

LITTLETON'S COLLECTORS GUIDE TO KENNEDY HALF DOLLARS



**Collectors Guide from
Littleton Coin Company**

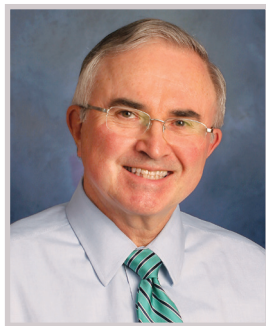
*"And so, my fellow Americans, ask not
what your country can do for you –
ask what you can do for your country."*

John F. Kennedy



Dear Collector,

Coins reflect the culture and the times during which they were produced, and Kennedy half dollars tell the story of JFK and post-war America in a way that no other artifact can. The Kennedy half dollar was designed and struck a mere 69 days after President John F. Kennedy's assassination. Until then, the half dollar was the only circulating coin that didn't bear the likeness of a U.S. president. Today, almost 60 years later, when you hold one in your hand, you're holding a tangible link to the 1960s and beyond.



*David M. Sundman,
LCC Chairman*

Kennedy half dollars recall the age of the space race - a time when U.S. satellite *Explorer VI* transmitted the first TV pictures of earth from space; or the first-ever live TV press conference held by JFK himself. It was a time of fear, with the Cuban Missile Crisis, and a time of hope, with sit-ins at the lunch counter in Greensboro, North Carolina. Today, this half dollar is an enduring legacy from our nation's past!

Have a plan for your collection

It's always good to have a plan and focus for what you want to collect. Although there is a variety of ways, building a complete date and mint mark collection is considered by many to be the ultimate achievement. The anticipation of waiting to fill the next space in your album becomes proud satisfaction when you locate that coin.

Of course, one of the greatest thrills of collecting is hunting for coins, like the first-year 90% silver Kennedy half of 1964 in mint state condition. Elusive key dates, like the 1970-D, will make your collection stand out. This series has many exciting varieties, like the 90% silver issue, 40% silver coins, and Bicentennial coins. Plus, its large size and the Kennedy mystique make it especially appealing.

Whatever your level of interest or experience, I hope you'll find this booklet on Kennedy 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
Chairman

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. Internet-based networks connect us to over 2,000 dealers, and Littleton’s coin buyers continuously travel to coin shows across the country to replenish our inventory.

See each coin before you buy!

Enjoy Littleton’s convenient Coins-on-Approval Service and collector club. 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 service at any time - there’s no obligation.

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

Having access to a large selection of coins “on approval” is just one of the services Littleton offers you. We also offer a Special Request Service to help you locate hard-to-find coins and paper money, a comprehensive website, and FREE publications that offer helpful collecting tips. You’ll find that as your knowledge increases, you’ll get more out of this exciting hobby.

Table of Contents

JFK’s Early Years.....	5
The 35th U.S. President.....	7
The Kennedy Coins.....	9
Uncirculated and Proof Coins	13
Caring For Your Coins.....	15



Painting of John F. Kennedy by William Franklin Draper
based on an oil sketch done in 1962.

“Let every nation know, whether it wishes us well or ill, that we shall pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe, in order to assure the survival and the success of liberty.”

Excerpt from the inauguration address delivered January 20, 1961

The Early Years

John Fitzgerald Kennedy descended from Irish immigrants who came to Boston in the mid-1800s to escape the potato famine and other economic ills. His grandfather, Patrick Kennedy, owned a saloon and became active in Boston politics. His father, Joseph, went into banking and made a substantial fortune in real estate, the motion picture industry, and other business activities. A strong supporter of Franklin D. Roosevelt and the Democratic Party, Joseph Kennedy held important posts in Roosevelt's New Deal administration and was appointed U.S. ambassador to Great Britain in 1937.



*Photograph of youthful
John F. Kennedy*

JFK, the second of nine children born to Joseph and Rose Kennedy, began life in a lower-middle-class section of Boston. The family gradually moved to better neighborhoods as his father prospered. Entering Harvard in 1936, he showed greater interest in athletics than academics during his first two years. But with Nazi aggression forcing concern about the threat of Hitlerism, "Jack" Kennedy developed a keen interest in history and government during his last two years at Harvard. His senior thesis about Britain's slow response to German rearmament was published as a book titled *Why England Slept*, which became a best-seller in both Great Britain and the United States.

"Need small boat – Kennedy"

After attending Stanford Graduate School of Business, and traveling extensively in South America, JFK enlisted in the U.S. Navy in late 1941 and became commander of a patrol torpedo (PT) boat. In August, 1943, his PT boat was rammed and sunk by a Japanese destroyer during one of numerous operations against the Japanese navy in the Solomon Islands. Although this seriously aggravated a previous spinal injury, Kennedy led the survivors on a treacherous three-mile swim through hostile waters to a remote island – towing one wounded sailor by clenching the edge of the fellow's life jacket in his teeth. Kennedy's spirit, endurance, leadership, and sense of humor would then become essential to their surviving several days on the island without water, food, or medical attention.

During his presidency some two decades later, the most treasured item on John F. Kennedy's Oval Office desk would be a fragment of a coconut shell – which in 1943 he had chiseled with the following message and given to a passing islander: "Native knows position, he can pilot, eleven alive, need small boat – Kennedy." The message eventually brought rescue to him and his surviving crew.

Though proud of his war record, John Kennedy never bragged about it. Years later, in 1962, a student asked him: "Mr. President, how did you get to be a war hero?" Kennedy responded with a few humble words: "It was absolutely involuntary. They sank my boat."



JFK on the campaign trail

A political career begins

The Kennedy family had always thought that John, the intellectual of the family, would become a writer or teacher – and that his older brother Joe would carry on the family’s political tradition. But Joe, a Navy pilot in the war, was killed in a 1944 air attack against German submarine pens off Belgium. So John took up the reins of the family’s tradition of political involvement, and decided upon a career in public service...

Campaigning long and hard against veteran city politicians in 1946, the 29-year-old John Kennedy won a seat as a Democrat in the United States Congress from the 11th Congressional District – a waterfront area of Boston comprised mainly of immigrants. While supporting an active role for the United States in international affairs, John devoted most of his efforts and time to domestic concerns and to servicing the specific needs of his district. Re-election to Congress came handily from his grateful constituents in 1948 and 1950.

Election to the U.S. Senate

Though not well known outside the Boston area, Kennedy decided to run against Republican Henry Cabot Lodge for Lodge’s seat in the United States Senate. Campaigning diligently for months, and aided by thousands of well-organized workers and volunteers, John Kennedy narrowly defeated Lodge in November, 1952.

As a U.S. Senator, Kennedy paid special attention to the textile workers, fishermen, longshoremen, and other major groups in Massachusetts. And as a member of the Senate Committee on Education and Public Welfare, he worked hard on social and economic legislation.

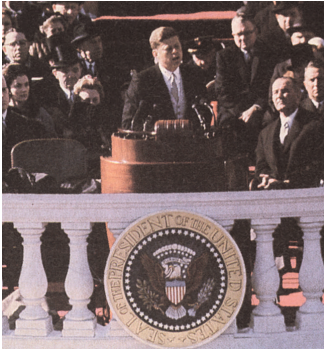
In September 1953, he married Jacqueline Bouvier of a wealthy Rhode Island family. The following year, he survived two dangerous operations for his war-aggravated spinal disorder, although recovery laid him up for six months. His spinal condition would remain a source of great pain and discomfort for the rest of his life.

In winning re-election to the U.S. Senate in 1958 by the largest margin ever achieved in Massachusetts, Kennedy was already becoming an important national political figure. His prominence was further boosted by taking an increasingly active and vocal position on civil rights and foreign policy. And though his Catholicism was seen by many as an insurmountable barrier to the White House, it served to draw added interest and attention to Kennedy as a potential presidential candidate.



*Hat and pennants
from 1960
Presidential race*

The 35th U.S. President



The new president delivers his inauguration address.

By the time John F. Kennedy formally announced his candidacy for the Democratic presidential nomination, he had become the acknowledged front-runner of his party. Campaigning in his usual dedicated and thorough fashion, Kennedy won all the presidential primaries he entered, and earned the endorsement of many state conventions.

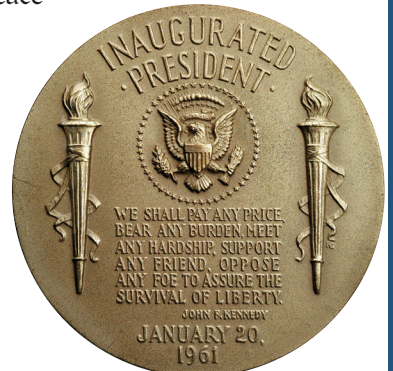
His nomination on the first ballot at the Democratic national convention was a tribute to his hard work, his outstanding organizational skills, and the steadfast efforts of thousands of campaign workers in all 50 states. The reach of his campaign organization would be pivotal in his attaining the White House.

The November 8, 1960 election proved to be extremely tight, with Kennedy receiving a mere 150,000 more votes than Richard Nixon out of the nearly 70 million votes cast. In his inaugural address of January 20, 1961, the energetic young president stirred the American people with his sense of civic pride and responsibility: “My fellow Americans, ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country... ask not what America will do for you, but what together we can do for the freedom of man.”

The “New Frontier”

The high caliber of his cabinet and other major appointments showed that the new 35th U.S. president wanted the best possible people to run the government. Through a zeal for involvement and achievement, Kennedy and his administration won the hearts of Americans of all ages, but especially the young. His new Peace Corps program sent thousands of bright young people to help in underdeveloped countries all around the world. Government service applications rose dramatically on the local, state, and national levels.

His signature social issue became civil rights, while his futuristic thinking was highlighted by his promise of “landing a man on the moon and returning him safely to earth before the end of the decade.” Though this seemed more like science fiction than fact in 1961, the promise was kept after Kennedy’s death – when on July 20, 1969, Neil Armstrong descended a spacecraft ladder to the surface of the moon and took his “giant leap for mankind.”



Official Kennedy Presidential Medal, which bears the eagle from the Presidential Seal as found on the Kennedy Half.

Kennedy's New Frontier included such domestic measures as a new Medicare system, strengthened Social Security, tax reform, and greater aid to education and inner-city programs. Foreign elements included Kennedy's well-received Alliance for Progress to promote economic development and reform in Latin America.

International crisis

The nuclear age's most dangerous moment came in October, 1962, when aerial photos revealed that offensive nuclear missiles were being installed by the Russians on the island of Cuba, just 90 miles from the Florida coast. President Kennedy moved quickly to declare and establish a "quarantine" of the island, deploying 180 war-ready ships to the waters surrounding Cuba, and filling the air with B-52 bombers armed with nuclear weapons. The tension-filled 13 days of the "Cuban missile crisis" ended with a lengthy, emotional letter to President Kennedy from Nikita Khrushchev, premier of the Soviet Union, agreeing to dismantle the missile installations and return them to Russia.

Understanding the extreme sensitivity of the crisis, Kennedy was careful not to declare any kind of victory. He simply wrote back to Khrushchev with the following joint proposal: "I think we should give priority to questions relating to proliferation of nuclear weapons, on earth and in outer space, and to the great effort for a nuclear test ban." Within a year, an atomic test ban treaty was signed by the United States and the Soviet Union.

The fallen leader

Though warned that the presence of several extremist groups made Dallas a potentially unsafe city to visit, President Kennedy made the fateful decision to speak to leading Texas businessmen on November 22, 1963 at the Trade Mart in Dallas – and to begin campaigning for the next year's election with a ride through the city in an open limousine. A cheering crowd greeted the motorcade as it moved through the city streets. But as the president's open limousine turned left at the Texas School Book Depository, the piercing sound of gun shots shattered the calm of the high noon.

When informing Bobby Kennedy that his brother the president had been killed by a sniper, a family friend offered a positive thought: "Maybe this will reduce hate." Bobby Kennedy merely shook his head and stated: "In a few months, it will be forgotten."

But as the weeks, months, and years passed, the memory of John Fitzgerald Kennedy seemed to grow only stronger, and to fill the hearts and minds of Americans all the more. To honor his memory, countless public buildings, schools, highways and bridges took on the Kennedy name.

Great Britain set aside three acres of the historic meadow of Runnymede (where the Magna Carta was signed in 1215) as a Kennedy shrine. In dedicating the shrine on May 14, 1965, Queen Elizabeth spoke in reverence of the fallen leader, "whom in death my people still mourn and whom in life they loved." In response, Jackie Kennedy said it was "the deepest comfort to know that you share with me thoughts that lie too deep for tears."



The Kennedy Coins

Designer: *Obv: Gilroy Roberts; Rev: Frank Gasparro*

Weight: *1964: 12.50 gms; 1965-70: 11.50 gms;
1971-date: 11.34 gms*

Diameter: *30.6 mm*

Composition: *1964: .900 silver, .100 copper;
1965-1970: .400 silver, .600 copper
1971-date: clad (composition varies)*

Following the assassination of John F. Kennedy on November 22, 1963, the popular young president was honored with many grand tributes. Cape Canaveral was renamed Cape Kennedy, New York's Idlewild Airport became Kennedy Airport, the National Cultural Center in Washington, D.C. was rededicated as the Kennedy Center... and schools, public buildings, bridges and highways throughout the nation were rechristened with the Kennedy name.

But the greatest tribute was to put John F. Kennedy's profile on a circulating U.S. coin, alongside those with portraits of George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Abraham Lincoln, and Franklin D. Roosevelt. Placed in circulation in early 1964, the Kennedy half dollar represented the quickest development and introduction of a new coin design in the history of the nation.

The profile of John F. Kennedy found on the obverse of the coin was created by Gilroy Roberts, chief engraver of the U.S. Mint, with some improvements to the portrait suggested by Jackie Kennedy. The reverse of the new coin featured an adaptation of the Great Seal of the United States and was created by Frank Gasparro, assistant engraver of the U.S. Mint. The design of the coin was finalized just weeks after President Kennedy's untimely death, and the necessary legislation breezed through Congress. Production of the new coins was under way before the end of January 1964, a mere two months after that fateful day in Dallas. The fast introduction of the Kennedy half dollar reflected America's desire to keep the spirit and memory of the popular young president alive.



Ten days after JFK's November 16 visit to Cape Canaveral in 1963, it was renamed Cape Kennedy. Today, it is known as the Kennedy Space Center at Cape Canaveral.



John F. Kennedy, 35th president of the United States, 1961-1963

Struck in 90% silver, 40% silver, and copper-nickel

When the Kennedy coins were introduced in 1964, America's half dollars, as well as quarters and dimes, were still being struck in 90% fine silver. But due to the rising price of silver bullion, the composition of the half dollar was changed in 1965 to 40% fine silver, while the composition of quarters and dimes was changed to copper-nickel. The Kennedy coins were struck in 40% fine silver from 1965 through 1970, when further increases in the cost of silver forced the complete removal of the precious metal from the half dollar composition. Since 1971, circulation-quality Kennedy half dollars have been struck in the same copper-nickel alloy as quarters and dimes, with the exception of some limited-issue Bicentennial half dollars that were

struck in 40% silver. However, since 2002, Kennedy half dollars have not been issued for circulation; they have been struck in limited quantities for collectors only.

Special Bicentennial coins

In honor of the nation's Bicentennial celebration, 1975 and 1976 regular-issue and specially-made Proof Kennedy half dollars were struck in 40% fine silver as well as in the copper-nickel alloy. And all the Kennedy halves produced during 1975 and 1976, whether 40% silver or copper-nickel, carry special Bicentennial dating, 1776-1976 (thus, no Kennedy coins carry just a 1975 or 1976 date). Besides the Bicentennial "double date," the half dollars struck in 1975 and 1976 also carry a special reverse design depicting Independence Hall – the historic Philadelphia landmark where the Declaration of Independence was adopted by the American colonies on July 4, 1776.

Proof and Special Mint Set issues

Proofs, which are specially-made coins of the highest quality, are struck in more



Bicentennial coins feature "1776-1976" dating and a special design on the reverse.



Gilroy Roberts, chief engraver at the U.S. Mint from 1948 to 1964, completing his design for the obverse of the Kennedy Half Dollar (the presidential portrait was created with help from Jackie Kennedy)

limited quantities and are intended as collectibles rather than circulating coinage. Since 90% silver, regular-issue U.S. coins came to an end at the close of 1964, the only 90% silver Proof Kennedy half dollar was the 1964 issue. Then, in 1992, the U.S. Mint began to issue special 90% Silver Proof Kennedy half dollars in limited quantities.

Due to a coin shortage from 1965 to 1967, all mint facilities were busy producing circulation coinage. So the U.S. Mint did not have time to prepare for and strike Proof coins. During those three years, the mint chose to handpick the

best Uncirculated coins and give them the special handling and packaging normally reserved for Proof Sets. These "Special Mint Sets" of 1965-67 contain Uncirculated coins of exceptional beauty, representing a level of quality above that of regular Mint Sets, but not reaching the distinctive excellence of Proof coins, which are made with specially prepared coin blanks, dies, and presses.

P, D and S coins

From 1964 through 1967, regular-issue Kennedy half dollars struck for circulation were produced at the main U.S. Mint in Philadelphia (no mint mark 1964 through 1979; "P" mint mark 1980 to the present). Regular-issue coins were also struck at the Denver Mint ("D" mint mark) in 1964, then again beginning in 1968.

The 1964 Proof Kennedy halves and 1965-67 Special Mint Set Kennedy halves were struck at the main Philadelphia Mint. Proof Kennedy halves of 1968 to the present were struck at the San Francisco Mint, and these special Proof issues are the only Kennedy half dollars that carry the "S" mint mark.

When the Kennedy half dollar was introduced in 1964, mint marks were located below the olive branch clutched by the eagle on the reverse. In 1968, the mint mark location was switched to the obverse, just below the portrait of President Kennedy.



"D" and "S" mint marks are found just below the presidential portrait on Kennedy Half Dollars from 1968 to date.



High-quality mint Uncirculated Kennedy Halves (pictured lower right) and special Proof coins (pictured top & left) are in great demand among coin collectors.

*“We stand for freedom. That is our conviction for ourselves;
that is our only commitment to others.”*

John F. Kennedy

Uncirculated & Proof Coins

Collector clubs from Littleton Coin Company offer you mint Uncirculated and Proof Kennedy half dollars, which are in greatest demand among collectors. These high-quality coins have been carefully preserved since their time of issue, and bear all the fine details and features of this handsome coin's original design. Littleton custom albums contain labeled spaces for every Kennedy half dollar of 1964 to the present, and are an attractive way to organize and display your collection.

Our albums also provide protection for such high-quality coins, and allow for easy viewing of both sides without handling the coins themselves. A collection of mint Uncirculated and Proof Kennedy half dollars will continue to grow more difficult to assemble in future years.

Mint Uncirculated Coins

Uncirculated coins are coins that exhibit no wear from general circulation. Coins may have been stored for many years in original mint-sealed bags, or stored in bank wrapped rolls, or carefully preserved by collectors. Depending on the contact they may have had with other coins, or atmospheric conditions during or after coining, blemishes, staining, bag marks and toning may be present. These coins may lack luster and still be considered Uncirculated. Because they represent greater quality and scarcity, they carry higher values than those that have circulated. Uncirculated grades range from MS-60 Typical to MS-70 Perfect. Most Uncirculated coins range from MS-60 to MS-63+, as very few coins meet the technical standards for MS-65 or higher.



Uncirculated first-year-of-issue Kennedy Half in 90% silver

Superb Proof Coins



Proof Kennedy Half with dual bicentennial dates

Proof is not a grade; it is a method of manufacture. Proof coins are made by a special process using carefully selected coin blanks and dies, which are meticulously polished and burnished to remove any and all imperfections. The coin blanks are individually fed into a specially adapted coin press, and are struck twice – at slow speed and with extra pressure – to produce high-relief features contrasted against deep mirrorlike surfaces. The dies are polished frequently, and are replaced after only a limited number of strikes. The finished Proof coins are inspected to rigid standards, handled only with gloves or tongs, and specially packaged for delivery to collectors.

Special Mint Set Coins



Special Mint Set coin produced especially for collectors, 1965-67

Because of a coin shortage during 1965-67, the facilities and personnel of the United States Mint were too busy producing regular issues for circulation coins to prepare for and strike special Proof coins. In lieu of Proof Sets during 1965-67, the mint carefully selected the best-quality Uncirculated coins, and then gave those coins the special handling, packaging and treatment usually reserved for U.S. Proof coins.

Known as "Special Mint Sets," these unique 1965-67 sets represent higher quality than the usual annual U.S. Mint Sets, and offer some characteristics of top-quality Proof coins.



Many collectors dream of building a complete collection of Kennedy Half Dollars like the one shown here.

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.

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 original wrappers.

Littleton's exclusive Showpak® packaging was designed for permanent storage and protection of your coins, and cannot be resealed once opened.

"A man may die, nations may rise and fall, but an idea lives on."

John F. Kennedy

You'll build nice collections with Littleton's exclusive clubs

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...

- Affordable monthly shipments to fit your budget
- You see each coin with no obligation for up to 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 Rewards Points – redeem them for FREE coins, paper money and collecting supplies!

Littleton's 45-Day Money Back Guarantee of Satisfaction

You must be completely satisfied with every purchase you make from Littleton. If not, simply return it within 45 days in unaltered condition for a prompt exchange or refund, whichever you prefer.

To explore other Littleton Collector Clubs, call our friendly Customer Service staff at

1-800-645-3122

M-F 7:30 A.M. - 9:00 P.M. ET

or visit us on the web at
LittletonCoin.com



Littleton
Coin Company®

Serving Collectors Since 1945

1309 Mt. Eustis Road,
Littleton NH 03561-3735

