

DIES OF MEDALS STRUCK BY AUTHORITY OF CONGRESS.

LETTER

FROM

THE SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY,

TRANSMITTING

In compliance with the resolution of May 19, a report of the Director of the United States mint, respecting the condition of the dies of medals ordered to be struck by authority of Congress, and a list of the dies now in the possession of the mint.

MAY 30, 1854.—Laid on the table and ordered to be printed.

TREASURY DEPARTMENT,
May 29, 1854.

SIR: In compliance with a resolution of the House of Representatives of the 19th instant, requesting the Secretary of the Treasury to communicate "copies of any reports he may have received from the Director of the mint touching the condition of dies of medals struck by authority of Congress, commemorative of patriotic services and national events, and of the propriety of establishing in the mint a medal department for collecting and preserving such dies, and of authorizing impressions to be made in bronze, for distribution amongst the States or otherwise, under such regulations as may be prescribed for the same," I have the honor to transmit herewith a copy of a communication from the Director of the United States mint of the 5th April last, together with a copy of the proceedings of the "Pennsylvania Historical Society," to which the Director refers, and a list of the dies now in the mint.

I am, sir, very respectfully your obedient servant,

JAMES GUTHRIE,
Secretary of the Treasury.

Hon. LINN BOYD,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MINT OF THE UNITED STATES,
Philadelphia, April 5, 1854.

SIR: Being invited by your favor of the 18th ultimo, in reply to the suggestions contained in my letter of a previous date, I present a few additional remarks in relation to the propriety of establishing a medal department in the mint.

No provision by law has heretofore been made for the preservation of the dies from which medals were ordered to be struck, nor for taking or preserving copies of them. In fact, the dies have, by some of the recipients of the honor of a public medal, been regarded as their property, and not that of the government. But through the personal efforts of some of the officers of the mint, assisted and encouraged by several of the Secretaries of the Treasury, most of the dies have been retained or recovered, and they are now in the custody of the chief coiner of the mint.

I present herewith a copy of the proceedings of the Pennsylvania Historical Society on the subject under consideration, together with a list of the dies now in the mint. The list embraces sixty-eight in number, including the presidential medals; some others, which were made in France, among which is that of Washington before Boston, and General Greene at Eutaw, are now in the mint museum at Paris. A few are supposed to be lost, but by renewed efforts might possibly be regained. But as it requires great care in their preservation, they are no doubt, if in existence, greatly injured, and perhaps defaced.

It seems proper that the government should take charge of this important subject, by establishing a medal department connected with the mint; provision to be made for taking copies in bronze of the dies preserved in the mint, as well as those which may hereafter be ordered. It would seem appropriate that each State, or the historical society of each State, should be supplied with such copies; and other copies in gold, silver, and bronze, should be struck and disposed of under such general regulations as the Director of the mint, with the approbation of the Secretary of the Treasury, might prescribe. Such an enactment, in addition to the public objects secured, would relieve us from the embarrassment which attends the present system of striking medals in the mint, in relation to which I had the honor to present some objections in my letter of the 3d of August last. I repeat here, that the striking of medals at the mint ought not to be the source of profit or gain to any officer or workman engaged therein, but should be performed under the official salary or per diem compensation which they receive.

I herewith enclose a *project* of a law, which I present to your consideration.

I have the honor to be, with great respect, your faithful servant,
JAMES ROSS SNOWDEN,

Director.

HON. JAMES GUTHRIE,

Secretary of the Treasury, Washington city.

Project of a law to establish a Medal Department in the mint.

Be it enacted, &c., That there shall be established in the mint of the United States a medal department, to be under the direction and control of the Director of the mint; but the Director may designate such officer or person as he may deem proper to have the immediate charge of the same, under his direction, and he may employ such workmen as he may deem necessary.

Sec. 2. Medals of gold, silver, and bronze, may be struck for any department of the government, for any State or society, or person or persons, under such general regulations as the Director, with the approbation of the Secretary of the Treasury, may prescribe.

Sec. 3. The machinery of the mint not otherwise employed, and applicable to the purposes of this department, may be so applied under such restrictions as the general operations require, at the discretion of the Director.

Sec. 4. An account of the receipts and expenditures of this department shall be kept by such person, and in such manner as the Director may prescribe, an abstract of which shall be quarterly transmitted to the Treasury Department; the profits which may accrue therefrom shall be applied to the enlargement of the cabinet of medals and coins at the mint, and for supplying national and scientific institutions and societies with copies of the public medals.

Extract from the minutes of a meeting of the "Historical Society of Pennsylvania," held on Monday evening, March 13, 1854.

"The matter of a communication addressed by the secretaries and librarian to Colonel J. Ross Snowden, Director of the United States mint, containing inquiries and a request concerning the national medals coming up for discussion, Colonel Snowden said he was much pleased that this subject had been brought to the attention of the society. National and public medals are important monuments of history, and their preservation is well worthy the attention of this society and others of similar character in the United States. Most of the gold and silver medals, either from reverse of fortune or some other cause, find their way to the melting-pot. It would be a higher compliment to the recipients of the honorable distinction in question, if Congress should authorize copies in bronze to be struck and presented to each historical society in the United States. Heretofore no legal provision has been made for the preservation of such copies, or the taking care of the dies from which the medals were struck. Fortunately, however, most of the dies heretofore made have been procured and preserved in the mint of the United States. Some of them were procured with much difficulty.

"Colonel Snowden's belief was that nearly sixty medals of a national and public character have been made, of which the dies of all but five or six are at the mint in this city. A full set of copies in bronze would cost about one hundred and forty dollars. A small appropriation by Congress would supply each State in the Union with a set, and here-

after, when medals are voted, provision could be made for supplying copies to be distributed in the manner proposed.

"On motion, it was

"*Resolved*, That Colonel J. Ross Snowden be requested to correspond with the Secretary of the Treasury, or take such other measures as may seem to him advisable, to effect the objects developed in his remarks on the distribution of the national medals."

Certified by

THOMAS BIDDLE, JR.,

Recording Secretary.

MINT OF THE UNITED STATES,

Coiner's Office, March 21, 1854.

DEAR SIR: Within you will find a list of the dies for national medals which have been recovered and faithfully preserved by Mr. Adam Eckfeldt and myself.

The list embraces nearly all that have been executed for our government since its foundation.

Very respectfully, &c.,

FRANKLIN PEALE, *Chief Coiner.*

Col. J. R. SNOWDEN, *Director.*

List of Dies of National Medals in the mint of the United States.

- No. 1. Horatio Gates.
2. Daniel Morgan.
3. Isaac Hull.
4. Jacobus Jones.
5. Stephanus Decatur.
6. Gulielmus Bainbridge.
7. Oliverus H. Perry.
8. Oliverus Hazard Perry. (State medal: 2 reverse.)
9. Jesse D. Elliott. (Reverse same as Perry die No. 7.)
10. W. Burrows.
11. Edward R. McCall. (Reverse same as No. 10.)
12. Jac. Lawrence.
13. Tho. Macdonough.
14. Rob't Henley. (Reverse same as No. 13.)
15. Stephen Cassin. (Reverse same as No. 13.)
16. Ludovicus Warrington.
17. Johnston Blakely.
18. Carolus Stewart.
19. Major General Winfield Scott.
20. Brigadier General James Miller.
21. Major General Edmund P. Gaines.
22. Major General Peter B. Porter.
23. Major General Jacob Brown.
24. Brigadier General Eleazer W. Ripley.
25. Major General Alexander Maccomb.
26. Captain James Biddle.

- No. 27. Major General Andrew Jackson.
28. Governor Isaac Shelby.
29. Major General William H. Harrison.
30. Colonel George Croghan.

Indian Medal Dies.

- 31, 32, and 33. Thomas Jefferson. (Three sizes.)
34, 35, and 36. James Madison. (Three sizes.)
37, 38, and 39. James Munroe. (Three sizes.)
40, 41, and 42. John Quincy Adams. (Three sizes.)
43, 44, and 45. Andrew Jackson. (Three sizes.)
46, 47, and 48. Martin Van Buren. (Three sizes.)
49, 50, and 51. John Tyler. (Three sizes.)
52, 53, and 54. James K. Polk. (Three sizes.)
55, 56, and 57. New reverses for Indian medal-dies.
58. Captain Truxton, (for revolutionary services.)
59, 60, and 61. Zachary Taylor. (Three sizes Indian medals.)

Miscellaneous.

62. Major General Zachary Taylor. (Palo Alto.)
63. Do. do. (Monterey.)
64. Do. do. (Buena Vista.)
65. Major General Winfield Scott.
66. Winfield Scott. (State medal.)
67. "For gallantry and humanity, Dec., 1846." ("Bache medal.")
68. "Somers navis Americana." ("Somers medal.")