

A collectors view on full strike Standing Liberty Quarters and a little history of the series.

The Standing Liberty Quarter was designed by Herman Atkins McNiel in a design competition held in 1915. His design was selected and the first production began in December 1916. All the quarters of the new design were struck in Dec. 1916.

It has been stated that he got his design from the Norman Waite Harris Art Prize of 1909 from the Art Institute of Chicago. Here is one to compare. I don't know if he did or not.

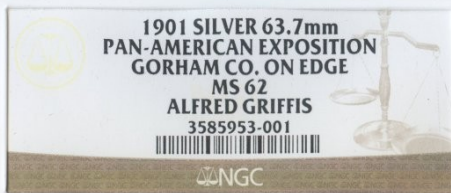


Roty from France also had some similar designs.

One of Herman McNiel's greatest designs was the 1901 Pan-American Award medals. I know of 5 versions 24k Gold, Gold plated Bronze (Gilt), Sterling Silver, Silver plated Bronze, Bronze. Here are Pictures of the ones I have.

Gilt in NGC MS63 holder





Sterling



Bronze

The design is one of the best designs of American coinage along with the Walking Liberty Half of 1916 and the Saint Gaudins Twenty dollar gold coin of 1907.

There are basically 4 design types of Standing Liberty Quarters.

1916 is a design by itself.

1917 P,D,S bare breast types known as Type 1

1917 P,D,S – 1924 P,D,S Chain mail covered breast known as Type 2

1925-1930-S Recessed date known as Type 3

The design proved to be hard to strike up fully because the design was much more intricate than the previous Barber design.

The term “Full Head” soon arose as a marker for a well struck coin but this is somewhat of a misnomer since many times the design is missing many details even with a full head. I choose not to use the “Full Head “ as my guide to a fully struck coin. Many small design features are on the die in most cases that are not fully struck up on the coin. Here is a list of each that I look at.

1. All the rivets on the outer shield.
2. A complete inner shield with both vertical and horizontal lines at the top.
3. The fold line in the gown above the right knee with the 2 buttons at each end.
4. The fold of gown over the right knee.
5. All the toes of miss libertys right foot.
6. The left foot and toes are sometimes missing but are there on certain dates.
7. The ear hole is present. Some years the ear hole is a hole and was changed to a slit.
8. The 3 sprigs of leaves in lady libertys hair.
9. The hair line and continuing down the jaw line down libertys face. This is what makes a “Full Head” along with the ear hole and the three leaves in her hair.
10. On the reverse the top of the right wing of the eagle has the edge feathers. Most do not.
11. On the reverse the breast feathers are there. The 16 and type 1 ‘s have the best breast feathers.

If you find a Standing Liberty Quarter with all of the above attributes, you have an outstanding coin. They are out there but are greatly under appreciated in my opinion.

In my opinion most grading companies do not take strike into consideration as much as I would like on this series. The strike is the most important thing on any coin. The design transfer from the die to the planchet is very important and it’s time that this series the strike gets it’s full due consideration. My opinion of course.

Many great authors and connoisseurs of the Standing Liberty Quarter series have gone before me. The late Jay Cline with his 4 books on the series, Bob Knauss with his 2 books on errors and varieties, and seasoned connoisseur Kelly Kasper who has a great collection of these magnificent quarters. I’m sure there are many other SLQ specialists out there that I don’t know.

This is my attempt to record my thoughts on this series. I am no expert and do not profess to be one. I have loved and admired the Standing Liberty quarter since childhood. They would show up in change back then but seldom had a date on them. I don’t recall ever seeing one with a date as a kid. A quarter was a lot of money at that time in the early 50’s. People saved cents and nickels but not quarters. Common folks might save some change but only coin collectors really saved them and built sets.

A few comments on quality as a kid in the 50's and 60's . Barber coins that circulated were not pretty nor were indian cents, buffalo nickels, mercury dimes, standing liberty quarters, and walking liberty half dollars. Worn out examples is about all we ever saw and never thought of saving them. Silver dollars were available at the bank but for birthdays and Christmas they stayed there. I remember a few old guys that collected coins and had some nice ones but few people ever got to see them. My history teacher in the 7th grade got me interested in coins when he gave me a 1935 buffalo nickel. He was also the school treasurer and dealt with the local bank a lot. I remember him going to the bank and dumping silver dollar bags out on the floor in the vault to search them. He had a quality complete collection in the blue whitman folders.

There were very few coin shops in my area so it was hard to view any nice coins. My mother collected antiques so she had a subscription to Hobby's magazine. In the back of each months magazine there were a few pages of coin dealers. I always looked at their offerings carefully but never ordered anything only wished. I have a collection of the Hobbies magazines from 1935-1965 and it's fun to peruse the ads and their prices. I also had a subscription to Coin World from about 1962-1964. I never bought anything but loved looking and reading the articles each week.

After graduating high school, girls, marriage, work and cars took up all my time and coins took a back seat. I did buy proof and mint sets each year though.

After the kids were raised, a divorce, I again renewed my love of collecting coins. I remember seeing a mint state SLQ and my passion was renewed in the series.

Here is a date analysis and my criteria and some thoughts. I am not a big fan of the Full Head designation as an end all for a great strike. My opinions are my own and in no way reflect on any ones holdings or their choices for their collections. They are all great.

My opinions on the dies. Since the Philadelphia mint made all the dies and shipped them to the branch mints for each year in limited numbers, it is my belief that the branch mints lowered the striking pressure to extend die life and that's why so many years do not have full strikes. That is just my opinion. Some of you with more knowledge may have a better understanding of the cause and I would appreciate any comments.

1916 Mintage 52000

Very poorly struck. Very little detail even on mint state pieces. Extremely hard to find fully struck pieces. Seems like the die was not as strong as it should have been.

1917 Type 1 Mintage 8,740,000

Probably one of the best struck dates of the series. Many virtually full strikes exist. Many have the full breast with the nipple and the full shield and toes along with a full head. The reverse is equally well struck with very nice feathers on the wings and the eagles breast. Most of the nice ones are overpriced due to the mintage and availability. There are many MS65FH and better out there.

1917-D Type 1 Mintage 1,509,200

Another bare breasted design that is very well struck in most cases and has some outstanding examples. Most collectors should have no problem finding a fully struck example for his or her collection. Most well struck examples are overpriced in my opinion due to the availability.

1917-S Type 1 Mintage 1,952,000

This date should also be available fully struck. Since the dies were made in Philadelphia the quality remains high. This is the last of the bare breast coins. Some speculation as to why the chain mail was added and many have different reasons. I'll leave that discussion to others.

1917 Type 2 Mintage 13,888,000

The type 2 is somewhat elusive in a full strike but are out there. They are harder to find than the type 1's and should be priced higher accordingly in my opinion.

1917-D Type 2 Mintage 6,224,400

This year and mint is one that is available with a full head rather easily but hard to find fully struck. There are some really nice ones out there. This date and mint also has the only shattered die in the series known to date. One example (mine) has no less than 64 independent die cracks on it. Amazingly it is also a fully struck coin with a full head. It is in a NGC 63FH slab. I have 5 coins from this die and they show the die deterioration progression. This one makes an interesting one to look for. Here is a pic . of my NGC 63FH.



1917-S Type 2 Mintage 55,520,000

The 1917-S is harder to find than the other two 17's with a full strike. Full heads can be found but fully struck ones are elusive. Expect to pay more for such examples. There are many designated Full Heads but both major grading services that are not even close to being fully struck. That's a shame too. Here is a 63FH with a very good strike as well.



1918 Mintage 14,240,000

The 1918 issue is fairly hard to find with a full strike but many full heads are readily available but a full strike is not. There are some with full strikes out there. It just takes some looking.

1918-D Mintage 7,380,000

The 1918- D is one that is very hard to find fully struck. Full heads are elusive and expensive but one that is fully struck is a rare coin indeed. I have seen less than a hand full in my many years of looking. High priced too.

1918-S Mintage 11,072,000



The 1918-S was poorly struck to begin with so finding a full head is a challenge but finding one with all the outer rivets is rare indeed. I have only seen a hand full with all the outer rivets and some remainder of a full strike. It's very rare if full head and nearly non existent with a full strike. Here is a pic of one of mine that is close to fully struck..

1918/7-S Mintage unknown Some estimate around 3000.

Most researchers agree that only one die was over struck but I think there were two. After close examination of many, I can see differences that can not be explained by the one die theory. There are a hand full of FH designated by the grading services but I do not agree with some and have never seen a fully struck specimen. Very expensive in the FH designation.

1919 Mintage 11,324,000

The 1919 has some magnificent strikes out there. I have seen several fully struck with a full head to boot. Expect to pay a hefty sum but some killer examples are available.

1919-D Mintage 1,944,000

The 1919-D is nowhere the quality of the P minted coin. Hard to find in Full Head and extremely hard in a full strike. Very expensive also.

1919-S Mintage 1,836,000

The 1919-S is hard to find in Full Head and next to impossible to find fully struck. Very expensive also.

1920 Mintage 27,860,000

The 1920 is one that is easy to get in great condition. There are many full heads out there and quite a number of full or almost full strikes.

1920-D Mintage 3,856,400

The 20-D is another that is available in full head but is harder but not impossible to find close to a full strike. The cost will be considerable though.

1920-S Mintage 6,380,000

The 1920-S is very hard to find nice let alone in full head. Costly also. I have never seen a fully struck 20-S that is all there. It would be extremely costly also.

1921 Mintage 1,916,000

According to the J. H. Cline book, in 1921 new master dies were created with the old 21 dies so there are two types of 21's. There are some killer fully struck 21's. If one date was selected for as an example of what a fully struck type 2 should look like, I would pick the 1921. I have a special 1921 that has had several things happen to the die. It has the largest "Eagle Beak" clash of any Eagle Beak clashes known. In order for the eagle beak clash to be seen the dies have to be rotated 10 to 20 degrees so the beak from the reverse die can be seen beside the shield on the obverse. Since this particular 1921 has such a large eagle beak clash the die had to be rotated about 20 degrees. Most eagle beak clashes still have the die rotation when the Obverse and reverse are observed on the coin. This coin does not. That means that before this coin was struck, the clashed dies were removed from the coin press and both dies were polished to remove the clash marks. The dies were then put back in the coin press in the proper orientation and this coin was struck. This is known since no die rotation is present on this coin but some clash marks not polished out remain on both the obverse and reverse. Also the dies used to strike this coin must have been very new since the strike is full with a full head also. This makes this coin quite rare. It is the only "Eagle Beak" 1921 known to date. I have added pictures of the coin. Both the Obverse and Reverse below. It is in a PCGS MS 63FH holder. It is the best struck SLQ I have ever seen and makes me wish all of the series had strikes like this one does.



1921 Obverse



1921 Reverse

Note all the die scratches from trying to remove the clash marks. From the eagles head to the star is a clash from the shield on the obverse.

1923 Mintage 9,716,000

The 1923 is another year that can be had with a full head and close to a full strike. Many nice examples are out there for a reasonable price.

1923-S Mintage 1,360,000

The 1923-S is a key date and is expensive. One with a full head is very hard to find and a person could look for a very long time to find one with a full strike if ever. It would cost quite a bit too.

1924 Mintage 10,920,000

A 1924 can be had with a full head and not cost a lot. A fully struck 1924 is next to impossible to find. I have never seen a fully struck 24.

1924-D Mintage 3,112,000

Full heads are super hard to find and I have never seen a fully struck 24-D but have seen some that are close.

1924-S Mintage 2,860,000

The highest graded one is a 66FH and not a full strike. Close to a full strike but not quite. There should be one out there somewhere.

1925 Mintage 12,800,000

First year for the recessed date variety four. The date is recessed into the pedestal so it wouldn't wear off so quickly. There are full heads available and I have not seen a fully struck 25. I think that when the dies were redone that some of the details were weak or not on the master die to begin with.

1926 Mintage 11,316,000

Full heads exist and have seen some that are close to fully struck but I have not seen one that meets all the fully struck criteria I consider.

1926-D Mintage 1,716,000

I have never seen a fully struck one with a full head also.

1926-S Mintage 2,700,000

I have never seen a fully struck one with a full head but I have one with all the rivets visible on the outer shield. Weak but there. On the next page.

One of the better strikes I've seen for a 26-S.



1927 Mintage 11,912,000

There are full heads of this date but full strikes are almost non existent. I have never seen one and don't think the dies had the details to start with. Maybe someone out there has.

1927-D Mintage 960,000

Same as the 1927. Never seen a fully struck 1927-D. I doubt if one exists. A full head maybe but not a fully struck one.

1927-S Mintage 396,000

Many circulated ones and almost none in mint state. A hand full certified full head but none fully struck as intended .

1928 Mintage 6,336,000

The 1928 is an exception to the late 20's SLQ's There are full heads and even a couple fully struck examples.

1928-D Mintage 1,627,600

There are a couple full heads and even a couple of almost fully struck ones out there. High dollars for them though. Here is mine with a nice strike but not a full head. PCGS 65



1928-S Mintage 2,644,000

Another San Francisco poorly struck example. Not even close to a full strike exists that I am aware of. If one does exist it would be very pricey.

1929 Mintage 11,140,000

Some full heads exist but none with a full strike. I doubt if the dies ever had the details to produce a full strike.

1929-D Mintage 1,358,000

Some full heads are out there and maybe a hand full close to a full strike.

1929-S Mintage 1,764,000

None with a full strike have ever surfaced that I know of. Don't confuse full heads with a full strike. Some folks do.

1930 Mintage 5,632,000

I have seen several full head examples but none were close to a full strike. Here is a nice one of mine in PCGS 64FH. Even the abraded shield variety.



1930-S Mintage 1,556,000

There are some full heads out there but I have never seen a fully struck 30-S. I'm pretty sure the dies or master die didn't have the details on them to begin with.

There are a couple of 30-S varieties you might look for. There are two different retained cud dates on the 30-S coins. They have a die break around the date. Most are in VG-EF condition. I own the only one of each variety in mint state. One is PCGS MS63 and the other is PCGS MS64. Here are pictures of both with an enlargement of the cud dates.

Type 1



Type 2



Well that's it for the series. I hope some of you might gain some knowledge from this or find it interesting reading.

All of the pictures are part of my collection and belong to no one else. For those of you who read all of this, Thank You and all comments will be appreciated.

Gary L. Hamm