

The History of Central States

Part 6 - 1949-1950

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As published in the Summer 2004 (Volume 52, Number 2) Issue of the *Centinel*

The Detroit Coin Club entertained the 7th Central States convention, May 13-15, 1949, in the Motor City Book-Cadillac Hotel. The auction was again called by James Kelly of Dayton, whose ad in the February *Numismatist* proclaimed that the Detroit convention would be "the outstanding event east of California in 1949." He went on to state: "The Central States Numismatic Society is purely a social organization to bring collectors together in convention once a year to provide good fellowship, exchange ideas and display their collections for the enjoyment of all."

The Detroit Coin Club President, Russell Stehfest, served as chairman of the 1949 CSNS convention. Price of bourse tables was \$5 and \$10 for two with a limit of four per dealer. Central States President, Richard Yeoman, announced that numismatists from coast to coast were sure to attend because the ANA executive committee was holding its annual meeting during the convention.

Detroit convention highlights included an exhibit of McDermott's 1913 Liberty Head nickel, a field trip to Henry Ford's Greenfield Village, a large auction (the highest priced item bringing \$1,250 was a 1793 "strawberry sprig" large cent), and a Saturday evening banquet attended by 162 persons.

The appearance of the McDermott nickel boosted public attendance and "surprisingly" some exhibit visitors actually bought coins, especially from the dealers who had "cheap foreign coin trays." Due to a strike, a scheduled tour of the Ford Motor plant was cancelled. Banquet attendees received a token issued by the Detroit Bank for its 100th anniversary. Banquet activities included a brief talk by ANA President Lloyd B. Gettys, and the Detroit "kitchen" band, a group of ladies who played kitchen utensils as instruments!

The Sunday morning CSNS business meeting featured a discussion of a life membership classification, appointment of CSNS representatives in each of the 52 local clubs in the CSNS area, and acceptance of an invitation to hold the 1950 convention in Springfield, Illinois.

CSNS life member #4, James W. Curtis, was the motivational force bringing the 8th annual convention to his hometown of Springfield, Illinois, May 5-7, 1950. In a full-page *Numismatic Scrapbook* article, November, 1949, Curtis extols the attractions of the Illinois

State Museum. This museum was located in the Centennial Building just three blocks from the convention hotel, the Abraham Lincoln.

The convention organizing committee made special note of Springfield's central location: 3 & ½ hours by train from Chicago and only 1 & ½ hours from St. Louis. For those traveling by automobile, the famous transcontinental U.S. 66 and equally convenient U.S. 36 were available. The March, 1950, issue of The Numismatic Scrapbook Magazine observed that the convention entertainment committee, while maintaining a mysterious silence as to what events would be, promised something out of the ordinary. Business meetings of ANA, CSNS and the Central Illinois Numismatic Society were to be held during the convention. James Kelly was again selected to call the auction, this being his 6th time out of the eight conventions held since 1939.

The convention began on Friday evening, May 3, with an informal get-together of dealers, exhibitors and collectors. Saturday morning was devoted to exhibit preparation and opening the bourse at 10. That afternoon featured a four-hour trip to New Salem where visitors viewed Lincoln's home and tomb.

Convention exhibits consisted of 52 cases. Prizes for the top four exhibits were again donated by the firm, Numismatic Gallery. First place was won by M. H. Bolender for his "Crowns of the World" and "Pattern U. S. Dollars."

The Saturday evening banquet featured filet mignon and a comedy quartet. M. Vernon Sheldon, ANA president, gave a short speech. Following the banquet, James Kelly cried the first session of his auction. Commemoratives and U. S. proof coins brought up to 80% over catalog while gold prices were on the soft side.

CSNS officers and board members elected at the Springfield convention were president Lillard W. Culver (Milwaukee), vice president James W. Curtis (Springfield), secretary-treasurer Paul H. Ginther (New Holland, IL), and board members Harry X Boosel (Chicago), Harold Bowen (Detroit), Henry Cary (Louisville), John Hansan (Kansas City), C. David Pierce (Ottumwa, IA), Hubert Polzer (Milwaukee), H. L. Randall (St. Paul, MN), Carl T. Shelby (Muncie, IN), and Curtis C. Shroyer (Toledo, OH).

The most significant item to be considered at the Sunday CSNS business meeting was a recommendation to establish a life membership classification. This was approved with the life fee set at \$7.50 for those applying prior to January 1, 1951. After that date, the fee was twenty times the annual membership dues. Applicants for life membership had to be a CSNS member in good standing for one year.

Finally, the invitation of the Northwest Coin Club of Minneapolis was accepted for the 1951 convention.



1976 - Chicago: Kansas City dealer Jack Klausen, right, was named to receive the Society's highest honor, the Medal of Merit. The presentation was made during award ceremonies by Ray O. Lefman.



1973 - Peoria: Caught during lively conversation in the hospitality room were Virginia Culver, George Hatie and Tom Jones.