THE ERIC P. NEWMAN STORY

The Young Numismatist

Eric P. Newman, is a Living Legend in Numismatic History, with over a Century of life experience, that has been dedicated to learning, loving and living his pursuits in life, as an example of his passions.

Eric Pfeiffer Newman was born on May 25, 1911, to Samuel Elijah Newman and Rose (Pfeiffer) Newman, in St. Louis, Missouri.

Young Eric was raised with strong work ethics from his parents, during a time of struggle in the early 20th Century, and his parents instilled in him, a respect for hard work, and the value of money.



Eric's boundless curiosity and quest for learning, came from a early age at the family dinner table, when the topic of conversations focused on daily issues, not negative gossip, where everybody would help everybody else find solutions.



Newman began collecting coins as a 7-year-old boy, when his grandfather gave him an 1859 Indian Head cent, and he was hooked on coins for life.

In 1921, when he was only ten years old, he earned an allowance of five cents a week... he carefully spent three cents every couple of weeks, to ride on a streetcar into downtown St. Louis, to shop at the St. Louis Stamp & Coin Company ran by local coin dealer, Mr. Burdette G. Johnson.



Numismatic Mentor

Burdette Johnson was self educated and read a book a day after he learned to read... he developed an absolutely spectacular memory, and eventually absorbed a total 20-volume history of the world by memory.

Johnson was intrigued by the curiosity of this young future Numismatist... So, he carefully steered young Eric into not just buying coins, but learning about the coins he desired, just as he had done.

The 36 year old Johnson saw much promise in this ten year old collector, and he decided to mentor him in numismatics, despite their 26 year age difference... as long as Eric Newman was willing to learn.

Once, Eric wanted to buy a coin from Burdette, but he refused to sell it to him, because he didn't know anything about the coin... Instead, he had Eric read a book about that type coinage, and then made him come back to tell him what he had learned, before he would even sell the coin to Eric.

Johnson's mentoring changed Newman's life, and he became a close friend, and Mentor...and ever since then, Eric himself, has dedicated his life to educating others and serving the Numismatic Community, just as Burdette Johnson did for him.





Newman's Family & Career

Eric Newman's great-grandfather immigrated to the U.S. from Germany, he could not speak English, but he managed to send his son, Eric's grandfather, to the St. Louis College of Pharmacy in 1874.

Eric's father Samuel, was a surgeon, and his mother Rose, was a pianist, and they encouraged Eric's interests in Numismatics, because it spans disciplines from art to metallurgy, economics, politics, and history... Eric's parents died fairly young, his mother died when she was 55, and his father when he was 65, but in those formative years, they taught him well.

Eric Newman was fortunate to be able to travel abroad from a young age... At ten years old , he traveled to Europe with his family, and experienced the coins and cultures of other countries... and he went back again at age 14, developing a taste for world travel which greatly stimulated his active curiosity.



As Eric Newman grew up, his passion for learning grew with him... He graduated from John Burroughs School in 1928, where he was astounded to discover how much there was to know, and he was excited to learn how to tackle it.

His enthusiasm continued at Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT,) where he earned a bachelor of science degree in 1932, during the depths of the Depression. There were few jobs, but he was offered a part-time position in a law firm in St. Louis.

His family lived just a block away from Washington University, so Eric decided to attend the School of Law, where graduated with a Juris Doctor Degree from Washington University in St. Louis in 1935, and he joined the firm where he had been employed as a student, and began practicing law until 1943.

Eric was already a young lawyer and a noted numismatist when he was first introduced to 18-year-old Evelyn Edison... It was her necklace of coins that sparked a conversation, and soon after, they married in 1939.



Evelyn, was a curious and creative person, who got the travel bug after marriage, and they became avid World travelers, exploring everywhere together... Syria, Mongolia, Afghanistan, Africa, Asia, and beyond. Eric and Evelyn are long-time members of the Explorer's Club, and at last count, they have visited more than 150 Countries around the World.

In1944, Eric was hired by Edison Brothers Stores, rising to executive vice president in 1968, before retiring in 1987, after practicing law for 52 years, he then became president of the Harry Edison Foundation, serving that position until January 2005.

Eric and Evelyn have always helped each other in all aspects of their lives, and built a remarkable partnership of respect and responsibility. They have two children, Linda N. Schapiro and Andrew E. Newman, who have encouraged and participated in Dad's numismatic endeavors.

Today at nearly 102 years old, Newman believe that it was good medicine, the love for Evelyn, his family, and numismatics, that keeps him living well. Eric and Evelyn are still together today, celebrating their 74th Anniversary in 2013, and a lifetime of happiness and adventure.

The Col. Green Connection



While attending MIT, Eric Newman became acquainted with Colonel E.H.R. Green, the son and heir of multimillionaire Wall Street investor, Hetty Green, who was a notorious miser, commonly referred to as "The Witch of Wall Street."

Colonel "Ned" Green himself, was an avid coin collector, which sparked Eric's interests in Green and his coin collection.

The story began when Newman was a student at Massachusetts Institute of Technology in the late 1920s, where Eric and other students were following Rear Admiral Richard E. Byrd's first Antarctic expedition (1928-1930).

Eric put aside the newspaper headlines, and opted to use a crystal shortwave radio set that he and other students built to listen to the historic event... But there was so much static in the transmissions, that it required frequent resending of messages, because only a portion would be heard at any one time.





Newman and other students volunteered to contact doctors all over the world, especially Norway and Sweden, via shortwave radio, to see how to do the surgery at temperatures of 40 degrees below zero. They found a solution, transferred the information to Byrd's team, and the patient lived.

Colonel Green came to MIT to thank these young volunteers, who helped transmit the information to Admiral Byrd, and Eric Newman was in absolute awe for this personal visit.

To help relay the transmissions better, Colonel Green offered the services of his private radio station in Roundtree, Massachusetts, to follow Byrd's historic Antarctic expedition.

That offer, and the interest of the MIT students came in very handy during that first expedition, when a member of Byrd's crew was diagnosed with appendicitis and immediately required surgery.



Colonel Green Collection

By the time Colonel Green died in 1936, Newman had graduated from MIT and was practicing law... and he knew that Colonel Green had a gigantic numismatic collection.

Newman decided he wanted a \$5 Demand Note of 1861 for St. Louis, that Green had in his collection, but the Chase National Bank was executor of Green's estate... so Eric wrote a letter to the bank and asked to buy the note.



When he didn't get an answer he was disappointed, yet determined, so he wrote again, but this time he said, "Colonel Green would like me to have that note."

The bank responded that they wouldn't sell him the single note, and that he would have to buy the group of 40 Missouri notes for the appraised value of \$600... which was a large sum during the depression.

Newman didn't have \$600, which was about a quarter of what he was making at the time, so he talked to his family, and they assembled the \$600 so Eric could purchase the group of notes from the Green Estate, which really fueled his fire for numismatics.

Eric Newman visited his long-time friend and mentor, Burdette Johnson owner of the St. Louis Stamp & Coin Co., and told him what he had purchased from Green's Estate.

Johnson asked if Eric could buy more if he would put up the money, which was one of the luckiest things that ever happened to him.

Newman made many trips to buy the coins and notes in Green's Estate, and he brought them back to Johnson, who gave Eric the choice of anything he wanted, and Johnson took an equal value.

Johnson advised Newman on the purchase of only five known 1913 Liberty Head V Nickels from the Green Estate in December 1941.

Newman purchased all five coins in two transactions, first acquiring the two best examples in one transaction, that also included hundreds of other 5-cent coins... and he then purchased the remaining three examples of the 1913 Liberty V Nickel in the second transaction.

Newman is the only person alive today, who once owned all five of the ultra-rare 1913 Liberty Head 5-cent coins, which is something that may never be repeated.



Eric Newman's favorite coin, however, is the gold 1792 George Washington President pattern privately made by Obadiah Westwood of Birmingham, England, from dies engraved by John Gregory Hancock.

Even though there are three silver pieces and a number of copper pieces struck with the same design, this is the only one gold piece ever made of this unique 1792 pattern, that was given to Washington by someone trying to get a contract for minting copper one-cent coins.

The coin is worn, with no denomination on it; because Washington carried it as a personal pocket piece, and he rode so many places on horseback, that the piece was rubbed constantly by his clothes,.



With this early guidance from Burdette G. Johnson, Eric Newman proceeded to assemble one of the foremost collections of American coins, tokens, paper money, and numismatic publications ever put together... and he did this with such a depth of knowledge, that the Newman Collection's quality and importance are probably incalculable today.

Eric Newman, Author

Eric P. Newman is a prolific numismatic writer and researcher... Collectors have no farther than their bookshelves to look, to see evidence of Newman's enthusiasm for numismatics, filled with works about early American coins and paper money, considered the standards on their subjects.

Eric has left an astounding legacy in his writings, his numismatic books and articles will last for decades, perhaps, centuries to come, for the benefit of future numismatists.



He has written 13 numismatics books, including these significant publications:

- Varieties of the Fugio Cent (1949, 1952)
- The 1776 Continental Currency Coinage (1952)
- Coinage for Colonial Virginia (1956, 1962)
- The Fantastic 1804 Dollar (with Kenneth E. Bressett, 1962)
 - Nature Printing on Colonial and Continental Currency (1964)
- The Early Paper Money of America (1967, 1976, 1990, 1997)
- American Circulation of English and Bungtown Halfpence (1976)
- The Dollar \$ign: Its Written and Printed Origins (1995)
- U.S. Coin Scales and Counterfeit Coin Detectors (1999)

In addition, Newman has written hundreds of articles for periodicals... including Coin World, the American Numismatic Association's magazine - The Numismatist, the Society of Paper Money's journal - Paper Money, multiple American Numismatic Society publications, and many other varried numismatic publications.

Eric Newman's numismatic literary accomplishments are staggering from the 13 books that bear his name... to the articles he's written, which has won him 15 "Heath Literary Awards" for best article published in "The Numismatist."

He has built a strong research library, that is so comprehensive that it resides at Washington University in St. Louis, in the Newman Money Museum.



The Newman Money Museum

Eric Newman created, and has headed his own foundation since 1959, the Eric P. Newman Numismatic Education Society, and in 1981, he opened his own money museum exhibition at the Mercantile Bank of St. Louis.

Then in 2003 Eric Newman, and his wife Evelyn, donated \$2 million to build the The Newman Money Museum, which is housed within the Mildred Lane Kemper Art Museum on the campus of Washington University in St. Louis.

The 3,000-square-foot museum houses exhibitions, some of them on a rotating basis, from Newman's extensive collection, which is known as particularly strong in Colonial and early American coins and paper money.

The Eric P. Newman Numismatic Education Society owns the collection. A portion of his library is in the museum, and workspace is provided for visiting numismatic researchers.



Numismatics Graduate Seminar

Now known as the Eric P. Newman Graduate Summer Seminar in Numismatics, the Seminar began over fifty years ago in 1952, and has a rich and fascinating history.

For over half a century the American Numismatic Society... a museum of coins, money and economic history, has offered select graduate students and junior faculty the opportunity to work hands-on with one of the world's preeminent numismatic collections.





The rigorous eight-week course taught by the museum staff, guest lecturers, and a visiting scholars, introduces students to the methods, theories and history of the numismatic discipline.

The seminar is meant primarily for those with limited, or no numismatic background, in order to familiarize students of art, history, textual studies, and archaeology, with a body of evidence in numismatics, that is often overlooked and poorly understood in traditional education today.

Eric Newman Awards & Recognitions

Eric Newman is a Living Ledged, who has made outstanding contributions to numismatics, achieving many important discoveries, and publishing major works on a variety of subjects, primarily in Early American studies.

There have been many highlights in Eric's numismatic career...

- Multiple recipient of the Heath Literary Award of the American Numismatic Association
- Received the ANA's Medal of Merit (1964)
- Exemplary Service Award (1993)
- The Farran Zerbe Award (1969) ANA's highest honor
- The ANA's Hall of Fame in 1986 and, in 1996
- Named ANA's "Numismatist of the Year 1996
- The Medal of the Royal Numismatic Society in 1991, the organization's highest honor
- The Burnett Anderson Memorial Award for Excellence in Numismatic Writing in 2001

To celebrate his 100th birthday on May 25th, 2011, this American Numismatic Society's Trustee Emeritus and benefactor, presented Eric Pfeiffer Newman, a portrait plaque, which was commissioned to commemorate this centennial event, and to honor him for his contributions to numismatics over his lifetime.



Eric Newman joined the ANS in 1944, was nominated as a Fellow of the Society in 1950, became a Life Associate member in 1964, and was named an Honorary Life Fellow in 1994. Mr. Newman served on the ANS Council (Board of Trustees) from 1962 to 2003, when he was named Honorary Trustee. The Society presented its highest honor to Mr. Newman in 1978, with the Archer M. Huntington Medal, in recognition of outstanding career contributions to numismatic scholarship.



To honor Eric on his 100th milestone birthday, his fellow Rittenhouse Society members pitched in, to create and present a gold medal honoring the occasion. The Rittenhouse Society, an informal group of numismatists created fifty years ago, was named after David Rittenhouse, the first director of the U.S. Mint in 1792.

The medal bears the portrait of Eric on the obverse, between symbols of a

quill pen and a lamp of knowledge, symbolic of the numismatic knowledge he has provided to the numismatic field. The reverse bears the names on the spines of the 13 books Eric has written. These are shown on two shelves, with a tiny bust of David Rittenhouse on the top shelf, and an image of Rittenhouse on an open book in the medal's exergue.



A Living Ledged

Eric P. Newman is a Living Ledged who still has a good sense of humor, and a peaceful smile for all those he encounters.

He is a loving Husband, caring father, noted Numismatist, studied scholar, passionate Philanthropist, and an overall great human being... who is living his life as an example for many generations to emanate and learn from... and he's not done yet!

It is said that "Great Men" Aren't Born to Greatness, They Become Great By Their Actions," and Eric Newman is that great man.





His museum and foundation are examples of a man who cares, and who is humble about what he has achieved, and leaves that legacy behind.

His greatest achievement is not reaching 100 years of age, but of the lasting knowledge that he has provided us forever.

Thank You Eric.



