

THEN *and* NOW!

Pennies Pressed Into Souvenirs and Service

(NAPSA)—Even if you're a penny pincher, it's hard to resist the fun that can be had with one of these copper coins and 22 tons of pressure. As far as collectibles go, many people consider pressed pennies to be heaven "cent."

First produced for the 1893 Colombian Exposition in Chicago, pressed pennies (also called squished or elongated pennies) are often an inexpensive memento (usually 50 cents, plus a penny) of a visit to a museum, event or other attraction. Children in particular enjoy watching a penny being rolled between steel dies and impressed with a design.

However, adults are not immune to the cachet of crushed copper. Evidence of the popularity of pressed pennies can be found in Washington, D.C., at the Squished Penny Museum (www.squished.com) and on eBay, where the mini mementos are bought and sold. Copper Memories (www.coppermemories.com) of Virginia Beach, Va., even produces custom-pressed pennies called Wedding Coins for brides and grooms who want an unusual favor for their guests.

Pennies bearing a special confetti-and-flask symbol on one side and the DuPont oval, event name and date on the other were dispensed recently at the company's 200th anniversary picnic in Wilmington, Delaware. To further mark the occasion, DuPont donated the pressed penny machines used at the picnic to three local museums.

"The donation of the pressed penny machines and the future revenue stream they generate are examples of the ongoing support DuPont provides to the cultural institutions that contribute to the vitality of our headquarters community," notes Contributions and



Squish all you want, they'll mint more. Pressed pennies are a popular collectible.

Community Affairs Manager Sylvia Banks.

"Revenue generated depends on traffic," says Tim Prize of Vendors Alliance Inc. (www.coinpress.com), supplier of the DuPont penny presses. "With a 50 cent vend price, you can expect penny presses to generate about \$7,500 for every 200,000 people passing through."

Before 1982, U.S. pennies were minted with 97 percent copper and three percent zinc. Afterward, the percentages were reversed. In post-1982 pennies, the zinc bleeds through the surface copper when pressed, resulting in silvery streaks. For this reason, some pressed penny aficionados use only pre-1982 pennies.

For a state-by-state list of penny machine locations, see www.pennycollector.com/locations.htm.