

# COMICCONNECT

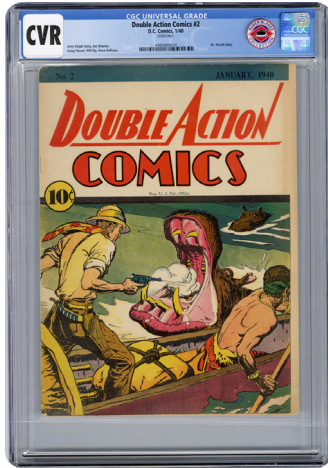
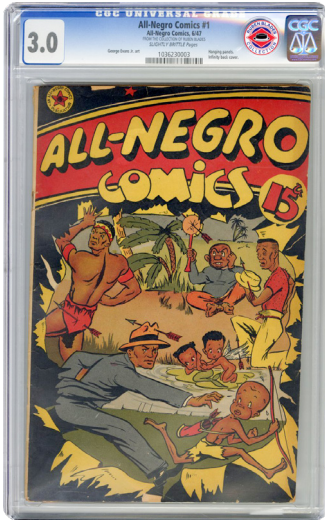
EVENT AUCTION **59**



## Ruben Blades Collection

SEPT 9TH -  
OCT 4TH

# RUBEN BLADES COLLECTION



Dear Friends,

You may know Ruben Blades as a multiple-Grammy winning icon of Latin Jazz and salsa, or as an actor from Fear The Walking Dead, or from movies like The Milagro Beanfield War, Predator 2, and Mo' Better Blues. You may know him as an activist who ran for President of Panama and served five years as the country's Minister of Tourism. But when I first met Ruben well over 20 years ago, it was as a vintage comic book aficionado.



Ruben would come to conventions and dig through boxes finding rare and esoteric Golden Age books. He was so unassuming and focused on books that I didn't know about the level of fame he had achieved. I just knew him as Ruben the Collector, until the day a fellow comic dealer explained to me who he was. I was really impressed that,

in all those years, not once did it come up in conversation who Ruben was to the world at large.

Whenever I speak with someone who knows Ruben's work, their eyes light up and they talk of fond memories of growing up on his music and how much it meant to them and their families. It's my hope that comic collectors will be affected in a similar way for years to come when they see comics from his collection, The passion and excitement that Ruben has brought to building this astounding collection is simply incredible. More than once when diving into the thousands upon thousands of comics in his collection, my team and I found comics we hadn't seen in years or never at all.

We're very proud that Event Auction 59 is introducing the most significant release yet of rare books from the Ruben Blades Collection. These classic titles and amazing finds include Detective Comics, Mystery Men, Catman, Punch Comics, Suspense Comics, Red Dragon, Rocket, Science, Scoop, Sensation, and more. Surely there's something for everyone. Enjoy.

Sincerely,

  
Vincent Zurzolo

WEL-  
COME  
TO

EVENT AUCTION 59  
COMICCONNECT

# Frank Miller

## Daredevil #172, page 5

'Gang War!' Just five issues into his run as both writer and artist on Daredevil, Miller is firing on all cylinders, revitalizing the character, and dragging the whole of comics into the 1980s. This page features five major characters, in addition to Daredevil: The Kingpin, his wife Vanessa, Bullseye, and Daredevil's regular street-thug-turned-informant Turk. The page recounts Turk's telling of the Kingpin's return to New York after the kidnapping of Vanessa and his subsequent hiring of Bullseye, closing with a classic Miller composition of Daredevil informing Turk that he no longer works for the Kingpin. This page has been in a private collection for over three decades and represents one of the nicest early Miller Daredevil pages we've ever offered.





# John Byrne

## The Avengers #165, page 31

The God of Thunder unleashes Mjolnir at an unsuspecting Count Nefaria upon his defeat of the other Avengers in this dramatic closing page from the story 'Hammer of Vengeance!' Byrne deftly handles the power of the God of Thunder in this great page from early in his career at Marvel. The page is crackling with so much energy it will make your hair stand up.

# Mike Zeck

# Captain America #269 Cover

# 1st Appearance of Team America



# Gene Colan

# Captain America #134, page 1 splash



# Jack Kirby

# Captain America #194, page 1 splash



# Jack Kirby & Wally Wood

# Tales of Suspense #72, Captain America, page 4



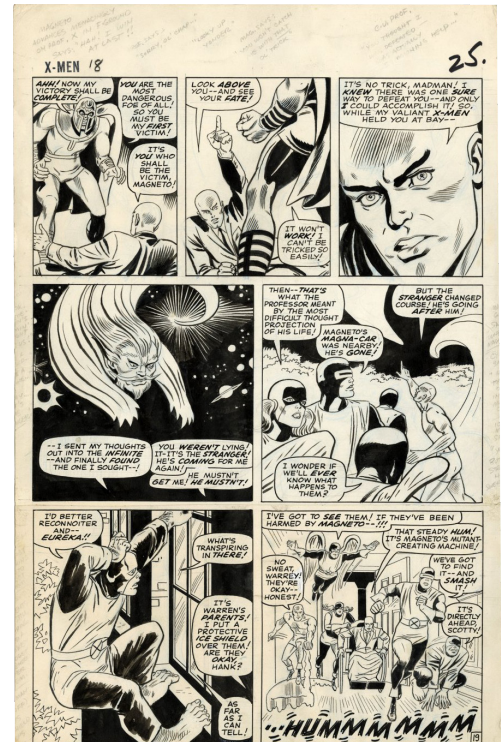
**Werner Roth**

**X-Men #18, page 17**



**Werner Roth**

**X-Men #18, page 19**



From the Marvel Silver Age of comics comes two pages from 1966s X-Men #18 by Werner Roth, both pages feature wonderful examples of early X-Men action with the team battling their greatest foe Magneto. Page 17 depicts The Beast doing his best to go toe to toe with the Master of Magnetism, while page 19 has Professor X taking the fight into their minds, each page showcases wonderful images of the team.

Wally Wood's T.H.U.N.D.E.R. Agents was one of the more successful independent titles of the Silver Age, published by Tower Comics in 1965, this outstanding page from issue #2s 'Dynamo Battles Dynavac', featuring the reveal of Dynavac, created by the Warlord to combat Dynamo. All expertly illustrated by Wood, showing why he retains the reputation as one of comics all-time great draftsmen.



**Wally Wood**

**T.H.U.N.D.E.R. Agents #2, Dynamo page 4**

Steve  
Ditko

Ghostly  
Haunts #27  
Cover

Ditko pulls out all his tricks in this wonderful, twice-up Charlton horror cover. Ditko's work is much more than just Spider-Man and Doctor Strange, from the whimsical spirit to the classic graveyard setting, "I'll Never Forget What's-His-Name!" stands as an enduring example from one of comics' greatest creators.





# Will Eisner

## The Spirit TV Movie Concept Paintings



# Mac Raboy

## Captain Marvel Jr. #31 Cover Prelim



# Mac Raboy

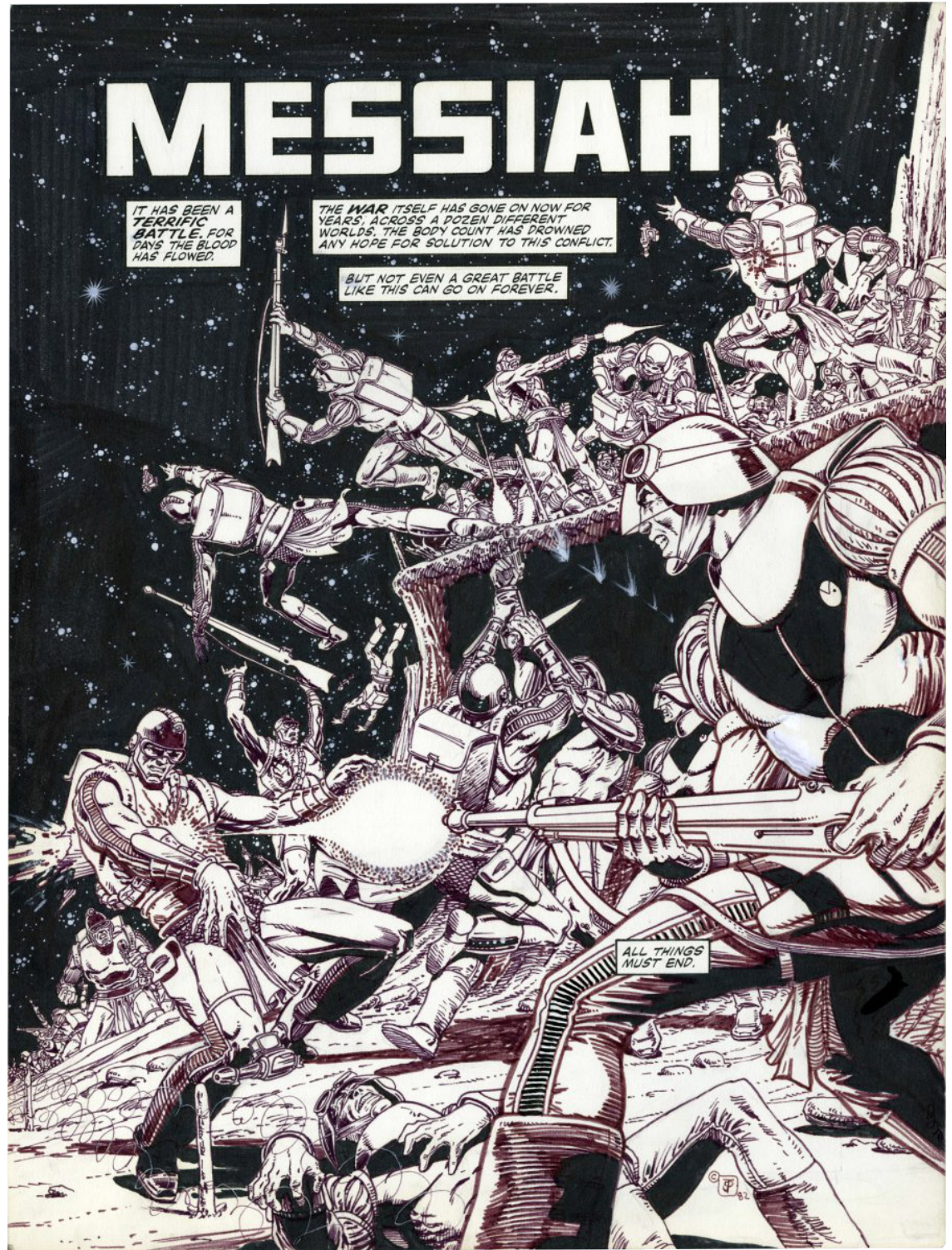
## Flash Gordon 12/17/1967 Sunday Strip – Raboy's Final Flash Sunday



# Jim Starlin

## Epic Illustrated #14, Messiah page 1

No one does space battle quite like Jim Starlin, and this page has it all in spades. Drawn at a staggering 15" x 20", Starlin puts you right in the middle of the action, with the two sides engaging in a brutal war on a distant world in this stunning opening splash to the six-page story. From 1982, with Starlin firing on all cylinders, the page is packed with detail and carnage.



# Dale Keown

Incredible Hulk #385, page 23



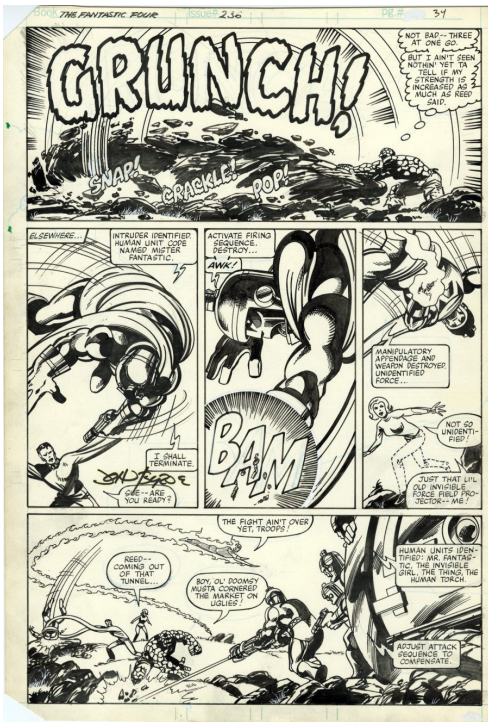
# Walter McDaniel

Deathlok #24 Cover



# John Byrne

Fantastic Four #236, page 34



# John Byrne

Official Handbook of the Marvel Universe Deluxe Edition #5, The Hulk



# COMICCONNECT

## Joe Jusko

**Invincible Iron Man  
#4 Variant  
Cover –  
60s Kirby  
Corner Box  
Recreation**



## Clay Mann

**Batman/  
Catwoman  
#3 Cover**



## Michael Cho

**Batwoman  
#17 Variant  
Cover**



## Marc Silvestri

**Cyblade/Shi:  
The Battle for  
Independents  
#1 Variant  
Cover**



# Jenny Frison

Wonder Woman #60 Variant Cover



# Lee Weeks

Daredevil #295, page 14



# Joe Madureira

Uncanny X-Men #325, page 17



# Andy Kubert

X-Men #25, page 8



## Curt Swan

Aurora  
Comic  
Scenes  
#185 –  
Superman,  
page 5



## Ron Frenz

What If?  
#105, page  
18 – 1st  
Appearance  
of Spider-  
Girl



## Steve Ditko

Ghostly  
Haunts  
#52, Sleep  
of Ages,  
page 2



## Russ Heath & Dave Stevens

Bettie Page  
Comics –  
Mars Wants  
Bettie,  
page 7



# Ruben Blades Collection



Ruben Blades has spent decades as a star of stage and screen, with the Panama native first coming to America as a rising Latin jazz and salsa sensation. His musical reputation grew even as Blades began working steadily on films including *Fatal Beauty*, *The Milagro Beanfield War*, and *Mo' Better Blues*. (He'd also graduate from Harvard Law School in 1985, and later serve for five years as Panama's Minister of Tourism.) Amidst that stellar career, however, Blades became a respected figure in the comics community while quietly pursuing his passion for collecting rare comics.

Blades himself recalls a childhood spent buying comics in the Canal Zone Balboa Club House, "in an area under U.S. jurisdiction in those days. Superman, Walt Disney, Lone Ranger, but mostly I got books from second class mom and pop shops in Panama, coming from Mexico as U.S. titles printed in Spanish." When the law school graduate came to New York City in the late '70s, he would revive his childhood passion while launching his international career.

"I was walking past a comic book store on 8th Avenue in midtown Manhattan," says Blades, "and saw a book I had when I was a kid. Walked in, bought it, and later began to try to complete the run. It was the Four Color comic group, which I've completed since."

That Four Color series from Dell Publishing, of course, ran for over 1,300 issues — with Ruben exclusively collecting copies with activity pages on the back cover, marking them as rarer printings than issues with ads on the back. That distinction is part of Blades' exceptional passion for seeking out lost gems published between 1938 to 1956.

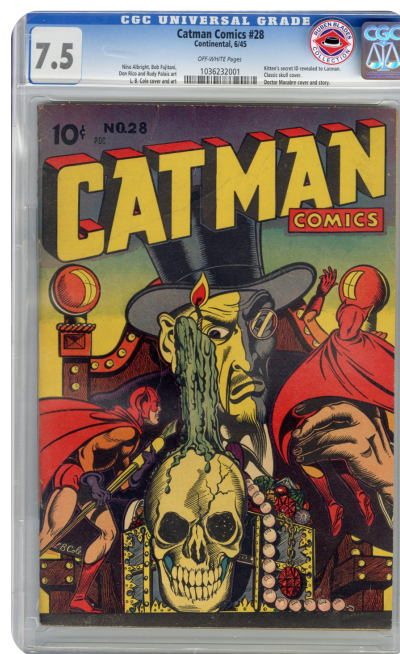
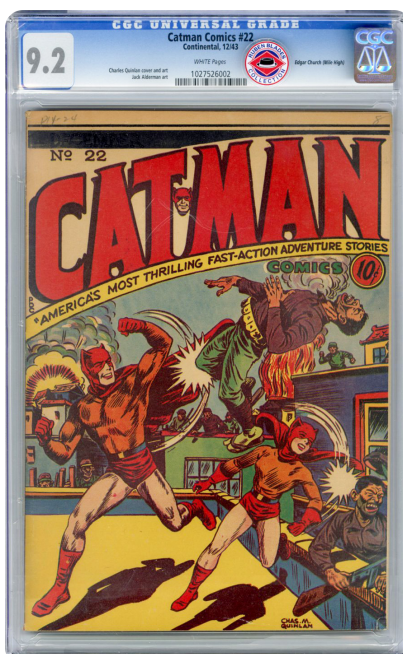
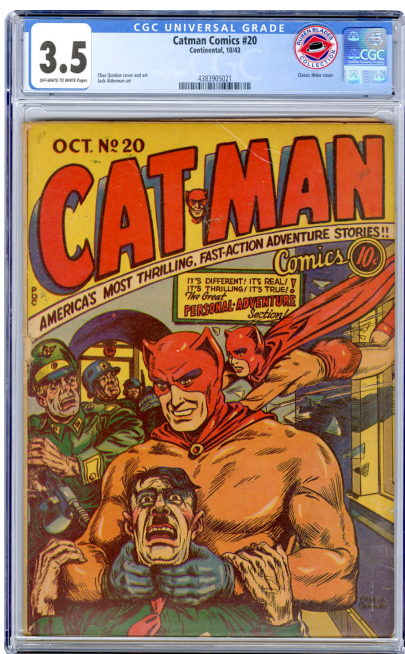
"I was into strange titles," Blades recalls. "All the Centaur books like *Star Rangers*, *Star Funnies*, *Keen Detective*, *Funny Pages*, and at a time when very few people cared to collect those books. Since there was no demand for them, they were extraordinarily difficult to locate."

Over the decades, Blades' unique focus would literally save thousands of Golden Age titles from extinction. ComicConnect is proud to present the most significant release yet of these rare books from the Ruben Blades Collection. In addition to classic titles such as *Detective Comics*, *Sensation Comics*, *Terry-Toons*, and *Captain America*, Blades has preserved important art and fantastic stories from rare (or barely distributed) books including *Mystic Comics*, *Red Dragon*, *Hangman Comics*, *Mystery Men*, *Catman Comics*, and more.

"It's sort of sad for me," says Blades, "but it is also time to let go and move on. I'm not getting any younger, and it's become too much for me to handle. It's my hope that others will take care of these books and keep the fun of collecting Golden Age alive."

## Catman Comics On The Prowl

Nothing quite sums up the importance of the Ruben Blades Collection like this selection of the notoriously rare Catman Comics. The feline hero was an attempt by Holyoke Publishing to cash in on the sudden superhero boom, resulting in a brightly costumed crimefighter with an origin story combining elements of Tarzan, Batman, and Captain America. Catman was also unique in taking on a girl as his sidekick, Kitten. Catman's success was even more notable for surviving scattered distribution as the title was acquired by Continental Publishing. Today, the Catman series remains a beloved Golden Age holy grail that commonly exceeds guide values. We're proud to present this ultra-scarce Catman collection that preserves outstanding art from cover legends Charles Quinlan and L.B. Cole, in a range from CGC Census-toppers to incredible investment-level opportunities.





# Batman Begins

## Detective Comics #27

Detective Comics #27 hit the newsstands in March 1939 with the first appearance of Batman—just 11 months after the debut of Superman in Action Comics #1. Both issues would become major works of pop culture, and still continually set new records at auction. (Our previous Event Auction included the record-setting sale of a 6.5 Detective #27 for \$1.825 million.) Investors will immediately recognize the outstanding opportunity that this book presents. There are only 76 copies of Detective Comics #27 on the CGC census, with this vital artifact having undergone professional work to be preserved for future generations. That includes retaining the vibrant colors which provide a natural warmth to the classic cover. Both Detective Comics #27 and Batman #1 have over a decade of consistent record-breaking sales. With (at least) ten Batman-related film and television projects in production at the start of 2024, copies of Detective Comics #27 are set to maintain their value as both a comic collectible and American artifact.

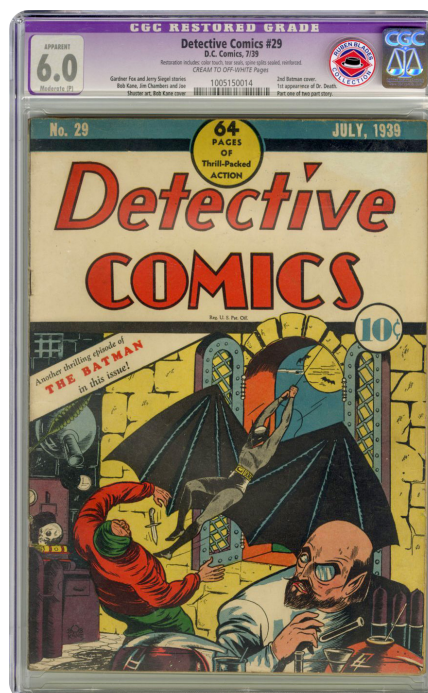




Most collectors consider Detective #31 to be one of the most important (and difficult) Batman stories to own. That's partly because of Bob Kane's iconic cover image of the brooding Caped Crusader. "Batman Versus the Vampire" is also considered by many fans to be the first true classic Batman story. In addition to meeting his second supervillain, Batman is seen using the Bat-Gyro and trying out his first Batarang. This striking 6.0 copy retains the punch of the dramatic cover art, with moderate restoration that still reflects the original look and feel of an 85-year-old book.



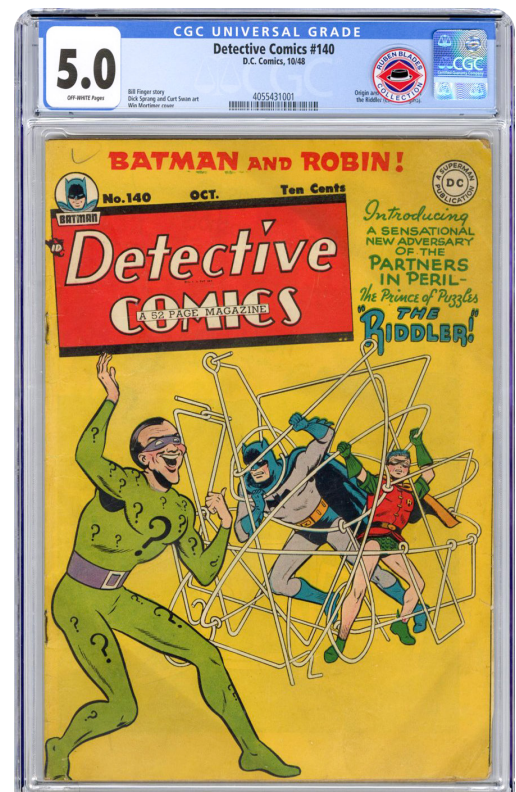
Batman's second appearance in Detective didn't rate getting his picture on the cover. Bob Kane and Bill Finger were still doggedly building the mythology of their shadowy new hero, and DC knew to advertise that "The Batman was appearing 'this month and every month.'" Fu Manchu, however, was making his final appearance as Detective #28 became a classic superhero collectible.



That's Batman taking on his first supervillain in Detective #29 — just in time for his second-ever cover appearance, with Doctor Death threatening to poison wealthy citizens. This moderately restored 6.0 copy assures this vital book's continued preservation, with only 77 copies listed on the CGC Census.

# More Dark Knight Detective Milestones

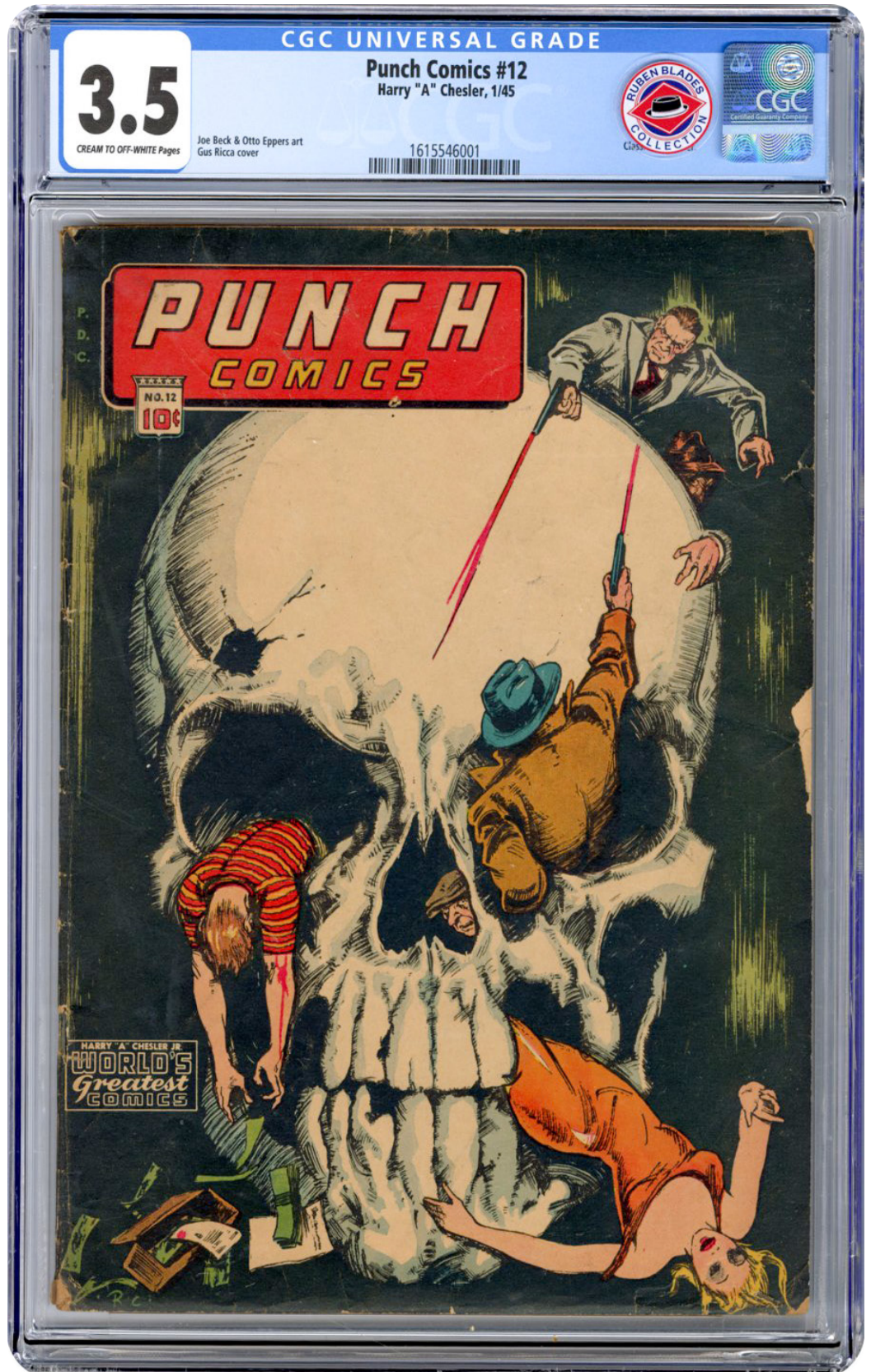
The Ruben Blades Collection includes rare pre-Batman titles from Detective Comics, plus vital Batman key issues from the earliest days of the Caped Crusader. Surprisingly, Batman's tragic childhood origin wasn't revealed until Detective #33 (with the first appearances of Thomas and Martha Wayne). Detective #35 marks the beginning of Batman's reign as the title's regular cover star. Robin the Boy Wonder makes his debut in Detective #38, living up to his cover hype as the "sensational character find of 1940!" Surprisingly, it'll be eight years later before The Riddler makes his first appearance as one of Batman's favorite foes in the classic Detective #140.



# A Cover To Die For

## Punch Comics #12

The legendary Punch Comics #12 brings together pulp fans and comic fanatics in appreciation of Gus Ricca's timeless cover art. The disturbing image also illustrates the outrageous instincts of notorious publishing showman Harry "A." Chesler, Jr. This copy from the Ruben Blades Collection lands perfectly in the middle of the scarce 33 unrestored copies listed on the CGC Census, with any notable wear safely distanced from Ricca's classic cover. The contents are also a vital part of this book becoming a true collectible, featuring two-fisted heroes Captain Glory and Master Key, and exceptional art from George Tuska as Hale the Magician battles slavers in Egypt.





# Wonder Woman's Sensational Cover Turn

## Sensation Comics #1

Sensation Comics #1 is the second appearance of Wonder Woman. H.G. Peter's classic cover remains the most iconic image of Wonder Woman from across the Comic Ages, capturing when William Marston's heroine exploded onto the Golden Age scene while establishing DC's superhero trinity. It's also Wonder Woman's first cover appearance, further confirming this comic's place as a defining pop-culture moment. The enduring artwork would introduce Wonder Woman as an inspiring role model to millions of girls and women from around the world. (In further milestones, "Wonder Woman Arrives in Man's World" has the Amazon returning Steve Trevor to America as she takes on the identity of Diana Prince.) With only 15 unrestored copies higher on the CGC Census, this vibrant 7.0 preserves all the impact of when Wonder Woman took her rightful place in pop culture history.

# Classic Schomburg

## Suspense Comics #3

There's an impressive selection of Alex Schomburg art as part of the Ruben Blades Collection. Few would argue, however, that this key issue, filled with hooded Nazi Klansmen and a bound damsel in distress, is Schomburg's most infamous cover from the Golden Age. The legendary artist's wild mix of multiple genres remains as unforgettably sordid as when Suspense Comics #3 hit the newsstands of 1944. ComicConnect is proud to offer this stalwart example of pre-code exploitation at an extremely rare investment-level grade. This 4.0 slightly restored copy is exceptional and sports a strong focal point for its iconic image with only 43 copies in the CGC Census, this book continually proves itself to be the most valued non-superhero collectible of the Golden Age.





# The Marvel Universe Begins

## Marvel Comics #1

A precious few Golden Age comics serve as cornerstones of the entire industry. Marvel Comics #1 has certainly earned its place in the publishing pantheon as the comic that spawned the Marvel Universe. This single comic matches Action #1 as a vital pop-culture artifact with the first appearance of the Human Torch, along with the Sub-Mariner's own debut on the newsstands with an amazing origin story. This particular copy, however, is notably rare as being from the book's first printing. Records show that Timely Comics publisher Martin Goodman initially printed approximately 80,000 copies of this debut issue, which quickly sold out on newsstands. The second printing would be for 800,000, changing the month to "Nov" as printed above a dark circle obscuring the original month of publication. The original print run dated October 1939 remains the rarest issues of an already scarce book. As seen here, this copy is the first unrestored October copy to be sold at public auction in over 6 years. This auction continues ComicConnect's longtime role in preserving the few Marvel Comics #1 that have come to auction over the years, with past sales (all for November copies) including a 9.4 copy selling for a record-setting \$1.26 million in 2019, with further records in 2022 as a 9.2 file copy sold for \$2.4 million, and a 2.5 for \$293,000.

# Fantastic Captain America Firsts

## Captain America Comics #1

First issues don't get more classic than the 1941 launch of Captain America Comics #1. "Meet Captain America" is more than just a timeless origin story. There's also the first mention of the Super-Soldier Serum, plus Bucky Barnes rushing in as Cap's valuable sidekick. Jack Kirby and Joe Simon already had a vision for Captain America's true nemesis, too. Technically, "The Riddle of the Red Skull" features a fake version of the notorious villain, but Marvel later established that Johann Schmidt (staying in the shadows until Captain America Comics #7) is pulling the strings. This investment-grade Captain America #1 has strikingly vibrant colors at 3.5, with any wear safely isolated from the central action of Kirby & Simon's classic Hitler-hitting cover.







# Daring Into The '40s

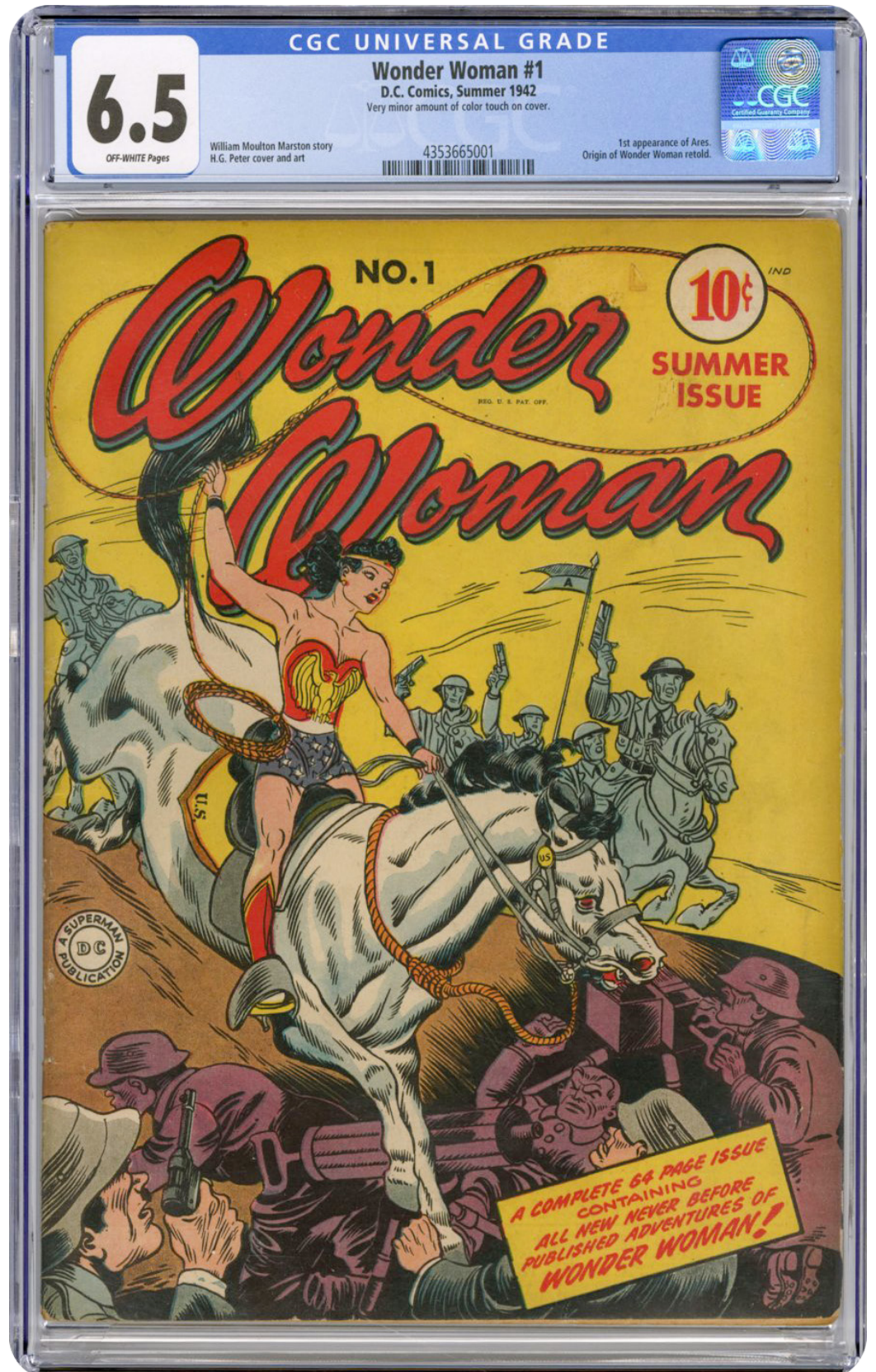
## Daring Mystery Comics #1

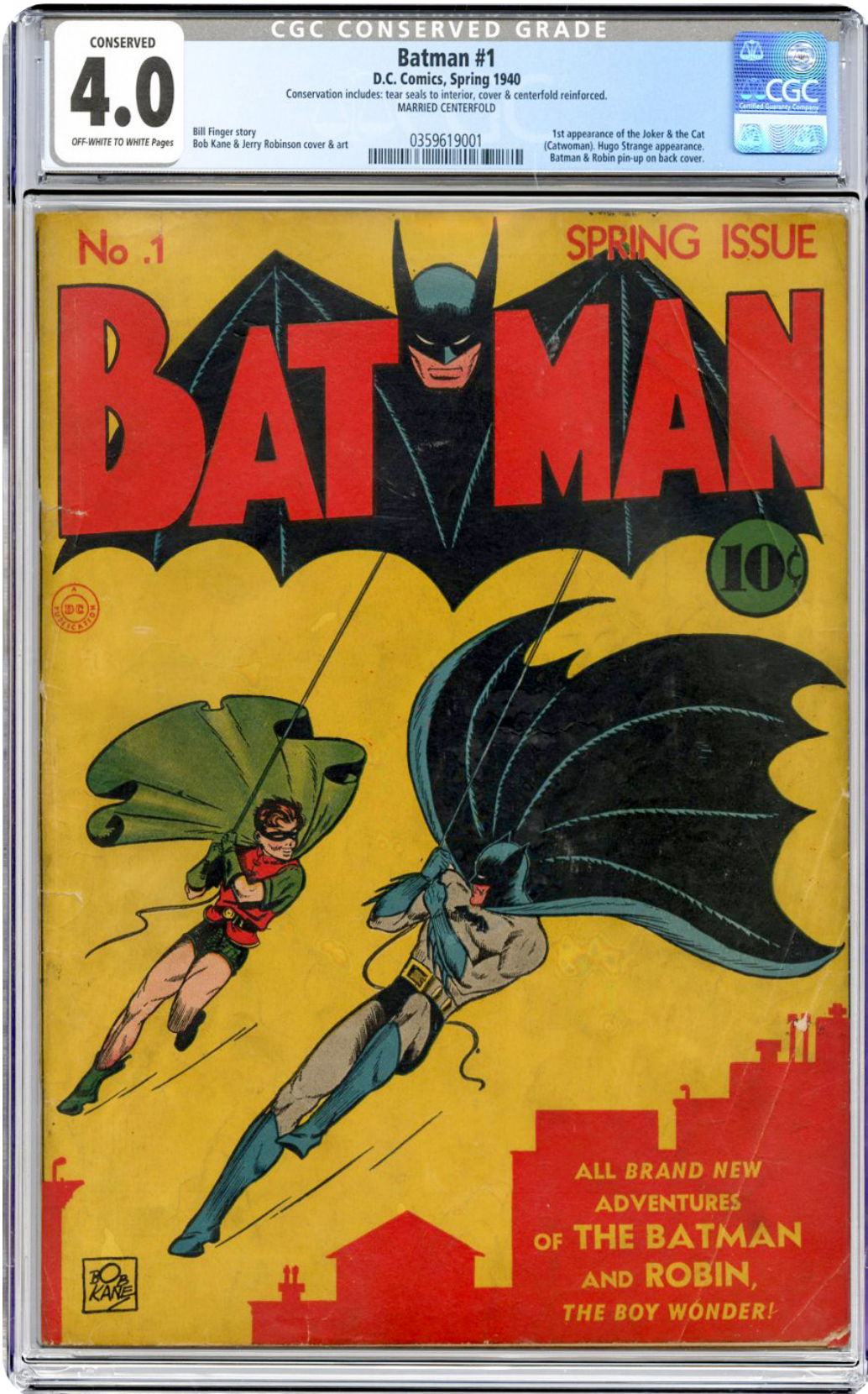
Any catalogue of Golden Age classics will feature plenty of work from Alex Schomburg. This legendary cover for 1939's Daring Mystery Comics #1 is particularly striking for merging the pulp fiction of the '30s with the emerging heroes of the '40s. The wild sci-fi imagery may be straight out of Buck Rogers, but Timely's reliably nightmarish villains invited readers to pursue a bold new direction. The contents include writer/artist Joe Simon inspiring Schomburg with the origin of the Fieri Mask in "The Fantastic Thriller of the Walking Corpses" This striking 9.2 is one of only two copies of Daring Mysteries #1 to be graded above an unrestored 9.0 on the CGC Census, with only 28 unrestored copies listed. The rich colors and sharp corners are typical of the Windy City pedigree that preserved thousands of first issues from the Golden Age.

# Wonder Woman Rides Into Her Own

## Wonder Woman #1

After her auspicious debut in All Star Comics #8, Wonder Woman was quickly brought in as the star of the newly launched Sensation Comics. That book's breakout success would lead to DC deciding to create the first solo comic for a female superhero. The company would follow the lead of the Superman and Batman titles with a quarterly Wonder Woman book in the summer of 1942. In addition to another classic cover from artist H.G. Peter, Wonder Woman #1 contains four new tales of groundbreaking heroism. Those include a revisiting of Wonder Woman's origin that reveals how the Amazons were sculpted from clay to fight war-mongering men who follow the malevolent god Ares. This striking 6.5 Wonder Woman #1 has impressively vibrant colors even for the grade, preserving the bold imagery that established Wonder Woman as the leading comics heroine of the World War II era.





# Enter The Joker (And Catwoman!)

## Batman #1

Batman #1 would be one of the most important comics of the Golden Age simply as the Caped Crusader's debut in a solo book, as accompanied by Robin on one of the most iconic covers in comics history. In this case, however, the creative team of Bob Kane and Bill Finger were also inspired to launch Batman's solo turn with the first appearances of both The Joker and the Cat (later known, of course, as Catwoman). There's also the introduction of the Batplane and the return of Dr. Hugo Strange in a dark tale that inspired a strict "No Killing" policy for Batman. This copy of Batman #1 has been professionally conserved at an impressive 4.0, providing a unique investment-grade opportunity to own a true pop-culture artifact. 2024 has already seen Batman: Caped Crusader debuting on Amazon Prime. That leaves three more Batman projects scheduled to be released onscreen by the end of the year — further ensuring that Bruce Wayne's alter-ego remains one of the world's most beloved (and collectible) characters.

# COMICCONNECT

## Classic Keys Of Captain America Comics



In addition to a gorgeous Captain America Comics #1, this auction offers more exceptional key issues featuring one of the Golden Age's most enduring heroes. Captain America #3 has the second appearance of the Red Skull, in the guise of the early character later exposed as a puppet of Johann Schmidt. This issue also has Stan Lee's first published comics story. Syd Shore's classic cover for Captain America #36 mocks the evil trinity of Hitler, Goering, and Goebbels in one of the most enduring images of WWII comics. Alex Schomburg's wild cover for a rare high-grade Captain America #37 is just part of the classic art ensuring this book's place as a vital Golden Age anthology. The ultra-scarce Captain America's Weird Tales #74 captures the weird final issues of the book's run, with a changed title marking Cap's last appearance (fighting the Red Skull in Hell) until 1954 as Timely tried turning the title into a horror comic.

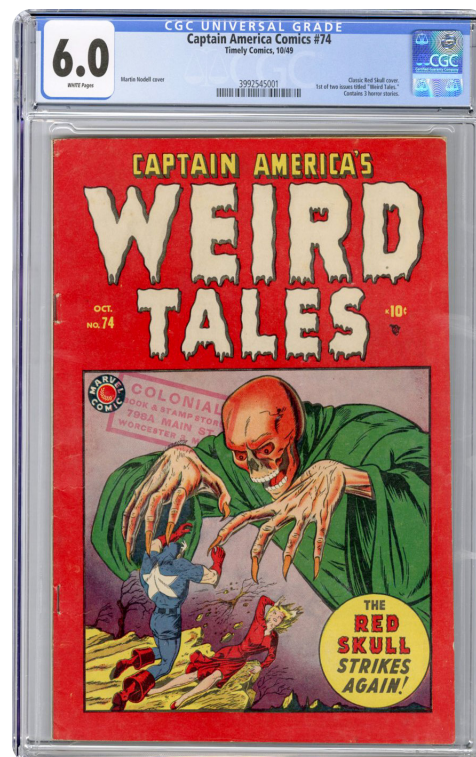
## Captain America Comics #36



## Captain America Comics #37



## Captain America Comics #74



## All Select Comics #2

Alex Schomburg's many classic covers benefit from his unique ability to find space for all Timely's biggest names. The incredible cover to All Select Comics #2 is a typically ambitious work that shows Captain America, the Human Torch, and Sub-Mariner destroying a bridge overrun by Japanese vehicles and soldiers. This gorgeous 9.4 comic is typical of the extraordinary Promise Collection pedigree that gathers Golden Age books of exceptionally high grades, with only one copy graded higher among the 47 copies in the CGC Census.



## Marvel Mystery #47

The startling cover of Marvel Mystery Comics #47 is a prime example of Alex Schomburg's hyper-detailed world of wonder. This outstanding 9.4 copy tops the CGC Census with a deep color strike and sharp corners, as commonly found in books from the Pennsylvania pedigree that preserved a treasure trove of wartime Golden Age comics. This rare book has also been QES-certified for a strikingly sturdy spine and perfect staple placement.



## Marvel Mystery Comics #63

It's impossible to overstate the impact Alex Schomburg had on the popularity of the wartime comic book. No one else could squeeze so much action onto a cover while still telling a coherent story. This stunning 9.4 copy of Marvel Mystery Comics #63 boasts bright reds, cool blues, and deep greens that push the four-color printing process to its limits. A solid spine and nice corners add to the overall eye appeal. It's no surprise that this impressive book tops the CGC Census, with only a scarce 66 copies even listed. Collectors will also take note of Schomburg's caricatures of Goering, Goebbels, and Adolf Hitler fleeing the chaos like cowardly clowns, adding another beloved element to this classic wartime cover.

# COMICCONNECT



**Adventure Comics #73**



**All Winners Comics #8**



**Amazing Spider-Man #47**



**Detective Comics #113**



**Fantastic Four #1**



**Iron Fist #14**



**It Rhymes With Lust**



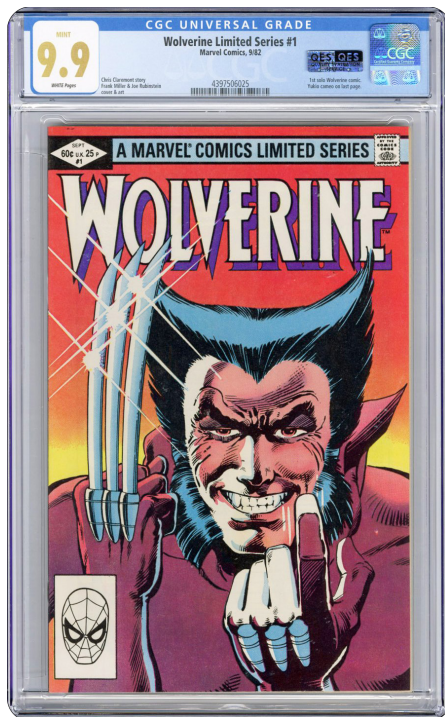
**Showcase #4**



**Tales Of Suspense #33**



**Tales To Astonish #26**



**Wolverine #1**



**X-Men #50**

# Jack Kirby

## Journey Into Mystery #86, Thor page 10

4th Appearance of Thor



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