

EMPIRE NUMISMATICS



US \$2.50 LIBERTY HEAD QUARTER EAGLE 1840-1907

Diameter: 17/24" (18 mm)

Weight: 64.5 grains (4.18 grams)

Composition: 90% gold - 10% copper

Designer: Christian Gobrecht

Engraver: Charles E. Barber

Mint Marks: Philadelphia (none);
Charlotte (C); Dahlonega (D); San
Francisco (S); New Orleans (O); found
on the reverse under eagle)

Obverse: Liberty head facing left
wearing a coronet inscribed LIBERTY.
Date (below), 13 stars (surrounding)
around beaded border.

Reverse: Spread eagle holding 3
arrows in left claw and an olive branch
in right. UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
and denomination 2 1/2 D. around
beaded border.

Edge: Reed

Christian Gobrecht's Coronet Liberty Head Quarter Eagle (\$2.50 Gold) stands alone as the longest running unaltered design in the history of U.S. coinage.

Gobrecht was strongly influenced by the Neoclassic style popular during this period. Because they felt modern fashions changed too frequently, Neoclassical artists froze their subjects in the clothing and style of Ancient Greek sculptors.

Gobrecht's new design for the \$2.50 gold coin featured a classically styled head of Liberty, with hair in a bun secured by a string of beads, wearing a coronet inscribed with LIBERTY. The reverse used a spread eagle design similar to that used since 1807 (Gobrecht extended the wingspan rim to rim).

This 68 year long series is extremely challenging to collectors and contains many classic rarities. One of the most famous is the 1848 "CAL." which was made from 230 ounces of native California gold shipped east in 1848. From this, 1389 quarter eagles were minted, distinguished by the abbreviation CAL. stamped into the reverse die above the eagle's head. Many collectors consider this to be the 1st U.S. commemorative coin, predating the Columbian Exposition Half Dollar by 44 years.

The design remained in uninterrupted production right through 1907 when it was replaced by Bela Lyon Pratt's incuse engraved Indian Head design. Of the surviving specimens, many fell victim to the massive gold recalls of the 1930's and were lost forever to the melting pot. America "came of age" during the reign of Gobrecht's Liberty motif. We grew from a rugged frontier nation to a modern industrialized world leader. Whether you have the \$2.50, \$5 or \$10 (ora set of all three), the Gobrecht Coronet

- a classic work of American art wrought in gold.

