

# EMPIRE NUMISMATICS



## US WALKING LIBERTY HALF DOLLAR 1916-1947

**Diameter:** 1-3/16" (30.61 mm)

**Weight:** 192.9 grains (12.5 grams)

**Composition:** 90% silver - 10% copper

**Designer:** Adolph Alexander Weinman

**Engraver:** Charles E. Barber

**Mint Marks:** Philadelphia (none);  
Denver (D); San Francisco (S); 1916-17:  
obverse below IN GOD WE TRUST; 1917-  
47: reverse lower left

**Obverse:** Full length Liberty facing left  
draped in the American flag striding  
toward a rising sun holding branches  
of oak and laurel in her left arm, right  
arm outstretched. Date (below) and  
LIBERTY (above) around plain border.

**Motto :** IN GOD WE TRUST in field to  
the right

**Reverse:** Eagle with unfolded wings  
perched on a mountain ledge. UNITED  
STATES OF AMERICA (above) and  
denomination HALF DOLLAR (below)  
around plain border. Motto E  
PLURIBUS UNUM in the field to the left.  
Edge: Reeded

1916 was a period of major transition in the United States. Society was shifting from rural to urban - horse and buggy to "horseless carriage" - isolationist to world power.

Our coinage was also going through dramatic changes. The classic Indian Cent and Liberty Nickel as well as all four gold coins (Liberty Head - \$2.50, \$5.00, \$10.00 & \$20) had already been replaced. The curtain was about to come down on the Barber Dime, Quarter and Half Dollar

Satisfied with the artistic merits of the previous six design changes, Mint Director Robert W. Woolley once again turned to "outside" talent in search of fresh, new ideas. One of those he contacted was noted sculptor, Adolph Alexander Weinman.

Born in Germany, Weinman came to this country in 1880 at the age of 10. He sharpened his skills as a student of the famous Augustus St. Gaudens. By 1915, he had become one of the nation's most acclaimed sculptors. Weinman's designs were the winning entries for two of the three new coins (the "Mercury" Dime and the Walking Liberty Half Dollar).

The Walking Liberty Half features a full length portrayal of Liberty draped in the American flag, boldly striding toward the dawn of a new day, holding branches of oak and laurel (said to stand for civilian and military honors). The reverse displays a majestic eagle with wings unfolded in a defiant and powerful stance. These brave patriotic theme reflected the nation's state of mind during these troubled times.

Considered by many to be among the most beautiful of all U.S. silver coins, the Walking Liberty Half met with immediate acclaim and was extremely popular. In fact, in 1986 when The U.S. Mint was searching for a design for the new 1 ounce silver "eagle" bullion coin Weinman's 70 year old Walking Liberty was again the winner

