

A GSA Carson City Silver Dollar Sale Press Kit

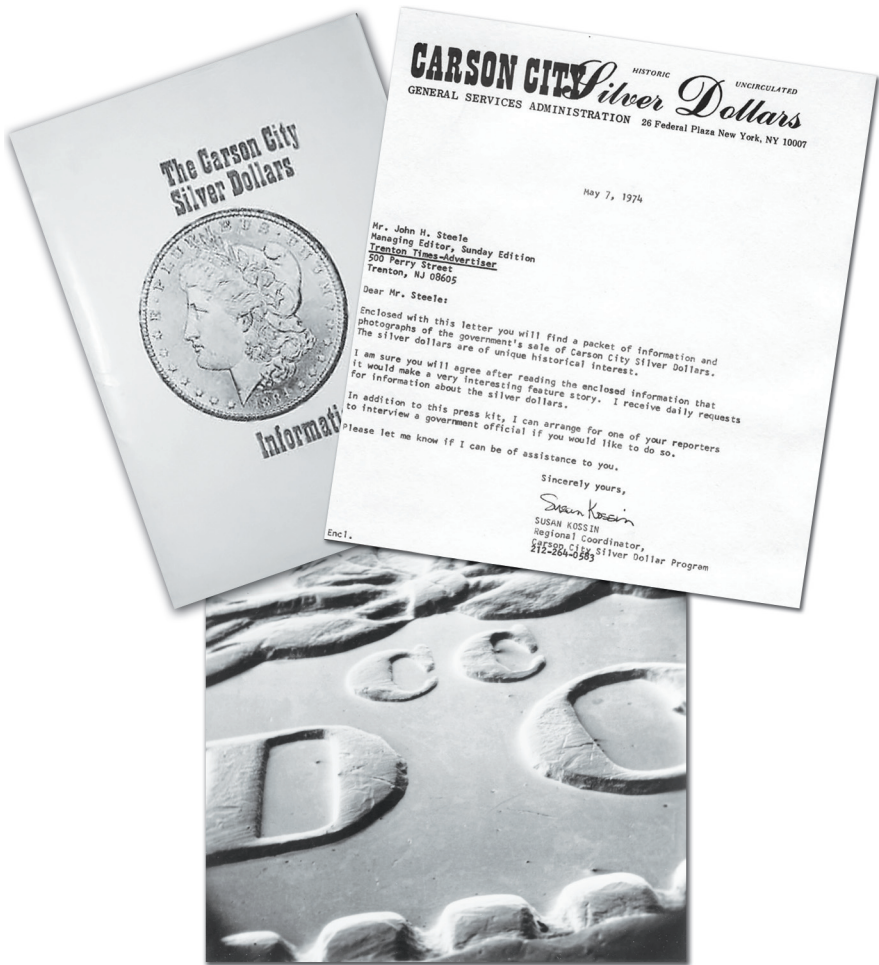
By Mitchell Yee

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In February 2010, a press kit from the General Services Administration's (GSA) Carson City silver dollar sales was sold on eBay. Press kits are compositions of pictures and printed material intended to provide the press (newspapers, magazines, etc.) with camera- or layout-ready materials that promote special events. In 1974, general interest in the GSA's sales of the U.S. Treasury's hoard of Carson City-minted silver dollars had been flagging because of market saturation. There had been four prior sales from the hoard of 2.9 million Morgan dollars and prospects for selling all of the "common" dates of 1882, 1883, and 1884 were growing dim. In the spring of 1974, the GSA issued the press kit described in this article in an attempt to boost public interest for its "Last of a Legacy" sale of 1974.



GSA press kit materials from 1974. GSA Administrator Arthur F. Sampson, at top left, holding a "CC" dollar.



Information booklet, press letter and close-up image of “CC” mintmark from 1974 GSA press kit.

This particular press kit was sent out to a reporter for the *Trenton Times-Advertiser* in New Jersey on May 7, 1974. It contains fifteen pages of printed materials and four photos. The printed materials describe the historical significance of the sale and the history of the Carson City silver dollars up for sale (1880, 1881, 1882, 1883,

1884, and 1885). They also discuss the investment possibilities, the role of the GSA, and the bidding process. The four photos depict the unique two-letter “CC” mintmark in close-up, the obverse of a Morgan silver dollar, the reverse of a “CC” mint-marked Morgan silver dollar, and the GSA administrator, Arthur Sampson, holding a GSA-packaged (hard pack) silver dollar with a tabletop display of GSA bid forms to his right.

Normally, the fate of press kits was to end up as shredded scraps on the floors of layout rooms in newspaper offices across the nation. The condition of this kit is intact (per the cover letter) and nearly mint, with only a few stains on the cover. The printed sheets and photos are clean, without folds or stains. It’s remarkable that this kit has survived the intervening years intact.

This kit is the first of its kind that I have ever seen. I am now wondering if there are any other press kits out there that could broaden the story of the GSA Carson City silver dollar sales.

(Images courtesy of Mitchell Yee)

Carson City Regional Meeting

Please sign up for the August C4OA regional meeting in Carson City, NV. If you plan to stay for dinner, reservations are required. See page 23 for details.