

Museum Notes

John Phipps

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regulated. The general public, despite efforts to assuage them, increasingly feared the influence of railroads in government. The fact remains, however, that the legislature was by no means the creature of the railroads during this period. Railroad management regarded the state legislature as an unpredictable and certainly an independent body. It can not be denied that the railroaders experienced a great deal of anguish as they tried to gain a measure of legislative support for their young enterprise.



MUSEUM NOTES

by John Phipps,
Museum Director

Two recent additions to the coin display at the Iowa State Historical Museum should be of interest to almost everyone—the numismatic hobbyist as well as the ordinary citizen.

Both coins came to us without fanfare in a collection of items from a donor in New Hampton, Iowa. The date "1787" and thirteen interlocking circles drew attention to one of the coins, identifying it as a "Fugio" penny—the first coin minted under authorization of the then infant United States. Said to have been designed in part by Benjamin Franklin, it has the motto "Mind Your Business" stamped on its reverse side. These coins were minted by a private firm by the order of Congress and are made of salvaged copper from the bands of powder kegs imported from France during the war for independence.

The second coin is dated "1866" and is obviously a "nickle"—in fact it is one of the first coins of five-cent denomination that was minted. Prior to 1866 the silver "half dime" was used—thus the new coin was dubbed the "nickle" to distinguish it from the old "half dime."

Neither coin is particularly rare or of great monetary value, but each is unique, and a welcome addition to the coin collection in the Manuscript Room, first floor west.

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