

**Press Release (January 30, 2025):****Pre-Sale Announcement for the March 22, 2025  
Gerry Fortin Auction Sale including a retrospective  
of Gerry Fortin's collecting career****Collector reflects on Lifelong Journey**

Collecting arcs are as numerous as collectors themselves, though to be sure many of us share common experiences. As with most collectors of his generation, Gerry Fortin plucked pennies and nickels out of change and filled the ubiquitous Whitman albums. Lawn mowing and snow shoveling supplemented the coin budget for occasional purchases from local dealers. High school brought the distractions of driving and dating, combining the ultimate symbol of American independence with the pressure of a busy social life.

Adult collectors have a way of returning to the hobby after launching professional careers and families, and such was the case for Fortin. With his collection stored away in the attic, Fortin's reintroduction to the hobby came in 1987 when his mother-in-law presented a roll of Morgan dollars to each of her children. Gerry's reaction was visceral. "When I was a kid, I could not afford a Morgan dollar," he recalled, and here was an entire roll! Fortin returned to the fold as a Morgan dollar collector, but did not find the pursuit significantly challenging. "You'd go to a coin show, there's Morgan dollars everywhere," Fortin remembered.

Fortin was more motivated by rarity and history, with the Civil War as a focal point. He studied the Red Book carefully and settled on the Liberty Seated dime series as a pursuit that optimally combined the "thrill of the hunt" with an achievable goal of completion. Fortin was fortunate to connect early on with Bob Levi, proprietor of Maine Gold & Silver. By sheer coincidence, Levi was disbursing his personal set of Seated dimes, which he pieced out to Fortin as Gerry was able to make payments.

In 1989, Fortin joined the Liberty Seated Collectors Club (LSCC) and acquired a copy of Kamal Ahwash's Encyclopedia of United States Liberty Seated Dimes (published in 1977), which at the time represented the most significant study of Seated dime varieties. "It was like a switch flipped," Gerry said, "and I was immediately addicted." Through John McCloskey, LSCC president, Fortin connected with Seated dime expert Brian Greer, who was working on a follow-up volume to the Ahwash reference. Greer was a valuable mentor, not only with respect to dime varieties, but also as a champion of the idea that connoisseurship is independent of one's budget. Training one's eye to find the best piece at a given grade level was more important than simply writing a check for the highest graded coin available. Fortin began studying the series more intensely and made contributions to Brian Greer's work, The Complete Guide to Liberty Seated Dimes, published in 1992.

Fortin describes his work on Liberty Seated dime varieties as a "stress reliever" from his professional career in the semiconductor industry. Fortin worked in various capacities at IBM, Fairchild, and National Semiconductor, where he gained experience in manufacturing operations and quality control. Fortin notes his analytical work in the semiconductor business was applicable to his study of dime varieties. "I was well versed in relational databases and sifting through those databases to get clues," Fortin said. "It was drilling down, assembling data, and building a story from the data." Fortin sought to apply the same skillset to numismatics and became laser-focused on the task of documenting every single die marriage in the Seated dime series.

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In 2004, Fortin released his “web book” of Liberty Seated dime varieties, which documented over a thousand different die marriages. Gerry released the “web book” as a CD, a novel approach at the time, as a print version would have been unwieldy and subject to constant updates. Following the release of the CD, Fortin received significant feedback from fellow collectors, which was in turn reflected in the live version of the work, now publicly available at [seateddimevarieties.com](http://seateddimevarieties.com). Brian Greer’s earlier work came full circle in the web book, as Fortin had purchased a substantial portion of Greer’s variety collection for reference purposes.

Fortin’s set construction hit “pause” when the collector Gene Gardner began assembling his world-class Liberty Seated collection, c. 2005. Competing with Gardner for the best pieces was usually a losing proposition, even for those willing to pay market rates. The sale of the Gardner collection in 2014-2015 opened a brief window when Fortin was again able to acquire significant coins, until the collector Dell Loy Hansen entered the market and aggressively pursued finest known pieces in all U.S. denominations.

The San Francisco Civil War dates are among Fortin’s favorite dimes. These coins are not rare in an absolute sense, but in Mint State the situation becomes challenging, as few examples were saved at the time of issue. Moreover, weak strikes are the rule in this era, with the 1865-S dime being the poster child for soft heads and weakly impressed wreaths. Fortin was able to pick off exceptional, well-struck pieces in the 1990s and 2000s, when the population reports were less mature and such opportunities were known only to astute collectors of the series. These coins have sharply advanced in value in the ensuing years. Predicting the coin market is anything but straightforward, though Fortin suggests CAC-approved gold coinage, particularly issues with populations under 20 examples, as an area for future growth.

After leaving Fairchild in 2006, Fortin relocated to China for six years, where he worked for CSMC Technologies, a Chinese semiconductor manufacturer. After returning to the U.S., Gerry launched a rare coin dealership, Gerry Fortin Rare Coins. The growth of the business was facilitated in part by Gerry’s son Matthew Fortin, who developed the software for the ‘seateddimevarieties.com’ site. This web site presents Gerry’s work on Seated dime varieties, in addition to coins for sale, periodic auctions sales, and a prices-realized archive that is especially useful for Liberty Seated coinage.

In addition to listing new coins for sale, the Fortin site hosts the Daily Blog feature, which presents Fortin’s running numismatic commentary on a regular basis. Gerry is a believer in the concept of accountability for coin collectors, which means owning one’s mistakes, and taking responsibility for the disposition of one’s collection, rather than leaving the task to heirs and estate administrators. Selling duplicates or uninformed purchases ensures accountability, as it provides valuable feedback on one’s grasp of numismatic value and current market conditions.

Fortin practices what he preaches and is currently offering his frontline collection of Liberty Seated dimes in a series of three sales. The first session, concluded on January 19, 2025, included an 1860-O PCGS AU50 CAC example, the fourth highest certified by CAC, which sold at \$16,000. An 1870-S dime, graded PCGS MS65 CAC, sold for \$12,000.

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Subsequent sessions take place March 22 and May 10. Highlights of the March 22 session include an 1845-O dime graded PCGS AU 55 Gold CAC, which comes with the Pittman pedigree (shown below). An 1865 dime in PCGS MS67 CAC is tied for finest known at CAC, while the ever-popular Carson City series is represented by an 1871-CC dime graded PCGS EF45 CAC (also shown below). Most pieces in the Fortin collection will be found in higher Mint State grades, with CAC certification, including a number of Gold CAC examples.

This Sale represents the most significant offering of Liberty Seated dimes since the Gene Gardner sales and will draw considerable interest among Liberty Seated collectors and dime specialists alike. Additional sale details are available at: [seateddimevarieties.com/auction.html](https://seateddimevarieties.com/auction.html)



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