

**1870 to 1973, About a 100 Years Later  
...103 to Be Exact**

**By Otto Klay**

**#CM-0010**

August 1973, we, my wife and I, emigrated to the Promised Land from Helvetia Land (Switzerland). Not much money in hand but with a promise of a job, I remember how nervous the landing in San Francisco was. How must the Pioneers have felt a 100 years earlier?



As a tool and die maker, I found my *gold in the Silicon Valley*. On a trip in “75” with my visiting parents, we traveled to Lake Tahoe and marveled at the beauty of the Sierra Nevada. It should become our passion and goal to live there.

Of course we had heard of the Wild West when we grew up in Switzerland and of course of *Bonanza* in particular. Names like Virginia City and Carson City, I knew already before I was even able to speak proper English. My Dad loved the gunfights they staged in Virginia City. On the way to Carson City, down to Gold Hill, I remember we toured a silver mine. Little did I know its legacy when we drove past the old mint. I think we didn’t even stop in Carson City? That was in 1975.

As a boy in Switzerland, I got introduced to collecting stamps. Once a month we took the train to the next big city to a club meeting, usually on a Saturday. I learned early that quality and rarity were out of my reach. So I collected the “Commons”. It was fun!

Sometime in the mid-eighties, *USA Today*, the newspaper was launched. I was impressed and liked the new format, specially the business section. In it, I noticed an ad about coins from a company called Blanchard in New Orleans. That’s how I got started in coin collecting.

First I bought everything under the sun. I signed up for a “Program of the Month”, where for a certain dollar amount they sent me a variety of different coins. I was too busy raising a family and making money, so my excuse is I didn’t “buy the books, before the coins!” But it was a good lesson! My collection grew, but aimlessly; so I subscribed to a coin magazine!

Also on my way home from work, every Friday I started to stop by a local coin shop. The owner was usually sitting behind some kind of a counter and seated on chairs before him were some of his buddies or customers. The topics ranged from the origin of coins to counterfeits to Marilyn Monroe! Never mind, smoking was permitted and that they did. (cough, cough) But I remember I got some wisdom out of these visit’s and the owner also sold me a complete Dwight Eisenhower dollar set in a Dansco Album.

The Morgan dollars caught my eye! Right there and then I decided to become a Morgan dollar collector - all of them! I knew by then the mintmarks and of course the “CC”s were high on my list. At that time, mid-80s, I bought the common “CC”s in MS-63 for under

\$100.00. Guess what, I got bored and sold all of them, and the rest too.

Due to a career change we moved to Reno and my wife and I retired! What I needed was a new challenge in coin collecting. I joined the Reno Coin Club and signed up for the ANA courses in “Grading, Counterfeit Detection,” etc, etc. It was about time!

I heard about Rusty Goe’s, new book, *The Mint on Carson Street*. So one day I stopped in and bought the book. What a nice guy, he signed it for me even though he did not know me.

Now I’m on a new mission, collect all 111 “CC”s, or most of them anyway! Sorry Rusty I haven’t read you’re whole book yet; but I’m getting there! With every coin I buy there are numerous chapters that go with it.

So let me tell you about my *Road to 111*. So far I have completed Rusty’s formula for a 10-Piece “CC” type set. In choosing so I stayed with the highest possible grade and rarity I could afford. In the meantime I acquired two more quarter dollars. So now what? Finish off the quarters since only I have six more to go? Focus on a year, like the 1870 inaugural mintage? Actually, I’m still a sucker for the Morgan dollar, I love that coin! Concentrating on that dollar series would be most satisfying, because I would come full circle, adding the “CC” silver dollars one more time to my collection on the *Road to 111*.