



"How I Started"

How numismatists "got started"

By Samuel Ernst YN

Last month we found out how Q. David Bowers "got started". I'm glad the club liked it. This month we find out about my friend Rick Kay, who owns Rick Kay Rare Coins. It's a great story, I think you'll like it too.

Hi Samuel,

I think it's a great idea. As far as how I got started, I don't have a specific recollection. However, I am the youngest of six children. My siblings, though not serious numismatists, had a few coins from the 1950's and 1960's laying around. At about age 8, I became very interested and bought a Redbook and some "How To" books on collecting.

I started collecting Liberty Nickels, as I loved the Roman numeral "V" on the reverse. Soon thereafter, I attended my first coin show at the Glendale (CA) convention Center. It was a small show of about 30 tables. There, I met, Don Carmody and his wife Helen (O'Carmody's Coins). Don was very friendly and extremely outgoing. He educated me on what to look for in coins and also tipped me off about using the Greysheet. At a later Glendale Coin Show, Don showed me a copper Morgan dime, and I think you know what happened after that.

When I went away to college, I put my collecting on hold. My interest lay dormant for about 15 years, when, around 2000, the collecting bug suddenly bit me again. I tried to contact Don and Helen, but Don had passed away years earlier and Helen two weeks earlier.

As you know, I am now studying all facets of 1854 and 1855 Large Flying Eagle patterns. I am trying to determine emission sequences and find connections between die state, weight and composition, which should dictate the striking order. I'd also like to learn the true quantities struck, as well as the actual compositions intended by the Mint. I have tested approximately 15% of the population believed to exist and hope to test another 5%. I also plan to search the National Archives for any relevant Mint records.

Rick

Rick Kay is the owner of Rick Kay Rare Coins (www.rick-kay-rare-coins.com) in Encinitas, CA and specializes in U.S. patterns, in particular, many of the finest known (and second finest) R7 and R8 patterns. He and his family visited Omaha last summer and my Dad and I got to show him the Byron Reed collection while he was here. I am really glad that I can call him my friend.

