

The Land of the Silver Dollar

What ever happened to the silver dollar? It was a noble coin. It must have weighed a half pound. When a silver dollar was thrown on a bar, the clink, so they say, could have been heard in Jefferson County, and would have bought two rounds of drinks for the town. At today's prices for silver, the diameter of a silver dollar would be down to the size of a canary seed.

A generation ago, The West had the reputation of being the last place where silver dollars could be found. Men used to go down the street with five pounds (weight) of silver dollars in their pockets. They would feel undressed without them. They paid for everything in silver dollars. At least such was the legend. Then, too, silver dollars were excellent for the slot machines in Nevada. Clink, clink, clink

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and in no time at all, you've dropped a hundred dollars at the cherries.

How is it today? In point of fact, the silver dollar was a numismatic item long before the inflation, and the computerization of money is as strong in The West as it is in The East. More so. Everyone in The West is check-happy. They carry no folding money. They write a check at the drop of a pin. You go to a food store and everyone pays with a check. Naturally this takes more time than cash because it involves establishing your credentials. In The East there are express lines for people with fewer than seven items. In The West, there are express lines for people who want to pay cash. These lines are mostly empty.

You go to a box office to pick up your theatre tickets. More check writing in front of you. I once saw a girl go into a drug store, buy a candy bar, and write out a check for it.

Thou hast conquered, O Great Computer, and the clink of metal is no longer heard in the land.