

Assembling a Carson City Mint Type Set

By Michael D. Parrott

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In the past year or so we have all been witness to at least three or four major auctions where some of the finest- and tied-for-the-finest-known examples of Carson City coins have yet again smashed barriers for prices realized. Just check out the article by Rusty Goe in the last issue of *Curry's Chronicle* (Spring 2007). Like most of you I drool over coins such as these. My mind wanders at the thought of what it must feel like to make acquisitions such as this. I marvel at those lucky few who are in that lofty financial position enabling them to take stewardship of such treasures—after all, coins like these do not come up for sale every day, indeed once in a lifetime for some issues! Even if one was to have a budget of several million to spend, it would not guarantee that you would be able to garner all of those “finest-knowns;” there simply aren't enough to go around. Most of us are on a more modest budget. I know I am. But that does not mean that we should feel left out of all the fun. There are still many affordable Carson City issues that contain the same history, were made by the same people, at the same mint, and were spent, owned and handled by the same folks as those *finest* “CC” coins were.

Actually, some of the more *worn* coins that have survived were the ones used in everyday commerce by the pioneers of the Old West making them desirable for that reason alone. Oh...the tales they could tell! And, while I would definitely prefer to own those lofty coins that command prices beyond fine automobiles and even homes, I still get excited about the ownership of some of my VF, XF and AU coins—in some cases even a G or VG will do!

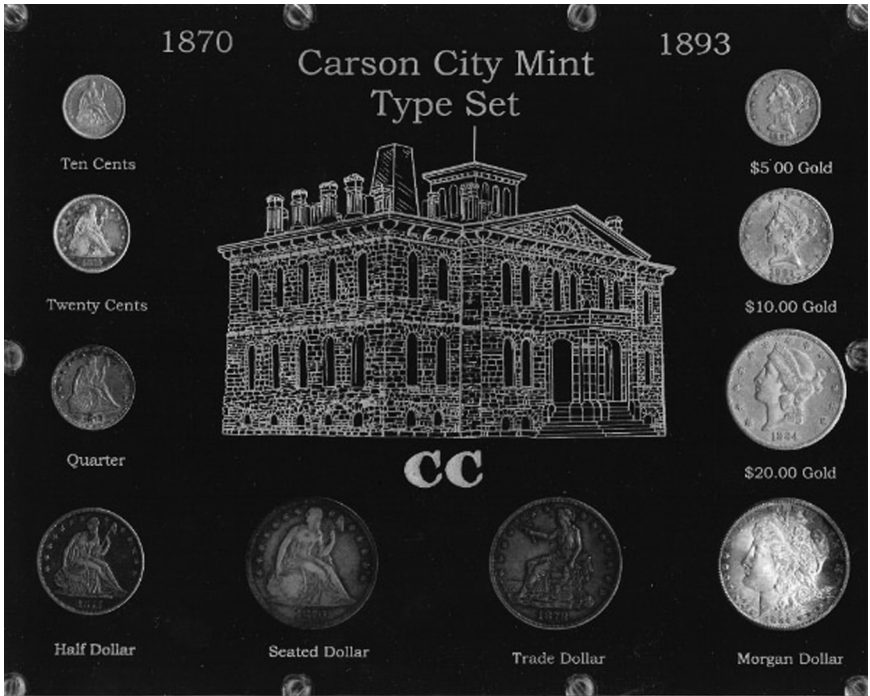
So, with that in mind, I set out to build an affordable, really nice

looking “type” set of “CC” coins. My budget limit was set at \$8,000.00. Naturally, I used the team at Southgate Coins in Reno, NV, because in my opinion, you’ll not find a more comprehensive display of “CC” coins for sale anywhere on planet earth like you’ll find there. (Not to mention the friendly and very helpful staff).

August 2004: I purchased my Capital Plastics Carson City Mint Type Set holder from Southgate (the only place I know where you can buy one). These beautiful displays are available in three colors, white, black and blue. They were designed by Rusty Goe and manufactured to his specifications by the Capital Plastics Co. (see picture). I believe they can still be purchased for under a hundred bucks. This same August day I filled the first spot in the holder with an 1877-CC Seated dime in AU (raw). Price \$170.00. It is a very light golden-toned specimen with lots of eye appeal for the grade. My second acquisition came later in August that same year (2004): An 1878-CC Seated quarter (also raw and in AU). Price: \$290.00, and again, a nice example for the grade with very light golden toning. The third spot was filled in March of 2005: An 1875-CC Seated half dollar also in AU (raw) for \$275.00. So far, I’m up to \$820.00 total for the three coins and the Capital Plastics display holder.

The next spot was filled with a “Top 25” “CC” coin! It wasn’t in the original plan to purchase any “Top 25” coins for this set, but this was something I just couldn’t pass up. To have this coin in the set certainly adds some significance to it. The coin is an 1878-CC Trade dollar. (ANACS AU-50—in all fairness, I grade it XF-45). Price: \$3,000.00. I know, it’s a little over budget, but it’s a “Top 25!” You could get a really nice “CC” Trade dollar (1874 or 1875) in your type set for a lot less than three grand. The next two coin acquisitions were made the same day in June of 2005: First, an 1870-CC Seated dollar (PCGS G-6). Price: \$280.00. Second, an 1884-CC

Morgan dollar in BU (raw), for \$320.00. The Morgan Dollar has slight toning (on both sides) and is indeed a nice BU coin; while the Seated dollar is a nice problem free specimen with just some good old honest wear. Now I'm at \$4,420.00.



Michael Parrott's Ten-piece "CC" type set in a Capital Plastic's holder.

In September of 2005, I purchased a very nice eye appealing, reddish-gold 1891-CC gold half eagle (PCGS XF-45) for \$490.00. And then in January of 2006, the 1875-CC twenty-cent piece was purchased for \$750.00. It *was* in an NGC AU-50 holder and is toned on the obverse. Only two spots to fill. The first of these remaining spots was the purchase of an 1884-CC gold double eagle for \$1,600.00 in AU (raw). (May, 2006). This coin is a very nice problem-free golden-honey example with lots of luster and great eye appeal.

The time had come at last to fill the tenth spot, but because of finances, I had to wait a good little while before that could happen. But that day finally did arrive (March of 2007), and after a couple of calls to Marie and the team at Southgate, they located for me an extremely nice example of an 1891-CC gold eagle (PCGS AU-58). A high-end 58, with almost no bag marks of any kind, loads of luster and packed with super eye appeal. I almost hated cracking this one out of the holder. (I was actually too “chicken,” so I had Rusty do it for me!). This coin is just a whisper from Mint State and is the finest looking coin in the set. Price: \$1,190.00. When this beauty finally arrived, I think I must have felt like Louis Eliasberg the day he acquired the fabulous (and *Unique*) 1873-CC *Without Arrows* Seated dime to complete his amazing collection. Of course my \$10 gold piece is not in that league, I know, but on my day of completion I think I felt the same excitement as he must have!

My grand total for this historic ten-piece type set (including the Capital Plastics display): \$8,450.00, and just under three years in time spent completing it. Just think, some lucky folks could do this set in one day! I don't know if anyone would get any more enjoyment out of it than I have though. This has been a truly fun project and leaves a very satisfactory feeling of accomplishment. I came in just a hair over my original budget of eight grand, but in there is a “Top-25”* coin in the set! Prices for “CC” coins have gone up since I began assembling my type set, and they continue to do so. However, I believe that today, with patience, one could build his or her own set as nice or nicer than mine shown here for less than \$8,000.00.

In ten years or so, I will look back on this little article and probably marvel at the low prices paid for these “CC” coins. But most of all, I will recall with fondness, the fun times that I had assembling this set.

Here’s an idea I have for another future “CC” type set:

1. All ten coins with different dates (no two alike). 2. The three gold issue denominations would present an example from each decade of mint production, the 1870s, 1880s and 1890s. (e.g. 1879-CC \$5 – 1893-CC \$10 – 1884-CC \$20). 3. The first and last years of “CC”-mint operations would be represented. (e.g. 1870-CC Seated dollar – \$1893-CC Gold \$10). How about an all “first year of issue” type set? Or a “last year of issue” set?

A closing comment: I have my display in my living room right next to my beautifully framed C40A membership certificate. Almost everyone who visits comments on how nice the set and certificate look together. Quite a few of my friends are actually surprised to learn that coins were ever minted in Carson City, Nevada! “Are they real?” many ask. Yes indeed...they’re real all right. Here’s an overview of my set. Have fun building yours!

Overview of 10-Piece “CC” Type Set

#	Date	Denomination	Grade
1.	1877-CC	Seated Dime	AU
2.	1875-CC	Twenty-Cent	AU
3.	1878-CC	Quarter Dollar	AU
4.	1875-CC	Half Dollar	AU
5.	1870-CC	Seated Dollar	G-6
6.	1878-CC	Trade Dollar	XF-45*
7.	1884-CC	Morgan Dollar	BU
8.	1891-CC	Gold Half Eagle	XF-45
9.	1891-CC	Gold Eagle	AU-58
10.	1884-CC	Gold Double Eagle	AU

*“Top 25” coin, from *The Mint on Carson Street*.