

## MORE ON THE COMPLETENESS OF LOUIS ELIASBERG'S U.S. COIN COLLECTION

David Ganz forwarded this excerpt from his new book "Rare Coin Investing" (Krause):

"Eliasberg's collection was magnificent, of that there is no doubt. But those who follow stories like this closely know that Eliasberg did not quite succeed in his task; one of them, evidently escaped. My notes say that when the family turned the collection over for auction by Bowers & Merena in the early eighties, he was one coin down: an 1866 no motto \$20 gold piece.

The king of coins was by then deceased, his estate, or heir, offering the gold coin collection anonymously through Bowers & Merena, and from my perspective, there was a mystery to be solved of who was selling the Eliasberg coins without calling them such. The solution: first, Neil S. Berman sold the deficient coin to the estate. But this did not come out until years later.

One good thing about being a collector; you collect. I keep the old auction catalogues, cross-reference them with future (and past) catalogues. Well, five years after Eliasberg, Bowers & Merena is selling "The King of Siam" sale in New York on October 14, 1987.

I am reading the catalogue for lot 2043 for an 1866-S No motto \$20 gold piece in EF-40 which is described as "finer" than the Eliasberg coin. There is a paragraph added in small type (it looks like six point type, but at the time, I could read it easily.

"When the cataloguer studied the Eliasberg Collection prior to presenting it at auction in 1982," Bowers wrote, "it was discovered that the collection had no 1866- No Motto double eagle. Whether Louis Eliasberg overlooked the variety or whether he considered his collection complete because he had an 1866-S with motto is not known. However, in the interest of completeness the Eliasberg family purchased one through us, and we acquired it from dealer Neil Berman. So as a footnote to numismatic history, the Eliasberg Collection was "completed" in 1982 with Neil Berman furnishing the missing piece!"

Eliasberg was born in 1896 in Selma, Alabama and lived a full life into the bicentennial year of 1976. He moved to Baltimore around 1907 and according to his son, Richard, in 1925 he began to collect "methodically", and starting the following year, began to buy systematically from the leading dealers of the day. He recorded his purchases in Ben Green's "The Numismatists' Reference and Checkbook", where many familiar names (or initials) appear: "BB" for Barney Bluestone, "Gut" for the Guttag brothers, "HC" for Henry Chapman, "MM" for B. Max ...  
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