

American Sales & Auctioneers, Pt. 3

Many of the hobby's most influential numismatists and dealers

launched their careers in the first half of the 20th century.

HIS MONTH'S installment takes a look at numismatic auctioneers and sales of the 20th century. For each company listed here, I have noted the dates of its first and last coin auctions (if known); the dates do not include the years that many of these firms were in the retail or wholesale coin business. Also indicated are the name or names of the numismatic experts the companies employed (if any). Catalogers and numismatists often worked for a variety of employers, so their names might be associated with more than one firm.

• **Ben Green (1902-14)**. A well-known numismatist and collector from Ohio and Illinois, he cataloged 84 sales comprised mostly of commercial coin material.

• **Geoffrey Adams (1903-06)**. Very little is known of this New York numismatist. He did, however, manage to catalog 30 coin auctions.

• **Thomas Elder (1903-40)**. From the beginning of his professional career, Elder was a rare-coin dealer. The quality of his work and the sheer volume of his sales made him an important fixture in the coin business. He cataloged 292 auctions in 37 years.

• **B. Max Mehl (1906-50)**. Texas numismatist B. Max Mehl started in the coin business as a teenager. He is remembered for his entrepreneurial flair and his *Star Rare Coin Encyclopedia*, published from the early 1920s until the late '30s. He worked briefly for Wayte Raymond in 1912. A salesman, promoter and major player in the coin business most of his adult life, he cataloged 116 sales.



▲ Texas numismatist B. Max Mehl got started in the coin business when he was a teenager and worked briefly for Wayte Raymond in 1912.

• **Wayte Raymond (1908-50)**. A full-time professional coin dealer and trader from his early youth in Connecticut, Raymond is considered one of the most influential rare-coin dealers in American numismatic history. He cataloged 69 sales under his own name, and another 43 for United States Coin Company, in which he was a partner. Raymond later joined forces with James Macalister, and the two conducted 53 sales. (See "J.C. Morgenthau & Company.")

• **William Hesslein (1909-31)**. Hesslein, a veteran of the Union Army, was a mediocre cataloger and supposedly a petty thief. He may or

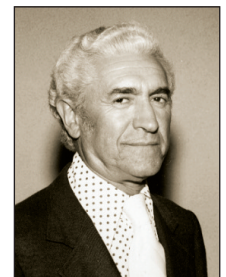
may not have cataloged 144 sales as he claimed.

• **United States Coin Company (1912-18)**. With partner and numismatist Elmer S. Sears, Wayte Raymond cataloged 43 sales under this trade name.

• **Milford H. Bolender (1925-60)**. A World War I veteran, Bolender was a schoolteacher before embarking on a career as a professional coin dealer in Illinois, sometime before 1939. Later, he authored *The United States Silver Dollars from 1794 to 1803*. He cataloged 197 coin auctions of average content and significance.

• **Barney Bluestone (1931-50)**. Bluestone is well known as the cataloger of Albert Grinnell's famous paper money collection. Even today, the eight catalogs he produced for that sale are considered excellent and indispensable references. He cataloged a total of 109 sales.

• **J.C. Morgenthau & Company (1932-45)**. Run by partners Wayte



▲ Wayte Raymond (left), one of the most influential rare coin dealers in American numismatic history, cataloged more than 100 auctions. Abe Kosoff (right), founder of Numismatic Gallery, was a moving force in the coin industry.

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Raymond and James Macallister, the firm conducted 53 sales. Macallister did the cataloging, and Raymond handled the business.

- **Stack's (1935-present).** This New York institution was founded by Morton and Joseph Stack, and later run by Harvey Stack and the late Norman Stack and Ben Stack. Harvey's son Larry joined the firm in 1973. In the heyday of Norman and Ben, the firm conducted 570 coin auctions, and under the Coin Galleries name another 144 mail-order sales. Numismatist John J. Ford Jr. reportedly worked for Morton Stack in the 1930s, and Walter Breen is said to have lent his talents as well. Doug Smith, Denis Loring and Carl Carlson prepared specific catalogs, and today Scott Mitchell and David Alexander are regular catalogers. In 70 years, Stack's has cataloged at least 714 auctions.

- **French's (1939-75).** Based in



Troy, New York, the husband-and-wife team of Charles and Arline French conducted 109 coin auctions. Charles also was a coin dealer, usually trading under his wife's name.

- **Numismatic Gallery (1940-71).** Abe Kosoff, a major force in the coin industry, founded Numismatic Gallery three years after he became a professional dealer. For 10 years, starting in 1944, he was partners with Abner Kreisberg. The firm cataloged 118 sales. ◀

◀ New York dealer, cataloger and auctioneer Hans M.F. Schulman sold this proof 1877 Seated Liberty quarter in December 1973 as part of the Robert Herdegen Sale (Lot 604). Schulman was the grandson of Dutch auctioneer Jacques Schulman and for a time worked with Wayte Raymond, a friend of his father.