

# Collector's Journal

A SERVICE OF COLLECTORS ALLIANCE

## 2015 Homestead National Monument of America Quarter – Nebraska

### *Twenty-Sixth in the America the Beautiful Quarters Collection*

The first of five 2015 Quarters in the America the Beautiful series honors Homestead National Monument of America in Nebraska. It is also the twenty-sixth coin in the complete collection that will eventually include a National Park or other national site in each state, the District of Columbia, and the five overseas U.S. territories.

The four additional coins to be issued in 2015 will be for Kitchie National Forest in Louisiana, Blue Ridge Parkway in North Carolina, Bombay Hook National Wildlife Refuge in Delaware, and Saratoga National Historical Park in New York. The order of issue is the order in which the sites first came under federal jurisdiction.

Each America the Beautiful Quarter is issued in a limited edition of only about 10 weeks, and only one coin design is struck during each limited mintage period. Once the mintage of any coin is over, it can never be made again, thereby guaranteeing the limited-edition status of the coin.

America the Beautiful Quarters are struck for circulation at both the Philadelphia and Denver Mints. The two distinct coins are identified by a small "P" (Philadelphia) or "D" (Denver) mint mark under "In God We Trust" on the obverse.

Homestead National Monument of America was established in 1936 as a tribute to the early pioneers who claimed land under the terms of the Homestead Act and who therefore helped to settle and transform America's western frontier. The Homestead Act was signed into law by President Abraham Lincoln on May 20, 1862.

Under the terms of the act, any person could claim a free 160-acre plot of land with the provision that he or she improve the land (which almost always meant building a house and establishing a farm on at least 10 acres). More than 1.6 million people made



homesteading claims; they settled about 270 million acres, which represented about 10 percent of the entire land area of the nation.

Daniel Freeman, a Civil War veteran, claimed the first homestead – and Homestead National Monument of America preserves this site near Beatrice, Nebraska. In addition to typical homesteader's rough wooden buildings, it features 100 acres of tallgrass prairie to give visitors a sense of what the original settlers in southeastern Nebraska would have seen when they first arrived.

The reverse of the Homestead National Monument of America Quarter depicts a homesteader's cabin with a well in front and flanked by ears of corn. The three elements within the design represent shelter, water, and food, which were the fundamentals of survival for homesteaders.

Several other designs were originally under consideration for the Homestead National Monument of America Quarter. Many of the other designs showed various farming scenes, mostly with a homesteader directing a plow pulled by either horses or oxen. One included the homesteader's family in the background performing daily chores, while another showed a harvest scene and one depicted part of the plow-shaped Heritage Center along with the inscription "Free Land."

The Homestead National Monument of America Quarter was released by the U.S. Mint in February 2015.

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