

Collector's Journal

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2010 Franklin Pierce Presidential Dollar

Fourteenth in the Presidential Dollars Collection

The second of four Presidential Dollars issued in 2010 honors Franklin Pierce, the 14th President. Coins are issued in the order in which the Presidents served, so the Pierce coin is the 14th in the overall series that started in 2007.

The Pierce coin was released in late spring 2010. It followed the coin for John Tyler and will be followed in 2010 by the coins for James Buchanan and Abraham Lincoln to complete the fourth year of Presidential Dollars.

Four Presidential Dollars are issued each year, and the series is scheduled to continue until 2016. Each coin is issued alone, meaning that the U.S. Mint ended production for the Tyler coin before it started the Pierce coin. As a result, each coin is struck for only about three months. When the production period ends, the coin can never be made again, assuring its limited-edition status.

Presidential Dollars are minted in the same golden alloy as the Sacagawea Dollar, which was the first Golden Dollar. The coins are also the same size and weight as the Sacagawea and Native American Dollars.

Each Presidential Dollar is struck for circulation at both the Philadelphia Mint ("P" mint mark on the edge) and the Denver Mint ("D" mint mark). In addition to the mint mark, the edge of the coin bears the national motto "E Pluribus Unum" ("Out of Many, One") as well as a line of stars. The stars replaced the motto "In God We Trust," which was moved from the edge to the obverse starting in 2009.

The portrait of Pierce on the coin was based on the White House portrait by George P.A. Healy. Healy was one of the most accomplished American artists of the mid-1800's. He is renowned for his portraits of Presidents as well as other celebrated Americans and European royalty.



Franklin Pierce

Franklin Pierce was the only President born in New Hampshire. He was born in Hillsborough, New Hampshire, on November 23, 1804. His father was prominent in New Hampshire history and politics. After graduating from Bowdoin College and practicing law in Hillsborough, Franklin Pierce started his own political career by winning election to the New Hampshire House of Representatives in 1829. He moved on to the U.S. House of Representatives in 1833 and the U.S. Senate in 1837.

At the age of only 38, Pierce turned his back on politics by resigning from Congress to return to New Hampshire to practice law. Over the next several years, he declined various political appointments. He also twice turned down the opportunity to run for Governor of New Hampshire. In 1847, he joined the U.S. Army as a brigadier general to fight in the Mexican War.

At the Democratic party convention in 1852, Pierce unexpectedly won the party's nomination for President. He won the election and became President in 1853 at only 48 years of age. The slavery issue divided the nation at this time, and Pierce was caught in the middle of the political battles. The Democratic party was so divided over Pierce's handling of the issue that he did not win the party's nomination for reelection in 1856. He retired to Concord, New Hampshire, where he died on October 8, 1869.

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