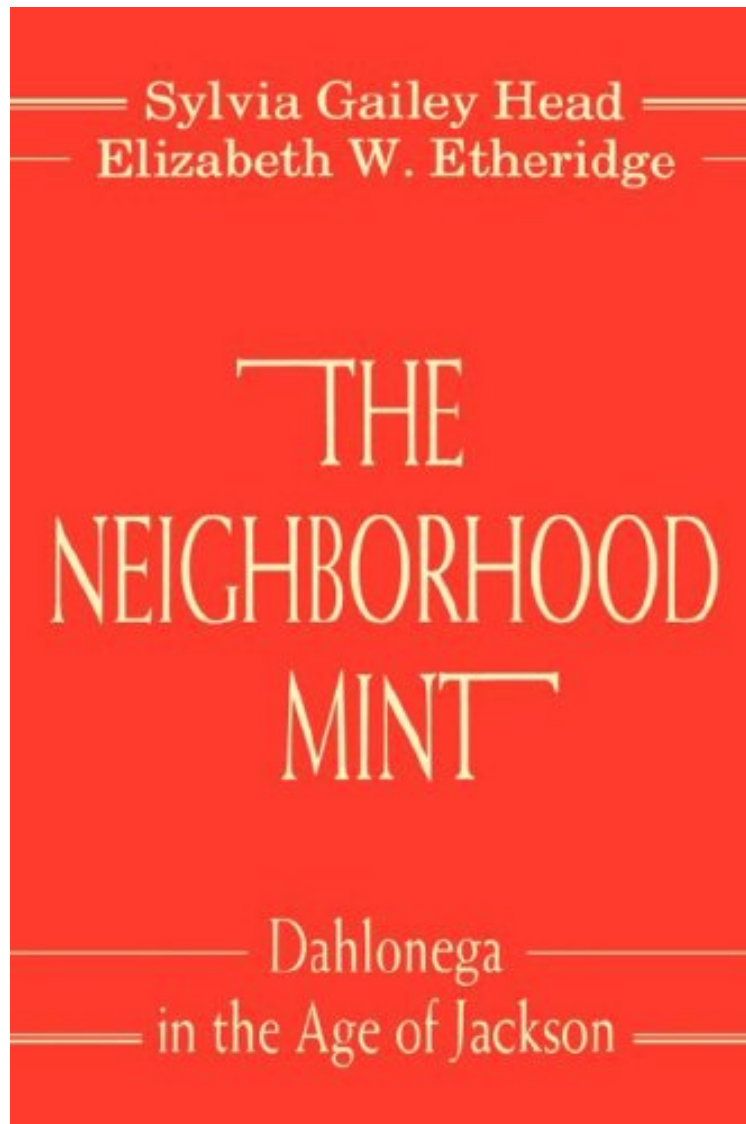


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## THE NEIGHBORHOOD MINT

*Elizabeth ETHERIDGE*

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**Elizabeth ETHERIDGE : THE NEIGHBORHOOD MINT** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised THE NEIGHBORHOOD MINT:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Gold coins in a place far, far away, long, long agoBy MB in CalifBook is a very readable history of a time and place little known to most Americans. Few know that the first US gold strikes were in the south and that mints were established to make coins from the gold. The book concentrates on the relationships of mint employees and does a thorough job of it. I would have like to seen some coverage of some of the technical aspects minting at that time and place. Still an enjoyable and informative read.0 of 0 people found the

following review helpful. Highly Recommended!By CustomerAn incredible look into the Dahlonega Mint from its earliest days to its last. Very highly recommended if you are a collector of Dahlonega coinage or are interested in early Georgia history.6 of 6 people found the following review helpful. Politics of the US MintBy Johnny W.

KicklighterAfter a recent trip to Dahlonega, Georgia, I've become obsessed with wanting to know more about the U.S. Mint that had been there and its history. To say that "The Neighborhood Mint" by Head Etheridge gave me all the information I ever wanted to know would be an understatement. Their 200-page book is packed with facts, figures, stories, and bits of history that sometimes were overwhelming. At times you get the feeling the authors are "beating a dead horse", but I was never left with mysteries or unanswered questions. Being a student of US coins, I was fascinated as to the role politics played in the coinage of our money, establishment of mints, and whom the mints employed. The authors drill down deep into the personalities and motives of the individual players. Additionally, I was fascinated to learn that Dahlonega was the site of the first American gold rush, not California. The Dahlonega mint never did produce the coinage anticipated by its developers for numerous reasons, which is also explained. I wouldn't recommend this book to the fainthearted. If you are history buff, coin collector, or a student of politics, this is a good read. If you are not, stay away.

The first major gold rush in the United States occurred not in California in 1848 but in north Georgia in the 1820s. The discovery of rich deposits of gold in the Cherokee Nation, later to become North Georgia, combined with the peculiar politics of the era to prompt the establishment of a branch mint in Dahlonega, Georgia. Then miners were able to bring their gold to the mint, have it assayed, and receive gold coins in return. The story of the mint - its establishment, construction, operations, failures, and eventual closing - is a fascinating one, full of conflict and a compelling cast of characters. But this account of the U.S. Branch Mint in Dahlonega, Georgia is much more than a fascinating story. The cast of characters was involved in a much larger drama. The events surrounding the establishment and operation of the mint reflect the social, political, and economic history of the antebellum United States. In Dahlonega, Georgia, as elsewhere during the Age of Jackson, the social, political, and economic equality for which the age is so noted was more hoped for than real. The U.S. Branch Mint in Dahlonega, Georgia pleased few people besides those who were fortunate enough to get jobs there. It never coined enough gold to serve the purpose for which it was created - the relief of the nation's chronic shortage of coin. So the director of the U.S. Mint at Philadelphia, the parent U.S. Mint, charged that it was merely a "neighborhood mint." Residents of Dahlonega, Georgia complained that it was not a neighborhood institution; they had no control over the appointments to its offices. Even those who did secure employment in the mint must have wondered at times just how fortunate they were when they had to defend themselves against all kinds of charges from people who were after their jobs. The Dahlonega Branch Mint closed in 1861, a victim of the Civil War, and was never reopened. But coins bearing the mint mark "D" have become collector's items in the twentieth century. In a story full of irony, that is the final one, for with all the obstacles that faced those who operated the mint, it is something of a miracle that coins perfect enough for circulation were produced there are all. The authors' sensitivity to historical ironies and their careful and exhaustive use of rare primary source materials make this a useful book for all professional historians. But it is a book for everyone to enjoy. Its compelling narrative, its development of characters, its sense of humor, its lively quotations from the correspondence of the period, and its constant attention to conflict in the community combine to make reading the book a pleasure as well as a profit.

"...Sylvia Head and Elizabeth Etheridge...have succeeded in producing a narrative that reads well and is a good history." -- Edward J. Cashin, Augusta College "...Throughout, the story is enlivened by the authors' wit and the copiously quoted unintentional humor of office-seeking Georgians." -- Johanna Nicol Shields, *Journal of the Early Republic* About the AuthorSylvia Gailey Head, who was born in north Georgia in 1903 and now resides in Athens, Georgia, is a colorful local historian. Elizabeth Etheridge, also a Georgia native, is a professional historian who has taught history at Longwood College in Farmville, Virginia, since 1966. She earned her Ph. D. in American history from the University of Georgia. She is the author of *The Butterfly Caste: A Social History of Pallagra in the South*.