
**Hidden Initials by the Early American Engravers Guild:
A Novel Approach to the Authentication and Attribution of Silver Oval
George Washington Indian Peace Medals**

by
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Silver Oval George Washington Indian Peace Medals

Virtually all we know to date about the silver oval Indian Peace Medals distributed during George Washington's administration can be attributed to the writings of a few talented and passionate numismatists. Some of these individuals include (in no particular order): Bauman L. Belden, Francis P. Prucha, George Fuld, John Kraljevich, Russell Rulau, Anthony Terranova, Michael Hodder, and Barry Tayman. The objective of this article is to shed some light on a plausible method of authentication of this challenging series through attribution.

During George Washington's administration, Peace Medals were an important part of the United States Federal Government's relationship with Native Americans. They were often presented to tribal leaders to secure treaties and cement political loyalties. The Native Americans loved ceremony and formality in the presentation of medals. The large silver oval, hand-engraved Washington medals dated 1789, 1792, 1793, and 1795, were produced in three sizes with the largest typically reserved for the principal chief or "great-medal chief." Each medal was manufactured using two thin sheets of silver (one dedicated to the obverse and one to the reverse) joined together by a band of flattened silver wire fashioned with a loop at the top for suspension. Due to their unique construction and hand-engraving by Philadelphia-area silversmiths, the discernment of authenticity has traditionally relied upon the quality of craftsmanship and/or absolute, unequivocal pedigrees. Counterfeiting has been and continues to be an issue with these silver oval medals.

In 2011, the late George Fuld conducted a census of all authentic and "questionable" silver oval Washington peace medals and located 42 specimens.¹ Fuld went on to guess that a total of 500 oval medals were initially produced with only about 50 genuine medals still in existence. He recognized only about 10% of the extant genuine specimens in the fortunate hands of one or two private collectors, and the rest residing with the American Numismatic Society, various historical societies, museums, and the Public Archives of Canada.

One of the earliest and most authoritative books on Indian Peace Medals by Bauman Belded distinguished nine different silver oval Washington Peace Medal designs (or "plates").² Belden's classification of these varieties is still widely used today. It is unclear who designed these medals, but certainly, the designer realized that the United States' fledgling mint could not strike a medal or coin larger than a silver dollar. Local Philadelphia artists hired by the U.S. Mint employed similar designs dictated by the Quartermaster General, Thomas Mifflin of Philadelphia.

The obverse design is reminiscent of the reverse of the *Happy While United* Indian Peace Medal engraved by Robert Scot in Williamsburg or Richmond in 1780 (Fig. 1). It depicts an American Indian and an Anglo-American smoking a calumet, a ceremonial smoking pipe. Philadelphia engraver James Trenchard's 1791 *Mico Chlucco the Long Warrior* engraving (Fig. 2)

¹ George J. Fuld, "Washington Oval Peace Medals," in George J. Fuld (ed.), *Peace Medals: Negotiating Peace in Early America* (Tulsa, OK): XXX

² Bauman L. Belden, *Indian Peace Medals Issued in the United States 1789-1889* (New York, 1927)

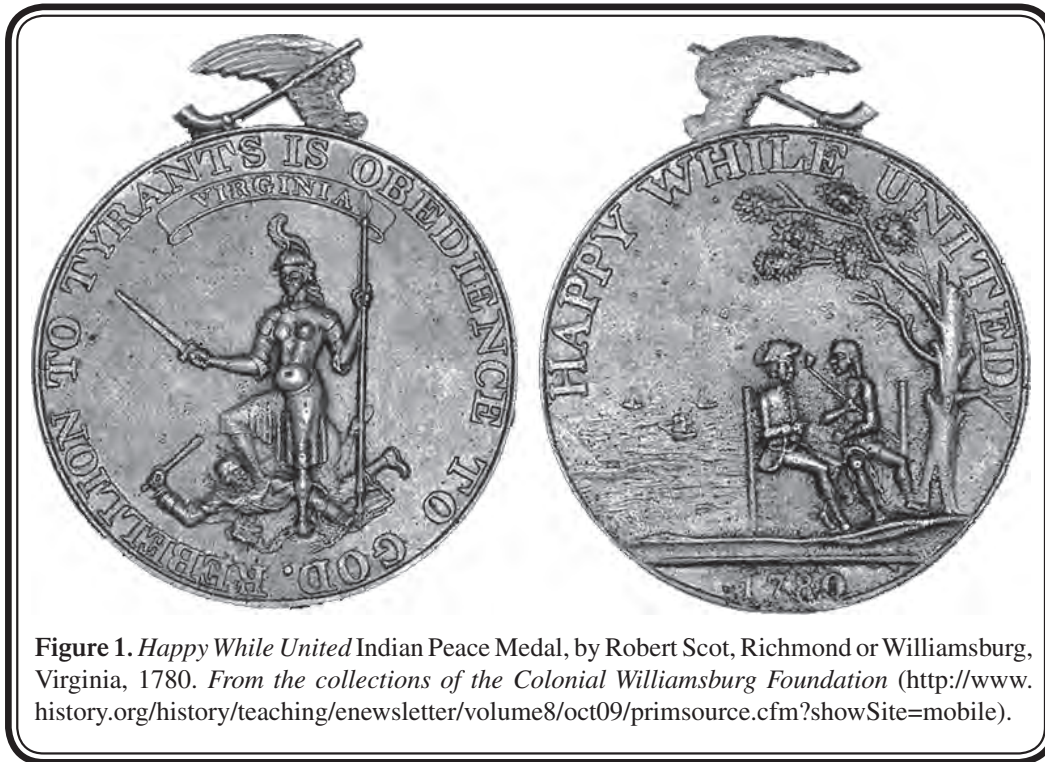


Figure 1. *Happy While United* Indian Peace Medal, by Robert Scot, Richmond or Williamsburg, Virginia, 1780. From the collections of the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation (<http://www.history.org/history/teaching/enewsletter/volume8/oct09/primsourceshowSite=mobile>).

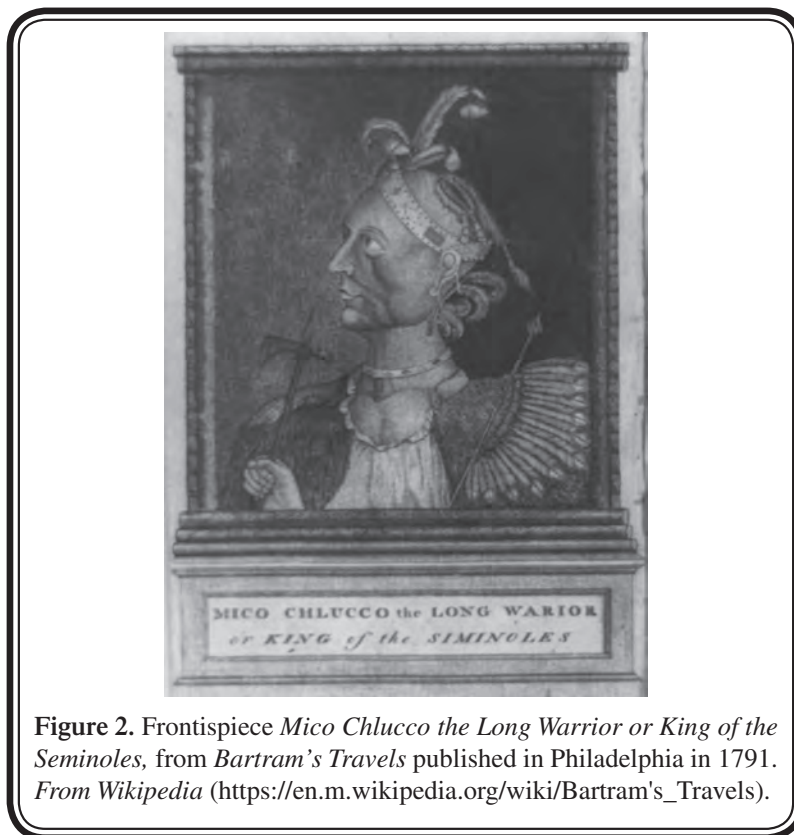


Figure 2. Frontispiece *Mico Chlucco the Long Warrior or King of the Seminoles*, from *Bartram's Travels* published in Philadelphia in 1791. From Wikipedia (https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bartram's_Travels).

published in 1791 possesses nearly identical styling of the Indian headdress feathers seen on these oval medals. Lastly, and perhaps most interesting, the oval shape of the medals, suggestive of a tortoise shell, combined with the inclusion of a tree strongly alludes to the Oneida tribe's (of upstate New York) Haudenosaunee Creation Story. In this story, the great turtle of the earth had a tree grow from its back, and the earth grew to become North America, the Turtle Island. This exact design can be found on a silver gorget engraved by Peter Getz, arguably the first employee of the Federal Mint, (Fig. 3). Getz was a young silversmith from Lancaster, PA (65 miles west of Philadelphia) who was hired by the Pennsylvania U.S. Senator Robert Morris in late 1791 to engrave to his specifications "sample coins" (i.e., patterns) for the U.S. Mint. According to Stack's, Getz formally applied for a job at the U.S. Mint in the summer of 1792.³ We assume that Getz used the motif found on the oval Washington medals for his gorget or vice versa.

The reverse design on the Washington silver oval medals bears

the arms of the United States taken from the Great Seal design stunningly executed by James Trenchard for the September 1786 issue of *Columbian Magazine* (Fig. 4). Notice the randomly placed stars and clouds forming an arc with rays of glory stretching upward and outward. The outlines of the shield and eagle were engraved first on the oval medals. These were followed by details of the feathers, internal shield lines, the banner and motto E PLURIBUS UNUM, and lastly the horizontal lines behind the eagle's head along with the clouds and the rays of glory.

To date, no Mint records have been located directly linking any Philadelphia artists to these silver oval medals. Only Joseph Richardson, Jr., with his signature JR hallmark has been confirmed to have engraved some of the silver oval medals. Some believe the few known silver oval medals hallmarked IR are also Richardson's although his father used the same hallmark



Figure 3. Oval engraved American trade silver gorget by Peter Getz with tree of life atop turtle's back. Hallmarked "PG" in large block letters. *From the collection of John Armiger. Sold by Cowan's Auctions March 10, 2005* (<http://www.cowanauctions.com/auctions/item.aspx?ItemId=21071>).

³ Stack's Auction Catalog (November 7, 2006), lot 2024 (<http://legacy.stacks.com/Lot/ItemDetail/118309>).

until his death in 1784. Instead, we postulate that the IR hallmark may actually be a poorly stamped TR, and therefore names Trenchard. It is widely believed that Richardson worked on the large-size Chief Red Jacket silver oval medal dated 1792, despite the lack of a hallmark (Fig. 8, below). Only two other silver oval 1792 medals are known with hallmarks, both of JW (Figs. 10 and 11, below). This hallmark is believed to represent the initials of the first American etcher,⁴ and first Engraver, Draughtsman, and Die-Sinker of the U.S. Mint, Joseph Wright, Jr.⁵ The 1792 medals, particularly the small size, are the rarest of the silver oval medals. For subsequent issues, government archives reveal a delivery of at least 68 medals dated 1793 (50 hallmarked JR and 18 with JL) and 114 oval medals dated 1795. It has been noted that most of the 1793 and 1795 medals were engraved by Richardson. The Chief Red Jacket medal and the later medals engraved by Richardson are superior in engraving artistry to other silver oval medals known. As we discuss and illustrate below, other Philadelphia engravers of varying skill

levels collaborated on the medals, largely under the auspices of the esteemed Scottish line engraver Robert Scot. The only other hallmark noted on these later issues is JL or IL. There are several candidates for the identification of JL, but it appears probable that these pieces were engraved by Joseph Loring of Boston, who used a JL hallmark after 1766, or possibly John Lynch of Baltimore, although he is only known to have used J. LYNCH as a hallmark around 1786.⁶



Figure 4. James Trenchard's Great Seal, published in the *Columbian Magazine* in 1786. Courtesy of Princeton University Library – Department of Rare Books and Special Collections.

4 J. R. W. Hitchcock, *Etching in America, with Lists of American Etchers and Notable Collections of Prints*. (New York, 1886): 14-16.

5 Monroe H. Fabian, *Joseph Wright: American Artist, 1756-1793* (Washington, D.C., 1985): XXX.

6 Russell Rulau and George Fuld, *Medallic Portraits of Washington*, 2nd ed. (Iola, WI, 1999): XXX.

The skills of the local engravers of the oval medals varied considerably, and clearly they used their own signature techniques and styles. The silver oval medals of 1792 lacking hallmarks show considerably more detail and shading than those dated 1789. It has been written that genuine silver oval medals were routinely polished using fine sand, and that this would cause the central area of the medal to appear more worn than the outer areas. However, a close examination of high-resolution images of medals presented here, in cited references, and in auction catalogs, reveals sporadic instances of such wear and inconsistent wear patterns, and if such patterns exist they appear to be fairly minor.

As chronicled in the 2015 book, *Robert Scot: Engraving Liberty*, by William F. Nyberg, we now know that under the tutelage of Master Mason Robert Scot, there were at least five apprentices and assistant engravers, including Samuel Allardice, James Thackera, John Vallance, Francis Shallus,⁷ and Joseph Wright, Jr. Scot delegated his workload to these men who worked together on a wide range of engraving projects in the 1780s and 1790s. The first four men are known to have assisted Scot in the massive undertaking of engraving numerous scientific plates for Thomas Dobson's *Encyclopædia* and other publications. Scot was one of, if not the only early American line engraver who permitted his apprentices and assistants to hide their initials in their work. Artists have been known to sign their works using pseudonyms, monograms, symbols or indecipherable signatures.⁸ Allardice and Shallus hid their initials in copperplate engravings while apprenticing for Scot and even after Scot became Chief Engraver at the U.S. Mint. Assistant U.S. Mint Engraver John Reich cleverly hid his initials, JR, in the Capped Bust coinage designs while Scot was Chief Engraver.⁹ Wright's collaborations with Scot appear to be limited to medals, including the silver oval Washington medals on which we have identified both of their initials (Figs. 8, 10, 11, 12, and 13, below). Nyberg reported that Scot did not hide his initials in his work,¹⁰ but we provide overwhelming evidence to the contrary here. The unique engraving styles of three to four artists combined with the presence of hidden initials on select silver oval medals, strongly suggests a collaborative effort was needed among Scot and his cadre of apprentices and assistant engravers to produce the large number of silver oval medals needed by the U.S. government in a short amount of time. At the same time that they had to complete this urgent work for the nascent U.S. Mint, these men also fulfilled other artistic obligations that were likely considerably more lucrative, including the burgeoning American publishing business. Further, we cannot emphasize strongly enough that to date we have been unable to identify any hidden initials on known counterfeit silver oval medals.

Robert Scot, First Chief Engraver of the U.S. Mint

Robert Scott (later shortened to Scot) was born in Canongate, Scotland in 1745. He was first trained as a watchmaker in England, and then learned the art of engraving. He arrived in America in 1774, and engraved plates for subsistence money, banknotes (Figs. 5 and 5a), bills of exchange, and office scales. While living in Fredericksburg and later Richmond, Scot served as Virginia's state engraver beginning in 1780. He became acquainted with Thomas Jefferson. and was hired to engrave the 1780 *Happy While United* Indian Peace Medal used to commemorate an alliance between the region's native tribes and the commonwealth (Fig. 1, above). In 1781 he fled the British invasion of Richmond and moved to Philadelphia where he developed a business as a portrait and scientific plate engraver and became a highly sought-after artist.¹¹ There were about a dozen active engravers in the Philadelphia area in 1781.

7 Robert Scot: Engraving Liberty (2015) American History Press. By William F. Nyberg.

8 American Artists: Signatures and Monograms, 1800-1989. (1990) Scarecrow Press. By John Castagno.

9 William Nyberg. (2007) John Reich's Hidden Initials. John Reich Journal Volume 18, Issue 3.

10 Nyberg 2015:XXX

11 Nyberg 2015:XXX



Figure 5. Virginia Four Spanish Milled Dollars banknote of May 6, 1776, with enlargement showing ST monograms. *Courtesy of the author.*

Some of the lesser-known engravers were in business only for a short duration, or did their work as a supplement to their other artistic endeavors. Scot proved to be a magnificent engraver and much favored mentor for aspiring artists. His skill level is best exemplified by a battlefield map, *Investment of York and Gloucester*, which depicted the decisive battle of the American Revolution. In this engraving, Scot included an image of the American flag for the first time on a map.¹² Another of Scot's masterpieces was an engraving of the frontispiece for *Ahiman Rezon*, a book which contained the rules, duties, prayers, songs, and the fundamental philosophy of Freemasonry. Although Scot was a Master Mason adept at engraving scientific drawings, maps, geometric shapes, and heraldry, his engraving of animals showed unfamiliarity with the subjects. Scot (and some of his apprentices) initially had difficulty with eagles, but eventually

42157
Washington, Bushrod

Dear Sir Alex^a. Nov^r. 22^d 1791

I have the pleasure of introducing
to your acquaintance Mr Robert Smith a near
relative of Mr^s Washington, who has lately arriv'd
in the Country from Great Britain, and intends to
spend a short time in Philadelphia before he
returns - he appears to be a Gentleman of very
amiable & accomplished manners - you will
much oblige me by introducing him to the Pres^{id}
ours & family & to such other of your acquaintances
as may contribute to render his time in the City
agreeable - with best wishes

I am Sir
Your mo^t ob^d. Serv^t P-22
Bushrod Washington

Figure 6. Letter from President Washington's nephew, Bushrod Washington, addressed to the President's personal secretary Tobia Lear. *Courtesy of William Reese Company, New Haven, CT.*

learned to engrave good representations on federal stamps and the heraldic eagle coinage in his later years.

Scot also engraved numerous seal dies throughout his career, which were used to validate official documents. He became the preferred engraver of federal seals by a wide margin, as he executed the die for the first Great Seal of the United States in 1782.¹³ He also executed dies for the College of William and Mary in 1783, the Department of the Navy in 1798, and the State Department in 1802.

In the period from the mid-1780s until about 1793, Scot and his apprentices were inundated with engraving contracts for currency, seals, and scientific copper plate engraving for William Nicholson's *Natural Philosophy* and Dobson's *Encyclopædia*. Also, Scot may have taken a

short trip to Great Britain, returning in November 1791. A man named Robert Scott is mentioned in a November 22, 1791, letter written by Bushrod Washington (George Washington's nephew) to the President's personal secretary Tobia Lear (Fig. 6). In the letter, Bushrod mentions Mr. Scott's recent return from Great Britain and requests that Mr. Lear pay special attention to him prior to his formal introduction to the President.

On November 23, 1793, Scot was appointed Chief Engraver of the U.S. Mint at Philadelphia by the Mint Director, David Rittenhouse. His appointment was advocated by Thomas Jefferson out of necessity, due to the untimely death of one of his apprentices, the First Engraver of the U.S. Mint, Joseph Wright, Jr. There were few others in America at the time who had the level of skill that Scot had as a die-sinker and engraver. Congress refused to hire a European company, so Scot got the job almost by default. What role that Scot's exceedingly successful engraving business and apparent short trip to Europe may have played in recusing him from consideration for the First Mint Engraver position remains to be seen.

Joseph Wright Jr., First Engraver of the U.S. Mint

Joseph Wright, Jr. was the first American-born student at the Royal Academy of Art in London, the first artist to sculpt a bust of George Washington, and the first to assume the position of Engraver of the U.S. Mint in 1792. He was born in Bordentown, NJ, and was an accomplished portrait painter. He was trained in England by American-born artist and President of the Royal Academy of London, Benjamin West.¹⁴ These interactions with West early in his career (ca. 1773) surely helped him to get accepted into the Royal Academy when he applied in 1775. Wright traveled to France in 1781 and used a recommendation letter from West to meet Jean-Baptiste Marie Pierre, painter to the King of France. While in France, he stayed at the residence of Benjamin Franklin for several months. In 1782, after much insistence from British commissioner Richard Oswald, who wanted a painting of Franklin, the American polymath reluctantly sat for Wright.

Wright returned to America in 1783, and was later introduced to General Washington who—probably with some encouragement from the General's friend, Patience Wright (Joseph's mother)—sat for young Joseph. In the fall of 1783 he painted Washington in oil on panel and executed a plaster mold or life mask, as well as a clay bust. In 1784, Wright sculpted an impressive plaster oval relief of Washington, currently owned by the Mount Vernon Ladies' Association.¹⁵ An oft-repeated tale states that in 1784, Wright attended New York City's Trinity Chapel where President Washington was also in attendance. Apparently, "the sermon fell upon deaf ears, for Wright, armed with crayon and paper, passed the time of service in drawing a profile portrait of Washington, quite without the knowledge of his involuntary sitter." From this crayon drawing he made an etching which Baker calls "probably the first ever executed by a painter in this country...For one, I am quite ready to acknowledge Joseph Wright as the first American etcher, and the portrait of George Washington as our first simon-pure etching."¹⁶ Although this is a slight overstatement, Wright's etched portrait of Washington was printed on a small card and published the same year with copies distributed widely in England. This same portrait appears on the "Twigg Medal" (Baker-65) and the Manly medals (Baker-61 and -62).¹⁷

Wright relocated from Philadelphia to New York in April 1786. During this time he developed his skills as a master painter, and produced most of his famous paintings. In the winter of 1790, Wright moved back to Philadelphia with his wife and children. Shortly after his arrival, Wright continued

14 Fabian 1985: XXX.

15 Fabian 1985: XXX.

16 Hitchcock 1886: XXX.

17 Rulau and Fuld 1999: XXX.

his training with Scot in the art of die-sinking and engraving. Wright and Shallus collaborated on a 1790 drypoint etching of Washington on which the inscription reads "J. Wright Pinx t FS" (Fig. 7). "Pinx t" is an abbreviation for the Latin verb *pinxit*, which means "he painted." The bottom half of the letter S for Shallus is weak, but clearly legible with minimal magnification. We also see a possible capital S for Scot in the curl of the ribbon on which G. WASHINGTON. is etched. Collaborations like this one between Scot's apprentices Wright and Shallus strongly point toward a collaborative effort within the Philadelphia art guild.

Around the time the U.S. Mint was established by an act of Congress on April 2, 1792, Scot and his apprentices were flooded with copper plate orders for the *Encyclopædia*.¹⁸ Fabian wrote, "[Joseph] Wright, in cooperation with Thomas Jefferson, may have begun his work in the realm of national numismatics at about this time."¹⁹ These facts may help explain why Wright was favored over the older and more skilled Scot. As the story goes, early in his presidency, Washington and Secretary of State Jefferson, diligently sought after talented European engravers to design the first U.S. coins. However, they failed in this endeavor and ultimately decided in the second half of 1792 that Mint Director Rittenhouse should appoint Wright, a favorite of Washington and Franklin, as the Engraver of the nascent Philadelphia Mint. In August 1793, Wright was also designated as the Mint's "First Draughtsman & Diesinker." He was responsible for the Liberty Cap designs on both the half and large cents. These designs were based upon the obverse of the *Libertas Americana* medal, which Wright is widely believed to have designed. He was also the designer and engraver of the 1792 Wright Quarter, a pattern struck in copper and white metal.²⁰ Wright died prematurely at the age of 37 during the 1793 Philadelphia yellow fever epidemic. Unfortunately, the precise identities of some of the other early coin and medal designers and engravers in Mint history are "shrouded in archival mist."²¹

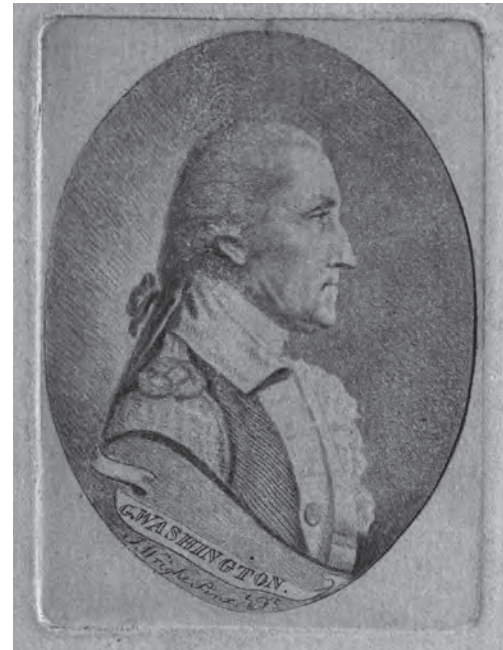


Figure 7. George Washington, 1790. Drypoint etching by Joseph Wright Jr. with enlargement showing S for Shallus. *Courtesy of the Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York, NY).*

¹⁸ Nyberg 2015: XXX.

¹⁹ Fabian 1985: XXX.

²⁰ See http://www.coinfacts.com/patterns/1792_patterns/1792_quarter_dollar_judd12.htm.

²¹ Leonard Augsburger, *The Secret History of the First U.S. Mint: How Frank H. Stewart Destroyed, and Then Saved a National Treasure*. (Atlanta, 2011): XXX.

Case Studies of Representative Silver Oval Washington Indian Peace Medals

1792 Chief Red Jacket Medal (*Buffalo Historical Society*), large size - 127 x 171 mm



Figure 8. 1792 Chief Red Jacket (Joseph Richardson Jr.) George Washington silver oval Indian Peace Medal. 127 x 171 mm. Belden Plate 2A; Prucha 23–24; Baker 174P. *Courtesy of the Buffalo and Erie County Historical Society (Buffalo, NY).*

In March and April of 1792, forty-seven chiefs representing the Iroquois Confederacy (the Six Nations—Seneca, Cayuga, Onondaga, Oneida, Tuscarora, and Mohawk tribes) arrived in Philadelphia to meet with President Washington, the Secretary of War Henry Knox, and the Governor of Pennsylvania Thomas Mifflin. One Indian who took the most prominent part in these conferences was the celebrated Seneca orator, Sagoyewatha, or Red Jacket. He was given a large-sized medal dated 1792 (Fig. 8). Red Jacket valued his medal very highly, and wore it on many occasions. Upon his death in 1839, the medal became the property of his nephew, Sosewah, or Chief James Johnson, and when he died it passed to Donehogawa or Door Keeper, better known as U.S. Army General Ely S. Parker.²² In 1891, Parker wrote the medal was evidence of "the bond of perpetual peace and friendship established and entered into between the people of the United States and the Six Nations of Indians at the time of its presentation."²³ The medal was eventually purchased from Parker's widow in 1898 by the Buffalo Historical Society where it remains today.

Obverse: Numerous letters E and F can be found hidden in the Indian's headdress (Fig. 8a). It is unclear at this time what the 'E' denotes. The F initial marks are believed to be those of

²² Belden 1927: **XXX**.

²³ Ely S. Parker. Letter dated March 9, 1891. Published in the *Geneva [NY] Gazette*, March 18, 1891. See <http://www.pbs.org/warrior/content/timeline/circle/mulberrySt.html>.

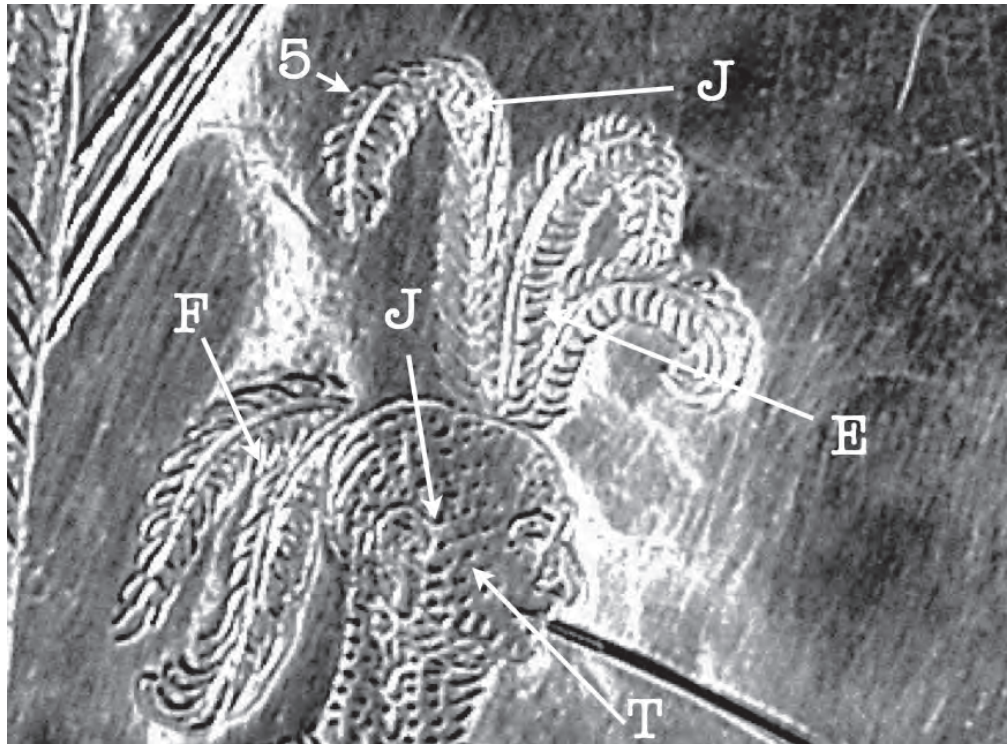


Figure 8a. Enlargement showing F, J, E, and T initials in headdress and head of Indian.

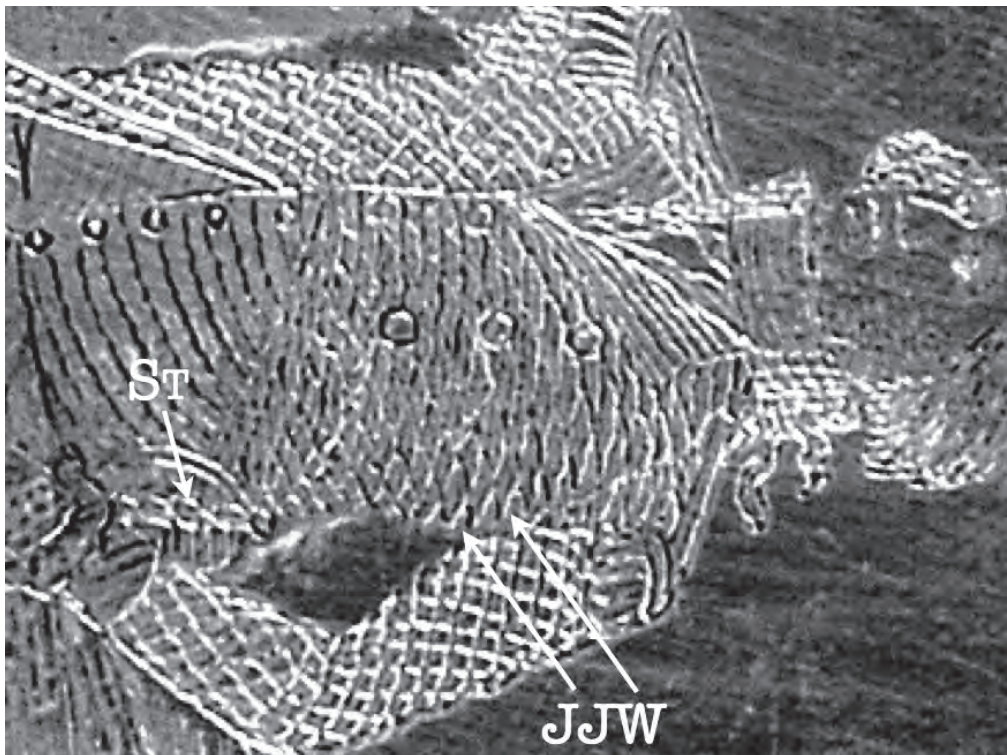


Figure 8b. Enlargement showing ST and JJW initials in Washington's jacket.

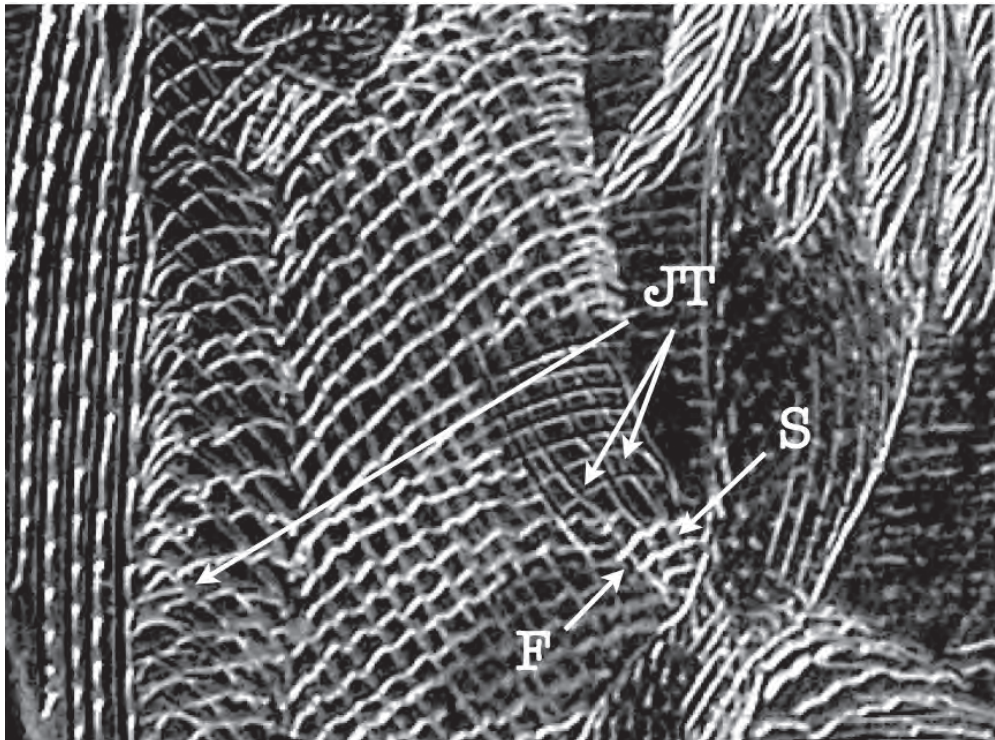


Figure 8c. Enlargement showing JT, S, and F initials in tree.



Figure 8d. Enlargement showing ST initials in PLURIBUS.

Shallus who was hired by Scot as an assistant in 1792. Two of Trenchard's J initials can be found by the ear and at the top of the tallest feather. It is possible the J could be a first initial of (James) Thackara or (Joseph) Richardson.

Wright engraved the detail on Washington's coat and sleeve using his signature cross-hatching with hidden JJW initials (Fig. 8b). Similar cross-hatching without the initials can be found near the farmer guiding the plow.

At the base of the tree trunk, there is a section that is very distinctive looking and different from the other line cuts of the tree (Fig. 8c). In this area, JT initials (Trenchard) and extremely clear FS initials (Shallus) can be identified.

Reverse: Arguably, the most obvious of the hidden initials on this piece are those of Scot. A prominent ST can be found in the inverted US in PLURIBUS (Fig. 8d). The method by which the base of the U turns atypically to the left to form the left tail of the capital T makes it distinct. This is the first known report of Scot using a pseudonym. The ST initials may also be an amalgamation of the Scottish Rite Masonry's tau cross and the lower part of the chi-rho symbol.²⁴ The eagle's eye is cut into a C-shape, similar to that on the Chief Farmer's Brother medal (Fig. 9e, below) and a 1792 medal in the American Numismatic Society (Fig. 12c, below). This same shape is also found in the clouds of the two known silver oval medals hallmarked JW (Figs. 10 and 11, below). The meaning of this C-shape is unclear at this time. The upper part of the beak has a unique semicircular shape cut similar to a reverse J. It is unknown if this is an initial, other symbol, or just an artifact. To the right of the J is the letter A that we suspect as an initial for Allardice. The Chief Farmer's Brother medal has a very similar letter A hidden in the eagle's tail feathers (Fig. 9, below).

Believed to be unique to both the Chief Red Jacket medal and the Chief Farmer's Brother medal, the identical wire-style line engraving of the eagle's talons, has a striking resemblance to the talon engraving used for Trenchard's famous Great Seal (Fig. 4, above). A letter V, believed to be the initial of Vallance, or possibly Henry Voigt who a year later, in 1793, became the Chief Coiner at the U.S. Mint can also be seen. This V is similar to the V found on the break of the laurel branch stem on Washington's famous "Dorsett" Great Seal currently on display at Mount Vernon. The initials WJJ can be seen clearly on the eagle's head and are without question those of Wright. We believe the R and the J initials found are those of Richardson and represent the first hidden marks documented for him. Note that the style of the R is quite different from his hallmarked letter R found on a few oval medals and other fine silver pieces. The letter T with the adjacent R probably belong to Trenchard. Trenchard used another set of hidden initials, JT, which are very prominent and cannot be mistaken for anyone else other than possibly his son-in-law, James Thackara.

1792 Chief Farmer's Brother Medal (Ontario Historical Society), small size – 81 x 124 mm

This medal (Fig. 9, below) was given to the well-known Seneca Chief, Farmer's Brother who was part of the delegation that accompanied Chief Red Jacket to Philadelphia in 1792 (Fig. 12, below). Belden wrote, "While the current histories of this meeting in Philadelphia, in 1792, do not mention the bestowal of other medals, it is more than likely that others, beside Red Jacket, were favored. Farmer's Brother [Seneca] is known to have possessed a medal²⁵ and, as he was one of the chiefs, representing his tribe at this time, and his medal bears the same date,

²⁴ On these symbols see <http://www.freemasons-freemasonry.com/masonic-apron-rosette.html> and <http://kahalyahweh.net/Articles/chirho.htm>

²⁵ William L. Stone. *Life and Times of Red Jacket or Sa-go-ye-wat-ha* (New York, 1841): 418.



Figure 9. 1792 George Washington silver oval Indian Peace Medal. Given to Seneca Chief Farmer's Brother in Philadelphia, PA. 81 x 124 mm. Belden Plate 2C. *Courtesy of the Ontario County Historical Society (Canandaigua, NY).*

he probably received it at the same time. There are other medals also dated 1792 which may or may not have been given then."²⁶

This medal is equally superb in quality to the Chief Red Jacket medal. Based on the hidden initials found on the obverse and reverse, the main artist of this medal was Scot. Acid engraving was used to make parts of the medal appear nearly three-dimensional. This technique was used in the negative space and the area above the eagle. Coin historians have noted similar techniques on early American coins, and on all U.S. Government seals made by Scot and his Philadelphia-based engravers guild.

Obverse: Virtually the entire trunk is engraved with cipher symbols in a mathematical code that may have been known only to the engraver. Just below Washington's cuff, we see a prominent mark by Scot, ST (Fig. 9a). Just below the ST we find an F for Shallus. The farmer guiding the plow in the background reveals a crisp V, likely the initial of Vallance. On the back of the farmer's leg, we see a rather fine large T with a smaller J set to the right, possibly the initials of Trenchard. Within Washington's left epaulette we again find an E which may symbolize Christ

²⁶ Belden 1927: XXX.

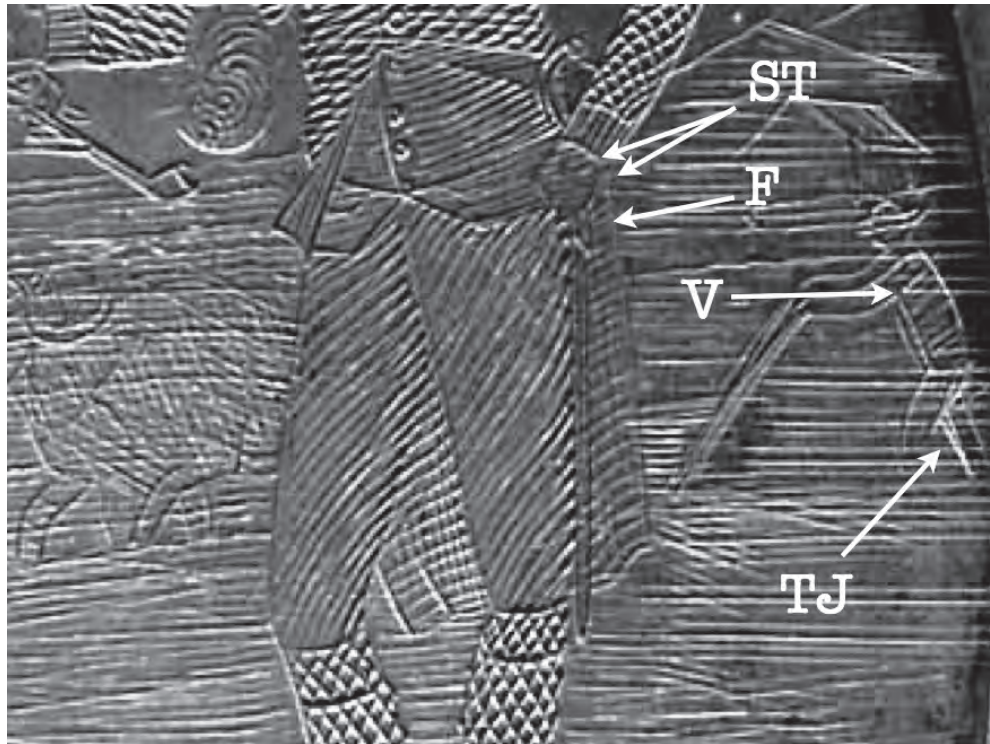


Figure 9a. Enlargement showing ST, F, V, and TJ initials in Washington's jacket and farmer.

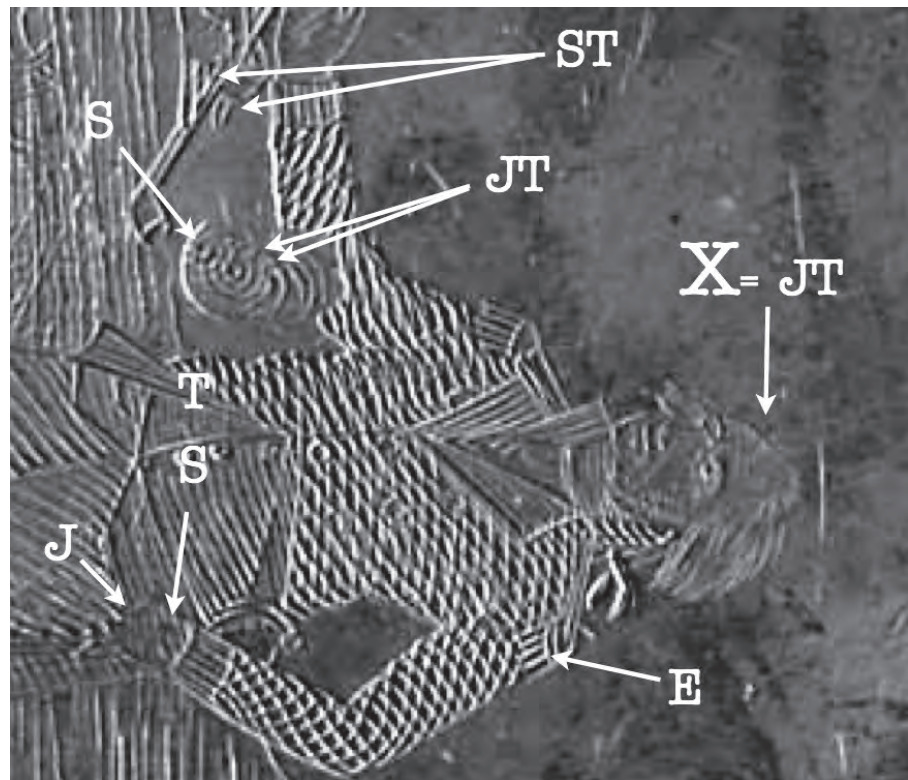


Figure 9b. Enlargement showing E, J, JT, S, ST, and X initials.

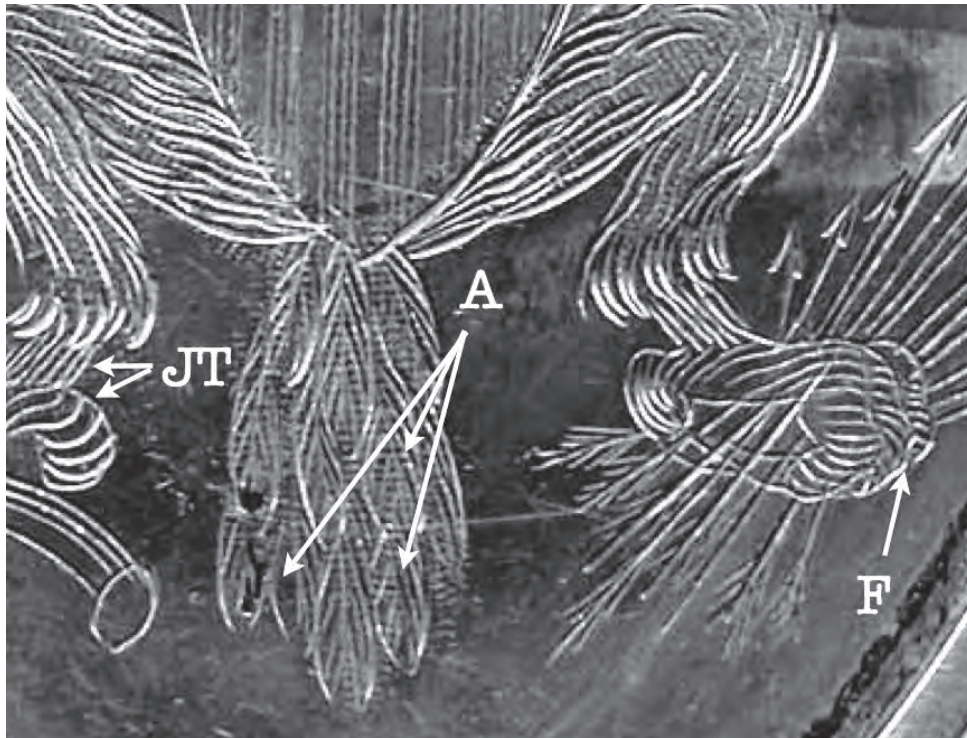


Figure 9c. Enlargement showing A, F, and JT initials on eagle.

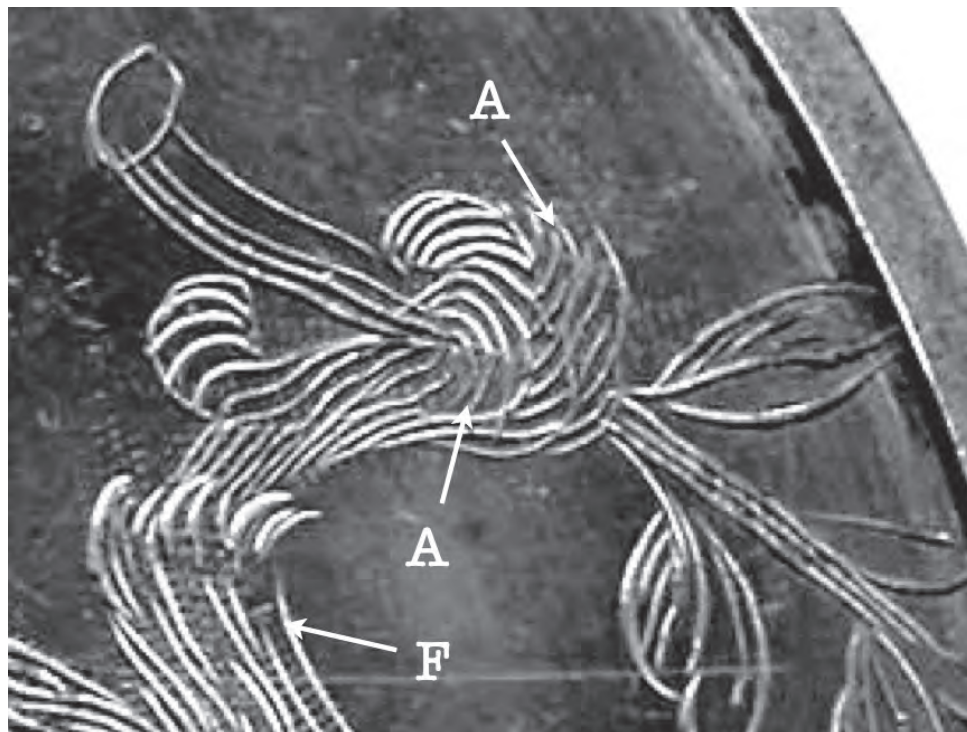


Figure 9d. Enlargement showing A and F initials on eagle's leg and talons.



Figure 9e. Enlargement showing JL, JT, and ST initials on eagle's head and in E PLURIBUS UNUM.

our Savior (Fig. 9b). The engraving of smoke from the Indian's calumet reveals an S for Scot and a JT for Trenchard. Surrounding the stem of the calumet we also find an ST.

Reverse: The eagle engraving style is nearly identical to that of the silver oval 1792 medal currently held by the American Numismatic Society (Fig. 12, below). The engraving of the feet using wire cuts and the feathers are certainly reminiscent of, if not identical to, those on Trenchard's eagle for the *Columbian Magazine* in 1786 (Fig. 4, above).

Two letter As (probably for Allardice) and an F (Shallus) can be found on the right talon and leg, respectively (Fig. 9c). Another prominent F can be found on the left talon and a series of As within the tail feathers. An apparent JT is also present (Fig. 9d). On the eagle's head there is a JT and as part of the E in E PLURIBUS UNUM we find a JL, possibly representing the same engraver responsible for the few known oval medals hallmarked with the same initials (Fig. 9e). In the last of PLURIBUS, we see a very large ST.

1792 Joseph Wright Jr. (JW) Medal (Woolaroc Museum), small size – 83 x 127 mm

Currently on display at the Woolaroc Museum in Bartlesville, OK,²⁷ this silver oval medal was excavated by Frazier E. Wilson on April 17, 1933 near the site of the Battle of Wabash in western Ohio, which occurred on November 4, 1791 (Figs. 10 and 10a). It was purchased from Wilson's estate by Norman Tazwell in the 1940s and displayed in the Museum of Archaic Man in Red Rock, MO, until 1950 when it entered into private hands. It was owned by the Shillington family until 1983 when it was purchased by Joseph T. Hajek, a dealer in Winsted, CT, in 1984.²⁸ This medal was engraved by the first Engraver of the US Mint and Die Sinker and Coiner, Joseph Wright Jr. and others in the engravers guild of Scot. This medal has a clear hallmark stamp

²⁷ See www.woolaroc.org.

²⁸ Fuld 2012: XXX



Figure 10. 1792 George Washington silver oval Indian Peace Medal (Joseph Wright). 77 x 125 mm. Belden Plate 4C. Courtesy of the Woolaroc Museum (Bartlesville, OK).

of JW. This hallmark is indisputably identical to that found on the drum in the 1793 painting by Wright, of himself and his family (Fig. 13, below). The only other numismatic or exonomia item with the identical hallmark is the silver oval 1792 New York-Wright medal (Fig. 11, below) currently in private hands. The 1792 Woolaroc medal was chronicled by Fuld, and interestingly was the only silver oval medal shown on the book's cover.²⁹ Fuld misidentified the engraver as Joseph Wyatt of Philadelphia. While Joseph Wyatt did have a similar J.W. hallmark, his mark is made distinct from Wright's by its upright block lettering with strong periods following each letter. Further, Joseph Wyatt was confirmed to have worked as a goldsmith in London up until 1790, but did not resurface in the public record until 1797, when he opened a silversmith shop in the Callowhill neighborhood of Philadelphia.

The precise timing of the engraving of the small size silver oval 1792 (and other year's) medals is not known, but due to the substandard engraving quality of this piece and other genuine pieces, it is likely that Wright and Scot engraved this medal in haste due to the large number requested by Secretary of War Knox, as well as the fact that Scot and his apprentices were inundated in 1791 through 1793 by the large order of copper plates requested by Dobson for his *Encyclopædia*. Wright's two known hallmarked silver oval medals show that he lacked experience in his work, was not trained to the same skill level as other Scot apprentices, and could not get much assistance from Scot who was not skilled in animal engraving.³⁰ Wright was inundated

29 Fuld 2012: **XXX**

30 Nyberg 2015: **XXX**.

with the burgeoning American publishing business, and may have just returned from a short trip to Great Britain. All of this notwithstanding, the historical value and importance of Wright's two known JW hallmarked pieces is still obvious. The silver oval 1792 Woolaroc and New York medals by Wright represent the earliest known surviving and identifiable hand-cut relics by an employee of the new U.S. Mint. By contrast, the first circulating coins produced by the U.S. Mint were 11,178 copper cents delivered in March 1793.

Obverse: Distinct JJW (Joseph Wright, Jr.) initials are prevalent throughout the cross-hatching used on Washington (Fig. 10b). The smoke coming from the calumet appears as a numeral 9 (identical to that found on the 1792 New York medal, Fig. 11). It is unclear why the engraver chose the number nine, but it is plausible there may be a reference to the Nine of Diamonds, also called the Curse of Scotland. Hidden on the rim at 4 o'clock on both this medal (Fig. 10c) and the New York medal (Fig. 11c), we can just barely discern Scot's mark, ST. Although worn from handling and age, the discovery of these initials further support the likelihood of a strong collaboration between the first two engravers of the U.S. Mint, Wright and Scot.

Reverse: The reverse of this medal is identical in style to the 1792 New York medal. The engraving style of the eagle's heads is cartoonish in appearance on both. The stars above the eagle are in the same locations and both show the celestial clouds with the connecting C symbolism, perhaps symbolic of the Masonic Star Gate Arch.

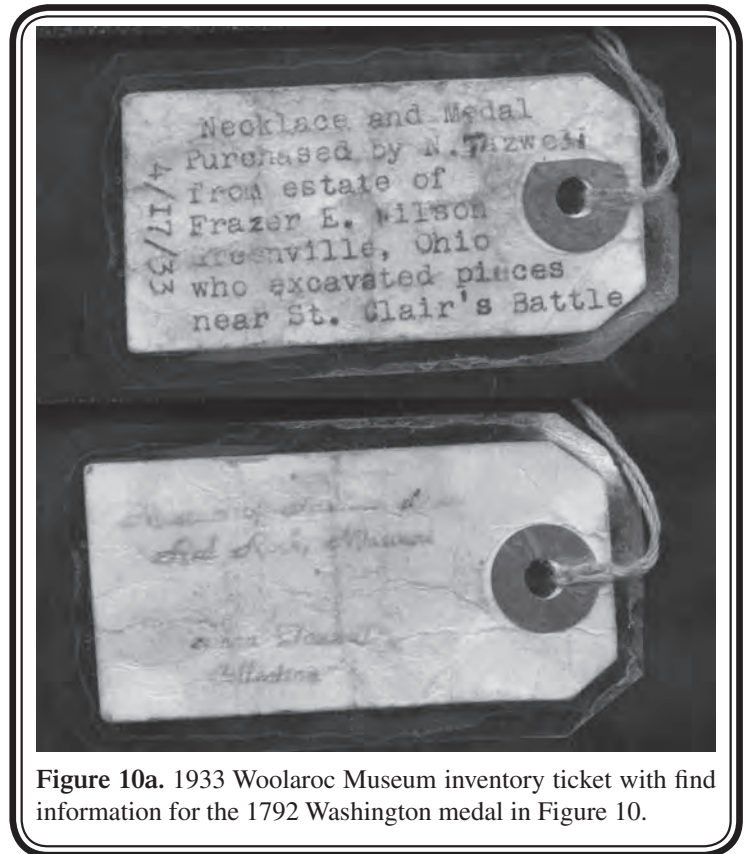


Figure 10a. 1933 Woolaroc Museum inventory ticket with find information for the 1792 Washington medal in Figure 10.

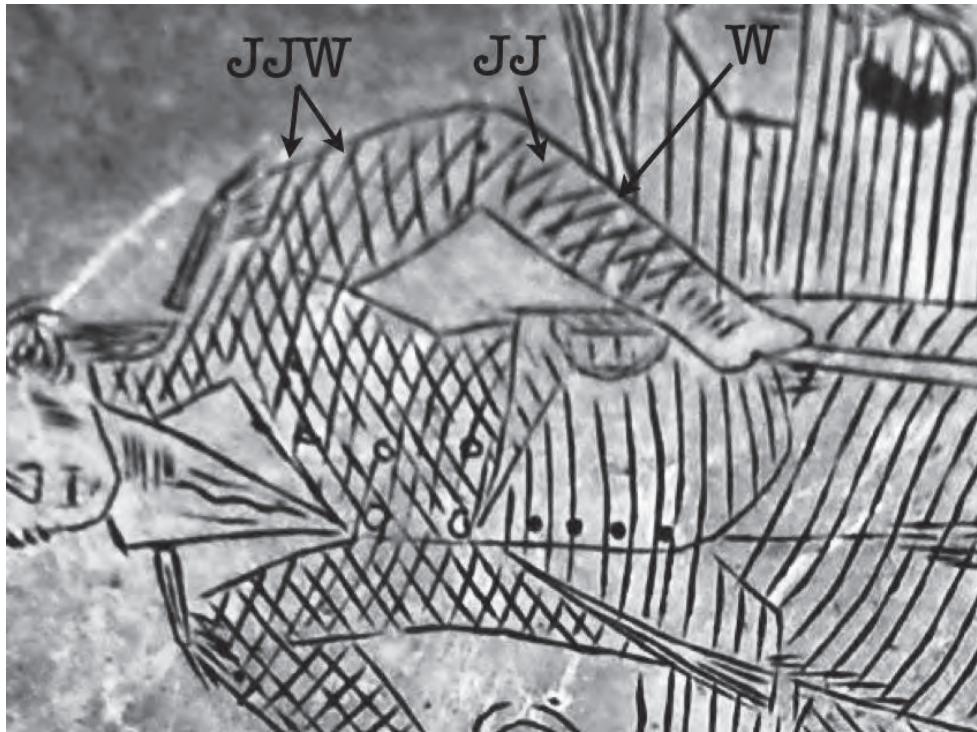


Figure 10b. Enlargement showing JJ, JJW, and W initials on Washington's sleeve.

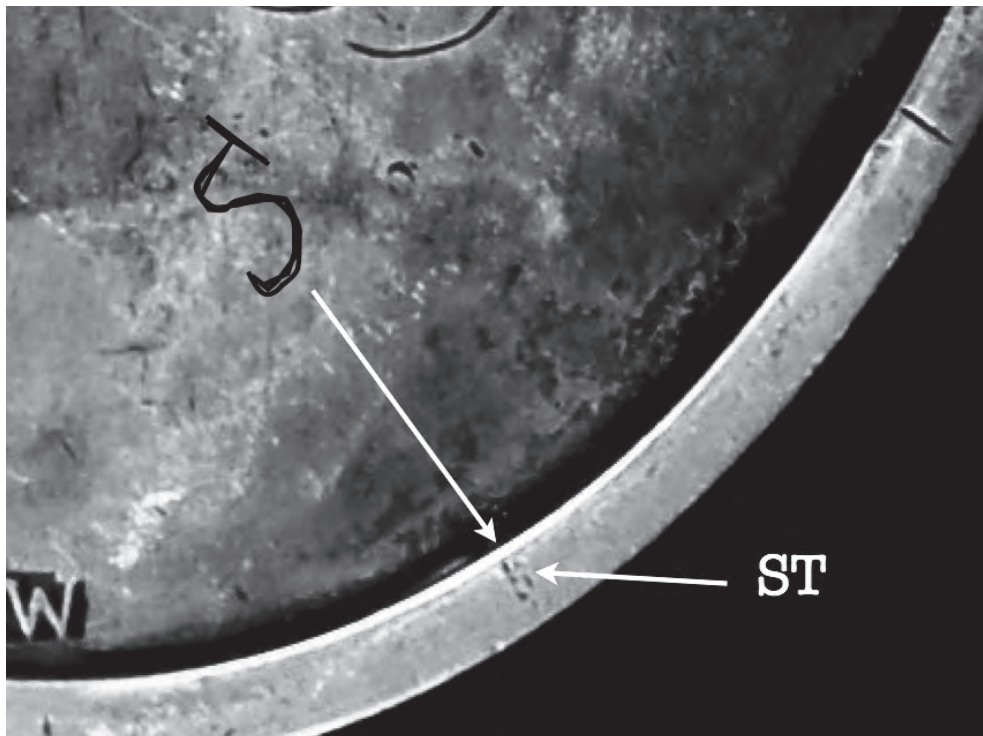


Figure 10c. Enlargement showing ST initials on rim.

1792 Joseph Wright Jr. (JW) Medal (New York private collection), small size – 81 x 125

Figure 11. 1792 George Washington silver oval Indian Peace Medal (Joseph Wright). 81 x 125 mm, 72.3 g. New York private collection. *Courtesy of owner.*

Currently residing in private hands, your authors learned in 2013 that this interesting silver oval 1792 medal (Fig. 11) came into the possession of an octogenarian gentleman living in New York via a collection he inherited from a close friend. This gentleman informed us that his close friend “spent a lot of time in northwestern New York State.”³¹ This medal has a stamped JW hallmark identical to that found on the 1792 Woolaroc medal, however this medal contains a worn, crude engraving of the numerals 11.91 or possibly 11.4.91 on the obverse (Fig. 11a). This is probably an ode to the most significant and pronounced Native American military victory in history at the Battle of Wabash on November 4, 1791. It remains to be determined whether there is a connection between the 11.91 on this medal and the Woolaroc, which was excavated near the battle site.

It is unclear whether this medal or the 1792 Woolaroc medal was bestowed on one of the 47 Indian chiefs of upstate New York at the 1792 conference in Philadelphia, but the circumstantial evidence points strongly toward this possibility. Belden alludes to the probability that chiefs from the Six Nations received silver oval medals dated 1792. He described the only two 1792 Plate 4C examples he was aware of:

³¹ Personal communications with owner (December 11, 2013).

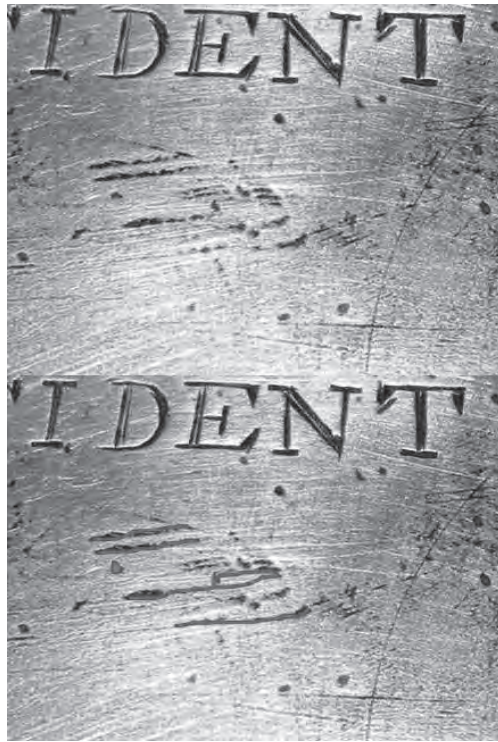


Figure 11a. Enlargement showing 11.91 on obverse.



Figure 11b. Enlargement showing 6 or 9 in smoke and JJ and W initials in Washington's sleeve.

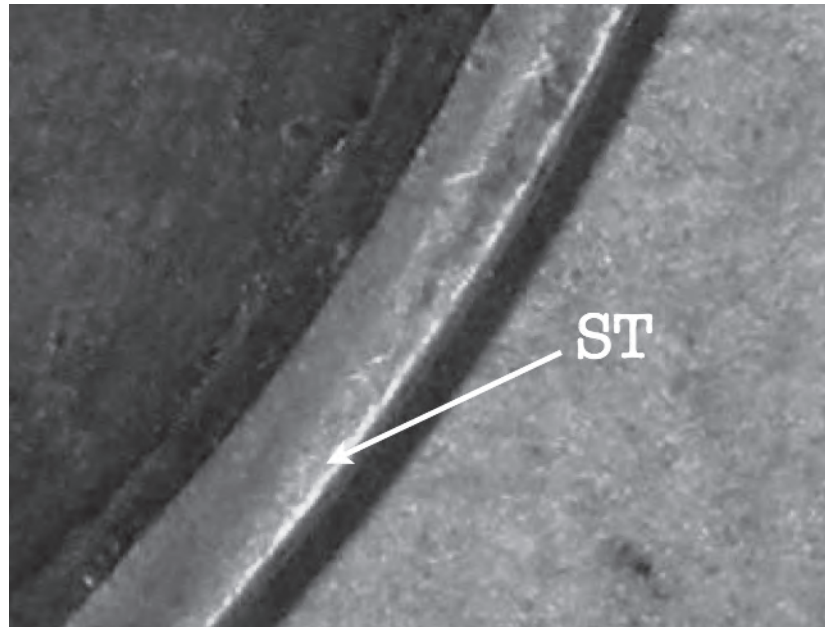


Figure 11c. Enlargement showing ST initials on rim.

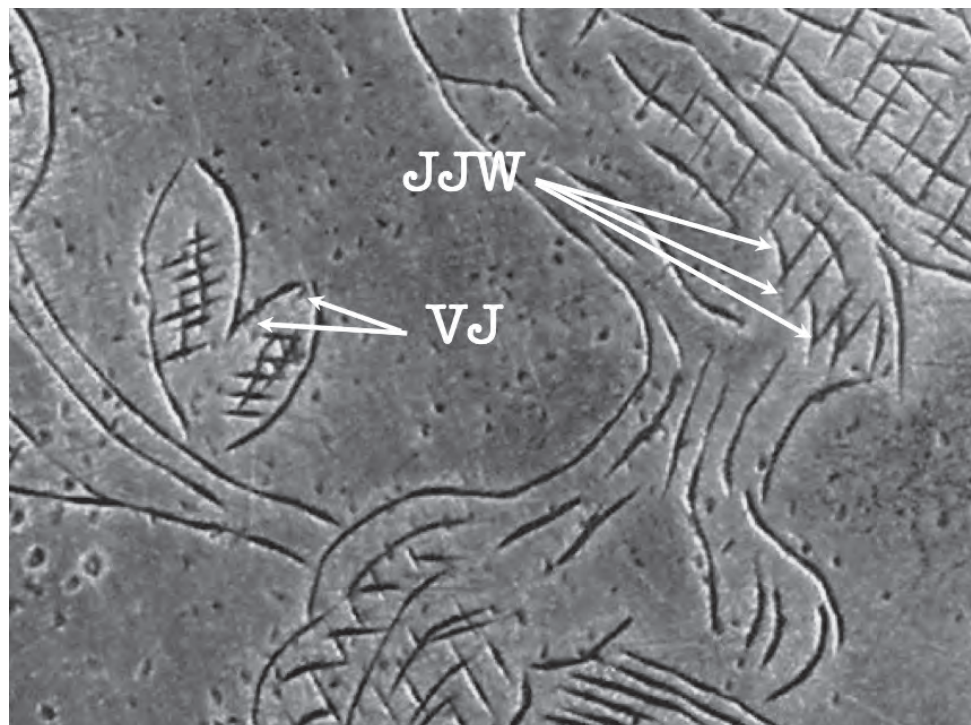


Figure 11d. Enlargement showing JJW and VJ initials in eagle's leg and leaves.

Two other medals of 1792 are known to the writer...One of these medals, size 81 x 124 mm, is in the collection of the American Numismatic Society. The other, size 81 x 127 mm, when last seen several years ago, belonged to a resident of New York State, whose present address is not known. Nothing is recorded regarding the original recipient of either of these two medals.³²

No update on the location of this medal was provided by Fuld in 2011. It is unclear but likely, given the circumstantial evidence and nearly identical dimensions (81 x 125 mm or 132 mm including loop), that the New York medal in private hands is the same one mentioned by Belden. Fuld identified two other 1792 Plate 4C medals. One measuring 81 x 124 mm was given to a Chief Keses and was sold in the Charles H. Fisher sale in March 1936 (lot 757). Another medal measuring 80.5 x 133 mm belonged to the famous American collector F. C. C. Boyd. It was catalogued and sold in Stack's John J. Ford, Jr. sale in May 2004 for \$264,000 (lot 190).

Similarly to the 1792 Woolaroc - Wright medal, the engraving quality on this medal is not up to the standards of the large-size Chief Red Jacket medal or the Chief Farmer's Brother medal. This medal does however appear to have some wear at the center of the medal on the obverse and reverse indicative of a polishing method by Native Americans using fine sand.

Obverse: Distinct JJW (Joseph Wright, Jr.) initials are prevalent throughout the cross-hatching used on Washington (Fig. 11b). Again, hidden on the rim at 4 o'clock, we can just barely discern Scot's mark, 'ST' (Fig. 11c).

Reverse: Figure 11d clearly shows Wright's more personalized JJW on the eagle's right leg. The VJ initials are believed to be those of Vallance who apprenticed for Scot and Trenchard.

1792 Medal (American Numismatic Society), small size – 84 x 136 mm

This medal (Fig. 12) was donated to the ANS by Howland Wood and Elliott Smith on January 15, 1921. No other information is available on this medal's provenance or historical significance. It is a Belden Plate 4C variety and is cataloged as ANS 1921.23.1.

Obverse: The Native American's extended right hand shows three distinct sets of initials (Fig. 12a). We are uncertain about the meaning of the CI, but these initials have been found on the eagle's leg in Trenchard's Great Seal and the National Coat of Arms painting, which hangs adjacent to Washington's original pew in St. Paul's Chapel of Trinity Church (New York, NY). The G may be the last initial of the first employee of the U.S. Mint and famous pattern engraver, Peter Getz. Lastly, the 'ST' just below the hand is Scot's mark. Again, we clearly find Wright's signature in the cross-hatching of Washington's coat and sleeves (Fig. 12b).

Reverse: On the eagle's head we find another "celestial C" symbol (Fig. 12c). As on Chief Red Jacket's medal, we find a distinct ST associated with the S in PLURIBUS. Interestingly, there is also a numeral 8 incorporated into the cloud engraving.

³² Belden 1927: XXX.



Figure 12. 1792 George Washington silver oval Indian Peace Medal (Joseph Wright). 84 x 136 mm. Belden Plate 4C. ANS 1921.3.1. Photos courtesy of the American Numismatic Society.

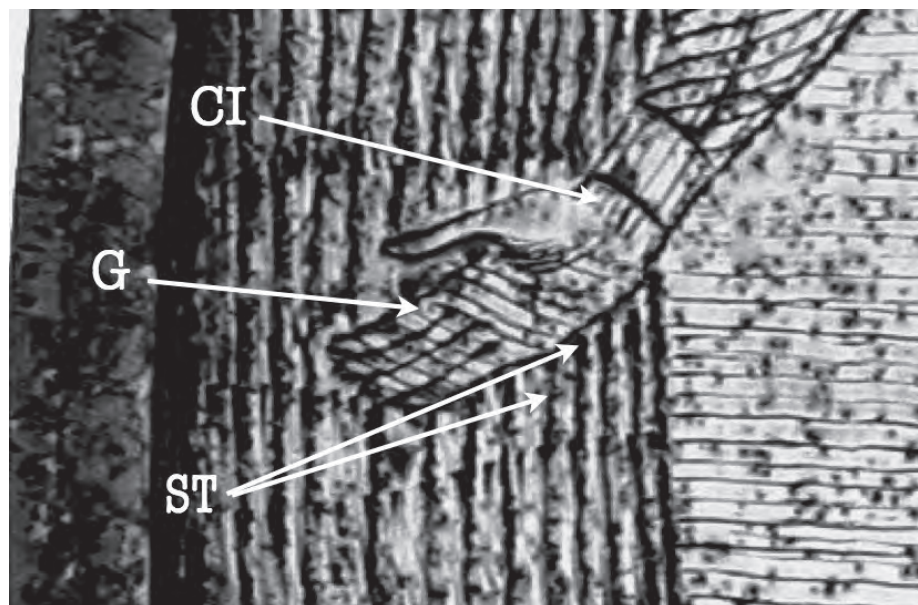


Figure 12a. Enlargement showing CI, G, and ST initials in Washington's hand and jacket.

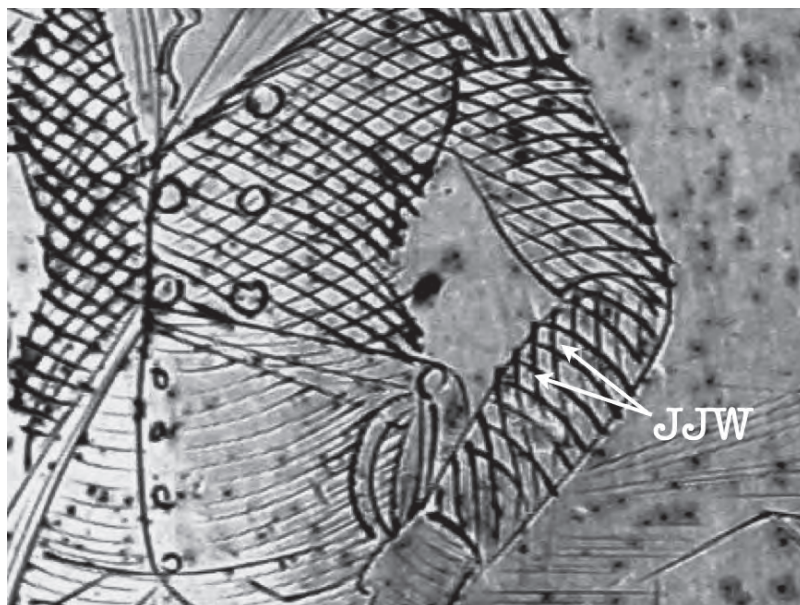


Figure 12b. Enlargement showing JJW initials in Washington's sleeve.

1793 Joseph Richardson Jr. (JR) Medal (U.S. State Department), dimensions unavailable

This medal was gifted to the U.S. Department of State by Mrs. Mark Bortman purportedly in 1967 (Fig. 13). It is listed by Fuld as an authentic medium-size silver oval medal.³³

Obverse: In Figure 13a we find clear marks of Trenchard (JT) and one mark for Shallus (FS). We also see the similar 9-shaped smoke from the calumet as seen on the Woolaroc medal (Fig. 10) and New York medal (Fig. 11). There is also a stray unexplained F initial on Washington's right forearm.

Wright's JJW marks can be found on Washington, and Scot's ST marks near his left hand (Fig. 13b). Albeit challenging to see, we find near Washington's ear the initials VJ, which are probably those of Vallance.

Reverse: In the plumage we find a very clear R with a J just to the left (Fig. 13c). These are likely to be the initials of Richardson. A very small diamond-style cut ST can be found in the furthest right cloud.

Figure 13d exquisitely captures details of the eagle design, and we find a J over the eye accompanied by a lower case r, that in theory could represent Richardson's suffix, "Jr." Scot's ST is found with a weak preceding capital T.

The shield on this medal is cut with the same design and technique as that on Chief Red Jacket's medal.



Figure 13. 1793 George Washington silver oval Indian Peace Medal (Joseph Richardson, Jr.). 110 x 159 mm. *Photography by Will Brown. Courtesy of the Diplomatic Reception Rooms, U.S. Department of State, Washington, D.C.*



Figure 13a. Enlargement showing F, FS, and JT initials in Indian's wrist, smoke, and Washington's sleeve.

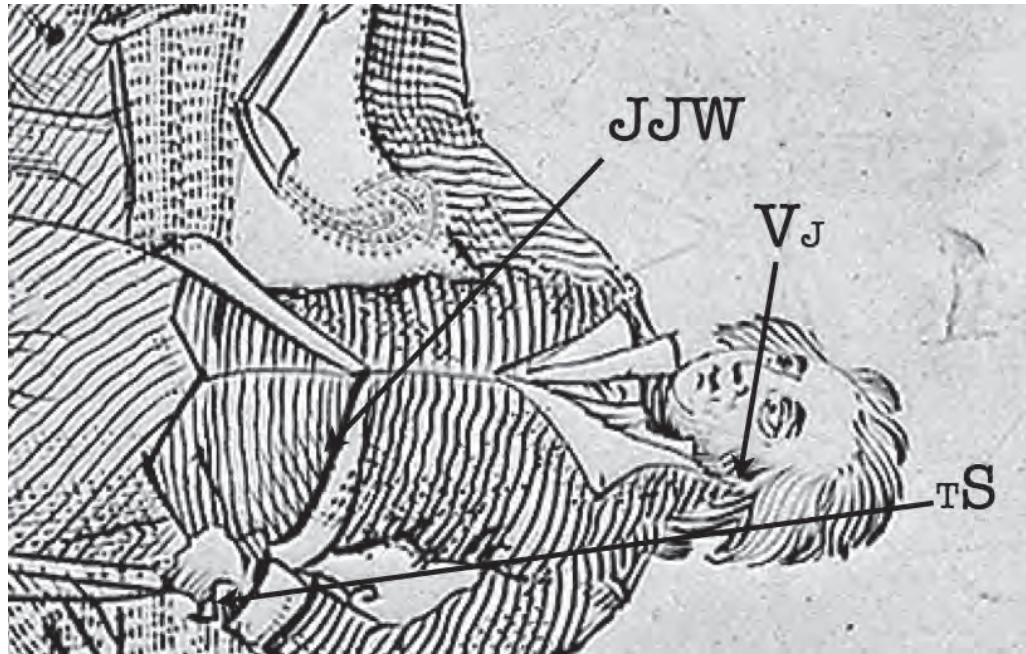


Figure 13b. Enlargement showing JJW, TS, and VJ initials on Washington.

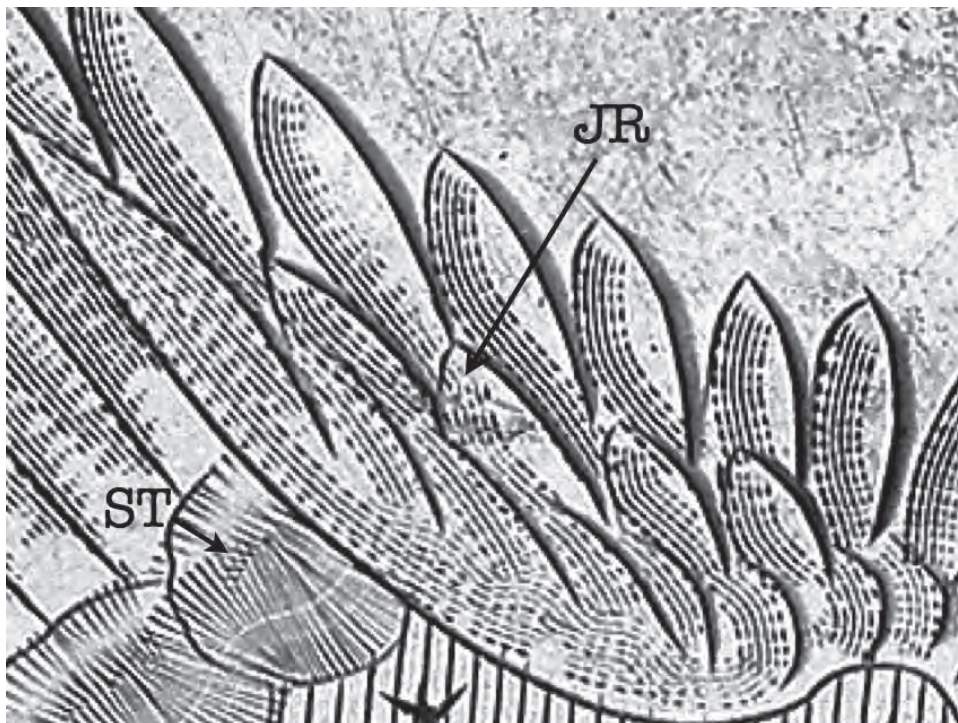


Figure 13c. Enlargement showing JR and ST initials in eagle.



Figure 13d. Enlargement showing C, J, R, and S initials in eagle.

Hidden Initials in Selected Portraits by Joseph Wright Jr.

The Wright Family (1793), oil on canvas, unfinished

This painting was likely Wright's last before succumbing to yellow fever in the Philadelphia outbreak of 1793 (Fig. 14, below). Wright used the drum on the floor next to his daughter to place his initials JW (Fig. 14a, below). The left-to-right angle of the JW inscription on the drum is nearly identical to that of the JW hallmark on the Woolaroc and New York 1792 Washington Indian Peace Medals (Figs. 10 and 11, above).

YANKEE-DOODLE. or the American SATAN (ca. 1780), self-portrait

This hand-colored etching is Wright's earliest known self-portrait and was drawn from his reflection in a mirror (Fig. 15, below). The theme of the portrait is quite interesting in that the words Wright chose "Yankee-Doodle" had been for two decades, a derisive term for an American, and "American Satan" hints at unforgivable behavior. The only known incident in the artist's early life that could be so satirized, was his exhibition at the Royal Academy in London of a portrait he did of his mother Patience Wright modeling the head of Charles I. This became quite a scandal for Wright and it was his first and last submission to a Royal Academy exhibition.³⁴

A closer look at Wright's etching method reveals hidden JW and JJW initials on the buttons of his coat as well in the shading along the button line. In the eighteenth century, individuals who could afford buttons generally used monogrammed initials. We also see his signature cross-hatching and shading technique with hidden initials to be identical to that found on a practice board that Wright used as a shim to keep his ca. 1775 painting, *Portrait of a Lady*, in its frame (Fig. 17b, below) and on a silhouette of a lady executed by Wright in 1783 (Fig. 16, below).

³⁴ Fabian 1985: XXX.

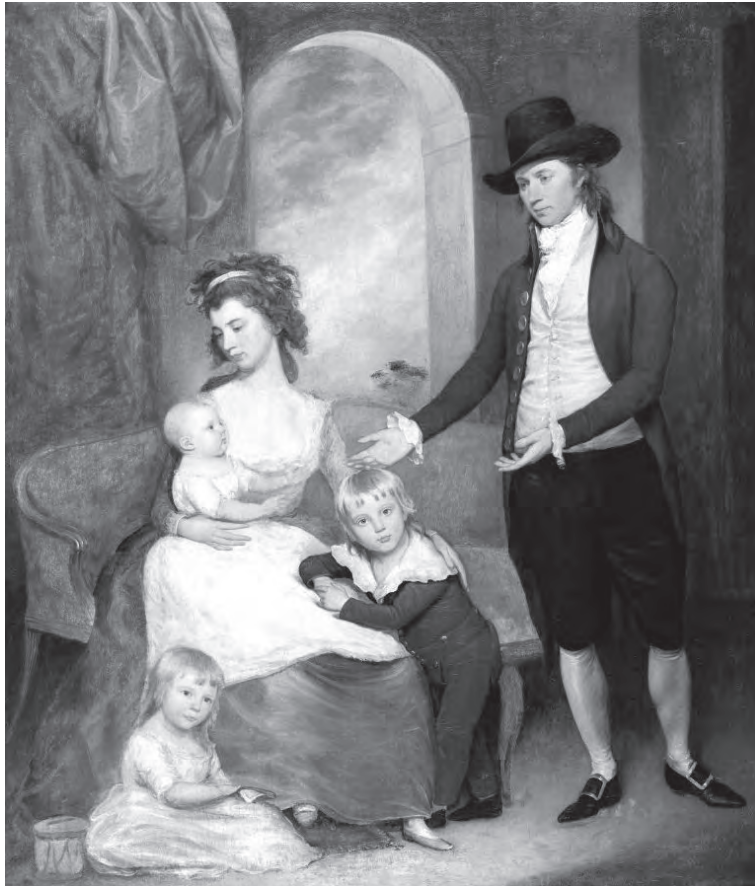


Figure 14. *The Wright Family*, 1793. Oil on canvas (unfinished). By Joseph Wright, Jr. *Courtesy of the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, Philadelphia. Gift of Edward S. Clarke.*



Figure 14a. Enlargement showing JW initials on drum.



Figure 15. *YANKEE-DOODLE. or the American SATAN.* Hand-colored etching. Self-portrait by Joseph Wright, Jr. Courtesy of the John Carter Brown Library at Brown University.

Portrait of a Lady (ca. 1775), sold by Christie's in 2005

Around the date on the reverse of this painting February 2, 1775, Wright was preparing his application to the Royal Academy of London's Keeper of the Royal Schools.³⁵ Applicants were required to submit a drawing or model from a plaster cast. The Keeper must have found Wright's initial submission acceptable since he had to pass a second test, another drawing or model

³⁵ Fabian 1985: XXX.



Figure 16. *Lady's Silhouette*, 1783. Philadelphia. Joseph Wright. Sold on eBay on September 11, 2015.

from a plaster cast in the possession of the Academy. On April 8, 1775, the Council of the Royal Academy admitted Wright and five others into the school of design. It appears entirely plausible that Wright used this painting during his application process (Fig. 16).

In this painting, Wright was consistent in leaving his JJW initials (Fig. 16a). Even more intriguing is the discovery by your authors of a practice board used by Wright as a shim to hold the portrait in frame (Fig. 16b). On this shim we find his signature cross-hatching (cf. Figs. 8, 10, 11, 12, and 13). When the shim was actually added to the frame cannot be determined, but it could have been during the short time he worked on the silver oval medals for the U.S. Mint. The elegant handwriting on the painting's frame (Fig. 16c) is identical in style and prose to a January 20, 1785 handwritten bill tendered from Wright to the U.S. Government for a bust of Washington (Fig. 18). Note the up-stroked stem of the lower case letter d in "modeling" and "order" indicative of a flourish or ornamental stroke. Thus, we believe the handwritten inscription was completed by Wright.

Conclusions

There is a lot of mystery surrounding who engraved each of the silver oval Washington Indian Peace Medals and when. Through detailed analysis and the discovery of hidden initials, signature engraving styles, and symbolism, this paper sheds light on the identities of some of the Philadelphia engravers charged with hand-engraving these important pieces of Americana. Most, if not all of these engravers appear to be known associates of Robert Scot, the famous Scottish line engraver, first Chief Engraver of the U.S. Mint, and Freemason. We are optimistic that this endeavor will serve as a starting point for similar investigations and future debate on other silver oval medals with and without indisputable provenance. These earliest relics of the U.S. Mint are of such great importance to early America, they should bring scholars together to advance their study.



Figure 17. *Portrait of a Lady*, ca. 1775. Oil on canvas. By Joseph Wright, Jr. *Courtesy of Michael Hall at Michael Hall Antiques (Nashville, TN).*

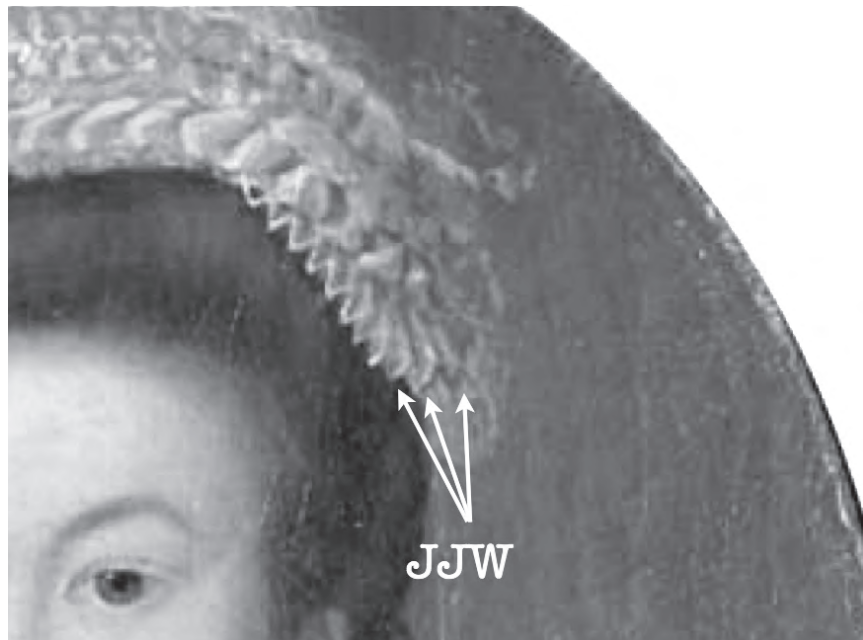


Figure 17a. Enlargement showing JJW initials in bonnet.

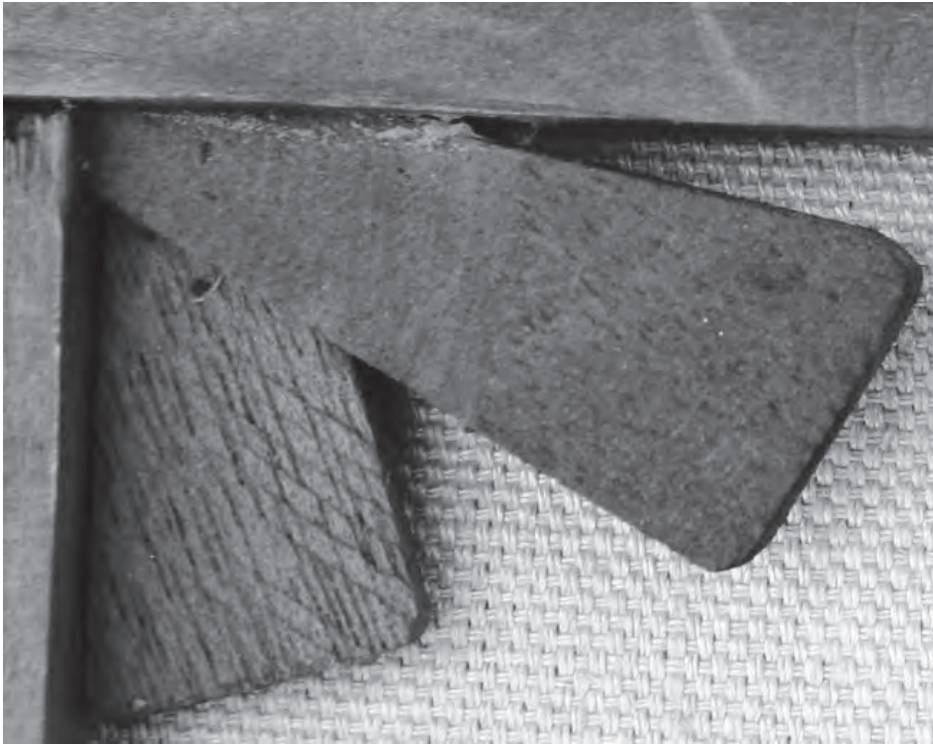
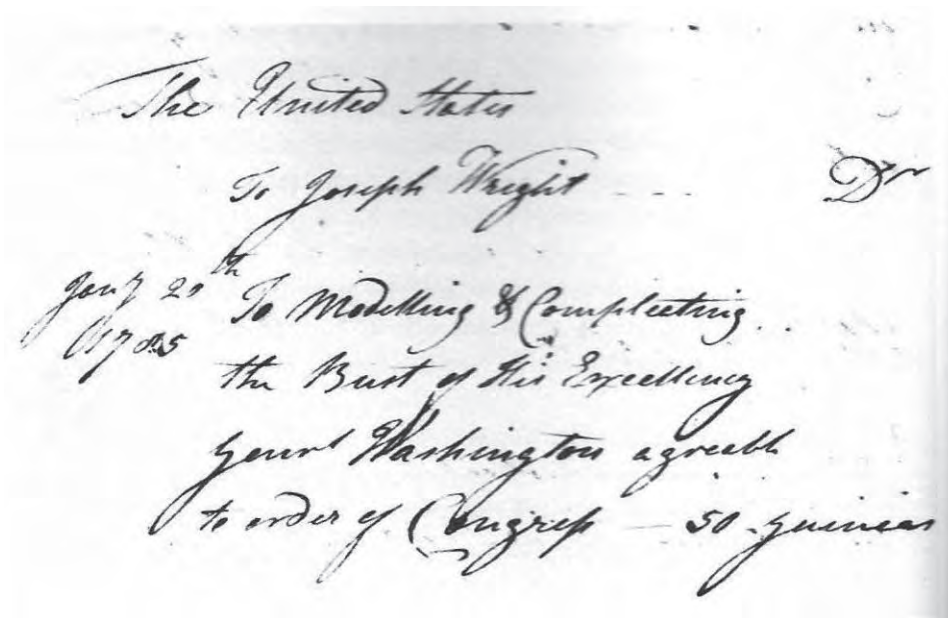


Figure 17b. Cross-hatching on shim in frame.



Figure 17c. Handwritten inscription on back of frame.



The United States
To Joseph Wright
Jan^y 20th 1785 To Modelling & Completing
the Bust of His Excellency
Genl Washington agreeable
to order of Congress - 50 guineas

Figure 18. Handwritten bill tendered from Joseph Wright, Jr. to the U.S. Government for his work on a bust of George Washington. Dated January 20, 1785. *Papers of the Continental Congress, National Archives.*

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the Buffalo and Erie County Historical Society, Woolaroc Museum, Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Michael Hall at Michael Hall Antiques, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Ontario County Historical Society, Princeton University, Brown University, the U.S. Department of State, and the National Portrait Gallery for their assistance in acquiring high resolution images. We would also like to thank Mr. Michel-Gérald Boutet for lending his expertise in the partial translation of the Ogham found during this investigation.