

Peoples Store Coin Story: Part II

By MARK GENOVESE

The mysterious Peoples Store coin, unearthed many years ago by Ron Stone of Jamestown has drawn the interest of several area residents.

Stone's story appeared in an article in the April 11 edition of *The Post-Journal*.

His coin offered a discount for the People's Store at 11 W. Third St. and five good luck symbols on the other side.

Some people have found other coins from the Peoples Store and others have found coins with the same backing.

Al Cecchini of Warren said he found such a coin on Chadakoin Street in Celoron except his was for the Queen City Clothing Co. at 21 E. Third St. in Jamestown. His coin could be redeemed for \$2 off a purchase of \$25. The emblems on the flip side were identical to the People's Store coin.

Cecchini guessed that the bronze coin possibly would have been made in the 1930s.

Raymond Ross of Jamestown brought a couple of similar coins to our office that his grandfather owned. One was for Daniel A. Donahue's, a clothing store and offered 50 cents off the

purchase of an overcoat.

The second coin Ross' grandfather had was for the Boy Scouts. On the front was an old Boy Scouts emblem, and on the back were the same symbols as the other coins. According to the inscription on the coin, the piece was manufactured by the Excelsior Shoe Co. of Portsmouth, Ohio.

Another area man who didn't want to be named, said he consulted his token texts after reading the article. He said he found a similar piece was produced in Buffalo and could have been struck in 1920, "give or take a few years."

He said there are earlier tokens from Jamestown, like a counter-stamped 1865 2-cent piece which reads: "H.V. Perry, Jamestown, N.Y. 1866." Perry was an area gunsmith, he said.

Two early store cards (tokens) were issued in 1884 by A.D. Sharpe of the People's Dry Goods Store at 30 Main St. Two other pieces promoted Grover Cleveland and another presidential candidate J.G. Blaine.

Another piece advertises Marble Hall, he wrote, which offered men's furnishing goods on Main Street. The coin had a bust of Admiral George Dewey, who won a crucial victory at

Manilla during the Spanish-American War.

The Cowan Brothers, who ran a brewery and tavern on Harrison Street, issued a scallop-stamped token that was good for 5 cents at the bar in about 1910. The location today is the Hills parking lot.

He added that the worth of the coin depends on its supply and demand. "Store cards tend to be scarce compared with mass transportation tokens and general government issue coins. However, demand is not nearly as great."

Because this coin has popped up in a number of cities, speculation among the parties has been that this coin was offered as a promotional tool.

Some had speculated the various store owners might have had Nazi or socialist connections, because a swastika on the reverse breaks in the direction of the Nazi emblem, not of the ancient Asian and Indian good luck symbol.

However, the possibility that the coins were produced in the 1920s or early 1930s and the appearance of the swastika on the Boy Scouts coin pretty well dispels that theory.

4/24/86