

History of Central States

Part 5 1947-1948

by W.Ray Lockwood

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Although plans were made to hold the 1943 Central States convention in Indianapolis, the Hoosier capital would wait until 1947 to play host to CSNS. World War II disrupted the plans of many organizations. The officers elected in 1942 remained in office during the war. President Ignatius T. Kopicki announced at the May 17, 1946, meeting of the Milwaukee Numismatic Society that Central States would "resume activities that were curtailed during the war with a meeting in Indianapolis in April, 1947."

Actually, the Indianapolis CSNS convention took place May 2-4. Friday was a half-day devoted to registration, dealer and exhibitor set-up and a general "get-together." Saturday morning was delegated to the Society business meeting. The highlight of Saturday afternoon (and possible of the whole convention) was a tour and ride around the famous Indianapolis Speedway. Wilbur Shaw, speedway president and three-time Indy race winner, personally invited Central States attendees to the track, to tour the garages and visit with drivers who were already practicing for the big 500 mile race later in May.

The banquet was held at 6 p.m. on Saturday, May 3, in the Riley Room of the convention hotel, the famous Claypool in downtown Indianapolis. Part 1 of the auction followed the banquet with Frank Katen as auctioneer. Part 2 was held on Sunday. In general, good prices prevailed with some sensational prices realized on commemorative halves. Ray Fiscus, president of the host Indianapolis Coin Club, served as convention chairman. Lee Long, local coin dealer, borrowed display cases from the Cincinnati club, and Wilson Pollard, another Indy dealer and amateur magician, served as publicity chairman.

Reports on the Indianapolis convention were generally positive. Approximately 125 persons registered attendance which was down considerably from the record-setting 350 who attended the 1941 Milwaukee show. At the June, 1947, meeting of the Detroit Coin Club, a Mr. Reynolds commented favorably on the large exhibit area and noted that Russell Stehfest, "one of our members," had been elected CSNS president. Chicago Coin Club and CSNS president, I. T. Kopicki, gave a glowing convention report to his fellow Chicagoans. The Stack's Award, for numismatic activity promoting the hobby, was awarded to the Milwaukee Numismatic Society. Dayton, Ohio, was selected for the 1948 convention.

Young and personable James Kelly, Dayton, Ohio, dealer and auctioneer, chaired the 1948 CSNS convention in Dayton, April 16-18, at the Van Cleve Hotel. The Dayton Coin Club and Ohio State Numismatic Association were co-hosts. Due to the Ohio location, a larger than usual attendance was anticipated with Western New York and Pennsylvania mentioned.

The March, 1948, issue of The Numismatic Scrapbook Magazine contained an article about the upcoming Dayton convention and included this fascinating comment about women in numismatics: "While the numbers of lady numismatists is on the increase, most of the wives attending conventions are just mildly interested, therefore a special entertainment has been set up for the ladies."

The Dayton convention was a huge success from all viewpoints: attendance (250), excellent entertainment, and fine weather. The first convention day, Friday, April 16, featured the first part of a three-session auction. James Kelly called his own auction. There was spirited bidding on U. S. rolls. On Friday evening, a reception was held with Sol Kaplan of Cincinnati as MC followed by a theater entertainment for the ladies. The bourse and exhibit areas "hummed with activity until well past midnight!"

On Saturday, the exhibits were opened to the public. Dayton newspapers were very generous with stories and photos resulting in increased attendance of townspeople. The chief attraction of the exhibit area was the McDermott 1913 Liberty Head Nickel. Also on Saturday, "the visiting ladies indulged in the favorite pastime of the fair sex: doing the department stores!"

The Saturday evening banquet was preceded by a cocktail party given by James Kelly. Manhattans and caviar provided an ideal curtain raiser to the banquet. 142 persons attended the affair which featured a strolling accordionist/singer and keynote address by Lloyd Gettys, ANA president.

Sunday morning witnessed a buffet-style breakfast for officers of CSNS and OSNA followed by the annual Central States business meeting. President Russell Stehfest of Detroit chaired the meeting which featured the adoption of a by-law amendment. This changed the office of secretary-treasurer from an appointive to an elective office for a term of two years. All other officers and governors retained their one-year terms. The slate of officers recommended by the nominating committee were duly elected: President Richard S. Yeoman of Racine, WI ("Red Book" author), Vice President Lillard W. Culver of Milwaukee, and Secretary-Treasurer Arthur Rutz of Gary, IN.

Attendance at the Dayton convention included many juniors. Dozens of boys between 12 and 16 years of age were noted in the bourse area going through the 5 to 25-cent trays. Several dealers gave the boys extra coins gratis after consummating big deals of 50-cents or more!

The Stack's Award was again presented to the Milwaukee Numismatic Society for its outstanding activities to promote the hobby. The invitation of the Detroit Coin Club to hold the 1949 CSNS convention in their city was accepted.

The Motor City convention and the 1950 event in Springfield, Illinois, with the subjects of the next installment of our on-going Central States history.