

**BASS COLLECTION "PERIOD TWO" NON 13 STAR CALIFORNIA SMALL
DENOMINATION GOLD**

BY

JOHN H. MACMILLAN Ph.D.

"Period two" (1857-1882) California gold was issued primarily as souvenirs and were not used as circulating currency, thus many collectors do not consider them "true" territorial gold. Breen and Gillio nonetheless included them in their classic 1983 standard reference, now out of print. This author has found many examples of period two gold deviating from the 13 star rule in Heritage's sale of the Harry Bass collection. Most of the series exhibits 13 stars on the obverse, the "rule of 13 stars", each star corresponding to one of the original 13 colonies. Preliminary analysis of this series shows, as with period one, most non 13 star obverses to be less than 13 stars, probably corresponding to Type "E", artistic license, although those with 12 stars could be type "F", mint error. Only two examples with greater than 13 stars were seen in this collection, BG-730 Octagonal 25 cent with 15 stars, and BG-822 Round 25 cent with 14 stars. BG-730 is a surprise, putting 15 stars on a coin as small as the gold 25 cent is a challenge for the engraver! Type "E", artistic license, is again the probable classification. BG-822 could be either Type "E" or "F". Listings from the Heritage web site auction catalog are given below. A detailed analysis of this series will be deferred until publication of the second edition of the Breen-Gillio reference, expected soon.

Type A: Number of states in the union the year the coins was struck.

Type B: A state's order in its ratification of the Constitution.

Type C: A state's order in joining the union after the Constitution was ratified.

Type D: Number of states in the union at the start of the Lewis and Clark Expedition in 1804.

Type E: Probably artistic license.

Type F: Probably Mint error.

2511 1864 Octagonal 25¢. BG-706. Rarity-6-. Liberty Head. MS-63. Highly lustrous with some moderate prooflike contrast. Ten obverse stars around a large head of Liberty. Free of the heavy clash marks that are virtually always seen on examples of this variety (as in the following lot, for example), and extremely rare as such; this may be the only specimen extant.

Equivalent to Lee:120; Texas:4017.

2513 1866 Octagonal 25¢. BG-708. Rarity-5. Liberty Head. MS-65. A frosty gem with attractive olive highlights. Among the finest known examples of this elusive variety. Large head of Liberty, [nine stars around](#), not auction image.

Finer than Lee:122; Heifetz:118; Texas:4019.

From Pine Tree Auction Co.'s sale of the Weimer Collection, March 1976, Lot 2665

2514 1867 Octagonal 25¢. BG-709. Rarity-4. Liberty Head. MS-65. A satiny problem-free gem with warm olive highlights on frosty surfaces. Another of the varieties with [nine obverse stars around a large head of Liberty](#), not auction image

Finer than Lee:123; Heifetz:119; Texas:4020.

From Pine Tree Auction Co.'s

2515 1868 Octagonal 25¢. BG-710. Rarity-6+. Liberty Head. MS-64. Lustrous satiny surfaces. A scarce variety within the Large Head style, [nine stars around](#). Not auction image.

Finer than Lee:124; Texas:4021.

Purchased from Isadore Herman, November 1973.

2517 1869 Octagonal 25¢. BG-712. Rarity-5. Liberty Head. MS-64. Lustrous satiny surfaces with rose highlights. [Nine stars around large head of Liberty](#) not auction image.

Equivalent to Lee:126; Texas:4023.

Purchased from Goliad Corporation (Mike Brownlee), August 8, 1972.

2518 1871 Octagonal 25¢. BG-714. Rarity-4. Liberty Head. MS-64. Lustrous warm golden surfaces. Another of the popular type with large head of Liberty and [nine obverse stars](#) not auction image.

Purchased from Goliad Corporation (Mike Brownlee), August 8, 1972.

2519 1871 Octagonal 25¢. BG-715. Rarity-7-. Liberty Head. MS-65 or finer. A lovely frosty gem of extraordinary quality. One of the rarest varieties [with nine stars and large head of Liberty](#). Perhaps just 10 or so examples of this variety are currently known. Reverse shattered at date and denomination. The die was probably discarded soon after this piece was struck, which may account for the rarity of the variety today.

Finer than Texas:4026.

Purchased from Ronald J. Gillio, 1975.

2531 1860-G Octagonal 25¢. BG-730. Rarity-7. Liberty Head. MS-60. Lustrous. Petite Head of Liberty [with 15 stars](#)

around, "G" (for Robert B. Gray & Co.) beneath, date on reverse. One of just a half dozen or so specimens known of this rare variety. From a shattered reverse die, "more extensively broken than on any other coin in this series, explaining early discard and rarity," as noted by Breen. A splendid opportunity for the alert California small denomination gold specialist.

Significantly finer than Texas:4040.

Purchased from William Hall, April 1975.

2581 1859 Round 25¢. BG-801. Rarity-4. Liberty Head. MS-64 PL. A brilliant and lustrous coin of near-gem quality; indeed, few would hesitate to apply the gem appellation to this piece. Large, crude head style, **10 stars around**. Not auction image. On the reverse, the top leaves of the wreath act as the fraction bar and the R of DOLLAR is broadly repunched. From the earliest state of the obverse die, with a faint vestige of the maker's mark "FD" present on Liberty's coronet (this fades quickly from the die).

Large Liberty Head punch, as seen on this and certain other Frontier & Diviercy dies. The neck truncation is straighter and there are other differences between this and the Liberty Head used on the firm's 50¢ pieces.

From Pine Tree Auction Co.'s sale of the Weimer Collection, March 1976, Lot 2695.

2583 1866 Round 25¢. BG-804. Rarity-4. Liberty Head. MS-63. Warm olive and rose toning on lustrous surfaces. **Seven obverse stars**, one below, none above Liberty. Not auction image.

Much finer than Texas:4158.

From Pine Tree Auction Co.'s sale of the Weimer Collection, March 1976, Lot 2696.

2588 1871 Round 25¢. BG-809. Rarity-4. Liberty Head. MS-65. A satiny gem with lustrous surfaces and pleasing olive toning. **Seven obverse stars**, two berries inside each branch of the reverse wreath. Not auction image.

Finer than Lee:240.

Purchased from Ronald J. Gillio, 1975.

2597 1865 Round 25¢. BG-822. Rarity-4. Liberty Head. MS-63 PL. A lovely cameo example with warm golden highlights on both sides. **Obverse with 14 stars around Liberty**, not auction image, reverse with low 5, date repunched.

Continual repolishing of the obverse die (which makes its first appearance as BG-820) and repunching of the stars (BG-822) has now resulted in stars that can more accurately be called "blobs," as many of the stars more closely resemble hearts or spades from a deck of playing cards than they do stars.

2643 1859 Octagonal 50¢. BG-902. Rarity-4. Liberty Head. MS-64. Satiny orange-gold surfaces with warm lustre on both sides. Variety with **11 obverse stars of various sizes around head of Liberty**. Weakly struck at DOLLAR and the date on the reverse, typical for the variety. A lovely near-gem example.

Finer than Texas:4252.

Purchased from Ronald J. Gillio, 1975.

2647 1871 Octagonal 50¢. BG-911. Rarity-4. Liberty Head. MS-64. Subdued lustre on pale golden surfaces. Obverse with nine stars around Liberty and a stray hair curl above her hair bun. Not auction image.

Finer than Texas:4260.

Purchased from Ronald J. Gillio, 1975.

2696 1859 Round 50¢. BG-1003. Rarity-7-. Liberty Head. MS-63. Frosty orange-gold surfaces. Twelve stars around Liberty on the obverse, date and denomination in reverse wreath. Struck from a rusted obverse die. Considered a rarity in all grades.

Purchased from the Goliad Corporation (Mike Brownlee), August 8, 1972.

2700 1868 Round 50¢. BG-1008. Rarity-5+. Liberty Head. MS-63. Lustrous with rose toning on the design high points. Obverse with 10 stars around Liberty, berry on reverse appears as a period after the date. Not auction image.

2705 1866-G Round 50¢. BG-1017. Rarity-7. Liberty Head. MS-63 PL. Frosted design elements and mirrored fields present a pleasing cameo contrast. 13 obverse, one reverse star. The tiny maker's mark "G" is low on the obverse, below the bust of Liberty, and embedded in the denticles there. A late die state; the reverse is heavily shattered, a feature that does not show on the Breen-Gillio plate coin, and probably accounts for the rarity of the die pair. Called: "Apparently unique" in the Breen-Gillio reference, further noted there that: "There is no rumor of a duplicate and no sale record. Doering could find none to illustrate for either edition." A few specimens of this rarity have appeared in the 16 years since the Breen-Gillio treatise, but it is still a very rare item. One of the finest of the variety.

This desirable rarity is one of the few BG varieties that were conspicuous in their absence in our sale of the Texas Collection.

Purchased from the Goliad Corporation (Mike Brownlee), August 8, 1972.

2707 1869-G Round 50¢. BG-1021. Rarity-7-. Liberty Head. MS-62. Rich orange toning on lustrous surfaces. A rare variety with perhaps just 15 or so examples known in all grades. Obverse with three loops in Liberty's hair bun.

13 obverse, one reverse star. *Purchased from Ronald J. Gillio, 1975.*

2755 1859-FD Octagonal \$1. BG-1101. Rarity-8. Liberty Head. EF-40. Satiny orange-gold surfaces with rose on the high points. A great rarity, one of perhaps just two or three specimens known, and one of the varieties that was not represented in the Texas Collection. Broad Head obverse, 10 stars around Liberty, one reverse star. Maker's mark "FD" below reverse wreath. Interesting in that the L punch in the reverse peripheral legend is missing a foot, giving the appearance of CAIIFORNIA GOID. Additionally, the I punch in the legend appears to be an inverted J! An important coin that will certainly see strong bidding competition.

Purchased from Isadore Herman, November 1973.

2768 1876 Octagonal \$1. BG-1115. Rarity-7-. Indian Head. MS-60 PL. Pale olive toning and modest cameo contrast are exhibited on lustrous surfaces. While several examples of this rare variety have evidently surfaced since our sale of the Texas Collection (January 1992, where BG-1115 was called Rarity-8), its rarity is still substantial enough that we anticipate serious bidding activity when this lot crosses the auction block. 13 obverse stars around Liberty, [one reverse star.](#)

Purchased from Ronald J. Gillio, 1975.

2769 1876 Octagonal \$1. BG-1116. Rarity-7. Indian Head. MS-62 PL. Iridescent olive and rose highlights on lustrous surfaces. Moderately prooflike. Reverse variety with scroll below DOLLAR rather than a star. A rarity in all grades, this variety is a special prize in Mint State. 13 obverse stars around Liberty, [one reverse star.](#)

Finer than Lee:465; Jay Roe/Heifetz:398; Texas:4457.

Purchased from Ronald J. Gillio, 1975.

Purchased from the Goliad Corporation (Mike Brownlee), August 8, 1972.

2772 1872 Octagonal \$1. BG-1119. Rarity-6+. Indian Head. MS-60 PL. Warm golden toning on frosted motifs and reflective fields. Large Indian Head. The elusive variety with period after date and small star on reverse. Usual reverse state with cud at LD of GOLD. A nice coin for the assigned grade. 13 obverse, [one reverse star.](#)

Equivalent to Texas:4460.

2773 1872 Octagonal \$1. BG-1120. Rarity-5+. Indian Head. MS-64 PL. A lovely near-gem specimen with rich orange iridescence on the cameo surfaces. Period after date, large star on reverse. Rare so fine; an opportunity not to be missed. 13 obverse, [one reverse star.](#)

Much finer than Texas:4461.

From "Quality" Sales Corp.'s sale of the Beck Collection, January 1975, Lot 624.

2775 1873/2 Octagonal \$1. BG-1121. Rarity-7. Indian Head. MS-64 PL. A stunning octagonal dollar of near-gem quality, with reflective fields and frosted motifs richly bathed in deep orange-gold. Sharply struck and exquisitely preserved, with all the eye appeal you might expect from a near-gem coin. A rare overdate that should see spirited bidding activity. 13 obverse, [one reverse star.](#)

Finer than Texas:4462 (ex Lee, September 1988, Lot 470).

From Superior's sale of the Ruby Collection, February 1975, Lot 1329.

2777 1874 Octagonal \$1. BG-1124. Rarity-5. Indian Head. MS-63 PL. An attractive Mint State specimen. Rich orange highlights adorn reflective surfaces and satiny motifs. Early obverse die state, crack from rim touches 1 in date but does not yet extend to the Indian's bust. 13 obverse, [one reverse star](#).

Finer than Texas:4465.

Purchased from Ronald J. Gillio, 1975.

2780 1875 Octagonal \$1. BG-1125. Rarity-5+. Indian Head. MS-63 PL. Deep golden orange and olive highlights on both sides. Variety with date numerals slanting progressively downward to right. Struck from heavily clashed dies. Reverse rim cud at 12:00. 13 obverse, [one reverse star](#).

Purchased from Isadore Herman, November 1973.

2783 1876/5 Octagonal \$1. BG-1128. Rarity-6-. Indian Head. MS-60. An attractive coin with the overall appeal of a finer grade. Olive toning graces the lustrous surfaces. Variety with the 5 in the date crudely altered by the maker. A popular rarity. 13 obverse, [one reverse star](#).

From "Quality" Sales Corp.'s sale of the Beck Collection, January 1975, Lot 625.

2784 1876/5 Octagonal \$1. BG-1129. Rarity-4. Indian Head. MS-62 PL. A lustrous and reflective coin with pleasing olive toning on both sides. Plenty of quality and eye appeal present for the assigned grade. Breen noted that this variety is: "Always weakly struck," but this specimen is a welcome exception to that statement.

Finer than Lee:478; Heifetz:411; Texas:4470. 13 obverse, [one reverse star](#).

2794 1872 Round \$1. BG-1206. Rarity-7-. Indian Head. EF-40. Lustrous despite some wear on the design high points. An important issue, one that California small denomination gold specialist Jay Roe calls the "King of the Indian Heads." On this elusive variety, the 2 in the date was first punched low into the die, then corrected in a higher position. BG-1206 is missing from most major cabinets of the series, and we expect intense bidding activity when this specimen crosses the auction block. 13 obverse, [one reverse star](#).

Purchased from the Goliad Corporation (Mike Brownlee), August 8, 1972.

2795 1872 Round \$1. BG-1207. Rarity-5. Indian Head. MS-63 PL. Lustrous with warm golden highlights on both sides. An impressive example of a variety that is only occasionally offered in any Mint State grade; perhaps this choice MS-63 specimen is one of the finest known. Close Date variety.

Finer than Lee:485; Heifetz:419; Texas:4477. 13 obverse, [one reverse star](#).

