



## "HOW I STARTED"

How numismatists "got started"

By Samuel Ernst YN

This month we are going to learn how Cliff Mishler got started. I hope you like it as much as I did.

*I date my initiation to coin collecting to the summer of 1950, when I was ten years old or shortly before my 11th birthday, which falls on August 11th. I was living in Kalkaska, in the northern part of Michigan's lower peninsula, about 25 miles east of Traverse City. My hometown was Vandalia, in southwestern Michigan, but that spring my father had responded to a business opportunity in Kalkaska. There I met a young friend and his mother, who undertook to entice me to share with them an interest in collecting cancelled postal stamps of the world. Their entreaties did not take.*

*My young friend's name was Bob Anderson. He was my age and in the same grade in school. We ended up being summer pals for the next five or six years, until my father disposed of the business and we returned to full time residency in Vandalia.*

*My first coin was a worn one-pysa bronze coin from Zanzibar. Dated in Arabic by the Mohammedan calendar (AH) era - 1299 - to an excited youngster the dating on the coin appeared to be a crude representation of the Christian year (AD) 1199. That coin cost \$1.75, being purchased as an approval selection mailed to me from the Tatham Stamp and Coin Company in Springfield, Mass. This is a coin that I have come to cherish over all others in my collection down through the years - thinking it was 650 years old, the price seemed such a bargain, I just had to have it - although it would probably only command a market value of one or two dollars in today's marketplace. That little bronze coin from Zanzibar is, however, certainly the best investment I ever made as a coin collector...or as a collector period for that matter. That purchase led me to a lifelong pursuit of coin collecting...along with other collecting interests as well...a vocational interest which became a vocational pursuit, and very rewarding collecting and career callings.*

*I had connected with Tatham by reading their ad in a stamp publication my young friend and his mother were receiving, wherein they offered ten pieces of world War II currency for 10 cents...plus a three-cent stamp for mailing...along with a selection of "rare" coins which would be sent on approval. Now, there was something I could sink my teeth into - money! And at the same time get my young friend and his mother off my back by offering to them that, while I was not interested in collecting stamps, I was becoming a coin collector. That turned out to be the case, of course, and I've been at it for 57 years without cease. The literature that accompanied that Tatham shipment included a little sales booklet that led me to discover that U.S. coins carried different dates and mintmarks. In short order I was acquiring the Whitman blue coin folders for cents and other denominations, and filling the holes with coins selected from searching rolls obtained from the local bank.*

*My current collecting interests are very eclectic, with particular interest in such diverse exnumia categories as encased coins and stickered silver dollars, National Bank Note issues from small towns in other states of same name as major cities, world paper money bearing aviation vignettes, coins and paper money of Sarawak and Liberia, early proof sets of South Africa, etc.*

*Over a period of about 20 years from the mid-60's to the mid-80's I had, on three or four occasions, personally conveyed the 1792 half-disme then owned by the late John J. Pittman to Lola for photographic purposes. When his collection came up for sale in the mid-90's I attended the auction with intentions of buying that coin. I stayed in the bidding, and was the ultimate under-bidder, well beyond the pre-sale limit I had set for myself. Within months of that sale I had the opportunity to purchase the Judd specimen, which was actually a nicer coin, at a price that was less than I had bid for the Pittman coins, but more than I had intended to bid for it. While I would have preferred to be able to own the Pittman coin, I am pleased to be the owner of the Judd coin.*

*Which leads me to say, never purchase a numismatic item as an investment. All purchases should be made because you appreciate the historic or aesthetic appeal of the item. If numismatic items are purchased intelligently and enjoyed over time they will prove to be good investments with but a few exceptions.*

Thanks to Mr. Mishler for sharing such a great story.

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