

**How Deep Participation Gave Me the Drive to
Build a “CC” Collection of Non-Coin Items
By Mark W. Archambault**

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Attending Rusty Goe’s August 2013 lecture, “Ten Non-Coin Collectibles Every ‘CC’ Coin Enthusiast Should Own,” at the Nevada State Museum was the start a new journey for me. His talk inspired me to start building a collection of non-coin items related to the Carson City Mint’s and the Comstock Lode’s heyday. At the time of the lecture I had already gathered four of the ten non-coin items on Rusty’s list. When I saw Tom DeFina’s quick action on his smart phone during the lecture, which allowed him to obtain an annual report of the director of the U.S. Mint before Rusty had even concluded his talk, I got charged up. I immediately started to search the Internet for items to add to my collection.

I thought about how quickly Tom had found and purchased a genuine U.S. Mint report from the 1880s, which contains information about the production of coinage at the Carson City branch, and hope (and enthusiasm) filled my heart. After that, I met with Rusty at Southgate Coins prior to my flight home, and I saw that there is more history surrounding the Carson City Mint than just the discs of silver and gold. We talked about Abe Curry, James Crawford, and T. Robert Hofer, and then Rusty showed me a ledger from the Carson Mint that contains the names of many more notable individuals from the era in which the mint thrived. He showed me other documents, newspapers, and photographs that were very interesting, too. After viewing these items I asked myself, What could a guy like me from New Hampshire find that could complement the worthwhile assortment I have already accumulated on the coin side of my collection?

The hunt was on. Searching day and night for things related to the

The Mint of the United States at Carson,
Cashier's Office, Bar #28

Yes. 3 1/2 lbs grains from
US Bar are same fineness as
bar and are worth \$20.¹⁶

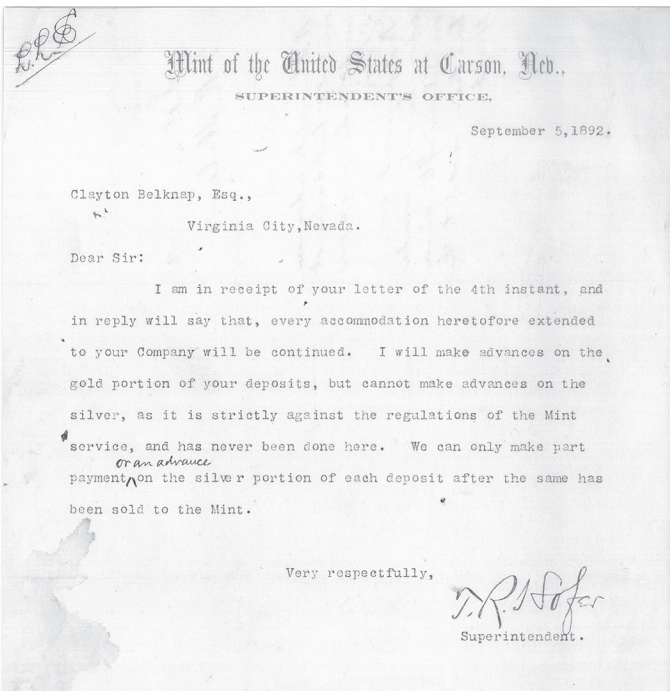
Mint charges on bar will be \$3.42

Net value of bar as per Cty
\$127.⁵⁵ - this is with our chgs paid
\$111.⁴⁰ A.G.R.

Assay statement from Carson City Mint, undated.

Carson City Mint is one thing I never get tired of doing. In the fall of 2014 luck was with me. I first noticed a particular item I was interested in on an auction site that is more noted for jewelry and high-end watches than for items like the one I wanted. I made the decision that I *had to* have it. It is an 8" x 10" document on Carson City Mint stationery. It came from the cashier's office and it lists an assay-fee charge for a bar of silver. It has the initials A. G. R. (I think) on it. I am sure that with further investigation I will discover who this person was and what position he held at the mint.

Then the spring of 2015 began a banner period of collecting for me. It started with a letter I found that is on Carson City Mint stationery. It is from the superintendent's office. It is a memo from T. R. Hofer to C. Belknap, which reads,



Memo from Superintendent Hofer at Carson Mint in 1892.

Clayton Belknap Esq., Virginia City, Nevada Sept. 5, 1892

Dear Sir,

I am in receipt of your letter of the 4th instant, and in reply will say that, every accommodation heretofore extended to your company will be continued. I will make advances on the gold portion of your deposits, but cannot make advances on the silver as it is strictly against the regulations of the Mint service, and has never been done here. We can only make part payment or an advance on the silver portion of each deposit after the same has been sold to the Mint.

Very respectfully,

T. R. Hofer

Superintendent

My second acquisition during this period is one of the highlights of my document collection from the Carson City Mint. This piece is extremely special to me because it is mentioned in Rusty Goe's *James Crawford: Master of the Mint at Carson City – A Short Full Life*. When I immersed myself in Rusty's book I made mental notes regarding references to documents on which requisitions were made from various departments within the mint. Sometimes there are images of these documents too. On page 124 a reference is made to a request from Chief Coiner Wm. Hy Doane. It is dated February 12, 1875, and it informs Superintendent James Crawford that the coining department needed the following quantities of dies: 9 obverse and 8 reverse dime dies, 8 obverse and 5 reverse quarter dollar dies, and 7 obverse and 7 reverse half dollar dies. Most C4OA members know of my love for Carson City half dollars, and will probably understand why the reference to dies for that denomination really got my attention. I immediately started searching for a similar type of die-request document.

I don't know how to describe this next event except by saying, "It happened!" While reviewing any auction site offering western memorabilia, I always type Carson City in the search bar. When I did this on a specific occasion, my jaw hit the floor immediately, after I followed the link to the page where my search led me. There

COINING ROOM. No. <u>6</u> To the Superintendent,	COINER'S DEPARTMENT. U. S. Mint, Carson, <u>Delaware</u> Feb. 12. 1875
Required for use in Coining Room	
Nine (9) obverse and Eight (8) Reverse dime dies.	
Eight (8) " " and Five (5) " " Quar. dol. dies.	
Seven (7) " " and Seven (7) " " Half " "	
Furnished _____	
Wm. Hy Doane Coiner.	

Die request from Coiner Wm. Hy Doane at Carson City Mint.

it was, staring me in the face: the actual die-request document from the Carson Mint's coining department that is mentioned in Rusty's book! I was so excited, and then reality hit me. How will I be able to pay for this? I asked myself. How high will the bidding go? My plan of action was to liquidate a partial set of raw Carson City Morgan silver dollars so I would be able to buy this precious piece of Carson City Mint history. Estimates on this item ranged from \$200 to \$400, which were not stratospheric prices by any means; but I needed to stick to my budget. Raising the necessary cash would be Job No. 1, but I was determined, or maybe even destined, to get this item. Because of the rarity and significance of the document the decision to liquidate the "CC" Morgans was an easy one. After all, in circulated grades these dollars are pretty common in the marketplace. I can replace them any time I want to. But how many opportunities will I have to obtain a one-of-a-kind die-request document from the Carson City Mint?

I registered to bid in the auction, and as I placed my maximum bid I admit I held my breath. I waited out the time and then it happened, the lot ended and this piece of Carson City history was mine. Of course I was on cloud nine after being the winning bidder, and I had to wait to receive the item. After owning this document for a while I still can't believe it now resides in the *Loosechange Collection*.

So keep searching fellow coin and collectible enthusiasts, and if you find yourself engrossed in "Deep Participation," as Rusty calls it, I am sure we will cross paths in our pursuit of all things from the Mint on Carson Street.

Reference:

James Crawford: Master of the Mint at Carson City – A Short Full Life by Rusty Goe, 2007

(Images courtesy of Mark Archambault)