

\$4.95

# LITTLETON'S COLLECTORS GUIDE TO FRANKLIN HALF DOLLARS



*Collector Clubs from  
Littleton Coin Company*

*"Early to bed and early to rise makes a  
man healthy, wealthy and wise."*

Benjamin Franklin



Dear Collector,

Coins reflect the culture and the times in which they were produced, and Franklin half dollars tell the story of America during the decades of the 1940s, '50s and '60s like no other artifacts can. Issued after World War II during prosperous times and the baby boom, these big silver coins circulated through the rock-n-roll era and the unsettled events of the early 1960s. Now, more than 40 years later, when you hold a Franklin half dollar in your hand, you're holding a tangible link to America's rich past.



*David M. Sundman,  
LCC President*

Franklin half dollars are especially prized by collectors today because they are the last American coinage series minted every year in 90% silver. In addition, this short-lived series has only 35 different dates and mint marks, making a complete collection far more affordable than many other U.S. coin series.

### **How to plan for your collection**

It's always a good idea to have a plan or focus for your collection. If you're striving to build a complete date and mint mark collection, there are certain issues that are keys to completing the set. The 1949-S, struck at the San Francisco Mint, is the scarcest and most sought-after Franklin half dollar in Uncirculated grades – followed by the 1949 and 1949-D issues from the Philadelphia and Denver Mints respectively, and the 1950 issue from Philadelphia.

Interestingly, the lowest mintage coins of the series – the 1953 and 1955 issues – are not as scarce as the three 1949 coins, simply because more 1953 and 1955 pieces have been preserved over the years. Yet, even these coins are in great demand, and a complete set of Franklin halves makes an excellent collecting goal.

Whatever your level of interest or experience, I hope you'll find this collectors club booklet on Franklin half dollars an interesting, useful, and educational guide to the series.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David M. Sundman". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

David M. Sundman  
President

## What can Littleton Coin do for me?

Ever since Littleton Coin first opened its doors in 1945, this family-owned business has been committed to providing outstanding service to collectors – it's our top priority. When you hear or see the name Littleton Coin Company, you probably think of the friendly voice you speak with on the phone. But teams of employees work behind the scenes to ensure you have the coins, paper money, supplies and information you need to enjoy the hobby to its fullest.

### The largest selection of U.S. coins in the widest range of grades!

Littleton offers you the widest variety of coins and paper money available. Teletype connects us to over 2,000 dealers, and Littleton's coin buyers travel to coin shows across the country to replenish our inventory.

### See each coin before you buy!

Enjoy Littleton's convenient "Free Examination" Coins-on-Approval Service and collector clubs. This special service lets you examine coins in your home before you buy. It's like having a coin shop come to your house. You buy only what you want from any selection, and you can cancel this special service at any time – there's no obligation.

### Special Request Service, one-stop shopping & collecting information, and FREE publications for collectors!

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## Table of Contents

Franklin's Words of Wisdom .....	4
Ben Franklin's America .....	5
The Many Sides of Mr. Franklin .....	7
Benjamin Franklin – American Statesman .....	9
1948-1963: Era of the Franklin Half .....	11
A short-lived but highly popular series .....	13

# Franklin's Words of Wisdom

Ben Franklin, the fascinating forefather pictured on the Franklin half dollar, was one of the greatest contributors to our American way of life. A noted inventor, scientist, public servant and statesman, he was also a prolific writer, and many of his brilliant quotes are still heard today. Here are some of his most famous:

“A penny saved is a penny earned.”

“Early to bed and early to rise makes a man healthy, wealthy and wise.”

“God helps those who help themselves.”

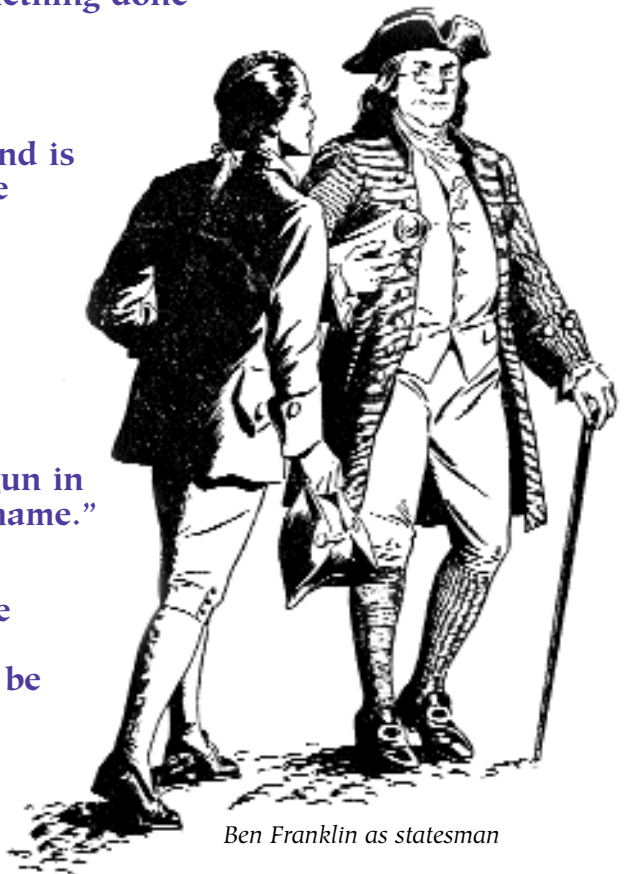
“If you want something done well,  
do it yourself.”

“A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush.”

“There are no gains without pains.”

“Whatever is begun in anger ends in shame.”

“In order for three people to keep a secret, two must be dead.”



*Ben Franklin as statesman*

# Ben Franklin's America 1706-1790

In his long and productive life of 84 years, which ended just a year after the inauguration of George Washington as first U.S. president, Ben Franklin witnessed a great many changes in the American people.

What had been an unusually diverse and dissimilar population, made up of people from many different nations and backgrounds, had somehow found

enough common cause and agreement to fight the

Revolutionary War together.

While Ben Franklin himself

envisioned a united nation long

before the events of 1776, most

people did not share his sense of common interest and identity.

And the fact that a united military effort occurred at all during the Revolutionary War was somewhat remarkable.

Some colonists had come to the

New World to escape religious persecution. Some came for political freedom from tyrannical rulers.

Others had been in prison for

various reasons, and were sent by authorities to the New World

either to relieve overcrowded jailhouses or simply "to get

them out of the country." Many other colonists came to America

in hopes of a better life for themselves and their families.



*Philadelphia's Liberty Bell*

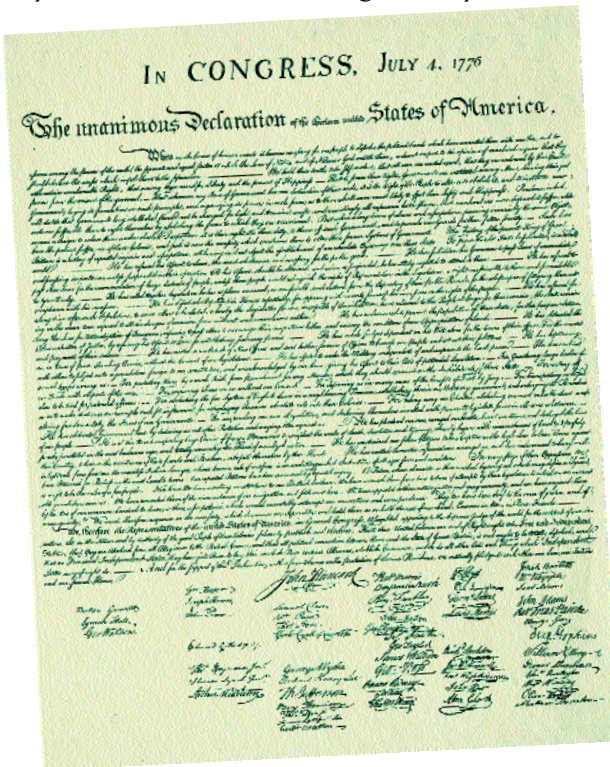
What most of the colonists shared was the courage to face and endure the extreme hardships of life in a new land. These staunch individuals were willing to leave their homelands behind and trust their own personal capabilities.

The intensity of American individualism would have great influence on the future of the new land. In order of importance, the people were loyal to family, friends, community and colony. Through most of the 18th century, few New World residents had any notion of themselves as "Americans." When Ben Franklin proposed a Plan of Union in 1754 for a joint colonial effort against the French and Indians, the plan was soundly defeated by the colonial legislatures as well as the English crown (both feared loss of authority). And when rebellions against the crown became frequent in the early 1770s, it was more a case of rebellious individual colonies than a rebellious "nation." Even in 1776, when a Continental Army was being

formed following the Declaration of Independence, there was a natural apprehension about a large regular army. The war became more of a militiamen's struggle to protect his own area of residence.

But the rugged individualism of the "Americans" would serve the nation well. The Declaration of Independence was a masterful statement proclaiming the natural rights of men to "Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness." And the U.S. Constitution was an unprecedented document, proposing that both state and central governments drew their authority from the same source – *the people*. Individual rights were given greater emphasis in the U.S. Constitution than ever before in history.

The people who had the courage and purpose to start a new life in America had also given the world a new outlook on government – one that would soon have a major impact on the peoples of other nations around the world. And Ben Franklin, who had been a spokesman for America long before there was any sense of a "nation," played a major role in formulating this new view of government "of the people, by the people, and for the people." Many years later, in 1948, Congress would honor Franklin's memory by putting his likeness on the U.S. half dollar. On the reverse of the coin, they saw fit to feature one of the greatest symbols of America's



Benjamin Franklin was one of the authors of the Declaration of Independence. His signature appears in the fourth column, third down.

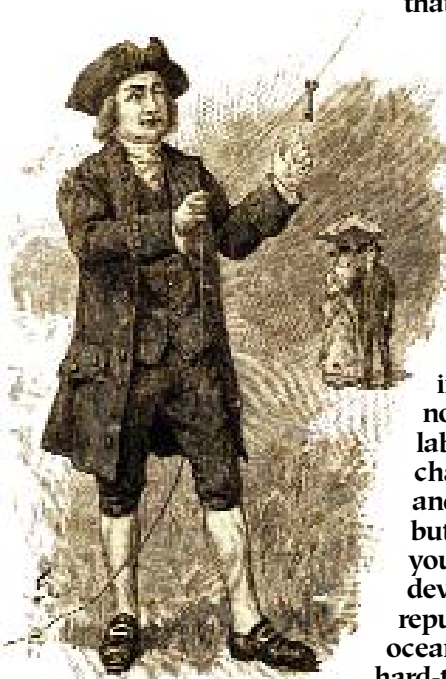
# The Many Sides of Mr. Franklin

One of Ben Franklin's best known sayings was "Early to bed, early to rise, makes a man healthy, wealthy and wise." If there's truth to the saying, then Mr. Franklin must have followed his own advice!

Franklin lived to be 84 years old, an unusually advanced age for the 18th century, so he must surely have been healthy. He was able to retire at the age of 42 from profits made in the printing and publishing business, so he acquired considerable wealth in his time. And his wisdom in science, public works, diplomacy, statesmanship and thrifty living was nothing short of legendary!

## Franklin the free spirit

Though most people think of Franklin first as a statesman, he may be almost as well known for flying a kite in a thunderstorm! It may seem like a crazy idea, but Ben Franklin had a boundless curiosity about science, knew what he was doing, and proved with the kite

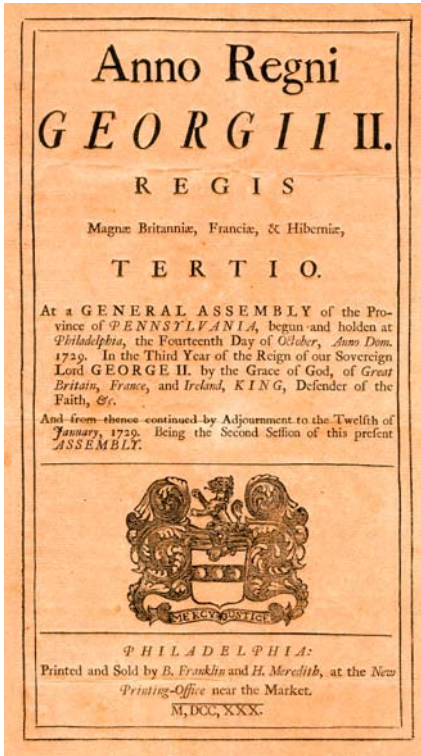


*In 1752, with his famous kite experiment, Franklin discovered lightning was electricity.*

that lightning was a form of electricity. From 1730 to the 1750s, he performed a great many scientific experiments – which brought him awards and degrees from major universities of the western world.

Fascinated by sight, sound, time and heat, he also found time to invent the Franklin stove, lightning rods, a glass harmonica, and bifocals!

But Ben Franklin was no introverted scientist with his nose stuck in a book or laboratory beaker. He not only charmed the world with his wise and witty *Poor Richard's Almanac*, but he won the hearts of numerous young ladies. In fact, Mr. Franklin developed quite a playboy reputation on both sides of the ocean – which he attributed to "that hard-to-govern passion of youth." However, Ben Franklin never tired of his playboy life, even in later years. While in his seventies, representing the United States in trade negotiations with France, he shocked his fellow



(Littleton archives)

This printing of the 1729 Pennsylvania Laws was produced in Philadelphia by Benjamin Franklin in 1730.

American painter of the 18th century, helped train three generations of American painters in his London studio.

Another of Ben Franklin's well-known sayings is: "Wish not so much to live long as to live well." But in Mr. Franklin's case, he managed to do both. In his words, he planned and worked "as if I was to live forever." And his countless contributions to America have become an inseparable part of our nation's heritage.

delegates by playing nightly chess games with his French girlfriend while she bathed!

But science, philosophy, diplomacy and beautiful women still do not fully represent the many interests of Mr. Franklin. He was also instrumental in establishing America's first subscription library in Philadelphia. He was at the forefront in creating Philadelphia's public hospital, fire and police departments, militia, and the Academy of Philadelphia, which became the University of Pennsylvania. His popular newspaper, *The Pennsylvania Gazette*, eventually became *The Saturday Evening Post*. And his tradesmen organization called the Junto was the model for such service clubs as Rotary International. Art, as well, benefitted from Mr. Franklin's seemingly limitless energies, as he helped Benjamin West get established in London. West, who became the most famous and popular

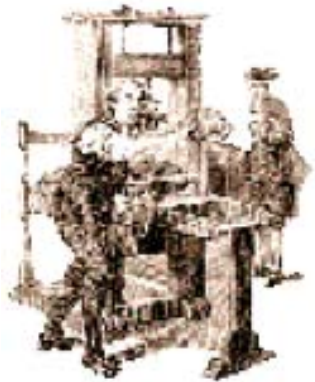


Image of the Franklin press



# Benjamin Franklin – American Statesman



*Portrait of Franklin*

From the time Ben Franklin took charge of the postal system of the northern colonies in 1753, he began to think about the common interests shared by the colonies – though nearly everyone else was much more concerned with the interests of one’s own colony, such as Virginia or Pennsylvania or Massachusetts.

A year later, in 1754, Franklin proposed his “Plan of Union” for a joint colonial cause and effort against the French and Indians. Though the plan (which included a general council with representatives of various colonies) was

rejected by the colonial legislatures, it introduced the idea that taxation should be the concern of representatives of the people. This was soon to become a major issue of the American Revolution.

Franklin, however, worked to the last minute to reconcile differences between the colonies and the English crown. Living in London in the late 1760s and early 1770s, he did his best to represent the American viewpoint to England. He made clear his desire to see the union of Britain and her American colonies secured and established, but he also cautioned Britain that “the seeds of liberty are universally found and nothing can eradicate them.”

Although Franklin worked tirelessly for conciliation, Britain’s ever-increasing colonial taxes and its heavy-handed response to the Boston Tea Party (itself a response to a British-imposed tax on tea), doomed his efforts. Only when he gave up hope for reconciliation (in 1775) did he return to the colonies to help organize a joint plan of action.

After helping to draft the Declaration of Independence, Ben Franklin was sent to France in 1776 to seek military and financial assistance. There, he swiftly achieved critical acclaim and won the admiration and



*Franklin's reception at Versailles in March, 1776,  
hosted by Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette*

respect of the nation. Before long, he was looked upon by Europeans as a hero, leading the new world to freedom from an antiquated form of imperial government. In effect, he became the chief representative of the fledgling United States in Europe, and greatly influenced opinion on the Continent.

Franklin became the first American minister to France, and for seven years he acted as diplomat, negotiator, purchasing agent, and head of intelligence. Though he was approaching 80 years of age at the time, he secured French military and naval aid, coordinated the dispatch of French forces to America, arranged the delivery of needed arms and ammunition to the American army, and obtained considerable financial backing for the war from the French Treasury. His success in obtaining French aid assured the final victories of the American Revolution.

Though preliminary peace agreements were made with Britain in 1781, Ben Franklin stayed on in Europe until 1785 to make necessary trade and commerce treaties for the new nation.

Back in Philadelphia in 1785, at the age of 79, Franklin began a three-year term as president of the Pennsylvania state executive council. As a member of the 1787 Constitutional Convention, he was an active contributor to the landmark United States Constitution.

A public servant and statesman through most of his long and productive 84 years, Benjamin Franklin's signature appears on the four most important documents in the formation of the United States of America: the 1776 Declaration of Independence, the 1778 Treaty of Commerce and Alliance with France, the 1783 Peace Treaty with Britain, and the 1787 United States Constitution.

In 1948, Franklin's great service to America was honored when he became the first non-president to be pictured on a regular-issue United States coin.

# 1948-63: Era of the Franklin Half



*The year the Franklin half was issued, Harry Truman was elected U.S. president.*

The years of issue for the Franklin half dollar, 1948-1963, represent one of the most active, progressive and tumultuous periods in both American and world history.

In 1948, Harry Truman and Thomas Dewey were engaged in one of America's closest presidential races. So close that the *Chicago Tribune*, in predicting the winner, printed one of the most famous "error headlines" in history – "DEWEY DEFEATS TRUMAN." But Harry Truman regained the presidency when the final tally was in.

Also in 1948, while the U.S. military had drastically scaled back in size following the Second World War, the Soviet Union was maintaining its war-strength forces, blockading Berlin, and making its presence felt in numerous eastern European countries. Then, in 1949, the Russians shocked the world when they exploded their first atomic bomb... and a great spy scare, communist scare, and bomb scare shook the nation.

In 1950, U.S. troops joined United Nations forces to defend South Korea against invading North Korean communist forces. Later that year, communist Chinese troops joined their North Korean allies against United Nations forces.

On the home front, concerned Americans began building bomb shelters in hopes of surviving a possible nuclear attack – and Wisconsin Senator Joseph McCarthy launched an anti-communist campaign that induced more fear and hysteria than the nation had ever seen.

But the 1950s also saw Dwight Eisenhower's eight years in the Oval Office bring peace, prosperity and progress to the nation. And the young Americans who had successfully defeated the Axis powers in World War II were filled with great confidence, optimism, and a desire to succeed. Families were formed at a rapid rate, and an enormous "baby boom" ensued.

With expansion of commuter transportation services, the nation's suburbs saw an equally enormous boom – as many thousands of Americans traded inner-city apartment living for the backyards,



*MacArthur (right) with aides and advisers, visits the front lines above Suwon, Korea, in 1951.*

barbeques, cocktail parties, and other forms of recreation that suburbia offered. Swing sets, power lawn mowers and automobiles soared in sales, and even entire new towns sprang up from farmland and woods to house the hordes of new suburbanites. This signified the beginning of a major social, cultural and economic shift for mainstream America.

With greatly expanded offerings in the still evolving medium of television, TV set ownership increased from 3.1 million in 1950 to over 32 million in 1955. America not only could watch Senator McCarthy's anti-communism hearings on television, but also the many choices in "sitcoms," variety shows, westerns, game shows and "soap operas." *Ozzie and Harriet*, *Marshall Matt Dillon*, *Sergeant Joe Friday*, and *Ed Sullivan* became household names.

And though movie attendance was expected to decline with the advent of television, it actually increased – as Marilyn Monroe, Rock Hudson and James Dean wowed their fans on the silver screen, and drive-in movies surged in popularity. Meanwhile, Broadway hits included *The King and I*, *The Music Man*, *West Side Story* and *Bye, Bye Birdie*. And the "mood music" of the early fifties was replaced by "rock and roll" with Chuck Berry, Elvis, Little Richard, Fabian, and many others.

By the end of the decade, a "new" America was poised to appear. And it did in 1960, when John F. Kennedy defeated Richard M. Nixon for the presidency with his New Frontier platform. A year later, the Soviets won the race to put the first man in space. The so-called "space-race" continued at a breakneck speed, as the challenge of landing astronauts on the moon and returning them safely to earth became the new goal. The 1962 Cuban missile crisis put America and the Soviet Union on the brink of war, as nuclear age politics struggled to keep pace with nuclear technology.

Then, on November 22, 1963, President Kennedy was assassinated – and time stood still while America grieved for its young leader. Within weeks, plans were made to honor his memory by putting his likeness on the U.S. half dollar coin. The Kennedy half dollar was introduced in early 1964, and America's last complete silver series – the Franklin half dollar – passed into the pages of numismatic history.



*WWII general Dwight D. Eisenhower also became president while the Franklin circulated.*



*After the assassination of President Kennedy, the Franklin Half was replaced by the Kennedy Half Dollar.*

## A short-lived but highly popular series

The Franklin half dollar was one of the shortest-lived U.S. coin series in history. In an era when other coin types (such as the Lincoln cent, Jefferson nickel and Washington quarter) have endured for 60 or more years, the Franklin half was struck for only 16 years, from 1948 through 1963.

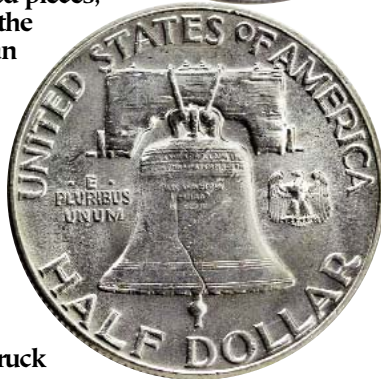
During five of its years of issue, the Franklin half dollar was struck at three different U.S. Mints: Philadelphia, Denver, and San Francisco. During nine other years, it was struck at two Mints: Philadelphia and Denver. And for two years, the Franklin half was produced only at the Philadelphia Mint. This gives a combined total of 35 different dates and mint marks, with all 35 issues minted in precious .900 fine silver.

The Philadelphia issues carry no mint mark (mint marks are small letters on coins indicating which mint struck them). Denver issues have a small "D" above the bell on the reverse. San Francisco issues carry a small "S" in the same location.

The obverse (front) of the coin features a profile bust of Ben Franklin, while the main element of the reverse design is the famous Liberty Bell. The bell's well-known crack is clearly evident on Uncirculated pieces, and under magnification the name of the bell's manufacturer, Pass and Stow, can be detected. Though the normal minimum issue span for a U.S. coin type was 25 years, this policy was foregone when President John F. Kennedy was assassinated on November 22, 1963. A design for a Kennedy half dollar was immediately created, and struck in 1964.

While 1964 was the first year of the Kennedy half, it was also the last year any 90% silver U.S. coins were struck for circulation.

Consequently, the short-lived Franklin half dollar was America's last coinage series minted every year in .900 fine silver.



<i>Designer:</i>	<i>John R. Sinnock</i>
<i>Weight:</i>	<i>12.5 gms</i>
<i>Diameter:</i>	<i>30.6 mm</i>
<i>Composition:</i>	<i>.900 silver, .100 copper</i>
<i>Issued:</i>	<i>1948-1963</i>

As America's last silver series, and with only 35 different dates and mint marks, a complete set of Franklin half dollars has become a highly popular collecting project.



*Benjamin Franklin and John Adams with British delegates  
Admiral Howe and Sir Henry Strachey*

# Caring for Your Coins

Proper handling and storage of coins is not difficult, and will maintain the natural condition (and value) of collectible coins. Appropriate care also helps preserve your coins for the benefit of future collectors.



*Gloves should be used when handling coins.*

**Handling:** Coins should be held by their edges between thumb and forefinger (see picture). This will protect coin surfaces and designs from fingerprints and the natural oils in fingers or palms that can be corrosive over time. In fact, many experienced collectors prefer to use soft cotton gloves when handling their high-quality Uncirculated or Proof coins. A wide variety of coin holders and albums is available from Littleton for easy viewing and examination of both sides of a coin without actual handling.

**Cleaning:** Improper cleaning, more than anything else, has harmed valuable coins. High-quality Uncirculated and Proof coins should never be cleaned, as cleaning can cause permanent loss of original mint finish and color (and permanent loss of value). Experts can easily detect a cleaned coin. Most experienced collectors and dealers agree that circulated coins also should not be cleaned, except by experts for specific restorative or protective purposes.

**Storage:** High humidity, air pollution, salt air, and temperature extremes can sometimes affect the surfaces of coins. It is best to store coins in protective holders or albums, and to keep them in an area of relatively uniform temperature. As your collection becomes more valuable, you may choose to store some or all of your coins in a safe-deposit box. If you choose to keep your collection in your home, we recommend that you check with your insurance company to ensure that your collection is covered for its full replacement cost.

Please note: The clear coin wrappers used by Littleton are sealed to provide protection of coins during delivery, and easy identification and examination without removal. You can store your coins in the clear wrappers, or you can remove them for placement in albums, holders, or other storage containers. When returning coins, we prefer that you keep them in the clear wrappers.

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Over the years, we've developed a wide variety of exclusive collector clubs tailored to fit your individual needs. As a Club Member, you'll always receive these special benefits...

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- You see each coin FREE for 15 days before you decide – We trust you!
- There's no obligation to purchase – EVER, and no membership fee!
- Your coins are hand selected for eye appeal – you'll get the best value for your dollar!
- Each coin is delivered right to your door – so you conveniently add to your collection in the comfort of your own home.
- Get FREE gifts and special collecting opportunities!
- You'll earn Profit Shares – trade them in for FREE coins, paper money and collecting supplies!

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