

# 1848 A YEAR IN CHANGE

By Dennis Fortier

Coinage provides a great record of major events in history. 1848 is unusual in that so much happened and was recorded in Numismatics as it was happening. Experts have counted more than 2000 distinct medals, medallions and other coin like items produced by various factions involved in the second French Revolution alone.

Karl Marx published his *Communist Manifesto*, in 1848. That helped fuel the fires in France as well as the 38 independent states that made up the German-Prussian lands. Soon The Italian states, Czechs, Poles, and Hungarians also joined the fun. The progress of the Hungarian revolution can be traced in its coins and paper money. The Revolutions of 1848 were largely crushed but the yoke of the European feudal system was cast off forever and a great legacy in coinage was left to us.

The United States wasn't idle during this time. The Mexican war was just finished and as part of the peace treaty the U.S. purchased for \$18 million dollars what is now California, Nevada, Utah, Arizona, and parts of New Mexico, Colorado, and Wyoming. Just weeks before the treaty was signed gold was discovered in California. Fortunately word didn't get out until it was too late and the treaty was signed.

Late in 1848 the first California gold reached the east and President Taylor had it sent to the mint to be made into coinage. 1,389 quarter eagles stamped CAL were made. 75 are known to exist today. Zachary Taylor also gave us something else to start collecting in 1848, campaign buttons!