

EMPIRE NUMISMATICS



US PEACE SILVER DOLLAR 1921-1935

Diameter: 1-1/2" (38.1 mm)

Weight: 412.5 grains (26.73 grams)

Composition: 90% silver - 10% copper

Designer: Anthony De Francisci

Engraver: George T. Morgan

Mint Marks: Philadelphia (none);
Denver (D); San Francisco (S); found left
of eagle's wing tip on reverse

Obverse: Liberty facing left wearing a
crown of ray with LIBERTY above head
with date below.

Motto: IN GOD WE TRUST left and right
of neck. Border plain.

Reverse: Eagle holding an olive branch
perched on a mountain crag inscribed
PEACE with UNITED STATES OF
AMERICA and motto E PLURIBUS
UNUM in two lines above.

Denomination: ONE DOLLAR on either
side of eagle with rays emanating from
lower right. Border plain. Edge: Reeded

America's first coin to commemorate peace owes its existence to Farran Zerbe, veteran numismatist, Historian of the American Numismatic Association (ANA) and founder of the Chase Manhattan Bank Money Museum. At the 1920 Chicago ANA Convention, Zerbe presented a paper entitled "Commemorate the Peace with a Coin for Circulation" which proposed a new coin (Half Dollar or Dollar) commemorating the end of World War I, "the war to end all wars".

After a failure to act on the part of Congress, the coin was authorized under provisions of the Pittman Act of 1918. The Commission of Fine Arts held a contest, inviting eight of America's leading sculptors to submit designs. The winner was a young Italian immigrant, Anthony DeFrancisci, who used his 23 year old bride as a basis for his portrayal of Liberty. He successfully captured the youth and vitality of the American spirit. After several revisions, the approved design for the reverse featured a powerful rendition of a bald eagle perched on a mountain crag, holding an olive branch facing rays emanating from the lower right, symbolizing the dawn of a new era.

Production began on December 26, 1921 and by year's end 1,006,473 coins were struck. It quickly became apparent that the high relief of the original design was not practical. To minimize rapid die breakage, striking pressure was lowered resulting in weakly struck specimens lacking sharpness in the details at the coin's center.

George Morgan flattened the coin's relief to make mass production practical, beginning with the 1922 issues. The lower relief design continued until the coin's demise in 1935. It is ironic that only four short years after the discontinuance of America's coin commemorating peace that World War II would erupt in Europe.

Because this is a short series (24 coins in all) many collectors strive to assemble complete date and mint sets. Top quality fully struck specimens are illusive but those determined individuals who succeed are rewarded with one of the most beautiful and impressive sets in our rich numismatic history.

