



"HOW I STARTED"

How numismatists "got started"
By Samuel Ernst YN

This month we are going to read about how Fred Weinberg started in the hobby. Mr. Weinberg is an error specialist and has an interesting story. I hope you enjoy it.

Samuel,

As a kid, I was interested in stamps and coins, but coins soon took over my interest - I liked the fact that they were made out of metal, as opposed to paper, and soon learned that they had very interesting stories to tell from our past.

I seriously started collecting coins around 8-9 years old, and soon filled up my current Cent, Nickel, and Dime Blue Whitman folders. At that point, I remember thinking I could start collecting Large Cents or Mercury Dimes, but soon realized that to get the Keys, it would cost over \$200 per set, an amount of money I didn't have as a ten-year old!

Because I was also interested in Flying Saucers at the time, like many kids in the 50's and early 60's, (there were a lot of magazines and articles on them all the time!) errors on any coin caught my eye. I soon decided to concentrate on the mistakes on the coins I found, and to learn about the Minting Process. I was pulling die cracks, laminations, clips, and so on, from circulation, and even better, from the change I collected at the end of each month for my paper route. I'd come home from collecting the Quarter per month subscription for the local newspaper, and I always had a large pile of cents thru quarters on my desk to go thru!

In 1963, I came home one night, and there was a 1882 \$10 Liberty Gold piece in the pile - someone had tried to pass it off as a foreign coin, as it was night time, and they thought I wouldn't notice it. I took it as a quarter, and didn't notice it was a gold coin till I got home hours later!

In 1964, it was valued at \$20, and the just-issued 1964 Kennedy Proof set, which the Mint had charged \$2.10 for, was already worth \$22 !! Because I wanted the first Kennedy Proof set so bad, traded my \$10 Gold coin for the Proof set, and I had to give my local dealer the extra \$2 to boot!

Needless to say, it wasn't my best trade, but it really motivated me to read even more about the coin hobby from Coin World (especially the Collectors Clearinghouse page) and Numismatic News, as well as finding a few local coin shops, and attending a few small coin shows in my area. I became an "Error Collector" and found that I enjoyed finding out how our coins were actually minted, something that wasn't of interest to most collectors and dealers at that time.

I joined the national error organization (Numismatic Error Collectors of America, now called CONECA), and soon was writing a month "Youth Column" in the monthly Errorscope publication, and also became the "Youth Director" of the Club, organizing various activities for the young error collectors who were members.

It wasn't till I was in college that I finally decided to turn my hobby into a profession, and go to work for a large local coin shop in the Los Angeles area. I've been a full-time coin dealer for over 36 years now, and it was the best decision I've ever made!

Fred Weinberg

Thanks to Mr. Weinberg for taking the time to send in an interesting story. He can be reached at his website www.FredWeinberg.com