

**A Journey of Discovery and a Room with a View –  
My Up-Close Experience with the *Battle Born* Collection**

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Wednesday August 8, 2012, broke early like any other summer day in sultry Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Yet, this day would not be like any other. This day would set me upon a journey of discovery\* unlike any day I have ever previously experienced.

I rose early to meet up with friend and fellow C4OAer Bruce Thayer. We enjoyed a hearty breakfast and then proceeded on to our destination, the Philadelphia Convention Center, room 108 A&B.

Rusty Goe greeted us at the entrance of the Stack’s Bowers auction lot-viewing room. We were promptly ushered to our spots as the first viewers of the day.



*Bruce Thayer, Michael Parrott, and Rusty Goe at lot viewing in Philadelphia for Battle Born collection.*

The large room was laid out with a wide “T” formation of professional dark-linen-covered tables. All tables were supplied with black-

enamel incandescent lamps, which provided optimum light for viewing. The treasured *Battle Born* Collection coins were brought forth one box at a time ... and so my journey of discovery began, Rusty seated to my left and Bruce on my right.

We began with lot #11001—the 1870-CC gold half eagle graded PCGS MS-61 CAC. I was exhilarated to be holding and viewing one of the finest 1870-CC half eagles on the planet! Eighteen of the nineteen *BBC* coins comprising this half eagle set are in the top two tiers of the condition census. One astounding coin after another, the *BBC* \$5 gold piece viewing made for an unfathomable experience. What a way to begin a journey!



*Michael seated with Bruce looking on and Rusty standing, at Stack's Bowers' lot viewing - Battle Born collection.*

Bruce and I were both compelled to spend some extra time with the finest “CC” gold coin that survives today (regardless of denomination or date), the stupendous 1876-CC \$5 Liberty gold piece. In its unbelievable grade of PCGS MS-66 (Secure holder, CAC, ex *Eliasberg*), this coin is far and away the finest gold coin survivor from the Carson Mint. It was an absolute thrill and honor for Bruce and me to have had this private viewing pleasure.

It's no secret that my favorite "CC" coin series is the gold half eagles, so it's little wonder that I spent the better part of an hour viewing this improbable run of "CC" fives.

We continued with the set of "CC" gold eagles. As hard as it is to believe, this set even topped the half eagles! The *BBC* eagle set is the finest ever assembled, and like its "CC" half eagle set counterpart, it has 18 of its 19 coins in the top two grading tier levels.

Following the catalog's order, our next group to view was the 19 gold "CC" double eagles. I longingly held, viewed, inspected, and ogled over my dream coin, the "Queen"† of Carson City gold pieces, the 1870-CC double eagle. This example, graded NGC AU-53, is one of the "nose-bleeds." It is tied with two others in this same grade, with only two graded higher, both by NGC. One at AU-55, and the other much publicized stolen example, which is amazingly at AU-58.

The journey of discovery's next destination was the silver issues beginning with lot #11058, the 1878-CC Morgan dollar graded NGC MS-67. A blazing and stunning coin!

The *Battle Born* collection contains 72 of 111 coins graded in the top two tiers of the condition census. It bears saying that the group of 39 coins not in that top-two-tier category, would serve as the centerpiece of just about any other collection.

We continued through the "CC" Morgan dollars, followed by the six Trade dollars, and the four Seated Liberty dollars. After a brief pause, we resumed our viewing odyssey with the fabulous ten-coin set of "CC" Seated half dollars.

Now, the "nectar." Lots #11091 through #11099 comprised one of the all-time greatest sets of "CC" Seated quarter dollars ever assembled. All nine of the amazing coins were in the top two grading tiers. We were staring at the face of beauty, rarity, and history all in

one package. For the first time in this old Drummer’s life, I actually held a “Princess.”† This particular “Princess” happens to be the 1873-CC *Without Arrows* Seated quarter dollar—one of only five known, with this example being the second finest known specimen, graded PCGS MS-64. It was difficult to truly comprehend what Bruce and I were viewing. It’s hard to believe that such a set, with coins like the Princess, even existed. But there it was in all its glory, splendidly laid before us.



*Michael Parrott holding Battle Born 1873-CC Without Arrows quarter, with Bruce Thayer in background.*

We now had arrived at lot #11101—the fabulous ultra-rarity, the 1876-CC twenty-cent piece, graded PCGS MS-64 (aka the “Duke”† of Carson City coins). A lustrous near gem and a sight to hold and behold.

Just prior to my audience with the Duke, I met up with its more common counterpart (relative term), the 1875-CC twenty-center. This particular piece held my gaze for quite a long time as it was among the most stunningly beautiful toned coins I’ve ever seen. It is vivid and breathtaking, with its periphery of light pink-gold subtly blending into a mid-halo of iridescent blue resolving to a peach-colored center. These color features are duplicated evenly on both sides. This stunning coin is unrivaled in the condition census.

A standalone number-one piece graded NGC MS-67★. A rare privilege to behold.

And now, the grand finale: Lots #11102 through #11111—the *BBC* Seated dimes. This staggering collection contains THE dime—“THE KING† of Carson City coins.” This King suffers no rival. It’s the single greatest rarity of all coins produced at the Carson Mint and the rarest of all U.S.-issued dimes. PCGS graded lot #11104, the unique 1873-CC *Without Arrows* Seated dime, MS-65 in a Secure holder. It is the finest known and the *only* known example. This satiny and fully lustrous gem I held in my hand provided me with a rare privilege to view it up-close and personal.

I was stunned when Bruce pointed out that our fabulous *BBC* viewing session had eclipsed the six-hour mark. It seemed like only a couple of hours at the most.

My viewing experience and journey of discovery did not begin to fully make its impact upon me until my long plane-ride back home to Nevada. I had (and still have) mixed feelings of elation, happiness, and some sadness too. I held and viewed these amazing coins perhaps for the final time ever. The *BB* collection will likely not be duplicated again—at least not in my lifetime. The most glorious coins in all of numismatics—a dream-team set from the Carson City Mint.

Bruce had reminded me of the awesome fact that all morning we had been handling and viewing coins once held in the cabinets of the greatest numismatic legends and luminaries in history: the Norwebs, Bass, Eliasberg, Budd, Bolen, and many more.

The *Battle Born* Collection viewing and auction are now over—finished. The journey of discovery, however, is not—it continues.

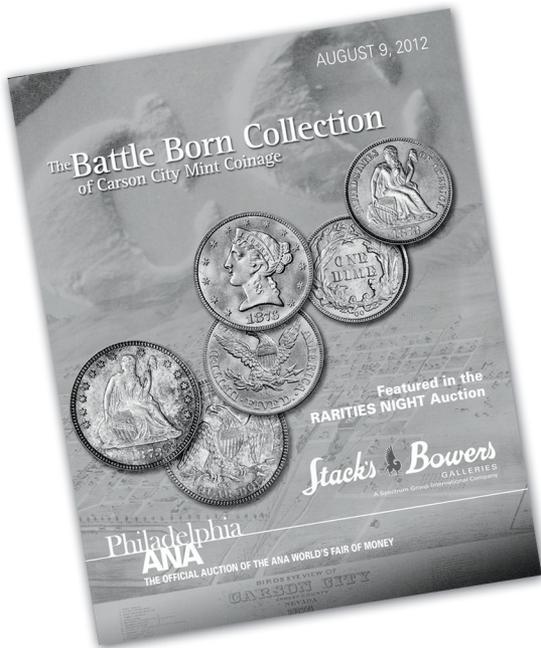
On that single Wednesday, August 8, 2012, for that brief and privileged moment in time, I was transported to a special and private place far away from the ordinary world of everyday things.

A place of dreams and an improbable “CC” coin set. It’s almost as if Rod Serling himself, appeared from the old TV series *The Twilight Zone* at the doorway of that viewing room and said to me, “You are entering another dimension ... A dimension not only of sight and sound, but of mind....”

On any given day that room is simply known as room 108 A&B, in the Pennsylvania Convention Center. For me, on that special day, I was transported on a journey of discovery to a very special room—a room with a view.

\* “Journey of discovery” is a wonderful phrase used by Rusty Goe in his lecture at the 2012 Philadelphia ANA C4OA meeting.

† THE KING, Queen, Princess, Duke, referring to “CC” coins, were conceived by Rusty Goe for use in his four *Coin World* articles in 2012.



(Images courtesy of Michael Parrott and Southgate Coins)