

References for Beginning Collectors

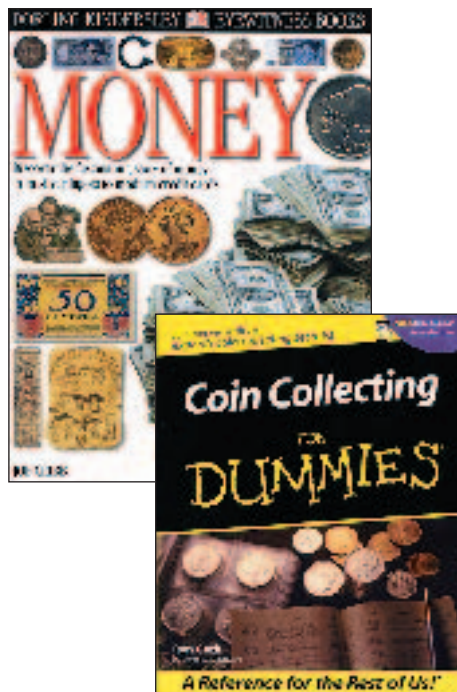
Even the experts will tell you—introductory books on coins and collecting are your best numismatic investment.

A BASIC LIBRARY of numismatic references is an outstanding resource for the beginning collector. Books can teach you

about the coins you are pursuing, guide you as you build your collection and introduce you to new collecting areas. Here are some suggestions for your home library. I think you'll find these books informative, helpful and fun.

A great place to start is with a general overview of the hobby, such as *Coin Collecting for Dummies*® by Ron Guth. It has an abundance of useful information to help you get the most out of coin collecting. There is a nice discussion of how to choose a collecting area, along with detailed information and collecting strategies for American coins. Guth explains the factors affecting a coin's value, suggests sources for buying coins and helps you navigate the coin marketplace. Other good, basic references are *The Whitman Guide to Coin Collecting* by Kenneth Bressett and *The New York Times Guide to Coin Collecting* by Ed Reiter.

To learn the value of the coins you have or want to acquire, you'll need a price guide. The classic in this category is *A Guide Book of United States Coins* by R.S. Yeoman, edited by Kenneth Bressett. Known as the "Red Book" because of the color of its cover, it is updated annually. It surveys American coins from colonial issues to state quarters and everything in between, presenting retail values for coins in up to seven grades. Enhanced



with color photos and packed with interesting historical information, the Red Book is one reference no collector should be without. *Coin World Guide to U.S. Coins, Prices & Value Trends* by the editors of *Coin World* is another very good price guide, with retail values for coins in up to 15 grades and informative chapters on U.S. coinage history, the minting process and other topics.

When perusing price guides, you'll see that a coin's value depends on its grade, or degree of preservation. Because grading is so important, *Official A.N.A. Grading Standards for United States Coins*, edited by Kenneth Bressett and Abe Kosoff, is very useful for evaluating coins. The book offers a general introduction to grading, followed by photographs and descriptions of grades for each type of U.S. coin. The simple format helps you

grade coins by comparing them to standard definitions.

References using the "Q & A" format are especially helpful when you are building your collection. Two are great choices, focusing primarily on American coinage: *Coin Clinic: 1,001 Frequently Asked Questions* by Alan Herbert is organized by topic, while *Coins: Questions and Answers* by Clifford Mishler is organized by coin type. Both are informative, easy to read and ideal for browsing.

Two, first-rate books explore money produced in an array of places and times. *Eyewitness Guide: Money* by Joe Cribb is a visual delight, with many attractive color photos and interesting stories on every page. It traces the evolution of coins and paper money around the world, from ancient times to the present, and is a wonderful introduction to money in all its forms.

Warman's Coin & Currency by Allen Berman and Alex Malloy catalogs United States coins and paper money, Canadian coins, ancient and medieval coins, and modern coins and paper money from around the world. There are photographs of many items and values for one or two grades, with informative essays introducing each section. If you want to know what's "out there," you can't go wrong with the books by Cribb and Berman.

All these books currently are in print, with most priced under \$15 and none over \$25. They are available from local and online bookstores or from the ANA MoneyMarket (www.money.org, 800-367-9723). You'll find them a pleasure to read, and the information you glean will be an enormous help as you assemble your collection. Happy reading!

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