

I Caught the “CC” Fever

By Maya Roberts

#RM-0399

In my mere twenty years of being alive, I have come to notice a few things. First: when you’re around something all the time, like it or not, you begin to learn about it through osmosis. Second: when you find something that passionately interests somebody else; you tend to search for something to be passionately interested in yourself. Third: chances are, if people around you are sick, you’re going to catch whatever fever they have. Consequently, I seemed to have caught the “CC” fever. Thanks to a little coin shop, a lot of learning-by-osmosis, and a few friends along the way, I now own my very first “CC” coin—an 1883-CC Morgan dollar, graded MS-63 by PCGS. And because of this, I was able to spread the fever to someone else. Now, I’m not a fashion guru, but I do know that when it comes to just about anything in the fashion world, it’s always best to add a little bit of color into the mix. That way, you’re not playing in the bland world of everyday appearance—no, you have a little something to spice it up. That said, my lovely new “CC” dollar has its own spice to it, in the form of what numismatists refer to as patina, or toning. And this isn’t your ordinary, everyday toning.

The obverse radiates with colorful patina, layered in sea-greens, cobalt blues, and crimson undertones, and is enhanced with specks of gold and silver peaking through. Because of the mixture of blue, red, and gold in the left obverse field, the coin exhibits a warm-purple glow when held in the right light. For all the diagnosticians out there, there’s even a small die crack between the letters BUS in PLURIBUS, as well as a tinier one between stars 9 and 10. There are a few contact marks scattered on the obverse, most noticeably in the left field in front of Ms. Liberty’s mouth, and on her jaw



Maya's first "CC" coin, an 1883-CC Morgan silver dollar graded MS-63 by PCGS.

line. However, none of them seriously detracts from the elegant, mesmerizing rainbow-coloring that flows over the entire obverse. Contrasting with the obverse, the coin's reverse is stark white (the way Weimar White prefers his coins), with only a hint of golden

toning around the periphery. There's a very faint doubling of the lettering in the motto, as well as a carbon spot on the eagle's cheek, giving the appearance of a little beauty mark. What's really striking, however, is the amount of die cracks. The most prominent one extends from the T in STATES through the eagle's wing, and ends in the C in AMERICA—nearly half way around the coin! There are two more, one stringing from the O in ONE through the star, and ending in the U in UNITED, and the other picking up where it left off, by connecting the letters NITED in UNITED.

Aside from the aesthetic beauty of this piece, I believe that this coin has also started a domino effect in my life. For instance, upon telling my mother about the purchase, she instantly became more interested in starting a 10-piece “CC” type set. Although we both figured that it would be a slow process, she promised me that if I helped her select the coins needed to build this set, *I* would be the one to inherit them. Now, that's the way I like to work—I get to use my position at the coin shop (along with the expertise of Rusty Goe), and I get to use my mother's money to build a 10-piece “CC” type set that will eventually be passed down to me! I have to say, that's the best of both worlds.

Since my mother expressed that she wanted to “go in with me” on a set, I have found two coins that match the eye appeal of my initial 1883-CC Morgan. First, I spotted an 1875-CC “Above Bow” dime, graded MS-64 by NGC, which Rusty recently purchased in an auction. When I asked Rusty to price it for me, he told me that he never expected to have a potential buyer for it quite so quickly. And, like the Morgan dollar, this particular dime displays beautiful toning on both sides, which is the reason I hurriedly handpicked it as soon as it came into the store.

I mentioned the dime to my mother, and sent her pictures of it via

email. She was very surprised at how beautiful the coin was, having never really seen a coin from the 1800s. She was very pleased with my pick, and we both decided that this would make a wonderful addition to the set that I had already started. The only obstacle was that she lives in Las Vegas, and in lieu of shipping it to her, we decided that she would wait to see it until she came to visit me a month later.

After the initial success of obtaining the second coin for the type set, I was working in the showroom at Southgate Coins, and happened across another “CC” coin (a quarter, this time), that had similar toning. Luscious sea-greens, electric blues, and mesmerizing golden hues crowd the obverse, and I already knew that after I spoke with my mom, this would be the third addition to a very special “CC” type set.

In addition to the color, this beautiful quarter was special in another way. First, it’s an 1878-CC, meaning that it was struck in the last year of issue for any Carson City Liberty Seated coin. Second, and more interestingly, this specific specimen is the semi-cancelled die variety. From what I’ve learned so far, this variety exists because of interesting circumstances. You see, when mint workers determined that a die was no longer useful, they stamped a large “X” across it, so that when it was discarded, it couldn’t be used to make unofficial coins. On a number of 1878-CC quarters, you can plainly see a large raised line extending from Ms. Liberty’s right arm, through her body, and ending at her knee. If this in fact occurred when Carson Mint staff chose to cancel a particular obverse die, but, for some reason, changed course after the initial act of stamping the “X,” a larger, more prominent portion of the “X” remained when a new batch of quarters was struck. If you look at Ms. Liberty’s waist, you can even detect another, much smaller line, perpendicular to



Lovely toned MS-64 specimens of an 1875-CC Above Bow dime, and an 1878-CC Semi-cancelled die variety quarter, included in Maya's mom's 10-piece "CC" type set.

the first. As I explained this phenomenon to my mom, she continued to get more excited about the start of our set. Needless to say, my mother purchased the quarter, commenting that this was going to be a very fun adventure for the two of us.

Overall, I've discovered that ever since I caught the "CC" fever, it didn't take long at all for me to find someone to spread it to. Now, my mom and I both discuss our next step in building the joint 10-piece "CC" type set, and she's learning a lot about coins along the way.

It really does surprise me how well you're able to learn things by osmosis. Before this job, I would have had absolutely no idea what a 10-piece "CC" type set was, let alone what coins were needed to put it together. And, because of my budding passion, I was able to find yet another way to connect with my mother. Even though we live in different cities, we have that little something extra to bring us together.

As an afterthought, I want to thank Michael Parrott for nudging me in the right direction. This past summer, he was astonished to find out that I have worked at Southgate Coins for a year and a half without having bought a "CC" coin. Well, following your recommendations, Michael, my mom and I now have three, and we are very pleased!

(Images courtesy of Southgate Coins)