

RNA News

The Official Journal of the Rochester Numismatic Association

Summer 2026



ATJEH – 1873 EN 1874

From the RNA Collection

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RNA

One of America's Oldest
Local Coin Club,
Established January 1912

Memberships

American Numismatic Association
Branch #2, Life Club #8
American Numismatic Society
Royal Canadian Numismatic
Association
Token and Medal Society

Meetings

Rochester Museum
& Science Center,
Eisenhart Auditorium

Officers

Andrew Geoghan, President
Joe McMahon , VP
Dennis DeYoung, Treasurer
Dennis DeYoung, Secretary
John Zabel, Curator

Directors

David Gottfried [2024-2027]
Tim Flaven [2024-2027]
Sheryl Zabel [2025-2028]
Robert Burlingham [2025-2028]
Chip Scoppa [2026-2029]
Jason Childers [2026-2029]

Historian

Dennis DeYoung

RNA News

Sheryl Zabel, Editor
John Zabel, Production

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P.O. Box 10056
Rochester, NY 14610-0056

RochesterNumismaticAssociation.org

RNA Committees

RNA Bylaws designate several committees appointed by the President and Board of Directors.
Below are the current active committees:

Membership

Jason Childers, Chair
Scott Annechino
David Gottfried
Dennis DeYoung

Endowment

John Zabel, Chair [RNA Curator]
Dennis DeYoung [Treasurer, Ex-Officio]
Steve Eisinger
Jason Childers

Auditing

Kerri Klajbor, Chair
Dennis DeYoung
John Lighthouse

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secretary@rochesternumismaticassociation.org
librarian@rochesternumismaticassociation.org
editor@rochesternumismaticassociation.org

Regular **RNA Meetings** are held from September to June at 7:30 p.m. on the second and fourth Wednesdays of the month. (See the Calendar on the website for schedule exceptions at Thanksgiving and Christmas.)

Meetings take place in the **Eisenhart Auditorium** of the **Rochester Museum & Science Center** located at **657 East Avenue, Rochester, NY**. The Auditorium is the glass front building behind the Museum. Enter through the main entrance and turn left to go up the ramp to the ballroom.

Members and visitors who cannot attend in person are welcome to join the live Zoom stream!



The John Jay Pittman Memorial Library

The club's numismatic library is available at every regular meeting.
Members can select from 600+ titles with new ones added regularly.

See the RNA Librarian to sign for and borrow material.

A complete, searchable library inventory is available on the RNA website.



From Our President

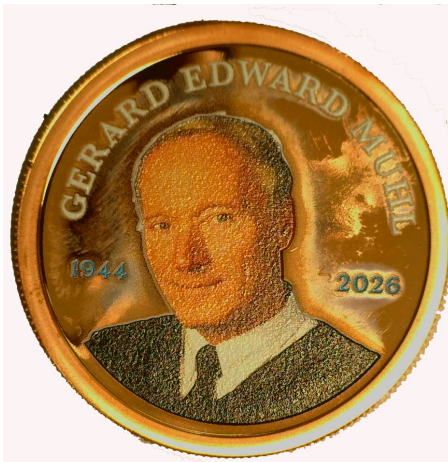
As we begin the 115th year of the Rochester Numismatic Association, I'm full of excitement. I'm grateful, honored, and privileged to be accepted into the officer group once again; this time to serve as the club president. At this time, I'd like to introduce myself to the club.

Let me bring you in on a little secret . . . I'm not a typical coin collector. I do not have a complete set of any coin series – not even close. Nor am I actively building a set. I don't often have coins to share during the exhibits & displays portion of our meetings. I haven't memorized the key dates for any series. I don't even buy coins all that often.

Now that I've revealed this, you may be wondering why I have been involved with the RNA as the treasurer for two years and the vice president for a year and why would I continue onward. Well, you see, I'm a coin admirer. I enjoy coins as a work of art, as a piece of history, as a connection to the past, as a connection to other nations across the world, as an item to wonder about.

I enjoy a walk through a coin show or a visit to a coin shop with the anticipation that I will find something that I have never seen before. I enjoy the coins shared by the club members during our exhibits & displays portions of the meetings. I genuinely enjoy a coin when a fellow RNA member offers to share a view of what they have. So, please share frequently.

~ Andrew Geoghan, President - RNA



Gerry Muhl commemorative medal issued after his death

Photo by John Zabel

The RNA Summer Picnic

The summer picnic will be held on Sunday, August 23rd at the Whitebrook Nature Area located on Aldrich Rd. in the town of Perinton.

The cost of the picnic is \$15 per person with children under twelve free. The fee covers the food supplied by the club and the cost of the shelter.

The picnic starts around noon with a board meeting. All members are invited to listen in. Food will be served after 1:00.

Bring a "White Elephant" for an auction after the meal. The "Elephant" should preferably be wrapped so no one knows what it is. It could be anything the you feel would intrigue the buyer.

Steve Eisenger will plan a hike for those that would like to get some good exercise.

What is a Piedfort?

by Dennis DeYoung

Piedfort coins are exceptionally thick, heavy collector's items, typically double the thickness and weight of standard-issue coins while maintaining the same diameter. Originating in 12th-century, the word comes from French *pied* (foot) + *fort* (strong/heavy), literally meaning "heavy foot" and idiomatically "heavy weight." The modern English form **piedfort** appears in numismatic literature and reference works, although "**piefort**" (without the 'd') is a common variant or misspelling that you may also see in catalogs and listings.

They are struck as proofs, often for collectors, dignitaries, or as early trial patterns, featuring higher metal content and superior craftsmanship. Piedforts are not just limited to silver; they

can be struck in various precious metals, including gold. While The Royal Mint is today one of the most prolific issuers of commemorative piedforts, they are far from the only mint producing them. The Monnaie de Paris (France) pioneered modern collector piedforts in the 1890s and continues to issue them. Other notable producers include the Perth Mint (Australia), known for its impressive 2 oz silver piedforts, and the China Mint, which has issued piedfort Pandas and Lunar coins since 1988. Historically, standout examples include the rare Amsterdam Piedfort Ducaton of 1672 pictured here.



Photo: OldCurrencyExchange.com

Key Features and Details:

Term Origin: Derived from the French "*pied fort*," meaning "heavy foot" or "heavy measure".

Historical origin: The practice dates back to medieval Europe – first in 12th-century France, later spreading to Great Britain.

Physical characteristics: They are usually twice as thick as normal coins; noticeably heavier while retaining the same diameter.

Metal and finish: Often struck in precious metals and finished to proof standards; superior strike and surface quality are common.

Production purpose: Originally created as trial strikes, modern piedforts are produced for collectors and high-end presentations, not for general circulation.

Rarity and value: Due to low mintages, higher precious metal content, and superior quality, they are highly valued by collectors.



The topic came up at an RNA meeting recently when a member showed a set of three piedfort RNA Medals (copper, bronze, and silver) struck to celebrate the club's 75th anniversary. They had just been freshly slabbed by NGC as Proof 65, 66, and 67. In addition, at least a couple of heavy silver piedforts exist of the A. A. Kolb "Lady Germania" medal that the RNA uses as it's Speaker's Medal. Perhaps there are more RNA piedforts out there in private hands?



DUES FOR THE
2026-2027
NUMISMATIC YEAR
ARE DUE!





MAIL A CHECK
Send your check to:
Rochester Numismatic Association
PO Box 10056
Rochester, NY 14610-0056



SEE THE TREASURER
Pay in person at our
Summer Picnic
or at our
next meeting.



PAY ONLINE
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to pay securely
online.

★ THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING OUR CLUB AND KEEPING THE HOBBY STRONG! ★

From the RNA Collection...

1873-1874 William III of the Netherlands

RNA Collection #895 (Box 22a)



The RNA Collection contains a commemorative medal bearing the portrait of **King William III of the Netherlands** (1817–1890). William III succeeded his father, King William II, in 1849 and reigned as King of the Netherlands and Grand Duke of Luxembourg until his death in 1890. His 41-year reign was one of the longest in Dutch history. William was succeeded by his daughter, Wilhelmina, who became queen at age 18 after an 8-year regency led by her mother, Queen Emma.

The medal in the RNA Collection is known as the **Aceh Medal** (Dutch: *Atjeh-medaille*), named for the military campaigns in Aceh, on the island of Sumatra, in the Dutch East Indies. The obverse features the profile of William III with the inscription:

Willem III Koning der Nederlanden G.H.V.L.

The initials **G.H.V.L.** indicate his title as **Grand Duke of Luxembourg**. The artist's initials, "J.E." for J. Elion, appear beneath the king's neck.

The reverse displays a wreath of oak and orange branches surrounding the inscription:

ATJEH – 1873 EN 1874



Photos from the RNA Website. See: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aceh_Medal.

Medal Facts

- **Authorized:** Royal Decree No. 9, May 12, 1874
- **Awarded for:** Service during the First Aceh Expedition and the first six months of the Second Aceh Expedition

- **Composition:** Gold-gilt plating over bronze **made from cannons captured at the Kraton (palace) of Aceh!!!**
- **Physical:** Diameter 36 mm, Weight 27 grams
- **Ribbon:** Originally dark orange; later changed to Nassau blue

Recipients of the Aceh Medal were also entitled to receive the **Expedition Cross** with the *Atjeh 1873–1874* clasp. This was unusual, as Dutch regulations generally limited awards to a single decoration for the same campaign.

Today, examples of the Aceh Medal commonly sell in the collector market for approximately **\$75–\$200 USD (€70–€180)**, depending on condition, provenance, and whether the original ribbon is present.



A Personal Journey to the Macdonough Medal — and the Importance of Authenticity

by Dennis DeYoung

Growing up with strong ties to the Lake Champlain region, I have always felt a connection to the history of the War of 1812. Many summers were spent at our family cottage on North Hero Island, surrounded by waters that once witnessed one of the most important naval engagements in American history. Because of that connection, I began considering the purchase of a Thomas Macdonough medal, a numismatic tribute to the commander whose victory at the Battle of Lake Champlain helped alter the course of the war.

Commemorating Macdonough's achievement, Congress authorized a gold medal to honor his leadership following the American victory over the British fleet on Lake Champlain. Beyond their historical significance, these highly desirable bronze medals are remarkable works of nineteenth-century medallic art, produced from dies engraved by some of the finest artisans associated with the United States Mint. Originally struck by the U.S. Mint around 1822, there are also some slightly older, official restrikes.





Image by NGC – a restrike (Julian-NA-15) produced by the U.S. Mint long after the initial examples were struck around 1822.

Large-format medals from the 19th century are beautiful works created by engravers who often cut directly into the die. As I began researching the medal before making a potential purchase, I also discovered an unexpected aspect of the story: electrotypes. What initially seemed like a straightforward historical acquisition quickly became a lesson in counterfeit detection and numismatic due diligence.

An electrotype is not a traditional cast counterfeit. They are created through a process invented in Russia in 1838; whereby thin metallic shells are produced from impressions of an original medal. A wax impression coated with graphite or metallic powder would be electroplated until a thin metal shell formed. Separate shells for the obverse and reverse were often made for display in museums. Upon deaccession, some were acquired by counterfeiters who joined the sides together with a filling of a heavier metal such as lead to create the appearance and feel of a solid piece.

The challenge for collectors is that some electrotypes can be remarkably convincing. It takes a close examination to reveal the subtle weaknesses in the design. Details on the reverse of this medal will lack the sharpness found on authentic examples, and textured elements such as the clouds will appear softer and less distinct.

The most decisive evidence, however, appears on the edge. Because electrotypes are formed from two shells joined together, they often display a fine seam running around the circumference. This seam is one of the classic warning signs of an electrotype and serves as a strong indication that the piece is not an original Mint product. Additional tests, such as measuring weight and specific gravity, can also reveal discrepancies caused by a copper shell surrounding a lead-filled interior.

For me, learning about these electrotypes has only increased my appreciation for the Macdonough medal. The research transformed what began as a nostalgic pursuit tied to childhood memories on Lake Champlain into a deeper exploration of history, craftsmanship,

and authentication. The story of the medal is not only about Macdonough's victory but also about the responsibilities of modern collectors who seek to preserve and understand the objects that connect us to the past.

Whether I ultimately purchase a Macdonough medal or not, the process has reinforced an important principle familiar to every collector: understanding an item's history is just as important as owning it. In the case of the Macdonough medal, that history includes both the heroism commemorated by the medal and the fascinating challenge of distinguishing genuine pieces from the highly deceptive electrotypes that have circulated for more than a century.

RNA Online Resources



www.rochesternumismaticassociation.org

www.facebook.com/groups/21533643632

@RocCoinClub

Social Media Chair: David Gottfried

Webmaster: John Zabel

Upcoming RNA Events

RNA Summer Picnic.....August 23
RNA First Fall MeetingSeptember 9
RNA Coin Show..... Oct. 31—Nov. 1
RNA Annual Banquet..... TBD (*October*)