

The Third Side of the Coin: Friday the 13th

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Friday the 13th is a day when we have fun paying special attention to coincidences. It so happens that October 13 represents three related events surrounding the Eisenhower dollar.

On October 13, 1975, the first Bicentennial Dollars were introduced. Originally, the large, nickel-based coins featured President Eisenhower on one side while the other side showed an eagle landing on the Moon. For the Bicentennial, a new reverse was created by Dennis R. Williams, combining the Liberty Bell and the Moon.

It so happens that October 14 is the day Dwight Eisenhower was born in 1890. Of course, it is not really a coincidence that the Bicentennial Eisenhower dollars were issued at the time of Eisenhower's birthday. The Lunar motif was a very fitting reminder of his presidency. Even though we identify the race to the Moon with President Kennedy, NASA and the space program were launched under Eisenhower. It was he who specified that the first Mercury astronauts must be military test pilots.

The third coincidence is that on October 15, 1794, the US Mint delivered its first run of silver dollars. Only 1700 were struck that first year, and today, they fetch anywhere from \$25,000 to \$50,000 in better circulated condition. If you want one of these first American dollars in mint condition, you'd better set aside at least \$150,000.

So, when the 13th of October falls on a Friday, you can celebrate the first dollars, the first Bicentennial dollars, and the foresighted president whose image was carried on those Bicentennial dollars.