

Michigan Roll Finds by Daniel Sheffer (*MichMatist* Spring 2009)

Are you trying to pursue your coin collecting hobby despite having very little money to spend on them? Wouldn't it be nice if a source for rare and collectable coins was close by – and they were available for face value? Well, the source for the rare and collectable coins in this article was just such a place. They were all discovered in rolls of coins that I've been able to obtain at my bank since the year 2000. You might be thinking, "But I collect proof coins, Franklin half dollars, and older type silver dollars and I can't get those at my bank!" I say, "Yes you can!"

Among the better coins that I have found are: Liberty Walking, Franklin, and 1964-1969 Kennedy half dollars. Also found were counter-stamped coins. Manufactured as post-mint novelties, a punch or die is used to add a letter, name, date or other feature not originally intended to be on the coin. Also included in my discoveries are proof coins, painted coins, plastic play money, Buffalo nickels and silver (1942-1945) "war" nickels. I've also found error coins, 40% silver content Eisenhower Dollars, and even Morgan and Peace type silver dollars!

My inspiration for roll searching came early on in my hobby adventures. I was in high school when Bill O'Rourke began writing his "Found in Rolls" column for *Coin World* magazine. While I had known of this source for finding coins before, it was Bill's writing about his finds of rare coins in bank rolls that really inspired me. He has written about several of my better finds over the years. The most recent roll find that he showed and wrote about (*Coin World*; June 9, 2008) was a "love token" that I found in 2008. The coin is a 1971-D (Denver Mint) half dollar with "Roger Loves Katie" inscribed on the front of the coin. I am proud to count Bill as one of my numismatic friends. Please check out Bill's websites www.foundinrolls.com or www.askaboutcoins.com to see some of the amazing coins, tokens, medals, and other things that you would never expect to find in rolls.

When I was in high school I would stop at my bank on the way home from school to see if any odd coins had come in. One day in 2001 the teller had something for me. It seems that a gentleman had come in earlier and turned in \$100.00 worth of rolled "Ike" (Eisenhower) dollars! That was a lot of money for a high school kid to come up with in order to obtain those rolls so I actually went home and borrowed the money from my mom. As it turned out, it was a good investment since there was a 1921 Morgan dollar as well as a 1922 Peace dollar in those rolls! Two weeks later the same man came in with another \$100 worth of "Ikes" and again I discovered that there were silver dollars in the rolls. That happened once more, two weeks later, then nothing.

Several years later in 2004, I was at the same bank and the teller that was waiting on me asked if I wanted a roll of "Ikes." "Yes!" I immediately replied. She then told me that I should look at them as soon as I got home. The coins had come in loose and she had noted some "different looking dollars" as she placed the coins in their wrapper. Well, needless to say, as soon as I got to the parking lot that roll of coins was poured into my hand and I immediately spotted the "different looking" ones. The first one found was a Peace type dollar. Then I saw a nice Morgan silver dollar that would easily grade as AU (About Uncirculated)! The coin's obverse was facing up, and I saw the date of 1879. My first thought was, "Wow! That's old!" Then I asked myself, "Could it have the magic and much more scarce "CC" (Carson City) mintmark on the reverse?" I slowly turned it over, and there under the eagle was.....nothing! Oh Well, I did not have a major rarity, but I did still have a very old coin that was worth what I traded in cash for the entire roll of coins.

Another fun find also came from a roll of Eisenhower dollars. That time it was one that should not have been in the roll at all. It was a 1973-S (San Francisco Mint) copper-nickel clad proof. These have a reported mintage of 2,760,339 and while that figure is not very low for the Eisenhower series, it's much lower than the mintages of the current Presidential dollar series. An interesting year for the Eisenhower dollar series, no coins dated 1973 were released into circulation. The only way to get the 1973 dated "Ikes" was to purchase

coins that were prepared by the U.S. Mint for collectors.

I also like looking for rare die varieties and error coins. One of the biggest errors I've found, although not from a roll, did come from a bank. In late 2007, I asked for any loose dollar coins they had as I like to spend them and the tellers don't like having them just sitting in their coin trays. As soon as I got back to my office I looked through them. Imagine my surprise when I found a circulated John Adams Presidential dollar with doubled edge lettering! Apparently undetected for quite awhile, this coin had been spent a few times, finally coming to rest at my local bank. I should have kept this one for my own collection of error coins but I sold it on eBay a week later for \$60.00.

By now you can tell that I like dollar coins. The fact is that dollar and half dollar coin rolls are among the best for searching. They do not circulate much, so when they get turned in, they often remain in the bank's vault until a knowledgeable collector comes along to trade cash for the rolls of coins. Don't pass up smaller denominations though as there are still many errors, die varieties and silver issues to be found.

Now, I'll share some tips for roll searching. First of all, you will need a magnifying glass and a jewelers' loupe. If you have been collecting coins for awhile you likely have these already. Secondly, you will want to buy a copy of both volumes of *The Cherrypicker's Guide to Rare Die Varieties* by Bill Fivaz and J.T. Stanton, edited by Mike Ellis (Fourth Edition-Volumes I & II). These books will show you some of the many die varieties that you can look for. Bill O'Rourke referred these books to me.

Thirdly, you will want to have a supply of paper coin wrappers on hand to re-roll the coins once you have gone through them. While most banks will give you these for free you can also purchase them at office supply stores. Finally and most importantly, establish a friendly relationship with your bank. Explain to the teller that you are a coin collector and would like to obtain, for example some rolls of half dollars. Always be friendly and courteous! I have found that it's best to return any unwanted coins to a different branch of the bank. This way the tellers where you are buying the coins from don't become frustrated with getting the same coins back. Also, this reduces the risk of searching through the same rolls of coins again and again.

In closing, it does not matter if you are a beginning collector or an advanced collector, roll searching is for you. You will not lose any money on the coins you get from your bank since they are traded with you at face value. You could also make quite a good profit should you choose to sell the collectable coins that you've found at some point. Most importantly you will have a lot of fun searching through rolls!