

# BUILDING A TYPE SET OF U.S. COINS

**John H. MacMillan Ph.D.**

## **1) What is a type set?**

A type set is generally defined as a collection that contains one, and only one, of each design for a series or complete coinage series. For example, a complete type set of 3 cent silver will be only 3 pieces while a complete type set of U.S. circulating coins would contain one of each design type from half cents through bullion platinum and from 1792 to the present. Major design types are usually supplemented with variations such as coins with and without arrows, rays, drapery or mottoes. A collector can decide which varieties to include as a matter of personal preference. This article is my attempt to share my experiences of collecting U.S. type coins. As a collector of moderate means I can give an overview of collecting strategies, pitfalls and guidelines for assembling a beautiful collection with annual expenditures of \$2000 or less. A collector has his entire life to enjoy this collecting specialty, so patience is required. I have collected for over 30 years and now have all but 2 types for the period 1834-present. A complete collection is impossible for all but the most wealthy so compromises and hard choices must be made. The article is broken into chapters for easy reading. I hope to convince you that type collecting is the most enjoyable specialty in U.S. coin collecting. The general principles elucidated here are also applicable to other specialties, such as commemoratives, ancients, hard times tokens and world coins.

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## 2. Why collect by type?

Variety is the spice of life for the type collector. A date collector assembles one of each date and mint mark for a series such as Lincoln cents or silver dollars. A varieties collector may focus on minute die variations in large cents or half cents. Reasons to collect by type rather than the other methods include:

- a. A type collection shows all the designs of U.S. coinage, some designs being very beautiful. Such a collection if exhibited will be of greater appeal to non collectors or beginners. Exotic denominations such as 2 cent pieces or \$2.50 gold usually elicit interest from the public. If you want to experience the complete panorama of U.S. coinage, from half cents to double eagles, a well developed type collection will view as a breathtaking experience.
- b. A type collector with only moderate reading can gain a wide overview of the history of U.S. coinage, minting practices and reasons for design changes.
- c. A type collection is easy to start, as late 20th and 21st century designs (excepting gold and platinum bullion issues) are mostly cheap even in high grades.
- d. A type collection can be a store of value and even a good investment if choice problem free specimens of good eye appeal are obtained. What we mean by these terms will be elaborated on later.

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### 3. **Advantages and disadvantages of type collecting**

Some of the advantages of type collecting have been mentioned in section 2 above. In addition some other advantages are:

Only moderate research is needed to get started. A copy of "The guidebook of U.S. coins" (Red Book) (~\$12.00) if bought and thumbed through will give a beginner a general overview. After common twentieth century types are acquired the collector can obtain more detailed texts such as Walter Breen's "complete encyclopedia of U.S. Coins(~ \$75.00)

A type collector can pick up bargains in currently slow series such as 2 cent pieces or half dimes. Many low mintage dates in some series are available in extremely fine or higher conditions at moderate prices.

Some disadvantages include:

A type collector will not gain in depth knowledge of a particular series or denomination. He is a "jack of all trades, master of none".

Type collecting becomes, except for the wealthy, impossibly expensive for choice condition 18<sup>th</sup> and early nineteenth century issues, particularly gold coins. Even well worn "good" conditions can run from \$500 up for most specimens. For even the wealthy the 1808 quarter eagle is a challenge, available infrequently at auctions. Choice reproductions of many 18<sup>th</sup> century coins are now available, manufactured by the Gallery Mint Museum in Eureka Springs Arkansas. These provide a beautiful and moderately priced alternative. This collector has filled many holes in this manner.

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## 4. Major vs Minor design types

It is a matter of personal preference whether a type collector wishes to include only the major designs, the moderate variations present in the "Red Book", or even more subtle variations. This collector personally adds different alloy variations as long as they are circulating coins, for example, 90% silver, 40% silver and clad Kennedy half dollars. In my opinion circulating commemoratives, such as the 1776-1976 bicentennial series and state quarters, and uncirculated bullion coins should be included. Non circulating silver proof or uncirculated general commemoratives should not. Whether modern uncirculated bullion coins should be included is again a matter of collector preference. While technically issued for circulation, of course they only circulate among bullion dealers and collectors.

Three U.S coins have always generated controversy as to whether they are patterns or struck for circulation. If patterns they are not to be represented in a type set of circulating U.S. coins. The questionable coins are described below, along with my opinion.

1. 1792 half dime. In my opinion it is a coin struck for circulation , as it was struck with existing mint equipment in a basement in Philadelphia during 1792 and released . Most specimens today are well worn, indicating extensive use by the public.
2. 1836-1838 Gobrecht dollars. Much confusion existed for many decades over these, as indeed many variations of patterns were struck. However mint records indicate that very small mintages, 1000 pieces or less, were issued as general releases in 1836 and 1838. Thus in my opinion it is a general issue. This issue presents a financial challenge. It is one of my missing coins, along with the 1907 roman numeral high relief double eagle!
3. Four dollar gold pieces or "Stellas", are a "no brainer" as all were issued as patterns. Nonetheless many wealthy collectors include them, as the designs and denominations are quite unique.

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# The U.S. type set list

**This in my opinion is the complete type coin list for circulating U.S. Coins.**

## Half Cents

Flowing Hair 1793

Liberty Cap Large  
Head 1794

Liberty Cap Small  
Head 1795-1797

Draped Bust 1800-1808

Classic Head 1809-1835

Coronet Head 1840-1857

## Large Cents

Chain 1793

Wreath 1793

Liberty Cap High Relief Large Head 1794

Liberty Cap Low Relief Small Head 1795-6

Draped Bust 1796-1807

Classic head 1808-1814

Coronet Head 1816-1839

Braided Hair 1840-1857

## Small Cents

Flying Eagle 1857-1858

Indian CN 1859

Indian CN 1860-1863

Indian 1864-1909

Lincoln 1909 V.D.B.

Lincoln 1909-1958

Lincoln 1943 steel

Lincoln Memorial 1959-

**Two-Cent Pieces 1864-1873**

**Silver Three Cent Pieces**

Type 1 1851-1853

Type 2 1854-1858

Type 3 1859-1873

**Nickel Three Cent Pieces 1865-1889**

**5 Cent Nickels**

Shield-Rays 1866-1867

Shield-No Rays 1867-1883

Liberty Head NC 1883

Liberty Head WC 1883-1912

Buffalo Type 1 1913

Buffalo Type 2 1913-1938

Jefferson Wartime 1942-1945

Jefferson 1938-

**Half Dimes**

Half Disme 1792

Flowing Hair 1794-1795

Draped Bust SE 1796-1797

Draped Bust HE 1800-1805

Capped Bust 1829-1837

Liberty Seated-NS 1837-1838

Liberty Seated No  
Drapery 1838-1840

Liberty Seated-Stars 1838-1859

Liberty Seated-Arrows 1853-1855

Liberty Seated-Legend 1860-1873

### **Dimes**

Draped bust SE 1796-1797

Draped Bust HE 1798-1807

Capped Bust Large 1809-1828

Capped Bust Small  
1828-1837

Liberty seated No Stars 1837-1838)

Liberty seated Stars 1838-1860

Liberty Seated No Drapery 1838-1840

Liberty seated Arrows 1853-1855

Liberty seated Legend 1860-1891

Liberty Seated Arrows 1873-1874

Barber 1892-1916

Mercury 1916-1945

Roosevelt 1946-1964 Silver

Roosevelt 1965- Clad

### **Twenty Cent Piece 1875-1878**

## Quarters

Draped bust SE 1796

Draped Bust HE 1804-1807

Large Bust 1815-1828

Small Bust 1831-1838

Liberty Seated No Motto No Drapery 1838-1840

Liberty Seated No Motto with drapery 1838-1865

Liberty Seated A & R 1853

Liberty Seated Arrows 1854-1855

Liberty Seated with motto 1866-1891

Liberty Seated Arrows 1873-1874

Barber 1892-1916

Standing liberty type 1 1916-1917

Standing liberty type 2 1917-1930

Washington 1932-1964

Washington Clad 1965-98

Bicentennial 1976 clad

Bicentennial 1976 40% silver

State quarters 1999 –clad

State quarters 1999- 90% silver

## Half Dollars

Flowing Hair 1794-1795

Draped Bust Small Eagle 1796-1797

Draped Bust Heraldic Eagle 1801-1807

Capped Bust 1807-1836

Capped Bust Reeded Edge 1836-1839

Liberty seated No motto No Drapery 1839

Liberty seated No Motto with drapery 1839-1866

Liberty seated Arrows and Rays 1853

Liberty seated Arrows 1854-1855

Liberty seated With Motto 1866-1891

Liberty seated Arrows 1873-1874

Barber 1892-1915

Liberty Walking 1916-1947

Franklin 1948-1963

Kennedy 1964, Silver

Kennedy 1965-70 40% silver

Kennedy 1971-Clad

Kennedy Bicentennial 1976 clad

Kennedy Bicentennial 1976 40% silver

## **Dollars**

Flowing Hair 1794-1795

Draped Bust Small Eagle 1795-1798

Draped Bust Heraldic Eagle 1798-1804

Gobrecht 1836-1839

Liberty Seated No Motto 1840-1866

Liberty seated With Motto 1866-1873

Trade Dollar 1873-1883

Morgan 1878-1921

Peace High Relief 1921

Peace 1922-1935

Eisenhower 1971-1978 clad

Eisenhower 1971-1978 40% silver

Eisenhower Bicentennial 1976 clad

Eisenhower Bicentennial 1976 40% silver

Susan B. Anthony 1979-1999

Sacagawea 2000-

## **Gold Dollars**

Type 1 1849-1854

Type 2 1854-1856

Type 3 1856-1889

## **Quarter Eagles, \$2.50 Gold Pieces**

Capped Bust Right No stars 1796

Capped Bust Right 1796-1807

Capped Bust Left Large 1808

Capped Bust Left Small 1821-1827

Capped Bust Left Small 1829-1834

Classic Head 1834-1839

Liberty Coronet 1840-1907

Indian Head 1908-1929

## **Three Dollar Gold 1854-1889**

## **Half Eagles, \$5.00 Gold Pieces**

Capped Bust Small  
Eagle 1795-1798

Capped Bust Large  
Eagle 1795-1807

Capped Draped Bust 1807-1812

Capped Head 1813-  
1834

Classic Head 1834-  
1838

Liberty Coronet No  
Motto 1839-1866

Liberty Coronet with  
Motto 1866-1908

Indian Head 1908-  
1929

### **Eagles, \$10.00 Gold Pieces**

Capped Bust Small  
Eagle 1795-1797

Capped Bust Large  
Eagle 1797-1804

Liberty Coronet No  
Motto 1838-1866

Liberty Coronet  
1866-1907

Indian Head No  
Motto 1907-1908

Indian Head 1908-  
1933

### **Double Eagles, \$20.00 Gold Pieces**

Liberty Coronet No  
Motto 1849-1866

Liberty Coronet (twenty D) 1866-1876

Liberty Coronet  
1877-1907

Saint Gaudens  
Roman Numerals  
High relief 1907

Saint Gaudens No  
Motto 1907-1908

Saint Gaudens with

motto 1907-1932

### **Bullion Coins**

One ounce silver \$1.00 1986-

Tenth ounce gold  
\$5.00 1986-

Quarter ounce gold  
\$10.00 1986-

Half ounce gold  
\$25.00 1986-

One ounce gold \$50.00 1986-

Tenth ounce-one ounce platinum \$10.00-\$100.00 1997-

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## 6. Getting started

Getting started as a type set collector is quite easy if one desires a set of circulating U.S. coins. One may pull nearly uncirculated examples from change and upgrade by ordering proof sets from the U.S. mint at less than \$20.00. As many state quarters are circulating, this phase can be quite a lot of fun for several months.

After the initial fun phase the new type collector can focus on earlier twentieth century issues. At this point his first buying decisions must be made. Should he buy uncirculated or proof walkers, standing quarters, buffalo nickels etc or settle for circulated grades? As a rule of thumb, this collector would advise that you proceed by acquiring the best grade you can afford, remembering to not show glaring grade discrepancies if you will exhibit. For example, a fine condition standing quarter will "stick out like a sore thumb" in a collection surrounded by about uncirculated or brilliant uncirculated quarters. Excluding Barber quarters, and gold coins, a twentieth century type collection should be assembled at a minimum of about uncirculated grade.

The second half of the nineteenth century will provide far more difficult grading and acquisition decisions. Does the collector try for extremely fine as the minimum grade or very fine? Should he include all Red Book varieties, even more exotic variations such as the 1859 "hollow star" half dime, or only the major types? The financial resources of the collector, his preferences and patience, all will influence his decision. I would advise purchasing this fifty year period in a minimum of extremely fine grade, even if the acquisitions slow somewhat due to finances. After all, you have your entire life to collect, and attractive higher grade coins always bring more on resale.

The decisions become even more difficult for the first 50 years of the nineteenth century. Are "no drapery" versions of the seated half dimes through half dollars to be included? I believe they are significant variations and have included them in my set. Prices are quite reasonable for the no drapery series in very fine and extremely fine grade. Early gold coins from 1800-1833 are rare due to extensive melting, and are out of the price range of the average collector. I advise focusing on completing gold type from 1834 on in minimum of extremely fine grade. Certain early gold types are also available as legal reproductions (see section 13). An additional complication now arising is how to deal with poorly struck issues, such as 1808-1814 large cents and 1800-1805 half dimes /dimes. Well struck problem free examples of these series are rare and cost many multiples of average strikes. My usual advice not to buy weakly struck coins still applies here unless the collector is on a very tight budget. Costs rise dramatically in all series for about uncirculated grade and above. This collector has set a minimum grade of very fine for all coins of this period. As always you the collector must make your decisions based on "finances, preference and level of patience". Never buy "bright shiny" early copper or silver unless professionally certified, as cleaning is probable. A cleaned coin is a difficult sell later.

As has been mentioned earlier, choice eighteenth century type coins become nearly impossible for the

moderate means collector. He may think that he must make difficult choices between obtaining extremely worn examples of many series (chain, wreath cents, early dimes) at greater than \$500, or acquiring choice specimens only after protracted savings plans. I solved this problem by obtaining a minimum of very fine grade for the type coins costing \$1000 or less. The remaining slots were partially filled with choice reproductions from the Gallery Mint Museum in Eureka Springs Arkansas. Vacant slots hopefully await further reproductions! Some discontinued GMM issues such as chain and wreath cents, have appreciated substantially in the open market. Nonetheless, several hundred dollars in my opinion is preferable to several thousand for barely discernable specimens.

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## 7. Grading

The topic of grading will always bring controversy, but I will give brief guidelines.

- a. Buy a copy of "Photograde" by James F. Ruddy and study all the pictures. Read the fine print about idiosyncrasies in each series. Try to grade yourself all circulated type coins you view , as moderate means collectors will include many circulated coins in their type set.
- b. If you are uncomfortable grading yourself, buy only Professional Coin Grading Service or Numismatic Guarantee Corporation certified coins, even if they cost more. The old cliches read true in coin collecting, "you get what you pay for" and "there is no Santa Claus in Numismatics". On eventual resale, a high percent recovery of cost, or even profit, is more probable for coins graded by these services.
- c. Do not buy weakly struck coins, even if attractively priced. A weakly struck coin shows design obliteration only in specific areas, not on all as is the case for a worn specimen. If you are unsure, pass on it.
- d. If you do not like how a coin looks don't buy it, as others probably wont like it either.
- e. View as many coins as possible in all series. Internet auctions such as E-bay, [www.ebay.com](http://www.ebay.com) , and internet dealers on-line catalogs are great starters. Go to all local shows and scan the bourse floor! Learning to grade yourself before bidding is especially critical for internet auctions, as many coins offered there are grossly over graded.

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## 8. **Methods of procuring type coins**

Viewing and obtaining coins has never been easier. On line auctions such as E-bay have brought coin bidding to our living rooms. In addition to the new internet method all classical methods retain their validity. This collector has bought by every method here.

- a. Numismatic adds such as in Coin World.
- b. Mail bid sales, also often in Coin World.
- c. Local Dealers Shops
- d. Live Auction
- e. Personal transactions, see if you have a local coin club for personal interaction.
- f. Fixed price lists, request to be on mailing lists by contacting dealers in numismatic publications.
- g. Numismatic chat rooms on the internet.

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## 9. Common versus scarce dates

Conventional wisdom states that a type collection should be filled with the most common dates in order to easily obtain choice specimens at moderate cost. Contrarian arguments to this strategy are:

- a. Common dates of recent series may be un-saleable and will be lumped together and dumped wholesale on liquidation of the collection.
  
- b. Scarce dates in many series are available at the same price or moderate markups from prices of the most common dates. Examples abound in the gold series and nineteenth century liberty seated coinage. Study the prices and mintage figures in the "Red Book". A scarcer date for a type coin could wake up some day and bring you a profit!

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## 10) Grading and grade matching

Some earlier comments should be repeated here. For example, a fine condition standing quarter will "stick out like a sore thumb" in a quarter type collection surrounded by about uncirculated or brilliant uncirculated examples. Try to have the coins on each side of your specimen in the type series be within one grade level. An aesthetically pleasing type coin exhibit, even if consisting of "middle" circulated grades, will be a source of satisfaction and pride for the type collector. If the type collector fills the late 18th century type coin examples with modern reproductions, such as those offered by the Gallery mint Museum( <http://www.coin-gallery.com/gmm/> ), he must decide whether to buy proof or uncirculated versions. This collector prefers uncirculated pieces since in most cases they more closely resemble the early coins as first struck. The "Copy" designation is generally less obtrusive on the reverse. Grade matching will of course not work here if you also include some real 18th century type coins. My **minimum** recommended grades per 50 year increment are:

21st Century B.U. and Proof

20th century 1950-2000 B.U. and Proof

20th Century 1901-1949, A.U.

19th century 1850-1900 E.F.

19th century 1801-1849 Fine

18th Century V.G. (except for reproductions)

If you do not intent to exhibit these suggestions are less important.

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# 11. Common Mistakes

I have made most of these mistakes myself. "Act in haste, repeat in leisure". I hope these lessons learned will help you.

- a) Buying low grade coins to "quickly fill the holes" is always a mistake as low grade coins have poor eye appeal and have practically no resale value. If you are compulsive and impatient like me you can fall into this trap.
  
- b) Not returning a coin with some problem as it is a "hassle" to repackage and mail. Believe me, it is a bigger hassle to be stuck with a doggy coin and face the necessity of upgrading it later. Ship it back to the dealer and don't look back!
  
- c) Buying for profit. Type coin collecting is for fun, and a collection acquired over many years can sometimes but not always be sold for gain. Most circulated type coins bring only 30-60% of retail. If you seek profit from type collecting buy only P.C.G.S or N.G.C. certified coins in mint state 63 and higher. Even for these coins profit is not guaranteed. The coin market is extremely cyclical with constant switching of "hot" and "slow" series. An advantage for the type collector is his intrinsic diversification by possessing many different series.
  
- d) Impulse buying. Always have a short list of coins you wish to add in the next several months, their range of conditions, and expected price ranges. If the next morning you have delayed sticker shock, return the coin immediately. Repenting is always in leisure.
  
- e) Going off the track. If you wish to enjoy collecting to the fullest, you should focus on at most two collecting specialties at a time. Doing otherwise will squander money and time on what will look like a mishmash with no theme. This collector in addition to U.S. type coins also has a small collection of political hard times tokens.

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## 12)Upgrading

In general, if you have the patience and discipline it is best to buy your type coin **just once in a pleasing grade that shows all the design details**. Buying lower grade coins to fill the holes was mentioned earlier as a mistake. When you upgrade you become saddled with a lower grade duplicate that you probably cannot sell at retail value or even cost. Thus you are paying more for the item in the long term. If you must upgrade, my general rule is that upgrading less than two full grade units is not worth it. For example upgrade a very fine coin to about uncirculated, a fine coin to extremely fine, etc. At least in this manner you will see a significant upgrade in eye appeal and detail, partially compensating for probable financial loss.

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## 13) Reproductions

It was mentioned earlier that many early U.S. type coins are high priced even in low grades. It is a matter of collector preference if you wish to fill these holes with modern reproductions. All legitimate reproductions contain the word "copy" on obverse or reverse. This collector has been well satisfied with those manufactured by the Gallery Mint Museum in Eureka Springs Arkansas. They are made with close reproductions of original mint equipment and are quite attractive. I collect the uncirculated rather than the proof versions, as they more closely resemble the look of the original coins.

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## 14) Spicing it up

In addition to the classic U.S. circulating type coin series many other interesting tokens or medals have actively circulated as money. Periods such as the financially tumultuous 1830s or civil war era saw Federal money disappear. Many private tokens actively circulated with political and patriotic themes or advertising. Prior to 1788 the states also legally could coin their own money. Such additions add breadth to the collection at moderate cost. Below is a list of potential candidates.

State half cent (only Massachusetts)

State cent (Ma, Ct, Ny or Vt)

Half Cent Hard Times Token (1837)

Cent Size Political Hard Times Token (1834-1844)

Store Card Hard Times Token (1834-1844)

Feuchtwanger cent 1837

Feuchtwanger three cent 1837 (a toughie)

Patriotic civil war token

Store card civil war token

Hobo Nickel (1930,s buffalo nickels, carved on obv to various portraits). Many modern reproductions exist. Do not pay over \$10.00 unless certified by a reputable specialist in this series!

Racketeer Nickel (1883 no cents nickel, gold plated to pass as \$5 gold piece). Comments same as for Hobo Nickel.

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## 15) Managing your budget

Coin collecting can become addicting, and many collectors go over their budget on impulse purchases or spending sprees. It is imperative that you set a maximum amount you will be spend per month or year. This collector has found that on an amount of \$1500-\$2000 per year rapid progress is possible for several years provided that the period is from 1850-present and the grades are extremely fine to proof. In today's age this amount of money could be spent on a single computer or set of golf clubs! The collectors advantage is that the collection will at least give a partial return of his money in the future, as compared to other items that depreciate to zero.

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## 16)What's the point of it?

Collectors, whether of coins, stamps, antiques, dolls or whatever, seem to have a natural affinity for acquiring, cataloguing and striving to complete groups of items.

As stated earlier, collecting by design type is a life long pursuit for most collectors unless they are quite comfortable financially. For most people, the "thrill of the chase" and the satisfaction on obtaining a new choice item are the principle rewards. Completion will actually lead to apathy and lack of collecting purpose for many. When additions slow as the collection becomes more advanced,many collectors such as this author turn to Numismatic education or writing to keep the thrill of involvement. If you are just beginning there will be many years of acquisitions, searching and enjoyment for you before reaching this point.

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## 17) Storing your type coins

Storing coins is indeed a problem. The collector must not use PVC(polyvinyl chloride) flips.

Plasticiser and chlorine in this plastic will corrode the surface of coins, particularly copper.

Also avoid "cellulose" or "nitrocellulose" plastics as they can evolve corrosive nitric acid.

Use polyethylene film based cardboard holders, polyethylene terephthalate(PET) flips or mylar. Solid Lucite holders are also acceptable.

Proof sets prior to 1955 are packaged in "boxes" with coins in degradable plastic pouches (cellulosic?). They all should be re-housed in suitable flips or Lucite. Proof sets from 1955-1964 are housed in polyethylene and seem to hold up well over the years. Re-house only for exhibiting purposes.

Certified coins and modern proof sets are generally housed in non corroding plastic, but all holders are permeable to corrosive gases such as hydrogen sulfide or sulfur dioxide. Store your coins in a dry secure (bank vault) environment with "sulfur scavengers" i.e. silver impregnated paper, in the vault if possible for added protection.

Avoid storage by wrapping the coin in Aluminum foil. While effective in preventing tarnish, the aluminum can leave hairline scratches, particularly on proof coins.

How does the type collector detect corrosive chlorine? Run the "**Beilstein**" test.

Take a piece of copper wire and heat it in the blue flame of a gas stove, bunsen burner or acetylene torch until it glows red. then place the hot wire on a tiny piece of the plastic (the plastic will melt on the copper). Place

the plastic/copper melt back in the flame. If the flame turns green or "azure", deep blue/purple, after the initial yellow burn, the plastic has chlorine. If only yellow is seen your flip is chlorine free and probably acceptable.

Copper chloride formed in the flame is responsible for the distinctive color.

No paper envelopes can be trusted to be sulfur free. Sulfur tarnishes silver, nickel and copper coins.

Susan Maltby [sue@toronto.icomos.org](mailto:sue@toronto.icomos.org), is a Toronto based conservationist and coin storage expert that can add much more detail to the background information above. She is a regular columnist in Coin World, [www.coinworld.com](http://www.coinworld.com) .

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## 18) Exhibiting your Type Collection

After several years of active collecting, many type collectors will feel the urge to exhibit their collection. Reasons to exhibit can include one of three common motives.

a) **Personal Pleasure.** Many collectors want to observe their coins in a pleasing logical format. Many standard "type coin" panels are commercially available. They will include the standard types and may not include minor types of interest to you. If you are willing to limit yourself to the common types, the "**Kingsword Series**" type coin holders, available from Bowers and Merena Galleries, Woolfeboro New.Hampshire, are an excellent choice. Collectors of moderate means can expect to fill all the "holes" in these panels, including gold, from 1834 to the present, with two exceptions, the Gobrecht dollars of 1836-1839 and the 1907 high relief Saint Gaudens double eagle.

b) **To interest family members or friends.** If your goal is to have an interesting conversation piece for viewing by family or friends the commercial holders may not be the best choice. Non collectors are most interested by gold coins and odd or strange denominations such as two cent pieces, half cents or quarter eagles. The type collector must then customize the exhibit for his audience. To do this effectively he will need to prepare his own holders, including background and text. An excellent article detailing the best methods to do this is:

**Carlton, R. Scott, "The Art and Science of Numismatic Exhibiting", The Numismatist, April, 1990, p550.**

c) **Professional Exhibiting.** The serious type collector may want to exhibit at a local, regional or national convention. Prizes are awarded and the exhibits judged. In this environment, aesthetics of the exhibit, novelty of theme, high coin grade and completeness are critical. Scott Carlton's article cited above will again give many valuable pointers.

**Themes:** Creative type collectors can devise many themes of great interest to the general public. Novel themes are also more likely to win prizes at numismatic conventions. While the possible themes are limited only by imagination, below are listed possible theme exhibits likely to spark non-collector interest.

a) **Odd denominations.** Half cent, Large cent, two cent piece, three cent silver, three cent nickel, half dime, twenty cent piece, gold dollar, quarter eagle, three dollar gold piece.

b) **Pairs,** differing design types of a denomination struck in the same year. They are:

1793 chain, wreath and liberty cap cents (Use Gallery Mint Museum Reproductions!).

1857 large cent, flying eagle cent

1909 indian, lincoln cents

1883 shield, liberty nickels

1938 buffalo, Jefferson nickels

1837 capped bust, liberty seated half dimes

1837 capped bust, liberty seated dimes

1916 Barber, mercury dimes

1838 capped bust, liberty seated quarters

1916 Barber, standing liberty quarters (tough)

1807 draped bust, capped bust half dollars

1839 capped bust, liberty seated half dollars

1921 Morgan, peace dollars

1854 type one, type two gold dollars

1856 type two, type three gold dollars

1795 small eagle, heraldic eagle \$5.00 gold (very tough)

1834 capped head to left, classic head \$5.00 gold (very tough)

1908 coronet, indian \$5.00 gold

1797 small eagle, heraldic eagle \$10.00 gold (very tough)

1907 coronet, indian \$10.00 gold

1907 liberty, Saint Gaudens \$20.00 gold

**c) Confusing or inconvenient denominations**

half cent (too big, too little purchasing power, even in 19th century)

large cent (too big)

three cent silver (too small, easily lost)

1883 "no cents" nickel (same size as \$5.00 gold piece, gold plated and passed as half eagle)

Twenty cent piece ( confused with quarter)

One dollar gold piece, type one (too small, easily lost)

Susan B. Anthony dollar (confused with quarter)

Themes which could be a hit with judges at convention exhibits include:

- a) **Rarest date in series shown for each design type** (example, 1916 shown for standing liberty quarter type one). Obviously this is an expensive theme for type collectors of financial means.
- b) **First date for type shown** ( examples, 1892 for Barber series of dimes, quarters and half dollars).
- c) **Last date of type shown**, (examples, 1915 for Barber series)

I have merely touched on some of the innovative ways that the collector can exhibit his type collection. The creative collector should be able to design many other interesting themes.

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# 19) Final Thoughts

I hope this article will get you as enthusiastic as I am about U.S. type collecting. My initial interest in coins was kindled as a boy when my grandfather gave me old worn large cents and indian cents on summer visits. On his passing he left me several gold coins which are still in my collection. They were my cornerstone to collecting enjoyment. If you start with modern U.S. coins, they are a great cornerstone too. Good luck in your collecting endeavors

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## 20) Bibliography

All coin collectors should have a numismatic library for reference and research. Below are my selections. Of course each collector will find different books of interest. In my opinion, Breen's massive work, Bowers book on design types, the "Red Book" and "Photograde" are musts for type collectors. They are highlighted in bold.

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