



"HOW I STARTED"

How numismatists "got started"

By Samuel Ernst YN

This month we are going to learn how Tom Reynolds, a local coin dealer who specializes in early copper, got started. I hope you like it as much as I did.

*Morning Samuel,
Here is my story.*

I began collecting coins during the Summer of 1953 when I was 12 years old. The boy next door and I started with Whitman folders for Lincoln cents, Buffalo nickels, Jefferson nickels, Mercury dimes, Roosevelt dimes, Standing quarters and Washington quarters. We couldn't afford to collect half dollars or dollars....the face amount of each coins was more than we could afford with a 50 cent a week allowance and money earned mowing lawns and shoveling snow. During the mid-1950's, Indian cents, Liberty nickels, Barber coinage, some Seated Liberty material and silver dollars were still in circulation. I collected until about 1956 and then high school and college took my time and money.

After graduation from college in 1964, I retrieved my coin collection from the closet and began collecting again. The only problem was that no "old" coins were in circulation....only 90% silver coins and they were disappearing fast. I started collecting Proof 3 cent nickels, Proof Shield and Liberty nickels and other Proof coins from the late 1800's. Early in 1965, I bought my first Large Cents....3 G/VG pieces for \$2-\$3 each. I found them interesting and began to study them. I decided to specialize in Early U.S. Copper dated 1793-1857. I learned about varieties and that some varieties were very scarce and were worth a considerable premium over common varieties. I joined the Early American Coppers, national group specializing in Early copper, in 1970. Over the next several years, I collected Half Cents and Large Cents by die varieties...usually in lower grades, upgrading when possible. By the late 1980's, I decided to further specialize by collecting only Early Date (1793-1814) Large Cents by variety in very high grades...many the finest known.

In January 1980, I set up at my first coin show to sell duplicate early coppers and coins I collected years before. I was hooked!!!! I started doing shows in Omaha and surrounding states. On November 1, 1986, I left the insurance industry and became a full time coin dealer. I now travel the national coin show circuit and attend all the major show and many auctions. In 1982, I started a price list of Early Copper which I continued until the early 2000's. I now have a web site for Early Copper: www.EarlyAmericanCoppers.com. I still collect Early Dates in high grade but it is hard to add much to my collection.

-Tom Reynolds

Thanks to Mr. Reynolds for sending in a great story.

You can contact him at:

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