

60
PAGES OF
ACTION
IN
FULL COLOR



HISTORICALLY DERIVED ORIGIN

EASILY IDENTIFIABLE MARKINGS



OKAJIMA COLLECTION

**ALL GENRES/
MOST PUBLISHERS**

GOLDEN AGE ATOMIC AGE SILVER AGE

1935 1940 1945 1950 1955 1960 1965 1970

Years Collected:1943-1954
 Brought to market:1995
 Owners Name:Okajima
 Size of Collection:1000-1200 (35)
 Average Grades:VF 7.9 (25)
 # of Key Books:0 (50)

Avg Page Quality:5.5 (20)
 Quality of Contents:3.0 (30)
 Volume of Scarcer Issues:3.5 (25)
 Completeness of Runs:4.0 (25)
 Overall Collection Value:4.0 (25)



The OKAJIMA

Collection



Images of the harsh life in the Manzanar Internment camp where a 10-year old girl began to amass what eventually became the Okajima Collection.



The Okajima collection was amassed quite unlike any other pedigree collection, assembled by a young Japanese girl while interned in the infamous camps ordered by President Roosevelt during World War II. The incredible backstory of this pedigree was revealed by accident when a letter was discovered half a century later inside one of the comics by comic dealer Alan Bahr.

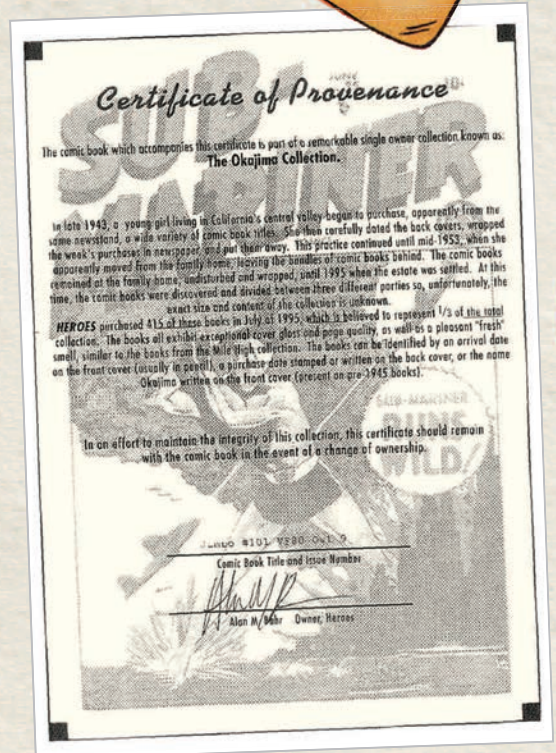
The Origin of the Okajima Collection

The Original Owner

In the aftermath of the bombing of Pearl Harbor in December of 1941, fear and paranoia had swept the nation. President Franklin Roosevelt was being pressured by political parties to take action against a perceived internal threat by Japanese who resided in the US. On February 19th, 1942 he signed Executive Order 9066, deporting all Japanese Nationals and effectively dislodging 120,000 Japanese-Americans from their homes and placing them in makeshift internment camps. Most families were given 48 hours to gather what few possessions they could carry before deporting to the camps. They were treated like prisoners, forced to live in very cramped quarters with the barest of essentials. Over two-thirds of those interned were sworn American citizens, and over half were children.

It was in one of these internment camps in 1943, possibly the Manzanar camp in California's desert valley, that a young 10 year-old Japanese-American girl used comic books to escape from her prisonlike surroundings. Incredibly, she managed to save those comic books during her two years of incarceration, a sacrifice for the entire family considering the tight spaces they shared in the camps.

Ultimately, only ten people were ever convicted of spying for Japan during the war, and none were of Japanese descent. Once this dark chapter in American history came to a close in early 1945 and the Japanese-Americans were released from the internment camps, the young girl and her family took her large accumulation of comics home with her. As they settled back into normal life after the war, she continued to buy, read and save comics for many more years. Her collecting ultimately stopped around mid-1953, when it is believed she moved from her parent's home, most likely due to marriage. This time, she didn't take her comic collection with her, leaving them behind at the family homestead.



Alan Bahr's original Pedigree Certificate.

Okajima Collection Founder:



ALAN BAHR

Alan Bahr began dealing at comic conventions in the mid '80s and then bought a comic store in the Silicon Valley area of California in 1995. He still owns and operates **Heroes** in Campbell, C.A. which covers new and old comics, cards and original art.

Alan can be seen at major California comic conventions like San Diego Comic Con and Wondercon, satisfying new and older collectors alike. He is also very active selling on the internet. Alan is nationally known as a collector and dealer of original comic art as well.



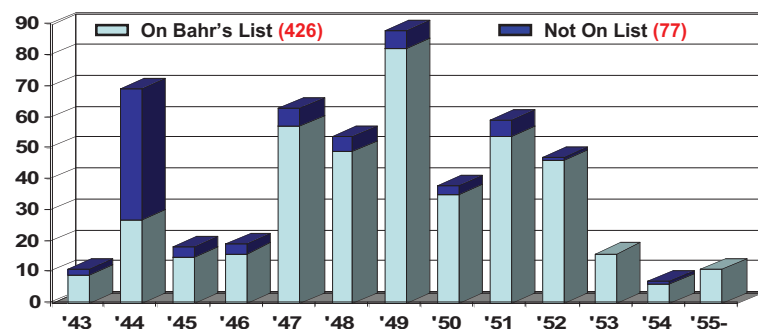
Discovering the Collection

Over 40 years later, the matriarch of the Okajima family passed away. Her descendants needed money to take care of a handicapped family member and hired an estate manager to sell off land and personal property they didn't want to keep. An estate sale was held near Fresno, California in 1995 which included several strange, tightly packed bundles of newspaper resembling large bricks. There were many of these bricks stacked against a wall in a back room during the sale, yet no one was aware of what these bricks contained.

At some point during the sale someone opened one of the "newspaper bricks" and found vintage comics inside. As it turns out, the family had carefully packed the girl's entire collection into these "newspaper bricks", where they sat for decades. Other bricks were opened to reveal more comic books, and a feeding frenzy began between three attendees. A decision was ultimately made to divide the bricks into three groups. After determining a fixed price per brick with the estate seller, the three attendees walked away with about one-third of the comics each, splitting apart what would ultimately become known as the **Okajima Collection**.

One of the three buyers actually collected comics, but his interests were mainly Silver Age books. He was in the right place at the right time (but with the wrong books!), this collector suddenly had some amazing comics for sale. In July of that year, comic dealer **Alan Bahr** of Heroes Comics, met with him and purchased 253 of his Okajimas. The collector initially held back several copies, but Alan was so thrilled with the comics in this collection that he pursued the collector to sell the rest. He ended up buying 87 more the following month, and then the rest in February 1996.

Yearly Breakout of Known Okajimas



Alan knew he had something special. The collection's history came to life when he found a letter neatly folded inside **Tip Top #102**, written by the young girl while in the internment camp. She described life in the camp, which fascinated Alan so much he began to actively pursue the other parts of the collection.

When he learned how it had been split up at the estate sale, Alan uncovered the identity of the other two buyers, one of whom was an adult material dealer who

frequently set up at Los Angeles shows, including the popular Shrine convention. By the time Alan got to him in September of 1995 the dealer had sold all but 30 of his Okajimas. Alan quickly snapped these up. As it turned out, Shrine regulars such as Mervin Lee, Terry O'Neil, Bruce Schwartz and Ron Murry had already plucked most Okajimas from this dealer before Alan hit the scene. These comics were then spread throughout the California comic collecting community.

Alan discovered the other buyer was a mysterious flea market dealer who was more secretive in his method of selling his books. The dealer had scattered his Okajimas around California in a curious fashion, not selling more than a few at any given time. Eventually Alan discovered 40 more Okajimas at a local comic store in 1996. During his year of pursuit on this collection, Alan remained bothered by the unanswered questions of the story behind this unique collection of comics, so he hired a detective to investigate the whereabouts of the girl, but unfortunately little information was uncovered.

Initial Brokering of the Collection

To showcase the superb quality and historical significance of this collection, Alan Bahr printed and signed a certificate of provenance for each Okajima copy he acquired. He used the old Overstreet 100 point scale and OWL page quality rating to grade the books, and selected the **Sub Mariner #32** cover as the background for the certificate. The certificate mentions the number of books Alan ultimately obtained from the collection (415). Ironically, the use of the word "pedigree" was avoided; according to Alan, at the time, some felt the pedigree concept was being overused, and he wanted to avoid any potential backlash.

Alan first unveiled his Okajimas at the 1995 San Diego Comic Con, and the books received considerable attention. He continued to sell them through his store and at conventions over the next year, adding a premium of around 20% to the common issues, and more for the higher grades and popular books. Within two years he managed to sell almost all of his Okajimas, having saved a few for his personal collection.

When CGC opened for business in January 2000 Okajimas were not one of the original ten pedigrees they recognized, but it was added shortly thereafter, along with 25 other collections. March 2001 saw the first CGC graded Okajima. Eventually Alan had his remaining copies CGC graded and subsequently sold them.

1944 OKAJIMAS?

Did JA Know?
Because 1944 Okajimas are the easiest to identify and among the most valuable, it's understandable why so many from that year have surfaced in the market.

As this happened over time, Alan Bahr realized how little of his third of the "Okajima Bricks" were from 1944, and the ones he did have were lower grade and not from the most valuable publishers like Timely and DC.

Was this luck of the draw, or was the division of the collection more intentional than random?



SUB-MARINER COMICS #50. (6/49)

DOUBLE COVERS

There have been no double cover issues found in the Okajima Collection to date.

OKAJIMA GENRE

WOMEN

Due to the way the collection was broken up at the estate sale, it's difficult to determine if the family packaged the books by year, by title or by genre. It is possible the genres were not evenly distributed among the lots, with one lot containing more of a genre than the others. As an example, Alan's first purchase contained no teen humor, but this genre was represented in the smaller second batch he purchased a year later.

As more Okajima's are identified in personal collections, it appears that jungle themed issues surface the most. Genres missing or lacking include funny animal, teen humor, crime, and romance. Although the collection favored titles featuring females, it is surprisingly missing Wonder Woman and Mary Marvel, the two most popular female titles of that era, even though there are a number of Sensation Comics and Wow Comics present.

Although the collection heavily favored titles featuring females, it surprisingly lacks all "girl" comics that were more plentiful during its era than it possesses.

Review of the Okajima Collection

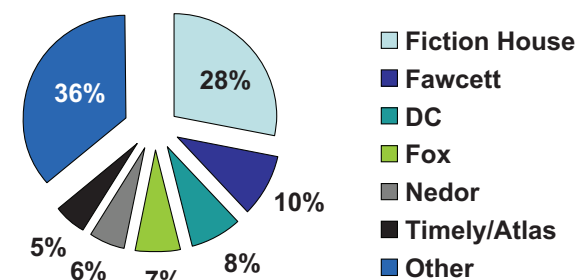
Contents of the Collection

Because the collection was evenly split into thirds at the estate sale, and the first buyer sold Alan approximately 340 comics, the estimated size of the Okajima collection has been estimated to be roughly 1,000-1,200 books. Alan's master list also includes the additional 70 issues he acquired from the other two-thirds of the collection. The collection spans 1942 to 1957 with peaks in 1944 and 1947-1952. The earliest known Okajima issue is True Comics #18 (1942).

Due to the starting period for this collection, Okajimas lack valuable Golden Age key issues (mostly issued between 1938-1942). It does however contain a number of key type such as Phantom Lady #17 and Sub-Mariner #32. The collection also lacks #1 issues--only 20 of the 553 known copies are #1's, and only one, Mystery Comics #1 is from 1944, the peak year of the collection.

As of June 2019, CGC has identified 231 Okajimas. 96 of these are on Alan's original list, which only represents 23% of that part of the collection. The other 134 copies are 58% of the total copies graded by CGC, which seems to accurately reflect the assumption that about 60% of existing Okajimas were not on Alan's list.

Okajima Publisher Breakdown



SHEENA #6, (Spring/50)

The genres within the collection changed over time; the war years between '43 and '45 contained about 80% superhero comics, after which point the number of purchased books significantly drops. This may be attributed to the release of all Japanese/Americans from internment camps in January 1945, which was likely a chaotic period of readjustment to normal life.

By 1947 her buying picked up again, with a focus on jungle themed comics and away from superheroes, which were on a steady decline once the war was over. Many comics among her selections featured women on the cover. Even the later super-

hero books she bought featured female heroes like Phantom Lady, Wonder Woman and Blonde Phantom. She consistently bought Jungle and Jumbo Comics, but also began acquiring titles like Thrilling, Exciting, Wings and Fight once they started featuring girls more prominently on the covers. She must have really liked the Alex Schomburg airbrush covers of these titles because most of them are present in the collection.

By 1950 the genres begin to shift from good girl art to western; many western comics are present from '50 to '52, particularly Atlas westerns and Indian themed comics, but little or no photo covers. Then in 1952 the genres shift again, this time towards science fiction and adventure, although western and jungle themed comics are still present.

The collection is heavy with two publishers: Fiction House and Fawcett. Almost a third of the master list are Fiction House, the publisher most famous good girl jungle covers. The domination of this genre in the collection is further evidenced by large number of Tarzan comics in the collection. Fawcetts, which account of over one-quarter of the known collection, is also heavily amassed with over 40% jungle themed titles.

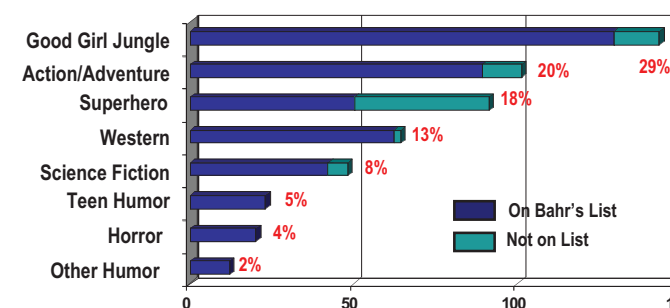
Conditions of the Okajima Collection

The key ingredient for Okajimas' quality appears to be the way the books were wrapped in paper for nearly 50 years. Most Okajimas have glossy, white covers that are free of foxing and soiling. Since word first spread about this collection, Okajimas have established a reputation for their white pages, which many have attributed to the temperate climate of California. Like the Mile High collection, the earliest Okajimas from the war era exhibit the whitest pages.

Since Alan acquired a random third of the Okajimas, it would be a safe assumption his grades reflect the contents of the entire collection. He graded about 57% VF (8.0) or better condition, with the majority of the highest grades falling between '46 and '49. Most of his lower grades were from the '43-'45 period. The CGC grades seem to reflect this as well, with an overall average grade of 7.7, and the lowest average of 7.2 from the '43-'45 period. The highest CGC grades also come from the '46-'49 period with an average grade of 8.3, and an average grade of 7.9 during the '50-'54 period.

Although about a third of Alan's list of Okajimas were produced by Fiction House, almost half of the CGC graded Okajimas are from this company. Popular companies

Genres of All Known Okajima Issues



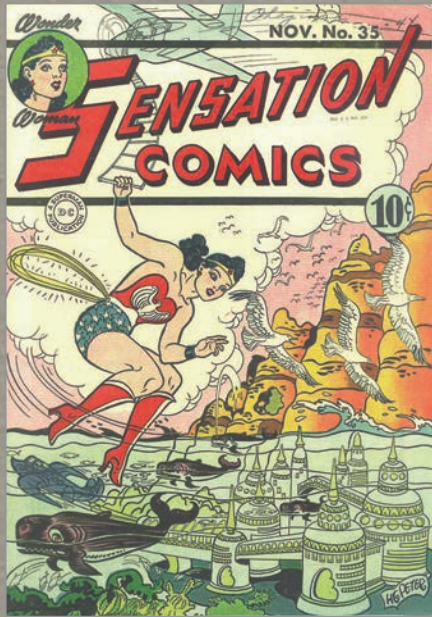
EXCITING COMICS #65, (1/49)



JUNGLE COMICS #106, (10/48)



CAPTAIN AMERICA COMICS #39, (6/44)



SENSATION COMICS #35, (11/44)

like DC, Nedor and Fawcett are also heavily represented, as well as a large number of 1944 issues. Because the collection was not initially sold as a pedigree, several copies were graded anonymously by CGC early on, such as the Blue Beetle #54 and Phantom Lady #17. Once the collection gained prominence over the following years, most Okajimas are recognized when sent for grading, however some still surface undocumented.

Identifying Okajima Copies

Okajimas are one of the most identifiable pedigrees out there. But there are several types of identifiers spread over the collection's life span, and they can easily go unnoticed if the code changes are not understood.

Okajima Front Cover "Okajima" with Date/Sequence Codes (Jan - Nov '44)



Nov '42 to Oct '43 – No Distinguishable Marks.

The earliest Okajimas on Alan Bahr's list have no identifying marks on the covers. Only six are known, and all are in lower grade. **True Comics #18** (Nov '42) is the earliest book. Because many Okajimas from this era are uncoded and in common grade, other copies that are not on Alan's list may never be identified.

Jan to Nov '44 – "Okajima" with Date/Sequence Code on Front Cover.

These are the easiest Okajimas to identify. "Okajima" is cleanly written on the upper edge of the front cover, always in pen, and is usually accompanied by a date and a sequence code on either side. The earliest known issue from this period is dated Oct 1943, but no other October and November covers exhibit a code.

The sequence code contains a number and a letter, and ascends chronologically (1A, 1B, and so on to 1Z, followed by 2A, 2B, and on to 2Z, etc.). A few early issues have the sequence code and date code reversed, such as **Captain Marvel #31**. This style of coding is very similar to the Crippen "D" collection where Davis Crippen came up with his own code to keep track of his comics. There are 63 Okajimas known to exhibit this style of identification with **Sensation #35** (November 1944) being the last "Okajima" coded issue with a sequence of "4Y." It has the same cover date as the "4V" issue.

It's impossible to tell if the original owner wrote the code, although it makes the

PHANTOM LADY #23, (4/49)



most sense. The handwriting is consistent, and the date could reflect the time of purchase, or possibly when that particular comic was read or "processed." Two Okajimas were found to have the same code on the cover, so it is possible such duplication is present on other issues. There are also gaps in the coding, making it possible that at least 63 other Okajimas from this time period are unaccounted for.

Dec '44 to May '45 – Store Stamp on Front Cover.

During this period the "Okajima" name disappears from the cover, and is replaced by a small store stamp on the front cover (i.e., Jan 30 1945). It was at this time that the United States government closed the internment camps, allowing the Japanese-Americans to assimilate back into the general population. The transition likely led to a disruption of the girl's buying habits because there are few Okajimas from this period and not all copies exhibit the stamp.

May '45 to May '46 – No Distinguishing Marks on the Covers.

These are the hardest Okajimas to identify because they have no identifying marks on either the front or back covers. It's also the period representing the fewest Okajimas in the collection, possibly due to the family settling back into a normal, post-war life.

Aug '46 to Dec '53 – "F" and "T" Distributor Code with Arrival Dates Penciled on Front Cover.

These are the most common codes found on Okajimas, although not the most obvious. These codes consist of an arrival date and one of two distributor marks, either "F" or "T." Many times the "F" looks like a "7" written in European form with a slash across the mid point (Fight #66), and the "T" is sometimes lower case, looking more like a "+" or even an "x." Up until May 1949, the T codes were found without an arrival date, making them hard to spot on a cover. Most codes from this period are written vertically (Zoot #12) or diagonally (Wonder #13). Because there are so few Okajimas known from 1946, this code may be found on books earlier than August '46.

1947-1953 Okajima Front Cover Distributor/Date Codes.



Jul '47 to Apr '50 – Personal Date Stamp on Back Cover.

By early 1947, the girl began to code her comics again, this time by placing a date stamp on the back cover displaying month, day and year. It is assumed she applied the stamp herself, because her dates are generally a few days or even a week or two after the arrival date written on the front cover. This date may represent when she read or "processed" the comic.

EARLY OKAJIMA CODES

Early Okajima front cover codes listed with the date code, "Okajima" name, sequence number and cover date of the issue.

DATE	SEQUENCE	COVER DATE
.....	Okajima	.....Oct 43
.....	Okajima	.....Nov 43
.....	Okajima	.....Nov 43
11-19-43	Okajima 1D	.....Jan 44
1-26-43	Okajima1-H	.....Jan 44
2-19-44	Okajima 2I	.....Apr 44
2-22-44	Okajima 2J	.....May 44
2-24-44	Okajima 2K	.....Apr 44
3-11-44	Okajima 2q	.....Jun 44
2-29-44	Okajima 2M	.....Spg 44
3-18-44	Okajima 2R	.....May 44
3-24-44	Okajima 2T	.....Jun 44
3-27-44	Okajima 2	.....Jun 44
4-8-44	Okajima 2X	.....Jun 44
4-1-44	Okajima 2W	.....Jun 44
4-xx-44	Okajima 2X	.....Jun 44
4-11-44	Okajima 2XZ	.....Jun 44
4-15-44	Okajima 3A	.....Jun 44
4-20-44	Okajima 3D	.....Jun 44
4-22-44	Okajima 3F	.....Jun 44
4-22-44	Okajima 3F	.....May/Jun 44
4-23-44	Okajima 3G	.....Jul/Aug 44
4-25-44	Okajima 3H	.....Jun 44
4-27-44	Okajima 3_	.....Jun 44
5-4-44	Okajima 3L	.....Jul/Aug 44
5-16-44	Okajima 3q	.....Jun 44
5-23-44	Okajima 3R	.....Jul 44
5-24-44	Okajima 3S	.....Jul 44
5-9-44	Okajima 3_	.....Jul 44
5-29-44	Okajima 3T	.....Aug 44
5-30-44	Okajima 3U	.....Jul 44
6-15-44	Okajima 3X	.....Jul 44
6-23-44	Okajima 3Z	.....Aug 44
6-30-44	Okajima 4B	.....Sep/Oct 44
7-31-44	Okajima 4L	.....Sep 44
8-9-44	Camp 3 40	.....1944
8-12-44	Okajima 4q	.....Sep 44
8-21-44	4U	.....Sep 44
9-2-44	Okajima 4V	.....Nov 44
.....	Okajima 4Y	.....Nov 44

Most likely the 1-26-43 is an error and should have read 11-26-43. Another oddity is that all letters are in caps except "Q".

DISTRIBUTOR CODE VS. PUBLISHERS

The following is a breakout of each comic publisher from '46-'53 against the distributor code on Okajimas.

"F" CODES

Avon	St John
Dell	Street & Smith
Fiction House	Superior
Fox	United Features
Nedor/Standard	Universal Phoenix
Novelty	Ziff-Davis

"T" CODES

ACG	Fawcett	Novelty
Atlas/Marvel	Golfing	Quality
Charlton	Harvey	Story
DC	Headline	Youthful
EC	Hillman	
Farrell	Holyoke	

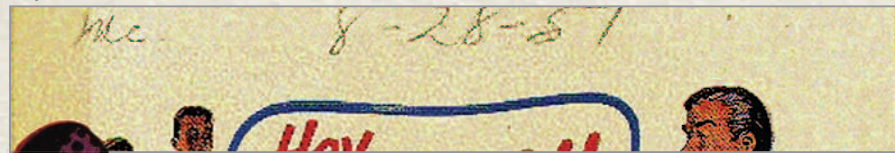
A handful of Okajimas have distributor codes including a "w" and several "a" and "A" codes, but these are very few and not consistent, indicating a few books could have been purchased from other sources.

Okajima Back Cover Personal Date Stamps were stamped normally, upside down even sometimes more than once!



The date stamps are almost always on the upper border of the back cover and are often stamped two or even three times. Nearly 20% of the identified books from this time period have multiple stampings. Sometimes the stamps are smudged or stamped sideways, and some are stamped upside down. Alan Bahr estimates 90% of all Okajimas he acquired from this period had the personal date stamps on the back..

Okajima Back Cover Pencilled Date Marks ('50-'54).



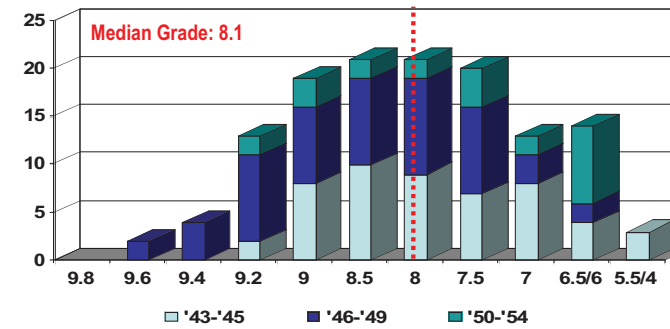
May '50 to Jun '54 – Pencilled Personal Date on Back Cover.

By early 1950 the date stamp was replaced with a pencilled date. The dates were pencilled in larger print than the stamp, but with a thinner line. About 20% exhibit an "mc" in front of the date (Jumbo #151). The last Okajimas after 1954 are void of any code or stamp on the back covers.

ALAN BAHR'S REVIEW

What Alan Bahr remembers most about the Okajimas was the exceptional page quality of the collection as well as the pleasant "fresh" smell similar to Mile Highs. "They have a very distinct fresh ink smell which I feel was likely due to being wrapped in newspapers for over 40 years." In his part of the collection, Alan recalled the best issues ran between '47 to '50.

Okajima CGC Grade Summary



Market for Okajima Comics

Okajima's are one of the few pedigrees that tend to demand a premium price no matter what the comic in that collection. The white freshness of the copies, its back story in the annals of history, the genres that heavily populate the bulk of the collection and the eras and that the majority of its comics are from seem to all add to the higher than normal values they tend to sell for.

In our 10.0 point scale summing up all the attributes that make up a pedigree, the Okajima Collection rates an 8 placing it in 5th among Golden Age pedigree collections.



STRANGE WORLDS 1, (11/50)



GREEN LANTERN #15, (Spring '45)



LIVING PROOF THAT CRIME NEVER PAYS!

VICTOR GELSON THE MURDERING SHOW-OFF! A TRUE CRIME STORY NARRATED BY BLUE BEETLE Also BLUE BEETLE in THE VANISHING NUDE! And HOUSE OF A THOUSAND CORPSES!



FLASH COMICS #54, (6/44)



WHIZ COMICS #19, (5/44)



CAPTAIN AMERICA #39, (6/44)



FIGHTING YANK #8, (6/44)



ALL TOP #16, (3/49)



Okajima CAPTAIN MARVEL, JR #19

OKAJIMA EXPERIENCES

While attending an L.A. Shrine Convention in 1995, collector Mervin Lee was surprised to find a dealer of adult material selling a table full of gorgeous Golden Age comics. The books had a definite slant on good-girl covers and appeared to be in the fine to very fine range. But what really stood out was the page quality and fresh appearance of the books. Mervin snatched up the Blue Beetle 54, Phantom Lady 17 and a few Schomburg airbrush cover Nedors.

The dealer told Mervin that these comics came from his personal collection, and that he had more (although this never materialized). At the following San Diego Con, Mervin saw Alan Bahr's "Okajima" comics for sale and they pieced together the mystery of where the Shrine comics came from.

Terry O'Neil of Terry's Comics acquired a dozen Okajimas at the Shrine when they first surfaced. He remembered how "striking" these issues were and decided to charge a premium even though they were not considered to be from a pedigree collection at the time.



INTERNMENT TERMINATION

DID YOU KNOW?

Effective January 2 1945, Public Proclamation No. 21 was issued allowing Japanese internees to return home. This was within a couple of months of when the last comic with an Okajima code is found on an Okajima. What significance did the code have while she was in the internment camp that made her no longer apply it afterwards?

GERBER SCARCITY RATINGS

NUMBER OF OKAJIMA COPIES

Gerber 8 (11-20 existing) 0

Gerber 7 (21-50 existing) 9

Totals: (50 or less) 9 Issues