

**THE**  
**CENT**  
**BOOK**

**1816-1839**

**JOHN D. WRIGHT**



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**CENT**  
**BOOK**

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## ***DEDICATION***

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How to dedicate? To my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ? No, this work is inadequate. To the many people who have contributed to this work over the decades? No, they already have their reward.

This book is dedicated to you, the reader, in hopes that it may prove useful and provide many hours of enjoyment.



# WHY COLLECT MIDDLE-DATE LARGE CENTS?

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My first large cent was purchased in June, 1954. I had been collecting coins for three years and decided to extend my incomplete Lincoln and Indian cent sets back another notch. A set of large National pages and a local coin dealer were all I needed to apply the modern “plug-the-hole” philosophy to a series ill-suited to that kind of thinking.

By late 1959 (in some things I’m a slow learner) I had become confused about my cent set. I had an 1801, but here was another one that was obviously different. First a Sheldon book, then a Newcomb opened my eyes to other vistas beyond my current coin album, and by early 1960 I began “plugging-the-hole” on a broader scale — a large cent variety collection.

It didn’t take long to realize that even with Newcomb’s book the cents after 1840 were a total mystery to me — I couldn’t tell one from the other. So I began chasing only the cents of 1793-1839. The early series (1793-1814) is still the most fascinating part of American numismatics, but my hamburger resources had a hard time coping with the filet mignon prices of those early pieces of copper. So I played with the earlies (amassing almost 400 pieces representing 315 varieties), but I didn’t “cultivate” that series as much as the middle dates. The 1816-1839 cents simply offered more “bang-for-the-buck” than the ones either before (too many bucks) or after (not enough bang). And when I got to the “variations on a theme” point, the middles were my automatic choice.

With a broad enough specialty I could guarantee that I would never again suffer the total letdown of the “completed collection syndrome” that always crept in shortly after plugging that last hole of each album. The fun is in the CHASE, in the TREASURE HUNT, in the SEEKING — \*NOT\* in the HAVING. Why do you think active collectors sell their coins soon after plugging that last hole? So I resolved to chase vigorously, to learn all I could, and to enjoy every mile of the road.

In the next 32 years I learned plenty, and much of that is in this book. I met a \*LOT\* of friends who shared my fascination with these old coppers, and some of their influence is here too. And I’ve had a whale of a lot of fun. THAT, you can’t put into a book. But you CAN generate it yourself by keeping focused on what is more important than what else. These old coppers are really fun — they’re a marvelous catalyst for friendships, they’re a wonderful topic for discussions, they’re fascinating artifacts of years before our memory, and many of them are things of great beauty or great curiosity.

But they are not an end to themselves. An old copper can stimulate our eyes and our minds. But it will not keep us warm or fill our belly or bring purpose to our lives. Though a copper costs money to buy and brings money when sold, a friend is more valuable than any coin. And our God-given principles are more valuable than any friend. As long as we keep our priorities straight, these talismans of a bygone era can give us many decades of enjoyment.

# ABOUT EAC

(Early American Coppers, Inc)

One of the best aspects of any hobby is fellowshiping with people who enjoy the same diversion you do. A hobby flourishes best if there is some common forum (preferably with a regularly-scheduled publication) for the participants in that hobby.

Collectors of early U.S. copper coins are blessed with a forum that has few equals. Chartered in 1967 as an educational organization, Early American Coppers, Inc. (EAC) has gone well beyond the minimum requirements of its charter. From here on I will refer to EAC as "our" group, or "we", because that is the image that each of the 1500+ members have of EAC.

We hold a formal meeting at the annual American Numismatic Association convention, and an annual three-day convention of our own. We have regional get-togethers where we "show & tell", talk copper, and get to know each other. We publish "Penny-Wise" (P-W) six times a year for all EAC members. In 25 years we have published almost 8,000 pages as an organization. Every book and most articles published since 1967 about old U.S. copper were either written by an EAC member or were reprints of older publications. We have a mail-lending library for the membership, several ongoing

research projects, and are a closer-knit group than any other hobby group I know.

EAC is not a "coin company". EAC does not buy or sell coins. We are a fellowship of collectors with a common interest in old U.S. copper coins and a mission to disseminate information about all things related to them. And we have a lot of fun along the way.

If you would like to learn more about these odd coins and the sometimes even odder people that collect them, I would suggest you associate yourself with EAC. If you want to plug into "where the action is" in old U.S. copper, this is where it is happening. I would be happy to hear from you, or you can write directly to EAC at the address below.

In 1992 the annual dues for EAC are \$16 (\$27 for first class mailing). We have been able to keep a nominal dues-rate because all EAC work is volunteer.

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# VARIETY NAMES

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A “die variety” is all coins struck from a given pair of dies. One of the earliest references on die varieties of U.S. coins was an article by S.S. Crosby and J.N.T. Levick in the “American Journal of Numismatics” in 1869: “The United States Cents of 1793”. Crosby used a number to name each obverse (head) die and a letter for each reverse (tail) die, with the variety-name being the combination (eg: 1-A or 14-K). Also in 1869 Edward Maris published the first work on 1794 cent die varieties, in which he designated the COMBINATION of dies by a number (eg: number 3, or Maris 3).

In 1881 Frank Andrews followed a combination of these two patterns by designating reverse dies by letters, and combinations (varieties) by numbers, while wholly ignoring the naming of obverse dies. In 1940 Howard Newcomb built upon this same foundation, adding variety numbers and reverse die letters, but omitting obverse names. In every instance the number-names started anew with each year.

In 1890 Francis Doughty used a coherent scheme to number an entire series

instead of each year, and in 1948 William Sheldon published a variation of that one-run-for-the-series pattern by numbering the cent varieties of 1793-1814 as numbers 1-295 while leaving open a sub-series within each year (the “NC’s”) for new or extremely rare varieties.

I have chosen to adopt the best of these ideas while keeping the current identities known to experienced collectors. For reverse dies, Andrews’ “A” is Newcomb’s “A” is my “A”. For varieties, Andrews’ “3” is Newcomb’s “3” is my “3”. But for obverse dies, Andrews’ (unnamed) is Newcomb’s (unnamed) is my “5”. I considered re-numbering the series to restore the logical pattern first published by Andrews (see discussion for 1835 and 1839), but decided this would cause more confusion among current collectors than was warranted by the benefits.

One of the negative spinoffs of this choice is that there are “missing numbers” in the series representing varieties earlier published that have been since disproven. These seven non-coins are discussed individually in the presentation of each year.

# GRADING

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Grading of any objects — be they coins, eggs, diamonds, or apples — is merely an attempt to justify higher prices for better examples. When buyer and seller transact business face-to-face, the question of grade can be neatly bypassed. Coin X is for sale at price Y — take it or leave it. But when the transaction is a remote one (such as an advertisement or a catalogue), or the buyer is not sure how much he is willing to pay, or the seller wants to extract a price that has no basis in what he paid, then some agreed-upon scheme of standard “grades” is necessary to describe the unseen item enough to reach an accord between buyer and seller.

Such a system has been agreed upon and has been in wide use for over half a century. Although the grading of coins is subjective, it is a teachable skill. Its chief aim is a concise description of the pleasingness of appearance of a coin that means the same thing to every buyer and every seller. Once this skill is learned — and some collectors (and dealers) NEVER learn it — disagreements on remote transactions are much less frequent.

The abbreviated word-descriptions of coin grades in the 1950’s gave way to the formalized line-drawing approach of the 1960’s and the photography of the 1970’s and beyond. All have tried to do the same thing — to teach the correlation between a symbol (for example, “Fine” or “F” or “12”) and the appearance of a coin.

But copper coins are the hardest of all to grade, largely because they show more abuses and less patronage than the precious-metal coinage. How is a nicked, dented, scratched, bent, or corroded cent to be graded?

The best way when selling is to list the sharpness, the nature of the problem(s), and the net grade (see below what is “net grade”). When buying, compare the problem coin with a standard problem-free coin of lower grade and ask “which coin would I prefer at the same price?”. When the answer is “either”, you have the net grade. Surprisingly enough, even though a coin of XF sharpness may net out to only a VG, this method produces quite consistent results among most graders.

But it is on THIS POINT that most differences of grading opinions come up. Different problems “bother” different collectors to different degrees. One collector dislikes roughness more than scratches, so he crucifies a rough coin while finding little fault with a scratched-up one. Another collector nets the rough coin higher because its blemishes don’t bother him.

The numerical grading system in current vogue was first proposed by William Sheldon in 1948 as a correlation between grade and price. For example, an XF (40) large cent then cost about ten times as much as a Good (4). Though the price structure has shifted, the numbers persist. The hidden danger with number grades is that numbers imply “measured” or “precision”, which is not the case at all. These numbers are no more than synonyms for names, which are labels representing an opinion.

Rather than duplicate Sheldon’s and/or the ANA Grading Guide’s definitions, I shall let the following brief notes stand or fall on their own merit.

Though minute grade differences foster huge price differences in and near the MS grades, these small differences do not photograph well and no attempt has been made to show them. I will leave to the hundreds of "investment counsellors" and the dozens of "grading services" the definitions of the ELEVEN (count 'em, folks) "grades" of MS coins now commercially touted.

## EXAMPLES

- VG — see Plate 16  
(obv 3 w/ cud)
- Fine — see 22-14
- VF — see 22-9
- XF — see 22-13
- AU — Some AU coins look  
better than some MS's.

Grade	Abbrev	Num- ber	In General
Fair	Fr	1-2	Worn out
About Good	AG	3	Almost Gone
Good	G	4-6	Outlines visible
Very Good	VG	7-10	Some relief
Fine	F	12-15	Bold generalities
Very Fine	VF	20-35	Sharp details
Extremely Fine	XF	40-45	Very little wear
About Uncirc	AU	50-55	Nearly new
Mint State	MS	60-70	As made

As this book goes to press, an interesting "Letter to the Editor" in Coin World (6 Jan 92) makes an impassioned plea to the grading services for "precision grading" to two decimal places (eg: MS63.37). This illustrates the point just made: numbers falsely imply a measurement. So, with MS being 60.00 through 70.00, who is going to be the great arbiter for 1001 gradua-tions of "new, as made"?

# CONDITION CENSUS

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## NOBODY HAS EVER SEEN ALL LARGE CENTS IN EXISTENCE.

An exact pecking order among those cents “known” to the cent-specialist fraternity would be possible only if all coins were examined side-by-side — and even then there would be differences of opinion. The census I have listed for each variety (counts by grade) represents coins I have seen in the copper, in auction catalog plates, in good pressings, and ones reported to me by a few very reliable friends whose word I trust completely in these matters.

The listing “MS(6)” means I KNOW OF six — there could well be twenty more I don’t know of. The listing “AU(5+)” means I KNOW OF five and have unconfirmed reports or since-untraced old auction records that could represent more. The listing “four to seven Proofs” means I HAVE TRACED at least four distinct pieces, and old appearances could be from some of these or could be up to seven exam-

ples. As stated before, there could still be another dozen of them in hiding somewhere. The count-by-grade numbers instead of a ranked listing of coins is my way of sidestepping what I feel is the too-much-abused snob-appeal of “third finest known”, for example.

Differences in census information between this and other references is due to a combination of two factors: (1) the same coin may be graded differently by another person and myself, (2) one writer knows of specimens unknown to the other. I have been gathering census information from hundreds of sources for twenty years and have shared most of this information freely. Some owners have requested that I reveal their holdings only in summary form, and this information has NOT been shared freely by me. My counts include these pieces, since they DO exist and this form of publication does not violate any trusts.



# RARITY

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The statement from “CENSUS” above is important enough to bear repeating. NOBODY HAS EVER SEEN ALL LARGE CENTS IN EXISTENCE. The term “Rarity” means “how many have been seen and recognized”. For the rarest varieties, a literal count will suffice. For the more common ones, a subjective guess is given representing “how easy is it to come by”. Obviously, the higher rarity ratings have a tendency to fall over the years.

Rarity ratings are given for each variety — NOT for each die-state within the variety. By the time somebody gets around to wanting several examples of each variety, he knows which ones are easy and which ones are not. And besides, only a handful of people even care.

The R-numbers listed below are a concise way to write a count or estimate. This is the scale proposed by William Sheldon in 1948 for use with the early (1793-1814) cent series. I use a +/- suffix for the top and bottom third of each range.

R1 — Common	Easy to find
R2 — Rather Common	Rather easy
R3 — Scarce	A bit tough
R4 — Very Scarce	Hard to find (est. up to 200)
R5 — Rare	31-75 counted
R6 — Very Rare	13-30 "
R7 — Extremely Rare	4-12 "
R8 — Forget it	1- 3 "
–	Lower (commoner) end
+	Higher (rarer) end

# VALUE

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“Value” is something assumed to be inherent within any object: a large cent variety, for example. This assumption is false. If value is dollar-equivalent, then what is a dollar worth? Can you eat it? Will a ten keep you warm any longer than a one? But accepting all of our pre-conditioned beliefs as fact, there is still no exact equivalence between any given object and the dollar system. A coin (or anything else) is “worth” whatever somebody will willingly give for it that the owner will willingly accept.

Supply and demand determine the “value” of large cent varieties the same as it does for dollars. This book will affect demand (people are interested in only those things they know exist), but perhaps not enough to be measurable compared to the current whim or fad of the masses with dollars to spare. If I spent a couple of months compiling figures I could come up with an inconsistent set of variety “values” that I could guarantee to be obsolete before they

were printed. As fast as one person can publish what he considers “right” in a price guide, somebody else will shoot it down as “wrong”.

Instead of trying to be specific (and thereby “wrong”), I have commented on “variety premium” for several varieties. This is not a guarantee; it is not a value; but it is an observation of what has occurred fairly consistently in the near past and just might happen again from time to time. When I comment “number X brings 6X-8X” I mean that any of several specialists might be willing to pay around 6-8 times the common-variety price to get one (if he needs it and likes the coin he is offered), and will likely try to get about that much out of a duplicate of this variety. “Value speculative” means I have not seen this one change hands enough to even make a guess — but the premium will likely be substantial unless the seller is wearing a red suit and a white beard.

# VARIATIONS ON A THEME

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The traditional route into collecting large-cent varieties is a date set, then dates and major varieties (two of 1828, two or three of 1835, five of 1839, and so on), and along the way the variety trap is sprung and you're off into a wonderland beyond the dreams of most collectors. But what if you're too overwhelmed to take that leap — almost 250 cents from a mere 24-year span? Or what if you have spent over a decade or two at it, and all of this is old and familiar ground? Whence then the Joy of Discovery — the Thrill of the Hunt?

Some collectors go after a single year only. When (and if, depending on the year) they complete this, they may upgrade, extend to die states, or tackle another year or two.

The most common step beyond varieties is to extend into die states, seeking examples of each variety struck during different phases in the life of its dies — new, cracked, more cracks or larger breaks, worn-down or mushed-out dies, dies that have become rusted, ground down, shattered — the possibilities are practically limitless. Instead of thirteen cents of 1831, your collection can now accommodate thirty or more 1831's — and all different! Fascinating sequences can be assembled showing the birth, life, aging, and death of a coinage die.

A variation on the die-state theme is collecting only new-die coins or only those from a terminal stage of the die. Others collect only cuds — those cents struck from an incomplete die, with part of the die broken away.

Another fascinating variation is the collecting of large cent 'errors', which come in many classes. Die errors include overdates and mispunched letters. Planchet errors include clips, major laminations, and uneven or irregular planchets (producing strange strikes). Striking errors include off-centers, multiple strikes, brockages, and all combinations of these. Since planchet and striking errors are each one-of-a-kind, your collection can never be complete, your quest never finished, and your 'thrill-of-the-hunt' never ended by the finality of completion.

Yet another possibility is a color set. How many different distinct, natural colors of cents can you gather? Though this is usually a last-resort excuse (if you need one) for keeping two or more of the same thing, it could be a primary goal for some collectors.

Still other people look for ANYTHING different in an old cent — the crossways reverses, the flat strikes, the cents made into buttons, gears, hum-dingers, printing or crimping wheels, rings, or mutilated into six-sided or eight-sided fabrications, the "enhanced details", the fanciful creations, or the alterations of common cents into rarer dates.

And if all of these excuses fail to justify your keeping two cents of the same variety, die state, strike, condition, and color, you can always fall back on one of the following now-famous quotes:

But I like them both.	(John Wright)
Twinsies are fun.	(Doug Smith )
Trade bait.	(Denis Loring)
Cufflinks.	(Bill Smith )



# CREDITS

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The information in this book has been gathered from three kinds of sources: original documents, the literature, and current observations.

## ORIGINAL DOCUMENTS

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The National Archives contain tons of paper pertaining to the operation of all phases of the Federal Government. An extensive (but incomplete) cataloguing and indexing job was done under the auspices of the WPA during the depression of the 1930's. This effort made feasible the searches done there in the 1950's by Walter Breen and in the 1960's and beyond by Bob Julian.

Bob was kind enough, while he was there to research his Mint Medals book, to select for me and for the Early American Coppers Library, sets of documents pertaining to large-cent production. These include the Boulton letters (1796-1838), the Rush letters (1816-1848), the Peale letters (1829-1886), "Waste Books" (1794-1833), records of cent planchets (1837-1850), coinage statistics (1794-1888), laws relating to the Philadelphia mint (1791-1835), rules and regulations of the mint (1796-1831), and other records on the operation of the Philadelphia mint in the early post-colonial days.

## THE LITERATURE

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The first reference on post-1815 United States Cents was a small (5x6) 42-page pamphlet published by Frank D. Andrews in 1881 titled "268 Varieties of United States Large Copper Cents 1816-1857 in the Collection of Frank D. Andrews, Esq". This was followed in 1883 by an updat-

ed version titled "An Arrangement of United States Large Cents 1816-1857 for the Assistance of Collectors", which added 119 more varieties and stood as the standard reference on the subject for over fifty years. That was back when a book title comprised the first chapter of the book!

In 1912-1914 Frank McGirk published an attribution series on U.S. large cents in *The Numismatist*. Though well-intentioned, McGirk was evidently as confused as he was confusing, and this work was largely ignored.

In 1924 B. Max Mehl reprinted Andrews' pamphlet, with George Clapp's addition of 49 purported new varieties.

In the 1930's two giants of the large cent fraternity, George H. Clapp and Howard R. Newcomb, collaborated to produce a standard reference work on the cents of 1816-1857, eventually published under Newcomb's name. This was only a PART of their goal, though. Between 1925 and 1947 these two men individually or in collaboration produced the standard reference works on U.S. cents for every year from 1795 through 1857 (five books), the 1793 and 1794 series already having been admirably covered by Crosby and Hays. Newcomb finished his 1816-1857 epic work in 1940 and did not find a publisher before the outbreak of World War II. With hobby references at zero priority during the war, he gave the manuscript to Stack's with the proviso that it be printed rather than archived. Newcomb's "United States Copper Cents 1816-1857" was first printed in 1944, a year before his death. Subsequent printings were made in 1956, 1963, 1981, and 1985.

In 1954 Frank Davis and Otto Steinberger published a one-page sheet of purported new varieties and new die states on cents of this series. Commonly referred to as "the D-S Supplement", this sheet was critiqued harshly by Walter Breen in the November 1954 issue of *The Numismatist*.

In the 1963-1965 period W.E. Johnson published a series of loose-leaf updates known as "LC167A", "LC167B", and "LC167C". His information included rarity estimates, die-state listings, and purported new varieties. The LC167 lists have been severely critiqued for their many faults, but contained several nuggets of new information for those patient enough and discerning enough to sift the true from the false.

Since the organization by Herb Silberman in 1967 of the specialty-group "Early American Coppers" (EAC), a considerable amount of both old and new information has been published on this series in the bimonthly club publication "PENNY-WISE" (P-W). I first published in P-W the "quick finder" guides to variety identification (1970-1971), a rudier form of section 2 of this book (1975-1979), and periodic variety, rarity, and census updates (1980-1991), and all of this information has been freely shared among over 3000 EAC members. In 1972 I began a continuing mid-date condition census project that has benefitted from the active help of many EAC members. This information has been published in summary form in several P-W updates and in CQR (see next), and in more detail in a recent book by Bill Noyes.

In 1983 Jack Robinson began publishing a price-guide for large and half cents, titled "Copper Quotes by Robinson". This has grown thru ten editions from nine pages to over 100 pages.

In 1984 Wes Rasmussen conceived the idea of an ongoing composite census of 1816-1839 cent variety collections. He distributed copies to the dozen participants and turned the project over to me for continuation. That year I began publishing "The List", a detailed tracking of 1816-1839 cent collections of at least 150 varieties. In 22 editions and eight years this has grown from 28 collections to over 70.

"The List" has since been joined by "The Score" (a similar 1793-1814 compendium) by John Fettingner, "Common Cents" (1840-1857) by John Frank-enfield, and "The 1/200 Survey" (half cents) by Ed Masuoka.

In 1991 Bill Noyes published a picture-book "United States Large Cents 1816-1839", and another for the cents of 1793-1814. Though the only new information in the 1816-1839 book derived from a set of my census notes loaned to him, the excellent pictures make both of these books well worth their price.

## CURRENT OBSERVATIONS

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The formation of EAC has served as a catalyst to bring large cent specialists together. Information on this series has been focused to a common forum as never before. With several hundred eyes tracking the same series for a quarter century, and the auctions for a hundred years before that, the count and condition census listings that have resulted will likely be immune from violent changes for several years, though a slight general rise in both count and cc is to be expected.

The trust of EAC members has allowed verification or disproof of purported new varieties, new examples of rare varieties, and new die states. In the early stages of compiling a condition census (ca 1972-1974), much

data-gathering, editing, and other personal input was provided by Del Bland, Jerry Bobbe, Walter Breen, Jack Collins, Denis Loring, and Gordon Wrubel. For the last fifteen years Del Bland has served not only as an energetic researcher in his own right, but also as the other focal point besides myself for others' census information on this series.

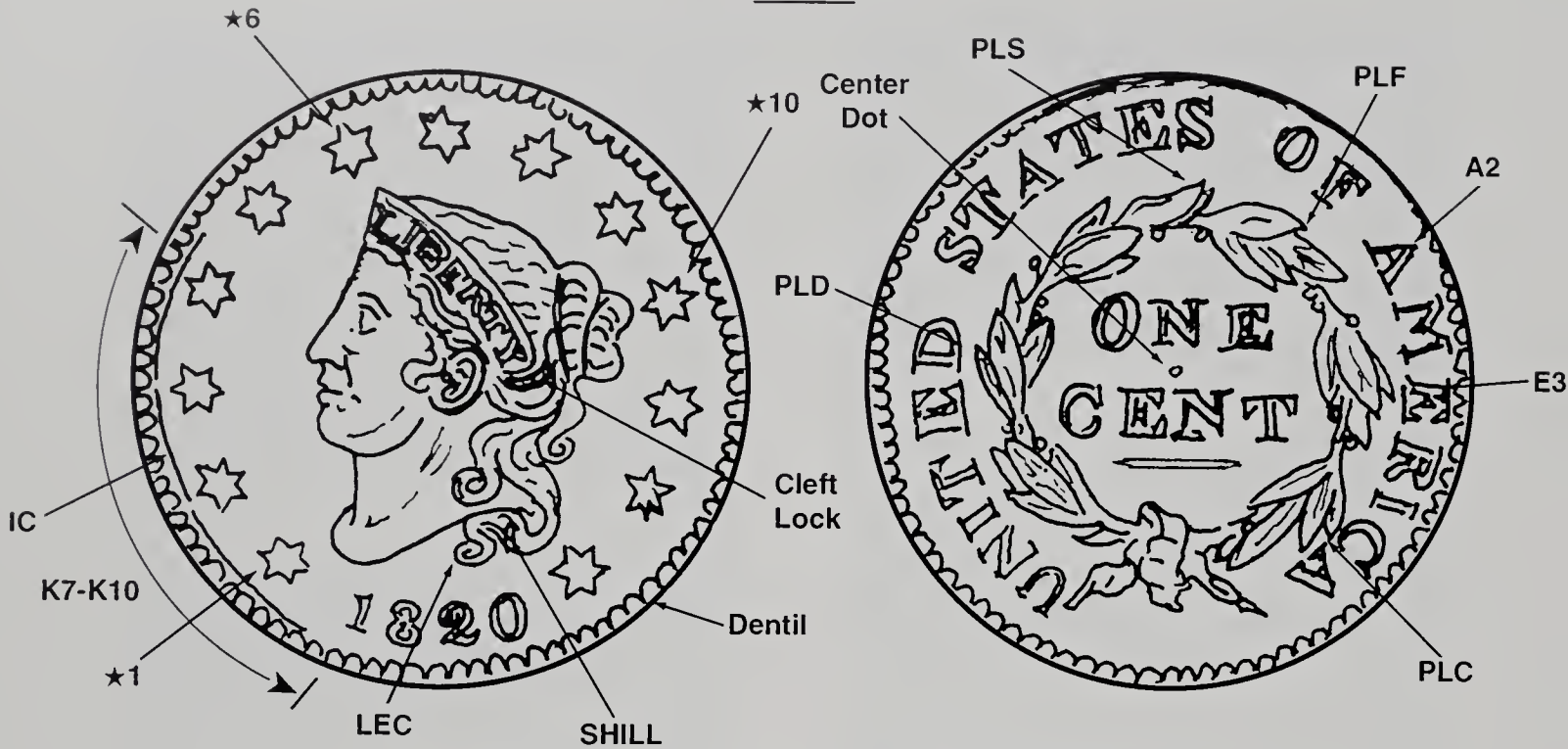
Most of the owners of the major collections of 1816-1839 cent varieties have been generous in offering their collections for illustrations, but for convenience most coins were pictured from the collections of Robbie Brown, Fred Borchardt, and myself. Jack Collins is unsurpassed in coin photography and he and Ted Naftzger offered their service and coins for the plates in this book, but the mechanics never jelled. Perhaps in a later edition...

Rod Burress, Chuck Heck, Dick Punchard, and March Wells all helped refine the abbreviated attribution guides, and my wife Mabel Ann typed, edited, listened, and put up with a lot of hassle to see this project through. Finally, Jeff Oliphant, Darwin Palmer, Del Bland, Mabel Ann Wright, and Harry Salyards helped proofread this manuscript, Wes Rasmussen provided printing, publication, and distribution advice, and Johnny Frankenfield provided the funds to have "The CENT Book" printed.

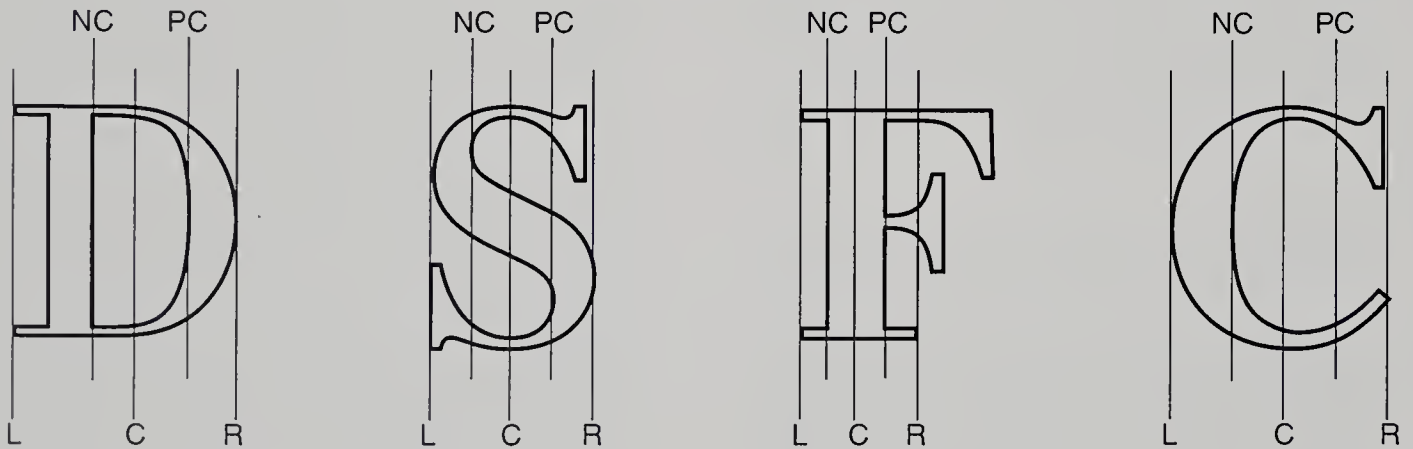
Without the help of all of these and many more this book would have been later, less accurate, and less readable. Without the help of a key few, the book might never have been written, let alone published.



# METHOD



These pictures illustrate terms defined in the glossary.



Leaf positions refer to the **base** of the letter

- |                 |                        |                       |
|-----------------|------------------------|-----------------------|
| • Far Past Left | • Nearly Center        | • Nearly Right        |
| • Past Left     | • Center               | • Right               |
| • Left          | • Slightly Past Center | • Slightly Past Right |
| • Nearly Left   | • Past Center          | • Past Right          |
|                 |                        | • Far Past Right      |

Pictures are the key to attribution.  
The purpose of descriptions is to point out  
in the pictures distinctive die features

# GLOSSARY

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**ACCESSORY E** — Variety 12 of 1837, which has an almost complete ‘E’ in the wreath below ME(RICA). This feature was first noted by Jules Reiver in the May 1969 issue of *PENNY-WISE*.

**ATTRIBUTE** — (verb) To identify a coin by die variety.

**AUCTION IDENTIFICATION** — Some coins are identified by appearance in well-known sales. These are noted by a name or abbreviation thereof and a lot number.

For example: “NN50:1435-Starr:160-JHR:787-DM:311” means “the coin that sold as lot 1435 of New Netherlands 50th sale, then as lot 160 of the Floyd Starr sale, then as lot 787 of the Jack Robinson sale, then as lot 311 of the Dennis Mendelson sale”. The benefits of this brief notation should be obvious.

**BEADED CORDS** — The hairbands on some cents of 1837 and all but one of 1838-1857 are two strands of beads. The ones of 1837 are called “Beaded Cords” (numbers 9-12) to distinguish them from the “Plain Cords” on the rest (numbers 1-7, 13-17).

**BOOBY HEAD** — A transitional type appearing on cents of 1839 and representing over half of the varieties of that year (numbers 5-7, 11-15). Its chief distinctive is a sharp shoulder-point protruding beyond the hair. See 1839 discussion for more details.

**BRAIDED HAIR** — The last type of 1839 cent (variety number 8), so-called because the hair under the coronet looks like a braid. This type is also called “Petite Head”, “Tipped Head”, or “Type of 1840”. The larger head introduced in 1843 is also a braided-hair type.

**BROADSTRUCK** — A coin struck with excessive pressure or with several blows and without the benefit of a restraining collar. The coin is over-size but of normal weight. The image on the coin is of normal size with broad borders.

**BROCKAGE** — A two-headed or two-tailed coin with one side intaglio. This results when a struck coin is retained in the coining chamber and a fresh blank is fed and is struck between a die and the retained coin just made from that die. Brockages are known (but rare) for most years of 1816-1839 cents, and are relatively common for cents of 1817 and 1826 (perhaps several dozen examples).

**BRONZING** — A process used in Britain for striking medals and presentation coins. The unstruck blank was dusted with “bronzing powder”, then struck, producing a crisp image with non-reflective surfaces, similar to the “matte Proofs” made in this country after World War I. The bronzing process was used experimentally here on cents of 1829 and the process was abandoned. One example of 1834 cent claims to be a “bronzed Proof”, but I am unconvinced.

**BUCKLED DIE** — A die which has warped from repeated use. Coins struck from a buckled die show areas of weakness where the fields undulate. Buckling may occur anywhere, but is most often seen at left center reverse. See varieties 31-5 and 35-7 for examples.

**CENTER DOT** — A raised dot in the center of the coin resulting from a hole in the die which was used as a compass anchor-point in laying out the design elements on the die. Center dots are common on reverse dies, less so on obverse dies.

**CENTURY LETTERS** — A set of letter-punches used on U.S. cent beginning in 1819. So called for the like-named printing typeface introduced much later. Century letters are characterized by squared centers to O's and C's, triangular-center-serifs on E's and F's, curled tails on R's, and thin fore-and-aft strokes on S's. See the plates of 1819 for examples of both Century and Square-Serif letter sets.

**CHATTER STRIKE** — A doubling of some parts of a coin image that is imparted in striking rather than cut into the die. This results from a worn or loose press mechanism that permits a bounce on each impact. These are found on most varieties of cents before 1835 and are quite prevalent from 1832-1835. See the discussion on 1832 for more details.

**CHERRY** — An unidentified goodie for which the buyer might have been willing to pay much more had the seller realized what he had. To buy such a bargain at the seller-established price is to "cherrypick". Some coin dealers consider cherrypicking to be unethical, believing they are the only souls alive that are entitled to a profit. If they buy a cent for \$10 and sell it for \$100, they feel the buyer has cheated them out of \$400 if he then sells it for \$500.

**CLASHED DIES** — Dies damaged by their mate from coming together forcefully without a coin blank between them. Each die has parts of the image from its mate impressed into it, and subsequent coins struck from this die also show these marks. These used to be called "suction marks" (as if the design had been "sucked through" the planchet). See number 30-11 for an example.

**CLEFT LOCK** — A new head puncheon was introduced in 1818. The most obvious difference is the treatment of the hair behind the Y of LIBERTY. On the earlier puncheon this was a single mass. On the new one there is an obvious "cleft" running parallel to the upright of Y. The dies made from this new puncheon (18-6 and 18-7) are called the "cleft lock" dies. Though all cents after 1818 have the cleft lock, this term is only noted for the year where it is a distinctive.

**CLUB 2** — Most large-date cents of 1820 have the top of the 2 ending in a broad down-pointing club. This is called the "Club 2", and was called the "Plain 2" by Newcomb. It is found on 1820 varieties 10 through 14.



**COLLAR** — A ring around the coining chamber into which the planchet is fed to be struck. A “loose collar” prevents overexpansion of the flan, producing exact-diameter coins. A “close collar” fully constricts the coin and often has a design. Examples on U.S. coinage are reeded-edge silver, clad, and gold coins, and 20th century \$10 and \$20 coins which have raised stars and letters on the rim. A raised edge-design requires a complex mechanism to retract the collar-segments radially outward to release the struck coin.

**CONDITION CENSUS** — A “census” or enumeration of the finest-known examples of each variety. This idea was first published by Wm Sheldon for the cents of 1793-1814 in summary form (1948), then in more detail (1958). The purpose of such a census is to establish a “pecking order” among examples of each variety. Though commendable in concept, a true census is unattainable in practice. And even for those coins recorded, an ordering is only possible by direct coin-to-coin comparisons, a concept practiced at the annual “half cent happenning” at the Early American Coppers (EAC) convention. See my separate discussion on this topic for more details.

**CORONET** — A coin-design named for the tiara worn by Miss Liberty. Though this general type is seen on several denominations of U.S. copper and gold coins of the nineteenth century, the name “Coronet Type” normally refers only to cents of 1816-1839.

**CRACKED HEAD** — Five obverse dies of 1838 were made from a head puncheon that was cracked. This crack shows on all dies made from this puncheon and these are called the “cracked head” dies. These are obverses 2,3,4,9,10 of 1838. See 1838 discussion for more details.

**CUD** — An impression from a die that has had part of the die broken away, generally somewhere around the edge. The coins struck from such a die show a raised, unstruck area where the die-piece is missing. See chain-plates of 31-12 and 38-14 for examples. An “interior cud” is where a piece has broken out of the die away from the rim — see 31-9 and 38-4 for examples. A “retained cud” is a broken-out piece of the die that has not wholly departed. The enclosed “cud” area on the coin is generally raised but still has some design on it. Retained cuds are sometimes seen on varieties 18-2, 22-9, 30-10, 35-11, 38-10, and a few others.

**CURL 2** — Most cents of 1820 and all of 1821-1829 have a 2 whose top ends in an ornate reverse-curl point. Since this is universal to all but a few varieties of 1820, the term “curl 2” is used as a distinctive only for varieties 1-9 and 15 of 1820.

**DENOMINATION** — The mark of value on an item of money. For U.S. cents of 1808-1958 this is the word ONE CENT in the center of the reverse. After 1958 the cent denomination is at bottom reverse; before 1808 it appeared also as a fraction 1/100 at bottom reverse; before late 1795 it was also impressed into the edge as ONE HUNDRED FOR A DOLLAR.

**DENTIL** — A tooth forming part of the border of a die. The ring of dentils is called “dentilation”. Dentilation appears on U.S. cents of 1794-1909.

**DEVICES** — Raised elements of a coin, such as letters, head, stars, wreath, etc.

**DIE** — A cylinder, usually of steel, into the end of which is cut or impressed an intaglio design to be imparted to metal blanks, transforming them from blank disks to coins. After 1794, the images on most U.S. cent dies were impressed into the die with a set of punches containing various elements of the design (letters, numerals, head, wreath, and dentils), with manual engraving touchup to finish the die. To be practical, the die must be harder than the blanks it strikes. So the finished die was then hardened (or “tempered”) by heating and quenching before being put to use.

**DIE BREAK** — A raised line on a coin that is the image of a crack in the die that produced that coin. Some people reserve the term “die break” for a cud (qv), while referring to a crack as a “die crack”. Either usage is correct. Cracks are just one form of damage/deterioration suffered by coinage dies as they age.

**DIE CHAIN** — Two dies are used together to produce a variety. When these dies are “retired” (taken out of service), either one or both are replaced. If one die is kept in service, the resultant string of varieties is called a “die chain”. See Plates 5 and 8 for examples. See also “Mule” and “Parallel Mating”.

**DIE FEATURE** — A feature on a coin that is particular to the die that struck it. All (or most) coins struck from that die will show the feature. See “Die State” and “Striking Feature.”

**DIE STATE** — All coins struck from the same pair of dies in the same stage of the life of those dies are called the same die state. If the difference seen on two coins of the same variety shows which specimen was struck first, this represents a difference in die state. Evidences are cracks, cuds, clashes, crumbling, flowlines, dishing, buckling, or weakening of die details. This does NOT include rotations, chatter strikes, centering, and strength of strike.

**DIE VARIETY** — All coins struck from a given pair of dies are the same “die variety”. This is independent of what may have happened to / been done to either of these dies. Deterioration or modification of a die does not make it a new die, or the coins struck from it a new variety.

**DISHING** — A common progressive failure of worn dies is for the rims of the die to give way. If a chunk breaks off, this is called a “rim break” or a “cud”. But if it merely yields, the rims of the struck coin look like the rims of a dish, from which comes the name “dished die”. This failure is quite common on cents of 1825-1826, but is seen throughout the series. See 23-RS for an advanced example of dishing.

**DOUBLE PROFILE** — See “Chatter Strike”.

**DOUBLE STRIKE** — A coin that has been struck twice with the same pair of dies, generally with the two strikes out-of-register with each other. This falls into the category of “striking errors”, which includes multiple strikes, brockages, and off centers. A related term is “over-strike”, which is a coin struck over SOMETHING ELSE. Since brockages and off centers are obviously defective product, these were occasionally noticed at striking time and these “spoiled cents” were either thrown back to be overstruck normally or cast aside as scrap for remelting.

**EMBATTLED RIM** — The rim of a coin with a two-tier design arrangement. Large cents of 1834 (numbers 3,4) and all 1836 and beyond have an “embattled rim” consisting of a ring of dentils joined at the roots to a raised, smooth outer rim. Occasionally a cent before this period will show a ring joining some of the roots of the dentils, but this is caused by the planchet extending beyond the die. This is not an embattled rim, since the term “embattled rim” is a die feature rather than a striking feature.

**EMISSION SEQUENCE** — Order of striking of a series of varieties.

**FIFTEEN STARS** — One variety of 1817 cent has a ring of fifteen stars around the head. All other large cents with obverse stars have thirteen stars. See 1817 discussion and number 17-16 discussion for more details.

**FLAN** — See “Planchet”.

**FLAT STRUCK** — A coin struck so that the metal does not fill the recesses of the design in the die. This is usually due to insufficient striking pressure, but might occur if the recesses of the die were caked with grease or dirt. Flat strikes are quite common on cents of 1829 and 1830.

**FLOWLINES** — Radial lines on a coin imparted from a worn die that has been scoured by the radial expansion of the many coins it has struck. As each planchet is struck, it is squeezed outward. This metal-flow does slight damage to the harder steel die, compounded many times. Each coin struck from the damaged die keeps an image of the damage while adding to it. Minute flowlines are the principal cause for the “cartwheel” effect seen on near-new coins.

**GRADE** — An attempt to justify price. See separate discussion on preceding pages.

**HARD TIMES TOKENS** — Large-cent-sized copper tokens struck mostly in the 1836-1841 period, coinciding with the “hard times” (major depression) of the 19th century. These come in a political motif (anti-Jackson/VanBuren) or as simple tradesman’s (advertising) tokens. They circulated freely as cents during this period of hoarding of specie.

**IC** — Abbreviation for “Inner Circle”, which is a circumferential scribe-mark either under or just off the tips of the dentils. Some dies have a complete IC, some have partial or remnants of an IC, and some have none.



**KEY LEAVES** — The outermost leaves near the end of each word of the legend on the reverse die. These are the leaf at D of UNITED, final S of STATES, F in OF, and C of AMERICA. See “Leaf Positions” and “Letter Names” for more details.

**K-NUMBERS** — The “Kolit” numbers reference hour positions on a 12-hour clock. These usually refer to some feature at or near the rim in that direction. This designation was first used by mint-error collectors to reference flan-clip and off-center directions. So a “Weak IC K2-K3.5” is a weak inner circle from the 2:00 to the 3:30 position.

**KEG** — Beginning in 1795 the U.S. mint bought planchets ready-made from the copper mills (some domestic, some British). These blanks were received in kegs by weight, were coined into cents, and were shipped out in the same kegs by count. There are no records of how many cents were in a keg, but cent shipments in 1803 were in consistent \$150 amounts. If \$150 represented a keg of cents, it would weigh 360 pounds and would be about 24” tall by 15” diameter. That sounds reasonable for the size of a keg.

**LAMINATION** — A peeling or split in a planchet. This results from a bubble in the ingot-rolled-to-sheet. Laminations are generally a detriment to the desirability of a coin, but they can be quite spectacular.

**LAPPED DIE** — A die which has been severely polished to remove flow-lines or other marks of damage. The fields of a coin struck from lapped dies are smooth, often mirrorlike, but the design relief is much lower.

**LEAF POSITIONS** — The positions of the four key leaves (qv) relative to the letter above them are abbreviated as PLD,PLS,PLF,PLC for “Point of Leaf under D/S/F/C”. The positions are abbreviated combinations of Slightly/Far, Nearly/Past, Left/Center/Right. So “PLD SPC” means “Point of Leaf under D is Slightly Past Center”, and the quartet “PC,R,NR,C” means the four key leaves point Past Center (of D), Right edge (of S), Nearly Right (of F), and Centered (under C). See the “Method” page for a closer definition of each of these positions.

**LEC** — Abbreviation for “Left Edge of Curl,” referring to the lowest curl below the head and how it aligns with digits of the date below it.

**LEGEND** — This is any inscription around the perimeter of a coin. On U.S. large cents the legend on the reverse is UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

**LETTER NAMES** — For those letters in the legend that are unique (UN—D — OF -M-R-C-), the letter names itself. For multiply-appearing letters (ITE S-A), they are numbered clockwise from the bottom. Thus “I2” is “the second I”, or the I in AMERICA, and “E2” is the E in STATES. See “Method” page.

**MISALIGNED** — Misaligned dies do not mate properly. Coins struck from misaligned dies show one side normally centered and the other side off center. This is seen occasionally on several years, but is most commonly seen on cents of 1808-1814, 1853, and 1854.

**MOUSE ON HEAD** — Four varieties of 1817 cents (numbers 3,7,8,9) develop a die failure atop the head. The late die states of these varieties showing these lumps are called the “mouse on head” varieties, though the failure on only one of the four dies is actually shaped like its namesake.

**MULE** — A coin struck from two dies that are not normally found mated to each other. A related term where one die is changed before the other is “die chain” (if the dies are similar) or “transitional type” (if they are dissimilar). Pattern cents of 1853 are mules of a pattern cent reverse with a quarter eagle obverse. In the 1816-1839 cent series the term “mule” normally refers to a rare marriage of two dies that are common with other mates. Examples are 20-14, 22-13, 22-14.

**OBVERSE** — The “head” side of a coin, or the side containing the principal design. On U.S. cents of 1808-1857 the obverse has a head, a circle of stars, a date below, and a border of dentils.

**OFF CENTER** — A coin struck on a blank that found its way near to but not into the coining chamber. Both sides are struck about the same amount off center (see “Misalign”). Slight mis-centerings of less than five percent are normal for this period and are not classed as “off center’s”. This striking error is found more often on cents of 1830-1834 than on other years.

**OVERDATE** — One or more date digits are overpunched with DIFFERENT figures. If the underfigure and the overpunch are the same character this is called a “recut”, not an overdate. Large cent overdates are known of nineteen years, seven of them in the 1816-1839 series. In every case, the alteration was done before the die was first used.

**OVERSTRIKE** — A struck coin that has been struck again with other dies, often of a completely different design. Examples are an overstruck large cent brockage (a spoiled cent recoined), one of the 1804 dollars which is struck over an 1857 Swiss thaler, a Brazilian copper coin struck over a U.S. large cent, recoined large Russian coppers of the early 1700’s, and so on.

**PARALLEL MATING** — When dies have a single mate for their whole service life, the result is called “Parallel Mating”. Both dies are retired together. See also “Die Chain” and “Mule”.

**PATINA** — A heavy layer of oxidation or corrosion products. This is much prized on ancient bronze coins, but a heavy patina is a detriment to something so modern as a U.S. coin. For early U.S. copper, the term “patina” is often misused to mean “toning” rather than “even encrustation”. Patchy encrustation is called “scale” or “corrosion” (which eats holes in the surface of a coin).

**PLANCHET** — The metal disk that makes up the fabric of a coin. A blank planchet is struck by coinage dies to become a coin. It originated as an ingot which was rolled out to plate from which planchets were punched (as with a cookie-cutter). The planchets are then “rolled” to upset (thicken) the rim, washed chemically, and struck into coins.

**PLAIN CORDS** — Until 1837 Miss Liberty’s hairbun was tied with two strings, commonly referred to as “Plain Cords”. In late 1837 these were replaced with strings of beads. See “Beaded Cords”.

**POROUS** — A pretty way to say “corroded”. Fine pitting is common on U.S. large cents because copper is chemically a very active metal. Generally the term “porous” is synonymous with “black”. Degrees of “porosity” are often noted in ads to sell old copper coins. The one that gives me the biggest laugh is “microscopically porous”. Who, when selling an old copper, examines it with a microscope?

**PROOF** — A coin specially struck for presentation or for a collector. The dies and planchets are polished before striking and several blows are used to raise a crisp, finely-detailed impression. Some cents of the early 1830’s are one-sided Proofs, with only the obverse die being specially prepared. An early strike (new dies, mirrorlike flat fields) may appear Prooflike but is the product of only a single blow.

**PEDIGREE** — Literally, “This coin knows who its father is”. As normally used with coins, the ownership-history of the coin. Specifically, auction history (which lot in what sale) and any well-known collections where the coin resided for an extended period. For a “Cherry”, the pedigree begins with the first person to correctly attribute the coin.

**PUNCHEON** — A positive-image punch for a large design-element of a coinage die. Examples are the head and the wreath. Sometimes smaller punches (letters, numerals, stars) may be referred to as “puncheons”, but “punches” is a more proper term for these.

**RANDALL HOARD** — A large group of Mint State and near-MS U.S. cents of 1816-1820 dispersed by coin dealer J.S.Randall in the late 1860’s and 1870’s. The hoard was discovered during post-civil-war reconstruction in Georgia. Varieties 16-2, 17-14, 18-10, 19-8, and 20-13 are commonly attributed to the Randall Hoard. See these varieties for more details.

**RARITY** — An actual count of specimens or an educated guess of how difficult a particular variety is to locate. See the “Rarity” discussion on a prior page.

**RECUT** — One or more small design elements (letters, digits, stars) are punched twice or more into the die with minor misalignment. Strong examples of recut digits are the final date-figure on 25-7 and 35-13.



**RESTRIKE** — Coins made at a later date from original dies. The “Restrikes” of 1823 and 1804 cents use this term loosely, as they were struck privately using an 1823/1813 die-pair for the 1823 and an 1803/1820 die-pair for the 1804. See the discussion for 1823 and 23-RS for more details.

**REVERSE** — The “tail” side of a coin, or the side containing the secondary design. On U.S. cents of 1808-1857 the reverse has the Denomination, an encircling wreath, the Legend “UNITED STATES OF AMERICA”, and a border of dentils.

**ROTATION** — Relative alignment between the Obverse and Reverse dies. For U.S. coins the normal position is head-to-toe. Minor excursions of less than thirty degrees from this are common. Some varieties come with a characteristic rotation and these are so noted in the text. Occasional pieces of some varieties have the reverse rotated crossways or head-to-head.

**RUSTED DIE** — The die has rust-pits in it. Coins struck from this die will show raised “pimples” where the die-pits are. Do not confuse this with corrosion-pits on the coin (which are “innies”, not “outies”) or patches of corrosion-scale on the coin (which are “outies” but are not firm, solid copper).

**SHILL** — Abbreviation for “Stray Hair In Lowest Lock”. Three dies of 1820, four of 1822, and three of 1824 have the lowest wave of hair under the truncation with a maverick “Stray Hair” cutting upwards across it. See discussion for 1820.

**SILLY HEAD** — Gobrecht’s first variant in his 1839 cent experiments. There are two Silly-Head varieties: 39-4 and 39-9. The type was so-named at least as early as the 1860’s. See 1839 discussion for more details.

**SLAB** — Something that investors are buried in. A coin encapsulated in a plastic slab with a professional grading opinion by one of the grading services.

**SMALL LETTERS** — Letters of the legend are smaller than on some other dies of the same year. Note that the large/small distinctive is relative to the same year only. Letter-size shrunk in 1830-34, again in 1837, and again in 1839. There are large/small letters for 1829-1832, 1834, and 1837. The tiny letters of the Petite Head 1839 (39-8) are far over-shadowed by its radically different head.

**SPECIE** — Literally “Hard Money”, or “Coin”. This is the subject of several political tokens of the hard-times era, 1836-1841.

**SQUARE SERIF** — A set of letter-punches used on U.S. cents until 1819 and on one die after that (21-1, 22-14). So called for one of its most prominent features. Square-serif letters are characterized by rounded centers to O’s and C’s, square center-serifs on E’s and F’s, straight tails on R’s, and broad fore-and-aft strokes on S’s. See the 1819 plates for examples of both Century and Square-Serif letter sets.

**STAR NUMBERS** — Stars are referenced by their position, numbered clockwise from bottom obverse. The sixth star (\*6) is the one usually nearest the tip of coronet and \*10 is the one nearest the hairbun. See "Method" page.

**STRIKING FEATURE** — A feature on a coin that is individual to the act of its striking. Other coins struck from this die may or may not display this feature. See "Chatter Strike" and "Die Feature."

**TRUNCATION** — The "cutoff" line at the bottom of the head.

**UNCIRCULATED** — A term in long use for "new" or "as made". The preferable term is "Mint State" (MS), as it is backwards to describe something by what it is not. Even more ludicrous is the term "About Uncirculated" (AU), which tries to describe the condition of a coin as what it is "almost not".

**VALUE** — A fantasy.  
(Ecclesiastes 5:10-11).

**VERDIGRIS** — Clumps of dirt between the devices on a coin. These may or may not contain corrosion salts. If verdigris will pick or bathe away, it is likely an oil-and-dirt cake referred to as "crud".

**WAVY HAIR** — One obverse die of 1836 (numbers 36-6 and 36-7) was a hand-cut design by Gobrecht. Its biggest distinctive is the top of the head, which has undulating, wavy hair unlike all other dies before and since.

**WHEELSPOKE** — One variety of 1829 (29-7) has several obvious radial cracks on the reverse. This popular variety is called the "1829 Wheelspoke", possibly riding on the fame of the much rarer "1794 Wheelspoke" (S-33). Another less-known variety (36-4) is occasionally called the "1836 Wheelspoke" for the four faint radial cracks found on its reverse.



# SECTION

# 2



# 1815 - 16

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The year 1815 was a pivotal one in world history, in American history, and in the history of the United States mint.

Napoleon was defeated at Waterloo and the European peace released Spanish troops to fight the insurrections in South America. Simon Bolivar fled to Jamaica. Britain entered a depression as national and worldwide demand for arms abruptly ended. Volcano “Tamboro” erupted in the East Indies, killing thousands and affecting world weather for years.

In America an unpopular war was in its dying stages, imported goods were in short supply, and the financial scene was unsettled. In New Orleans, Andrew Jackson defeated the British two weeks after the signing of the peace treaty ending the War of 1812. The U.S. population reached 8.35 million, with Philadelphia its largest city at 75,000.

In 1816 James Monroe was elected President. James Shreve’s new steam riverboat design spelled the end of the Natchez Trace as a national highway and the start of two-way riverboat traffic on the Mississippi and Ohio rivers; and Indiana became the nineteenth state. This was “the year without a summer”, as heavy snows fell in the northeast in July and August — a residual effect of the volcanic eruption half a world away and a year earlier.

Due to the unsettled times there was a general reluctance to submit precious metals for coining. And the management of the first U.S.Mint showed an

evident hesitancy to coin even the small deposits of bullion that were submitted. Copper flans had been exhausted in 1814 as shipments of British goods (including copper) had been suspended while she waged war with the United States. As a result, the U.S. coinage of 1815 totalled less than \$50,000 in quarters, halves, and half eagles, each denomination from a single pair of dies. Though no cents were struck bearing the 1815 date, at least a few hundred alterations to this date exist — most being fabricated from 1813 cents.

Late in 1815, the first shipment of British copper arrived and was immediately coined into Robert Scot’s new-design cents bearing the 1816 date. Thus, there were indeed 1815 cents — but they were dated 1816, creating the only hiatus in the continuous date-run of cents from 1793 till today.

On January 11, 1816, the building housing the mint’s rolling presses burned, thus rendering academic the question of precious metal coinage. Fortunately, when the flow of British copper resumed, the mint was able to continue production of cents. British-produced planchets were used exclusively for all 1816 coinage, and no other denominations were struck this year.

The rolling presses were not replaced until 1817, when new steam-powered rolling presses were installed. Installation of this modern equipment in 1817 provided the impetus for what is commonly considered to be the first

## 1815-16

official U.S. proof coins — though it has been argued that presentation strikings of 1796 (the first ten-denomination coinage year) could be considered as “proofs” in both method and intent.

Eight obverse dies and seven reverse dies were used, probably on three presses, to coin 2,820,982 cents bearing the 1816 date. Of the nine varieties struck, two are very scarce, three are a bit scarce, and four are common. One variety is quite common in mint state from a hoard discovered during the post Civil War reconstruction in Georgia ca. 1867, likely from one or more mint-sealed kegs of cents.

All 1816 cent dies were prepared with the same set of numeral and letter punches. The ‘6’ shows a lump on top of its lower loop on all varieties. On two varieties the obverse die is frequently found worn and/or lapped, and

some coins of these varieties do not show the lump. Two obverse dies of this year had the bottoms of the letters of LIBERTY awkwardly strengthened (repunched) after the dies were ground down, but before they were used to strike coins. On both of these dies an E-punch was used to “repair” the B.

The only die chains in 1816 are 9-3 and 1-3-2. From die similarities and the final chain tying the last 1816’s to the first 1817’s, a reasonable emission sequence would be 5,6,4,7,8,9,1-3-2.

Nearly all 1816 cents are bluntly struck at the forelock. Apparently, the relief of the head-puncheon was more than the manual presses of 1816 could bring out in striking. This characteristic is eagerly pounced upon by some who delight in selling XF coins as Mint State.





18 Close, Dentil-Fusing K2



Both I's Dotted

**Obverse 1:** This die appears on varieties 1, 3, and 2 of this year. Dentils are unusually broad, especially at bottom and left. Stars 4,8,10,13 point between dentils, stars 3,5,6,7 nearly do. Sixth star points to coronet tip. Date is moderately spaced with the 18 closer than the other figures. A dentil is perfectly centered under the second 1. Second 1 is recut at top right. There are horizontal dashes to the left of the tip and base of the second 1, and to the right of the 6, even with its base. Lower curl is bold and extends barely past the right edge of the second 1. The letters of LIBERTY are badly formed as on variety 8, their bases poorly patched — the B with an E-punch. The broken appearance of the T is especially noticeable. Small center dot before the ear.

**Striking variations:** Obverse occasionally comes perfect, but usually has rim-crumbling fusing several dentils at 9-10. Most seen have obverse struck evenly and slightly off-center to the right. Reverse normally comes perfect or with a light crack across the top of UNITED. Reverse rim is usually struck

**Reverse A:** Key leaves point PC,NR, C,C. A dentil perfectly dots both the I of UNITED and the I of AMERICA. The outer leaftip under E of AMERICA is under the upright of that letter. N of ONE is punched over another figure, the evidences being strongest in its corners. The left top of E in CENT is crumbled above. Tiny center dot.

slightly more deeply at left than at right. A few examples show a large rimbreak joining the tops of NITE to the rim.

**Discussion:** R4, slightly the rarest 1816, quite scarce in all grades, especially above Fine. MS(3), AU(3-4), XF(2), VF(12+). This is a deceptively high census for a cent of this rarity and is not a true indication of availability. Only three pieces above XF have been auctioned in the last forty years, and the last of these sparked a furious bid-battle between two very determined friends, culminating in a five-figure price. Variety 1 of 1816 commands a substantial variety premium—usually around 8-10X or so.

1



18 Close, Dentil-Fusing K2

**Obverse 1:** This die appears on varieties 1, 3, and 2 of this year. Dentils are unusually broad, especially at bottom and left. Stars 4,8,10,13 point between dentils, stars 3,5,6,7 nearly do. Sixth star points to coronet tip. Date is moderately spaced with the 18 closer than the other figures. A dentil is perfectly centered under the second 1. Second 1 is recut at top right. There are horizontal dashes to the left of the tip and base of the second 1, and to the right of the 6, even with its base. Lower curl is bold and extends barely past the right edge of the second 1. The letters of LIBERTY are badly formed as on variety 8, their bases poorly patched — the B with an E-punch. The broken appearance of the T is especially noticeable. Small center dot before the ear.

**Striking variations:** All have rim-crumbling at stars 8-11. Later examples have an additional section between ★11-12. Strike is bold and even with crisp dentilation on both sides. Hairline cracks extend left from

2



Recut Left Foot N in ONE

**Reverse B:** This die appears on variety 2 of both 1816 and 1817. Key leaves point C,NR,NR,R-. TE of STATES almost touch top and bottom, with E slightly high. Feet of RI are more apart than those of AME, with I slightly low. N of ONE is conspicuously recut at its lower left. Large center dot.

the tops of ST and right from the tops of OF. Later pieces show scattered rust pits on both dies. This variety is frequently found with reverse rotated an eighth-turn right and occasionally with reverse crossways, rotated right.

**Discussion:** R1-, extremely common in all grades — particularly in MS. MS (many hundreds). Possibly a few thousand MS examples survive from the Randall Hoard ca 1867. These are usually reddish-brown or spotty red, bluntly struck at the forelock, and dealers delight in offering them at exorbitant prices.





18 Close, Dentil-Fusing K2

**Obverse 1:** This die appears on varieties 1, 3, and 2 of this year. Dentils are unusually broad, especially at bottom and left. Stars 4,8,10,13 point between dentils, stars 3,5,6,7 nearly do. Sixth star points to coronet tip. Date is moderately spaced with the 18 closer than the other figures. A dentil is perfectly centered under the second 1. Second 1 is recut at top right. There are horizontal dashes to the left of the tip and base of the second 1, and to the right of the 6, even with its base. Lower curl is bold and extends barely past the right edge of the second 1. The letters of LIBERTY are badly formed as on variety 8, their bases poorly patched — the B with an E-punch. The broken appearance of the T is especially noticeable. Small center dot before the ear.

**Striking variations:** Obverse rim is always fused at ★8-11. All seen of this variety have left reverse boldly struck and right reverse weak. The double



Dbld Dentil Over E-1

**Reverse C:** This die appears on varieties 9 and 3. Key leaves point PC,R,PR,SPC. The dentil over the right top of E in UNITED is doubled to the right. This feature is diagnostic, as is the position of the leaf under F. O in OF is slightly high and leans left. STATES OF is spaced to look like a single word. Center dot is tiny.

dentil over E is boldly apparent on even a worn cent. The heavy flowlining at AMERICA mentioned for variety 9 is here minimized by die lapping, but is still present.

**Discussion:** R4, quite scarce in all grades, but easier in higher grades than variety 1. MS(4), AU(4), XF(2), VF(15+). As a variety, this is slightly the second-scarcest 1816 cent and generally commands a 6-8X variety-premium.

2



Open Mouth

**Obverse 2:** Stars 1,4,11 point between dentils. The date is widely and evenly spaced. The sixth star points slightly left of the coronet tip. The lowest curl, extending to the left upright of the second 1, is weak and appears as two overlapped locks. On well over half of this variety the lips are apart, and it is by this hallmark that the die is usually recognized. The coronet has an extra line above LIBERTY. The bases of all letters except T have been repunched with excellent alignment. Only the B has a broken-backed appearance. R is not completely closed at center. There is no obverse center dot.

**Striking variations:** Occasionally found early with dies unlapped, mouth closed, and a lump under first 1; but usually seen quite late with weak, incomplete dentilation on both sides, open mouth, weak lower curl, chip on 6-loop not showing, and tops of legend either weak or drawn to the

4



PLF NL

**Reverse D:** Key leaves point NR, PR,NL,C. The leaftip left of the upright of F is diagnostic. The space between STATES and OF is unusually wide. In UNITED, the U is low and D is high and lightly doubled below. Leaftip under E of AMERICA is under the upright of that letter. E of ONE is low. Small, plain center dot.

rim. Reverse dentilation is usually strongest at lower left, obverse strongest either at upper right or at bottom. Most later examples do not show the D-doubling and have clash marks within the wreath.

**Discussion:** R3-, only slightly scarce in any grade. MS(40+), AU(many). Certainly over three dozen, possibly four or five dozen MS examples survive. Variety 4 only occasionally commands a slight premium.



3



★13 → Knob of 6

5



E

PLD NL

**Obverse 3:** Stars 7,8,13 point between dentils. Date is wide and evenly spaced. First 1 has a dentil centered under it. Star 13 points to the knob of 6, and the sixth star points to the tip of coronet. Lower curl is heavy, extending to the center of the second 1. Coronet above LIBERTY has an extra line. All letters of LIBERTY are boldly and perfectly formed. Obverse center dot missing.

**Reverse E:** Key leaves point NL,PC, C,PC. Leaftip under upright of D is diagnostic. Two larger dentils at K6. Plain center dot.

**Striking variations:** Usually found sharp with bold dentilation. Obverse is usually well-centered with only the tips of the dentilation showing all around; reverse is strongest at lower left and slightly weaker around OF. Later strikes have dentilation fading, but still at least half present.

**Discussion:** R3-. Easier to find nice than well worn. MS(16+), AU(many). This variety rarely commands a premium.

4

**Double Line Over LIBERTY**

**Obverse 4:** Stars 10,13 point between dentils. Date is wide and evenly spaced. Very similar to variety 5, but the dentil under the first 1 is well right of center. Sixth star points slightly right of the tip of coronet. Lowest curl is heavy, extending to left edge of upright of the second 1. Coronet above LIBERTY has an extra line. All letters of LIBERTY are bold and perfect, though later examples show the base of T weakening. Tiny center dot before ear.

**Striking variations:** Found early with bold dentilation obverse and reverse, strongest at lower right obverse and evenly impressed on reverse. Later, all dentilation is weaker, the chip on 6-loop is no longer visible, both obverse and reverse rims are dishing, T of LIBERTY is weakened at its base, and lumps from die rust are quite evident on the obverse and to a lesser degree

6

**PLD C-**

**Reverse F:** Key leaves point C-,PC, NR,NR. Leaf under D is past upright of D but is (if anything) a trifle left of center, and this position is diagnostic. Triplet dentil at K6.5 shows on early specimens. Feet of NITE are unusually close. The E of STATES is high and the E of CENT tilts left. Center dot is small but plain.

on the reverse. In this die state, variety 6 is usually evenly-struck on obverse and has dentils heaviest at K7-K10 on reverse. This variety in its late state usually presents the boldest browlock found on any 1816 cent.

**Discussion:** R2, rather common in all grades. MS(20+), AU(many). Variety 6 commands no premium.



5



Tip of 1 at Tip of Bust

7



G

PLD NR, PLS SPR

**Obverse 5:** Stars 1,10,11 point between dentils, star 2 nearly does. Date is widely and rather evenly spaced, with 18 apart a trifle more than others. Sixth star points exactly at tip of coronet. Tip of 1 is under the tip of bust. The lump atop the inner loop of 6 shows indistinctly on early specimens and not at all on later-struck ones. Lowest curl extends to the center of the second 1. Coronet above LIBERTY shows a faint extra line. All letters of LIBERTY are perfect and bold, though later-struck pieces show weakening at bottoms of TY. Y is noticeably low. Tiny center dot before ear.

**Striking variations:** Found early with bold dentilation, evenly struck on obverse and reverse, usually with evidence of die clashing within wreath. Slightly more often found late with dentilation weaker, both dies heavily lapped, lowest curl and final 6 very

**Reverse G:** Key leaves point NR, SPR,SPC,C. ST are quite close. Feet of TA are farther apart than those of AT, and feet of AMERI all nearly touch. E of ONE is slightly low. Small, plain center dot.

weak, curl behind head thin with a "split" at the back edge of the lock above it, legend weakened, center dot tiny, reverse dentilation remaining only at lower left. This variety occasionally comes with reverse crossways, rotated left.

**Discussion:** R1, common in all grades. MS(20+), AU(many). Variety 7 draws no premium.



6



Long Dentils Below 8

**Obverse 6:** Stars 5,8 point between dentils, star 12 nearly does. Sixth star is over tip of coronet. Date is widely spaced with 16 notably closer than other digits. Three dentils below and left of 8 are elongated, as is one dentil left of first 1. A dentil is centered under the first 1. Date spacing and/or the elongated dentils are diagnostic. Letters of LIBERTY are malformed and poorly patched at bottom — the B patched with an E-punch, similar to varieties 1-3. A line joins the centers of ERT, and Y is doubled to the left. There is a die-cut across the curl before ear. Plain center dot before ear.

**Striking variations:** Always seen with bold obverse dentilation all around and reverse dentilation heavier on the left. Comes with perfect dies; later with small rimbreak in the dentils between ★11-12 and a light crack joining the tops of NITED ST; still later with the

8



“Comma” Left of Center

**Reverse H:** Key leaves point SPC,R, SPC,SPC. TAT are evenly and moderately spaced, E of STATES is a little high, and the feet of AME and RI nearly touch. A “comma” chip left of the plain, small center dot is diagnostic.

first obverse rimbreak deeper, another from between ★8-9 to over ★10, and the reverse crack heavier; finally with a third rimbreak between ★3-4. Comes rarely with reverse rotated crossways left.

**Discussion:** R1, common in all grades except strict MS. MS(4-5), AU(12), XF(36+). For so common a variety there are surprisingly few MS examples. This is a very distinctive variety and is popular as such, but it is too abundant to command a premium.



**Large Center Dot**



**Dbld Dentil Over E1**

**Obverse 7:** Stars 3,9,12 point between dentils, star 11 nearly does. Sixth star points at coronet tip. The date is very wide and evenly spaced. A vertical chip shows to the left of the lower loop of 8, and the point and base of the second 1 have extensions to the left, all from repositioning of these number punches. The tip of the first 1 extends slightly past the tip of bust. Lowest curl is bold and extends to the left upright of the second 1. LIB-ERTY is bold and perfect with B tilted left. T has its left pendant long and right pendant short. The large center dot before the ear is diagnostic, as are the several light vertical lines below the ear.

**Reverse C:** This die appears on varieties 9 and 3. Key leaves point PC,R,PR,SPC. The dentil over the right top of E in UNITED is doubled to the right. This feature is diagnostic, as is the position of the leaf under F. O in OF is slightly high and leans left. STATES OF is spaced to look like a single word. Center dot is tiny.

**Striking variations:** Obverse is evenly struck, usually slightly off center to the upper left. Reverse almost always has bold, deeply-struck dentilation at bottom and left, and is weakest around OF. As they wear, both dies flowline heavily around the periphery.

**Discussion:** R3-, slightly scarce in all grades. MS(4-5), AU(9), XF(18+). This one draws little or no premium below XF. In higher grades it may run up to 2X.





# 1817

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In 1817 Mississippi was admitted to the union as the twentieth state, the Seminole war began in Georgia, the Cumberland Road stretched westward from the Potomac to the Ohio River, and the Conestoga wagon that covered the 90 miles from Philadelphia to New York in a mere three days was dubbed “the flying machine”. The Harvard Law School and the University of Michigan were founded this year, and American farm prices tumbled as Europeans turned their attention from war to raising crops.

The first unquestioned United States Proof coins were produced this year, doubtless as crowning examples of the latest technology. Though cent blanks were still purchased pre-cut, the Director was quite proud of the new steam rolling mills installed this year. One variety of half dollar and two of large cents are known in Proof for this year, representing a mere handful of coins. Walter Breen’s discussion of Proofs in his monumental *ENCYCLOPEDIA OF U.S. & COLONIAL PROOF COINS* covers this topic more eloquently than I could, and I refer the interested reader to that work for amplification.

Cents and half dollars were the only denominations struck in 1817, and dies for both were produced from the same set of numeral punches. This punch set was only in use from 1812 to 1819. At least the 6, 7, and 8 punches differ from those before or after this period. The I of UNITED has a broken right foot on all but the first two 1817 cent reverses. This is hand-

patched with varying degrees of success on the other ten reverses of the year.

For large cents, the year 1817 is commonly called “the 1794 of the late dates” due to the large number of varieties and the magnitude of their naked-eye differences. Such a large number of cent varieties for a single year had not been seen since 1803, and would not be surpassed until 1835. Thirteen obverse and twelve reverse dies were paired to produce 3,948,400 cents in seventeen varieties dated 1817. Possibly some of those bearing the 1817 date may have been struck in 1818, as this practice was not uncommon then. This is the most common year for large cent brockages — most being obverses of variety 16, or reverses of varieties 4, 10, or 17.

One true anomaly for this year is the fifteen-star variety; there were twenty states in 1817. This mint-produced curiosity doubtless gave rise to a fraud seen as early as 1906. Over eighty years ago an “1817 Eleven Star” variety was published by a Chicago dealer. Though no such coin has ever withstood scrutiny, I have seen at least three examples of variety 8 with the first and last stars shaved off rather skillfully, making a superficially convincing “major variety”. One of these even had an ANACS certificate. The ANACS people hadn’t noticed the tampering or even bothered to count the stars. Naturally the owner was disappointed when his \$5 cent failed to draw the five-figure offer expected from a major copper-specialist dealer. There seems to be no upper limit to greed.

When bought as unattributed coins, a low-grade set of 1817 cents can usually be completed in from two to four years. A Mint State set, while attainable, is an extremely difficult goal. Obviously, attributed purchases would decrease both the time and the challenge. Only one 1817 cent variety might be classed as 'rare', and even that one is not excessively so. The date-collector will find 1817 an easy acquisition even in MS, as the year was represented in quantity in the Randall hoard.

The first-struck 1817 cent is reverse die-linked to the last-struck 1816 cent. The last-struck 1817 cent is a muling

of two worn-out dies, possibly struck in 1818. The arrangement between is best-guess speculation. Several logical die chains of this year are disproven by study of the die states of the varieties involved — apparently, 'temporary retirement' of dies was a common practice during this period. In these cases, I've tried to keep the 'retirement' period minimal, while acquiescing to the more reliable evidence of die state progressions. Die chains of this year are 2-1, 16-1, 6-7-8, 4-14-5, 12-15-14, and 17-5. The most likely sequence of emission appears to be 2,16-1,13,3,6-7-8,9,10,11,4,17,12-15-14-5.



Open Mouth



Doubled Dentil Just Left of K6

**Obverse 1:** This die appears on varieties 2-1. Stars 8,9 point between dentils. Date is extremely close with the 8 high and 1's pointed as on all obverses of this type except the fifteen-star (variety 16). Second 1 has a dentil centered under it. A doubled dentil appears between ★6-7. Fourth star is recut on its inner and outer points. Sixth star is right of coronet tip. Left edge of the lower curl ends between 17. LIBERTY has no line under ER, E is recut to right, and I is recut above. A small center dot appears before the ear.

**Reverse A:** This die appears on varieties 16-1. Key leaves point SPC,R, SPC,SPC. A doubled dentil is just left of bottom center. O in OF and T in CENT are low. Medium sized center dot.

between ★5-6. These cracks extend extremely faintly across the top of hair, haircords, lower lobe of hairbun, to ★11; and from the bust-tip along the truncation, through the neck-curl to the hair behind the shoulder.

**Discussion:** R3+, second scarcest variety of the year. AU(6-7), XF(12+), VF(16+). Almost all of the AU's have been sold as 'MS' within the past quarter-century. For so many purported 'MS' examples, it's amazing that not a single one has passed the test of scrutiny. The open-mouth 1817 is popular among variety collectors, but has little popularity outside these circles. As a very scarce variety, it commands around a 4-6X premium among interested specialists — and occasionally a bit more.

**Striking variations:** Obverse is evenly struck, usually a trifle off-center to the left. Reverse is struck as on variety 16 — deeply at left, slightly off center to the right. Though the rimbreak between AM is always there, it may not show because of the characteristic mis-centering. Obverse is now lapped, with relief lower, lowest curl almost disjointed, lips apart, dentilation gone. The crack from the tip of bust becomes stronger, and another develops from the tip of coronet to the rim



1



V. Close Date, Pointed 1's

**Obverse 1:** This die appears on varieties 2-1. Stars 8,9 point between dentils. Date is extremely close with the 8 high and 1's pointed as on all obverses of this type except the fifteen-star (variety 16). Second 1 has a dentil centered under it. A doubled dentil appears between ★6-7. Fourth star is recut on its inner and outer points. Sixth star is right of coronet tip. Left edge of the lower curl ends between 17. LIBERTY has no line under ER, E is recut to right, and I is recut above. A small center dot appears before the ear.

**Striking variations:** Both sides are usually well-centered and evenly struck. Die-rotation varies up to an eighth-turn either way. Reverse generally has longer dentils at lower left. Early pieces have crisp dentils, but this gradually fades and a light crack develops from the point of bust to the rim below ★1. The light cracks atop ST and OF remain light (see variety 2

2



Leaf Under C Nearly to A

**Reverse B:** This die appears on variety 2 of both 1816 and 1817. Key leaves point C,NR,NR,R-. TE of STATES almost touch top and bottom, with E slightly high. Feet of RI are more apart than those of AME, with I slightly low. N of ONE is conspicuously recut at its lower left. Large center dot.

through S1, progressing to the top of O in ONE, then a northeast/southwest bisecting crack appears, passing exactly through the center dot. This variety comes with reverse rotated beyond crossways right.

**Discussion:** R3-, rather scarce and popular. MS(6-10), AU(6+), XF(10+). Variety 2 is popular in its bisected state and occasionally commands over a 3X premium thus, though usually in the 1.5-2X range.



Pincer 8

3



Moth-eaten N

C

**Obverse 2:** Stars 6,8,9 point between dentils, star 7 nearly does, but dentilation at top obverse is more often missing than not. The date is close and evenly spaced, with the 8 open at bottom — from which the variety derives its name. Left edge of lowest curl is over the right edge of 1. Sixth star is slightly right of coronet tip. In LIBERTY, the right foot of Y extends into the hair. Upright of T is thin, as is the right leg of R, with a heavy line under ER. No center dot.

**Striking variations:** Earliest strikes have crisp dentilation all around both sides, broadest at left reverse. This early gives way to weakened or missing dentilation at top obverse, with clash marks below hair-bun and around TY, broken upright on T of LIBERTY, deterioration of the N in CENT. A crumbling develops atop the hair below ★8 (the “mouse top”). On this die the crumbling is small, broadest at its right edge. Finally, a faint crack joins the bases of 817.

**Discussion:** R2, fairly common in all grades — even choice. MS(36+), AU (many). The broken-8 punch appears also (upside down) on one of the half dollar dies of 1818.

**Reverse C:** Key leaves point NR,FPR, SPC,C. Final S of STATES is low. This die is very similar to varieties 10 and 7-8, but the leaf under ME ends almost exactly between the letters rather than well under the E. On all but the earliest strikes, the diagonal of the N in CENT has a moth-eaten appearance, being irregular and narrower at the bottom.

This is the first of four obverse dies which develop the same type of failure in the same location. These have long been known as the “mouse on head” varieties. It is curious that this should occur on four dies of one year and on no other dies of any other years. No “mouse on head” variety is really rare, and a collection of the four mice has been a goal of many cent collectors over the past hundred years or so. Despite its twofold charisma, the commonness of variety 3 usually prevents it from commanding a premium unless it shows a mouse. With the mouse, it is scarce — in fact, it is the scarcest of the four mice — and it finds a ready buyer at a premium of up to 3X or more.



3



Crack Thru Base of Date

**Obverse 3:** Stars 3,4,5,6,7,9,12 point between dentils, stars 1,8,11 nearly do. A “triple dentil” appears to the left of ★8, with three dentils squeezed into a 2.5-dentil space. The date is close, especially the 81. Variety 4 is instantly recognized by the conspicuous crack through the base of date. The lowest curl extends barely to the right upright of the second 1. The sixth star is just right of the coronet tip. Two “die chips” occasionally seen in the field above ★1 are the nearly-effaced points of a misplaced star-punch. Any purported “perfect die” example of variety 4 would have to show these marks. The lips are occasionally barely separated. There is a heavy line under the E of LIBERTY and R has a thin right leg. No center dot.

**Striking variations:** I have never seen an example without the date crack. All purported to be such have turned out to be something else — usually variety 5. This crack extends from the rim left of ★1 to the field past ★12, passing through the bases of all date-figures and the outer points of ★12-13. Early strikes show this crack as a thin line, later strikes show it

4



A in STATES High

**Reverse D:** This die appears on varieties 4-14-5. Key leaves point PC,PR,PC,NC. Newcomb’s reverses ‘D’ and ‘L’ are the same die. The feet of A in STATES are slightly high, and the feet of AME nearly touch. The left foot of N in ONE is barely doubled. Large center dot.

heavy, and the latest strikes have it quite broad from ★1 to 17. Additional cracks develop between ★1-2-3. The reverse shows a light crack spanning the tops of TATE, often extending to the final S. Obverse usually shows a bolder rim at left, and left stars are lined to their centers. As a rule, the reverse is evenly struck. I have seen over a half dozen reverse brockages of this die.

**Discussion:** R3-, a bit scarce in all grades. MS(5-6), AU(3-4), XF(12+), VF(many). This is a popular variety due to its conspicuous break. VF’s are fairly obtainable, but an MS example presents a challenge. Variety 4 generally commands a slight premium, often into the 1.5-2X range.





High T

**Obverse 4:** This die appears on varieties 17-5. Stars 3,11 point between dentils, stars 1,5,6,10 nearly do. The date is moderately close, with the tip of first 1 even with the tip of bust and lowest curl extending to between 17. Sixth star is well right of coronet tip. The foot of T is higher than the foot of R, and Y is recut left of its left arm. There is a line under ER, and a tiny center dot before the ear.

**Striking variations:** The obverse is usually seen with blunt browlock, weak figures and stars, no dentilation, and star points/date digits drawn to the rim. The reverse is similar, with peripheral details fading. This mating probably resulted from the resurrection of two worn-out dies.



A in STATES High

**Reverse D:** This die appears on varieties 4-14-5. Key leaves point PC,PR,PC,NC. Newcomb's reverses 'D' and 'L' are the same die. The feet of A in STATES are slightly high, and the feet of AME nearly touch. The left foot of N in ONE is barely doubled. Large center dot.

**Discussion:** R3-, a bit scarce but not rare. MS(11-13), AU(8-10), XF(several). For some reason, variety 5 is not in as great favor as variety 15, though of comparable scarcity. This may be due to number 15 being rated higher than it deserved in years past. Even so, number 5 will usually pull a slight premium.

5

**Close Date With 18 Apart**

**Obverse 5:** This die appears on varieties 6-7. Stars 5,6,7 point between dentils, star 12 nearly does. First star is farther from 1 than on variety 8, which this die somewhat resembles. Third star points just above the mouth. There is a doubled dentil at K7, just right of ★1. The date is close with 18 apart. Lowest curl extends to the center of 1 and ★6 is very slightly left of coronet point. LIBERTY has letters BER recut inside their tops, and Y low. There is no line under ER and no center dot.

**Striking variations:** Obverse is almost always well centered and evenly struck. Reverse is evenly struck, with dentilation slightly wider at left than at right. Dentilation fades on both sides, and tops of AMERICA and most stars draw strongly to the rim. Most are from the later, mushed-out state — variety 6 is rarely seen with crisp, bold dentilation. No cracks seen.

6

**PLF Well PR**

**Reverse E:** Key leaves point NR,FPR, PR,SPC. Highest leaftip is midway between S and O. AME feet touch. Final S of STATES is higher than the tops of TE. Left foot of N in ONE is recut. Leaf under C of AMERICA is distant from that letter. Medium sized center dot.

**Discussion:** R1, common in all grades. MS(60+), AU(hundreds). The Henderson-Sheraton: 1588A-Naftzger and the Beckwith:51-Loring coin are the only confirmed Proofs from these dies. Several references over the past century could all refer to these pieces or could represent up to four different coins. Most likely, the count of true Proofs for these dies will remain at two. This is the first confirmed Proof large cent and the only such of this year. Regulation strikes of variety 6 are rather common and command no premium.





Large Mouse

7



Doubled Dentil Over N

F

**Obverse 5:** This die appears on varieties 6-7. Stars 5,6,7 point between dentils, star 12 nearly does. First star is farther from 1 than on variety 8, which this die somewhat resembles. Third star points just above the mouth. There is a doubled dentil at K7, just right of ★1. The date is close with 18 apart. Lowest curl extends to the center of 1 and ★6 is very slightly left of coronet point. LIBERTY has letters BER recut inside their tops, and Y low. There is no line under ER and no center dot.

**Striking variations:** Almost always seen with a large, semicircular crumbling ("mouse") atop the head below ★8. I have seen only a few with no trace of the mouse. No-mouse examples of variety 7 are best attributed by positively identifying the reverse (quite early and crisp, with doubled dentil over 'N'), and noting a late, weak-dentilation obverse with the first 1 notably nearer to 8 than to ★1. Obverse dentilation fades out completely and the centers of RT fade away. Light cracks develop down from the tip of nose to

**Reverse F:** This die appears on varieties 7-8. Key leaves point NR,FPR, R,C. A doubled dentil appears over the left upright of N in UNITED. Top of D is above the tops of TE. E of CENT tilts slightly left. Medium sized center dot.

★2, from brow to ★3, and up from the hairbun to the rim between ★9-10. Clash marks from the hair appear across the right side of ONE CENT. Reverse dentilation remains bold. Finally, a light crack develops from the tip of bust to ★1, and a small rimbreak over ★12-13 grows more prominent on terminal strikes.

**Discussion:** R3, scarcest of the mouse tops as a variety, but the easiest one to find with the mouse. MS(4), AU(7), XF(8+), VF(many). Most of the AU's have been offered as MS at one time or another. Variety 7 will usually find a mouse-collector willing to pay up to a 2X premium, and a no-mouse example in any grade will readily fetch well into three figures.



6



**Stray Hair Over Back of Ear**

**Obverse 6:** Stars 2,6 point between dentils, stars 5,9,12 nearly do. The date is moderately spaced, with 81 slightly closer. First star is nearer to 1 than on varieties 6-7 which this die somewhat resembles. Third star points to lower lip. The first 1 is about midway between the star and 8. The lowest curl extends to the center of 1, and the sixth star is just a touch left of the coronet tip. The lips are barely apart on early strikes, noticeably apart on later strikes. A wavy graver-mark, like a stray hair, extends from the back of the ear, up to the coronet just right of the T. LIBERTY has the E minimally recut inside its top serif and the tail of R thin. There is no line under ER. Tiny center dot.

**Striking variations:** This is the third "mouse on head" variety. It is the second commonest of the mice, but is found more often without the mouse than with. Early examples are often prooflike and boldly struck, with reverse dentilation deepest and broadest at lower left. This is the last use of this reverse die. The reverse clash marks mentioned for variety 7 are quite apparent on early 8's. A circular

8



**Doubled Dentil Over N**

**Reverse F:** This die appears on varieties 7-8. Keyleaves point NR,FPR, R,C. A doubled dentil appears over the left upright of N in UNITED. Top of D is above the tops of TE. E of CENT tilts slightly left. Medium sized center dot.

rough patch develops in the left obverse field before the brow as the dies wear. Later strikes are from weakened and slightly lapped dies — lips apart as on variety 1, and a lump atop the head under ★8, appearing as a small finger pointing at the inner points of ★7. Reverse dentilation is always boldest at the bottom. The doubled reverse dentil is quite obvious even on late strikes.

**Discussion:** R1, common in all grades — but less so with the mouse. MS(25+), AU(many). The Bement:335-Hines-Starr:87-CDSmith-Halpern:316 coin has been catalogued in years past as "Proof/Unc", but it is not a Proof coin. Sometimes a collector will be willing to pay a little extra for the "stray hair" mouse, but without the mouse variety 8 commands no premium.

**Divided Date**

**Obverse 7:** Stars 8,10,11 point between dentils, stars 1,3 nearly do. The date is divided 18 17. An unusually broad dentil between 17 shows on earliest strikes. The lowest curl extends past the left upright of 1, nearly to its tip. Sixth star is over the tip of the coronet. Top of E is recut inside and R is recut to the right. A light line under E may or may not show.

**Striking variations:** This is the last mouse-top, the second-scarcest of the four mice, and the only one on which the “mouse” actually looks like its namesake. Variety 9 is occasionally found early, with crisp dentilation both sides, longest at bottom right obverse and uniform on reverse. A light crack always spans the tops of ES OF AMERICA to the rim beyond A. It is more often seen later, with the dentils much weakened on both sides, star points drawn to the rim, reverse struck deepest at lower left, and profuse radial flow lines on both sides. The reverse crack is heavier, but is obscured to some extent by the mashing of details. Finally, the mouse develops under ★8, with its head to the left and humped body to the right.

**Dropped E, T**

**Reverse G:** Key leaves point PC,PR, SPC,C. The I of UNITED, E of STATES, and the final letter of ONE and CENT are all dropped slightly below their neighbors. C of CENT leans left. The center dot is small and disappears completely on the latest strikes.

**Discussion:** R2, rather common in all grades. MS(30+), AU(many). The last “mouse on head” variety is popular on two counts: its odd date-spacing and its mouse. A mouse-collector will often pay a premium for variety 9 if it shows the mouse. But without the mouse it is too common a variety to win a prize.



8

**Wide Date, Close Stars**

**Obverse 8:** Stars 2,4,5,13 point between dentils, stars 1,7,10,12 nearly do. The date is wide, with 18 more apart than the other figures. The first 1 is totally under the bust though barely so, and is closer to ★1 than to the 8. Both the first and the last star are quite close to the date. The lowest curl extends past the upright of the second 1, and ★6 is just a hair right of the coronet tip. A long, light die-scratch angles down, touching the tip of ★11. There is no discernible center dot.

**Striking variations:** Usually found early, with the dentils crisp and all stars lined to their centers, or a bit later with dentils weakening. If the left obverse dentilation is broad enough (which rarely happens), a small rim-break may show below ★2 on rather early strikes — before the dentilation disappears in this area. A series of small chips develop between the tops of S O, eventually extending inward as three small faint V's. This obverse is occasionally found with an indistinct rimbreak at ★3, both dies lightly buckled making a 'halo' effect to the head, and the outer tips of all stars drawn to

10

**Sinking NIT**

**Reverse H:** Key leaves point R, FPR, PC, C-. The highest leaftip is about midway S and O. In UNITED, the bases of NIT are progressively lower, with that I perfectly dotted by a dentil. The feet of ATE nearly touch. Medium sized center dot.

the rim. The reverse is invariably deeply struck at left, usually with the roots of the dentils joined to a raised rim. This variety is sometimes found with reverse rotated crossways left, and occasionally with the dies head-to-head. A handful of brockages are known from this reverse die.

**Discussion:** R1, common in all grades. MS(10-16), AU(15+), XF (many). For so common a variety, this low an MS-count is unusual. Number 10 commands no premium.





**Wide Date, Stars Away**

11



**Highest Leaf Tip Under S**

**Obverse 9:** Stars 9,10 point between dentils, star 11 nearly does. The date is wide, with 18 more apart than the other figures. The tip of the first 1 extends just beyond the tip of bust, and the lowest curl extends past the right upright of the second 1. The stars are moderately positioned away from the date, with the first 1 about midway between ★1 and 8. The sixth star is slightly right of the coronet tip. There is a line under E, and no center dot.

**Striking variations:** Early strikes have all dentils crisp. These gradually fade, as does the recutting on N of CENT. The obverse is usually evenly struck and well centered. The reverse is even, with dentils a trifle longer at lower left. Later strikes are heavily flowlined on both obverse and reverse, with lines joining all stars and legends to the rim.

**Reverse I:** Key leaves point C,SPC, PC,C. The position of the highest leaf is diagnostic. Feet of ATE are apart. In CENT, T is low and N has both feet delicately recut. Medium center dot.

**Discussion:** R1, common in all grades. MS(13-20), AU(20+), XF (many). This one draws no variety premium.

17-12

10



**Fused 17**

12



**Weak CE**

**Obverse 10:** No stars point between dentils, although stars 2,7 nearly do. A triplet dentil appears just left of ★8. The date is wide, and the first 1 is almost entirely left of the bust, with a dentil centered beneath it. The lowest curl ends between 17, which are closer than the other figures. The sixth star is well right of the coronet point and ★10 points to the cleft in the hairbun. There is no line under ER. Small center dot.

**Reverse J:** This die appears on varieties 12-15. Key leaves point PC, SPR, C, C-. A narrow dentil appears just left of bottom center. I of AMERICA is perfectly dotted by a dentil. Large center dot.

**Striking variations:** All seen are cracked from ★1 thru the top of the date, inner points of ★10-13, and outer points of ★1-3. Most have the date crack bold, with a broad crack joining the tops of 17. Another crack joins the inner points of ★3-5. Dentilation is bold on both sides. This is the first use of this reverse die. In this marriage the right side of C and all of E of CENT is weakened. Later pieces have additional obverse cracks, and a triangular piece of the die falls out between the two cracks through ★1. The break thru ★1-3 grows heavy and finally the rim from ★1-3 drops out, making a three-star rimbreak. Reverse dentilation is usually slightly bolder at left than at right.

**Discussion:** R3-, a bit scarce, not rare. MS(4-7), AU(10-12), XF(several). Although several XF's are known, this is a difficult variety to locate better than Fine. Most examples seen are Good or VG. The little flurry of choice pieces at recent auctions is abnormal, representing the breaking up of several old collections. The consistently high prices realized show how many advanced collectors have been frustrated for too long looking for a nice one. The "Fused 17" is somewhat popular for its impressive break and usually commands a slight premium. In higher grades, "slight" is an understatement.





1 off Tip of Bust

13



K

The Lazy C

**Obverse 11:** Stars 1,2,3,9 point between dentils, stars 4,10,11,13 nearly do. There is a doubled dentil left of the first 1. Inner points of stars 1,11 are conspicuously recut. The date is close, with 18 slightly more apart than other figures and a dentil centered under the second 1. The head is tipped left relative to its frame — so that the 1 is just off the tip of bust, lowest curl extends only to left of center of the 7, point of coronet is about midway between ★5-6, and tenth star points directly to the cleft of hairbun. The upright of 7 is recut, as is the lower right serif of E in LIBERTY. There is no line under ER and no center dot.

**Striking variations:** Usually seen sharply and evenly struck on both sides, with delicate hair detail and leaf detail, and all stars sharp to the centers. Reverse is usually slightly off center to the right, often with an almost wire-rim appearance on the left. Early strikes show light clash marks around ONE CENT, several die filemarks from the bottom dentils, and a graver scratch connecting the bases

**Reverse K:** Key leaves point R,FPR, R+,C. A dentil dots the I of UNITED. The right foot of I is vestigial. Highest leaf tip is midway between S and O. C of CENT leans far over to the right, from which the name 'lazy C' derives. Medium sized center dot.

of IC. Later pieces do not show these marks but have dentilation fading or gone, and some show a few tiny rust pits in the reverse die (lumps on the coin) inside the wreath.

**Discussion:** R1, common in all grades, especially in or near Mint State. MS(Well over a hundred). Many, possibly a few hundreds of Mint State examples survive. From its plentitude in MS, this variety may have formed a small part of the Randall hoard. The fine detail seen on variety 13, coupled with its ready availability in choice condition, make it an excellent coin for type collectors. This one draws no variety premium.



17-14

12



1 Fully Left of Bust

**Obverse 12:** This die appears on varieties 15-14. Stars 2,4 point between dentils, stars 3,5,6,13 nearly do. The head is rotated far left so that the 1 is entirely left of bust tip, lowest curl ends right of center of the 7, coronet tip points midway between ★5-6, and ★10 points to the lower lobe of the hairbun. The date figures are progressively closer from left to right. R has an unusually broad right leg, and its upper left upright is recut. There is a heavy line under E, and no center dot.

**Striking variations:** The obverse clash marks (see variety 15) fade as the die wears. The obverse usually lacks dentilation and has the star points and date figures drawn to the rim. The brow and other high points are usually fairly blunt. This variety generally comes boldly struck with weak areas in letters, legends, and/or obverse periphery. I have seen MS examples offered as XF — and VF examples offered as MS. The crack between ★1-3 grows heavier than on variety 15, and several minor rim crumbings occasionally show above ★8-11. The reverse has weakened

14



A in STATES High

**Reverse D:** This die appears on varieties 4-14-5. Key leaves point PC,PR,PC,NC. Newcomb's reverses 'D' and 'L' are the same die. The feet of A in STATES are slightly high, and the feet of AME nearly touch. The left foot of N in ONE is barely doubled. Large center dot.

dentilation, usually heaviest at left, and a light crack at the tops of TATES as on variety 4.

**Discussion:** R1-, very common in all grades, more so in and near MS than lower. MS(many hundreds). A few 70's survive, and possibly a thousand or more other MS examples. This is the most common 1817 in Mint State, the vast majority of those known originating from the Randall hoard. MS examples of variety 14 are usually light brown to yellowish. This is a good one for the date collector — easy to find choice, and demanding no premium over the usual outlandish prices asked for MS cents. Unfortunately, its characteristic weak strike is a detriment.



1 Fully Left of Bust

15



Leaf Just Past S

**Obverse 12:** This die appears on varieties 15-14. Stars 2,4 point between dentils, stars 3,5,6,13 nearly do. The head is rotated far left so that the 1 is entirely left of bust tip, lowest curl ends right of center of the 7, coronet tip points midway between ★5-6, and ★10 points to the lower lobe of the hairbun. The date figures are progressively closer from left to right. R has an unusually broad right leg, and its upper left upright is recut. There is a heavy line under E, and no center dot.

**Reverse J:** This die appears on varieties 12-15. Key leaves point PC, SPR, C, C-. A narrow dentil appears just left of bottom center. I of AMERICA is perfectly dotted by a dentil. Large center dot.

**Striking variations:** Occasionally comes perfect, but is usually seen with a light crack joining the outer points of ★1-3. Latest strikes show clash marks from the wreath before and behind the head. Obverse dentilation is plain, usually strongest at the bottom. Reverse dentilation has faded, with the center dot now shrunk to medium-sized, CE is well struck up (unlike variety 12). Variety 15 is occasionally found with reverse rotated crossways or beyond to the left.

**Discussion:** R3+, scarce in all grades. MS(3-5), AU(9-10), XF(12+), VF(many). With the scarcity of variety 15 and the popularity of this year among variety buffs, it usually elicits a 2-3X premium.



17-16

15★

13



Fifteen Stars, Blunt 1's

**Obverse 13:** Fifteen stars, blunt 1's in date, triangle break behind ear. Any one of these features is diagnostic. Tip of coronet is closer to seventh star than to sixth. The last two stars are the only ones to point between dentils. The date is very close, with the left edge of the lowest curl between 17. There is no line under ER of LIBERTY.

**Striking variations:** The triangle-break behind the ear is constant on all seen. Reverse comes without and with a small rimbreak above and to the right of the first A in AMERICA. Finally, a small rimbreak develops between ★6-7. Reverse is almost always slightly off-center to the right, and is always seen deeply struck at left and less so at right. Blunt strikes are usual for this variety, and the reverse occasionally comes rotated crossways right or crossways left. This year is one of the more common ones for misstruck cents, and this variety is a favorite of such. I have seen at least seven examples of obverse brockages (obverse/incuse obverse) of the fifteen-star 1817 — a most fascinating "1817 thirty-star variety". Obviously,

16



Dbl'd Dentil Just Left of K6

**Reverse A:** This die appears on varieties 16 and 1. Key leaves point SPC,R,SPC,SPC. A doubled dentil is just left of bottom center. O in OF and T in CENT are low. Medium sized center dot.

somebody was playing around at the mint or couldn't get their act together.

**Discussion:** R1+, common in all grades. MS(20-40), AU(several). Most of the AU examples seen have been described (and priced) as MS, but aren't. The fifteen-star is a perennial favorite among specialists and non-specialists alike, being one of the few varieties that screams its identity from arm's length. It is fortunate that this one-variety type coin is so common; otherwise more of us would have to do without one of the most interesting varieties of the series.

Why fifteen stars? Nobody knows. It could not have been for any official reason — there were twenty states in 1817. This is the only fifteen-starred U.S. coin after the 1790's, and the only blunt-1 cent die between 1801 and 1830.





High T

17



M

Bisected A1 to U (usually)

**Obverse 4:** This die appears on varieties 17 and 5. Stars 3,11 point between den-tils, stars 1,5,6,10 nearly do. The date is moderately close, with the tip of first 1 even with the tip of bust and lowest curl extending to between 17. Sixth star is well right of coronet tip. The foot of T is higher than the foot of R, and Y is recut left of its left arm. There is a line under ER, and a tiny center dot before the ear.

**Reverse M:** Key leaves point PC+,R, C+,C-. I of UNITED has a vestigial right foot and is perfectly dotted by a dentil. Leaftip under T of STATES ends just BEFORE the right end of that foot.

**Striking variations:** Obverse die shows crisp dentilation in this marriage. Earliest strikes have the reverse bold at left, weak at right. The reverse is cracked through the tops of UNITED, bases of D ST, below the tops of TAT, later extending through ES. Additional cracks develop from tops of MER thru centers of ICA, stem and beyond, a bisecting crack from between OF A to U, a radial crack through the first T of STATES and wreath, with the right arm of that T broken and raised. The TATE crack grows very heavy, to the rim at both ends, and finally this chunk drops out, making a rimbreak joining the tops of TATE to the rim. The final failure accounts for the early discard of this reverse and the scarcity of the variety. I have seen a few reverse brockages in the intermediate die states.

**Discussion:** R4, quite scarce in all grades. MS(1), AU(1), XF(5), VF(20+). The best two are in ANS. This is the first "not-in-Andrews" variety. It was first published by C.E. McGirk in 1913 as his "3J". McGirk's writings (Numismatist, 1913-14) were confusing enough that they were largely ignored. Clapp did not mention this variety in his notes for the 1924 reprint of Andrews, so Newcomb (1940) has traditionally been credited with first publication. Number 17 is usually seen in lower grades and is very popular because of the bisecting crack. This is the rarest 1817 variety and it always commands a premium — usually around 8-10X or so, though choice pieces may go higher.



# 1818

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During 1818 the Seminole war ended, Spain ceded Florida to the U.S., Illinois was admitted as the twenty-first state, the U.S./Canadian border was agreed at the 49th parallel west of the Great Lakes to the Rocky Mountains, and Congress adopted a flag of thirteen stripes and one star for each state. The first steamboat on Lake Erie steamed from Buffalo to Detroit, H.S. Brooks opened a menswear shop in New York City, and a major bank failure in Baltimore deepened the recession into a depression. And abroad, Ludwig Beethoven went deaf, Mary Shelley wrote "Frankenstein", and Joseph Mohr put the poem "Silent Night" to music.

This year presents the first real challenge since 1807 for the collector of cent varieties. Ten varieties were struck bearing this date, with nine obverse dies and eight reverse dies being used to strike 3,167,000 cents. One variety is quite scarce, another is a bit scarce, and the other eight should pose no challenge. For the date collector, a Randall hoard variety

is available in Mint State by the thousands (if not the tens of thousands). The type collector would undoubtedly prefer the 1820 from this hoard for his collection though — it's better struck.

Variations in date width and proximity of stars to the date are at least as great as for 1817. A major die-retouching, the first boldly apparent obverse inner circle of the series, four rather spectacular failed-die varieties, and a new head-puncheon introduced late in the year — all of these add collector interest to the cents of 1818.

One Proof specimen of this year was "known" to Newcomb, supposedly from the Hines collection, but the piece is untraced and its Proof status is doubtful. No 1818 cent Proofs are confirmed.

The only die chains in 1818 are 2-1, 4-5, and 8-10. Putting the new heads last ("cleft lock", as on 1819 and later) and similar dies adjacent gives a most-likely sequence of 2-1,3,4-5,8-10,9,7,6.







Closest Date, Stars Away

1



A

PLC NR

**Obverse 1:** This die appears on varieties 2 and 1. Stars 3,6 point between dentils, stars 4,7 nearly do. Date is close, with 81 especially so, and stars well away from it. First star points at the serif of 1, and ★6 points to coronet tip. Lowest curl begins over the center of the second 1. R is recut outside its top right, and Y on its left arm. Right foot of Y is long and extends into the hair.

**Reverse A:** Key leaves point SPC, NR,R,NR. Feet of NIT are progressively lower. RI feet are well apart. N of ONE has lumps around it and a horizontal spine from its diagonal. C of CENT has a weak tail. Center dot is tiny.

**Striking variations:** Obverse has a light crack thru outer points of ★4-5, later extending to ★6. Another faint crack grows from the base of the first 1 through the outer points of the first two stars. Finally the dentilation begins to crumble at left obverse, eventually extending from just above ★3 to halfway between ★4-5. Obverse is typically evenly struck in this marriage, with the reverse rim always seen much bolder at left than at right. Usually the left reverse rim is embattled — that is, the roots of the dentils are joined to a raised solid rim as seen on cents of the 1840's. This variety occasionally comes with the reverse crossways left.

**Discussion:** R1, common in all grades. MS(15+), AU(12+), XF(several). Several of this variety are superb, though none stands alone as “best”. Number 1 rarely commands a variety premium.



1

**Closest Date, Stars Away**

**Obverse 1:** This die appears on varieties 2 and 1. Stars 3,6 point between dentils, stars 4,7 nearly do. Date is close, with 81 especially so, and stars well away from it. First star points at the serif of 1, and ★6 points to coronet tip. Lowest curl begins over the center of the second 1. R is recut outside its top right, and Y on its left arm. Right foot of Y is long and extends into the hair.

**Striking variations:** Number 2 is usually struck with dentils slightly longer at the lower left, both obverse and reverse. Obverse comes perfect, then with a light crack through the outer points of ★4-5. Reverse is struck evenly, with a light crack through the top of UNITED, almost to S. This crack early becomes heavy and additional cracks join it to the rim at left of N, center of T, left of S. This section gradually sinks until it becomes a full rimbreak, first over NIT, then from N almost to S. It is questionable whether the pieces ever actually fell out of the die, since the gradual sinking would seem to imply a pushing back rather than a departure.

2

**Break Tops UNITED**

**Reverse B:** Key leaves point PC+,PR, SPC,C-. I in UNITED has a broken right foot. A of STATES is tilted right, so that its left foot is high and right foot is low. Both N's of ONE CENT are recut below, and CE is recut to the right. The final letters of ONE CENT are dropped below their neighbors. Medium center dot — plainest of the year.

**Discussion:** R3+, rather scarce, but not as much as current prices imply. MS(1), AU(2), XF(8-12), VF(16+). Variety 2 was long considered the rarest collectible 1818 cent and has always been popular because of the spectacular break usually seen over UNITED. Its scarcity is amplified by advanced collectors keeping several in different die states. This variety usually commands a premium in the 5X-8X range, though some are regularly offered to the impatient at well beyond these figures.





★1 Close, Points Below 1 Tip

3



C

Leaftip Under R.Edge E(RICA)

**Obverse 2:** No star points between dentils, though stars 2,5,7 nearly do. Stars 1,13 are very close to the date, with the first star pointing well below the serif of 1. Sixth star is left of coronet tip, and ★10 points well up on the upper lobe of the hairbun. The date is moderately spaced with first 1 well under the bust, nearer to the star than to 8, and 81 closer. Lower curl begins about over the left upright of the second 1. The foot of I is higher than both L and B, and the upright of Y is strengthened, with both feet very short.

**Striking variations:** This variety comes early with bold relief, a vertical spike from the juncture of coronet and hair above, and two or three rust-pits in the left obverse field. Successive lappings remove first the rust-pits, then the spike, leaving the details in lower relief and reverse center dot missing. No cracks seen. The obverse dentilation is usually broader at the left, shorter at right. Variety 3 comes fairly often with the reverse crossways right and occasionally with the dies top-to-top. I have seen several forms of error on

**Reverse C:** Key leaves point NR, PR,NR,PC. Both I's are perfectly dotted by a dentil. ST are very close. O in OF tilts left and F has its upper left serif weak. AMERICA has a leaftip ending directly under the right edge of E, a leaf nearly touching C, and the final A recut conspicuously above both feet. N of ONE is recut below its right foot and N of CENT above its left top. The center dot is tiny.

this variety — flat strikes, obverse brockages, and double strikes.

**Discussion:** R3-, slightly scarce in all grades but not rare. MS(7-10), AU(16+), XF(several). Most advanced collectors experience a momentary thrill on sighting this variety due to its similarity to the rare 18-4. The "spiked coronet" is quite interesting in its own right, but usually rests in the shadow of its rarer lookalike. It occasionally commands a 1.5-2X variety premium.

3



★1 Close, Points to 1 Tip

4



PLF SPR

**Obverse 3:** Star 4 points between dentils, ★8 nearly does. The date is close with ★1,13 very close to it. The first star points at the serif of the first 1. Sixth star points at the coronet tip, ★9 is recut on its outer point and the next point to the right, and ★10 points just a hair above the cleft of the hairbun. Both 1's have a dentil centered below them. The first 1 is well under the bust, midway ★ and 8. The lowest curl begins midway between the uprights of second 1. The foot of I is above L and B, and the lowest serif of E and top of T are obviously recut.

**Reverse E:** This die appears on varieties 4-5. Key leaves point PC,FPR, SPR,C-. The highest leaftip ends nearly midway between S and O. Feet of NITED are each progressively lower, with that I dotted by a dentil. In STATES, the first S is high and tilted left, and the right foot of A is well above the following T. O in OF is low and leans left. No center dot. Andrews called this 'Reverse D', different from the 'Reverse E' on number 5, but they are the same die

**Striking variations:** Comes perfect, but is usually seen with some degree of swelling at center obverse. The center obverse sinks, bloating the lower face more and more, a radial crack develops through ★3, an elongated vertical chip raises between ★6-7, and a line develops into the field from the front line of the coronet, with another

from the curl behind the head. As the obverse swelling develops, the O of ONE fades and finally disappears. This latter feature results from the obverse swelling and is not a feature of the reverse die itself. This is the first use of this reverse die. Variety 4 is more often than not found evenly struck on dark, rough flans.



**Discussion:** R4+, quite scarce in all grades and extremely popular. XF(1), VF(6), F(10), VG(20), G(40+). A few of the best VF's are quite near XF and three of the VG's are near Fine. Once referred to as "the 14-K of the late dates", variety 4 is considerably less rare today. At one time I owned seven of them, and I have seen about 80 examples of this "incredible rarity".

The first example of this variety to be recognized as something different was published by Frank Andrews in his "256 Varieties of United States Large Cents 1816-1857" in 1881. The Andrews coin, VG8, wound up in the Howard R. Newcomb collection, sold intact in 1945. Around this time John P. Young discovered a second specimen (G6), which he gave to George Clapp. Clapp knew of but one other besides his and Newcomb's and so noted it. The cataloguer of the Homer K. Downing cents for the 1952 ANA auction relied heavily on Clapp's notes for cents after 1815, so the variety was there listed (though the sale lacked an example) as "3 known, the best VG". The Thomas P. Warfield sale provided the second auction offering in 1955, followed by two more examples in the

NN50 sale in 1957. In that catalog Walter Breen pedigreed the eight examples then known to him.

There was another in an NN mail-bid sale in 1959, two more in the EAC80 sale, another in EAC81, and at least 18 auction appearances 1983-1991. With Newcomb's book reprinted five times since 1960, and with my attribution series in PENNY-WISE in 1975-1979, more collectors have been looking harder and have been better armed for recognition of this rare variety than ever before. New specimens have been coming to light at the rate of one or two a year.

As of 1991 I have now seen about eighty of them, so the former 'Non-Collectible' now rates only R4+. But, hand in hand with the increasing supply has gone the increased collector-base to devour that supply. So the variety remains nearly as elusive as before — eighty coins among a thousand collectors goes no farther than one coin among two dozen collectors. Variety 4 always commands a healthy premium — at least 30X, occasionally up to 100X for a nice one.

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4



Date Spaced 1 81 8

**Observe 4:** Stars 8,9 point between dentils. The date is moderately spaced with 81 very close. Stars 1,13 are rather near the date, but not so near as on the two previous obverses. The first 1 is just right of the tip of bust, and about midway between ★ and 8. The sixth star is very slightly right of the coronet tip. Lowest curl begins over the right upright of the second 1. There is a light graver-scratch just under the tops of LIBER. Top of T is recut, and Y has a long right foot.

**Striking variations:** Variety 5 occasionally comes perfect, but is usually seen with a crack through the inner points of the first three stars to the rim near the first 1 of date. Later, another fainter crack runs through the inner points of ★10-12. Dentilation fades on both sides as the dies wear.

5



PLF SPR

**Reverse E:** This die appears on varieties 4-5. Key leaves point PC,FPR, SPR,C-. The highest leaftip ends nearly midway between S and O. Feet of NITED are each progressively lower, with that I dotted by a dentil. In STATES, the first S is high and tilted left, and the right foot of A is well above the following T. O in OF is low and leans left. No center dot.

**Discussion::** R3-, slightly scarce but not rare. MS(2-6), AU(8-9), XF(several). The ANS coin is slightly the best of the lot. This is another variety which, while interesting in its own right, is usually eclipsed by the glory of number 4 which it somewhat resembles. Variety 5 usually brings a 1.5-2X premium.



**Cleft Lock, Strong Inner Circle**

6



**Crack Below STATES OF**

F

**Obverse 5:** Stars 3,4,9,12 point between dentils, star 6 nearly does. Sixth star points barely right of the coronet tip. A strong inner circle shows all around. The date is moderately spaced with stars farther away and first 1 very close to the bust above. The lowest curl extends to right upright of second 1. IBER are strongly recut — I at upper left upright, B inside top, E below its top, cross-stroke, and bottom, and R to the right. The foot of I is sharp at left and blunted at right. A short graver-scratch points down from the lock before the ear. The hairlock behind Y is cleft (second hub) as on variety 7 and all later years.

**Striking variations:** All seen by me have a crack from the foot of the first T of STATES to F via the highest leaf. And it is this crack which instantly identifies the variety. Often this crack extends from the center of ED and through the bases of AMERIC, with a lump in the lower curve of C and radial streaks behind the final A. This variety is usually well struck and well centered, with left stars lined to their centers. Mirrorlike examples are not

**Reverse F:** Key leaves point PC-,PR, SPC,C. Feet of NIT are progressively lower, with a cleft above the right foot of this I. The foot of the second I is likely patched too, but with more skill. Center dot is very small. This die is very similar to Reverse H.

uncommon. Variety 6 occasionally comes with the reverse crossways, rotated left.

**Discussion:** R1, common in all grades. MS(20+), AU(many). Number 6 is a good one for the type or date collector as it represents one of the better strikings of the year and is often seen prooflike. It draws no variety premium.



6



Cleft Lock, ★6 Well Right

**Obverse 6:** Star 9 points between dentils, stars 1,8 nearly do. Sixth star points right of coronet tip. A doubled dentil appears just left of the date. There is a weak, incomplete inner circle stringing the dentil tips at left. The stars are well away from the date. Date is moderately spaced with 81 closer and first 1 near the bust above. The second 1 is centered over a dentil, with the lowest curl wholly right of this 1. The hairlock behind Y is cleft (second hub) as on variety 6 and all later years. IB are recut below their tops, and Y has both feet short.

**Striking variations:** All seen have a short crack joining the outer points of ★6-7. This gets bolder as the dentilation fades, lapping weakens the relief, T of LIBERTY loses its feet, and the reverse center dot disappears. A triangular rimbreak appears touching the top of O in OF, a lump grows on the back side of the ear, and faint obverse cracks develop left from the coronet tip, right from ★1, left from tip of bust, and above the bases of 81. Variety 7

7



PLD SPC, PLF L

**Reverse G:** Key leaves point SPC, NR,L,C. The right feet of all I's and T's are patched, the repair being more obvious on some than others. N of ONE is recut below its right foot. The inner berries on the left are oversize as on some 1819's and 1820's. Center dot is tiny.

is usually found evenly centered and sharply struck, and occasionally comes with reverse crossways left.

**Discussion:** R1, very common in all grades. MS(50+), AU(many). The ANS coin appears to be barely at the top of the heap, though at least eight MS65's are known. This variety may have been minimally present in the Randall hoard (qv), as its MS population is excessive compared to the other varieties of the year. Early strikes are often prooflike. Hines owned a purported "Proof" example of this variety, listed as such by Newcomb, but the coin is untraced and its Proof status is doubtful. There is no variety premium on this one.





Closed Hairbun

8



H

PLD PC+, PLF C

**Obverse 7:** Stars 2,10,12 point between dentils, stars 3,4,7 nearly do, though the top obverse dentilation is usually obscured by rim crumbling. Three dentils are slightly closer, often fused below the first 8. The date is widely spaced with 81 close and the first 1 extending just to the bust tip. The sixth star is slightly right of the coronet tip and the lowest curl begins over the right upright of 1. This die is easily recognized by the touchup diecutting which joins the two lobes of the hairbun into one. Y has no left foot and is recut on its left side.

**Striking variations:** This variety has been reported without the hairbun recut, but all I have seen have the two lobes of the hairbun joined and light hairlines added in the juncture. A series of cracks encircle the outer points of nearly all stars and the top of the date. As the obverse dentils fade, they start to crumble K10-K2, most obviously at ★6 and ★8. Reverse dentilation fades and the tiny center dot disappears. No reverse cracks have been noted.

**Reverse H:** This die appears on varieties 8 and 10. Key leaves point PC+, SPR,C,C. Feet of NIT are progressively lower. I of AMERICA is dotted by a dentil, though the dentilation often does not show. T of CENT is cut deeper than the other letters. A tiny center dot often shows. This die is very similar to Reverse F.

**Discussion:** R3—, slightly scarce in all grades. MS(8-12), AU(6-8), XF(several). The closure of the hairbun, long considered to be die-crumbling, looks more like an intentional effort — probably the satisfaction of a whim by some diecutter at the mint. The “closed hairbun” variety has long been popular for its namesake. This coupled with its scarcity usually induces a 1.5X-2X premium.

8



Wide Date With Curl Over 1

**Obverse 8:** Stars 5,9 point between dentils, stars 6,10,11 nearly do, but the dentilation is usually too faded to tell this. Sixth star points to the coronet tip. The date is wide, but with the first 1 fully right of bust tip. Lowest curl begins just left of the center of the upright of 1. The left foot of Y is all but missing.

**Striking variations:** The dentilation fades and disappears entirely. Clash marks from the head develop inside the wreath. The tiny center dot disappears. Final strikes have a small rim-break fusing three dentils between ★7-8 and a faint hairline crack through the tops of MER. This variety is invariably bluntly struck.

9



PLS SPR, PLF NL

**Reverse I:** Key leaves point PC,SPR, NL,C. The I in UNITED has its base lower than N and even with T. The right foot of this I is very short and poorly patched, with a cleft above it. Center dot is tiny or missing.

**Discussion:** R2+, rather common in all grades but Mint State. MS(6), AU(7-9), XF(many). Quite a few of the XF's have been offered at auction and elsewhere as "brown Unc". The "perfect die wide date" commands no premium as a variety. The few collectors who insist on coins from unbroken dies choose some other variety because of the characteristic weak dentilation of this one.





Crack Inner Points All Stars

10



H

PLD PC+, PLF C

**Obverse 9:** Star 6 points between dentils, star 2 nearly does. Sixth star points slightly right of coronet tip. The date is wide, with tip of first 1 beyond the tip of bust. Lowest curl extends barely to the right edge of second 1. A faint line joins the tops of LI.

**Reverse H:** This die appears on varieties 8 and 10. Key leaves point PC+, SPR,C,C. Feet of NIT are progressively lower. I of AMERICA is dotted by a dentil, though the dentilation often does not show. T of CENT is cut deeper than the other letters. A tiny center dot often shows. This die is very similar to Reverse F.

**Striking variations:** Always found with a series of cracks joining the inner points of all stars and top of date. Other minor cracks develop from and near these cracks. Reverse dentils fade and disappear, no reverse cracks seen. The strike is almost always even, but blunt at the browlock. One “perfect die” example was sold by the Chapmans and was in the Blaisdell collection for several decades. This turned out to be a forgery — a legitimate XF cent with the crack carefully tooled off. It illustrates the extent to which some of the more zealous will go to create a “new variety” or a “new die state”.

**Discussion:** R1-, very common in all grades, especially in MS. MS(thousands), AU(even more). Several thousands of MS examples survive from the Randall hoard (qv), mostly spotted or stained, many with much original red. It would seem that at least one full keg of this variety (\$150 face) was included in this hoard, more likely two kegs. Obviously, variety 10 bears no special premium. And, until recent years, the continual supply in roll-size quantities of these cents has held the price down enough that any collector of modest means could proudly show his non-collecting friends a 150-year-old U.S. cent in Mint State. Today, the availability is nearly as great — only the prices have changed.





# 1819

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During 1819 Maine was separated from Massachusetts, Alabama became the 22nd state, the Erie canal was completed from Utica to Rome, NY by Irish immigrants earning 37.5 cents per day (plus a quart of whiskey), and the 'great liberator' Simon Bolivar became the first president of Gran Colombia (presently Colombia, Venezuela, Ecuador, and Panama).

Variability is the keynote of the cents of 1819, which boast overdates, large dates, small dates, wide dates, close dates with stars very near and far from the dates, and two distinctive letter styles on the reverse. Mintage of record is 2,671,000 pieces of ten die combinations. No cent of 1819 is really rare, but a couple are scarce enough to provide a bit of challenge — especially for the aficionado of choice copper. One major and likely one minor hoard variety make this an easy year for the discriminating date collector.

The year 1819 introduced a new set of letter and numeral punches for U.S. large cents, as well as a temporary return to the earlier die-chaining practices. With few exceptions, most cent dies of the previous eleven years had boasted a single mate — indeed, the only chain in this period to exceed two varieties was the final group of 1817 varieties. Probably most if not all dies prepared during 1819 bore the marks of new punchcons. The old style numeral punches appear on two of the seven obverses — and both of these are cut over 1818. The old-style letter punches appear on five of the eight reverses.

Two letter styles appear on 1819 cent reverses. The first is identical to those found on 1818 and before, and is the style most often found on nineteenth century billboards, here designated "square-serif" for its most prominent feature. All E's and F's have square inner serifs, O's have curved inner lines, S's are broad at their vertical curves.

The last three reverse dies prepared for 1819 cents use a new set of letter punches, in a style to be dubbed "Century" seventy years later, replacing the broken set in use until 1819. Round letters have squared insides, all inner serifs are clearly triangular, all point-serifs are much finer, S's have narrow fore-and-aft curves, C's are nearly closed, other minor differences abound. For once, the U.S. mint was several decades ahead of the times, as the Century type was hailed as something new and wonderful when it was introduced to the printing industry in 1890.

The earliest 1819 cents are from the large, pre-1819 date punches. The first obverse die even used the glob-looped 6-punch from the 1816 cents, now inverted as a 9 and punched over an obvious 8. One of the earlier varieties shows BOTH styles of digit punches, the newer impressed over the older. Over twenty years would pass before some workman again tried this trick in 1840.

Proofs are known of two of the ten 1819 cent varieties and have been rumored for two more. All 1819 Proof cents are extremely rare, the most

common at high R7 being variety 9. At least two varieties of 1819 cents are commonly seen in prooflike Uncirculated, and several of these have been offered as Proofs in years past — and no doubt will be again in years to come.

It is convenient to group the varieties of this year into three classes: the large dates (1,2), the small dates with square-serif reverses (6,9,10), and the small dates with Century reverses (3,4,5,7,8).

**OverDate** 1

**Large Date** 2

**Small Date**

Square Serif Rev 6,9,10

Century Reverse 3,4,5,7,8

It would be nice to be able to sequence all 1819 cent varieties within these classes, but the evidence of die states within the one die-chain of the year dashes any such hope and I was forced to assign the last variety slot to a square-serif reverse. This die was definitely an unused leftover, prepared before any other 1819 reverse die, though used after all of them. The one long die chain 8-7-4-3-5-6 takes most of the guesswork out of the emission sequence for 1819. My proposed sequence is 1,2,10,9,8-7-4-3-5-6.





**Obvious Overdate**

1



**PHL Centered Under S**

19-1  
1819/8

A

**Obverse 1:** Stars 2,3,5,9 point between dentils, and stars 6,7,10,12 nearly do. Star 2 is obviously recut on two points, ★4 on three. There is an inner circle under the dentil-tips, most apparent at bottom and right. Sixth star is right of coronet tip. The date is from the large old-style punches with script 8. The 9 is the same punch as used inverted for a “6” on 1816 cents, the “knob” below its inner loop being quite apparent. The 9 is cut over a plainly visible 8 which is quite evident closing the mouth of the 9 and framing its upper loop. Other lighter traces also show on some pieces. Lowest curl does not quite reach to right upright of second 1, and the first 1 is equidistant from bust and dentils. Y of LIBERTY has a long horizontal graver scratch from its left foot.

**Striking variations:** No notable cracks. Dentilation fades slightly on both sides as the dies wear. Latest strikes show light rim crumbling on obverse at K1-3. Usually found well-centered and sharply struck.

**Reverse A:** Key leaves point NC, C,NC,C. Letters are square-serif as on cents of 1818 and before. Right feet of all T’s and I of AMERICA have been manually repaired; E of ONE is low and tilts left; letters ENT are progressively lower. Center dot is tiny or missing.

**Discussion:** R1+, fairly common in all grades. MS(30+), AU (many). One Proof example of this variety is known to me — the Beckwith:54-DuPont:568-Pittman coin. The Mougey:121-Sleicher:1043 piece, purported to be a Proof, is currently untraced. It is definitely not the Beckwith coin. There are several nice regulation strikes from these dies. Early (regulation) strikes occasionally come prooflike. Yet, in spite of its commonness, when a 19-1 is a pretty penny, it sells at a pretty penny — likely due to its overdate status. Though this is the first overdate of the mid-date cent series, the practice is common across this period of U.S. coinage. Thirty of the 34 years 1796-1829 boast an overdate in one U.S. series or another.

19-2

Large Date

2



1 Almost Touches Bust

**Obverse 2:** No star points between dentils, nor do any come within the width of a star-point of doing so. Early strikes show a doubled dentil at K9, just above ★3. There is a strong inner circle under the dentil tips at left, which fades out at right. Sixth star points right of coronet tip. Top of first 1 is very close to bust above. This die is commonly called the “Large Date” variety, as the date is from the large old-style punches, but is overpunched with a set of large new-style punches. Usually some trace of the script 8 shows under the overpunched block 8. Early and many intermediate specimens show a light line closing the mouth of the 9. The lowest curl extends to the right edge of second 1, and the first 1 is quite close to the bust above — nearer to it than to the dentil below. L of LIBERTY is recut below, I is higher than L-B, and this is the only 1819 obverse that lacks a line under ER.

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2



**Reverse B:** Key leaves point PC,NR, NC+,C. Letters are square-serif. There is a triplet dentil above U, and the right feet of all I's and T's are patched. There is a regular shaped chip, similar to the bottom serif of a D, on the leaf which crosses under the stem below the first S of STATES. C of CENT leans left and has a weak tail. ONE has N recut below its left foot and E recut at lower right. Medium center dot.

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**Striking variations:** Comes in three basic die conditions: early, rusted, and lapped. Early strikes are usually sharp, often prooflike, and usually show faint circumferential cracks through the date and several stars. The area below and to the left of the final 9 is raised from the engraver's efforts to efface the underlying 8. Dentilation is crisp and the multiple-dentil occurrences at ★3 and U are quite obvious. The rusted die condition of this variety is the most frequently seen. Dentilation fades, cracks are a bit heavier, and the multiple-dentil occurrences are no longer apparent. Radial flow-lines develop, the underdate is weakened but still faintly visible, and both dies are quite notably rust pitted, most obvious at lower right reverse and upper left obverse. Nice examples tend to be satiny rather than mirror-like. Strikes from lapped dies show details in lower relief, lowest curl and curl behind the head open and nearly severed, and the final 9 with no trace of an underfigure. The center dot is tiny or missing and the rust areas and die cracks are much less apparent. Although this is the latest state, some cracks seen on earlier strikes may not show at all. Centering is usually perfect for early strikes, and broader at bottom obverse on strikes from rusted and/or lapped dies. I have seen several "spoiled cents" from these dies — misaligned strikes (offcenter one side only), and major laminations (flan flaws).

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**Discussion:** R1, common in all grades. MS(45+), AU(many). The early, prooflike strikes usually bring a slight premium because of the faint overdate seen on them. Two Proofs have been reported, but one of these (French:410) is unverified and the other (Wayte Raymond) is presently untraced. When (and if) they are subjected to scrutiny, either or both of these may turn out to be prooflike early strikes. This is a one-variety type, so its price for type is also its variety premium (which is nil).

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3



Stars Close to Date

**Obverse 3:** This die appears on varieties 4-3. Star 13 points between dentils, stars 7,9 nearly do. Inner circle at dentil tips from K11 extends clockwise to K6. Sixth star points slightly left of coronet tip. The date is small and quite close, with stars very close to it (diagnostic). The tops of 81 nearly touch. Lowest curl extends past the left upright of the second 1. Star 10 is recut below its lowest point. A long graver scratch extends through both feet of Y.

**Striking variations:** The obverse edge is noticeably dished, dentilation fading, with star points drawn to the rim. Star/dentil positions may be hard to see. Inner circle and recutting on star 10 rarely show on this marriage. Reverse dentilation is usually broadest and clearest at lower left. Obverse dentilation fades and disappears. This variety occasionally shows a faint crack from the lower edge of bust toward the rim between 1 and the first star.

3



PHL Far Past S

**Reverse C:** This die appears on varieties 3 and 5. Key leaves point NR,FPR,PC,C. Letters are Century style, as on all but one die of the 1819-1828 period. The right feet of at least the first and last A's are patched. UNITED has T below I, and E top joined to T. STATES has TE bases lightly connected. Berries are small, but not as tiny as on variety 8. C of CENT leans right. Tiny, nearly invisible center dot.

**Discussion:** R3, rather scarce in all grades. MS(3), AU(5), XF(9-12), VF (many). At least one of the XF's has been catalogued as "Unc". Though variety 3 is about a rarity number below number 4, it is still scarce and is still the same distinctive close-star type as number 4. So collectors usually find it more "interesting" than several others and will generally part with a few more hard-earned shekels for it if they have to — say around 2-3X.



**Stars Close to Date**

4



D

**V.Large Berries, Rusted Die**

**Obverse 3:** This die appears on varieties 4-3. Star 13 points between dentils, stars 7,9 nearly do. Inner circle at dentil tips from K11 extends clockwise to K6. Sixth star points slightly left of coronet tip. The date is small and quite close, with stars very close to it (diagnostic). The tops of 81 nearly touch. Lowest curl extends past the left upright of the second 1. Star 10 is recut below its lowest point. A long graver scratch extends through both feet of Y.

**Reverse D:** This die appears on varieties 7 and 4. Key leaves point C,R,C,C. Letters are Century style, and the new letter set has suffered its first casualty — all A's have their outside right foot patched. D in UNITED is low. Bases of TE in STATES are joined, and the final S is low. All berries are oversized as on the first 1820 dies. A berry is centered under the right foot of the first A in AMERICA. Center dot is effaced, leaving a faint irregular lump in its place. This die is similar to Reverse F but for the oversized berries and the A-berry position.

**Striking variations:** This variety is usually evenly struck and well centered. Obverse is new with crisp dentilation. The reverse die is now worn and heavily lapped. The dentilation is blurred, letters fainter, and the line joining TE in STATES is gone as is the center dot. The heavily lapped reverse is a constant feature.

**Discussion:** R4-, fairly scarce in all grades, tougher in high grade. MS (1-2), AU(2-4), XF(9-10), VF(30+). In addition, the French:412 piece was catalogued as AU and an unverified "AU" was offered in a 1972 French's auction (F103:263), which may modify this list. The Clapp-ANS coin is the only fully MS example I have seen, possibly ex Rice:1102. The most commonly seen grade of number 4 is VG-F. As a scarce variety of a distinctive type (close stars), number 4 commands around a 3-4X premium.



4



Close Date With Stars Away

**Obverse 4:** This die appears on varieties 5-6. Star 11 points between dentils, ★7 nearly does. There is a double dentil at K7 and an inner circle at the dentil tips from K9 clockwise to K5. Sixth star points left of coronet. The date is close, with stars far away from it. The lowest curl extends about to the left upright of the second 1. In LIBERTY, I is high, and the tops of I and Y are recut.

**Striking variations:** Obverse dentilation remains crisp, reverse fades until dentilation is merely a raised rim and letters are weaker, notably in the center. The graver scratches connecting both TE's no longer show, though the first E still has an overlong top left point. The reverse center dot has now disappeared.

**Discussion:** R3, moderately scarce in all grades. MS(1), AU(3-4), XF(3-7), VF(25+). Old auction records indicate four other MS examples, but none of these have been verified —

5



PHL Far Past S

**Reverse C:** This die appears on varieties 3 and 5. Key leaves point NR, FPR, PC, C. Letters are Century style, as on all but one die of the 1819-1828 period. The right feet of at least the first and last A's are patched. UNITED has T below I, and E top joined to T. STATES has TE bases lightly connected. Berries are small, but not as tiny as on variety 8. C of CENT leans right. Tiny, nearly invisible center dot.

any or all could be misattributed or overgraded. These include Rice:1103 and 1104, Young1:700, and MANA 77:92. This variety has long been considered fairly common — by default, R1. After a few years of looking I felt R2 fit it better. Another decade passed, and R3 seems closer. I've seen too many to rate it much higher than R3, but this one does present a bit of a challenge. Until recently few have attached any premium to this variety, but to get a decent one the competition forced me to pay a 2X premium, and my duplicate readily brought the same.





**Close Date With Stars Away**

**6**



**E**

**Square-Serif Letters**

**Obverse 4:** This die appears on varieties 5-6. Star 11 points between dentils, ★7 nearly does. There is a double dentil at K7 and an inner circle at the dentil tips from K9 clockwise to K5. Sixth star points left of coronet. The date is close, with stars far away from it. The lowest curl extends about to the left upright of the second 1. In LIBERTY, I is high, and the tops of I and Y are recut.

**Reverse E:** Key leaves point PC,PC-, SPC,NR. Letters are square-serif. IT feet are even, the final S is low, and AME nearly touch. The leaves are quite close below all letters. E in ONE is a bit low. Though used last, this die was undoubtedly made before any other 1819 reverse, as all I and T punches are unbroken. This is the only small, close date variety to mate with a square-serif reverse.

**Striking variations:** Obverse is usually found boldest at right, reverse boldest at bottom. Vestiges of the obverse inner circle show on earlier strikes, fading away on later strikes. Dentilation fades slightly on both sides, and the reverse begins to buckle at left center weakening O and C.

**Discussion:** R1, common in all but choice grades. MS(10-16), AU(4-6), XF(16+). Fines or VF's are not difficult to find. Though this "reversion" or "out of the woodwork" die certainly carries its interest on its face (or 'on its tail' in this case), the interest is unapparent to the non-specialist. With no plebeian "raison d'être" and with a sufficient supply for all the specialists, number 6 is rarely able to coax even an extra nickel from a prospective buyer.

5



Close Date With Stars Away

**Obverse 5:** This die appears on varieties 8-7. Stars 2,5,8 point between dentils, stars 9,13 nearly do. Sixth star points at coronet tip. There is an inner circle under the dentils. The left edge of lowest curl is right of the right edge of the second 1. Date is small and closely spaced, with first 1 far from the bust.

7



V.Large Berries, Rusted Date

**Reverse D:** This die appears on varieties 7 and 4. Key leaves point C,R,C, C. Letters are Century style, and the new letter set has suffered its first casualty — all A's have their outside right foot patched. D in UNITED is low. Bases of TE in STATES are joined, and the final S is low. All berries are oversized as on the first 1820 dies. A berry is centered under the right foot of the first A in AMERICA. Center dot is effaced, leaving a faint irregular lump in its place. This die is similar to Reverse F but for the oversized berries and the A-berry position.

**Striking variations:** Obverse die is worn, usually has no dentilation. Reverse die is new and sharp, but is extensively rusted, with raised pit marks scattered over its entirety. To date all purported "unrusted reverse" examples of number 7 have turned out to be the common number 8. This die and those of variety 2 probably suffered the same ill-storage together, and the 'cure' was the same. The last-struck 7's are heavily lapped, severely weakening all reverse details.

**Discussion:** R4, scarcest variety of the year. MS(2), AU(2), XF(5), VF(10+). Besides these, an unverified "60" appeared in a 1945 Mehl sale, since untraced and unverified, and another "60" was in the G.Rice collection auctioned in 1906. Many purported 7's have been exposed as 8's, including the Masters:210 "MS N7". That seems to be the way of things — as soon as something is called "rare", EVERYBODY has one (or more). If these fail the test, the "rare" label sticks; if enough of them pass, the label falls by the wayside — only to be revived years later by some ignorant or unscrupulous huckster who wants to milk some extra bucks from a now-common variety. Variety 7 (when correctly attributed) generally draws a 4-5X premium.





**Close Date With Stars Away**

**Obverse 5:** This die appears on varieties 8-7. Stars 2,5,8 point between dentils, stars 9,13 nearly do. Sixth star points at coronet tip. There is an inner circle under the dentils. The left edge of lowest curl is right of the right edge of the second 1. Date is small and closely spaced, with first 1 far from the bust.

**Striking variations:** Early strikes show faint scratches joining the bases of TE in UNITED and AT in STATES. Other examples from lightly lapped dies do not show these marks. The dentils fade as the dies wear, and the center reverse buckles.

**Discussion:** R1-, extremely common, especially in Mint State. MS(many hundreds). Over a half dozen 70's, many dozens of 65's, and several hundred, possibly a few thousand in the 60-65 range are available. This variety probably comprised the bulk of a keg from the Randall Hoard (qv). Variety 8 is generally found sharply struck, crisply detailed, and often prooflike. This makes it a superior type-collector's coin — a fact that has driven the price of these hoard



**Berry Centered Under A**

**Reverse F:** Key leaves point PC,PR, SPC,C. Letters are Century style. Berries are even tinier than on the preceding dies. Foot of T is below I in UNITED, ME and RI feet are quite close, others more apart. Final A is nearer to the stem than to C. This die is very similar to Reverse D, but has tiny berries and a berry centered under the first A of AMERICA, while the former has large berries and the A-berry notably right of center. E of ONE is low. The tiny center dot has been crudely effaced, appearing as a few light chips.

examples far beyond any reasonable range. Unfortunately, more often than not, the hoard pieces of this variety show myriad tiny nicks and contact marks, which is a turnoff to some purists. One Proof example from these dies is known to me; Beckwith:55-Allenburger:746-Naftzger. Two lots in the Mougey sale (1910) were listed there as Proof, but are since untraced. Since these are unverified, and since this variety often comes prooflike, it is likely that neither were Proof coins. Number 8 draws no variety premium.

8

F



6



Wide Date 18 19

**Obverse 6:** Stars 3,8 point between dentils, ★5 nearly does. Traces of an inner circle appear under the tips of the dentils, slightly more apparent at left. Sixth star points to the coronet tip. Lowest curl ends high over the second 1. Date is small and widely spaced, with 81 slightly wider. The hair is finely cut with each strand well-defined. The muscle from back of ear to clavicle is unusually bold. LIBERTY has the L low, IB recut above, two lines up from adjacent feet of IB, and a line under ER and Y. The coronet top has a raised line above ERTY. A heavy clash behind LI makes a "half football" from the left side of I.

**Striking variations:** Early strikes show a graver scratch joining the feet of TA and a mark extending the top left of the N in CENT. Some pieces show heavy clash-marks on the left obverse. The die was then lapped to remove these marks and was allowed to wear normally. The lapping removed the TA and N lines and weakened the doubled R. As the dies wear, the dentilation fades completely and the doubling on the R becomes even less distinct. No cracks seen.

**Discussion:** R1, common in all grades, especially near MS. MS(hundreds). Over a dozen 65's have been traced, a few of

9



Doubled R

**Reverse G:** Key leaves point C+,NR, SPC,NC. There is a triplet dentil over E of STATES. Letters are square-serif. The right feet of all I's and T's are manually patched. The R in AMERICA is conspicuously doubled above, and the final S in STATES is low. The leaves are very close under the legend, and there is a strong dot on the center of the inner leaf below D. C in CENT leans right. The center dot varies from small to tiny.

which may approach 70 grade, as well as hundreds of 60's. This variety was likely a minor adjunct (hundreds, not thousands) to the Randall Hoard, with the late state being quite common in Mint State and the early state much less so. The type collector will prefer the more common number 8, which usually shows more delicate detail. A few Proof examples are known to me, including the Hines coin seen by Newcomb before 1940 (currently untraced), Kissner-NN44:371-Warfield:450-Kagin, another unconfirmed Kagin piece (K84:3875-K109:55), and a cleaned one certified by me for ANACS in 1981.



Wide Date 18 19

10



H

Doubled R

**Obverse 7:** Stars 3,4,7,10 point between dentils, and ★8 nearly does. Inner circle joins dentil tips, broken only under 18, but plainest on the left side. Sixth star points at the coronet tip. Date has small figures and is very widely spaced, with 81 slightly closer, and all figures leaning a bit right. The first 1 is far from the bust. Lowest curl extends to the right edge of the second 1. The muscle from back of ear to clavicle is unusually bold. Letters of LIBERTY are fairly even. Tiny center dot before ear.

**Striking variations:** All seen have a light crack from the right side of 9 joining the inner points of the last four stars. Early strikes have a SW/NE swelling above N of ONE. Dentilation fades, but does not disappear. Latest strikes show heavy reverse lapping, with weak legend and irregular relief on the letters of ONE CENT.

**Reverse H:** Key leaves point SPC, PR,PC,NC+. There is a triplet dentil at bottom center. Letters are square-serif. The right bases of all I's and T's are hand patched. In STATES, the top of E is notably lower than that of the adjacent T. Left top of N in ONE is in deeper relief than the rest of ONE. Tail of C in CENT is weak, missing on late strikes. Small, indistinct center dot.

**Discussion:** R3, scarce but not rare. MS(8-11), AU(8), XF(8+). One of the 60's was once catalogued as "Proof reverse", which is an anomaly — all one-sided Proof large cents I have seen have Proof obverse. This variety is tied for third scarcest 1819, and commands a premium as such among variety collectors — say around 3-4X.





# 1820

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In 1820 George III, the American revolution foe, died in England. Revolutions began in Spain, Naples, and Portugal. The Spanish revolution ended the 342-year Spanish Inquisition begun by Isabella (sponsor of Columbus) in 1478. The Inquisition had claimed thousands of lives of “Jews, heretics, and witches” worldwide. On a happier vein, the Venus de Milo (Aphrodite of Melos, second century BC) was discovered in a cave on the Aegean island of Melos.

In this country James Monroe was reelected over John Q. Adams in an almost unanimous vote, and Maine became the twenty-third state — a free state under the terms of the Missouri Compromise. The Nebraska Territory was called “a great American desert” by a U.S. Army exploring expedition. Under the “land law” federal lands went on sale to farmers for \$100 cash per eighty acres. Five in every six of the 9.6 million U.S. citizens were farmers.

The floodgates of immigration were opened wide — the United States would gain 700,000 Irish immigrants in twenty years. New York passed Philadelphia as the largest U.S. city at 124,000. The Philadelphia census included “one negro slave”. And Liberia, a “land of liberty”, was privately founded for the repatriation of U.S. blacks to Africa. Its capitol would be named “Monrovia”. To this day, Liberian citizenship is limited to blacks and the ruling class is descended from American emigrants.

Mint records show 4,407,550 cents delivered in 1820. Fifteen combinations are known of fourteen obverse and fourteen reverse dies.

During 1820 the use on U.S. cent dies of Century letters (first introduced in 1819) was extended to the small LIBERTY on Miss Liberty’s tiara. The dual date sizes of 1819 were continued in use. A new minor variant of the last 1818 head punch was introduced (probably just a single hub — see varieties 4,5,9). And a return to the small-berry wreath of early 1819 was effected. Three surplus unused 1819 cent dies were altered to 1820, so this year boasts both large and small overdates.

Of the old square-serif letter set used on the headband of early 1820 cents and all before, the clearest feature is the slanting leg of the R. Older references list this type as ‘straight-tailed R’ as contrasted with the ‘curled R’ of later varieties. But ALL letters are different — not just the R. The style of the date figures also varies with size, the large figures (with two exceptions) having a plain, club-top 2, while all of the small-date varieties have an ornate curly-top 2.

As a rule, large-date 1820 cents are mated with large-berry reverses and small-date 1820 cents have small-berry reverses. The only two exceptions to this are varieties 9 and 14, qv. Also, large-date and overdate dies have the old square-serif LIBERTY, while the small-date dies bear letters

## 1820

from the Century punch set (except number 7, qv).

Proof examples are known of four or five varieties of 1820 cents, and all are quite rare. The “or five” depends on whether or not the purported “proof” 20-A5 in the Wilharm sale (1921) ever turns up and checks out as a valid Proof.

There are only two two-coin die chains in 1820 (9-14 and 10-14), likely representing resurrection of two unrelated dies rather than true chaining. No 1819 dies carried over to 1820, and only one 1820 die carried over to a later year (1822). So we can only guess at an emission sequence by arranging similar dies adjacent. This produces my proposal of 13,12,11,10-9,14,1,2,3,7,15,6,8,5,4, though number 14 may date well after the others — say in 1822 or so.

The three general classes of 1820 cents are easily broken into subclasses so that the date-and-type collector could easily set his goal at anywhere from three to eight different types of

1820 cents — see the indented list below. Representation in the Randall hoard makes this an easy year for the one-a-year collector. All varieties are known in Mint State (though a few are tough in this condition), so the advanced collector of choice coins has an attainable goal. Only one of the fifteen varieties is rare, so the task of assembling an any-grade variety set can be handled in a reasonably few years.

### **Large Date**

Large Berries	10,11,12,13
Small Berries	
Curl top 2	9
Club top 2	14

### **Overdate**

Large Overdate	1
Small Overdate	2,3

### **Small Date**

Plain-tailed R	7
Curly-tailed R	
Without SHILL	6,8,15
With SHILL	4,5



**Large Overdate**

**Obverse 1:** Stars 4,5,10,13 point between dentils, stars 6,9 nearly do. The date is large and has the same curved-inside '0' as found on number 13. A dentil is centered under the first 1, and there is a strong 1 inside the large curl-topped 2. Sixth star points to the coronet tip. Star 10 is recut on two points. A fine line joins BER near their tops. For a consistent and continuous style-change, this variety should immediately follow number 10 (as the last club-2 die), should precede number 9 (as the last curl-2 large date and the first small-berry reverse), and number 14 should not exist. Unfortunately, we cannot wish number 14 away, so the proposed sequence tries the next best thing — grouping all overdates together.

**Striking Variations:** Usually seen evenly struck, with reverse dentils longest at the bottom. Early strikes show recutting on 18. This fades on later strikes, as does the line joining AM.



20-1  
Overdate

A

**Reverse A:** Key leaves point C,NR, NC,C. UNITED has a dentil dotting its I and three close dentils squeezed over the left top of the succeeding T. A line joins the feet of AM. All berries are quite large, and the center dot is medium sized.

**Discussion:** R1, common in all grades. MS(7-10), AU(12+), XF (many). The ANS piece is the best one I have seen. The Beckwith-Downing-Bareford coin has long been listed as a Proof but is not. This common variety's clear overdate makes it popular, but also gives it (and the two to follow) a separate evaluation in most catalogues and price lists. Well over half of all 1820/19 cents are number 1, so it commands no die-variety premium.



20-2

Overdate

2



2



### Small Overdate, Underfigure Left

**Obverse 2:** Star 10 points between dentils, stars 4,11,12 nearly do. A doubled dentil appears at K4, just below star 12. The date is small, spaced 1 820. The 20 is obviously cut over a 19, but, as with the other two 1820 overdates, this die was not used on 1819 cents. The undercut 1 rises from the left base of the 2 and extends to its top. Its peak extends left from the top of the 2 on some but not all examples. Traces of the 9 are plainest outside the lower left of the 0, but also appear inside the 0. The sixth star points slightly right of the coronet tip. L of LIBERTY is doubled below, and Y has a long point from its left foot.

**Striking Variations:** No cracks seen. Dentilation fades on both sides, as do the 9-remnants under the 0, the line from Y-foot, and the line below CENT. Later strikes show faint rust pits (tiny lumps on coin) lightly peppering both dies. The latest strikes have the dentilation all but missing and both dies lapped, with lowest and back curls nearly severed, legend and wreath

**Reverse B:** Key leaves point C,SPC,C,NC+. A dentil dots the I of AMERICA and another nearly dots the I of UNITED. The final S of STATES is low. The bottom of a misplaced D appears on the root of the innermost leaf below ED, just above CENT. All leaves are fully and finely veined. Berries are small as on all small-date dies. N of ONE tilts right. No center dot.

weaker, and underline below CENT almost gone. Indeed, a glass is needed to tell that the latest examples of number 2 are overdates at all. Dentilation is usually broadest at lower left obverse and bottom reverse.

**Discussion:** R2+, not quite R3. MS(8-11), AU(12+), XF(12+). This is the scarcest of the three 1820 overdates but is still fairly common. This is by far the clearest overdate of the year, especially in the early strikes. It may occasionally command a slight premium, but it usually does not.



3

### Small Overdate, Underfigure Right

**Obverse 3:** Stars 6,10 point between dentils, stars 2,3,5 nearly do. A light inner circle shows at dentil tips at left on earlier strikes. Sixth star is right of coronet tip. The date is small, spaced 1 8 20, and the 20 is cut over a 19. The undercut 1 rises from the right side of the 2 and is almost totally obscured by the right and top curves of the 2. The 9 shows only faintly inside the 0 and only on early strikes. For these reasons, number 3 is offered as a non-overdate as often as not. The R in LIBERTY has a straight tail (see year discussion), as on all 1820 large dates and overdates. In LIBERTY the ER is high.

**Striking Variations:** No cracks seen. As the dies wear the dentilation fades, the inner circle and the 9-remnants disappear, and the reverse rim begins to dish.



C

20-3  
Overdate

**Reverse C:** Key leaves point C,PC, C,C+. The feet of A in STATES are a trifle high. E of CENT is misplaced, being a touch high, tilted left, and too close to the N. Center dot is tiny or missing.

**Discussion:** R2, fairly common in all grades. MS(15-20), AU(12+), XF (many). The best one I have seen is the ANS piece. Number 3 will draw the overdate price, but no premium beyond that.



4



Small Date

**Obverse 4:** Star 1 points between dentils, star 7 nearly does. The date is small, evenly and moderately spaced. Sixth star points at the coronet tip. The lowest lock of hair (over and to the right of 0) has a stray hair cutting upward across it. This feature is apparently a mark on a head punch rather than a graver mark on the die, as the same feature appears on three obverses of 1820, four of 1822, and three of 1824. LIBERTY has B above I and the feet of ER joined. Plain center dot before ear. LIBERTY has curly tailed R on obverses 4,5,6,8,14 of 1820.

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4



PLS FPR

**Reverse D:** This die appears on number 2 of 1820 and number 7 of 1822. Key leaves point R,FPR,NR,PC, any of the first three positions being diagnostic. UN overlap at top, ED bases almost touch. The E of STATES appears to be grossly oversized. The leaf under C is a phantom outline only. N of CENT is slightly low, and the line under CENT is thin. Center dot is weak or missing.

The Davis-Steinberger supplement to Newcomb (1954) listed a "new variety" of 1820 with this reverse and the obverse of N-7, but such a coin has refused to come forth and be counted. The highly distinctive features of both these dies would imply near impossibility of such a combination lying hidden. However, it is very much in keeping with the accuracy of the other D-S "new varieties" to assume that the variety meant there was this die mated with the N-7 obverse of 1822 (not 1820), which makes the "new variety" merely N-7 of 1822.

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**Striking Variations:** Obverse dentilation is usually broadest at bottom. Even early strikes show die-rust on the wreath and head, with smooth, lapped fields. Later strikes show slight dishing of the reverse rim, weakening at ON and CE. Dentilation remains sharp on both sides.

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**Discussion:** R4-, quite scarce, though not rare. MS(1-3), AU(5), XF(10+), VF(15+). Though specifically sought only by variety collectors, number 4 possesses in large measure the two requisites for popularity. It is distinctively different, and it is scarce. Among variety collectors it usually brings a premium of 2X or more — and beyond for the hard-to-locate choice examples.

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5



Small Date

**Obverse 5:** Stars 3,11 point between dentils, stars 5,10 nearly do. Light remnants of an inner circle show at left. A dentil is centered under the 1 of the small, moderately-spaced date. Sixth star points directly to the coronet tip. The lowest lock of hair (over and to the right of 0) has a stray hair cutting upward across it. See comment on 1820 obverse 4. A faint line joins the tops of BERT. The foot of T is low and rests directly on the hair. LIBERTY has curly tailed R on obverses 4,5,6,8,14 of 1820.

**Striking Variations:** No cracks seen. Early strikes show the obverse inner circle fairly prominently at the first five stars. Dentilation fades and the reverse rim begins to dish.

5



Both I's Dotted

**Reverse E:** Key leaves point NC, SPC,NC,C. The leaf under D is just a hair right of the upright. Both I's are perfectly dotted by a dentil. The center dot is about medium sized and is generally quite plain. This die is very similar to reverse H.

**Discussion:** R3, scarce but not rare. MS(4-6), AU(2), XF(6+), VF(several). The Wilharm sale (1921) had a purported Proof, unverified and since untraced. This variety is quite similar to number 8, and the two are often confused. Though scarce, number 5 has no salient feature to generate interest. Only rarely does it command any premium — and then only from a frustrated collector pursuing an every-variety goal.



Small Date, IC at ★ 3

6



RI Almost Touch

F

**Obverse 6:** Stars 3,13 point between dentils, stars 5,12 nearly do. Some strong remnants of an inner circle show above and below the third star and more faintly under 20. The date is small and evenly spaced. Sixth star points left of the coronet tip. LIBERTY has doubling below L, at top of I, with feet of IB and ER joined, R high, and feet of L and T low. Small center dot before ear. LIBERTY has curly tailed R on obverses 4,5,6,8,14 of 1820.

**Reverse F:** Key leaves point SPC, NR,C-,SPC. The legend is extremely close to the dentilation. Feet of RI almost touch. Center dot is tiny or absent.

**Striking Variations:** No cracks seen. Dentilation weakens slightly. Reverse center dot disappears and the line under CENT weakens with minor lapping of the die.

**Discussion:** R4-, a bit scarcer than numbers 5,8,15. MS(1-2), AU(4-5), XF(8+), VF(several). At least one Proof example is known from these dies, possibly two — the Mougey-Ryder coin may be the same as the Parmalee piece. Auction records show several MS examples of this variety,

but a lot of these have been exposed as misattributions (including the 'finest known non-Proof', Pearl:266), and several others turned out to be AU or less. Though from one to four purported 'MS' examples are still untraced, I have only been able to confirm a single true MS piece. Number 6 commands a premium (maybe 4X-6X) from impatient variety hunters, as it is usually one of the last few they need for this year — especially if they are picky about grade.





**Small Normal Date, Straight R**

**Obverse 7:** Stars 6,7 point between dentils, star 10 nearly does. A strong inner circle, free from the dentil tips, shows plainest at left. Date is small. The sixth star points at the coronet tip. LIBERTY has R from the old, straight-tailed punch as found on the 1820 large dates and overdates, but with the new triangular centerbar E-punch. So this is a one-variety type (as with numbers 1, 9, and 14). E is lightly doubled below, Y tilts right and has an extra line under it. A near vertical graver mark cuts across the curl before the ear and there is a bold center dot between this graver mark and the ear. A report of this obverse mated with reverse D has been generally debunked — see the comments under reverse D.

**Striking Variations:** Usually seen with sharp dentilation and bold obverse inner circle. Obverse dentilation and inner circle fade. Reverse dentilation fades slightly but remains clear. Reverse center dot disappears.



**Reverse G:** Key leaves point SPC, NC, NC, NC. The foot of R is far above that of I. Tiny center dot.

A faint crack develops tangent to the base of the bust, extending to the rightmost point of the first star. Finally, another hairline fracture extends from the rim through ★7, top of head, and between LI, and a light crack runs from the bottom of D, under S, to the foot of first T in STATES.

**Discussion:** R3, scarce but not rare. MS(2-3), AU(7-8), XF(12+), VF(many). The "Straight-R Small Date 1820" is popular and commands a slight premium (around 1.5X), more in higher grades. A true AU or better may command 3X or more.

8



Small Date

8



H

PLD C, I's Not Dotted

**Obverse 8:** Stars 3,7,10 point between dentils, star 9 nearly does. An inner circle joins the dentil tips at left. The date is small, evenly and rather widely spaced. The curve of the date is less than its due, so that the 82 are a bit farther from the rim than the 1—0. Sixth star points slightly left of the coronet tip. RT of LIBERTY are extremely close, nearly touching at top and bottom. L and B are recut below, and R to the left. Plain center dot before the ear. LIBERTY has curly tailed R on obverses 4,5,6,8,14 of 1820.

**Reverse H:** Key leaves point C,NR,C,C. Medium sized, plain center dot. Nothing else about this die is remarkable, other than its similarity to reverse E.

**Discussion:** R2+, slightly more common than number 5 which it closely resembles. MS(7-9), AU(8-10), XF(several). At least two of the AU's are only a hair's breadth from full MS. The ANS example of this variety was reported by Breen in 1953 as a one-faced Proof — Proof obverse, MS65 reverse. Such a coin results from the standard proofing process, but where only one die is polished for the special striking. This strange practice is seen on several large cent Proofs of the 1820's and 30's. Unfortunately, the coin ANS has now is a choice MS65+, not Proof. Was it switched — or misreported? Rarely, if ever, does number 8 command a variety premium.

**Striking Variations:** No cracks seen. Dentilation fades slightly, reverse rim dishes somewhat. Later strikes often show the tips of letters drawn to the rim.



20-9  
Large Date

9



Large Date, Curly 2

**Obverse 9:** Stars 3,4 point between dentils, stars 11,13 nearly do. The date is large and very close, with 2 low. The 2 has a curled top as on the small-date 1820's and later cents, and the 1 is shaped at its peak like that on the small-date dies. The sixth star points well to the right of the coronet tip. Star 4 is recut on three points. The lowest lock of hair (over and to the right of 0) has a stray hair cutting upward across it. See comment on 1820 obverse 4. LIBERTY has L doubled below and Y with a graver scratch from its left foot.

**Striking Variations:** No cracks seen, though dentilation fades somewhat. Early strikes show a short line under the foot of T in CENT. This disappears on later strikes. Reverse is usually struck with dentils broadest at bottom.

9



Small Berries

**Reverse I:** This die appears on varieties 9,14. Key leaves point C,C, C-,C+. A dentil dots the I of AMERICA. All berries are small, as on the small-date reverses, and it is this feature that sets this large-date reverse apart. Feet of ERI are very close, with I below R. C of CENT is close to E and leans right. No center dot.

**Discussion:** R3, scarce but not rare. MS(2), AU(2), XF(4-5), VF(20+). Most variety collectors settle for a Fine number 9 after a year or two — others who are more picky go without. Then there are always a few who get lucky. Obviously, such a distinctive and popular (not to mention 'scarce') variety generally manages to command a premium — occasionally as much as 1.5X or more.



10



**Large, Moderately-spaced Date**

**Obverse 10:** This die appears on varieties 10,14. Stars 4,7,9 point between dentils, stars 1,2,6,10 nearly do. Date is large and moderately spaced, with club-topped 2 and 82 slightly more apart than other figures. Sixth star is a hair right of coronet tip. LIBERTY has L high, R recut left, and T strongly recut to lower right.

**Striking Variations:** No cracks seen. Earliest strikes have a hint of a tiny reverse center dot. This vanishes early. Dentilation fades slightly. Later examples are from lapped dies, but not so heavily lapped as on numbers 11 and 12.

20-10  
Large Date

10



**Triplet Dentil at Bottom**

**Reverse J:** Key leaves point PC,NR,NC,NC. A triplet dentil appears at K6.5, just below the left ribbon end. A period-like defect is about midway between F and A. Feet of ME are joined. Leaftip nearly touches C of AMERICA. Large berries, no center dot.

**Discussion:** R2, fairly common in all grades. MS(20+), AU(several). A single Proof example of number 10 has been traced — the Smithsonian coin. The DuPont:591-TAD:88 "Proof" is not a Proof. As one of the more common and less interesting varieties of the year, this one commands no premium.

20-11

Large Date

11



Long-peaked 1

**Obverse 11:** Stars 11,12,13 point between dentils, and star 6 nearly does. A light inner circle shows at the dentil tips, most apparent at left and right. Date is large, moderately spaced, with a long point at top of 1, club-topped 2, and 0 slightly high and tilted left. Sixth star points slightly left of the coronet tip, and the first star is directly off the tip of the bust. Letters LI-ERT are lightly recut.

**Striking Variations:** Early strikes show the obverse inner circle fairly prominently at ★1-5. Comes perfect and heavily lapped. A few examples are from dies so heavily lapped that the date and legend are almost gone.

11



PLS R, PLC NL

**Reverse K:** Key leaves point PC,R, C,NL. Berries are large. Foot of T is below I in UNITED, and the top of this T is joined to the succeeding E. Final S in STATES is low. Feet of ME nearly touch. E of ONE is slightly low and there are two horizontal die scratches below the T of CENT, which is heavily reinforced on its top bar. Extremely faint or missing center dot.

**Discussion:** R2+, rather common in all grades. MS(4-5), AU(6+), XF (many). The 'long-peaked 1' is occasionally popular for its namesake, but usually lives in obscurity. It rarely commands much if any premium.



12



Large Date

**Obverse 12:** Stars 1,2,6,13 point between dentils, stars 4,7,12 nearly do. A light inner circle occasionally shows at the dentil tips at left. The date is large, moderately and evenly spaced. A bold chip shows between the top points of ★4. Sixth star points barely left of the coronet tip. LIBERTY has square-serif letters. L is recut strongly below and at top. Base of E is lightly recut, and R is high.

**Striking Variations:** This variety is commonly found perfect or with both dies heavily lapped. Specimens from lapped dies show letters, dentils, stars, and date figures in lower relief, the chip above ★4 weak or missing, the line joining TE gone, line under CENT weakened and shorter, the lowest curl and the curl at nape of neck open and weak, and the lips apart.

20-12  
Large Date

12



PLS FPR, PLF SPC

**Reverse L:** Key leaves point NR,FPR, SPC,C. C of AMERICA is nearly closed. Berries are large, and all letters are well positioned. Early strikes have a line joining the tops of TE in STATES. No center dot.

**Discussion:** R2+, rather common in all grades. MS(24+), AU(many). Most of the top dozen or so are regularly offered as 65-coins, which they are not. The reverse die of this variety, then heavily rusted, lapped, and cracked, found its way into a lot of scrap steel purchased by Joseph Mickley in the late 1850's and was subsequently used by him and others to produce the "1804 Restrike" cents. See PENNY-WISE (Sept '70) or THE NUMISMATIST (Feb '71) for an excellent presentation of this "business venture", or the discussions of 1823 and 23-RS for more details here.



20-13

Large Date

13



Large Divided Date

**Obverse 13:** Stars 1,2,3,4,7,8,9,11,13 point between dentils, stars 5,10 nearly do. A broad gap appears between the dentils at ★13. A light inner circle, free from the dentil tips, is plainest at left. Date has large figures with club 2. The wide-spaced date 18 20 is diagnostic. The '0' in date has curved inner sides as on the letter 'O' of pre-1819 reverses. This feature is peculiar to only two 1820 obverses — this one and number 1. Sixth star is well left of the coronet tip. Square-serif letters (straight R) are used in LIBERTY on this, on all other large-date 1820's, and on all overdate 1820's. L is boldly doubled below and all around its top, and Y has a doubled upper right pendant. A faint line cuts diagonally through LIBE.

**Striking Variations:** Reported perfect, but all I have seen are cracked through the date and all stars. Since the only known Proof from these dies is from cracked dies, a perfect-die example is doubtful. This variety is usually well centered, almost always crisply struck, and as such is a perennial favorite with type collectors.

**Discussion:** R1-, common in all grades, especially in or near Mint State. MS(many hundreds). At least sixty full

13



PLD PR

**Reverse M:** Key leaves point PR, FPR,R,C-. Leaf-position under D is diagnostic. I of AMERICA is dotted by a dentil. One foot of E in UNITED, A in STATES, and R in AMERICA is broken and manually patched. Berries are slightly larger than the largest seen on any 1819 cent. This feature is common to five of the seven large-date varieties of this year. In CENT the C leans far to the right, E has a long left foot, and N is recut at upper right. The final letter is low in ONE and CENT. Tiny or missing center dot.

70-coins are known, many hundreds of 65's, and likely a few thousand 60's. This variety probably occupied the greater part of two kegs in the Randall hoard (qv), and is one of the commonest and most finely detailed varieties from this hoard. This and the other Randall-hoard varieties were available as late as the 1920's from the Chapmans, mint red, at ten cents each or \$6 per hundred — they bring more today. Though many gem examples of this variety exist, and though such claims have been made for several examples, only one bonafide Proof is known from these dies, last publicly sold in the Morgan sale of 1932.

10



Large Date with Club 2

14



Small Berries

20-14  
Large Date

I

**Obverse 10:** This die appears on varieties 10,14. Stars 4,7,9 point between dentils, stars 1,2,6,10 nearly do. Date is large and moderately spaced, with club-topped 2 and 82 slightly more apart than other figures. Sixth star is a hair right of coronet tip. LIBERTY has L high, R recut left, and T strongly recut to lower right.

**Reverse I:** This die appears on varieties 9,14. Key leaves point C,C,C-, C+. A dentil dots the I of AMERICA. All berries are small, as on the small-date reverses, and it is this feature that sets this large-date reverse apart. Feet of ERI are very close, with I below R. C of CENT is close to E and leans right. No center dot.

**Striking Variations:** This variety is almost always seen on dark planchets, often (but not always) rough. Usually number 14 has reverse rim dished, reverse dentilation very weak or missing, line under CENT nearly gone, and tops of legend drawn to the rim. Reverse die is lapped, with outer leaf under TAT being a raised outline only. Reverse is consistently rotated about thirty degrees left so that the 0 of the date is about in line with the F in OF. The weakened condition of these dies implies that this variety, along with the heavily lapped examples of numbers 11 and 12 may be a remating of old dies in later months or even later years.

**Discussion:** R5-, rare in all grades. MS(2), XF(2), VF(10), F(12+), lower (30-40). This variety was first published by Newcomb (1940) as being 'of highest rarity'. One now comes up at auction every two or three years, but most change hands by private contract. As a distinctive type (Lg Date, Club 2 / Sm Berries), number 14 is sought by a few people beyond those afflicted with the every-variety syndrome. As a rare one, the competition usually drives the price up to 5 to 8 times the common-1820 price — occasionally even a bit more, depending on the relative determinations of buyer and seller.



14



Small Date, I at Top Line

**Obverse 14:** Star 3 points between dentils, stars 2,11,12 nearly do. An inner circle is free from the dentil tips at left and under them at right. The small date is evenly and moderately spaced. Sixth star points at the coronet tip. In LIBERTY, L is strongly doubled below and recut at its top. The top of T rests almost on the upper coronet line (diagnostic). The coronet baseline often seen under ER is complete from B to Y on this die. Tiny center dot before ear. LIBERTY has curly tailed R on obverses 4,5,6,8,14 of 1820.

**Striking Variations:** No cracks seen, though nicer examples show extensive fine die-rust uniformly over both dies. Later examples show dentilation weakening on both sides, the dentils and inner circle at left joined into one serrated mass, reverse rim dishing, legend tops drawn to the rim, crumbling in the angles of the N's in ONE CENT, and center dot missing.

15



Dotted I's

**Reverse N:** Key leaves point C,NR,SPC,NR. Both I's are dotted by a dentil. In AMERICA, the foot of E is above that of R. NE of ONE are more apart than usual. Tiny or missing center dot.

**Discussion:** R2+, rather common in all grades, especially so in Mint State. MS(hundreds). A single 70-coin has been confirmed. I know of over two dozen 65's and at least a few hundred 60's. This variety may have been a minor adjunct to the Randall hoard, similar to the status of number 9 of 1819. The collector of low grade cents will find this a slightly more difficult variety than will the connoisseur of choice coins. The high-T 1820 commands no premium.

# 1821

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In 1821 Mexico, including the provinces of California and Texas, declared her independence from Spain. Guatemala and Peru followed suit, and Simon Bolivar added Ecuador and Venezuela to his list of liberations. Missouri became the twenty-fourth state, a slave state. The first tuition-free public high school opened in Boston, and a new magazine “The Saturday Evening Post” began publication. Englishman Michael Faraday pioneered the electric motor, and Napoleon died in exile on St. Helena Island. That he was a victim of systematic arsenic poisoning will not be proven until over 160 years later.

Mint records show 389,000 cents delivered in 1821, and it’s anybody’s guess as to how many bore what dates, or for how many years the 1821 date was struck. From current survival figures, it is likely that nearly a million or more 1821’s were coined. To keep the emission sequence proposal simple lets call it 1,2.

Collectors can go blind trying to distinguish 1821 cents by date width, though they have been listed that way for a century or so. Fortunately, other features make the difference blaringly apparent. The “wide date” 1821 cent has a bold inner circle on the obverse, while the “close date” has little or none. The “close date” is mated with

an unused square-serif reverse — a style discarded two years earlier — while the “wide date” uses the then-conventional Century style reverse.

Both varieties are common in anything but Mint State, and one is even rather common (but still expensive) in that grade. The six finest non-Proof 1821 cents came from a cache of seven cents taken from the cornerstone of a Boston building erected in 1821 and torn down in 1981. As Proof cents go, both varieties are “common” in Proof — one quite so (around two dozen pieces known).

Cents of 1821 are easy to find in low grades by the hundred, yet they are priced higher than any other year around them besides the 1823. Pressure from date collectors has been cited as the source for this pricing, but I doubt it. To be priced as 1821 cents are priced, they should be hard to find — they are not. It may be the number “389,000” coupled with the illogic that says “there were only 1,193,000 cents struck in Denver in 1914, so that cent is rare” (in truth, it is not), or “a 1903-O dollar was worth \$1500 in 1962 when silver was worth \$1.29 an ounce, so it must have gone to \$60,000 in January, 1980, when silver hit \$51.60 an ounce” (in truth it went to \$110). In short, low grade cents of 1821 are overpriced.







No IC

1



A

Square-serif Letters

**Obverse 1:** Stars 2,7,9,11,12 point between dentils, star 5 nearly does. Nice early-strike examples show only the faintest traces of inner circle remnants at left and from below 21 to the last star, though most show none at all. This is the so-called “close date”, but the date-width variation between the two varieties of this year is extremely minimal. Sixth star points a hair below the coronet tip. LIB-ERTY has the top of T well above R. A tiny center dot appears just in front of the ear.

**Striking Variations:** Light dentil-fusing develops between ★6-7. This spreads to ★5-7 as a horizontal reverse crack develops through the first I, wreath, ribbon, wreath, C, to the rim over the final I. This is followed by an obverse crack from the rim over ★1, through the outer points of ★2-3 to the rim before ★4. This crack grows heavy. Finally a near vertical bisecting crack grows between S-O to the left ribbon. This variety has been reported cracked from the rim through ★13 to the hairbun, but I have not seen it thus. Reverse dentilation is usually a shade broader at bottom.

**Discussion:** R1+, common in all grades except Mint State. MS(4-6), AU(14-17), XF(several). Many of the XF's I have seen of this variety have been sold as “AU” or “Unc”. In fact, rarely is an AU

**Reverse A:** This die appears on numbers 1 of 1821 and 14 of 1822. Key leaves point SPC,R,NL,NC. All letters are the old square-serif style discontinued in 1819 (diagnostic). The legend is quite near the wreath. In UNITED, the I is below N and the D is below E. STATES has the first S high and the second low. Feet of AME nearly touch. C in AMERICA is low, tilted left, and very close to the leaf below. Tiny or missing center dot.

1821 offered as less than full MS. In Proof, this is one of the commonest of all pre-1840 cents. Sale records and current reports tally up to nearly two dozen Proof examples of this variety, though undiscovered overlaps will probably cut this to around twenty or less. Still, it is definitely no more than R6 in Proof. The appearance of a discarded reverse style on this high issue Proof striking is inexplicable.

The two finest non-Proof examples of this variety came from the cornerstone of a Boston building that was built in 1821 and torn down in 1981. The cache consisted of two of this and five of the next variety, being sold as lots 58-64 of the Long Beach II sale of 1981. Gary Fitzgerald bought six of the seven cents, letting Ted Naftzger have the other one. Obviously, this one commands no variety premium.



2

**Strong IC**

**Obverse 2:** Stars 8,10 point between dentils, stars 2,3,4,7,11,13 nearly do. An inner circle shows quite strongly at left, weaker at right, just inside the tips of the dentils. The 2 is well positioned, if anything a touch low. This is the so-called "wide date" of 1821. Sixth star points slightly below the coronet tip. LIBERTY has BE both tilted right and both feet of R high.

**Striking Variations:** Early strikes show a diagonal graver-scratch between the first star and date. This fades as the dentils weaken slightly and the rims begin to dish. The obverse develops minor dentil-fusing between ★6-7.

2

**Century Letters**

**Reverse B:** This die appears on numbers 2 of 1821 and 12 of 1822. Key leaves point SPC,R-,C,C. I of AMERICA is dotted by a dentil. All letters are well positioned, and are the Century type as found on all 1820 cents and later (excepting only the 1821-A,1822-L die). The legend is away from the wreath. Feet of AM are well apart. N of CENT tilts left. Center dot is tiny or missing.

**Discussion:** R1, common in all grades but Mint State, and fairly so there. MS(11-27), AU(15+), XF(several). The best four pieces are from the Boston cache (lots 61,64,63,60 — see discussion, variety 1). In spite of the high census for both 1821 varieties, they are still not easy to find in XF or better. And when a high-grade one is offered, it usually sells dearly. I know of anywhere from three to eight Proof examples of number 2. Between the two varieties, 1821 is the most common year for Proof cents before 1840. Neither 1821 variety draws a premium.

# 1822

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In 1822 French Egyptologist Champollion deciphered the Rosetta Stone, opening ancient Egyptian writings to modern man. Pianist Franz Liszt made his debut at age 11. The European/American separation continued as the ruler of Brazil declared his independence from his father, the king of Portugal. Yellow fever struck New York City. And it was noted that an American family of fourteen could live comfortably on \$3000 a year. Prices aren't the ONLY thing that have changed in the last 170 years!

The year 1822 for large cents has been called "the 1796 of the late dates" because of the number of scarce varieties it offers. A better tag might be "the 1800 of the late dates" because they are so hard to tell apart. Or maybe even "the 1798 of the late dates" because so many old dies were resurrected and used past their time.

There were 2,072,339 cents delivered in 1822, but there is no telling how many of these were dated 1820 or 1821, or for how many more months or years after 1822 the 1822 dies were used. This is a fairly common year for large cents, but there is no hoard available to pour MS examples upon the collecting public. For this year the date collector may insist on an Uncirculated example, but the variety buff takes whatever he can find. And in a few cases that is WELL below MS.

The major-variety collector will be bored with 1822 cents. Once he gets a wide date and a close date he is done — and both types are fairly common. But for the variety collector this year

offers something far richer — a first-rate challenge. Fourteen varieties, including an R8, two R5's, and three R4's provide enough challenge for even the most determined collector.

Attribution of 1822 cents has always been extremely tedious, so some new distinctives were needed. Al Overton's idea of noting star/dentil alignments is fully as useful for large cents as for bust halves, and the use of this tool simplifies 1822 cent attributions for all but the most worn cents. As a generically useful tool, I have extended star-alignment notes to all varieties from 1816 to the first 1834, after which the new narrow-dentil and small-star dies made this feature too hard to distinguish.

The die matings for this year provide one quite lengthy chain, but it doesn't hold up to examination. At every turn the die states are all wrong for any proposed sequence. Careful examination of each variety, tallying of a long list of "this before that" leads to a rather startling conclusion: the regular issue of 1822 followed the same parallel mating scheme used for all other 1820-1826 years. The 10-9, 8-9, 11-13, and 14-8-12-7-13 chains evidently resulted from salvaging scrap dies.

One 1822 obverse was mated with five reverses, all but one of these being worn out dies that had seen earlier service with other mates. The "die chains" to one 1820 reverse, both 1821 reverses, and two other 1822 reverses are, with one exception, rematings of old reverse dies with this one 1822 obverse.



## 1822

It is highly likely that the rarest 1820 cent (20-14) was made at the same session as the last six varieties of 1822, using one 1820 obverse and two 1822 obverses with two 1820 reverses, two 1821 reverses, and two 1822 reverses (all but one of the 1822 obverses being well-worn dies) to produce whatever could be made before these old dies gave out completely. Since a new obverse die of 1822 began this series of matings with other old dies, they were likely struck in 1822.

The arrangement of the first eight "paired die" varieties of 1822 has to be speculative. The sequence chosen

groups like features while keeping those varieties most like 1820's first and those most like 1823's last. The only variety commonly seen in Proof was likely the first coined of the year. Subject to other constraints, the varieties with Stray Hair in the Lowest Lock (hereafter abbreviated "SHILL") are grouped, as are those with the most obvious inner-circle scribemarks. The two unused 1822 dies later repunched to 1823 and 1824 are both close dates and are both quite similar to the varieties chosen to end the paired-die "regular sequence" of 1822. This gives an emission proposal of 10,11,6,4,5,3,2,1,14-8-12-7-13,9.



Close Date

**Obverse 1:** Stars 1,9 point between dentils, star 13 nearly does. Inner circle underneath the dentils, strongest at K9-12. Sixth star points below the coronet tip. Star 8 is strongly recut. The date is very close with 1 a trifle low. Lowest lock has the stray hair (SHILL) first seen on four obverses of 1820. LIBERTY is evenly positioned, with a strong coronet baseline under E and joining feet of TY. Traces of recutting are found below L and above T. No center dot.

**Striking Variations:** Dentilation and remnants of inner circle fade slightly. No cracks seen. Reverse dentilation is almost always broadest at bottom, with obverse dentilation broadest at lower left.



PLC NC

**Reverse A:** Key leaves point SPC,PC,NC,NC. Final S is low. All A's have broad, flat tops, unlike any other reverse before 1824. T of CENT is low. Tiny or missing center dot.

**Discussion:** R3+, fairly scarce in all grades. MS(6-10), AU(15+), XF(several). A purported "Proof" in the 1914 ANS Exposition has been identified as the French:431-Newcomb:545- Starr: 145 coin, not a Proof. Variety 1 commands a small premium as a close date, and a bit more for its scarcity, generally around 2-3X.



2



Close Date

**Obverse 2:** Stars 7,10 point between dentils, star 9 nearly does. Sixth star points below the coronet tip. The date is quite close with 22 below 18. LIBERTY has L and Y recut below, a point reaching up to the left foot of R, and the right foot of Y running heavily into the hair. The coronet baseline is apparent under the E. No center dot.

**Striking Variations:** Found perfect, but more often with crack through outer points of ★7-11 to rim over ★12.

2



PLC R

**Reverse B:** Key leaves point NR,FPR, SPR,R. A light arcline is seen between the bases of S-O and occasionally between D-S. Feet of ER nearly touch, though AM and RI are well apart. Tops of A's come almost to a point as on all other 1822's except variety 1. Final A is far from stem. Tiny center dot.

**Discussion:** R2+, rather common in all grades. MS(18-22), AU(20+), XF(several). The Starr:146 coin was catalogued as a Proof. Breen says yes; Loring/Bland/Robinson say no; I have examined the coin and am undecided. This is the more common of the two unquestioned "Close Date" 1822's. As a variety it commands no premium, but the Close Date generally costs a bit more than does the Wide Date.



22 v. close

3



C

**Obverse 3:** Star 13 points between dentils, stars 2,8,9 nearly do. A strong inner circle appears at left, free from the dentil tips. Sixth star points below the coronet tip. The date is widely spaced with 22 very close and a dentil centered under 1. LIBERTY has L-B-RT lightly recut, feet of LIB successively higher, no baseline under E. Small plain center dot before the ear.

**Reverse C:** Key leaves point C,SPC, C-,C-. A dentil dots the I of AMERICA. In CENT, C tilts right and T is low. Small center dot.

**Striking Variations:** Earliest strikes show a dot high between the TA of STATES. This fades quickly. Though newly-polished and sharp, the obverse die shows many tiny rust pits all over the head. Reverse comes perfect and cracked through base of MERICA to stem. Dentilation on both obverse and reverse is usually slightly broader at right. Dentilation fades slightly.

**Discussion:** R1+, fairly common in all grades. MS(8-10), AU(9+), XF(several). No premium on this one.



4



Moderate Date

4



PLT3 SPR

**Obverse 4:** Stars 1,5,6,9 point between dentils, stars 7,8,13 nearly do. A weak inner circle shows at left, free from the dentil tips. Sixth star points left of the coronet tip. The date is moderately and evenly spaced — a touch closer than on variety 10. The 8 is a bit low. LIBERTY has L recut below, ER feet touching, and no base line under E. Small plain center dot before ear.

**Reverse D:** Key leaves point PC, SPR,SPC,C. Top of I in UNITED is slightly low, with D slightly below E. The leaf at second T of STATES is SPR. Feet of AMERI are all well apart. E of ONE is recut at lower right. N of CENT is tilted left. Tiny center dot.

**Striking Variations:** Reverse rim dishes, most apparent at top. A few pieces show a faint hairline crack from rim midway between 1 and ★1, just missing peak of 1, to bust over 1.

**Discussion:** R2-, rather common in all grades. MS(24+), AU(many). The only Proof example known to me is the Winsor:919-Williams:312-Blaisdell-Naftzger coin. This one draws no variety premium.



Moderate Date

5



E

PLT3 NR

**Obverse 5:** Star 4 points between dentils, stars 6,10,11 nearly do. An inner circle at left is underneath the tips of the dentilation. Sixth star points directly at the coronet tip. The date is moderately and evenly spaced. LIB-ERTY has L recut below, foot of I low, IBE progressively higher, and no baseline under E. Very tiny center dot before the ear.

**Reverse E:** Key leaves point SPC, SPR,C,C. The leaf at second T of STATES is NR. Final letter of ONE and CENT is low. Tiny or missing center dot.

**Striking Variations:** No cracks seen. As the center dot fades, small rust pits develop on the neck. These become extensive.

**Discussion:** R2, rather common in all grades. MS(20+), AU(many). No premium on this one.



6



Wide Date with SHILL

**Obverse 6:** Star 1 points between dentils, stars 2,7,9,10 nearly do. Bold inner circle is well clear of the dentils at left, lightly broken only at the second and sixth stars. Sixth star points left of coronet tip. The date is widely and evenly spaced, with more IC-remnants below 22 to the last star. The lowest lock has the stray hair (SHILL) previously mentioned for some 1820 dies. LIBERTY has the feet of ERT well separated and no baseline under E. Infinitesimal, almost invisible center dot before the ear.

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**Striking Variations:** No cracks seen. Reverse rims begin to dish slightly and both dies develop increasing signs of rust.

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6



PLC NR

**Reverse F:** Key leaves point SPC, SPR, PC, NR. Tops of U and I in UNITED are low. E and N of CENT both tilt left. Tiny center dot.

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**Discussion:** R1+, fairly common in all grades. MS(20+), AU(several). The only Proof example known to me is Mougey:136-HRN:550-Starr: 151. This is the third commonest 1822 cent and commands no premium as a variety.

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**Moderate Date, No SHILL**

**Obverse 7:** This die appears on varieties 14-8-12-7-13. Star 8 points between dentils, stars 9,12 nearly do. Several inner circle segments appear underneath the dentil tips at left. Sixth star points slightly below the coronet tip. The date is moderately spaced with 22 just a trifle closer than other figures. LIBERTY is in low relief and minimally recessed at left, so LIB is generally weak or gone on examples below Fine. LIBERTY has no recutting but for a light line joining the tops of BER. There is no baseline under E. The foot of T is well below the adjacent foot of R and rests directly on the hair. Tiny center dot before the ear.

**Striking Variations:** Obverse is always cracked from rim through ★7, head, BE, to before the ear, though the crack is such a fine hairline that a nice coin may be needed to see it. Reverse fades until leaf under C disappears. Reverse rim continues to dish further.



**Ghost Leaf at C**

**Reverse G:** This die appears on number 2 of 1820 and 7 of 1822. Key leaves point R,FPR,NR,PC, the second and third positions being diagnostic. UN overlap at top, ED bases almost touch. The E of STATES appears to be grossly oversized. The outer leaf under ME is weak and the leaf under C is a phantom outline only. N of CENT is slightly low, and the line under CENT is thin. Center dot is weak or missing.

**Discussion:** R4-, quite scarce in all grades. AU(2-3), XF(7), VF(30+). Though a few borderline Unc's are known to me (one of them a cleaned Unc), I have seen no true MS examples. At least two of the VF's have been sold at auction as XF's, and most of the XF's have been sold as AU's. The ghost leaf 1822 is of comparable scarcity and popularity to numbers 8 and 12 and commands about the same 3-4X premium.



7



Moderate Date, No SHILL

**Obverse 7:** This die appears on varieties 14-8-12-7-13. Star 8 points between dentils, stars 9,12 nearly do. Several inner circle segments appear underneath the dentil tips at left. Sixth star points slightly below the coronet tip. The date is moderately spaced with 22 just a trifle closer than other figures. LIBERTY is in low relief and minimally recessed at left, so LIB is generally weak or gone on examples below Fine. LIBERTY has no recutting but for a light line joining the tops of BER. There is no baseline under E. The foot of T is well below the adjacent foot of R and rests directly on the hair. Tiny center dot before the ear.

**Striking Variations:** Obverse always has crisp dentilation and is usually unbroken. Reverse shows isolated rust pits around F-A, comes with and without a hairline crack through tops UNITED STATES OF AMER. Later a faint bisecting crack develops left of F through E of ONE, N of CENT, left ribbon, to rim. Finally, a faint obverse crack develops through ★7 toward the head, and two pairs of dentils begin to fuse together over ST.

8



PLD NC

**Reverse H:** This die appears on varieties 8-9. Key leaves point NC, SPC,C,C. Dentil dots A of STATES, another the I of AMERICA. R is below the preceding E. In CENT, C leans right, ENT are progressively lower (diagnostic). Small center dot.

**Discussion:** R4, quite scarce, especially in top grades. AU(1), XF(3-4), VF(15+), F(15+). The Hines-Clarke-Naftzger coin is a Proof. A few of the VF's have claims to XF but for problems. The Sawicki-64ANA:150 coin (as MS, N-8) was number 5, not this variety. In 1954 the Davis-Steinberger supplement to Newcomb listed a "new variety" with "Obv. N7/Rev.New". The reverse description matched N-8 perfectly, which makes it N-8. The real punch line was their concluding comment — "resembles N-8". This is the fourth scarcest 1822, the scarcest normally obtainable, and commands a variety premium of around 3-4X in grades below VF — and more in higher grades.



Wide Date with SHILL

9



Dentil-Crumbling Over ST

**Obverse 8:** This die appears on varieties 10-9. Stars 1,2,9,11 point between dentils, stars 3,10 nearly do. Several disjointed segments of inner circle appear at the left, free from the dentils. Sixth star points left of the coronet tip. Date is evenly and rather widely spaced. This die has the Stray Hair in Lowest Lock, but not as clearly cut as on the other three SHILL dies of this year. There is no baseline under E, and IB are much closer at their bases than are LI or BE. L is slightly high. A tiny center dot may show before the ear.

**Striking Variations:** Obverse rarely shows any trace of the inner circle remnants at left. More often than not the obverse rim is slightly broader at top. Obverse rim begins to dish at top. Light dentil-fusing begins over ST (diagnostic). The faint bisecting crack left of F, through E of ONE, N of CENT, to ribbon, and the hairline through tops of UNITED are constant, but the light crack over TES becomes heavier, finally growing into a retained cud involving the tops of TES. The die-piece above TES likely never fell from the press, as this area suffers a gradual sinking similar to the failure suffered by number 2 of 1818 and number 10 of 1830. On well over half the known

**Reverse H:** This die appears on varieties 8-9. Key leaves point NC, SPC,C,C. Dentil dots A of STATES, another the I of AMERICA. R is below the preceding E. In CENT, C leans right, ENT are progressively lower (diagnostic). Small center dot.

specimens the coins are too worn and the cracks too faint to see without careful study, so the dentil-fusing over ST is the quickest identifier.

**Discussion:** R5, rare in all grades, unknown above XF. XF(2), VF(6), F(5), VG(11), G(26+), AG(8+). Old auction records list unverified and since-untraced examples in "Unc", "AU", and "XF". The best ones I've been able to confirm are Downing: 2156-Blaisdell-Naftzger and GWrubel-Naftzger. The Clapp-ANS coin and five others I've seen are VF, and from there they get worse fast. Over the past thirty years I have shot down almost three dozen misattributed 1822's purporting to be this variety. This is the rarest 1822 listed by Newcomb and collectors have clamored after it for decades. In grades below Fine it readily brings a 20-25X premium. Above Fine the going gets rough — the seller sets his price and the buyer pays it or goes without.



8



Wide Date with SHILL

**Obverse 8:** This die appears on varieties 10-9. Stars 1,2,9,11 point between dentils, stars 3,10 nearly do. Several disjointed segments of inner circle appear at the left, free from the dentils. Sixth star points left of the coronet tip. Date is evenly and rather widely spaced. This die has the Stray Hair in Lowest Lock, but not as clearly cut as on the other three SHILL dies of this year. There is no baseline under E, and IB are much closer at their bases than are LI or BE. L is slightly high. A tiny center dot may show before the ear.

**Striking Variations:** Reverse is struck boldest at bottom, reverse rim dishes at top. Obverse is generally well centered and evenly struck. Inner circle traces fade as the dies wear. Both dies develop minor rust pits. This variety sometimes comes with the reverse crossways, rotated a quarter turn left.

10



I1 Dotted, PLS NR

**Reverse I:** Key leaves point C+,NR, C,C-. A dentil dots the I of UNITED, which is lower than the adjacent N. In CENT, the E tilts right, N left. Center dot is small, fades on later strikes.

**Discussion:** R1, common in all grades. MS(16+), AU(many). I know of six to nine Proofs. About half of these have known pedigrees into the 1800's. This variety shares the "most common" honors with number 11, between the two accounting for over half of all 1822 cents. Obviously it commands no premium as a variety.



Wide Date with SHILL

11



First I Dotted, PLS SPC

J

**Obverse 9:** Star 4 points between dentils, stars 3,11,12 nearly do. The strong inner circle is unbroken at left and is barely free from the dentil tips. Sixth star points a bit left of the coronet tip. Date is widely and fairly evenly spaced, with a dentil centered under the 1. This die shows boldly the Stray Hair in Lowest Lock (SHILL) first seen on some 1820 dies. LIBERTY has L low, a strong baseline under E, feet of ER joined, and foot of T slightly below R-Y. Small, bold center dot before the ear.

**Reverse J:** This die appears on varieties 11,13. Key leaves point C, SPC,C-,C. I of UNITED is dotted by a dentil, and the top of the following T is tilted to appear high at left and low at right. Top of E in STATES is well above the adjacent T. Foot of I is lower than the adjacent R. T of CENT is low. Small, plain center dot.

**Striking Variations:** No cracks seen. Dentilation fades and both dies begin to show signs of rust.

**Discussion:** R1, common in all grades. MS(18+), AU(8+), XF(several). If anything, this is even a little more common than number 10. It commands no variety premium.



7



Moderate Date, No SHILL

12



PLD SPC, PLS R-

**Obverse 7:** This die appears on varieties 14-8-12-7-13. Star 8 points between dentils, stars 9,12 nearly do. Several inner circle segments appear underneath the dentil tips at left. Sixth star points slightly below the coronet tip. The date is moderately spaced with 22 just a trifle closer than other figures. LIBERTY is in low relief and minimally recessed at left, so LIB is generally weak or gone on examples below Fine. LIBERTY has no recutting but for a light line joining the tops of BER. There is no baseline under E. The foot of T is well below the adjacent foot of R and rests directly on the hair. Tiny center dot before the ear.

**Reverse K:** This die appears on numbers 2 of 1821 and 12 of 1822. Key leaves point SPC,R-,C,C. I of AMERICA is dotted by a dentil. All letters are well positioned. The legend is away from the wreath. Feet of AM are well apart. N of CENT tilts left. Center dot is tiny or missing.

**Striking Variations:** Reverse die has been lapped, so the outer leaf under ME is distinctively hollow, with a high, raised rim and nothing inside. Obverse always comes lightly cracked from rim through star 7, usually through head, BE, to curl before the ear. Reverse is uncracked, but the rim dishes quite noticeably at the top. Reverse is usually slightly bolder at bottom, obverse is almost always evenly struck. This variety is occasionally found with reverse crossways, rotated a quarter-turn left.

**Discussion:** R4- quite scarce but not rare. MS(3-5), AU(2+), XF(6+), VF(many). The queen of the lot, Beckwith-French-DuPont-Naftzger, may be a Proof. It was so listed in the 1914 ANS Exhibition catalog. Two or three of the AU's have been auctioned as MS. As a scarce and popular variety, number 12 brings about the same 3-4X premium as numbers 7 and 8.



13

Moderate Date, No SHILL



J

First I Dotted, PLC C

**Obverse 7:** This die appears on varieties 14-8-12-7-13. Star 8 points between dentils, stars 9,12 nearly do. Several inner circle segments appear underneath the dentil tips at left. Sixth star points slightly below the coronet tip. The date is moderately spaced with 22 just a trifle closer than other figures. LIBERTY is in low relief and minimally recessed at left, so LIB is generally weak or gone on examples below Fine. LIBERTY has no recutting but for a light line joining the tops of BER. There is no baseline under E. The foot of T is well below the adjacent foot of R and rests directly on the hair. Tiny center dot before the ear.

**Striking Variations:** The ★7-BE crack is always present, but most examples are too worn to pick it out easily. Obverse dentilation is weakened, with only slight traces remaining of the inner circle at left. Reverse dentilation is weakened, always sharpest at right and missing at left, with the rim dishing at top. The reverse die has been lapped, with a hollow leaf under AT of STATES.

**Discussion:** R5+, very rare in all grades and unknown above XF. XF(1), VF(2), F(3), VG(9), G(14), AG(10). Willard Blaisdell discovered the

**Reverse J:** This die appears on varieties 11,13. Key leaves point C, SPC, C-,C. I of UNITED is dotted by a dentil, and the top of the following T is tilted to appear high at left and low at right. Top of E in STATES is well above the adjacent T. Foot of I is lower than the adjacent R. T of CENT is low. Small, plain center dot.

variety in 1947 (VF). His coin is now in the Naftzger collection. Breen found the second one (F) in 1952, auctioned in NN50:1435- Starr:160-JHR:787-DM:311. The third one (XF) went from NShultz to DBland to JReiver in 1968. I turned up the fourth (AG) in 1972. The fifth and sixth (F, G) were found in 1975 by JReiver (to RSBrown) and DPalmer (to RBurress then JCorrado). In the next sixteen years thirty-three more have come to light (about two per year), almost all of them in grades AG to VG. This is an undistinctive variety but is very popular for its rarity. It was the first not-in-Newcomb variety. It draws well into three figures in any grade, but the days of four-figure VG's began to fade when the count passed twenty. There are only so many people that will pay crazy prices for a nondescript large cent — and when those people all have one the price plummets.



7

**Moderate Date, No SHILL**

**Obverse 7:** This die appears on varieties 14-8-12-7-13. Star 8 points between dentils, stars 9,12 nearly do. Several inner circle segments appear underneath the dentil tips at left. Sixth star points slightly below the coronet tip. The date is moderately spaced with 22 just a trifle closer than other figures. LIBERTY is in low relief and minimally recessed at left, so LIB is generally weak or gone on examples below Fine. LIBERTY has no recutting but for a light line joining the tops of BER. There is no baseline under E. The foot of T is well below the adjacent foot of R and rests directly on the hair. Tiny center dot before the ear.

**Striking Variations:** Obverse die is crisp, new, with bold dentilation and no cracks. Reverse die is lightly cracked horizontally through the first I, wreath, ribbon, wreath, C, to the rim over the final I, and vertically from between S-O to the left ribbon as on the latest examples of number 1 of 1821.

14

**Square-Serif Letters**

**Reverse L:** This die appears on numbers 1 of 1821 and 14 of 1822. Key leaves point SPC,R,NL,NC. All letters are the old square-serif style discontinued in 1819 (diagnostic). The legend is quite near the wreath. In UNITED, the I is below N and the D is below E. STATES has the first S high and the second low. Feet of AME nearly touch. C in AMERICA is low, tilted left, and very close to the leaf below. Tiny or missing center dot.

**Discussion:** R8-, three examples are known to me as of January, 1992. F(1), VG(1), G(1). Dick Punchard discovered the Fine example attributed as N-12 in 6/84, to Wes Rasmussen in 6/89. Jim Long found a Good example in 1/86, to Dan Holmes in 6/86. Don Weathers discovered the third one (VG) in 5/90 at the EAC convention (of all places). No example of this variety has sold at auction to establish a free-market price, but the two private transactions were well into four figures (G) and five figures (F). Value is speculative, but I know several collectors who would pay dearly for one in any grade. The pressure should ease as more turn up.

# 1 8 2 3

---

In 1823 the “Monroe Doctrine” was enunciated, beginning almost a century of political isolation for all western hemisphere nations. Judicial reform in Britain saw the removal of the death penalty from over a hundred offenses. The revolution in Spain was crushed by a French invasion. And a new Christmas poem published in a Troy, NY, newspaper began “Twas the night before Christmas and all through the house...”.

When the date-and-type collector becomes a variety collector, his job is done for 1823 before he begins. There are two (or three) types; there are two (or three) varieties. Mintage of record for 1823 cents is zero, all 1823-dated cents being delivered in 1824 or later.

One overdate and one normal 1823 obverse are known. Since both dies are known to have struck Proofs, it is likely that the Proof-striking is the sole reason for their existence. To some unknown 19th century collector or two we owe the unbrokenness of the cent year-string from 1816 till now. It is a pity that these collectors were not active in 1815.

The number of extant pieces imply a mintage of at least a few hundred thousand 1823-dated cents, but prob-

ably well less than a million. As a year 1823 is scarce, but not overly so. As varieties, “rather common” is the best they would rate. But a true no-problem XF 1823 is really hard to locate at any price.

The relative scarcity of this year was recognized by entrepreneurs Mickley and Cogan even a century ago, when they turned Mickley’s “scrap steel” into an attempted goldmine. The results of this enterprise were, among other things, a questionable “third variety” of 1823 cent.

This “cent” was struck on privately-produced planchets on a privately-owned press outside the mint using discarded-and-sold-for-scrap dies of government manufacture. In spite of the “1823” on its face, the spawn of this illicit venture first saw the light of day some forty to fifty years later. This group includes the half-cent restrike of 1811 and the cent restrikes of “1804” and 1823. Though by now legitimately collectible, this fabrication is only a part of the large cent series by adoption, and the question “adopted child” verses “bastard son” is left to individual collector preference. Since the reverse of the normal-date 1823 reappears on an 1824 variety, the most likely emission order of 1823 cents is 1,2,R.







1823 Over 1822

**Obverse 1:** Stars 7 and 11 point between dentils; stars 2,3,4,5,6,9,10 nearly do. Faint traces of inner circle are seen at the dentil-tips at K9-12. Star 6 points slightly left of coronet tip. The date is evenly spaced, with the 3 cut over an obvious 2, the underfigure being visible at upper left, lower right, and within the 3. The top curl of this 3 cuts back at a much sharper angle than on number 2. LIBERTY is made from carefully-positioned delicately-cut letters with no baseline below them. A wavy raised line runs up the left side of Y.

**Striking Variations:** Generally found perfect though later strikes have several dentils fused from ★1 to ★2 and another section of fusing below the date. The dentil-fusing eventually extends from ★1 up to ★3. Dentilation fades, but remains clear even on late strikes.



Leaf Left of E

**Reverse A:** Key leaves point C, PC, C, NC. The I of UNITED and second T of STATES are each perfectly dotted by a dentil. The leaftip under E(RI) ends before the outer upright of that letter. Center dot is tiny and weak, fades on later strikes.

**Discussion:** R2-, rather common in all grades below XF. MS(3-4), AU(6-10), XF(12+). Several of the XF's and AU's have been sold as "Unc". At least five, possibly six Proofs are known from these dies. As an overdate, number 1 attracts attention outside variety circles. As a one-variety type its variety-value is whatever the type will bring, which is not insignificant — especially so in the top grades.



2



Normal 1823

**Obverse 2:** Stars 1,2,3,4,11 point between dentils; star 10 nearly does. The sixth star points slightly left of the coronet tip. Date is perfect with top curl of 3 pointing southeast. Faint traces of an inner circle are seen at the dentil tips from K9 around to K2, though these fade as the die wears. LIBERTY is boldly punched and irregularly positioned, with a strong coronet baseline under BER. L is recut below and at top, and the top of E is lumpy.

**Striking Variations:** Usually seen with dentils slightly broader at bottom obverse and top reverse. The obverse rim begins to crumble, first fusing a string of dentils between ★4,5 then a few more above star 6. Later these join, with a rimbreak lump between ★5,6. Dentilation begins to fade on both sides, and the reverse rim dishes slightly.

2



Leaf Under Upright of E

**Reverse B:** This die appears on number 2 of 1823 and 5 of 1824. Key leaves point C, NR, C+, C. First T of STATES is perfectly dotted by a dentil. Leaftip is centered under upright of E(RI). CE is slightly above NT. No center dot.

**Discussion:** R2, rather common in all grades below XF. MS(6-7), AU(7-9), XF(12+). Several of the XF's and AU's have been offered as "Unc". One Proof has been traced. As a one-variety type the normal 1823 commands no variety premium. However, as the more expensive of the two types of the key year of the 1816-1857 series, its own merit is grace enough.



Restrike

RS



PLS FPR

23-RS  
Restrike

C

**Obverse 2:** Same die as number 2, now badly rusted and heavily retooled. The hair and ear are especially crude. Rim is grossly broken K10-12, and obverse is usually bisected NW/SE.

**Reverse C:** Same die as 1813 B (S-293), now badly rusted, heavily dished, and often cracked across. Key leaves point R, FPR, SPC, C-.

**Striking Variations:** Flan weight varies widely, usually being around genuine coin weight. Though struck from horridly worn-out dies, the striking is generally sharp, producing mirrorlike coins with wire edges. Comes with both dies uncracked, with obverse bisected NW/SE and a short crack over D, with quadrisecting obverse crack SW from center and reverse crack meandering across the coin from D to R, and finally with other minor cracks besides these major ones.

**Discussion:** R2+, fairly common, generally found in or near MS. This is not a true coin. It is here listed solely for the sake of questionable complete-

ness. Dubbed for nearly a century as the “mint restrike”, this has been known since its manufacture to be a fabrication by private individuals some decades after the fact, using worn-out federal dies which were purchased as scrap steel. Supposedly 49 were struck before the obverse die cracked across. I have seen ten unbisected examples and eight of these had the obverse rimbreak tooled off to try to pass as original 1823 cents. I have seen a half-dozen or so of these struck in silver, all of them being of the latest die state — likely struck in the 1870’s. The story of these tokens is told well in PENNY-WISE (Sept. 1970). They are separately listed in most coin references and bring fairly consistent prices.





# 1824

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In 1824 Sequoya finished creating the Cherokee alphabet of 85 letters. Sequoya's "talking leaf" made his people the first literate tribe of American Indians. Rensselaer Polytech, the first U.S. engineering school, was founded in Troy, NY. The Presidential election in November ended with no candidate having an electoral majority. Firsts for this year included the first covered bridge, the first round barn, and the first Colby cheese.

Mint records show that 1,262,000 cents were delivered in 1824, and it is quite likely that most of them bore that date. With few exceptions, all 1820-1826 cents follow a strict parallel die-mating scheme. The exceptions are the rare "rematings" of 1820-1824 dies, most of which likely occurred in late 1822. The rarest 1824 seems to fit this pattern too, but is dated too late to be included in that group.

After the picayune differences of 1822 and the brevity of 1823, the cents of 1824 should provide a little interest for the collector. Four of the five varieties of this year are discernible at arm's length. One of the five is rare, and two are overdates.

The date-and-major-variety collector need only extend his goal by one coin to aspire for a complete variety collection of 1824. The casual attributor has done over 90% of his work for this year once he has looked at the coin's date — which is a feat not beyond even the contemporary roll-collector. The close date, divided date, and wide date are each represented by a single variety, and the overdate requires only a single additional point of identification for full attribution: check the leaf under C.

A best-guess emission sequence for 1824 would be 1-5,4,3,2, since the 1-5 obverse is an overdate and number 2 comes on a beveled-edge flan characteristic of cents of 1825-1826.







1824 over 22

1



PLC PC

24-1  
1824/2

A

**Obverse 1:** This die appears on numbers 1,5. Stars 1 and 4 point between dentils; stars 7 and 10 nearly do. An inner circle is seen at and under the dentil tips K8-1. Star 6 points slightly left of coronet tip. Date is close, with the 4 cut over a 2. All specimens show the following remnants of a 2 behind the 4: the back curve of the 2 behind the right top of 4, a “chip” left of the left foot, and a large arc-curve outside the upper left side. The lowest lock has the stray hair (SHILL) first seen on some 1820 dies. L is low and is recut below, top of Y is above T, and there is a strong coronet baseline under E. Small center dot before ear.

**Striking Variations:** Obverse has a quite faint crack joining outer points of ★6,7, another from base of 1 to outer point of ★1. These are sufficiently faint that whether they show depends more on the preservation of the coin than on the condition of its dies. Reverse comes perfect, but is usually cracked circumferentially through the bases of the entire legend (except OF). Another light crack runs along the leaves below OF. Dentilation

**Reverse A:** Key leaves point PC, SPR, PC, PC. Tops of ITE are successively higher. A short circumferential chip underlines U. T of CENT is low. Small, weak center dot.

fades slightly on obverse, greatly on reverse, and the reverse center dot disappears.

**Discussion:** R2-, rather common in all but the top grades. MS(3-10), AU(12+), XF(many). The best of the lot is the Helfenstein piece, commonly known as the legendary “Whaaaaat!? penny” from the incredible bid-battle it inspired at the Masters sale in 1971. A second 65 coin may be lurking somewhere if the Penn-Ohio ‘52 coin turns out to be other than the Helfenstein coin. Within the past few years several XF’s and AU’s of this variety have been offered as “Unc” with much ballyhoo, most of them riding on the fame of the Whaaaaat!? cent. Though not a rare variety, this is a member of a popular class which boasts a separate listing in most references. Specifically as a variety it commands no premium.



2



Close Date

2



Broad-Topped A's

**Obverse 2:** Stars 1,6,7,10 point between dentils; star 5 nearly does. Star 6 points at coronet tip. Date is close and evenly spaced. L is recut below; feet of LIB are successively higher. Tiny center dot before ear.

**Reverse B:** Key leaves point NR, SPC, PC, C. The A in STATES is slightly high, and all A's have broad, flat tops as on the last-struck "regular-series" cent of 1822 (22-1). Center dot is tiny or missing.

**Striking Variations:** Dentilation fades and practically disappears. Reverse center dot fades out. A few small rust pits develop on the neck. Both N's and E's of ONE CENT begin to develop crumbling in their corners. A fine crack runs through ★9 toward hair. This variety comes on beveled-edge flans as seen on all cents of 1825 and three varieties of 1826.

**Discussion:** R1, the most common 1824 cent. MS(36+), AU(many). No coin stands out as finest. The Close-Date 1824 commands no premium as a variety.



3

### Divided Date

**Obverse 3:** Stars 5 and 6 point between dentils; stars 11 and 12 nearly do. A strong inner circle is seen at left, completely free from the dentils. Sixth star points to coronet tip — if anything, maybe a hair to the right. Date is close but divided 18 24, with 2 a bit low. This is another SHILL-die showing the stray hair quite boldly in the lowest lock. RT almost touch top and bottom. Small center dot before ear.



C

**Reverse C:** Key leaves point C+, SPR, NR, PC. T of CENT is low. Center dot is tiny or missing — usually missing.

**Striking Variations:** No cracks seen. Earlier strikes have the inner circle nearly complete, continuing under the dentil tips at right. Dentilation fades slightly on both sides.

**Discussion:** R3, scarce but not rare. MS(7-10), AU(6+), XF(12+). The divided date 1824 is mildly distinctive, mildly popular, and often, but not always brings a slight premium — usually no more than 1.5X or so.



4



Wide Date

4



**Obverse 4:** Stars 3 and 11 point between dentils; stars 1,4,5 nearly do. Sixth star points slightly left of coronet tip. Date is widely and evenly spaced. This is the last SHILL-die of the series. Though not as bold as on some other dies, the stray hair shows on most examples down to VG or so. L of LIBERTY is NOT low (which is unusual), E has a broken topbar, and ER are below B-T. Small center dot before ear.

**Reverse D:** Key leaves point PC, PR, NR, R. In OF, the O is low. Tiny or missing center dot.

**Striking Variations:** Early strikes show a light inner circle at the dentil tips at left. Obverse comes perfect, but usually is cracked from crossbar of 4 through outer points of last three stars. A lighter crack joins outer point star 5 to inner point star 6. Dentilation fades considerably on both dies, nearly disappearing, and reverse rim dishes.

**Discussion:** R1, common in all grades. MS(20+), AU(several). The wide-date 1824 is slightly less common than the close date, but commands no premium as a variety.



1824 over 22

5



PLC C

24-5  
1824/2

E

**Obverse 1:** This die appears on numbers 1,5. Stars 1 and 4 point between dentils; stars 7 and 10 nearly do. An inner circle is seen at and under the dentil tips K8-1. Star 6 points slightly left of coronet tip. Date is close, with the 4 cut over a 2. All specimens show the following remnants of a 2 behind the 4: the back curve of the 2 behind the right top of 4, A “chip” left of the left foot, and a large arc-curve outside the upper left side. The lowest lock has the stray hair (SHILL) first seen on some 1820 dies. L is low and is recut below, top of Y is above T, and there is a strong coronet baseline under E. Small center dot before ear.

**Striking Variations:** No new cracks seen, but the die is now generally worn and lacks the crispness it once had. The faint obverse cracks may or may not show, but the fading of fine die detail shows this to be a used die, later than its use on number 1.

**Reverse E:** This die appears on number 2 of 1823 and 5 of 1824. Key leaves point C, NR, C+, C. With the 1824 overdate, PLC centered is diagnostic. First T of STATES is perfectly dotted by a dentil. Leaf tip is centered under upright of E(RI). CE is slightly above NT. No center dot.

**Discussion:** R4+, rare in all grades, especially above VF. MS(2), AU(1), XF(1), VF(12+), F(12+). This variety was first published by Newcomb (1940) as being ‘extremely rare’. The ANS piece and one in a New York collection stand alone in the Uncirculated class, the latter being the better of the two. Over 80 examples have been identified to date. As a rare and popular variety, number 5 commands a premium over its more common look-alike, usually around 10X or so, depending on the relative determinations of buyer and seller.





# 1825

In 1825 the Erie Canal was opened, connecting the Hudson River to the Great Lakes. The canal cost eight million dollars and was 363 miles long, forty feet wide, and four feet deep. Freight rates from the midwest dropped instantly from \$100 per ton to \$5 per ton. Syracuse, Rochester, Buffalo, Cleveland, Detroit, and the 70-man garrison at Chicago became boom towns. The New York Stock Exchange opened, trading in canal, turnpike, and mining stocks. John Q. Adams was elected President by the House of Representatives. Bolivia and Uruguay became independent nations, and Buckingham Palace was created out of Buckingham House.

Mint records show 1,461,000 cents delivered in 1825. As a fairly common year, the number of 1825-dated cents struck in this or succeeding years was probably around that figure. The cents of 1825 offer the classifier a fairly simple task, providing he can recognize variation in two letter punches - the 'A' and 'F' on the reverse. The nine varieties of this year fall into three classes of three varieties each, based on variations in these two letters. The first (small A) group has all A's undersized — this being the most apparent on the A of STATES. The second (normal) group has larger A's matching the other letters and an F whose topbar is normally proportioned. The third (long F) group has the F-topbar disproportionately long. The parallel-mating practice continued in 1825 makes any actual emission-sequence impossible to discover, so the groups and the varieties within the groups are arranged by similarities.

All 1825 cents are struck on the beveled flans seen on the last 1824's and the first 1826's. The E in LIBERTY is broken on six of the nine obverses of this year, as is the N used on three of the reverse dies. Unfortunately, the usual "first perfect, then broken" logic fails us here, since the broken N occurs primarily with perfect-E obverses of 1825 and broken-E obverses of 1826, while the perfect-N dies commonly appear with the broken-E obverses of 1825. If all this seems confusing, that's just because it is. In short, any sequence-proposal has several contradictions. The most logical sequence seems to be 8,3,6,1,7,9,10,4,2. The 1825 variety groups are as follows:

Small A's	8,3,6
Normal A's	
Normal F	1,7,9
Long F	10,4,2

The only variety commonly seen in Proof (number 9) may have been the first struck, but not necessarily. In the tabulation it was placed sixth for design considerations. Proof examples of two other varieties of this year have been catalogued, but both are unconfirmed and doubtful.

Though this year boasts no overdates, it does supply at least two "unusual" varieties — one with square-serif letters in LIBERTY (number 8) and one with a strangely repunched date digit (number 7). The former uses a letter-style discarded five years previous, and the latter shows a rotated but perfect 5-punch corrected with a well-positioned but broken 5-punch.



1825 provides our first example of a "missing variety". In 1881 Frank Andrews published ten varieties of this year, yet in 1940 Howard Newcomb knew of only nine, the A-5 variety being unknown to him. In 1954, the Davis/Steinberger supplement published "the long-lost Andrews 5" as having the obverse of N4 and reverse of N10. These two varieties are similar and have often been confused. No

such coin has been seen by a cent specialist or reported from any other source, so this report by D/S is likely another of their numerous errors. The specific coin from which Andrews made his "A-5" listing is a boldly-struck number 10, later in the Blaisdell collection, so the "long-lost Andrews 5" is a fiction — one of Andrews' few mistakes.



Extremely Close Date

**Obverse 1:** Stars 3,10,13 point between dentils; star 8 nearly does. Sixth star points at coronet tip. Date is extremely close — the closest of the year. LIBERTY has LI-Y recut, topbar of E broken, ER feet joined, and left top of Y above T.

1



A

Normal A+F, S-O wider than F-A

**Reverse A:** Key leaves point NR, PR, R, PC. Large A's, short topbar of F. UNITED has U and D low. Space between S-O is wider than that between F-A. Foot of A above adjacent M, feet of MERI are all quite close. Small center dot.

**Striking Variations:** The beveled edges usually show clearly on this variety, which almost always comes on dark, rough flans. Obverse rim is boldest at right and bottom, reverse boldest at right with tops of UNITED STATES usually unprotected. Crumbling shows atop C of CENT. Obverse comes perfect, but usually is cracked through base of date to rim under ★1 and midway 5 and last star. In its later stages an obverse rimbreak extends into the field over ★8 to ★9, similar (though differently positioned)

to that seen on the hoard-variety I816. And finally a large rimbreak buries three points of ★7, extending from just past ★6 almost to ★8, and a smaller rimbreak encroaches between ★10,11.

**Discussion:** R4+, quite scarce, nearly rare. MS(1), AU(2), XF(5-6), VF(20-25). This is a tough one to find, and it always commands a premium — generally around 3-4X.



2



Moderate Date, No IC

2



Long F, PLS PR

**Obverse 2:** Stars 2,8,11 point between dentils; stars 3,7,9,12 nearly do. Sixth star points at coronet tip. Date is moderately spaced, slightly more closely than on number 4. All letters of LIBERTY are boldly punched and only the BE are recut. ER feet are close, topbar of E is broken, and T is low.

**Reverse B:** Key leaves point PC, PR, SPR, PC. U is low and all N's are broken as described for number 4. Center dot is medium-to-small, but in low relief.

**Striking Variations:** Edge beveling is usually quite evident. Reverse rim dishes slightly and reverse center dot fades. Hairline crack grows from rim through tip of 1 to bust tip. Another goes from nostril through eye, I, head, rightmost tip of ★7, to rim. Later a light reverse crack grows from rim through stem and ribbon, eventually extending to E of CENT. Obverse rim develops considerable crumbling from below the date to ★3-4.

**Discussion:** R2+, rather common in all grades. MS(18+), AU(several). French:451 purported to be a Proof, but was not. This is a much higher census than for the comparable variety 4, which may partially explain why number 2 usually brings less than number 4. Number 2 draws no variety premium.



Close Date, Star 6 SL

**Obverse 3:** Stars 4,5,9,10 point between dentils; stars 11 and 12 nearly do, though dentilation rarely shows all the way around the obverse. Sixth star points slightly left of the coronet tip. Date is closely and evenly spaced. First star is well below the bust tip, unlike the other close-date variety in this group. IB are joined at bases, ER nearly so, and the E has a broken top-bar. Right feet of TY are thicker than left.

**Striking Variations:** This variety is generally struck on flans of very slightly smaller diameter than other varieties around it. The dentilation is rarely complete on either side, and the sections that do show generally run into the beveled edge. Occasionally found with reverse crossways, rotated right. Light crumbling develops atop E2, E3. Reverse begins to dish. Delicate cracks grow from the rim between 1 and the first star to bust and from right top of 5 to lowest hairlock.



Small A's, E in CENT High

**Reverse C:** Key leaves point SPC, SPR, C, SPC. Small A's, short F. I of UNITED is dotted by a dentil. Foot of the other I is well below the preceding R. E in CENT is high. Medium, plain center dot.

**Discussion:** R3, only slightly scarce in all grades but MS. MS(9-12), AU(7+), XF(several). This one draws no premium as a variety.



4



Moderate Date, Strong IC

**Obverse 4:** Stars 2 and 7 point between dentils; star 1 nearly does. A strong inner circle, free from the dentil tips, appears at K9-12, with weaker remnants elsewhere. Star 6 points at coronet tip. Date is moderately spaced. In LIBERTY the L and foot of T are low, L and Y are grossly recut at tops, IBE-T less spectacularly so. IB bases are very close, and ER bases touch. There is a heavy coronet baseline below the E, which is not broken at the topbar, and the left foot of T touches the hair below.

**Striking Variations:** Usually seen glossy with beveled edge evident. E of CENT strikes weakly, but less so than on number 10. Comes unbroken and with faint crack from 1 through stars 1-6, another through stars 7-9, another through stars 11-13 to right side of 5. Faint reverse crack joins bases of RICA to ribbon, and an even fainter one grows from the wreath below FA thru E of ONE to N of CENT. Light die-rust develops on and around wreath at TES OF AMER. Reverse rim begins to dish lightly. A "terminal die state"

4



Long F, Legend Nearer Wreath

**Reverse D:** Key leaves point C, SPC, SPC, SPC. The rightmost tip of the left foot of all N's is broken off, and all N-punches show a nick at the top of the left upright. In ONE the O is slightly high. Tiny center dot.

example with "heavy break thru ★12 to head" appeared in EAC89:272-DM:328. This was a damaged, bent coin that lacks the cracks and other features of a late number 4. I have examined the coin carefully and am convinced that the "break" is a damage to the coin.

**Discussion:** R3, only slightly scarce in all but the highest grades. MS(2-3), AU(7-8), XF(8+), VF(many). This is a surprisingly low count of high-grade pieces for so common a variety. Though slightly less scarce than number 10, this one draws the same 1.5-2X premium.



5

### Moderate Date 5 Under Curl

**Obverse 4:** This die appears on numbers 4-5. Stars 2 and 7 point between dentils; star 1 nearly does. A strong inner circle, free from the dentil tips, appears at K9-12, with weaker remnants elsewhere. Star 6 points at coronet tip. Date is moderately spaced. In LIBERTY the L and foot of T are low, L and Y are grossly recut at tops, IBE-T less spectacularly so. IB bases are very close, and ER bases touch. There is a heavy coronet baseline below the E, which is not broken at the topbar, and the left foot of T touches the hair below. Lowest curl is high above 5 and does NOT extend over 2. Outer star points are moderately away from the dentils, especially stars 1, 2, 11, 12. A line between the farthest points of stars 1,13 cuts the lowest curl BELOW its center. On obverse 9 this line cuts the lowest curl ABOVE its center.

**Striking Variations:** The only example seen as of January 2012 is from a lapped obverse die, with the lowest and back curl weaker than normal. The faint obverse cracks sometimes seen on variety 4 do not show on this coin, likely due to its well worn condition.



E

### PLF C- Recut N(T)

**Reverse E:** This die appears on numbers 5-10. Key leaves point C, PC, C-, SPC. The legend is much closer to the dentils above than to the wreath below. O in OF is lightly recut at left and below. F-A are unusually close. A triangular chip appears left of the innermost leaf under D. In ONE the O tilts right, N left. The N in CENT is grossly recut, most obvious at upper right. Small center dot.

**Discussion:** R8+, as of January 2012 known by a single example. G(1). Published in 1883 by Frank Andrews with an extremely minimal description. Andrews' description of his 'E' and 'J' reverses are so similar that they likely both refer to the same die. I have chosen to designate that die as 'E' (its first appearance). Andrews did not own this variety, though the Blaisdell "A5" (which turned out to be variety 10) claimed to be "ex Andrews". Newcomb de-listed the variety in his 1940 work because nobody he knew had ever seen a coin to match the A5 listing. It took 128 years for the first confirmed example of A5 to be identified. Discovered by Tom Deck as an eBay cherry in December 2011.



## UPDATE

For a better example of A5, verify the moderately spaced (not wide) date with curl fully over 5, stars NOT nearly touching dentils, reverse legend almost touching dentils, PLF not quite to center of F, recut right top of N in CENT, and chip at innermost leaf under D. On a worn example, only the width and position of

the date and stars (see star 1,12 note above), and the leaf tip positions, inner recutting and chip will show. The value of a unique item can only be speculative, but with the current level of interest in large cent die varieties it should prove to be quite substantial.

4



4



5

9



10



\*\*\* There Is No Number 5 \*\*\*

The coin listed by Frank Andrews as his number 5 (4-E) is an early-state number 10. The specific coin from which Andrews made his “A-5” listing

is a boldly-struck number 10, later in the Blaisdell collection, so the “long-lost Andrews 5” is a fiction — one of Andrews’ few mistakes.



5



Close Date, Sixth Star R

**Obverse 5:** Stars 3 and 8 point between dentils; stars 6 and 12 nearly do. Sixth star points right of the coronet tip. Early strikes may show traces of an inner circle at the dentil tips at stars 1-4. Date is closely and evenly spaced, with stars far from it. The first star is far left of the bust tip. LIBERTY is boldly punched, with BER-Y strongly doubled. Bases of BER touch, and E has a broken topbar. Tiny, weak center dot before ear.

**Striking Variations:** Beveled edges are usually evident. Dentilation begins to fade minimally, reverse begins to dish, light crumbling is seen atop C of CENT, and reverse center dot disappears. Hairline crack develops from wreath through N of ONE to N of CENT.

6



**Reverse F:** Key leaves point C, SPC, C-, C+. Small A's, short F. Several rust lumps appear below TE of STATES. In OF, O is low. In ONE, O is high and tilts right. In CENT, CE are widely separated, with C tilted right and E tilted left. Tiny or missing center dot.

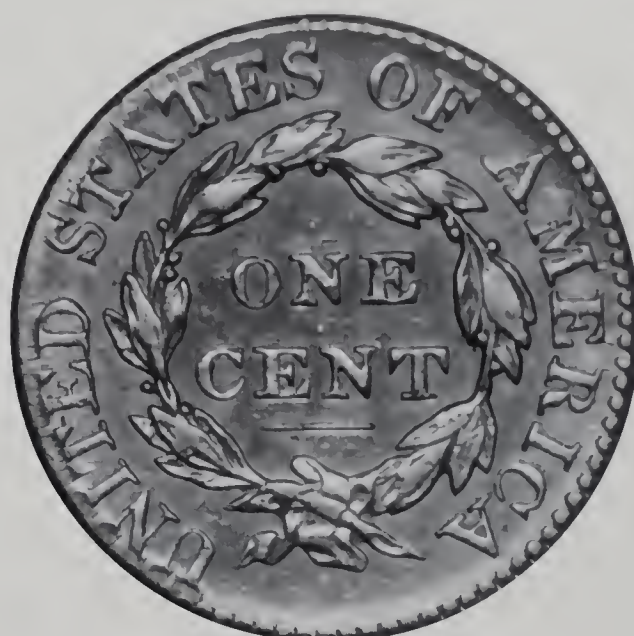
**Discussion:** R2, rather common in all grades. MS(11-14), AU(several). Two Proofs have been reported but are unverified (one ex French) — both are doubtful. Number 6 elicits no premium as a variety.

6



Repunched 5

7



Normal A+F, PLF PR

G

**Obverse 6:** Stars 6,13 point between dentils; stars 8,9,10,12 nearly do. Sixth star points to coronet tip. Date is evenly and moderately spaced, with the 5 doubled-punched. The 5 was first punched tilted left, then repunched normally. The undercut 5 is perfect, and the overpunched 5 is broken, lacking the right half of its topbar. LIBERTY has L low, IB almost touching, L-E-T recut, and the crossbar of E broken and manually repaired.

**Reverse G:** Key leaves point NR-, PR, PR, PC. Large A's, short F. ED almost touch at bottom. C in AMERICA is low. E of ONE shows strong points inside from pendants of a narrower E. Large, plain center dot.

**Striking Variations:** Often seen on rough flans, but not so consistently as number 4. Edge beveling is lightly evident. All letters of ONE CENT begin to crumble. Obverse dentil-fusing begins at star 11, then spreads to stars 9-11. Light crack extends from rim right of date to hair near star 13. Dentil-fusing continues to develop, eventually extending above stars 4-11 and from date to ★10.

**Discussion:** R2, rather common in most grades. MS(4-5), AU(4+), XF(several). This is a surprisingly low census for so common a cent — though most of the AU's have been sold as MS. The "1825 Doubled 5" commands no premium in spite of its namesake.



7



Square-serif LIBERTY

**Obverse 7:** Stars 1,2,3,11,13 point between dentils; stars 4 and 12 nearly do. Strong remnants of an inner circle are seen off the dentil tips at left. This feature is commonly seen on three varieties of 1825 cents — oddly enough, one from each of the three groups. Star 6 points to coronet tip or a hair to the right of it. The date is moderately spaced, with 8 high and 25 closer. The final star has a small spike from the left side of its lowest point. LIBERTY is from a set of square-serif punches, but this is a different letter-set than the one discarded in 1820. The letters are finer, less massive, and have longer, more angular serifs than even the original square-serif letter-set. L is low and recut at left and above, feet of IB touch, and feet of RTY are especially long. A light coronet baseline underlines E.

**Striking Variations:** The beveled rims are rarely evident on this variety. Obverse comes perfect, then with a faint hairline crack from tip of coronet through ★6 left of its center and to the rim from the leftmost point of that star. Obverse dentilation weakens and

8



Small A's, PLF NR

**Reverse H:** Key leaves point SPC, PR, NR, PC. All A's are small and the F-top is short. The tail of R is unusually blobby. C of CENT leans right. Small, plain center dot.

mushes out. The inner circle fuses with the rim, dentilation begins to crumble between ★11,12. A hairline crack grows up the left side of I in LIBERTY, turning sharply right at the top of the I to run toward the hairbun. Finally a faint crack develops from the outer point of ★1 through the bases of the date to the rim at ★13. Crumbling develops on letters of CENT — top of C, at mouth of E, corners of N. Reverse dentilation fades slightly.

**Discussion:** R2, common in all grades. MS(15+), AU(several). The square-serif 1825 has always been popular, may occasionally draw some slight premium for this popularity, but generally does not. It is the only 1825 cent not commonly seen with beveled rims.



Wide Date, Strong IC



Normal A+F, Lump Under T

**Obverse 8:** Stars 4,5,8,12 point between dentils; stars 2,9,13 nearly do. A strong inner circle is seen just off the dentil tips at left and above. Sixth star points slightly right of the coronet tip. Date is widely spaced. Bases of IB and ER touch, strong coronet baseline under E, and top of T is well above R. The topbar of E is not broken, implying that this die was either cut before the others of this year or after the broken E-punch was replaced — more likely the former.

**Reverse I:** Key leaves point NR, PR, R, PC. Large A's, short F. Bases of ED are quite close, A of STATES a touch high, C of AMERICA low. N of ONE appears taller at left than at right. Both N's in ONE CENT are broken as described under number 4. T of CENT has conspicuous doubling below both pendants, is short, and has a square lump under its upright. Tiny or missing center dot.

**Striking Variations:** Flans usually show lightly beveled edges. As the obverse rim begins to fade and dish, the inner circle becomes the border. Hairline crack grows from rim between star 3,4 to brow. The boldest remaining portions of the reverse rim begin to resemble the embattled rim first introduced in 1834. Letters and stars start to draw to the rims. Reverse center dot disappears.

**Discussion:** R2, rather common in all grades. MS(20-24), AU(several). One of the MS coins (a DuPont piece) has been repeatedly sold as "Proof", which it is not. At least two, possibly up to six true Proofs of this variety have been traced, and the MS examples often come prooflike. Early accounts of the Randall Hoard included the phrase "and 1825's". If there were 1825's in this hoard, Breen considers this variety to be the most likely candidate. As a variety this draws no premium.



9

**Wide Date, Weak IC**

**Obverse 9:** Stars 1,7,9 point between dentils; stars 4 and 13 nearly do. A weak inner circle joins the dentil tips around the entire obverse. Sixth star points to coronet tip. The date is quite widely spaced, with a dentil centered under the 1. In LIBERTY the L and E are grossly recut, the I and Y less spectacularly so. The E is not broken at the topbar. IB are very close, ER touch top and bottom, foot of T is below R, and its top is below Y.

**Striking Variations:** Flans are beveled as on almost all other 1825's. The right side of C and left of E in CENT are usually weak, though the die shows no apparent buckling in this area. A hairline crack grows from bust, touching peak of 1, to rim between 1 and ★1. Obverse dentilation fuses between stars 8,9 and to the left of ★10. Late strikes show a rimbreak joining ★7 to the rim.

10

**Long F, Legend Against Dentils**

**Reverse J:** Key leaves point C, PC, C-, SPC. The legend is much closer to the dentils above than to the wreath below. O in OF is lightly recut at left and below. F-A are unusually close. A triangular chip appears left of the innermost leaf under D. In ONE, the O tilts right, N left. The N of CENT is grossly recut, most obvious at upper right. Small center dot.

**Discussion:** R3+, scarce in all grades, rare in MS. MS(2), AU(8-10), XF(8+). The "widest 1825", like the "closest 1825" (number 1) is popular and draws extra bucks when it comes up — in this case around 1.5-2X.

# 1826

---

Thomas Jefferson and John Adams died within an hour of each other on July 4, 1826, the 50th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence. The Pan American Conference in Panama had no U.S. representatives, as one delegate died enroute and the other arrived too late. Samuel Lord and George Taylor opened a mercantile shop in New York City.

As a year, I find 1826 cents rather uninteresting. Eight obverses were parallel-mated to eight reverses to provide eight varieties to the tune of 1,517,425 pieces. No variety of this year is rare, there are no really spectacular die states, and most of the distinctives, though straight-forward, are rather bland.

The year does boast one obscure overdate (which convinces me, but not everybody), a noticeable variation in date-width, a curious clash (the clash-marks do not line up with the die-alignment usually seen on that variety), noticeable dishing on several reverses (more pronounced than any others since 1814), a surprisingly consistent collection of within-the-dentils rim-breaks at top obverse, varieties with and without a strong inner circle on the obverse, and a minor variation in the size of the 'S' punch on the reverses. At least this is enough to raise 1826 out of the totally blah class.

Quality control was obviously lax in 1826, as double-struck, triple-struck, and brockage cents are more common for this year than for any other in this decade.

Frank Andrews listed one more variety of 1826, but this variety (his #2) was there described as only minimally different from his 26-A3 and is likely the same. His only distinction between these was "broad S/narrow S", which is an eyestrain at best.

No Proof cents of 1826 have been recorded, though choice examples of every variety can be had at a price. Since no hoard has poured thousands of MS 1826 cents on the market (as with 1816-1820), the supply of true MS examples of this year probably stands at around a hundred or slightly less.

The sequence chosen here attempts to group the strong-IC dies and the weak-IC ones, the large-S reverses and the small-S reverses, the heavily-dished reverses and the normal reverses, the broken-rim obverses and the perfect-rim obverses, with the broken-N reverses towards the beginning of the year — since this punch is found on some reverses of 1825 and none of 1827. With a parallel-mating series this is the best we can hope for. The resultant "most likely" emission sequence is 3,5,6,1,9,8,7,4.







Dash after 6

**Obverse 1:** Star 6 points between dentils and star 4 just about does. A plain inner circle shows off the dentil-tips, strongest at bottom and top, weakest at right. Date is rather close and even, with the 1 low. Left edge of curl is over the center of 2. Star 6 is over the coronet tip. LIBERT are recut, BE spectacularly so at top. IB bases almost touch, and E tilts left. There is a tiny center dot before the ear. There are two dashes after the 6 and extensive fine die-rust on the coronet, neck, and lower hair. These dashes seem to be remnants of a misplaced star, which is not at all unlikely, since this same error occurred on a half cent of this year.

**Striking Variations:** Earliest strikes show faint die scratches between TE(D), between AM and wreath, and from the leaf tip under E of AMERICA. The topmost after-date dash fades, a rimbreak develops to the right of ★6, and finally a light crack grows from the hair through ★9 to the rim. The rims dish lightly on both obverse and reverse.



A3 Close, PLF PC

**Reverse A:** Key leaves point PC, PR, PC, NC. O in OF is low and leans left. All T's in legend have broken left arms. N's of ONE CENT have broken inner left feet. E of CENT is recut at inside top. The final A is very close to the stem, and there is a chip between this stem and the rim. There are rust areas around the letters inside the wreath, and a medium center dot.

**Discussion:** R2-, rather common in all grades. MS(14+), AU(several). This is not the overdate, though it has often been offered as such. Dr. Sheldon once wrote, "Doubtless as a joke, somebody seems to have sold one of these to a beginner as an 'overdate'." Now the joke has spread, and collectors in general are often invited to pay a generous price for this 'overdate' as part of their initiation to cent collecting." Obviously, this variety commands premium only among collector-apprentices.



**\*\*\* There Is No Number 2 \*\*\***

The coin listed by Frank Andrews as his number 2 (1-B) is indistinguishable from his number 4 and is likely that variety. Nobody since Andrews (1881)

has identified any 1826 variety besides the other eight Andrews varieties.



★6 Over, Close Date, LEC R

3



C

A3 Away from Stem, PLS SPR

**Obverse 2:** No stars point between or nearly between dentils. There is a fairly strong, nearly complete inner circle, separated from the dentils. Date is close and evenly spaced. Left edge of curl is over the right edge of 2. Star 6 points at the coronet tip. Tops of BE are spectacularly recut, T less so. B is slightly above I, and ER feet touch.

**Reverse C:** Key leaves point SPC, SPR, SPR, PC. I is below N. A2 is dotted. N of CENT has broken inner left foot. Center dot is medium-sized to missing.

**Striking Variations:** Left reverse rim is almost always weak. Obverse rim is usually perfect, but develops minor crumbling fusing several dentils over ★6 and between ★7-8. Reverse center dot fades and disappears. Reverse dentilation is generally weak at left.

**Discussion:** R3-, a bit scarce, but far from rare. MS(7-9), AU(8+), XF(many). This variety may occasionally call a premium of up to 20% or so, but usually not — perhaps its non-distinctive appearance is to blame.



3



Coronet Tip Midway ★5-6

**Obverse 3:** Star 1 points between dentils, and stars 3,7,9,12 nearly do. An inner circle fuses dentil tips K7-12, strongest at K10-12. Date is close, fairly even, with 18 slightly more apart. Left edge of curl is between the curves of 2. Star 6 is far right of coronet tip, which is midway between stars 5 and 6. L is low, IB almost touch top and bottom. E is recut at the center-bar. Feet of ERT are on same line.

**Striking Variations:** Reverse rim dishes slightly. No cracks seen. Latest strikes have dentilation weak or missing.

4



E's of ONE CENT Recut

**Reverse B:** Key leaves point SPC, SPR, SPR, PC. The S's are slightly undersized. Feet of TE(S) are well apart. C(A) is recut at inside top right. A2 is dotted by a dentil. Both N's and E's of ONE CENT are recut, the E's being quite plainly so. There is a large center dot.

**Discussion:** R2-, rather common in all grades. MS(24+), AU(many). This variety draws no premium.



**Coronet Point Nearer ★6 than ★5**

**Obverse 4:** Stars 1,4,12,13 point between dentils, and star 11 just about does. There is a strong inner circle off the tips of the dentils. Left edge of curl is over the inner curve of 2. The date is close with 1 low and 6 high. Star 6 is well right of the coronet tip, but nearer to it than is ★5. IB of LIBERTY has a raised area joining its tops. BE is close at the bases but not touching.

**Striking Variations:** As the reverse rim starts to dish slightly, obverse rim-crumbling develops first over star 6, then over star 4 and between stars 5-7. This variety has been reported with reverse crossways, but I have not seen it thus. Both obverse and reverse are evenly struck and generally well-centered.



**PLF FPR**

**Reverse D:** Key leaves point PC, FPR, FPR, SPR. There is a broad, doubled dentil over right tip of E2. T is below I, ED is joined at bases. PLS is nearer O than S. PLF is nearer A than F. Final A is recut lightly above. E's of ONE CENT have inner points on both pendants. N's of ONE CENT have broken inner left feet. There is a large center dot.

**Discussion:** R1, probably the commonest 1826. MS(30+), AU(many). This variety commands no premium.



5



Star 6 SR

**Obverse 5:** Stars 6 and 9 point between dentils. Strong inner circle left and above, free from dentils, K6-K3. Date is moderately spaced with 18 a touch high. Left edge of curl is over the inner curve of 2. Star 6 is slightly right of coronet tip. IB feet are joined, E is broken at top, BE recut, BER feet are very close, and RT are apart. There is rust behind the ear.

**Striking Variations:** Obverse generally comes with dentils slightly longer at left. Even the earliest strikes show tiny rust-pits (coin lumps) on both dies. Obverse comes perfect, then begins to crumble between stars 7 and 8, eventually extending from stars 6 to 9. The reverse dishes badly, and a light, almost horizontal crack develops from ★1 to lower edge of bust. Crumbling develops at the left of the date, a faint crack runs from the back hairwave to the lowest point of ★12, and a final hairline crack grows from the coronet to the top point of ★5.

6



Line Along A2

**Reverse E:** Key leaves point C, R, C, C-. All T's have broken left arms. Right foot of A1 is slightly above the following T. O of ONE is low and leans left. Fine recutting-line or crack well left of A2 parallels that letter. The final A is very near to the stem. Minor recutting top EN and there is a medium center dot. Heavy dishing left and top reverse, often involves the tops of STATES. Both A1 and I2 are dotted by a dentil.

**Discussion:** R2-, fairly common in all grades. MS(16+), AU(15+), XF(many). This is another no-premium variety.



**R Heavily Recut Below**

7



**N of CENT Recut, Leans Right**

F

**Obverse 6:** Stars 1,6,8,10 point between dentils, and stars 2 and 4 nearly do. There are traces of an inner circle at the dentil tips and this is strongest at left. Date is close with 82 especially so. Left edge of curl is over the left edge of 6. Star 6 points far right of the coronet tip. IBE touch at their bases, and R is spectacularly recut below its right foot. There is a faint center dot.

**Reverse F:** Key leaves point PC+, PR, NR, C. The S's are slightly undersized. A graver-scratch extends from the leaf tip under I1. E is higher than T-D. Final S is low. Final A is very near the stem. A2 is dotted by a dentil. E of ONE is recut above its top, and N of CENT is recut at right and above. There is a large center dot.

**Striking Variations:** This variety is generally seen boldly and evenly struck with mirrorlike fields and bold clash-marks both sides: obverse with strong clash-marks under BERTY, weaker ones from the wreath before the face and under the head — rotated 30 degrees clockwise from the normal head-to-toe die orientation; reverse with clash of a complete head-silhouette, rotated 30 degrees clockwise. Though the obverse/reverse clash-marks align perfectly for a common injury, I have seen this die-orientation (reverse 30 degrees left) on only

two examples of this variety. These fade and eventually disappear, and the reverse rim dishes and mushes out on later strikes. No cracks seen. Minor crumbling occurs in the dentilation at bottom obverse.

**Discussion:** R1, common in all grades. MS(20+), AU(15+), XF(many). Though the plain clash adds interest, the variety's commonness precludes any premium.



7



DATE 1 8 26

**Obverse 7:** Stars 4 and 13 point between dentils and star 12 nearly does. There is no inner circle. The date is wide with 26 close. 6 is cut over 5, the underfigure showing strongest under the top curve of 6. Left edge of curl is centered over 2. Star 6 is left of coronet tip. Star 13 has a chip off the inner point. LIBERTY is shallowly cut with minor recutting on I, ER and strongest on foot of E. E tilts left, ER feet almost touch, BE and RT feet are apart. A light line joins the tops of LI on earlier strikes.

**Striking Variations:** These dies early develop a mushy appearance. Dentilation is rarely if ever crisp all around both sides, and is usually incomplete. The crumbling on N of ONE is usually quite apparent. The crossbar of the undercut 5 is crisp on early strikes, but crumbling obscures it later. The reverse rim dishes more and more, and the letter-tops draw to the rim as on the previous two varieties.

8



PLS FPR, PLF R

**Reverse G:** Key leaves point NR, FPR, R, PC. The S's are slightly undersized. UN almost touch at tops. O of ONE is low and leans left. Feet of AMERI are all extremely close. N of ONE has crumbling between left upright and diagonal. There is very minor recutting inside tops of both E's of ONE CENT. This die comes with bold, medium-sized center dot and usually with minor dishing.

**Discussion:** R3, slightly the scarcest 1826 and definitely the most popular. MS(9-12), AU(8-10), XF(several). The premium demanded by this variety is quite variable, occasionally running up to 4X, but more often around 2X. Then there are always the few who ride the overdate bandwagon for all the market will bear and manage to hook an occasional fish at prices beyond even these levels.



Evenly Wide Date

9



T of CENT Crumbled

H

**Obverse 8:** Stars 2,3,4,5,8 point nearly between dentils. There is no trace of an inner circle. Date is wide and even. Left edge of curl is between 26. Star 6 is over the coronet tip. Star 11 is strongly recut on 2 inner points, and star 12 has a chip between its 2 inner points. IB and ERT all about touch at bases. BE and TY are well apart. L is recut below and BE and T are recut above, the T spectacularly so with what looks like three squares above it.

**Striking Variations:** The obverse circle of dentils is sufficiently wide in diameter that even a perfectly-centered strike would show only the tips of the dentils — generally either the left or right side is totally lacking in dentilation. Early strikes show a faint crossways clash of the head (face-up) on the reverse. The faint reverse center dot fades with the clash marks as the rims dish, and a bisecting crack grows upwards from K6 rim towards the 'O' of OF. Dentils begin to crumble slightly around stars 5 to 8. Finally, a light crack joins the bust-tip to the rim left of the date.

**Reverse H:** Key leaves point C+, PC, R, SPC. The S's are slightly undersized. Reverse letters are shallowly punched (low relief). ED bases are very close. AME feet are very close, with M recut inside. Right ends of the feet of N's in ONE CENT are broken. E of ONE is recut inside the bottom pendant. T of CENT has distinct crumbles at left pendant and below upright. Center dot is so ghostly as to be questionable. Most leaves of the wreath show strong rust pits — the die was likely heavily lapped.

**Discussion:** R3, scarce, but not rare. MS(15+), AU(several). At least two of the MS examples have been sold as "Proof" or "Semi-Proof". I know of no Proof examples of this variety. Long considered the scarcest 1826, I have found it to be slightly less scarce than the overdate. The Wide-Date 1826 is both scarce and popular as a type and usually draws a 1.5-2X premium.





# 1827

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The completion of the Miami and Erie Canal in 1827 began the rise of Cincinnati as the “Queen City of the West”. The B&O Railway was chartered to build a 380 mile railway west from Baltimore to compete with the Erie Canal, the cars to be propelled over rails by horses or sails. Public transit began in New York City with a single 12-seat horse-drawn bus to serve a city of 200,000.

Eight obverse and seven reverse dies were used to produce the twelve known varieties of 1827-dated cents. Although 2,357,732 cents were delivered in 1827 (1.55x the 1826 figure), this is a slightly scarcer date than 1826.

I find 1827 a fascinating year, partly because of its variability, but mostly because it contains some rarities. A few goodies in each year always have a way of adding zest to the search.

Though no catalogue I’ve seen lists a “wide” or “close” date 1827, the date-width for this year varies at least as much as for 1822, 1824, and much more than for 1821 which has always been listed with a wide/close distinctive.

All 1827 cent obverses have the LIBERTY recut (“multi-punched” might be a better term), most of them quite spectacularly so. Not since 1818 have so many different encircling die-cracks been seen, with at least one of them being fully as impressive as the usual-

ly-seen 1818 and 1820 hoard varieties. The one minor reverse oddity (the “crosseyed reverse”, appearing on 6-10-1) bespeaks of at least a few whimsical moments by a bored die-sinker.

Die-chaining, an almost-dead practice since 1819, is revived here. The 1827 die chains are 1-2, 3-12, 4-5, 4-9-2, 6-10-1, 8-3, and 11-10, with the reverses of 5, 8-3, and 12 used into 1828. Proofs of the year include 1, 2, 4, and 7. Obviously these chains do not permit a “clean” guess at an emission sequence. The only Proof varieties that are not imbedded within a chain are 4 and 7, making one of them the logical place to start.

At least two of the 1827 varieties were struck in 1828, and at least three of the 1827 dies had to experience an interrupted usage. Placing the 1828-used reverses late makes the following sequence one of the few that make much sense. I would propose 7,11,6-10-1,4-9-2,5,8-3-12.

Since four of the twelve 1827 varieties are known in Proof, this is an acceptable year for collectors of these medallic samples. But a complete variety set in Mint State is currently impossible. Indeed, a full variety collection in any grade is no mean task, as the individual variety discussions will show.

In the obverse descriptions to follow I have used the term ‘LEC’ to represent the Left Edge of Curl above the date.

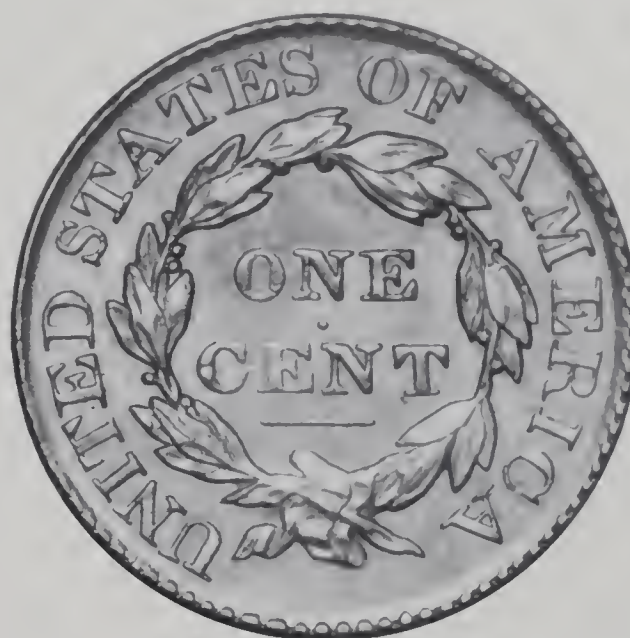






Close Date, Star SR

**Obverse 1:** This die appears on varieties 1-2. Star 10 points between dentils, and stars 4,5,11 nearly do. Date is close and even, LEC is over center of 2. Star 6 points slightly right of coronet tip. L is low, IB tops nearly touch, and tops of IBE-TY are recut, with BE spectacularly so.



PLF FPR

**Reverse A:** This die appears on varieties 6-10-1. Key leaves point NR, FPR, FPR, R-. PLS is nearer O than S and PLF is midway F-A. Two dentils at K6.5 are wider than their neighbors. Legend is about equidistant between wreath and dentils. Final A is far from the stem. Horizontal chip off right end of line under CENT. Large center dot.

This is the “crosseyed reverse” — an “I” is punched across the wreath below the IT of UNITED, with another lighter “I” lying slightly across it. Remnants of both I’s show on and above the outer leaf and around the first berry — strongest on variety 6, weakest on variety 1.

**Striking Variations:** A narrow rim-break develops at dentil roots between stars 5 and 6. Reverse dishes slightly at right.

**Discussion:** R1+, common in all grades below Mint State. MS(5-7), AU(15+), XF(many). Four Proofs are known, one of them in the Smithsonian. This is the second-commonest 1827 and commands no premium.



1



Close Date, Star SR

2



A2 Has Long Right Foot

**Obverse 1:** This die appears on varieties 1-2. Star 10 points between dentils, and stars 4,5,11 nearly do. Date is close and even, LEC is over center of 2. Star 6 points slightly right of coronet tip. L is low, IB tops nearly touch, and tops of IBE-TY are recut, with BE spectacularly so.

**Reverse B:** This die appears on varieties 4-9-2. Key leaves point SPC, PR, PC, C. Dentilation at bottom has a "picket-fence" appearance, with wide gaps between dentils. Feet of AT nearly touch. All A's have patched right feet. The right foot of A2 is especially long, and the right foot of A3 is obviously broken. Line under CENT is weak at left end. Tiny center dot.

**Striking Variations:** Reverse always shows dentils fused at bottom. Left reverse edge dishes slightly as dentilation begins to fade out K9-12. The "conical rimbreak over O in "OF" mentioned by W. E. Johnson does not occur on this variety. This was another error transcribed from the Davis-Steinberger supplement. The reference should have been to N7 of 1818, not N2 of 1827.

**Discussion:** R3, scarce but not rare in anything but high grade. MS(1-2), AU(5+), XF(6+), VF(many). ANS has a one-sided Proof (Proof obverse, Uncirculated reverse) — evidently unique thus. This variety commands little or no premium in grades below VF, but the going gets tougher above VF and the collector must resign himself to paying extra or doing without for a fair while.



Joined Dentils K12-3

3



PLF SPR

C

**Obverse 2:** This die appears on varieties 3-12. Stars 1,2,5,7 point between dentils, and stars 3,4,6,12 nearly do. LEC is left of the center of 2. Date is close and even spaced. Star 6 points at coronet tip. LIBER-Y are widely recut, most spectacularly so. There is a strong inner circle at dentil-tips, most apparent at upper right.

**Reverse C:** This die appears on numbers 8-3 of 1827 and 3 of 1828, which was struck between these two. Key leaves point R, PR, SPR, PC. R is crumbling at center right, N of ONE leans right. Small center dot.

**Striking Variations:** Comes with small, jagged cracks before the ear, later with faint crack from rim below ★1 thru outer points of ★2-6 and flaws on mid-throat below the ear. Reverse dentilation weakens and begins to dish.

**Discussion:** R2. MS(7), AU(8+), XF(8+), VF(many). This variety is nothing special but it always elicits a thrill when I spot its easily-recognized obverse. I keep hoping for an N12 and it never is. This one draws no premium.



3

**Sawtooth Dentils**

**Obverse 3:** This die appears on varieties 4-5. Stars 5 and 8 point between dentils, and stars 2 and 10 nearly do. Dentils are long and crisp and have a sawtooth appearance. There is a nearly complete inner circle under the dentil-tips, strongest at the top. Date is quite close, especially the 82. Lowest curl is wholly over the 7. Sixth star points right of coronet tip. IBER are strongly recut, and ER is noticeably weaker than LIB.

**Striking Variations:** Comes with and without reverse dentilation crumbling at bottom, more often with than without. This variety is occasionally found with reverse crossways, rotated a quarter turn right.

4

**A2 Has Long Right Foot**

**Reverse B:** This die appears on varieties 4-9-2. Key leaves point SPC, PR, PC, C. Dentilation at bottom has a "picket-fence" appearance, with wide gaps between dentils. Feet of AT nearly touch. All A's have patched right feet. The right foot of A2 is especially long, and the right foot of A3 is obviously broken. Line under CENT is weak at left end. Tiny center dot.

**Discussion:** R2+, rather common. MS(10-15), AU(8+), XF(many). This is the commonest 1827 in Proof. I know of 10 to 14 examples, which is quite plentiful for early cent Proofs. The Proof strikes may have been made early in the year, but most if not all regulation strikes followed several other 1827 varieties. This variety draws no premium.



Sawtooth Dentils



D-S Close

**Obverse 3:** This die appears on varieties 4-5. Stars 5 and 8 point between dentils, and stars 2 and 10 nearly do. Dentils are long and crisp and have a sawtooth appearance. There is a nearly complete inner circle under the dentil-tips, strongest at the top. Date is quite close, especially the 82. Lowest curl is wholly over the 7. Sixth star points right of coronet tip. IBER are strongly recut, and ER is noticeably weaker than LIB.

**Reverse D:** This die appears on number 5 of 1827 and 4 of 1828. Key leaves point PC+, FPR, SPR, PC+. Inner circle shows under dentil-tips at top. Legend is about equidistant between wreath and dentils. D-S are close. S2 is doubled at right top. Three light diagonal dashes appear high between S-O and another from the top of C toward A — these fade. There is a berry centered under the left upright of M. Minor recutting occurs on CENT — top of C, base of E, right leg of N, and base of T. Medium, bold center dot.

**Striking Variations:** Comes with faint crack tops UNI, then a light vertical crack left of star 13 to hair. The reverse dashes at S-O and C-A fade out as the reverse rim dishes slightly. Finally a heavy crack extends from the rim below star 2 to the chin, with a lighter crack growing from this one through star 1 to the rim.

**Discussion:** R2+, rather common. MS(19+), AU(several). With that kind of a census one should expect to find a nice coin with minimal effort. But I looked for a long time for a nice one and willingly paid a premium when it finally did come up. Then once I got it they seemed to come pouring out of the woodwork! Although this variety should command no premium, the seller can always hope for a customer who is dangerously sick with the cent disease (such as the writer).



4

**82 Almost Touch**

**Obverse 4:** Stars 4 and 9 point between dentils, and stars 8 and 10 nearly do. Date is very close and 82 almost touch at the top. LEC is over the inner curve of 2. Star 6 points at the coronet tip. LI-E-T are recut — the L base and I top obviously so, with the E top quite well repaired. IB feet nearly touch and the RT feet do touch.

**Striking Variations:** Comes with obverse perfect, then with a light crack through bases of date and three lower stars on each side. This crack extends until it encircles all stars and another light crack grows from the center of 82 to top of 7 to inner point of star 13. Finally a heavy crack runs across the bottom of the date, dropping sharply to the rim left of 1 and under 7, and the area enclosed by this crack sinks.

**Discussion:** R3+, scarce, especially near Mint State. MS(8-11), AU(12+), XF(several). One example has been claimed to be a "Proof" but is unproven. The closest-date 1827 has always been popular among variety

6

**PLF FPR**

**Reverse A:** This die appears on varieties 6-10-1. Key leaves point NR, FPR, FPR, R-. PLS is nearer O than S and PLF is midway F-A. Two dentils at K6.5 are wider than their neighbors. Legend is about equidistant between wreath and dentils. Final A is far from the stem. Horizontal chip off right end of line under CENT. Large center dot.

This is the "crosseyed reverse" — an "I" is punched across the wreath below the IT of UNITED, with another lighter "I" lying slightly across it. Remnants of both I's show on and above the outer leaf and around the first berry — strongest on variety 6, weakest on variety 1.

collectors, possibly partly due to its touted "great rarity" (which it is not). Then again, the "crosseyed reverse" may enjoy at least some popularity for its namesake. The search is sufficiently challenging that there is usually an impatient variety hunter somewhere willing to pay a 1.5-2x premium for a nice example of this variety.



Blow, TY Touch

7



Feet of TA Above TES

**Obverse 5:** Stars 4,5,13 point between dentils, and stars 6,12 nearly do. Date is moderately spaced. LEC is between the right curves of 2. Star 6 points at tip of coronet. Tops I-E are strongly recut. B is below I, ER bases touch, as do TY tops.

**Reverse E:** Key leaves point NR, FPR, SPR, PC. I of UNITED is dotted by a dentil. U is less than the width of its left upright from the ribbon. Feet of TA are above TE. Both E's of ONE CENT are recut inside their top pendants. Medium, bold center dot.

**Striking Variations:** Reverse rim dishes slightly at left, and legend tops draw to the rim. No cracks seen.

**Discussion:** R3-, slightly scarce. MS(8-13), AU(several), XF(many). At least three to five Proofs are known. This is a pleasing, finely-cut variety which is excellent (but for its slight scarcity) as a type-collector's coin. It gets no extra as a variety.



6



IC at Left

**Obverse 6:** No stars point between dentils, although the first six stars are reasonably near to that position. Plain inner circle is free from the dentil-tips K4 clockwise to K12. Date is moderately widely spaced with 7 a touch high. LEC is about over the inner curve of 2. Star 6 points directly at coronet tip. LIBER-Y are recut strongly — L below and the others above. ER feet nearly touch.

**Striking Variations:** Almost always seen with strong crack under 1 through stars 1-3, weaker cracks through other stars. Noticeable flaking occurs on the neck below the ear. A rare terminal state has a chunk fallen out of the interior of the obverse die obliterating the bottom half of 18.

8



PLD R

**Reverse C:** This die appears on numbers 8-3 of 1827 and 3 of 1828, which was struck between these two. Key leaves point R, PR, SPR, PC. R is crumbling at center right, N of ONE leans right. Small center dot.

**Discussion:** R3, scarce, but not rare. MS(2-5), AU(16+), XF(many). A few of the AU examples of number 8 have been repeatedly offered as "Unc", "Choice Unc" and "MS65". I find this variety intriguing for its obvious obverse cracks, and suspect others may as well. It occasionally draws a slight premium, even when graded realistically.



**Crack Top of Date, All Stars**

9



B

**A2 Has Long Right Foot**

**Obverse 7:** Stars 1,2,5,6 point between dentils. Date is close and LEC is barely left of 7. There is a light inner circle at dentil-tips K5-K8. Star 6 points right of coronet tip. IBE are recut, although only the E is grossly so. Feet of IBE nearly touch, ER do, and feet of RT are apart and about even.

**Reverse B:** This die appears on varieties 4-9-2. Key leaves point SPC, PR, PC, C. Dentilation at bottom has a "picket-fence" appearance, with wide gaps between dentils. Feet of AT nearly touch. All A's have patched right feet. The right foot of A2 is especially long, and the right foot of A3 is obviously broken. Line under CENT is weak at left end. Tiny center dot.

**Striking Variations:** Always seen with crack through tops of date, with another series of three or more cracks completely encircling the obverse. Reverse dentilation is always complete with fusing at bottom, though not so much as on variety 2. Reverse is usually slightly rotated left, occasionally up to 45 degrees.

**Discussion:** R3+, quite scarce, especially in high grades. MS(1), AU(4), XF(8-12), VF(24+). Most of the AU's have sold as "Unc". Always popular for its spectacular obverse cracks and its scarcity, this one consistently brings a 1.3-1.6x premium.



8

**Wide, Thin Date**

**Obverse 8:** This die appears on varieties 11-10. Star 10 points between dentils, and stars 2,4,5 nearly do. Date is wide and thinly cut. LEC is just left of 7. Star 6 points right of coronet tip. BE-T tops are recut. Feet of IB and ER touch.

**Striking Variations:** Always seen with crumbling at brow and under nose. Occasionally a very faint hairline crack is seen from rim left of 1 to tip of bust, continuing across neck to front of ear.

**Discussion:** R5-, around seventy known to me. AU(1), XF(1), VF(6), F(12), VG(22), G(25), AG(3). Although Newcomb listed this as the rarest 1827, it is not so rare (by a factor of

10

**PLF FPR**

**Reverse A:** This die appears on varieties 6-10-1. Key leaves point NR, FPR, FPR, R-. PLS is nearer O than S and PLF is midway F-A. Two dentils at K6.5 are wider than their neighbors. Legend is about equidistant between wreath and dentils. Final A is far from the stem. Horizontal chip off right end of line under CENT. Large center dot.

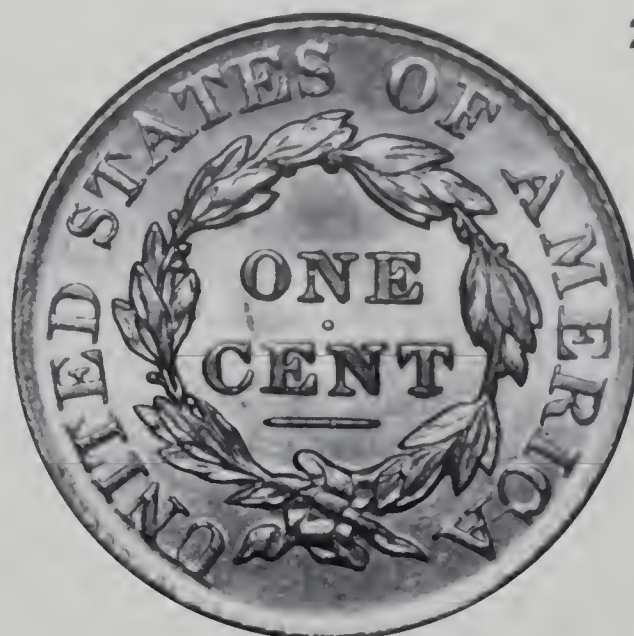
This is the “crosseyed reverse” — an “I” is punched across the wreath below the IT of UNITED, with another lighter “I” lying slightly across it. Remnants of both I’s show on and above the outer leaf and around the first berry — strongest on number 6, weakest on number 1.

almost 2) as number 12. An extremely popular and readily-distinguishable variety, this always demands a premium and usually finds more than one buyer in the 15x-20x range.



Wide, Thin Date

11



T of Cent Has Doubled Foot

**Obverse 8:** This die appears on numbers 11-10. Star 10 points between dentils, and stars 2,4,5 nearly do. Date is wide and thinly cut. LEC is just left of 7. Star 6 points right of coronet tip. BE-T tops are recut. Feet of IB and ER touch.

**Reverse F:** Key leaves point NR, FPR, SPR, PC. Legend is about equidistant between wreath and dentils. A faint scratch extends left from the left foot of A2, another between the centers of CA. These fade as the die wears. Right upright of N of ONE is recut. There is heavy crumbling center of EN. T of CENT has a strongly doubled foot and heavy top bar. Large center dot.

**Striking Variations:** Comes with and without crumbling at brow, later with additional die crumbling below the nose. Reverse edge dishes, dentilation weakens, and finally disappears, as do the die scratches.

**Discussion:** R1, far the commonest 1827. MS(many), AU(even more). Newcomb's book lists this as "R5" on his 6-point scale, but his reference is only to the latest die-state and even that isn't all that rare. According to John Young (a contemporary of HRN), Newcomb called this "the common 1827". Number 11 accounts for nearly half of all 1827 cents and never commands a premium.



2



Joined Dentils K12-3

**Obverse 2:** This die appears on varieties 3-12. Stars 1,2,5,7 point between dentils, and stars 3,4,6,12 nearly do. LEC is left of the center of 2. Date is close and even spaced. Star 6 points at coronet tip. LIBER-Y are widely recut, most spectacularly so. There is a strong inner circle at dentil-tips, most apparent at upper right.

**Striking Variations:** Obverse shows all cracks listed for number 3. About half seen have an additional crack between 18 to back of ear. Reverse always has a crack from center of C to right foot of A to stem. This continues, lighter, almost to U. Other hairline cracks are seen at bottoms of UNIT and RIC. At least one example has an additional obverse crack from tip of nose thru ★2 to the rim.

12



PLF SPC

**Reverse G:** This die appears first on number 12 of 1827, then on numbers 12-1 of 1828. Key leaves point NR, R-, SPC, PC. Diagonal die scratch between S-O. T of CENT leans right. Medium center dot.

**Discussion:** R5. MS(1), VF(2), F(6), VG(15), G(15), AG(5). First published by George Clapp in the 1924 reprint of Andrews, this variety had only four examples known by 1952 and five auction appearances before 1980. Over half of the known examples have been discovered in the last decade. This is the rarest 1827. Several of my friends keep finding them (two each for Loring, Burrell, Heilbronner, Schugars), but as of the end of 1991 this is one of only three mid-date cent varieties that I have never found unattributed. Premium levels on this one range from incredible to insane — and a customer can usually be found in the 50x-100x range.

# 1 8 2 8

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In 1828 Andrew Jackson was elected president, Noah Webster culminated twenty-eight years of work with his "An American Dictionary of the English Language", and the B&O and C&O Railway Companies began a race to build a railway across the Alleghenies.

The 2,260,624 cents delivered in 1828 make this a fairly common year, though just slightly less so than 1827. Twelve varieties are known from five obverse and eleven reverse dies. Of these, two are a bit rare, two more are scarce, two offer an impressive date-recutting (the 1828/88), and one is an extremely popular (though common) transitional type. This is more than enough to make 1828 a highly interesting year for the cent collector.

Mint State examples are known of all but one of the 1828 varieties, but two are quite rare thus, and only two of the twelve varieties can boast much over a dozen MS examples apiece. Overall, around 130 to 150 true MS 1828's are available for the more finicky date collectors. One 1828 variety is known in Proof, and that by only two or three

examples — and one of those is in the Smithsonian.

After the guesswork of recent years, the sequencing of 1828 varieties comes as a refreshingly trivial task. The one small-date die (10) comes last, since this die is from the punch-set of 1829-1835. The remaining eleven varieties come in three die-chains, and the sequence within each chain is fairly easily determined. The longest of these chains (5-2-4-3-12-1) contains two 1827 reverses, so it is placed first. Welcome corroborating evidence is that this assigns the only 1828 known in Proof as the first variety of the year. The next-longest chain (11-8-9) has an 1829 reverse on its last-struck variety, so I have placed it just before the small date. This uniquely determines the 1828 sequence as 5-2-4-3-12-1, 7-6, 11-8-9, 10, with the added confusion that 1827 3, 12 were struck between 1828 12, 1. Now all somebody has to do is to find one strange new mating of the known dies to throw all of this into a cocked hat.







82 Close, ER Feet Joined

1



A

Dash Between S O

**Obverse 1:** Stars 1,2,6,10,12 point between dentils, and stars 3,7,11 nearly do. Sixth star points at coronet tip. Left edge of curl is between the right curves of 2. Date is large, very close, with 2 low. In LIBERTY, B is high, ER tops are even with feet joined, RT feet are apart and about even. Tops of B,Y are lightly recut. Top of E is broken and repaired as on all 1828 large dates.

**Reverse A:** This die appears on number 12 of 1827 and 12,1 of 1828. Key leaves point NR, R-, PC, PC. A down-sloping dash appears high between S O. Feet of AME are all evenly near. I of AMERICA is dotted by a dentil, and final A is away from the stem. Small center dot.

**Striking Variations:** Occasionally is found with reverse upside-down (head-to-head rather than head-to-toe). Reverse is cracked from center of C thru A to stem, the CA-stem crack grows bolder, extends on thru feet of UNITED. Dentils begin to fuse over final S of STATES. Obverse develops minor dentil-fusing between ★3-4; otherwise retired as a near-perfect die.

**Discussion:** R1+, rather common in most grades. MS(7-9), AU(5+), XF(8), VF(many). This is one of the easy ones, commanding no premium. It is often mistaken for the very similar number 12.



2



82 Very Close, E Above R

2



Final A Very Close to Stem

**Obverse 2:** This die appears on numbers 5-2-4-3-12. Stars 1,12 point between dentils, and stars 2,8,11 nearly do. Sixth star points to coronet tip. Left edge of curl is between the right curves of 2. Date is large and extremely close, with 1 quite low, 2 slightly low, and 82 tops all but touching. The tail of a '2' shows between bases of 28. In LIBERTY, B is high, top of E is above top of R and is broken and repaired, BER are strongly recut below their tops. Feet of RT are close with T lower.

**Reverse B:** Key leaves point PC, R-, PC, C. TA feet are well apart. In AMERICA, AM feet are more apart than ME, I is dotted by a dentil, and final A is very near tip of stem. Plain, small center dot.

**Striking Variations:** Both dies remain crisp, dentilation fades slightly. The line joining bases of 28 fades out, and a very faint crack grows from the right side of the final 8 to hair over ★13. Reverse slightly stronger at left.

**Discussion:** R1, commonest 1828 in all grades but near MS. MS(8-10), AU(5), XF(12+), VF(many). There is no variety premium for this one.



82 Very Close, E Above R

3



PLD R

C

**Obverse 2:** This die appears on numbers 5-2-4-3-12. Stars 1,12 point between dentils, and stars 2,8,11 nearly do. Sixth star points to coronet tip. Left edge of curl is between the right curves of 2. Date is large and extremely close, with 1 quite low, 2 slightly low, and 82 tops all but touching. The tail of a '2' shows between bases of 28. In LIBERTY, B is high, top of E is above top of R and is broken and repaired, BER are strongly recut below their tops. Feet of RT are close with T lower.

**Reverse C:** This die appears on numbers 8-3 of 1827 and 3 of 1828, with the 1827 struck between the two 1828's. Key leaves point R, PR, SPR, PC. TA feet are apart, and AT feet nearly touch. AME are evenly close, right center of R is filled in, and the final A is away from the stem. Small center dot.

**Striking Variations:** The faint crack from ★8 to bun usually shows only on better specimens. The 2-8 baseline no longer shows, both obverse and reverse rims begin to dish. Obverse dentilation is indistinct and slightly crumbled at ★3-4.

**Discussion:** R2, rather common in all but MS. MS(6-8), AU(4), XF(6+), VF(many). The 1827 3-12 coming after this 1828 shows those 1827's (at least) to be products of 1828. This variety commands no premium except when (often) found misattributed as the rarer number 4.



2



82 Very Close, E Above R

**Obverse 2:** This die appears on numbers 5-2-4-3-12. Stars 1,12 point between dentils, and stars 2,8,11 nearly do. Sixth star points to coronet tip. Left edge of curl is between the right curves of 2. Date is large and extremely close, with 1 quite low, 2 slightly low, and 82 tops all but touching. The tail of a '2' shows between bases of 28. In LIBERTY, B is high, top of E is above top of R and is broken and repaired, BER are strongly recut below their tops. Feet of RT are close with T lower.

**Striking Variations:** Reverse die is now worn and mushy. The last traces of reverse dentilation fade away, and obverse dentilation begins to weaken at stars 3 and 4. A faint crack from ★8 to hair is generally distinguishable only on better examples. Some high grade examples show an extremely faint crack joining the tops of UNITE.

4



D S Close

**Reverse D:** This die appears on number 5 of 1827 and 4 of 1828. Key leaves point PC+, FPR, SPR, PC+. D S close, TAT feet evenly close, as are AME feet. Final A is away from the stem. N of CENT tilts slightly right. Tiny or missing center dot.

**Discussion:** R4+, slightly the rarest 1828. Quite scarce in all grades, currently unknown above XF. XF(1), VF(10), F(7), VG(30+), G(over 40). A couple of the VF's are near XF. Other reported but unverified examples include an "XF" and four "VF"s. This is the rarest 1828 known to Andrews, is often confused with number 3, and usually finds a willing buyer at the 10X-12X range - when correctly attributed. As evidence that greed has no limit, I was offered the opportunity to bid "anything over \$8,000" on the confirmed XF piece.



82 Very Close, E Above R

5



E

PLF FPR

**Obverse 2:** This die appears on numbers 5-2-4-3-12. Stars 1,12 point between dentils, and stars 2,8,11 nearly do. Sixth star points to coronet tip. Left edge of curl is between the right curves of 2. Date is large and extremely close, with 1 quite low, 2 slightly low, and 82 tops all but touching. The tail of a '2' shows between bases of 28. In LIBERTY, B is high, top of E is above top of R and is broken and repaired, BER are strongly recut below their tops. Feet of RT are close with T lower.

**Reverse E:** Key leaves point R-, FPR, FPR, R-. D is slightly above E. PLS is nearer O than S. TA are slightly closer than AT with final T a touch high. Feet of ER are well apart, and final A is far from the stem. A long spike extends from leaftip over O of ONE. Both E's of ONE CENT show recutting inside their right top pendants. Bold center dot.

**Striking Variations:** A delicate crack develops through tops TED, growing heavy on a few examples, and this section finally develops into a full rim-break from rim over T, covering tops of ED, and ending midway between DS, similar to the break on number 8. The break on number 5 just touches the last corner of T, while that on 8 covers the whole top of T.

**Discussion:** R2, rather common in all but MS. MS(5-7), AU(8+), XF(many). Two confirmed Proofs are known from these dies. The Smithsonian Proof has been cleaned, and the Cleanay-Beckwith-Morgan-Clarke-Starr coin is perfect. This variety commands no premium.



3



Crack 8 to ★

**Obverse 3:** This die appears on numbers 7-6. Star 13 points between dentils, and stars 1,4,12 nearly do. Sixth star points a hair left of the coronet tip. Date figures are large, close, with 82 even, 1 low, and final 8 high. A phantom '8' appears between 82. Left edge of curl is between right curves of 2. This die is instantly identifiable by a chip on the right juncture of the 8-loops. L is low, IBE is strongly recut below tops, top of E is broken and repaired, and foot of T is below R.

**Striking Variations:** This marriage is always seen with a crack center of 28 thru inner points of ★13-12, occasionally on to ★10. Rust pits (lumps on coin) are always found scattered all over the obverse. Occasionally found with additional hairline cracks to right edge of hairbun, from coronet tip thru ★6, and from point of bust to rim right of ★1. Sometimes comes with reverse upside down (head-to-head) or crossways right.

6



PLS R

**Reverse F:** Key leaves point PC-, R, PC, SPC. I of UNITED is dotted by a dentil. Feet of TA are slightly more apart than AT. Final A is away from the stem. T of CENT leans right. Bold center dot.

**Discussion:** R1+. MS(30+), AU (many). The "1828 over 88" is a popular obverse, but neither mating of this die is hard to get, even in or near MS. There is no bonus for this one — but high grade examples do look really impressive with the rust lumps all over the obverse.



Crack 8 to ★

7



PLS PR

G

**Obverse 3:** This die appears on numbers 7-6. Star 13 points between dentils, and stars 1,4,12 nearly do. Sixth star points a hair left of the coronet tip. Date figures are large, close, with 82 even, 1 low, and final 8 high. A phantom '8' appears between 82. Left edge of curl is between right curves of 2. This die is instantly identifiable by a chip on the right juncture of the 8-loops. L is low, IBE is strongly recut below tops, top of E is broken and repaired, and foot of T is below R.

**Reverse G:** Key leaves point NR, PR, R+, PC. I of UNITED is dotted by a dentil. TAT feet are evenly near, with final T a bit low. Final A is away from the stem. E of ONE is a bit low. Small center dot.

**Striking Variations:** This marriage comes with obverse cracked from center of 28 thru ★13-12 and little or no rust pitting on either die. Later, both dies develop rust pits scattered uniformly, and the reverse die dishes more and more. Top reverse rim is usually weaker than bottom.

**Discussion:** R3, a bit scarce. MS(10-12), AU(6+), XF(8+), VF(many). This is a rather scarce one that commands little or no premium. The "1828 over 88" is a popular obverse, but neither mating of this die is hard to get, even in or near MS. It took me long enough to find a nice example of number 7 that I was glad to pay a double price for it, but then two more just like it turned up within a few more years. This just reinforces the virtue of patience in collecting.



4



82 Tops Separated

**Obverse 4:** This die appears on varieties 11-8-9. Stars 1 and 5 point between dentils, and stars 7 and 13 nearly do. Sixth star points slightly left of coronet tip. Date figures are large, rather close, with both 8's a bit high. Left edge of curl is over inner curve of 2. 82 are no closer than 18 or 28 — the only large date die thus. Feet of IB touch, tops of ERT are recut, with top of E broken and repaired.

**Striking Variations:** Early strikes have reverse unbroken. Later a crack develops thru tops of TED and light dentil-fusing shows between D S. Finally a rimbreak develops, joining the tops of TED to the rim, similar to the break on number 5. The break on number 5 just touches the last corner of T, while that on 8 covers the whole top of T. Obverse remains crisp, with dentilation slightly less distinct than on number 11. Occasionally found with reverse crossways, rotated a quarter turn left.

8



PLS PC-

**Reverse H:** Key leaves point PC-, PC-, PC, PC. Feet of TAT and AM are evenly apart. MERI feet all nearly touch. Final A is away from the stem, with several down-sloping die scratches below the ribbon and stem. In ONE CENT both N's tilt right and both E's tilt left. Final T is slightly low. Small, weak center dot.

**Discussion:** R3+. MS(4), AU(4), XF(15+), VF(many). This one commands a nominal premium, especially in the upper grades — generally around 2X.



82 Tops Separated

**Obverse 4:** This die appears on varieties 11-8-9. Stars 1 and 5 point between dentils, and stars 7 and 13 nearly do. Sixth star points slightly left of coronet tip. Date figures are large, rather close, with both 8's a bit high. Left edge of curl is over inner curve of 2. 82 are no closer than 18 or 28 — the only large date die thus. Feet of IB touch, tops of ERT are recut, with top of E broken and repaired.

**Striking Variations:** Reverse die remains new, while obverse rim begins to dish slightly. Generally found with obverse dentilation boldest at bottom.



Dashes Between F A

**Reverse I:** This die appears on number 9 of 1828 and 8 of 1829. Key leaves point NR, NR, R-, NR. Several light die-scratches slope upward between the feet of F A. UNI are lightly recut below their tops. TA feet are well apart, AT feet nearly touch. AMER feet are close and rather even, with RI farther apart. Final A is far from the stem. Both E's of ONE CENT tilt left. N of ONE and NT of CENT tilt right. Tiny, weak center dot.

**Discussion:** R4. MS(3), AU(3), XF(9+), VF(12+), F(several). This is the third scarcest 1828, and is a popular one that draws a 3X-4X premium in most grades.



28-10

Small Date

5



Small Wide Date

10



Left Top M Long

**Obverse 5:** Stars 1 and 10 point between dentils, and stars 5, 12, 13 nearly do. Sixth star points slightly left of coronet tip. Date figures are small and widely spaced, with script 8's. This is the first appearance of new numeral-set which will remain in use for over a decade. Evidently, the small-set 1 did not please the die-sinker, as it is overpunched with the 1 from the old large-figure set. Traces of the small underpunch often show along the right upright and under the peak of the 1. Left edge of curl is over the center of 8. Tops of LIBERTY are recut, RT most plainly. Feet of IB are over ER which are above T, which has an extra stand above its base. Perfect, unbroken E from a different punch than on any other 1828.

**Reverse J:** Key leaves point NR, PR, R+, NR. TA are more apart than AT, AM are more apart than MER, RI feet are very close, and final A is far from the stem. M has a long left top. Tiny, weak center dot.

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**Striking Variations:** Reverse rim begins to dish slightly and dentilation fades. No cracks noticed.

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**Discussion:** R2-. MS(20+), AU (many). The "Small Wide Date 1828" is a one-variety type listed separately in most catalogs. As such, its type premium is exactly its variety premium.

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82 Tops Separated

11



K

Bold Center Dot

**Obverse 4:** This die appears on varieties 11-8-9. Stars 1 and 5 point between dentils, and stars 7 and 13 nearly do. Sixth star points slightly left of coronet tip. Date figures are large, rather close, with both 8's a bit high. Left edge of curl is over inner curve of 2. 82 are no closer than 18 or 28 — the only large date die thus. Feet of IB touch, tops of ERT are recut, with top of E broken and repaired.

**Reverse K:** Key leaves point NR, R-, NR, NR. Feet of ED, AT, AMERI nearly touch, with R slightly below E. Final A is far from the stem. Recutting is found on D, and often between feet of TA and CA, and in the mouth of the final C. The bottom of an 'S' often shows between D S and the left side of an 'O' between S O. Bold center dot.

**Striking Variations:** As the dies wear, successive lappings remove all traces of the recutting, leaving only that on the D. Reverse dentilation fades as the rim dishes and begins to crumble K3-6. Obverse dentilation remains crisp.

**Discussion:** R2. MS(16), AU(several). This is another easy one in any grade. The boldly recut legend seen on early strikes is fascinating, but not enough to command a bonus.



2



82 Very Close, E Above R

12



Dash Between S O

**Obverse 2:** This die appears on numbers 5-2-4-3-12. Stars 1,12 point between dentils, and stars 2,8,11 nearly do. Sixth star points to coronet tip. Left edge of curl is between the right curves of 2. Date is large and extremely close, with 1 quite low, 2 slightly low, and 82 tops all but touching. The tail of a '2' shows between bases of 28. In LIBERTY, B is high, top of E is above top of R and is broken and repaired, BER are strongly recut below their tops. Feet of RT are close with T lower.

**Reverse A:** This die appears on number 12 of 1827 and 12,1 of 1828. Key leaves point NR, R-, PC, PC. A down-sloping dash appears high between S O. Feet of AME are all evenly near. I of AMERICA is dotted by a dentil, and final A is away from the stem. Small center dot.

**Striking Variations:** Obverse is now lapped, with stars and date in lower relief and the 2-8 baseline gone. Reverse is cracked through center CA to stem and occasionally extending lightly to base of U. This variety was struck after number 12 of 1827 and before number 1 of 1828.

**Discussion:** R4. MS(1), XF(1-2), VF(14+), F(12+), VG(many). Normally found in grades G-F. Slightly less scarce than number 4, but does not command the insane prices sometimes demanded for that one. The 4X-6X price range suits it well.

# 1829

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In 1829 the Welland Sea Canal opened, bypassing Niagara Falls and connecting lakes Erie and Ontario. Boston's "Tremont House" opened as the first modern hotel, providing a private room with a key, four meals a day, and a free cake of soap for \$2 per day. No hotel will have private baths until 1853. Over 75,000 Americans go to debtor's prison each year, over half for less than \$20.

The nine known varieties of 1829 cents originate from six obverse and six reverse dies, one a carryover from 1828. A new, smaller letter-punch is introduced on one reverse of this year — an enigma that will see sparse but gradually increasing use over the next three years. The "small-letter" reverse will become the standard by 1833, but will not be in exclusive use until 1835. Small-letter 1829's are only slightly scarce in grades below Fine, but are quite so in higher grades, probably due to their almost universally flat strike. As a year, 1829 cents are more readily obtainable than the official 1,414,500 mintage figure would imply. No 1829 cent variety is truly rare, but several are scarce enough to provide a bit of a challenge.

A collector of major types will want a large-letter and a small-letter 1829, while a collector of minor types will double this with the long-1 and short-1 variants within each group — and everybody is fascinated by the wheel-spoke variety. Only half of the 1829 cent varieties are reasonably obtainable in Mint State, so this is a frustrating year for the perfectionist — but I consider it a fascinating year.

One variety is known by over a dozen Proof examples — a rather high number for cent Proofs of the period. Proof

examples of this variety were dusted with "bronzing powder" before striking — a trial technique from the British firm of Boulton & Watt. The result is a crisp but non-reflective, satiny finish, not too unlike the "French Proof" or "Matte Proofs" of the early 20th century. The effect is sufficiently different that Newcomb recognized no examples of this variety as Proofs, although he undoubtedly saw at least a few.

Determining the striking sequence for 1829 cents requires more than mere die-chaining and style-grouping. Likely the nine 1829 cent varieties are the product of at least two concurrently-running presses. The flat strikes almost consistently found on five of the 1829 varieties as well as a few of the next two years speaks strongly for a press-distinctive. A single chain could encompass all but two of the 1829 varieties — the one tied to an 1828 obverse and the Proof variety. But die states show this chain to be a matter of arrangement convenience rather than of emission order. Any valid sequence requires interruptions in usage of two or more dies.

The sequence chosen places the three long-1 obverses (as on the last 1828) before the three short-1 obverses (as on 1830-32), with the Proof variety first, and a continuous striking-chain of the flat-strike varieties last. These restrictions leave latitude only in selecting the order of the second and third varieties, which are arranged by die similarities to the preceding and following varieties. Unfortunately, this places the 1828-tied variety as fourth of the year, but to do otherwise would raise more inconsistencies than it would resolve. The most likely sequence seems to be 6,1,2,8,9-3-5-4-7.







1

**Bold, Complete IC: Date Close**

**Obverse 1:** This die appears on varieties 1-5-4. Stars 2,3,4,6 point between dentils, and stars 1,5,7,13 nearly do. The sixth star points slightly left of the coronet tip. There is a complete, bold inner circle just off the dentil tips. Date has an oversized 1. Base of I is above L-B, E-T are grossly recut, and ER feet are joined, as are TY tops. RT tops are widely separated.



A

**PLS PR, PLF PC**

**Reverse A:** Key leaves point R, PR, PC, SPC. Faint inner circle often shows underneath the dentil-tips. U is recut under the left inner serif, and there is a faint down-pointing dash below the left side of O (F). E of ONE and EN of CENT are boldly recut. Large, bold center dot.

**Striking Variations:** Always found sharp, well-centered, with bold, crisp dentilation. E of CENT is usually a bit weaker, as is occasionally the O of ONE. Hairline crack from rim over M connects tops of ER. A mail-bid offering by Tom Warfield in 1956 listed an N-1 "with rim break over TAT". Nobody I know of has seen one or heard another rumor of such a coin. The listing likely referred to a 30-10 (or 22-9 or 17-17).

**Discussion:** R2, rather common in all but MS. MS(7-10), AU(10+), XF(several). Most of the AU's and several of the XF's have been sold as MS over the last half century. No Proofs are known from these dies — the one in Auction80:1059 claiming to be such was not. I have found this variety quite difficult to obtain above VF, yet it does not command any noticeable premium.



2



Crack ★1-3

2



PLS Midway S O

**Obverse 2:** This die appears on varieties 2-3. Stars 1,2,3 point between dentils, and stars 4,8,9,11,12 nearly do. Sixth star points a hair right of the coronet tip. An inner circle shows underneath dentil-tips at left. Date is closely spaced, with an oversized 1. LI are strongly recut at top and bottom, inside top-bar of E and TY tops are less so. Bases of IBER all touch, though barely. IB feet are even, with E slightly low.

**Reverse B:** Key leaves point NR, FPR, PR, PC. PLS is midway S O. PLC is far below that letter. In UNITED, top of E is above T. In CENT, the top serif of C is filled in and EN are boldly recut at left. Large, bold center dot.

**Striking Variations:** Always seen cracked through inner points of first three stars to center of ★4. Usually another crack joins the outer points of the last three stars. Reverse dentilation fades on later strikes.

**Discussion:** R1+, slightly the commonest 1829. MS(12-15), AU(several). No premium on this one.



Crack ★1-3

3



Small Letters (TES Apart)

29-3

Sm Letters

C

**Obverse 2:** This die appears on varieties 2-3. Stars 1,2,3 point between dentils, and stars 4,8,9,11,12 nearly do. Sixth star points a hair right of the coronet tip. An inner circle shows underneath dentil-tips at left. Date is closely spaced, with an oversized 1. LI are strongly recut at top and bottom, inside top-bar of E and TY tops are less so. Bases of IBER all touch, though barely. IB feet are even, with E slightly low.

**Reverse C:** This die appears on varieties 9-3-5. Key leaves point SPC, R, PC, PC. Letters of legend are small, especially noticeable by their isolation from each other. A-CA are widely but lightly recut to the left, most apparent on the final A. Faint traces also occasionally show to the left of ME. Letters of ONE CENT are large as on all other cents produced before 1832 (but see 1831 discussion). In CENT, E and T tilt left, N right, and the T is recut below its left arm. Medium, plain center dot.

**Striking Variations:** Almost always bluntly struck with flat brow and stars. A weak area usually extends from O of ONE to E of CENT. Obverse is cracked as on variety 2. Crumbling usually fills all three A's of the legend, though remnants of the openings will often show. Presence or absence of these remnants is more a feature of strength of strike than of die state.

**Discussion:** R3+, rather scarce above Fine, more common lower. MS(1), AU(3), XF(2-4), VF(15+), F(many). In low grade this one commands little if any premium beyond the usual "1829 Small Letters" price (2X "LL" price). But above Fine it finds eager buyers at 3X-4X.



1

**Bold, Complete IC: Close Date**

4

**Crack Thru R**

**Obverse 1:** This die appears on varieties 1-5-4. Stars 2,3,4,6 point between dentils, and stars 1,5,7,13 nearly do. The sixth star points slightly left of the coronet tip. There is a complete, bold inner circle just off the dentil tips. Date has an oversized 1. Base of I is above L-B, E-T are grossly recut, and ER feet are joined, as are TY tops. RT tops are widely separated.

**Reverse D:** This die appears on varieties 4-7. Key leaves point PC-, PC, PC, C-. First A of AMERICA is dotted by a dentil. A leaftip is centered under the left foot of final A, which is very near the stem. Medium center dot, generally rather flat.

**Striking Variations:** Almost always quite flatly struck, with flat brow, top of head, stars. Usually weak from O in ONE to E in CENT. Often quite flat on lower curl and much of the wreath. Obverse is now at its latest, with rim break between ★4,5 into the inner circle, extending shallower down to ★3, and additional light rim crumbling below ★11. Reverse is occasionally found perfect, but usually is cracked from rim thru R to wreath — the first wheelspoke crack.

**Discussion:** R4+, nearly rare — the scarcest 1829. MS(2), AU(1), XF(1), VF(9+), F(12+). Usually seen in Good or VG. The usual 4X-5X premium climbs sharply in higher grades.



**Bold, Complete IC: Close Date**

5

**Obverse 1:** This die appears on varieties 1-5-4. Stars 2,3,4,6 point between dentils, and stars 1,5,7,13 nearly do. The sixth star points slightly left of the coronet tip. There is a complete, bold inner circle just off the dentil tips. Date has an oversized 1. Base of I is above L-B, E-T are grossly recut, and ER feet are joined, as are TY tops. RT tops are widely separated.

**Striking Variations:** Almost always bluntly struck on head, stars, and portions of the wreath. Generally weak from O of ONE to E of CENT. All A's of legend are filled, though remnants of the openings often show. Reverse dentilation fades and disappears. Obverse dentilation crumbles below ★11, then begins to crumble from ★3 almost to ★5. The weaker strikes generally show strong radial flow lines thru the legend. Surprisingly, the later strikes are generally sharper than the earlier, supporting the contention that these weaknesses are a striking feature rather than a die feature.



**Small Letters (TES Apart)**

C

**Reverse C:** This die appears on varieties 9-3-5. Key leaves point SPC, R, PC, PC. Letters of legend are small, especially noticeable by their isolation from each other. A-CA are widely but lightly recut to the left, most apparent on the final A. Faint traces also occasionally show to the left of ME. Letters of ONE CENT are large as on all other cents produced before 1832 (but see 1831 discussion). In CENT, E and T tilt left, N right, and the T is recut below its left arm. Medium, plain center dot.

**Discussion:** R3-, scarce, but the commonest 1829 small letters. MS(1), AU(1), XF(5-7), VF(30+), F(many). Almost a dozen of the VF's are nearly XF. All of those have been sold as XF or better. As the commonest 1829 small letters variety, this draws no bucks beyond the usual "Small Letter" price, which is around 2X the "Large Letter" ticket.



3



Long, Fine Dentils: No IC

**Obverse 3:** Stars 2,3,4 point between dentils, and star 9 nearly does. Sixth star points at the coronet tip. Date is widely spaced with a long 1. Dentilation is crisp, but finely and rather shallowly-cut, giving this variety an arms-length identity. The top and bottom lobes of the hairbun are apart, making an "open" hairbun. LIBERTY has L recut below, IB joined at bases, E recut under topbar, RT faintly so at tops, and feet of R above E-T.

**Striking Variations:** Always seen boldly and evenly struck, though 'bold' is not quite the proper word for the delicate features of the obverse. No cracks or deteriorations noted.

6



PLS PR, PLF SPR

**Reverse E:** Key leaves point PC, PR, SPR, C+. An inner circle strings the dentil-tips, much as a string of pearls. Feet of AT are quite close with A a trifle higher. Small, bold center dot.

**Discussion:** R2-, third commonest 1829, but the most common one in choice grades. MS(18+), AU(many). There are 12 to 16 Proofs from these dies, most of them bronzed. In choice grade this is an excellent type-collector's coin; finely detailed and usually comes sharply impressed. Though an intriguing variety, it commands no variety premium.



★6 Well Right of Tip

7



Wheelspoke Cracks

29-7  
Wheelspoke

D

**Obverse 4:** Star 12 points between dentils, and stars 1,4,5,6,10,13 nearly do. Sixth star points well right of coronet tip. Date is evenly spaced with short 1, and 2 is a touch low. Dentils from ★1-5 have an extra lump on their tips, though this generally shows only on earlier strikes. First star is far from the bust. In LIBERTY, the L is recut below, BE are recut inside their tops and are joined at their bases, T is strongly recut on the right, Y less so on the left. Feet of BER are even and above LI-TY.

**Striking Variations:** Almost always found flatly struck. Obverse always shows minor rust pitting above the curl on the neck. Earliest strikes show only the one wheelspoke crack thru R. Most have wheelspoke cracks strongly thru R and between D S, fainter thru ribbon at bottom and thru first A of AMERICA. Later strikes show these four cracks stronger and more extended, a fifth wheelspoke thru the second T of STATES, reverse rim dishing at left, and a light crack joining the inner points of ★1-4. The area from O of ONE to E of CENT is usually weak.

**Reverse D:** This die appears on varieties 4-7. Key leaves point PC-, PC, C-. First A of AMERICA is dotted by a dentil. A leaf tip is centered under the left foot of final A, which is very near the stem. Medium center dot, generally rather flat.

**Discussion:** R4, quite scarce and inordinately popular. MS(2), AU(4), XF(5), VF(20+). The best one turned up unattributed in the CSNS89 sale. It was recognized by at least four SERIOUS cent specialists and the bidding went crazy, finally selling beyond \$10,000. Though not as rare as number 4, the great popularity of the wheelspoke variety often drives it up to the 8X premium range, but usually 6X is more accurate.



5



★6 Left

**Obverse 5:** Stars 6 and 11 point between dentils, and stars 4,5,7,10,13 nearly do. Sixth star points left of the coronet tip. Date has short 1. This die has bold, well rounded dentils. A faint inner circle strings the dentil tips, strongest at ★1-2 and ★4-5. First star is directly off the tip of bust — the only 1829 cent thus. LIBERTY has L recut at bottom, I high and boldly recut at top, BER joined at bases, BE joined at tops, with E strongly recut at center-bar.

**Striking Variations:** Almost always found well struck, but with right stars flatter than left. As the dies wear the dentilation fades and reverse center dot vanishes. Occasionally found with a light rim break between ★9-10, another between ★7-8 and another over CA. These do not extend past the dentils. Sometimes found with reverse upset — dies aligned head-to-head. One example (Good) was reported in the Davis-Steinberger supplement in 1954 and again in W.E. Johnson's LC167B and C in 1968 with "heavy break tip of coronet to over LIB". This

8



PLC NR, Close to C

**Reverse F:** This die appears on number 9 of 1828 and 8 of 1829. Key leaves point NR, NR, R-, NR. Several light die-scratches slope upward between the feet of F A. UNI are lightly recut below their tops. TA feet are well apart, AT feet nearly touch. AMER feet are close and rather even, with RI farther apart. Final A is far from the stem. Both E's of ONE CENT tilt left. N of ONE and NT of CENT tilt right. Tiny, weak center dot.

ghost has refused to materialize and is likely a gouged coin. Has anybody seen this "break"?

**Discussion:** R1+, second commonest 1829. MS(14), AU(12+), XF(many). The French:490 coin was catalogued as a Proof in the 1914 ANS Exposition and in the French catalog. It may be a Proof, but is untraced and unverified. This is an easy variety that pulls no premium.



Wide Date, 1 Leans Right

9



Small Letters (TES Apart)

**Obverse 6:** Starts 7 and 10 point between dentils, and stars 1,4,5 nearly do. Sixth star points slightly right of coronet tip. There is a strong inner circle K4-K12. Date is widely spaced with a short 1 that leans far right. The first star is much farther from the bust than is the 1. LIBERTY has I high, and strongly recut at top. Crumbling connects center-bar of E of its top pendant. Left top serif and left foot of R are boldly recut below.

**Reverse C:** This die appears on varieties 9-3-5. Key leaves point SPC, R, PC, PC. Letters of legend are small, especially noticeable by their isolation from each other. A-CA are widely but lightly recut to the left, most apparent on the final A. Faint traces also occasionally show to the left of ME. Letters of ONE CENT are large as on all other cents produced before 1832 (but see 1831 discussion). In CENT, E and T tilt left, N right, and the T is recut below its left arm. Medium, plain center dot.

**Striking Variations:** Usually found flatly struck on head, brow, stars, parts of wreath, and from O of ONE to E of CENT. Comes with tops of all A's in legend open but these fill in with crumbling — first A2, then A3, finally A1. Remnants of the opening often show on the filled A's, apparently more as a feature of striking than of die state. Obverse comes perfect, then (while A1 is still open) develops an arc crack from rim thru ★12, ERT, brow, top of ★4 to rim. Another crack grows from this one, beginning at mid-field before the eye, barely missing ★4, extending thru ★3, with a later progression thru ★2 to rim over ★1. An additional crack

runs horizontally from the tip of bust, turning sharply to the rim just right of ★1. This marriage is occasionally found with dies aligned head-to-head (see also number 8).

**Discussion:** R4-, rather scarce, especially above Fine. AU(2), XF(3), VF(20+), F(several). Several of the VF's have been claimed as AU or better. I can name five collections that combined can account for over two dozen examples. A 4X-5X premium is normal for this one.





# 1830

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By 1830 the B&O Railway stretched thirteen miles. Joseph Smith published "The Book of Mormon" and James Audubon published the first American edition of "Birds of America" — I will leave to others the debate over which is more noteworthy. The U.S. population reached 12.9 million, including 3.5 million black slaves. In Europe the cholera pandemic continued to spread, killing a million this year, with several million more to die from it in the next few years.

For large cents 1830 is one of my favorite years. In spite of the 1,711,500 cents delivered this year, it is slightly scarcer as a year than 1829 and is even more intriguing. Five obverse and six reverse dies were mated into eleven varieties comprising three distinct subtypes. As in 1829, a single small letter reverse die saw limited use, producing one of the best known scarcities of the period. The five obverses break easily into two classes — the close date with inner circle, and the wide date without inner circle. Of the three subtypes (small letters, large letters/wide date, large letters/close date), only the small-letters type is scarce. But woe to the impatient variety collector! Three of the eleven 1830 cent varieties are far rarer than the scarce small letters. In fact, until the 1970's two of them could properly be classed as non-collectibles (fewer than three examples known).

Only three varieties of this year are truly common, and together they account for about 80% of all 1830 cents and over 80% of all Mint State examples. In fact, if I were to add a

fourth variety to the "common" group, that group would swell to well over 90% of all 1830 cents. The one-of-a-year collector of Mint State cents will find 1830 a slight but not forbidding challenge, with a little over 100 true MS examples known. The Proof collector has a near impossible task in competing for one of the half dozen confirmed Proof examples of 1830 cents. And the variety collector must compete for an R6+ and an R5+ variety, with fifteen known of one and thirty-three of the other. What more could one ask for — an inexpensive year that offers a first-rate challenge.

The extensive intermarriage of the few dies of this year make it at once a simple and a difficult year to figure out. At least two, likely three or more dies saw interrupted use. At least one variety was struck on two occasions — both before and after a long string of other varieties to which it is die-linked. Once we have that spaghetti straightened out, the rest is easy. The sequence presented here is not the only possibility, but is the most logical of the several alternatives. In its development, I relied heavily on die-wear and break-progressions, placing the usually seen Proof variety first. Where alternatives arose I clutched at any straw available, such as flan-characteristics, postulating an inferior batch of blanks for those varieties characteristically found rough and black. If this was the case, there must have been at least two such batches. As the sequence fell into order, the small letter variety obediently took its position at the tail of the queue. The most likely emission sequence seems to be 10-3-4,1,8-11-7-9-2-5-6.







**IC Broken Only Under 18**

**1**

**Obverse 1:** Only the sixth star points between dentils. There is an almost complete inner circle, broken only below 18. Sixth star is right of coronet tip. Date is close and evenly curved. IBER feet are even and very close, BERT are recut at centers. The curl-tailed R is cut over a straight-tailed R.



**A**

**A Almost Touches Stem**

**Reverse A:** This die appears on varieties 1-7 of 1830. Key leaves point PC, R, PC, C. Second S is low, and final A almost touches the stem. Small center dot.

**Striking Variations:** Dentilation is bold on both sides, generally minimal at top obverse. Earliest strikes show the obverse circle complete, but most have it broken below 18. In this marriage the reverse is heavily rusted, with leaves of the wreath and all letters of ONE CENT quite rough. Later strikes show light dishing on reverse, light radial flow-lines near rim on both sides, light crack from rim over ★1 thru outer points ★2 to rim over ★3. Final strikes have IC as the obverse rim, with minor rimbreaks between ★5,6, below ★11, and below ★12. This variety is usually found clean and brown.

**Discussion:** R1, third commonest 1830. MS(30+), AU(many). One Proof and over 30 MS examples are known to me. This variety is an old friend that is usually recognized at a glance by the circle broken only under 18. It commands no premium.



2



Cracks Top of Date

**Obverse 2:** Star 9 points between dentils, and stars 10,11,13 nearly do. There is an inner circle at left, K7-K12, just clear of dentil tips. Sixth star is slightly right of the coronet tip. Date is quite close, almost straight across the top. A string of rust pits makes an "earring" behind the ear (diagnostic). Base of I is above L-B, B is lightly recut inside top, ER much more obviously so. E is slightly oversized, but not so much as on variety 10.

**Striking Variations:** Generally found on clean, tan flans, cracked thru tops of date and all stars. These cracks are faint on some, but bold on most. As the dies wear the die-scratch at U fades away. This marriage is almost invariably struck flatly on stars, brow, and coronet tip. Flowlines often join several star points to the rim, and some of these may be breaks rather than flowlines. Occasionally found with reverse rotated crossways left.

2



PLS C

**Reverse B:** This die appears on numbers 9-2-5. Key leaves point C, C, C, C. The final A is plainly but lightly recut on the right. A light die-scratch usually shows from leaftip to base of U. N of ONE leans right. Tiny center dot.

**Discussion:** R2+, fourth commonest 1830. MS(6), AU(4), XF(6), VF(several). Old auction records (1918-1962) list another half-dozen or more purported "MS" examples, but these have not come to light for proof/disproof. In Fine or less this is not a hard one at all. Above Fine it will command a premium around 1.5X-2X.



IC: Crack Right Side O

3



C

PLF PR

**Obverse 3:** This die appears on numbers 10-3-4. Stars 5 and 8 point between dentils, and star 9 nearly does. Inner circle is complete just off the dentil tips, boldest at left and below. A dentil below 30 is joined to this IC. Sixth star is right of coronet tip. LIBERTY is weaker-cut than on other dies of this year, with BER boldly recut inside their tops. Base of T is far below that of R.

**Reverse C:** This die appears on numbers 3-8. Key leaves point PC+, SPR, PR, PC. Legend is far from the wreath, most noticeable at final S. Feet of TA are unusually close. Left pendant of all T's is shorter than the right one. Small, bold center dot.

**Striking Variations:** Always seen with obverse crack thru outer points of first three stars, base of date, right side of O to outer points of last four stars. This die may have suffered an interrupted marriage, as some examples seem to have a later reverse die state than found on the later variety 8, while others seem earlier than seen on variety 8. This variety is found with reverse rotated to (or near) all four major compass points — an interesting variety for that.

**Discussion:** R3, fifth commonest 1830. MS(7), AU(3-5), XF(12+), VF(many). Number 3 may bring up to a 2X premium, especially in higher grades.



3



IC: Crack Right Side O

**Obverse 3:** This die appears on numbers 10-3-4. Stars 5 and 8 point between dentils, and star 9 nearly does. Inner circle is complete just off the dentil tips, boldest at left and below. A dentil below 30 is joined to this IC. Sixth star is right of coronet tip. LIBERTY is weaker-cut than on other dies of this year, with BER boldly recut inside their tops. Base of T is far below that of R.

**Striking Variations:** Reverse is always cracked from rim at bottom thru tops of UNITED ST, from rim over T thru tops of ATES to rim over O, thru tops of OF, from bases of OF AMER, thru centers ICA to rim at bottom. Obverse comes with inner circle bold, with inner circle weaker and rim crumbling on right, without and with a short radial crack from left top of E (D) to rim, with the date crack very bold and joined to the rim to the left and right of the date (dentils now gone), and finally

4



CA and Leaf all Close

**Reverse D:** This die appears on numbers 4-11. Key leaves point PC+, SPR, R, NR. ED bases almost touch, final S is low, AME feet all nearly touch, with RI feet well apart. Final A is farther from the stem than on any other 1830. Tiny center dot.

with the section below the date broken away in an impressive rimbreak. Obverse dentilation is typically bolder at right. Of the last two states mentioned, I know of only five or six of each.

**Discussion:** R1, slightly the second-commonest 1830 cent. MS(20+), AU(many). This variety commands no premium.



5

**Straight Date, Short-tip 1**

**Obverse 4:** This die appears on numbers 5-6. Stars 1,2,13 point between dentils. Sixth star is slightly right of coronet tip. Faint inner circle runs from ★1 clockwise to O of date. Date is moderately spaced and straight across. 1 has short peak (broken off) and leans right. Feet of BER are joined, with oversized E well above top of R. Top of I is recut and broad. Center of E is recut, RT less plainly so.

**Striking Variations:** Almost always seen on clean, attractive flans, flatly struck, with dentils slightly longer at top reverse. UNIT are joined to the rim and tops of most reverse letters are flow-lined to the rim. More often than not found with a weakening at O-CE. No cracks seen.



B

**PLS C**

**Reverse B:** This die appears on numbers 9-2-5. Key leaves point C, C, C, C. The final A is plainly but lightly recut on the right. A light die-scratch usually shows from leaftip to base of U. N of ONE leans right. Tiny center dot.

**Discussion:** R3, sixth commonest 1830. MS(3), AU(5), XF(4), VF(16+). This variety is in the same league with numbers 7 and 6 and is slightly more common than either, though it lacks the distinctive features of the latter. It is usually seen in VG and below, and draws about a 3X premium in better grades.



30-6

Sm Letters

4



**Straight Date, Short-tip 1**

**Obverse 4:** This die appears on numbers 5-6. Stars 1,2,13 point between dentils. Sixth star is slightly right of coronet tip. Faint inner circle runs from ★1 clockwise to O of date. Date is moderately spaced and straight across. 1 has short peak (broken off) and leans right. Feet of BER are joined, with oversized E well above top of R. Top of I is recut and broad. Center of E is recut, RT less plainly so.

6



**Sm Letters, TATES Apart**

**Reverse E:** This die appears on number 6 of 1830 and 11 of 1831. Key leaves point NR, SPR, PC, C-. The legend letters are small, most obvious by the isolation of the letters in STATES. I of UNITED is dotted by a dentil. ST are close. Top of T3 is higher than A-E. O in OF leans left. RI are higher than AME-CA. Letters of ONE CENT are large, and N of CENT has a broken right upright. Small, bold center dot.

**Striking Variations:** Reverse is cracked faintly along tops of TES of A. Dentilation remains crisp on reverse, fades on obverse. A second hairline crack develops from rim along tops of UNIT and corner of E to rim and the first crack gets more obvious. Finally, a tiny hairline crack grows from the underside of the bust and another from the peak of 1. Reverse rim is usually slightly bolder at right. Generally found on dark flans, often rough, usually bluntly struck.

**Discussion:** R4, quite scarce and extremely popular. MS(2), AU(1), XF(8), VF(24+). Several of the XF's have been offered or auctioned as "MS" at one time or another. This variety is a favorite for overgrading. Its popularity seems to cause an extra grade or two to be tacked on as often as not. As a one-variety type, you can find its variety premium in any coin pricebook. Today it runs about 3X-5X the "Large Letter" price.



No IC: O High

7



A

A Almost Touches Stem

**Obverse 5:** This die appears on numbers 8-11-7-9. Stars 4,5,13 point between dentils, and stars 1,6,7,8 nearly do. There is no trace of an inner circle. Sixth star is slightly right of the coronet tip. The date is widely spaced with final O notably high — the “hiccup O”. Lowest curl is completely over and right of O. B leans slightly left, E is recut inside, B and R less so. Base of T is weaker than other letters. This obverse is typically flat but delicately detailed, as if the die were cut in lower but finer relief than usual.

**Reverse A:** This die appears on varieties 1-7 of 1830. Key leaves point PC, R, PC, C. Second S is low, and final A almost touches the stem. Small center dot.

**Striking Variations:** Always has light crack tip of bust to rim just below ★1. This extends on some across the tip of the bust and below the bust to the lowest curl. Obverse dentilation is strongest at left and above. Reverse rim is always somewhat dished, and legend weakens as dentilation fades. Flans are usually hard and brown.

**Discussion:** R4, a scarce one, about equal to the small letters. AU(1), XF(1), VF(20+), F(several). Besides these, about twenty years ago I saw a lovely tan MS example that was horribly plugged. At least four of the VF's are near XF. Several other auction appearances of high-grade examples have come up, but most of them have turned out to be misattributed or have remained untraced after 30 years or more. This variety generally draws around a 3X-5X premium in Fine or better.



5



No IC: O High

8



PLF PR

**Obverse 5:** This die appears on numbers 8-11-7-9. Stars 4,5,13 point between dentils, and stars 1,6,7,8 nearly do. There is no trace of an inner circle. Sixth star is slightly right of the coronet tip. The date is widely spaced with final O notably high — the “hiccup O”. Lowest curl is completely over and right of O. B leans slightly left, E is recut inside, B and R less so. Base of T is weaker than other letters. This obverse is typically flat but delicately detailed, as if the die were cut in lower but finer relief than usual.

**Reverse C:** This die appears on numbers 3-8. Key leaves point PC+, SPR, PR, PC. Legend is far from the wreath, most noticeable at final S. Feet of TA are unusually close. Left pendant of all T's is shorter than the right one. Small, bold center dot.

**Striking Variations:** Earliest strikes show 1 widely recut to the left, but this fades quickly. Comes with and without crack tip of bust to rim below ★1. Reverse dentilation fades, radial flow streaks develop over and thru CA, around to stem. Final strikes show fairly heavy clashing inside the wreath and an obvious rust pit below TA.

**Discussion:** R1, slightly the commonest 1830. MS(24+), AU(many). Once considered a very scarce variety, this could only have been attributable to poor memory on the part of the searchers. This is an easy variety to find and commands no premium.



No IC: O High

9



B

PLC C

**Obverse 5:** This die appears on numbers 8-11-7-9. Stars 4,5,13 point between dentils, and stars 1,6,7,8 nearly do. There is no trace of an inner circle. Sixth star is slightly right of the coronet tip. The date is widely spaced with final O notably high — the “hiccup O”. Lowest curl is completely over and right of O. B leans slightly left, E is recut inside, B and R less so. Base of T is weaker than other letters. This obverse is typically flat but delicately detailed, as if the die were cut in lower but finer relief than usual.

**Striking Variations:** Usually on smooth, attractive, but dark flans, flatly struck, with top dentilation bold and bottom weaker. I have seen only one brown example from these dies. The die scratch at U always shows if the coin is of high enough grade to show such things. Reverse is generally weaker at the bottom.

**Reverse B:** This die appears on numbers 9-2-5. Key leaves point C, C, C, C. The final A is plainly but lightly recut on the right. A light die-scratch usually shows from leaf tip to base of U. N of ONE leans right. Tiny center dot.

**Discussion:** R6+, the rarest of the year. AU(1), VF(2), F(1), VG(5), G(5), AG(1). The first example was found by Frank Andrews between 1881 and 1883, published in his 1883 edition. It passed to Newcomb:620-Starr:240, and is rough, black, and gouged (Fine). The second was discovered by Del Bland in Boston in 1969, to Wright-Brown (VG). Notice that we are talking three quarters of a century between the first and the second — so for those “super-rare” ones, be patient: they’ll turn up eventually. Denis Loring found the third (VF) in southern California in 1973. I found the fourth (VG) in Minneapolis in 1976, and eleven more have turned up in the fifteen years since. This one brings a heavy premium — almost always well into four figures. This will likely fall as the rarity does likewise.



3



IC: Crack Right Side O

10



ONE CENT Crooked

**Obverse 3:** This die appears on numbers 10-3-4. Stars 5 and 8 point between dentils, and star 9 nearly does. Inner circle is complete just off the dentil tips, boldest at left and below. A dentil below 30 is joined to this IC. Sixth star is right of coronet tip. LIBERTY is weaker-cut than on other dies of this year, with BER boldly recut inside their tops. Base of T is far below that of R.

**Reverse F:** Key leaves point PC-, R, R+, SPC. I of UNITED is dotted by a dentil. Feet of ME are quite close with E a trifle higher. In ONE CENT, O is recut lightly at lower left, both E's lean left and T leans right. Tiny center dot.

**Striking Variations:** All seen, including the Proofs, are cracked lightly thru base of date and from right side of O thru outer points of stars on right. Reverse comes with hairline crack from rim over T thru tops TES to rim over O. Later this breaks to the rim between TA and S O, sinking gradually into a full rim break. Another crack bisects this chunk from the top of the E. Newcomb's states II and III are a gradual progression of the same thing rather than discrete states.

**Discussion:** R5-, third rarest 1830. AU(2), XF(2), VF(8), F(10). I know of six Proof examples and almost fifty more in AG-VG. At least three of the VF's are nearly XF. Normally seen below Fine, examples of this variety usually change hands agreeably in the 15X-20X range.



No IC: O High

11



CA and Leaf All Close

D

**Obverse 5:** This die appears on numbers 8-11-7-9. Stars 4,5,13 point between dentils, and stars 1,6,7,8 nearly do. There is no trace of an inner circle. Sixth star is slightly right of the coronet tip. The date is widely spaced with final O notably high — the “hiccup O”. Lowest curl is completely over and right of O. B leans slightly left, E is recut inside, B and R less so. Base of T is weaker than other letters. This obverse is typically flat but delicately detailed, as if the die were cut in lower but finer relief than usual.

**Striking Variations:** Almost always found on dark flans, usually rough, more often than not with patches of corrosion or pits. Most of the VG’s and Fines in the census are rough coins with VF detail. Obverse dentilation is heavy at top, weaker at bottom. Reverse die is clashed in center and always has a short radial crack from top of E1 to rim. Tiny center dot fades and disappears.

**Discussion:** R5+, second rarest of the year. AU(1), VF(2), F(5), VG(14), G(10), AG(4). The first example was

**Reverse D:** This die appears on numbers 4-11. Key leaves point PC+, SPR, R, NR. ED bases almost touch, final S is low, AME feet all nearly touch, with RI feet well apart. Final A is farther from the stem than on any other 1830. Tiny center dot.

discovered by A.C.Gies, reported by him to McGirk for his 1914 supplement in *The Numismatist*, there published as his “1-I”. That piece went to H. Chapman (1934) and W.C.Blaisdell. Newcomb took his description from the Blaisdell coin (Good). Walter Breen found the second one in Boston in 1956, into NN50:1510 (Good). I found the third one in a shoebox of loose cents in eastern Michigan in 1971 (Fine), and 33 more have come to light over the next twenty years — over half of them within two hundred miles of Cincinnati, possibly all from a single shipment that went west a century and a half ago. The area of concentration of this variety caused one dealer to dub it “the I-75 variety”. Six collectors have found 20 of the 36 pieces now known. This variety brings a healthy premium, but not the “thousands of dollars” that fledgling cherrypickers seem to dream of.





# 1831

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The first Baldwin locomotives were made in 1831, soon to travel 62 miles an hour. Cyrus McCormick demonstrated his horse drawn reaper, which enabled one man to do the work of five. A million Europeans immigrated to the U.S. between 1790 and 1840, sixty percent of them within this decade.

Cents of 1831 offer confusion, variety, and a challenge to the variety collector. The 3,359,260 cents reported for this year may include a few 1830's, but definitely do NOT include all of the cents dated 1831. These break rather easily into two classes — those likely struck in 1831, and those struck in later years concurrently with cents dated 1832, 1833, 1834, and 1835. Seven obverses are found paired with nine reverses to provide thirteen varieties of the two types of this year — three types if you count the small legend, large denomination as a separate type (which it really is). All of the five small-letter reverses of 1831 are die linked to other years. In fact, the cents of 1831 are die linked to all years from 1830 thru 1835 — with the common die invariably being a small-letter one.

Die-chaining makes this a trivial year on the surface, and careful study of die states confirms the initial hypothesis. All cents likely produced in 1831 follow a single, simple chain beginning with the 1830 small-letter reverse (die-linked to 1830) and proceeding thru all large-letter reverses (11-12-9-6-8-7-10-14-1). The other small-letter varieties (5-4, 3-2), as the following discussion will show, were struck in 1833 and in 1835.

The first small-letter die chain of 1831 (5-4) was made in 1833 or later. Number 5 was struck well after number

1 of 1832 (same reverse). Number 4 (same obverse) was struck later, shares its reverse with numbers 4-1 of 1833, and was struck between these two 1833's.

The second small-letter die chain of 1831 (3-2) was made in 1835 or later. Number 3 shares its reverse with numbers 1-5 of 1835 and 5 of 1834. It was struck before any of these — possibly in 1831, but more likely around the time of its die-mates. Number 2 (same obverse) was struck after this, and shares its reverse with numbers 18-12-13 of 1835. It has long, narrow dentils — a style that was not introduced until 1834. It was struck after numbers 18-12 and before 13 of 1835.

One cent of this year (Andrews 13) is a ghost that may yet give rise to another 1831 variety or, more likely, another 1834 variety. See the fuller discussion with number 13 notes.

For one-a-year collectors, 1831 is easy, even in Mint State (with a couple hundred such known). The date-and-type collector will find no challenge here even if he insists on choice cents — MS examples of the small-letter type are as easy as the large-letter ones. A variety collector will find a bit of a challenge in number 14 (mid R4) or even in numbers 5-4 if he insists on VF or better coins. The Proof collector always has a rough road with large cents, but 1831 is one of the easier years. Over 20 Proof examples have been confirmed of five 1831 cent varieties, far the least rare of these being number 3. Though most 31-3 cents were likely struck in 1835, the Proof strikes from these dies were probably made in 1831.







**Crack Top Date, ★6 FPR**

**Obverse 1:** Stars 2,7, and 10 point between dentils and star 6 nearly does. Sixth star is far right of coronet tip. Faint remnants of inner circle appear between dentil tips K3-K6. Date is close, evenly curved, with plain, short peak on both 1's. Upper lip is extended slightly into the field ("fat lip" variety). Several evidences of manual die-strengthening are seen in the hair, on brow, eye, upper lip, and ear. L is low, I is boldly recut at top, BERTY are slightly less boldly recut, with curl-tailed R over a faintly-cut straight-tailed R.

**Striking Variations:** Obverse is lightly cracked thru top of date, left thru center of ★1 and outer points of ★2-4, right thru inner points of ★13-12, center of ★11, outer points of ★10-9 to rim over ★8. Later strikes are lightly lapped, removing the extension to the upper lip. Reverse dentilation fades and rim begins to dish K9-K12. This variety is usually found on smooth, brown flans.

1



A

**LL: PLF R, PLT3 R**

**Reverse A:** This die appears on numbers 14-1. Key leaves point PC, R+, R, C+. Large letters. Several letters of the legend are crumbling all around — most notably the MERI. Portions of the wreath suffer the same fate. Leaftip at T3 is even with tip of right foot. A is rather near the stem. Bold center dot.

**Discussion:** R1, common in all grades. MS(20+), AU(12+), XF(several). This one draws no premium.



31-2

Sm Letters

2



First 1 High

2



SL, Lg ONE CENT: PLF FPR

**Obverse 2:** This die appears on numbers 3-2. No star points exactly between dentils, but stars 5,7, and 12 nearly do. Sixth star is far right of coronet tip. Date is rather close, with first 1 a bit high and 31 a little more apart. Both 1's have a very abbreviated point at their peaks. L is a trifle low, ER feet touch and tops nearly do. IBE is faintly recut. Left arm of Y is crumbling.

**Reverse B:** This die appears on numbers 18,12 of 1835, 2 of 1831, and 13 of 1835. Key leaves point NR, FPR, FPR, PC. Leaftip at S is nearer O than S. Small legend, large denomination. Dentilation is much longer and finer than found on any other cents before 1834, running about 16 dentils per centimeter of rim — as opposed to the usual 12 per centimeter. Second S is widely recut to right, though this may not show on this variety. All three E's of legend lack their lower left serifs. The first two A's lack their inner right feet and the final A has this foot manually patched. O of ONE is a touch high. Large, bold center dot.

**Striking Variations:** Obverse dentilation is usually broadest at left. Rim begins to dish, peaks to 1's vanish, stars begin drawing to right rim, finally right rim begins crumbling extensively, most noticeable at final 1, ★11, ★9, and between ★6-7. Reverse dentilation weakens slightly, recutting right of S2 fades and finally vanishes.

**Discussion:** R2+, rather common. MS(4), AU(10+), XF(24+). This one commands no premium below MS.



**First 1 High**

**3**



**31-3**  
Sm Letters

**C**

**SL: PLS NC, PLC NC**

**Obverse 2:** This die appears on numbers 3-2. No star points exactly between dentils, but stars 5,7, and 12 nearly do. Sixth star is far right of coronet tip. Date is rather close, with first 1 a bit high and 31 a little more apart. Both 1's have a very abbreviated point at their peaks. L is a trifle low, ER feet touch and tops nearly do. IBE is faintly recut. Left arm of Y is crumbling.

**Reverse C:** This die appears on number 3 of 1831, 1,5 of 1835, and 5 of 1834. Key leaves point NC, NC, C, NC. Small letters. In AMERICA, both A's have flat tops and I is dotted by a dentil. In the denomination, O leans left, N is recut at lower right, E is low, and E of CENT is boldly doubled above. Small, bold center dot.

**Striking Variations:** Dentilation weakens on both sides, finally all but vanishing. Reverse dentilation is generally broadest at right. Latest-struck pieces show all stars drawn to the rim and indistinct crumbling on right obverse, similar to but not as distinct as that found on number 2.

**Discussion:** R1, tied with numbers 6,7,12 for commonest of the year. MS(30+), AU(many). At least 8 Proof examples are known from these dies, and if old auction records are correct and are of different coins, there could be up to 15 of them. No variety premium here.



31-4

Sm Letters

3



TY Tops Joined

**Obverse 3:** This die appears on varieties 5-4. Stars 1,4,10, and 13 point between dentils, and star 7 nearly does. Sixth star is far right of coronet tip. Heavy inner circle strings dentils K10-K1, weaker K8-K10. Most dentils have a counterclockwise twist as on varieties 11-12-9-6-8-7. Bold dentilation, high relief, sharp designs, but head detail is almost invariably rather blunt. Date is bold, moderately spaced, with long-peaked 1's. In LIBERTY, L is a bit low, IBERTY are all recut — B, E, and Y spectacularly so. TY tops touch or nearly do.

**Striking Variations:** Obverse develops light crack thru outer points of ★8, another from rim over ★10 to ★9. Obverse dentilation begins to fade. Reverse is cracked thru center of IC to base of A, stem, ribbon, base of U. Another crack joins tops of UNITED ST, and another the bases of STATES. E of CENT is always weak, but this die is not so heavily buckled as the reverse of variety 5. Almost always found on square-edged, tan flans — just as number 5.

4



SL: Dot Between Tops TA

**Reverse D:** This die appears on number 4 of 1831 and 4-1 of 1833, with the 1831 struck between the two 1833's. Key leaves point PC, PR, SPR, SPC. Small letters. Bold dentilation. Small legend as on all 1833's, and small denomination. I is low, E1 has patched lower left serif, A-ES are recut to left (remnants between tops TA, left of E, joining ES). O is low and leans left. Tops of AMERI and bases of ER-A have points of undercut figures to their left. In ONE the N leans left and NE are crumbling. In CENT the tops of CE are recut, EN and base of T are crumbling, and T has a lump below its base. Medium, bold center dot.

**Discussion:** R4-, slightly less scarce than number 5. MS(1-2), AU(2), XF(6+), VF(20+), F(many). This one pulls a 3X-4X premium above Fine, rarely more than 2X for lower grades.



**TY Tops Joined**

5



**SL: PLS C, PLC PC**

31-5  
Sm Letters

A

**Obverse 3:** This die appears on varieties 5-4. Stars 1,4,10, and 13 point between dentils, and star 7 nearly does. Sixth star is far right of coronet tip. Heavy inner circle strings dentils K10-K1, weaker K8-K10. Most dentils have a counterclockwise twist as on varieties 11-12-9-6-8-7. Bold dentilation, high relief, sharp designs, but head detail is almost invariably rather blunt. Date is bold, moderately spaced, with long-peaked 1's. In LIBERTY, L is a bit low, IBERTY are all recut — B, E, and Y spectacularly so. TY tops touch or nearly do.

**Reverse A:** This die appears on number 1 of 1832 and 5 of 1831. Key leaves point C-, C, C, PC. Two fine graver-scratches form V-points from the leaftip under A2. Small legend, small denomination. All letters are widely spaced (even the ONE CENT), and the final A is well away from the stem. A long point extends from the next-to-last leaftip toward the stem. T of CENT has a small lump on its base. Tiny center dot.

**Striking Variations:** Obverse remains unbroken. Reverse is always mushy, with dentilation weak, extensive flow lines, and buckled across O-CE. Denomination letters are mushy. Always cracked from base of final A across stem, ribbon, bases UNI to center of T, another crack thru bases TED. Almost always found on square-rimmed, light brown flans, and rather bluntly struck.

**Discussion:** R4, quite scarce, especially above VF. AU(2), XF(2), VF(30+), F(several). This variety generally brings in the 4X-6X range.



4

**Broad, Flat Dentils**

**Obverse 4:** This die appears on numbers 6-8-7. Stars 3,6,7,11,12, and 13 point between dentils. Sixth star is barely right of the well-rounded coronet tip. Several dentils have counter-clockwise cusps as on numbers 11-12. Faint inner circle shows underneath dentils at K9-K1. The date is well curved with long thin peaks to both 1's. L is low and recut below, E is recut, R top is well below E, T foot is well below R, with line thru tops RTY. T is bold at top and bottom, weaker in center.

**Striking Variations:** No cracks, no deterioration. Reverse dentilation fades and finally disappears, but the reverse die was retired unbroken and evidently little if any more rusted than it began. The crisp obverse dentilation in low relief is reminiscent of number 6 of 1829.

6

**LL: Leaf Very Close to D**

**Reverse F:** This die appears on numbers 12-9-6. Key leaves point SPC, R-, NR, PC. Large letters. All T's of legend have broken left arm. Legend is close to the wreath, most noticeable below D. In OF, O is low and leans left. RI feet are well apart with I slightly lower. In the denomination, O leans right and all letters are crumbling slightly. Large, bold center dot.

**Discussion:** R1, common in all grades. MS(30+), AU(many). One one-sided Proof is confirmed from these dies, with Proof obverse (as are all one-sided Proofs). This is one of the easiest 1831's in any grade. It commands no premium.



Sawtooth Dentils

7



G

LL: PLS R-, PLF SPC

**Obverse 4:** This die appears on numbers 6-8-7. Stars 3,6,7,11,12, and 13 point between dentils. Sixth star is barely right of the well-rounded coronet tip. Several dentils have counter-clockwise cusps as on numbers 11-12. Faint inner circle shows underneath dentils at K9-K1. The date is well curved with long thin peaks to both 1's. L is low and recut below, E is recut, R top is well below E, T foot is well below R, with line thru tops RTY. T is bold at top and bottom, weaker in center.

**Reverse G:** This die appears on numbers 7-10. Key leaves point SPC, R-, SPC, SPC. Large letters. In AMERICA the notch on right side of R is filled with crumbling (looking similar to a straight-tailed R) and C is nearly closed. Small lump below T of CENT. Bold center dot.

**Striking Variations:** Obverse is now lightly lapped, dentilation is weaker and quite sawtooth-appearing. Reverse dentilation begins to fade. Points at 1-peaks are gone. Both dies remain unbroken. This variety is occasionally found with reverse crossways, rotated a quarter turn right.

**Discussion:** R1, common in all grades. MS(40+), AU(many). One example (Brand-NN41:876) claimed to be a one-sided Proof, with Proof ★REVERSE★. This is a contradiction of terms. Early strikes of number 7 come with mirrorlike reverse, but that does not make them Proofs. This is one of the easiest 1831 varieties to find in MS. It commands no premium in any grade.



4



No Cracks, Short-Peak 1

**Obverse 4:** This die appears on numbers 6-8-7. Stars 3,6,7,11,12, and 13 point between dentils. Sixth star is barely right of the well-rounded coronet tip. Several dentils have counter-clockwise cusps as on numbers 11-12. Faint inner circle shows underneath dentils at K9-K1. The date is well curved with long thin peaks to both 1's. L is low and recut below, E is recut, R top is well below E, T foot is well below R, with line thru tops RTY. T is bold at top and bottom, weaker in center.

**Striking Variations:** Obverse dentilation grows less crisp, but obverse remains unbroken. Reverse comes perfect, but is usually seen with a light crack from rim over final A, clockwise thru ribbon end of base of UNITE. Another crack joins tops of TED S. This grows heavy, extends to rim at both ends, and the piece outside this crack begins to sink — progressing

8



LL: PLS SPC

**Reverse H:** Key leaves point SPC, SPC, SPC, C. Large letters. RI feet are apart and even. C has long, square-ended tail. Final A is quite near the stem. In the denomination, both E's are lightly recut. Bold center dot.

gradually into a full rimbreak. This gradual development of a rimbreak is similar to what occurred on number 2 of 1818, 9 of 1822, and 10 of 1830, and is totally unlike the usually-seen catastrophic appearance of such breaks. This variety is more often than not found on rough, black flans.

**Discussion:** R3, scarce but not rare. MS(14+), AU(8), XF(12+), VF(several). This variety rarely commands much if any premium.



9

Circular Crack, Straight-Tailed R

**Obverse 5:** Stars 7,11,12 point between dentils, and star 10 nearly does. Sixth star is right of coronet tip. Top dentil tips (only) show a slight counterclockwise turn. Date has thin-pointed 1's. Lowest points of ★1 are well below the bust tip. ★3-13 are crumbled on the inner points. L is quite low, feet of BERTY are manually patched with straight lines. LIBERTY consists of style I letters (most noticeable on ERT) as on cents before 1820.

**Striking Variations:** Comes lightly cracked thru top of date, left thru inner points of first eight stars, and right thru inner points of last five stars. The crack soon grows heavy, doubles between ★4,5 (one joining inner points, another the outer), and finally starts losing die-metal between these cracks. Reverse dentilation remains crisp, no reverse cracks. The final state has a massive break between ★3-5 obliterating three points of ★4 and two points of ★5. The later states of this variety are quite rare.



F

LL: Leaf Very Close to D

**Reverse F:** This die appears on numbers 12-9-6. Key leaves point SPC, R-, NR, PC. Large letters. All T's of legend have broken left arm. Legend is close to the wreath, most noticeable below D. In OF, O is low and leans left. RI feet are well apart with I slightly lower. In the denomination, O leans right and all letters are crumbling slightly. Large, bold center dot.

**Discussion:** R3-, a bit scarce but not too bad. MS(12+), AU(9+), XF(several). Two one-sided Proofs are confirmed from these dies, one of them in the Mint Cabinet at Smithsonian. This variety draws a premium only in the rare terminal states, for which many cent specialists would pay dearly.



6



No Cracks, ★1 Low

10



LL: PLS SPC

**Obverse 6:** This die appears on numbers 10-14. Stars 2,4,5, and 9 point between dentils and stars 6 and 12 nearly do. Sixth star is right of coronet tip. Heavy inner circle joins dentil tips K7-K1, fades with dentilation as die wears. Date is evenly curved with long, heavy peak on both 1's. Lowest points of ★1 are well below the bust tip. LIBERTY has L a touch low, BER boldly recut inside, ER about touching at both top and bottom.

**Reverse G:** This die appears on numbers 7-10. Key leaves point SPC, R-, SPC, SPC. Large letters. In AMERICA the notch on right side of R is filled with crumbling (looking similar to a straight-tailed R) and C is nearly closed. Small lump below T of CENT. Bold center dot.

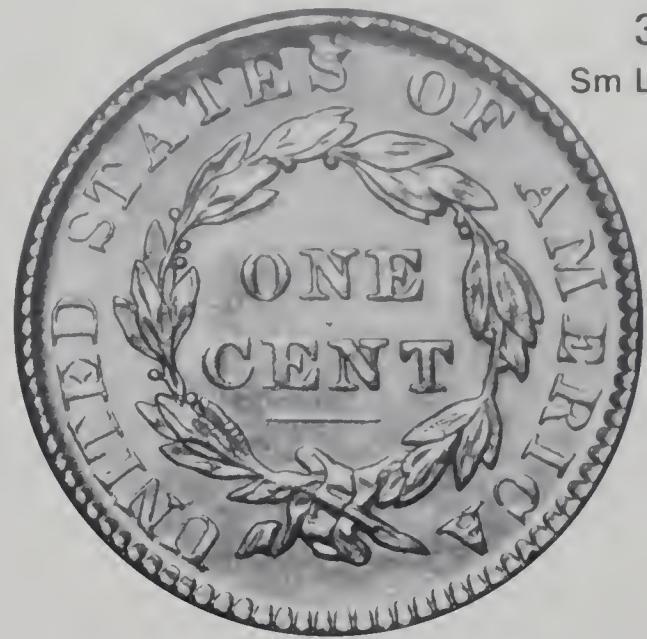
**Striking Variations:** Comes with both dies perfect, then with a faint arc crack thru S1 to wreath below TA, exiting from leaftip under S2 to rim just left of O. Later, the obverse dentilation begins to crumble above ★9, finally fusing six dentils all the way to their tips.

**Discussion:** R3, scarce but not rare. MS(6), AU(5), XF(10+), VF(many). At least three, likely four or five Proofs are known, all one-sided (Proof obv / MS rev). This one draws no bonus below AU.



**Crack thru Stars & Base of Date**

11



31-11  
Sm Letters

I

**SL, TATES Apart: PLD NR, PLC C-**

**Obverse 7:** This die appears on numbers 11-12. Stars 1, 3 and 13 point between dentils and stars 2,7, and 12 nearly do. Sixth star is right of coronet tip. Dentilation has counterclockwise-turned tips with a faint inner circle at dentil tips K7-12. Lowest points of star 1 are well below the bust tip. Date is rather widely spaced with 18 a touch more apart. Long, heavy peaks on both 1's. LIBERTY has L low, IB touching at base, BE recut inside, ER touching at base, RT well separated, with feet of T far below R and resting on hair. Die is noticeably rusted, most obvious at LIBERTY and around date and stars. Small bold center dot before ear — the only 1831 obverse thus.

**Reverse I:** This die appears on number 6 of 1830 and 11 of 1831. Key leaves point NR, SPR, PC, C-. The legend letters are small, most obvious by the isolation of the letters in STATES. I of UNITED is dotted by a dentil. ST are close. Top of T3 is higher than A-E. O in OF leans left. RI are higher than AME-CA. Letters of ONE CENT are large, and N of CENT has a broken right upright. Small, bold center dot.

narrow rimbreak in the dentils at ★13. Small reverse center dot fades away. Occasionally found with reverse upset — a half turn from its normal head-to-toe orientation.

**Striking Variations:** Always found with a crack from center of first 1 encircling inner points of stars, though this crack is quite faint on a few of the earliest ones. Other faint cracks are seen thru tops 831 and occasionally bases 183. Reverse is lightly cracked thru tops of UNITE, another thru tops ATES of A, later develops rim break joining tops of TES to rim, finally with tops of N in ONE rusted together, the rimbreak filling in the top loop of S2, and a

**Discussion:** R2, rather common in all grades. MS(12+), AU(9+), XF(many). Surprisingly enough for a carryover die, at least two Proofs have been confirmed. Several of the XF's and AU's have been offered as "MS" and as "Proof". Though the rimbreak or the small legend on this variety occasionally generates a little extra interest, it is rarely enough to command a premium.



7



Crack thru Stars &amp; Base of Date

**Obverse 7:** This die appears on numbers 11-12. Stars 1, 3 and 13 point between dentils and stars 2,7, and 12 nearly do. Sixth star is right of coronet tip. Dentilation has counterclockwise-turned tips with a faint inner circle at dentil tips K7-12. Lowest points of star 1 are well below the bust tip. Date is rather widely spaced with 18 a touch more apart. Long, heavy peaks on both 1's. LIBERTY has L low, IB touching at base, BE recut inside, ER touching at base, RT well separated, with feet of T far below R and resting on hair. Die is noticeably rusted, most obvious at LIBERTY and around date and stars. Small bold center dot before ear — the only 1831 obverse thus.

**Striking Variations:** Obverse is always cracked around inner points of stars to near base of both 1's. The dentil crumbling at ★13 expands almost to the final 1, a light crack joins tops of 831, another the bases of 183, light dentil fusing starts at ★7-8, radial cracks to rim develop at ★4 and to right of final 1. Then comes a 5-mm rimbreak, covering two points of ★13 (Newcomb's 12/1). Then it extends deeper to cover three points of this star

12



LL: Leaf Very Close to D

**Reverse F:** This die appears on numbers 12-9-6. Key leaves point SPC, R-, NR, PC. Large letters. All T's of legend have broken left arm. Legend is close to the wreath, most noticeable below D. In OF, O is low and leans left. RI feet are well apart with I slightly lower. In the denomination, O leans right and all letters are crumbling slightly. Large, bold center dot.

(N-12/2), and finally becomes very massive, covering over 10 mm of rim, five points of ★13, and three points of ★12 (N-12/3). The reverse remains unbroken, but is naturally weak opposite this massive break. The terminal state of this variety is rare but not excessively so. It has always been extremely popular as one of the most spectacular breaks of the series.

**Discussion:** R1, common in all grades. MS(12+), AU(12+), XF(many). Somebody is usually willing to pay a 5X-8X bonus for the two-star rimbreak, perhaps more for the rarer three-point break. Without it, this common cent commands no premium.

\*\*\* There Is No Number 13 \*\*\*

Described by Frank Andrews in 1883 as “Sixth star right, large 8 in date”, this exactly fits the obverse of 1834 A3-4 (altered to 1831), and doesn’t come even close to anything else. However, the reverse, described as “NR, PR, PR, NR, Small Letters” fits only the reverse of 1831 A2 and 1835 A12-13 (same die all). At any rate, nobody has ever seen such a beast.

Andrews’ description could be either a complete mixup, a mule of 1834 A3-4 obverse (coin altered to 1831) and

1835 A12-13 reverse (since unseen), or a validly-reported, since-unseen 1831 variety. My feelings run strongly towards the first, weakly toward the second, and I tend to consider the third as only the barest possibility.

An interesting side note is that all Andrews-pedigreed cents come in his handmade envelopes. A few of his envelopes were found some years ago at his house — one of them marked “1831 A13” had never had a coin in it.



6



No Cracks, ★1 Low

14



LL: PLF R, PLT3 R

**Obverse 6:** This die appears on numbers 10-14. Stars 2,4,5, and 9 point between dentils and stars 6 and 12 nearly do. Sixth star is right of coronet tip. Heavy inner circle joins dentil tips K7-K1, fades with dentilation as die wears. Date is evenly curved with long, heavy peak on both 1's. Lowest points of ★1 are well below the bust tip. LIBERTY has L a touch low, BER boldly recut inside, ER about touching at both top and bottom.

**Reverse A:** This die appears on numbers 14-1. Key leaves point PC, R+, R, C+. Large letters. Several letters of the legend are crumbling all around — most notably the MERI. Portions of the wreath suffer the same fate. Leaf tip at T3 is even with tip of right foot. A is rather near the stem. Bold center dot.

**Striking Variations:** Obverse dentilation fades further, developing a string-of-beads appearance as radial flow-lines increase in intensity all the way around. Reverse remains crisp and new-appearing.

**Discussion:** R4+, scarcest of the year, but not as rare as previously thought. I have seen several "hoardlets" of 4-10 pieces each. AU(4), XF(4), VF(18+), F(12+), G-VG(over 50). At least seven of the VF pieces I have seen are near XF. This one almost always commands a premium, usually in the 5X-6X range. When it was considered as "very rare" it used to bring over 10X.

# 1832

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In 1832 the U.S. Army's daily liquor ration was abolished. The first steamboat on Lake Michigan reached Fort Dearborn (Chicago), the first true clipper ship was built at Baltimore, and the European cholera pandemic finally reached New York, killing 4,000 there. The Creek, Chicasaw, Sauk, Fox, and Seminole Indians ceded their lands east of the Mississippi River to the United States, the tribes to be relocated westward.

Three pairs of dies were used to strike the 2,362,000 cents delivered in 1832. Three varieties, three types — each distinctive, and none rare. All three 1832 cent varieties are readily obtainable in Mint State, and the Small-Letter variety is available in Proof.

Since the Large-Letter reverse is the older type, style considerations should dictate an emission sequence of 3,2,1. Evidence pro is that variety 1 is die-chained to an 1833 issue (numbers 5-4 of 1831; see 1831 discussion). Evidence con is that the Proofs of this year, traditionally a first-of-year practice, are from number 1. A contributing argument is that the start-of-the-year variety for 1831 was a small-letter Proof. I chose to weigh the Proof-variety argument heavier than the die-link-to-1833 argument in my sequence-guessing, assigning 1,2,3 as the most likely order of striking.

A specific word about double profiles seems in order here, as it is with this year that this flaw first becomes

endemic. A “double profile” (or triple, or quadruple, or ...) is nothing more than a chatter-strike — rebound permitted by a loose (worn or poorly adjusted) press mechanism. With a sufficiently high-power glass and patience, minor doublings can be found on some specimens of nearly every 1816-1835 variety (though Newcomb only specifically mentioned it on less than half of them), as well as on a few others earlier. They are most common on cents of 1832-1835, just before the culprit presses were retired. It is no coincidence that this period of confusion spans the transfer to the new Mint facilities and ends abruptly with the scrapping of the old-Mint presses in October of 1835.

Indeed, nearly one out of every three cents of 1832-1835 shows plain evidence of doubling somewhere. I have seen as many as eight double-profile examples of a given variety lined up together — with no two of them identical. This does not constitute a different variety, or even a different die state, but speaks of the condition of the press rather than of the dies in that press. In my opinion, to ballyhoo a cent as “unique with triple outline on back of ear!” is in the same league as “the only one known with carbon spot below nose” or “one of only four examples seen with edge bruise at third star”. Nonetheless, some collectors do find fascination in such things — and it's fully as valid an excuse for keeping two or more of a variety as “but they're different colors” or “but I like them both.”







★6 R, Close Date

1



32-1  
Sm Letters

A

Sm. Legend, Sm. Denomination

**Obverse 1:** Stars 3,4,10 point between dentils, and stars 1,2,13 nearly do. Sixth star points right of the coronet tip. Date is close with a short peak on 1. IB barely touch top and bottom, and bases of ER are joined. Foot of T is below R.

**Reverse A:** This die appears on number 1 of 1832 and 5 of 1831. Key leaves point C-, C, C, PC. Two fine graver-scratches form V-points from the leaf tip under A2. Small legend, small denomination. All letters are widely spaced (even the ONE CENT), and the final A is well away from the stem. A long point extends from the next-to-last leaf tip toward the stem. T of CENT has a small lump on its base. Tiny center dot.

**Striking Variations:** Comes with and without a light crack joining bases of CA, stem, ribbon, bases UNI to center of T, and another joining bases TED. This is also reported with an obverse crack joining the first two stars, though I have not seen it thus.

**Discussion:** R2, rather common in all grades. MS(24+) AU(many). Three Proofs are known from these dies, one of them in the Mint Cabinet at Smithsonian. This one draws no variety premium.



32-2

Sm Letters

2



★6 SL

2



Sm. Legend, Lg. Denomination

**Obverse 2:** Stars 5,7,10 point between dentils, and stars 12,13 nearly do. Sixth star points a hair left of coronet tip. In the date, 1 has a moderately long peak and 8 is low. First star is quite near the tip of bust. Front of eye and eyelid are heavily recut. IB touch at bottom and are apart at top. ER touch top and bottom, as do TY at top. L is low, E is boldly recut below, foot of T is well below R, and Y has short right top pendant.

**Reverse B:** Key leaves point NL, NL, NC, NC. Small legend, large denomination. A short dash extends right from the base of S1 and a left-sloping line up its right side, possibly the remnants of an underpunched A. Other minor marks show between the tops of ED and bases DS on earlier strikes. S2 is high, as is E of ONE. ONE CENT is closely spaced. Medium center dot.

**Striking Variations:** Always found with arc crack at top thru ★5-10. Reverse dentilation fades, the ED S marks disappear. Flowlines draw stars and letters to the rim. No other cracks seen, though a faint flaw downward from E in CENT has been claimed as a crack.

**Discussion:** R3-, barely scarce but the scarcest 1832. MS(24+) AU(several). This is the only 1832 to command any premium, and even this one rarely brings any more than 1.5X.



★6 FR, Wide Date

3



C

Lg. Legend, Lg. Denomination

**Obverse 3:** Stars 7,8,10 point between dentils, and stars 1,11,13 nearly do. Sixth star is far right of the coronet tip. Date is quite widely spaced with a very short peak on 1. IB and ER about touch at bases. IBE are recut below their tops. T has a spike from its right foot, and Y is high.

**Reverse C:** Key leaves point C-, C, SPC, NC. Large legend, large denomination. All letters are closely spaced (due to their larger size). S2 is low, F has broken top of centerbar and is doubled, with original punch tilting left. Final A nearly touches stem. In CENT the E tilts left and base of T is doubled. Small center dot.

**Striking Variations:** Dentilation fades — no cracks seen. This one often comes in my favorite color: that honey-brown that Doug Smith likes to call “golden bisquit”.

**Discussion:** R1, far the commonest 1832. MS(24+), AU(many), XF(even more). Don't even THINK about a premium.





# 1 8 3 3

---

Count your blessings. In 1833 the British Parliament passed an act forbidding textile factory employment of children under 9 and restricting employees below age 19 to no more than 69 hours per week. This year the first cargo of U.S. ice left Boston on a four-month voyage to Calcutta. Though half was lost in transit, the shipment turned a profit. Chicago carpenter Augustus Taylor began building houses from a cagelike frame of two by fours to which a roof and siding was nailed. Though his critics predicted that prairie winds would blow the “balloon house” away, within twenty years Taylor houses would be built all over America.

Six obverse and five reverse dies were used to make 1833-dated cents. These, plus two varieties of 1831 cents, comprise the 2,739,000 cents delivered in 1833. For many years the standard reference books listed both a “large letter” and a “small letter” 1833, as with all other 1829-1834 years, but this erroneous listing was corrected some years ago. The legend on all five 1833 reverses is small, but the denomination inside the wreath comes in two slightly different sizes (larger on one die, small on four) — neither type being scarce.

One 1833 variety is a true 1833/2 overdate, but traces of the underfigure are faint at best. This puts it in the same class as the 1813/2, the 1840/39, and

the 1849/8 — legitimate overdates all, but so faint that they will never gain any wide popularity. Another 1833, the “horned 8” is mildly popular for its namesake.

The most likely emission-sequence selected for 1833 cents derives from the following points: first the short-peaked 1 (one obverse) as on the last 1832 and on no 1834, next the two reverses with broken right base on E (as on no others of adjacent years), then the two reverses (three varieties) from the E-punch with broken left foot (as on several varieties of 1834-37). Ordering within each of the last two pairs was rather arbitrary, with an eye toward general similarities to neighbors. This last is an unreliable tool but in most cases is better than nothing. Unfortunately, this 6,3,5,4-1,2 arrangement places the overdate (and only Proof variety) in the center of the sequence rather than at its head, but I still find it more logical than any other alternative.

This is a common year comprised of common varieties, only one of which can be rated higher than R2. Five of the six 1833's (including the scarcest one) are readily obtainable in Mint State, and one Proof is known of the year. Cents of 1833 provide very little challenge for the variety collector and absolutely none for the date collector.







★6 L, 83 Closest

1



A

PLS PR

**Obverse 1:** Star 2 points between dentils, and stars 7,10,11 nearly do. Sixth star is left of the coronet tip. Date is close, with 83 closer than 18 or 33, and a long, rather narrow peak to 1. First star is lower than tip of bust. Feet of IBERT are quite close (RT feet always touch, IBE feet often do), as are ER and TY tops. All letters are lightly recut.

**Striking Variations:** Always cracked center IC to base A, stem, ribbons, base U, up across U to join another crack thru tops UNITED ST. Another crack joins bases STATES. Dentilation fades both sides, obverse remains unbroken. The “chip” between TA and recuttings left of AMERI fade away as the die wears. Center dot is often obscured by center die buckling. Newcomb reported this variety with a heavily-cracked obverse coupled with the early reverse state (with TA chip). This combination is illogical and can only be a laminated flan, a damaged coin, or a new variety (different obverse die). Of these possibilities, the first is far the most likely.

**Reverse A:** This die appears on number 4 of 1831 and 4-1 of 1833, with the 1831 struck between the two 1833's. Key leaves point PC, PR, SPR, SPC. Small letters. Bold dentilation. Small legend as on all 1833's, and small denomination. I is low, E1 has patched lower left serif, A-ES are recut to left (remnants between tops TA, left of E, joining ES). O is low and leans left. Tops of AMERI and bases of ER-A have points of undercut figures to their left. In ONE the N leans left and NE are crumbling. In CENT the tops of CE are recut, EN and base of T are crumbling, and T has a lump below its base. Medium, bold center dot.

**Discussion:** R2, rather common in all but MS. MS(5), AU(10+), XF(12+), VF(common). It commands no premium as a variety — unless you run across an unquestionably MS example.



2



★6 SL, B Well Above E

2



RI Feet Apart

**Obverse 2:** No stars point between dentils but stars 7 and 8 nearly do. Sixth star is slightly left of coronet tip. Date is close and even, with moderately short peak on 1. First star is lower than tip of bust. Lips are a trifle extended outward, almost as if Miss Liberty is puckering for a kiss. Bases of IB and RT are apart, with IB boldly recut at tops. B is well above E, and ER touch heavily both top and bottom.

**Reverse B:** Key leaves point PC, R, NR, NL. All E's have missing lower left serif manually patched — the E of ONE particularly badly. Feet of TE in UNITED touch, and the feet of RI are widely separated. Final A nearly touches stem. Small ONE CENT, with O of ONE lightly recut above, N leaning right, and a faint scratch joining its right base to E. C of CENT is recut above, and T faintly recut far below. Tiny center dot.

**Striking Variations:** Always cracked thru base of date and outer points of most if not all stars. Reverse comes cracked from dentils at K6 left thru tops UNITED STATE, another from rim off tip of stem thru tops ICA to rim over R. As the reverse die wears the faint marks above O of ONE and below the T of CENT fade away.

**Discussion:** R2, rather common in all grades. MS(30+), AU(many). This is another no-bonus item.



★6 R, Low Date

3



PLF NL

C

**Obverse 3:** Star 12 points between dentils, and stars 4,5,8,10 nearly do. Sixth star is well right of coronet tip. Date is evenly and moderately spaced. The 1 leans right and has a moderately long point. Tenth star touches hair. Feet of LIBER are all quite close, with RT widely separated. I is boldly recut at top, E at center right, and Y at upper left. Miss Liberty has a swelling in front of her ear, possibly an infection from swimming in polluted water.

**Reverse C:** Key leaves point C, SPC, NL, C. Small ONE CENT with C and both E's boldly recut above and a lump under T, which leans left. The E's of ONE CENT have their lower leg right of the upright broken and patched. Small center dot.

**Striking Variations:** Dentilation fades both sides. No cracks seen.

**Discussion:** R1, barely second commonest 1833. MS(40+), AU(many). There are no Proofs known from these dies, but one of the better MS coins (French-Clarke) has been repeatedly auctioned as a Proof. Common cents don't cost extra.



4



★6 FR, High Date

4



PLS PR

**Obverse 4:** Stars 1 and 7 point between dentils. Sixth star is far right of the coronet tip. Date is quite close and quite high, with 33 more apart than 183. 1 has a sharp peak, first 3 is a bit low, and final 3 has a very faint curve of an undercut 2 surrounding its upper left quadrant. Bases of IBE are close with each a mite lower than the preceding. Tops of I and R are recut, ER feet joined, with the field behind ER uneven. RT feet are rather close, with T a bit low.

**Reverse A:** This die appears on number 4 of 1831 and 4-1 of 1833, with the 1831 struck between the two 1833's. Key leaves point PC, PR, SPR, SPC. Small letters. Bold dentilation. Small legend as on all 1833's, and small denomination. I is low, E1 has patched lower left serif, A-ES are recut to left (remnants between tops TA, left of E, joining ES). O is low and leans left. Tops of AMERI and bases of ER-A have points of undercut figures to their left. In ONE the N leans left and NE are crumbling. In CENT the tops of CE are recut, EN and base of T are crumbling, and T has a lump below its base. Medium, bold center dot.

**Striking Variations:** Always cracked strongly thru base of date, continuing lighter to outer points of last two and first three stars to the rim over ★4. Reverse is cracked lightly thru center IC to base of A, stem, ribbons, to base of U. Another light crack joins tops of UNITED ST, and another the bases of STATES. Later strikes show an additional obverse crack joining outer points of ★4-7. One example is known with a three-star cud covering the outer points of ★1-3 and ending over ★4.

**Discussion:** R4-, scarcest 1833 but by no means rare. MS(9+), AU(8+), XF(10+), VF(many). One Proof (Norweb:2914) has been confirmed from these dies — the only Proof cent of this year. The scarcest 1833 variety was already much sought before its overdate status was widely publicized — and that didn't help matters. This one readily draws a 4X-5X premium.



★6 R, Horned 8

5



D

A Far from Stem

**Obverse 5:** Stars 5,6,7 point between dentils. Sixth star is well right of coronet tip. Date is moderately spaced with 8 low and boldly recut above, forming a perfect pair of horns and a strongly doubled diagonal in its center. No part of the lowest curl extends left of the final 3. Eyelash is unusually pointed. IBE are boldly recut, tops of TY less spectacularly so. ER bases touch, with top of E well above R.

**Reverse D:** Key leaves point C+, SPC, PC, PC. D is slightly low, and final A is far from stem. In ONE CENT the letters are small and all are recut. O leans left, C right. Both E's are broken, recut above and crudely patched below. T has a bold lump below. Medium, bold center dot.

**Striking Variations:** Generally cracked lightly thru base of date to outer point of ★1. Another hairline crack joins inner points of ★1-6, and another the outer points of ★6-10. Crack joins tops ERICA, arcing around thru ribbon-tip to bases UNITED STAT, angling up thru ES to tops OF and beyond. Dentilation fades.

**Discussion:** R1, slightly the commonest 1833. MS(60+), AU(many more). The "horned 8" is a fascinating variety that might draw a premium if there weren't so many of them. If you run into an MS 1833 (or a hoard of eight of them), it's likely this one.



6



★6 L, Blunt 1

6



Large Denomination, C Closed

**Obverse 6:** Stars 4,5,6 point between dentils. Sixth star is left of the coronet tip. First star is low and quite near the tip of bust. Faint line strings dentil tips. Date is rather wide with very short peak to 1. Sharp eyelash. LIBERTY has IB touching, R below E and even with foot of T. Tops of ER and left arm of Y are recut.

**Reverse E:** Key leaves point PC, R+, SPC, NL. Small legend (as always), but with slightly larger ONE CENT. Letters of ONE CENT are rather close together, with C nearly closed, and T having a split-level foot and leaning left. Medium, bold center dot.

**Striking Variations:** Cracked bases ICA thru stem tip, ribbon, to edge at K6.5. Another crack from this one joins ribbon, bases UNITED STATES OF. Another from center OF to base AME, and another completes the circuit by joining tops of MERIC. An additional short crack develops thru the N of UNITED, paralleling above the first one. Finally the chunk between these two cracks falls out, making a heavy bar across the bottom of N. This variety often comes on lovely honey-golden planchets.

**Discussion:** R1+, third most common of the year. MS(30+), AU(many). Though distinctive as a minor type for either its large-denomination reverse or its blunt-1 obverse, this is too common a coin to draw a premium.

# 1834

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By 1834 America had over a thousand miles of rails in service, most of them along the Atlantic seaboard. Twenty-eight million acres of public land were offered for sale, inducing a migration across the Appalachians. This year weekly steamboat service began between Buffalo and Fort Dearborn (Chicago). Fresh European immigrants replaced the mass exodus from the Atlantic coast. The “New Yorker” was started in 1834 by Horace Greeley (known for his advice “Go west, young man”).

Seven varieties of cents bear the 1834 date. These are matings of five obverse and seven reverse dies, likely accounting for most, if not all, of the 1,855,100 pieces delivered in 1834 and many more into 1835. One variety is Proof-only and is not impossibly a later-date construct.

The Proof-only variety (number 7) is known by only six examples and is quite similar to the other large-date variety (number 6), which is why its distinct identity was so long overlooked. The other six varieties of 1834 are sufficiently different that each could be considered a distinctive “type” as characterized by size of date, stars, reverse letters, and type of dentilation.

Until this year the dentilation on cents had been of a single style and (except for the 1835-struck 1831) nearly of a single size. An obvious change was made in the cent-dentilation in 1834. A finer, narrower dentilation was introduced that would be the cent standard for the next three years or so. And one peculiar pair of dies shows an “embat-

tled” rim — precursor to the adopted rim of 1838 and later. The embattled rim (obviously an experiment) is found on the only “no mystery” Proof variety of this year — the one produced for diplomatic presentation sets (see Newman & Bressett’s *The Fantastic 1804 Dollar*, chapters 8 and 9). This came quite late in 1834, though the dies were subsequently used extensively for regulation coinage.

Proof examples of 1834 cents come from only two pairs of dies. Normally, one of these varieties should conform to the usual practice of making coins for collectors at the start of the year. The other obviously arose from John Forsyth’s order in November 1834 for presentation sets for the King of Siam and the Imaum of Muscat (to be delivered to Edmund Roberts in December). One would expect the 1834 start-of-the-year Proof dies to conform to 1833 particulars and to be reused on regulation strikes, while the December issue should be either 1835-conforming or experimentally new, but in either case should not appear plentifully (if at all) on regulation strikes.

Naturally, fact usually tends to confound the prettiest of theories. The anomalous Proof-only dies are quite similar to 1831 cents, but not to those of 1832 or 1833. They use a new large-8 punch not seen before, and the reverse legend is large as on cents before 1832. This variety is known by six Proof examples and no regulation strikes and is the logical candidate for the December Proof. But the examples found in the King of Siam set and the



Mint Cabinet (along with their 1804 class one dollar) are from the other pair of Proof dies. The absence of business strikes using either of these dies suggests strongly that there may have been no start-of-1834 Proofs and that these six examples may have been produced a decade or more after the date on their faces, during the “special coins to order” era.

The December-Proof variety has small stars as on all but one 1835 and a radically different dentilation (both dies), unseen on any other cent before or since (but somewhat akin to the cent dentilation of 1838-1857). These dies are a unique, mated pair, undoubtedly specially prepared for the presentation order. They were used together new (unbroken) for the Proof strikes (King of Siam, Smithsonian, Clarke, etc.) and a few business strikes, then the obverse was used extensively with another (small dentil) reverse until the reverse became rusted and broken and the obverse broke, then was reunited (now broken) with its original mate for more Proofs (Newcomb, Sawicki, etc.) and for many more business strikes.

The late preparation (likely December 1834) and extensive use of these dies almost guarantees that many of the

1834-dated cents were struck in 1835. Breen’s speculation that the 1835 presentation-set strikes may also have been from these dies would seem to tally with their second Proof usage (with cracked obverse).

The emission-sequence worked out for 1834 cents can’t hope to reflect the interrupted marriages, the questionable dates of manufacture, and the complete enigma of the Proof-only variety. The best we could hope for is a grouping by style, placing the identical-to-1833 variety first and the presentation dies last. This gives a “convenience arrangement” of 2,1,7,6-5,(3-)4-3. Of these, at least numbers 5 and most 3’s, and most if not all 4’s (and possibly all 7’s) were struck in 1835 or later.

This fascinating year presents a challenge even if the Proof-only variety is discounted, as one variety is scarce in any grade and prohibitive in choice condition, while another is moderately difficult in Mint State. Discounting the Proof-only still leaves six varieties, each sufficiently distinctive as to rate minor type-status. And, as mentioned for 1832-33, the percentage of chatter-strikes is increasing daily as the old presses wheeze toward their own “valley of the shadow.”



Sm Date, Lg ★, Narrow Dentils

1



Sm Letters, PLC FPR

34-1  
Small Date

A

**Obverse 1:** Stars 2,3,5,6,7,13 point between dentils, though this is much harder to determine with the new fine, narrow dentils found on this and subsequent dies. After number 2 (the last large-dentil variety), this feature will not be mentioned — partially due to a lack of variability, but mostly because this distinction is unnecessarily fine with the narrow dentilation. Stars are large, with sixth star far right of the coronet tip. Date has small figures, with 83 notably closer than 18 or 34. Tenth star points a hair above the dimple in the hairbun — the only 1834 thus. LI are recut below (I boldly so) and E at its center-bar, with IBE even and joined at their bases. Top of R is well below E and slightly below T. Tops of TY are very close and even. A vertical graver-cut joins the back edges of the curl before the ear.

**Striking Variations:** Obverse is cracked thru outer points of ★2, center of ★3, inner points of ★4-11, center of ★12, to outer point of ★13. A considerable amount of crumbling disfigures ★4. Reverse is occasionally found perfect, but is usually cracked from center of final A thru stem tip, ribbon, bases

**Reverse A:** This die appears on number 1 of 1834 and 3 of 1835. Key leaves point NR, FPR, FPR, FPR. Small legend, small denomination, narrow dentils. Highest leaf tip is nearer O than S, the next nearer A than F, and the last pair are under the left foot of the final A. All five E's have broken lower left serif — the ones in UNITED and denomination being patched, and the others left unrepaired. All A's are perfect. Final A is more than its own width from the stem. A short, square point extends from inner leaf tip above ON. The denomination is from the same small-letter punches as the legend, and these E's are also manually patched and doubled above. O leans left, N of CENT is doubled above and right, and T has a lump below its upright. Small center dot.

UNITED STATES, and center of OF A. The "massive R DB" mentioned in WEJ's LC167C was a damaged coin, not a die break.

**Discussion:** R1, commonest 1834 in all grades. MS(100+), AU(bunches). Common both with and without doubling. There's no premium on this one.



34-2

Small Date

2



Sm Date, Lg ★, Broad Dentils

2



Sm Letters, PLD PR

**Obverse 2:** Stars 1,7,10 point between dentils, and stars 9,12 nearly do. Sixth star points far right of the coronet tip. Date has small figures and is moderately spaced. Dentils are large as on cents of 1833 and before, but the dentils below and left of the date each have a small radial point extending from them. Stars are large, as on earlier cents. LIBERTY has IB even, and the tops of ER-Y each lower than their predecessor. Tops of IBE are recut.

**Reverse B:** Key leaves point PR, FPR, FPR, SPC. Small legend, small denomination, large dentils. Highest leaf tip ends nearer O than S. O leans left, both N's are strongly doubled, both E's with patched lower left serif (the first E with patch, the second E strongly outlined above), and T with a bold lump under the center of its foot. Bold, medium center dot.

**Striking Variations:** Obverse is cracked lightly thru the inner points of all stars, often extending to tops of 1 and 4. Reverse is cracked from rim thru top of S, center of T, left foot of A, to wreath under TE, and along the wreath under S OF. Another crack runs from leaf tip under R, past I to base of C, center of A, to rim opposite the stem tip. On later strikes the first crack takes an abrupt radial turn, passing thru the left foot of the first A in AMERICA toward the rim. Final strikes show a large lump of crumbling above the left foot of Y. Occasionally found with reverse crossways, rotated left.

**Discussion:** R1, common in all grades. MS(300+), AU(even more). Between a third and half of the coins from these dies are chatter strikes, and this variety often comes in a lovely tan. They don't come any more common than this one.



**Lg Date, Sm ★, Embattled Rim**

**3**



**Sm Letters, Open C(ENT)**

**C**

34-3  
LD, S★

**Obverse 3:** This die appears on numbers 4-3 (literally 3-4-3). Embattled rim — the only large cent obverse clearly thus before 1836. Actually, this is the first appearance of the double rim that will become the cent standard (with narrower dentils) in 1836, but on worn and/or late struck examples the “two-level” dentilation feature is not apparent. Large date with 3 a touch low, small, more sharply-pointed stars. The sixth star is the least hair left of the coronet tip. Evidences of manual die touchup abound — most notably around pupil of eye, on upper lip, ear, and lower hair. Feet of LIB are successively higher, with tops of IBE recut (strongest on B). R is notably weaker than other letters.

**Reverse C:** Key leaves point NR, R, PC+, NC. Small legend, small denomination, embattled rim. N of UNITED was first punched upside-down, then corrected. E2,3 have patched left foot, but all A’s are perfect. ERIC are very widely separated, and this C is misshapen (bottom pushed right) and lightly recut below. As with its mated obverse, there are many evidences of manual touchup work. A point extends from the inner leaftip over O. In the denomination, both N’s are doubled on the right, both E’s are boldly doubled above and have patched basebar (not serif), C is wide open with stubby tail and is at least triple-punched, and T has a lump under its base. Small, bold center dot.

**Striking Variations:** Obverse is occasionally found perfect, but usually cracked thru ★12,13. The two-tier rim has all but disappeared for the cracked-die coins, so both obverse and reverse rims appear as a single, continuous raised unit with toothed inner edge.

**Discussion:** R1, common in all grades. MS(18+), AU(several). Nine or ten Proofs are known from these dies, more with the faint obverse crack than without. It is fortunate that so fascinating a variety is so common. It commands a lot of interest but no variety premium. See the 1834 year-discussion for more on this variety.



3



Lg Date, Sm ★, Embattled Rim

**Obverse 3:** This die appears on numbers 4-3 (literally 3-4-3). Embattled rim — the only large cent obverse clearly thus before 1836. Actually, this is the first appearance of the double rim that will become the cent standard (with narrower dentils) in 1836, but on worn and/or late struck examples the “two-level” dentilation feature is not apparent. Large date with 3 a touch low, small, more sharply-pointed stars. The sixth star is the least hair left of the coronet tip. Evidences of manual die touchup abound — most notably around pupil of eye, on upper lip, ear, and lower hair. Feet of LIB are successively higher, with tops of IBE recut (strongest on B). R is notably weaker than other letters.

**Striking Variations:** Emission sequence for this variety and the next was number 3 (Proofs, a few business strikes), then number 4 (many business strikes), then number 3 again (more Proofs and many more business strikes). Occasionally found with both dies new, but generally with perfect obverse and rusted reverse, most notably under NITED STATE, and a light crack thru tops F AM to rim over E. Some later strikes have a light crack

4



Sm Legend, Lg Denom.

**Reverse D:** Key leaves point SPC, NR, PC+, C. Small legend, large denomination, narrow dentils, strung at their tips by an indistinct IC. All E's of legend (but not denomination) have patched lower left foot and all A's have patched inner right foot. In UNITED, I is a bit low and a graver-scratch extends left from the patched E-serif. Second T of STATES shows a double right foot and lump above its right topbar. A long, weak point extends from the leaftip under the first A of AMERICA. Denomination-letters are perfect but for broken root of left topbar on T. Small, plain center dot with another dot northeast of it. A jagged graver-scratch, like a wormtrack, extends upwards between NE from the extra dot.

thru the outer points of the last star, eventually growing to rim under 4 and to outer points of ★12, then another crack thru center of ★12 to rim over ★11. Occasionally found with reverse crossways, rotated right.

**Discussion:** R2+, fairly common in all grades. MS(24+), AU(several). In spite of the fascination afforded by its mismatched dies, this variety is not scarce enough to command a premium.



**Lg Date, Lg★, 3 Low**

**Obverse 4:** This die appears on numbers 6-5. Large stars, large date, narrow dentils, with IC at the dentil-tips K8-K11 and behind the dentils K11-K1. Sixth star is far right of the coronet tip. Date has oversized 8, with 18-4 even and 3 notably low. 18 are closer than the Proof-only die. The stars appear to be from the same star-puncheons as the Proof-only variety — at least the distinctive style is the same (six separate petals rather than one six-pointed unit). LIBERTY has L below I below BE, with L recut on its base, BE at center, R at upper left, and T at top. Bases of TY are weak, repunched heavier, giving both letters a weak lower upright. T leans left and is well apart from R at both top and bottom. The field behind LIBERTY is striated, with a light line joining the centers of IB.

**Striking Variations:** Obverse is always heavily lapped. Feet of TY are severed, as almost is the lower curl. Flow lines are quite apparent on the head, coronet, hair, but not in the fields or behind RTY. A “chip” has developed at the dentil-tip midway between ★8,9. Reverse dentilation is the old, broad



**Sm Letters, PLS NC**

**Reverse E:** This die appears on number 3 of 1831, 1,5 of 1835, and 5 of 1834. Key leaves point NC, NC, C, NC. Small legend, small denomination, broad dentils. Letters of STATES are widely spaced. PLF C is diagnostic for 1835 and 1834. In AMERICA, both A's have flat tops and I is dotted by a dentil. In the denomination, O leans left, N is recut at lower right, E is low, and E of CENT is boldly doubled above. Small, bold center dot.

type, though now weakened and indistinct on this worn-out die. Reverse die is lapped, flowlined and dishing at edge, and is almost always weak at bottom. This variety was struck after both 1835's which use this die.

**Discussion:** R4+, a bit rare and quite popular. MS(1), AU(6), XF(10+), VF(18+), F(several). Three of the AU pieces are MS coins with minor problems. This is a very scarce and popular one-variety type whose value is separately listed in most catalogs — look under the heading “LD,LS/SL”.



34-6

LD, L★/LL

4



Lg Date, Lg★, 3 Low

**Obverse 4:** This die appears on numbers 6-5. Large stars, large date, narrow dentils, with IC at the dentil-tips K8-K11 and behind the dentils K11-K1. Sixth star is far right of the coronet tip. Date has oversized 8, with 18-4 even and 3 notably low. 18 are closer than the Proof-only die. The stars appear to be from the same star-puncheons as the Proof-only variety — at least the distinctive style is the same (six separate petals rather than one six-pointed unit). LIBERTY has L below I below BE, with L recut on its base, BE at center, R at upper left, and T at top. Bases of TY are weak, repunched heavier, giving both letters a weak lower upright. T leans left and is well apart from R at both top and bottom. The field behind LIBERTY is striated, with a light line joining the centers of IB.

**Striking Variations:** Obverse is always cracked from center of 1 thru outer points of all stars to crossbar of 4, continuing on thru lower part of 3, bases of 8 and 1, to rim beyond. Reverse is cracked lightly from rim at bottom thru tops of UNITED and

6



Lg Letters, Ctr Serif F Broken

**Reverse F:** Key leaves point PC+, PC, PC, C. Large legend, large denomination, narrow short dentils. F has top pendant of centerbar broken off. Feet of ME are much more apart than AM or ER. Foot of final A is near the stem. T of CENT has a lump below its foot. Small center dot.

beyond. Obverse also comes lightly lapped, with lowest curl nearly severed and radial flow-lines removed, leaving field and background of RTY smooth. Reverse is quite often found with RICA weakly struck.

**Discussion:** R3, scarce but by no means rare except in MS. MS(3), AU(12+), XF(18+), VF(many). This is a scarce and popular one-variety type and commands a premium as such — nothing extra for the variety. Look it up in any price list under “LD,LS/LL”.



**Lg Date, Lg★, 18 Very Close**

7



**Lg Letters, Dentil Dots Both I's**

34-7  
LD, L★/LL

G

**Obverse 5:** Large stars, large evenly-positioned date, narrow dentils with a nearly complete inner circle stringing their tips K6-K2 and behind the dentils K2-K6. Sixth star is far right of the coronet tip. All stars have one point narrower than the others and the second point clockwise from this one is shorter. This is a different star-punch than previously used and has been called “medium stars” even though there is no real size-distinctive between it and the earlier star-punch. Dentil centered under 1. LIBERTY has L low, recut above. I tilts right, recut above. BE at least triple, RT doubled at top, and Y doubled on the right foot. This die is quite similar to number 6, which see for distinctives.

**Striking Variations:** Obverse has a hairline crack from dentil over ★6, barely missing ★7, thru outer point of ★8 to outer point of ★9. Reverse is perfect.

**Discussion:** R7, no regulation-strikes known. Though this variety has auction records back to 1910 (and perhaps to 1864), it was always listed as A-6 if attributed at all. Howard Newcomb first published this as a separate variety in 1940. The discovery piece sold as HRN:656(1945)-FS:291. I have seen

**Reverse G:** Key leaves point PC+, R, SPC, SPC. Short, narrow dentils, strung by a light IC. Large legend, large denomination, narrow, short dentils. Both I's are perfectly dotted by a dentil. All letter-punches are perfect. E is slightly above T-D. First T of STATES is doubled on its left upright. Feet of TA are rather close, AT even closer, with TE well apart. Feet of AMER are all evenly close, and final A is well away from the stem. N of ONE leans right and is recut at the lower right. E of CENT is lightly recut inside its upper pendant. T of CENT has a square lump below its upright, as on numbers 2,1,6,3 (qv). Right leg of all N's bows outward. Small center dot.

six Proof examples from these dies and am waiting to prove/refute claims of another one or two. Two are less than MS and one is quite flatly struck. One of the impaired pieces claims to be a “botched-job bronzed” example and may be that, though the bronzing experiment is seen elsewhere only on 1829 cents. This is the only Proof-only cent variety before 1841. Proof large cents always bring thousands of dollars unless impaired. In a recent flurry of offerings, these have brought even more — a LOT more!





1835

In 1835 P.T.Barnum (“There’s a sucker born every minute”) began his traveling carnival career. For the only time in history, the U.S. national debt was fully paid off, as Andrew Jackson paid the final installment on January 8, 1835. A new “penny newspaper”, the “New York Herald” was started this year on an investment of \$500, using two wooden chairs and a plank across two barrels for an office.

But newsboys were not this year’s only cravers of U.S. coppers. The government of Venezuela in 1835 officially requested delivery of 1.1 million U.S. cents and their request was approved. Though I have seen no record of such a delivery, it is safe to assume that over a quarter of our 3,878,400 cent mintage sailed to the tropics. That may help account for why half of the eighteen varieties known of this year account for over 90% of the 1835 cents seen.

During this year the old coining presses were formally retired, the “multiple profile” epidemic was cured, the fat dowager on the cent went on a diet, variety-charisma fell to a low ebb and

my interest dropped to zero. For well over a decade I considered the stereotyped images of the 1835 Slim Bust, 1836, 1837, and 1838 too much of a penance to pay just to get to 1839 — the next (and last) year to hold any interest for me. But all things change with time. Who knows, in another decade or two, I may even try my hand at collecting the buttons that passed as cents in the 1840’s and 50’s.

This year presents the best argument FOR renaming the cent varieties of this period, as successive layers of sedimentation have undone the logic in Andrews’ original naming scheme. This year comes in three distinct types:

- (I) Old Head, Large Date and Stars
- (II) Old Head, Small Date and Stars
- (III) Young Head

Whose	When	(I)	(II)	(III)
Andrews	1881	1	2,3,4,5,6	7,8
Newcomb	1940	9	10,11,12,13	14,15,16(,17)
Wright	1992	—	18	19





### 1835 Old Head

The first two types of 1835 cents (9-1 and 11-5-6, 2-4-10-3-18-12-13) are called the Matron Head varieties (alias "Old Head", "Type of 1816", "Fat Head", "Yuk!" and other like descriptors). These have a bit of charm, many interesting die states, several highly distinctive varieties, more than a few rarities, and they are punch-linked and die-linked to 1831 and 1834 — which makes a fitting climax to a 20-year series.

These varieties fall into two simple chains with only one provable interruption. One of these chains begins with the old 1834 star-and-date punches, which, without the interruption, would uniquely determine a simple emission sequence. These two simple chains could be joined by a single die (1831 obverse 2), further simplifying the matter.

But after these roses we are confronted with the thorny questions of die-states, commonalities with earlier and later issues, and punch-breakage. The last half of the broken chain (9-1 / 11-6-5) should come at the end of the year because of its broken-A punches (unseen on earlier years except the 1835-struck 1831 number 2) and because reverse D (on number 6) is shared with one slim-bust variety and comes from the same hub as all the slim-bust reverses.

The other end of this chain (9-1) was placed first because of the 1834-style date and star punches — but this strange obverse may have slept till later, since its first use is with a broken-A reverse (reverse G on number 9).

The sequence presented here resolves all but this single paradox — the earliest style obverse with a broken-A reverse. Should this pair be placed before the 2-4-10-3-18-12-13 chain for its 1834 obverse? Or should it go after this chain for its broken-A reverse? Because of the major design difference I chose the former. Since number 11 comes in Proof (traditionally a start-of-year operation) and number 6 follows the last young-head variety, a reasonable whole-year sequence might be 9-1, 11, 2-4-10-3-18-12-13, 7-19-14, 15, 16, 8-6-5. But 1835 cents were made at two facilities, so a simple sequence may be impossible to determine.

One variety of this 1835 group is known in Proof, but six of the twelve varieties are currently unknown in Mint State, and three more boast a mere half-dozen MS examples combined. That makes 1835 a boring year for the epicure, but it is a fascinating year for the non-perfectionist and is my single favorite year of the whole 1816-39 series.



### 1835 Young Head

Every series has its low point, and for 1816 to 1839 cents you're looking at it here. The 1835 Head of 36 (alias "Young Head", "New Head", or "Slim Bust") is plentiful, outnumbering the Matrons of that year by around four to one. But unless one of these is a nice VF or better or has distinctive breaks, it is difficult if not impossible to attribute. It is likely that the Young Head type accounted for over three million of the 1835 mintage, unless a LOT of old-head cents went south.

The six known varieties of this type are distinguished more by characteristic cracks, rusting, and buckling than by distinctives cut into the dies. This "identity crisis" has led to myriad claims of new die states and even some claims of new varieties of this type. The chatter-strike epidemic is in its final convulsions here, which confuses identification even more. Some of the known varieties may eventually turn out to represent two, three, or more pairs of dies, but my Yankee skepticism would demand some really strong evidence before I'd believe it. All but one such claim to date have shown nothing

definitive to distinguish them from one of the five previously known varieties of this type, and I stumbled onto that one myself.

Even the great HR Newcomb, with all his attention to trivia and his mapping of chatter-strikes and minute letter-alignments, made three provable errors on this difficult series. His N7 and N17 are the same variety. The N7, N16 obverses (claimed as "same die") are two demonstrably different dies. And the N6, N8 reverses (claimed different) are the same die. In the decades to come, further studies may prove as many or more errors in the treatise presented here.

All obverses of this type of 1835 cent are from the same hub, with even the LIBERTY included. L has a triangular chip at its lower right, with B rather thin, feet of IBE and tops of BER quite close, feet of ER joined, and a small dent below the right foot of Y. The total invariance of star-positions would imply that they were included in the hub, too. The only die-distinctives noted are due to minor manual retouchings (notably



on the leading edge of the coronet, some stars, and lowest curl), subtle variations on the tip of the bust, and small variations in date-placement.

The reverses are all from the same hub as the next to last old-head variety (number 6), and most are crisper impressions than found on that variety. Key leaves point PC, R, PC+, SPC, with only trivial variations from these positions. All E's in legend are patched at lower left, as are the inner right feet of all A's. Minor manual touch-up work and distinctive failures provide the only differences in these lookalike dies.

The Young 1835 cent is readily obtainable in any grade from Good thru Mint State, but is more often found (by the thousands) in VG-F. The fully-MS population of this type is likely in the 100-120 range, with XF's and AU's much more common. No Proofs have been confirmed of the Young 1835 type, though early-struck examples of number 7 fairly often come prooflike and at least one example has been sold as a Proof.

Since most of the six known varieties of this type are from parallel matings (i.e., 5 obverses and 5 reverses), our

only sequencing tool is a "progression of style" which is subtle at best and nonexistent at worst. The shape of the bust-truncation is our only key — it is slightly shorter and broader on one die, which is the identical shape of the probable first 1836 obverse. Placing this variety (number 8) last and working backwards by placing "nearly identical" varieties adjacent to each other, we finally arrive at number 7 as the most likely candidate for first struck. That this often comes crisp and prooflike is more of a bonus than we have a right to hope for on a sequence built from such slim evidence. That this sequence places number 14 second is truly phenomenal — since its position was selected and published several years before I discovered the newest variety of this series — a late N7=17 obverse mated with the earliest N14 reverse.

Two of the Old Head 1835's, one 1834, and one 1831 cent variety are quite common from worn dies and were provably struck after New Head varieties of 1835. This leads to the speculation that these trashed dies may have been resurrected to satisfy the Venezuelan request, or more likely the shortfall from filling that order with cents made for local use.



**Large 8, Large Stars**

**Obverse 1:** This die appears on numbers 9-1. Large stars, large date, with oversize 8 and ball-topped 3 as on 1830-34 (diagnostic). Dentils are long and narrow, as on all obverses and all but one reverse of this year. A broken inner circle strings the dentil tips. But for the 5 in the date, this die is extremely similar to the two 1834 Large Date, Large Star obverses. Sixth star is far right of the coronet tip. A '1' was punched into the bust, its peak extending from the top edge of the bust. LIBERTY has BERT recut at top, E at lower left, and R notably smaller than E-T.

**Striking Variations:** Reverse dentilation is now weakened into a sawtooth appearance. Obverse is always cracked from rim over ★3 thru ★4-13 to rim right of 5, and develops a branch crack to the rim between ★11-12. These cracks are faint on some examples, bold on others. The reverse die remains unbroken. No catastrophic failures are known to me.



**PLF C, Sawtooth Dentils**

**Reverse A:** This die appears on number 3 of 1831, 1,5 of 1835, and 5 of 1834. Key leaves point NC, NC, C, NC. Small legend, small denomination, broad dentils. Letters of STATES are widely spaced. PLF C is diagnostic for 1835 and 1834. In AMERICA, both A's have flat tops and I is dotted by a dentil. In the denomination, O leans left, N is recut at lower right, E is low, and E of CENT is boldly doubled above. Small, bold center dot.

**Discussion:** R1, common in all grades. MS(20+), AU(10+), XF(many). This is likely the most common Matron 1835, accounting for almost half of all Large Head 1835 cents. It commands no premium.



2



Close, Straight Date; No Cracks

2



PLD NL

**Obverse 2:** Small date, small stars. The 8 is small and 3 has a curl-top as on the 2's of the previous decade (and 1832). This style remains constant through 1839. Date is closely spaced, and is straight across its bottom, not following the curve of the rim. The 1 is well back from the bust tip. Sixth star is a bit right of coronet tip, but not so far right as on most others of this type and year. The upper lip is reinforced above. LIBERTY has L low and strongly recut below, I leaning right, tops of BE-T recut, and BER very close at both top and bottom. A diagonal die cut extends from the nostril across the cheek toward the feet of the R. This cut shows only on higher grade examples.

**Reverse B:** This die appears on numbers 2-4. Key leaves point NL, NC, NC, NC. Legend is small, with denomination larger. PLD NL is diagnostic. The N of UNITED is boldly double punched along its right side, and a graver slip nearly joins the feet of TE(S). The lower left serifs of all E's are patched, but the A's are perfect. A short graver scratch extends from the ribbon tip. Both N's of the denomination lean right, with the final E high and T low. Tiny center dot.

**Striking Variations:** Obverse die is always unbroken. Reverse always has a light crack joining the tops of UNITED STATES OF. This grows heavier as the periphery begins to weaken with extensive radial flowlining. The tiny center dot and graver scratches from ribbon tip and between TE(S) fade and vanish. The obverse also begins to flowline somewhat.

**Discussion:** R3, scarce but not rare. MS(4), AU(1), XF(8+), VF(several). This is the fourth commonest Matron of the year and is one of the more popular ones. The second finest MS example turned up in a London auction in 1987 as "Very Fine". This variety usually commands little or no premium below VF (2X or less). Above VF it is a tough one.



3

Date Close to Bust, Cracked thru Tops



C

PLC FPR

**Obverse 3:** This die appears on numbers 4-10-3-18. Date and stars are small. Date is widely spaced, curved, but not as curved as the border. A strong inner circle joins the dentil tips from first to fifth star, continuing weaker the rest of the way around the die. The date has its 1 under the lowest curve of the bust, much nearer the bust than the border. The sixth star is well right of the coronet tip. The upper lip is reinforced as on number 2. LIBERTY has IBER all but touching at their bases, with BER boldly recut at their centers — the R apparently over a much smaller R.

**Striking Variations:** Obverse is always cracked from rim over ★3 thru first two stars and top of date and beyond. Another crack from center of 5 passes thru the last three stars to the rim over ★10. A third, much fainter crack extends vertically thru ★6 before coronet, thru brow to nostril. The cracks grow stronger, and tiny rimbreaks develop at the dentil roots at K9 and K6. Reverse is cracked lightly thru center of CA, stem, ribbon, bases UNITED STATES, center OF A. Later strikes have the reverse lapped, details fainter, center dot gone, the crack even fainter than on earlier strikes. Occasionally found with reverse crossways, rotated right.

**Reverse C:** This die appears on number 1 of 1834 and 3 of 1835. Key leaves point NR, FPR, FPR, FPR. Small legend, small denomination, narrow dentils. The legend is farther from the wreath than on any other 1835. Highest leaftip is nearer O than S, the next nearer A than F, and the last pair are under the left foot of the final A. All five E's have broken lower left serif — the ones in UNITED and denomination being patched, and the others left unrepaired. All A's are perfect. Final A is more than its own width from the stem. A short, square point extends from the inner leaftip above ON. The denomination is from the same small-letter punches as the legend, and these E's are also manually patched and doubled above. O leans left, N of CENT is doubled above and right, and T has a lump below its upright. Small center dot.

**Discussion:** R3, scarce but not rare. AU(2), XF(3), VF(24+). A half dozen of the VF's are near XF and have been repeatedly sold as XF. This is the fifth commonest 1835 Matron and may draw up to a 2X premium — and even more above VF.



3



4



**Date Close to Bust, Cracked thru Tops**

**PLD NL**

**Obverse 3:** This die appears on numbers 4-10-3-18. Date and stars are small. Date is widely spaced, curved, but not as curved as the border. A strong inner circle joins the dentil tips from first to fifth star, continuing weaker the rest of the way around the die. The date has its 1 under the lowest curve of the bust, much nearer the bust than the border. The sixth star is well right of the coronet tip. The upper lip is reinforced as on number 2. LIBERTY has IBER all but touching at their bases, with BER boldly recut at their centers — the R apparently over a much smaller R.

**Striking Variations:** Obverse is always cracked from rim over ★3 thru first two stars and top of date and beyond. Another crack from center of 5 passes thru the last three stars to the rim over ★10. A third, much fainter crack extends vertically thru ★6 before coronet thru brow to nostril. The reverse has been lightly lapped since its previous marriage (number 2), is now less bold, but with the crack more obvious. Finally, a huge chunk falls out over NITED, causing an early retirement of the reverse die.

**Reverse B:** This die appears on numbers 2-4. Key leaves point NL, NC, NC, NC. Legend is small, with denomination larger. PLD NL is diagnostic. The N of UNITED is boldly double punched along its right side, and a graver slip nearly joins the feet of TE(S). The lower left serifs of all E's are patched, but the A's are perfect. A short graver scratch extends from the ribbon tip. Both N's of the denomination lean right, with the final E high and T low. Tiny center dot.

**Discussion:** R4+, one of the rare ones. XF(2), VF(10), F(12), VG(16), G(36), AG(3). Ten of the nearly eighty examples seen by me have the massive reverse rim break. This one has been listed as "extremely rare" for decades (the usual overstatement), and consistently brings a strong premium. They normally become available in little flurries. For example, there were five in the Robinson sale and three in the Mendelson sale. I have discovered eight of these in thirty years — or about one every four years (moral: "be patient, be persistent, maybe you'll get lucky"). The impatient collector will pay a 30X-40X premium for this one.



★10 Away from Head

5



PLF C, Sawtooth Dentils

**Obverse 4:** This die appears on numbers 11-6-5. Date and stars are small. The date is evenly and widely spaced, with 1 centered between the lowest curve of bust and dentils below. Sixth star is far right of the coronet tip. Tenth star is well away from the hairbun (diagnostic). LIBERTY has two diagonal scratches up thru L, a line joining the tops of LIBE (strongest between LI — also diagnostic), and letters IBERTY all recut — strongest on ER. The curl-tailed R is punched over a straight-tailed R.

**Reverse A:** This die appears on number 3 of 1831, 1,5 of 1835, and 5 of 1834. Key leaves point NC, NC, C, NC. Small legend, small denomination, broad dentils. Letters of STATES are widely spaced. PLF C is diagnostic for 1835 and 1834. In AMERICA, both A's have flat tops and I is dotted by a dentil. In the denomination, O leans left, N is recut at lower right, E is low, and E of CENT is boldly doubled above. Small, bold center dot.

**Striking Variations:** Reverse dentilation is now weakened into a sawtooth appearance. Obverse usually has a light crack thru bases of 835 and to the right. Reverse is always rather mushy — this progresses.

**Discussion:** R1, the third commonest Matron 1835. MS(24+), AU(12+), XF(many). Varieties 1,5,6 account for fully eighty percent or more of all Matron 1835's. Obviously this one draws no premium.







★10 Away from Head

6



D

PLS NR, PLF NR

**Obverse 4:** This die appears on numbers 11-6-5. Date and stars are small. The date is evenly and widely spaced, with 1 centered between the lowest curve of bust and dentils below. Sixth star is far right of the coronet tip. Tenth star is well away from the hairbun (diagnostic). LIBERTY has two diagonal scratches up thru L, a line joining the tops of LIBE (strongest between LI — also diagnostic), and letters IBERTY all recut — strongest on ER. The curl-tailed R is punched over a straight-tailed R.

**Striking Variations:** Earliest strikes have flat fields, crisp dentilation, and faint recutting at C of AMERICA. I have seen a very few examples with dies new, boldly crisp dentilation, no trace of the crack thru date, evidently struck before number 11. Most are from the second mating of these dies, plainly cracked thru bases 835 and to the right. No other cracks noted. Most have reverse legends weak, and latest strikes have minor rim crumbling at right reverse. This is one of the few pre-1840 varieties that often comes in my favorite cent color, a “golden biscuit” tan.

**Discussion:** R1, second-commonest Matron 1835. MS(24+), AU(24+), XF

**Reverse D:** This die appears on numbers 8-6, and is from the same hub as all 1835 Young Head reverses. Key leaves point PC, NR, NR, PC. Legend is small with denomination larger. I of UNITED is slightly low. All A's and E's in legend are repaired. Final A of AMERICA has its inner right foot very poorly patched. The mouth of C of AMERICA is rather open on this die, unlike any other 1835 Young Head reverse but like all 1836 reverses. This C is doubled at lower right. Center dot is extremely tiny or (usually) missing. This die probably represents the first use of the complete reverse hub of 1835, which created this die and all of the slim bust 1835 reverses. The characteristic leaf/letter alignment and widely separated AM characterize this hub, and individual dies from it can be differentiated only by die cracks and minor manual retouchings.

(many). This last obverse die of the old broad bust design was as tough an old lady as the image upon her. She produced large quantities of cents with each of her last two mates and was finally retired with only minimal wear. This memento of the end of an era elicits respect and a touch of nostalgia — but no variety premium.



5



String-lock to Lowest Curl

**Obverse 5:** This die appears on numbers 7, 19. The bust is slim and the coronet is more pointed than on cents of prior years. Lowest curl is well-defined with its lead-in a single, sharply defined strand — more like a string than a lock of hair. Left edge of curl is just left of center of 5. The shape of this curl is diagnostic. Its center is long, with a flat bottom and a crisp, sharply-defined lead-in lock. Tip of bust is somewhat squared with its top edge nearly straight. The first five stars are all double-cut in the die. This feature is strongest on stars 1, 2, 3, but is often masked by the profusion of chatter-strikes on the stars on every 1835 Young Head variety. Check carefully with a glass to distinguish die features from striking features. Leading edge of the coronet is curved, with a manual patch and a small offset at bottom. Tiny center dot before ear.

7



PLD past Inner Curve

**Reverse E:** A single feature identifies this die over its whole life span — it is the only 1835 Young Head reverse with PLD past the inner curve of D. This leaftip is quite blunt. A doubled dentil appears between F A, with the right half longer than the left. Nice examples of this die show a tiny raised nick where the leaf under AT joins the stem, another on the root of this leaf. Early strikes are instantly recognized by a group of horizontal die-scratches between D S, a rust-pit (lump) above the second berry and another below this berry, a graver-scratch extending from the leaftip under T of UNITED, and a short point from the top of the leaf under the left foot of A2. As the dies wear, these marks fade, the left center begins to buckle quite noticeably, and more and more rust-pits (lumps) pepper both the reverse and the obverse. There is no reverse center dot on even the earliest strikes.



**Annular Swelling thru Stars**

7



E

**Rusted and Buckled Reverse**

**Striking Variations:** Early strikes have mirror-like, flat surfaces and bold crisp dentilation. As the dies wear, the dentilation fades, radial flowlines develop on both obverse and reverse, an annular swelling (like a donut) develops thru the date and all stars, and both dies gradually develop more and more rust-pits, much more so on the reverse than the obverse. See reverse description for further developments.

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**Discussion:** R1, far the commonest 1835. MS(20+), AU(many). One Proof has been claimed from these dies, but on examination it turned out to be only an early strike, not a Proof. For so common a variety and for so distinctively different an appearance between early and late, it is no wonder that Newcomb considered this as two varieties (his N-7 and N-17). Most variety collectors prefer to get both an early and a late number 7, even knowing them to be a single variety. The late state (rusted and buckled) is the more commonly seen state. The great abundance of 1835 YH cents and the near identity of their dies might imply that there are more varieties of these than we suspect. For example, if five identical dies develop no distinctive failures, how would we ever know they were more than one?

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35-8

Young Head

6



**Short, Wedgeliike Bust**

**Obverse 6:** The bust is slim ("Young Head"). Left edge of lowest curl is almost to the left edge of 5 — the farthest left of any 1835 Young Head. Tip of bust is slightly shorter, broader and more wedge-shaped than on the other 1835 YH dies. The dentils between ★6-7 are finer than the others, as on numbers 14,15. Leading edge of coronet is slightly curved with small offset at bottom. A faint horizontal graver scratch extends rightward from the top of head under ★8 toward the lower points of ★9. Bold, medium-sized center dot before ear. Though it occasionally comes perfect, this variety is usually recognized by the radial crack running up the back side of the 1 to the bust above.

8



**No Distinctives**

**Reverse D:** This die appears on numbers 8-6, and is from the same hub as all 1835 Young Head reverses. Key leaves point PC, NR, NR, PC. Legend is small with denomination larger. I of UNITED is slightly low. All A's and E's in legend are repaired. Final A of AMERICA has its inner right foot very poorly patched. The mouth of C of AMERICA is rather open on this die, unlike any other 1835 Young Head reverse but like all 1836 reverses. This C is doubled at lower right. Center dot is extremely tiny or (usually) missing. This die probably represents the first use of the complete reverse hub of 1835, which created this die and all of the slim bust 1835 reverses. The characteristic leaf/letter alignment and widely separated AM characterize this hub, and individual dies from it can be differentiated only by die cracks and minor manual retouchings.

**Striking Variations:** Earliest strikes have flat fields, crisp dentilation, a bold die scratch from top of head below ★8 toward the lower points of ★9, and a faint arc die scratch from the mouth of the C of AMERICA to the rim at bottom. As the dies wear, the head-top graver scratch fades and vanishes — but not before the next-mentioned crack starts. While the dies are still quite crisp, an obverse crack grows from below 1: running up its right side to the bust, up the neck to behind the ear, with a lighter branch running thru the ear. Later strikes have the main crack continuing thru the right pendant of T, finally splitting into two cracks — one thru the left points of ★8 to the rim, and the other thru the first hair cord to the rim between stars 8-9.

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**Discussion:** R2, rather common in all grades. MS(24+), AU(many). This one garners a little interest for the obverse crack progression, but not enough to pull a premium.

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1



**Large 8, Large Stars**

**Obverse 1:** This die appears on numbers 9-1. Large stars, large date, with oversize 8 and ball-topped 3 as on 1830-34 (diagnostic). Dentils are long and narrow, as on all obverses and all but one reverse of this year. A broken inner circle strings the dentil tips. But for the 5 in the date, this die is extremely similar to the two 1834 Large Date Large Star obverses. Sixth star is far right of the coronet tip. A '1' was punched into the bust, its peak extending from the top edge of the bust. LIBERTY has BERT recut at top, E at lower left, and R notably smaller than E-T.

**Striking Variations:** Obverse is cracked from rim over ★3 thru ★4-13, later continuing to rim under 5. Reverse is usually perfect, but occasionally cracked from rim over E thru tops RIC back to rim before A. This crack gets broader and finally the enclosed section breaks out into a full rimbreak. Two multi-struck examples in this state attest to the complete catastrophic failure of this die, likely accounting for the scarcity of the variety.

9



**PLS R, Large Ctr Dot**

**Reverse G:** Key leaves point C, R, SPR, C. Legend is small with larger denomination. In legend all E's and A's are patched — E's at lower left, and A's at inner right foot. Large center dot.

**Discussion:** R4, borderline rare. MS(1), AU(2), XF(1), VF(13), F(15), VG(20+), G(24+), AG(10+). This is a popular variety that regularly commands around an 8X-10X premium.



10

**Date Close to Bust,  
Cracked thru Tops**



H

**PLD NR, PLC C**

**Obverse 3:** This die appears on numbers 4-10-3-18. Date and stars are small. Date is widely spaced, curved, but not as curved as the border. A strong inner circle joins the dentil tips from first to fifth star, continuing weaker the rest of the way around the die. The date has its 1 under the lowest curve of the bust, much nearer the bust than the border. The sixth star is well right of the coronet tip. The upper lip is reinforced as on number 2. LIBERTY has IBER all but touching at their bases, with BER boldly recut at their centers — the R apparently over a much smaller R.

**Reverse H:** Key leaves point NR, PR, SPR, C. All E's are patched and all A's are perfect. Graver slips extend left from the feet of F, E and I in OF AMERICA, and O is lightly recut at lower left. MERI is very widely spaced, with leaf almost touching base of C. N of CENT is boldly doubled below its diagonal. Rather large center dot.

**Striking Variations:** Obverse is always cracked from rim over ★3 thru first two stars and top of date and beyond. Another crack from center of 5 passes thru the last three stars to the rim over ★10. A third, much fainter crack extends vertically thru ★6 before coronet, thru brow to nostril. Reverse is always cracked thru tops UNITED ST above A to rim over T, with another crack from rim over M thru tops ER, centers IC, feet of A to stem. These cracks vary from weak to strong. Finally, the piece over ST (almost to D)

develops into a large triangular rim-break, accounting for the early discard of yet another die. Reverse die is always rotated right from ten to forty-five degrees.

**Discussion:** R4+, another toughie. AU(1), VF(13), F(17), VG(26), G(23), AG(4). Two or three of the VF's are nearly XF. This is another of the rare 1835's that always draws a strong premium, usually around 30X-40X.



4



★10 Away from Head

**Obverse 4:** This die appears on numbers 11-6-5. Date and stars are small. The date is evenly and widely spaced, with 1 centered between the lowest curve of bust and dentils below. Sixth star is far right of the coronet tip. Tenth star is well away from the hairbun (diagnostic). LIBERTY has two diagonal scratches up thru L, a line joining the tops of LIBE (strongest between LI — also diagnostic), and letters IBERTY all recut — strongest on ER. The curl-tailed R is punched over a straight-tailed R.

**Striking Variations:** Obverse is perfect. Reverse is cracked in a 'V' from dentils at bottom thru tops of UNIT and ERICA. Another faint crack joins feet of TED STA. The V-crack is occasionally faint, usually bold, and eventually develops a rimbreak covering the tops of U. This rimbreak progresses as a sinking before falling out completely. The Proof strike(s) account for the existence of this die, while its early failure accounts for its rarity.

11



PLD C, PLF NL, V-Break

**Reverse I:** Key leaves point C, NC, NL, NC. Legend is small and denomination larger. The E's and A's in legend are broken and patched as on reverse G (number 9), though with a bit more skill. A light dash joins the bases of ED. A in STATES is slightly high. E of ONE is doubled below. Medium to large center dot, though this may not show as the central reverse is generally rather weak.

**Discussion:** R5, another goodie. AU(1), XF(4), VF(7), F(8), VG(10), G(25), AG(2). One Proof is confirmed from these dies (Clapp-ANS), and the AU (Newcomb:666-Starr:306) may be a mishandled Proof. This one always brings a strong premium, usually around 30X-50X.



Date Close to Rim, ★6 FR

12



A's Lack Inner Right Feet

J

**Obverse 7:** Date and stars are small. There is a plain, nearly complete inner circle under the dentil tips K6-K12. The date is farther right than on previous dies, is nearer to the dentils than to the bust, and is very closely spaced. The sixth star is far right of the coronet tip. LIBERTY has the feet of IBE all extremely close, E boldly cut at center-bar, and RT well apart.

**Reverse J:** This die appears on numbers 18, 12 of 1835, 2 of 1831, and 13 of 1835. Key leaves point NR, FPR, FPR, PC. Leaf tip at S is nearer O than S. Small legend, large denomination. Dentiulation is much longer and finer than found on any other cents before 1834, running about 16 dentils per centimeter of rim — as opposed to the usual 12 per centimeter. The fine dentiulation is diagnostic for 1831. All A's and E's in legend are broken and most are not patched. The E's lack their lower left foot and the first two A's lack their inner right foot, with the third A being the only repaired letter. The footless E's are diagnostic for 1835. The final S of STATES was first punched well right of its present position, leaving two vertical dashes a millimeter to its right. RI and CA are especially widely spaced. O of ONE is a touch high. Large, bold center dot.

**Striking Variations:** Obverse is cracked from rim over ★3 thru the first two stars to top of 18, center of 35 to outer tip of ★13. Another crack runs from the rim between ★8,9 just outside ★9, and on thru ★10-13. Finally, a rim-break occurs at the top end of this crack, outside ★8-9. With this, yet another 1835 die retires early. The reverse remains perfect with bold dentiulation.

**Discussion:** R4-, quite scarce but not one of the biggies. AU(2), XF(3), VF(20+), F(20+). This is another premium 1835, but not one of the "big five". It brings around a 4X-6X premium.



8

**Doubled 5, Crack Base Date**

**Obverse 8:** Date and stars are small. Date is well right of bust tip as on obverse 7 (number 12), but is much higher — being about midway between bust and dentils. The 5 is boldly doubled below. Sixth star is right of the coronet tip, but less so than on number 12. First star is lower (farther right) than on any other old-head-small-star 1835. Faint lines extend from the left point of ★8 to the rim. LIBERTY has L low, IBE close and even, with BE joined. The ER are recut over old-style letters — the E spectacularly so, over a square-serif E whose center extends well beyond the overfigure; and the R less obviously so, over a straight-tailed R.

13

**A's Lack Inner Right Feet**

**Reverse J:** This die appears on numbers 18,12 of 1835, 2 of 1831, and 13 of 1835. Key leaves point NR, FPR, FPR, PC. Leaftip at S is nearer O than S. Small legend, large denomination. Dentilation is much longer and finer than found on any other cents before 1834, running about 16 dentils per centimeter of rim — as opposed to the usual 12 per centimeter. The fine dentilation is diagnostic for 1831. All A's and E's in legend are broken and most are not patched. The E's lack their lower left foot and the first two A's lack their inner right foot, with the third A being the only repaired letter. The footless E's are diagnostic for 1835. The final S of STATES was first punched well right of its present position, leaving two vertical dashes a millimeter to its right. RI and CA are especially widely spaced. O of ONE is a touch high. Large, bold center dot.

**Striking Variations:** Obverse is always cracked from dentil tips between ★4-5, downward outside the first four stars, thru bottom of date, and outside the last two stars to the dentils between ★11-12. A small failure develops early, making a "tail" extending right from the 5, then a dot-like 'chip' develops below 83. The reverse is weaker, slightly buckled at center, strongly flowlined at the edge, with dentilation progressively mashing out. Later strikes show a strong arc of impressed dentils inside the wreath above ONE and two bent lines joining the lowest leaf on right to the stem below. Small rimbreaks appear in the dentils above D S and above ST. Finally, a heavy crack runs from the rim near ★4, thru the outer points of ★5, to the rim near ★6, and the enclosed section begins to sink, providing yet another fatality for this accident-prone year.

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**Discussion:** R4-, another scarce one. MS(1), AU(2), XF(6), VF(20+), F(several). The single MS example (Beckwith:83-Newcomb:668-Starr:308) has been sold as a "one-sided Proof". The "doubled 5" 1835 is a popular one that generally draws a 4X-6X premium.

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35-14

Young Head

9



**Serrated Lock to Lowest Curl**

**Obverse 9:** Left edge of lowest curl is slightly right of center of 5. There are two distinct 'breaks' or 'serrations' on the strand leading to this curl — one on the right side and one on the bottom, right of center. This lock is somewhat stringy — similar to number 19 but not as pronounced. The bust tip is somewhat squared with straight top edge, similar to number 19. Dentils between ★6-7 are slightly shorter, narrower, and less deeply-cut than the rest of the dentilation. With a good glass, this is evident on nice examples of all but the very latest strikes. Stars are perfect, but may be crumbled around. Leading edge of coronet is quite well defined and is ruler straight but for a small offset at its very bottom. Center dot is large and bold for an 1835 Young Head (but still requires a low-power glass) — would be classed as 'small' for most other years.

**Striking Variations:** Earliest strikes have crisp, bold dentilation both sides, with sharp detail everywhere except on hairbun and leaves under MER. A faint crack joins the tops of AME. A slightly raised area appears at the edge above and below ★10, and ★6 shows a triple outer point. Early strikes show a tiny lump under the center of T of CENT

14



**Flat-topped C in AMERICA**

**Reverse K:** This die appears on numbers 19,14. Top of C in AMERICA is broken and manually patched — appears unusually flat and wide. Sharp examples sometimes show a faint raised line crossing the center leaf tip under IT. There is a doubled dentil above the first T in STATES, but this is apparent only on earlier strikes. Left end of the line under CENT is weaker than right.

and a small center dot. Later strikes show the dentilation weakening and a slight buckling of the left center reverse field behind ONE CEN, two southwest-pointing dashes in the center reverse (which are clashmarks from the hair around the ear), and sharply-struck hairbun. Most late strikes have the left reverse a bit weaker than the right. Final strikes may show rim-crumbling K5-K6 obverse.

**Discussion:** R2, third scarcest 1835 YH, but still rather common. MS (30+), AU(many). The instantly identifiable reverse of number 14 gives an initial thrill (Maybe it's a 19!) that rapidly gives way to disappointment (No, it's not.). This variety never draws a premium.

10



**Bust Narrower at Throat**

**Obverse 10:** Left edge of lowest curl is about over center of 5. Bust has well-rounded tip. The truncation is of more uneven width than on others of this year, being narrower at the throat than farther left. The dentils between ★6-7 are finer than the other dentils, as on number 14. Leading edge of coronet is unusually well-defined, even on later heavily flowlined strikes. It is smoothly curved with no offset at its bottom. A small 'chip' shows below the space between 35. This fades as the dies wear. Tiny, bold center dot.

**Striking Variations:** Early strikes have crisp dentilation, flat fields, plain chip below 35, and reverse crack tops UNITED. On later struck pieces the dentilation fades and finally disappears, both sides develop radial flowlines, the 35 chip fades, and the reverse swells up slightly behind ONCE. Obverse rim begins to crumble at bottom. Though more obscured by flowlining, the reverse crack is still quite apparent between the tops of NIT. Late strikes always seem to be unusually thick and square at the rim,

15



**Crack Tops UNITED**

**Reverse L:** Inner right foot of A in STATES is patched very weakly — even more weakly than the left foot of the following E. Leaftip nearly touches bottom of C in AMERICA. All seen have light crack from field at bottom reverse, thru tops of UNITED, to rim above ST. Even the earliest have the top of the final A drawn to the rim, giving it a perfect pair of horns. No center dot.

similar to some of the 1817's. Newcomb described a final reverse crack, weaker, from above T thru tops ATES OF AMERICA, but I have not seen one thus, and suspect he confused an example of number 16, which always comes that way.

**Discussion:** R2, fairly common in all but the top grades. MS(8), AU(12+), XF(12+), VF(many). This one is often seen heavily flowlined, and these pieces retain the appearance of "mint frost" clear down to XF. Below MS number 15 draws no premium.



35-16

Young Head

11



Parallel, Rounded Bust-tip

**Obverse 11:** Newcomb lists this as the same dies as number 7 which it closely resembles, but the shape of the lowest curl is distinctively different. It is more rounded and taller, and the lead-in lock is a broad, ill-defined, raised band unlike obverse 5. The curl extends left of the center of 5, as on obverse 5. The bust tip is rounded — a cross between obverses 10,6 (numbers 15,8). Stars 2 and 3 are recut on their top points. The leading edge of the coronet is slightly curved, with a graver-dig at the left base of L, but no offset at its bottom. The center dot is even tinier and less defined than on number 7.

**Striking Variations:** This variety almost always has strong dentilation. Even the latest strikes have fairly well-defined dentilation almost halfway around both sides. Dentilation is usually longest at lower right obverse and upper right reverse. Reverse crack is always present, always strongest thru OF AMERICA. This variety is more often than not found on pleasingly streaked 'woodgrain' planchets.

16



Strong Crack Tops AMERICA

**Reverse M:** Instantly recognized by the strong crack just below the tops of AMERICA. This crack encircles the tops of the entire legend, never touching the edge, but is strongest on the right side. E in STATES is recut under its top bar, but chatter-strikes could imitate this feature on any 1835 Young Head variety. Feet of E1, A1, E2 are less boldly patched than on other reverses from this hub. Tiny center dot shows on earlier strikes. Near-MS examples always show an area of slight die roughness behind ON, and all show slight buckling in this area.

**Discussion:** R2, fairly common in all grades. MS(12), AU(12+), XF(many). This one brings no variety premium, but the beautiful woodgrain effect often enchants a buyer into a few extra bucks.

**\*\*\* There Is No Number 17 \*\*\***

The variety described by Newcomb as his "N-17" is a late state of number 7. Why HRN considered this a new variety is a mystery. He acknowledged the

obverse as "Same as No.7" and of his "Rev.N" he said "Probably was originally die E". He was right on both counts, which makes it number 7.



3



**Date Close to Bust,  
Cracked thru Tops**

**Obverse 3:** This die appears on numbers 4-10-3-18. Date and stars are small. Date is widely spaced, curved, but not as curved as the border. A strong inner circle joins the dentil tips from first to fifth star, continuing weaker the rest of the way around the die. The date has its 1 under the lowest curve of the bust, much nearer the bust than the border. The sixth star is well right of the coronet tip. The upper lip is reinforced as on number 2. LIBERTY has IBER all but touching at their bases, with BER boldly recut at their centers — the R apparently over a much smaller R.

18



**A's Lack Inner Right Feet**

**Reverse J:** This die appears on numbers 18,12 of 1835, 2 of 1831, and 13 of 1835. Key leaves point NR, FPR, FPR, PC. Leaftip at S is nearer O than S. Small legend, large denomination. Dentilation is much longer and finer than found on any other cents before 1834, running about 16 dentils per centimeter of rim — as opposed to the usual 12 per centimeter. The fine dentilation is diagnostic for 1831. All A's and E's in legend are broken and most are not patched. The E's lack their lower left foot and the first two A's lack their inner right foot, with the third A being the only repaired letter. The footless E's are diagnostic for 1835. The final S of STATES was first punched well right of its present position, leaving two vertical dashes a millimeter to its right. RI and CA are especially widely spaced. O of ONE is a touch high. Large, bold center dot.

**Striking Variations:** No variations noted — all seen have broken obverse and perfect reverse. Obverse is always cracked from rim over ★3 thru first two stars and top of date and beyond. Another crack from center of 5 passes thru the last three stars to the rim over ★10. A third, much fainter crack extends vertically thru ★6 before coronet, thru brow to nostril. Tiny rimbreaks are seen at the dentil roots at K9, K6, and K5. Reverse is crisp and new, with dentils well defined even at their tips. The broken condition of the obverse may account for its final discard, but it is nowhere near as damaged as six other dies of this year, so perhaps there is yet hope of somebody turning up a number 18 with massive rimbreak obliterating the date and the first two and last three stars — or some portion thereof.

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**Discussion:** R5-, second rarest 1835. VF(3), F(5), VG(18), G(35), AG(5). First discovered by A.C. Gies in or before 1914, published in McGirk's confusing series in *The Numismatist* that year as his #1V, then lying dormant for almost forty years until rediscovered by Breen in 1952. It is amazing that this distinctive die combination could have gone so many years unrecognized. By 1968 there were four known, seven by 1971, and twenty by early 1974. By 1989 I knew of 41 pieces, having discovered almost a third of them myself, and by 1991 I know of 66 pieces. This is the least rare and the most distinctive not-in-Newcomb variety before 1840. It always commands a very healthy premium, currently close to 100X the common-1835 price. This should drop, as number 18 is nowhere near as rare as once thought. But note that above VG this is still one tough cookie.

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35-19

Young Head

5



**Annular Swelling thru Stars**

**Obverse 5:** This die appears on numbers 7,19. The bust is slim and the coronet is more pointed than on cents of prior years. Lowest curl is well-defined with its lead-in a single, sharply defined strand — more like a string than a lock of hair. Left edge of curl is just left of center of 5. The shape of this curl is diagnostic. Its center is long, with a flat bottom and a crisp, sharply-defined lead-in lock. Tip of bust is somewhat squared with its top edge nearly straight. The first five stars are all double-cut in the die. This feature is strongest on stars 1,2,3, but is often masked by the profusion of chatter-strikes on the stars on every 1835 Young Head variety. Check carefully with a glass to distinguish die features from striking features. Leading edge of the coronet is curved, with a manual patch and a small offset at bottom. Tiny center dot before ear.

19



**Crisp Dentilation, Flat-top C**

**Reverse K:** This die appears on numbers 19,14. Top of C in AMERICA is broken and manually patched — appears unusually flat and wide. Sharp examples sometimes show a faint raised line crossing the center leaftip under IT. There is a doubled dentil above the first T in STATES, but this is apparent only on earlier strikes. Left end of the line under CENT is weaker than right.

**Striking Variations:** This variety is usually first recognized by die state, followed by a careful study of die features for confirmation. All seen have obverse extremely late and reverse extremely early. Obverse has extensive rust pitting (lumps) and an annular swelling (like a donut) thru date and all stars. Reverse has flat fields and sharp, crisp dentilation. A faint crack joins the tops of AME. There is a tiny lump under the center of T of CENT and a small center dot.

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**Discussion:** R6, extremely rare (so far). MS(1), AU(1), XF(1), VF(5), F(2), VG(8), G(2). The discovery piece (MS) had been lurking in my set as "intermediate N14", and was recognized by me as an unpublished variety in early 1982 as I was preparing a presentation on 1835 Young Head varieties for the EAC82 Educational Forum. It was first announced there and was first published in Penny-Wise #89 (March 1982). Bob Grellman went home from that meeting, checked his own 35N14, and discovered the second one (AU). In the succeeding nine years I have found seven more and others have found another eleven. Almost twenty others claimed have been shot down. Two EAC'ers did battle over one sleeping in a bulk lot in Katen67:413 (12/88), and the account of this was later published in Numismatic News. This variety has appeared at auction six times in 1989-1991, bringing consistently around 150X-200X the price of a common 1835 cent.

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# 1836

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The memorable story of 1836 was the fall of the Alamo de San Antonio. In the eleven-day siege 188 Texan defenders killed forty percent of Santa Anna's 4,000 man Mexican army before being overrun. Forty six days later Sam Houston's army defeated the remainder, establishing the Republic of Texas. Many political tokens were circulated this and the next few years opposing the fiscal policies of Andrew Jackson. Jackson's protege Martin Van Buren was elected President of the United States, and Arkansas became the 25th state. Twenty-two-year-old inventor Samuel Colt patented his "six shooter", and the first issue of *McGuffey's First Reader* began a ninety-year run of teaching young Americans the virtues of industry and frugality.

Cents of 1836 follow the pattern set by the Young Heads of 1835, but show a few more singularities. Six obverse and six reverse dies were used in seven combinations to produce 2,111,000 cents in 1836. Only one obverse stands out as an arms-length individual, likely a hand-cut effort by Gobrecht.

A single new feature is introduced on the cents of 1836 — the embattled, or two-tiered rim. This feature appeared on one pair of Proof dies earlier (1834 number 3, also used for business strikes), but begins its production-usage with all 1836 cents — and continues for the rest of the large cent series.

The shape of the 1836 bust shows a gradual transition from the short, blunt bust of the last 1835 YH to the long, slim bust seen on the first cents of 1837. That the shortest-bust obverse is the most common Proof variety of 1836 is gratuitous confirmation for a first-emission position for this variety. The single distinctive die (obverse 6, varieties 6-7) could be placed anywhere in the series, but has been placed near the front since it is die linked to a short-bust die. This gives 1,7-6-4,5,2,3 as the most likely emission for 1836 cents.

Four of the seven varieties of 1836 cents are known in Proof, representing all stages of the bust-shape progression and the maverick obverse. Every variety is known by over a half dozen MS examples, with over three hundred MS pieces for the year and at least a few thousand at XF-AU.







**Short, Blunt Bust**



**PLF Nearly R**

**Obverse 1:** Date has a pointed 1, doubled below its point. Tip of bust is shorter and a bit more blunt than on any other 1836 cent — but see also number 4 which is somewhat similar. Fore edge of coronet is straight and is slightly indented at base. It leans far from the top of L. No stars are recut. Small, bold center dot.

**Reverse A:** Key leaves point SPC, NR, NR, SPC. PLF is nearly to the right edge of the foot of F — farther right than on any other 1836 cent. All letters are complete though all A's have patched inner right foot. Small center dot.

**Striking Variations:** Occasionally found with both dies perfect, but reverse almost always shows a light crack from rim over A, thru tops of TES to rim over O, and another from top of F, above A to rim over M. Obverse crack develops early from rim thru lowest point of ★5, center of L, top of I, rightmost tip of ★8 to rim. Reverse is usually bisected thru right center of first S, O of ONE, center dot, T of CENT and inner upright of R. A second obverse crack then extends thru the top two points of ★10, hairbun, TY, to ear, and finally thru chin, lower two points of ★2, to rim.

**Discussion:** R1. MS(24+), AU(many). Three or four one-sided Proof examples are known from these dies, all having Proof obverse only. The Mint Cabinet piece, now in the Smithsonian, has long been claimed to be a Proof but is not. This is the second-commonest 1836 and commands no variety premium.



2



Thin, Pointed Bust

**Obverse 2:** Strong inner circle strings the tips of all dentils. Date has pointed 1. Tip of bust is long, narrow, and more pointed than on earlier 1836 cents — see also numbers 5 and 3. Leading edge of the coronet is well-defined and rather unevenly curved, with a small offset at its base. This edge leans far away from the top of L. No stars are recut. Small, bold center dot.

**Striking Variations:** Almost always has a very faint crack connecting tops of AMERI. Later strikes have a strong reverse arc crack from left of S1 thru bases ONE, center of M to rim. These (only) show a short diagonal spike down from the right foot of T in CENT. Finally, another faint radial crack runs down the left side of S2 to the wreath. Obverse remains unbroken, though dentilation fades considerably on both sides.

2



Two Long, Sharp Leaves under S2

**Reverse B:** Key leaves point SPC, PC+, PC-, SPC. Traces of an inner circle show under the dentil-tips in several places. A graver-scratch joins the feet of TE(S). This fades on later strikes. The A's are so perfectly patched as to almost appear unbroken. Both leaftips under the final S are extended with sharp points, with inner leaf much longer than the outer (diagnostic). The C of AMERICA has a bold graver-scratch closing its mouth. Tiny center dot disappears on later strikes.

**Discussion:** R2-, rather common in all grades. MS(20+), AU(many). The only confirmed Proof from these dies is in the ANS collection. Over a dozen of the many AU's of this variety have been sold repeatedly as "MS". As the third-commonest 1836 it draws no premium.



83 Low



ME V. Close, E Higher

**Obverse 3:** Date has pointed 1, with 83 well below 1-6. Bust-tip is pointed as on numbers 5 and 2. Fourth star has upper inner point doubled on its right. Leading edge of coronet is straight with no offset, but has a strong notch at the base of L. Top edge of coronet leans well away from L. Extremely tiny, bold center dot.

**Reverse C:** Key leaves point PC, NR, PC, SPC. This is the only 1836 with PLD extending fully to inner curve of D. Outer edges of PLD are more bloated than on any other 1836, and PLS is quite blunt. Feet of ME are quite close with E high. I of UNITED was first lightly punched much too high, with the top of the original punch visible just below the dentils. All letters are complete (fully patched). Line under CENT is thinner than on most other unlapped 1836 reverses. No center dot.

**Striking Variations:** Both obverse and reverse dentilation remain rather bold, even on late strikes. Early strikes show a faint die-scratch from the tail of C, through the center of A, to the dentils at bottom reverse. Comes with both dies perfect, then with a radial crack thru left serifs of M to berry. An obverse rim-break then occurs at ★6, after which the reverse crack extends on thru tops ONE, center of first S to rim at left. The traces of underpunched I in UNITED weaken, but traces remain on all but the latest strikes.

**Discussion:** R1, commonest 1836. MS(300+), AU(many more). This variety and number 6 make an interesting display-pair, with complementary rim-breaks at K11 and K1. If you want an MS 1836 cent, this is the one to get — they don't come any easier.



4

**Light Spiral Cracks**

**Obverse 4:** Pointed 1 in date. Tip of bust is nearly as blunt as on number 1, but not quite. Coronet line is straight with small offset at base and leans well away from L. Rim is heavily embattled, especially at left. Small center dot.

4

**Broken-base E's, Radial Cracks**

**Reverse D:** This die appears on numbers 6-4. Key leaves point SPC, SPC, SPC, SPC. PLD and PLS are farther left than on any other 1836 reverse, with both well left of the inner right curve of their respective letter. PLS is blunt, with a noticeable down-tuck. Bases of all E's in legend are weak (E1, E2 base very weak, E3 base completely missing), and all A's have vestigial inner right feet. Leaftip under T3 is more finely pointed than normal. Line under CENT is weak and fades out at left. No center dot.

**Striking Variations:** Generally seen with a network of final obverse cracks thru base of date and outer points of most stars. This is not a complete circle, but represents at least five distinct cracks spiraling inward clockwise. Reverse always shows radial cracks thru ribbon tip, T of UNITED, between D S (well left of S), upright of F, and stemtip, though these may be quite faint. Later strikes have the reverse lapped, an additional break between TE(D), and a small obverse rimbreak between ★1,2.

**Discussion:** R3, second scarcest 1836. MS(5-7), AU(6+), XF(12+), VF(many). The ANS piece is either a Proof or the sharpest early strike I've seen. This variety only rarely pulls any variety premium below AU.



Thin, Pointed Bust



E2 Base Weak, No Cracks

**Obverse 5:** Pointed 1, with 183 on same line. Tip of bust is thin and pointed as on numbers 2 and 3. Date has 836 slightly more apart than other 1836 cents. Smoothly curved coronet line without offset and leaning well away from the L. Obverse rim is generally slightly embattled at either top or bottom. Small, indistinct center dot.

**Reverse E:** Key leaves point PC, PC-, PC-, SPC. Base of E in STATES is weak on early strikes, missing on late strikes. Highest leaf tip is left of inner right curve of S, but this leaf tip disappears on the later, lapped strikes. No other distinguishing die features. No center dot.

**Striking Variations:** Early strikes have bold dentilation both sides, all reverse E's and A's complete (though base of E2 is weak), and usually show a faint crack joining tops of F AMERICA and beyond to rim at K6. Later strikes show both dies heavily lapped, with stars and date thinner, lowest curl nearly (or barely) severed, small rimbreak below ★1, bases of E1, E3 weak, inner right feet of all A's vestigial and base of E2 missing. Lapped strikes are occasionally found with dies aligned head-to-head. Finally, another crack grows from reverse rim at K6 thru bow, lower

left corner of E, top of C (ENT), and upright of D to rim. The Davis-Steinberger supplement (1954) reported a final 'piece out of die at AT' which I've not heard of elsewhere. Who has one to show me?

**Discussion:** R3-, third scarcest variety of the year. MS(15+), AU(several). This is another popular one, but does not pull a premium.



36-6

Wavy

6



Wavy-Top Head

**Obverse 6:** This die appears on numbers 7-6. This is a distinctively different head than any other cent before, during, or after 1836. Date has 1 with tall peak and very short point. Leading edge of the coronet is straight without offset and leans only slightly away from the upright of the L. Though the stars are positioned the same, the different coronet line makes the sixth star appear not so far right as on other 1836 obverses. Silhouette of top of head is wavy, lowest lock is tall and more crudely executed than on other dies, hairbun appears looser, lowest edge of bust truncation is sharply raised, point of bust is quite blunt but is longer than on numbers 1 and 4. Head is in lower relief, nose is more Roman, totally lacking any trace of curve, ear is larger, with small bold center dot before it. This head is so distinctively different that it is quite likely one of Gobrecht's early attempts at manual die-preparation, spurning the use of a head-puncheon.



D

6

PLD, PLS Left of Inner Right Curves

**Reverse D:** Key leaves point SPC, SPC, SPC, SPC. This die appears on numbers 6-4. PLD and PLS are farther left than on any other 1836 reverse, with both well left of the inner right curve of their respective letter. PLS is blunt with a noticeable down-tuck. Bases of all E's in legend are weak (E1, E2 base very weak, E3 base completely missing), and all A's have vestigial inner right feet. Leaf tip under T3 is more finely pointed than normal. Line under CENT is weak and fades out at left. No center dot.

**Striking Variations:** Obverse is occasionally found unbroken, but usually has a large rimbreak between ★7,8. Reverse then develops light radial cracks to wreath as follows: thru ribbon end, thru right upright of T1, about midway between D S, thru upright of F, and to stemtip. A final hairline arc crack develops connecting the top corners of M to the rim. Obverse always has embattled rim, generally strongest at top. The 'break from rim thru ★1, field, ★5 to rim' reported in the Davis-Steinberger supplement (1954) turned out to be a worn, scratched coin — not a die break. This one often comes in a lovely tan color.

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**Discussion:** R2, middle of the pack. MS(24+), AU(several), XF(many). At least two Proofs are known from these dies, one of them in ANS, and both with unbroken obverse die. The "wavy hair" 1836 is quite popular for its distinctive head and for its usually-seen large rimbreak, but it is too common to command a premium. This variety and number 3 make an interesting display-pair, with complementary rimbreaks at K11 and K1. Golden tan is a common color for number 6, and very pretty examples are readily available.

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36-7

Wavy

6

**Wavy-Top Head**

**Obverse 6:** This die appears on numbers 7-6. This is a distinctively different head than any other cent before, during, or after 1836. Date has 1 with tall peak and very short point. Leading edge of the coronet is straight without offset and leans only slightly away from the upright of the L. Though the stars are positioned the same, the different coronet line makes the sixth star appear not so far right as on other 1836 obverses. Silhouette of top of head is wavy, lowest lock is tall and more crudely executed than on other dies, hairbun appears looser, lowest edge of bust truncation is sharply raised, point of bust is quite blunt but is longer than on numbers 1 and 4. Head is in lower relief, nose is more Roman, totally lacking any trace of curve, ear is larger, with small bold center dot before it. This head is so distinctively different that it is quite likely one of Gobrecht's early attempts at manual die-preparation, spurning the use of a head-puncheon.

7

**Scratch Crosses Wreath under S1**

**Reverse F:** Key leaves point SPC, NR, NR, SPC. PLF is just over halfway out the right foot of F. All letters are well and fully patched. A bold graver-scratch angles upward across the wreath under S1 (diagnostic). Inner leaftip above ON and highest leaftip under S2 are each extended by a bold spike. Tip of inner leaf under S2 is unusually blunt and bloated. A fainter point extends from the underside of the leaf under R.

**Striking Variations:** Reverse has a faint crack from above TE thru tops D ST. Both dies remain crisp with only slight dentil-weakening. Final strikes show a long, narrow rimbreak above D STA, not extending beyond the dentils. The obverse remains unbroken. This one is more often a lovely tan than not.

**Discussion:** R4, the scarcest 1836. MS(5-7), AU(12+), XF(15+), VF(several). At least one example is Prooflike and may be a cleaned Proof. Though scarce, this one usually comes nice. It may command a slight premium, but nobody needs to settle for a tired or ugly one.

# 1837

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In 1837 the Texas Rangers began with a force of three men in Waco. Michigan became the 26th state. A smallpox epidemic in the Great Plains practically wiped out several Indian tribes. Seminole leader Osceola was captured in Florida under a flag of truce. Samuel Morse demonstrated his “magnetic telegraph”. William Proctor and James Gamble began a candle and soapmaking business in Cincinnati. Charles Tiffany started a “Fancy Goods Store” in New York, netting a 33 cent profit the first week. Two months after being sworn in as President, Martin Van Buren faced economic depression; 618 banks failed this year. Specie disappeared from circulation, employees were paid in “shinplaster” promissory notes, all New England textile mills but one closed, and thousands were reduced to starvation. The U.S. went into debt again — a condition that has persisted for over 150 years, if not till the fall of our Republic.

The rampant hoarding of specie (hard money) at the outset of the “hard times” caused nice examples of coins of this year and the next to be very plentiful among collectors today. They did not get spent-and-spent-and-spent-and-all-used-up.

This year offers several distinctive varieties of cents and enough moderately-scarce ones to keep it spicy without bankrupting the collector. This is a common year (5,558,300 coined), a transition year (three distinctive heads), and one with a proliferation of varieties. Twelve obverse and twelve reverse dies were paired to produce sixteen varieties.

Andrews recognized eleven of these in 1883 (but two were the same), and Clapp added one more to the list in his 1924 reprint of the Andrews booklet. All of these first-recognized varieties range from rather to very common (A1-11,N13). Even the scarcest 1837 is not all that rare — certainly far less so than several varieties of other years that Andrews did recognize. He likely saw most of the 1837 varieties and just did not consider them as different. But this seems inconsistent with his calling A7 and A8 (same die-pair) different while failing to recognize N12, which can be easily identified from either obverse or reverse.

The proposed sequence begins with the distinctive flap-bust dies (numbers 7,6) — an extreme extension of the shape-trend started with the last 1836's (numbers 2,3). Small variations in bust-shape provide the biggest distinctive for sequencing until the major mid-year design-change is encountered. This last group (numbers 9 thru 12) have distinctively smaller legend letters and beaded hair cords, generally known as “head of 1838” because this is the type of all 1838 cents and only some cents of 1837 and 1839. Doubled letter-punches, though fairly common on 1838 cents, are found on only one 1837 variety (number 10), so it should be last. The other possible “letter-in-the-wreath” variety (number 12) immediately precedes it. This, with the die-chaining found in the middle of the year (bridging the type change), pins down a quite logical sequence of 7,6,17,3,15-2-16-13-14-1-4-5,9-11,10,12. Was this the actual emission sequence? Seems like it — but I can't guarantee it.



All cents of 1837 have sixth star notably right of the coronet tip, and all but one have the leading edge of the coronet leaning well away from the L. These features will be mentioned in the descriptions only by exception. Though leaf alignment variations fairly died in 1835, this obsolete tool will be continued through 1837.

Mint state examples are known of all 1837 cent varieties, and are rather common of a few of them. Near-MS examples abound — this is a great year to get a really nice type coin without going into the usual MS usury. No

fewer than six varieties of 1837 cents are reported in Proof, representing from eleven to eighteen examples total.

For the collector of modest means, a VF-AU set of 1837 cents is a reasonable three-year goal. Higher grade pieces, while readily obtainable for most of the varieties, are under heavy pressure from the “coin investment”, or “dollar-level” crowd. A G-F set of 1837 cents can be built “from change” (large cent base prices — \$4 to \$10 or so) in two to five years.

1

**PHC: Crack Base Date, Left Stars**

**Obverse 1:** This die appears on numbers 14-1. Hair cords are plain bands. Date is quite close, with lowest curl over right half of 7. Bust is slightly pointed, similar to numbers 16-13. Coronet line has strong offset to browlock. Bases of IB and ER touch. Letters are massive as on numbers 16-13. A small depression touches lower right corner of Y. Small, rather indistinct center dot.

1



A

**LL: Scratch over F**

**Reverse A:** This die appears on numbers 1,4. Letters of legend are large. Key leaves point PC-, NR, PC+, SPC. This die is extremely similar to reverse I (numbers 13-14), even to quite similar cracks. I is below N-T, base of E1 is patched, as are the inner right feet of all A's. An arc-like graver-scratch from over O touches right tip to F. Letters ENT are progressively lower. No center dot.

**Striking Variations:** Obverse is always cracked lightly below date to past outer point of ★1, with another light crack thru inner points of ★1-3, spiraling out to rim between ★7-8. It has been reported perfect but no such claims to date have withstood examination. Reverse has a light crack from top of centerbar of F, thru the bottom of its upper pendant, well below top of A, tops of MER. This contrasts with the similar reverse I (numbers 13-14), which is cracked thru the very tops of STATES OF AMER.

**Discussion:** R3, a bit scarcer than once thought. MS(24+), AU(several). It may draw a slight premium, rarely beyond 1.5X.



2



**PHC: Vertical Crack thru ★3,4**

**Obverse 2:** This die appears on numbers 15-2. Hair cords are plain bands. Date is close and even, and 1 has a bold peak. Lowest curl is more massive than obverse 1 (numbers 14,1), its left edge extending well left of center of 7. Bust is well-proportioned and sharply rounded at its tip. Coronet line has a notch at its base, about touching the base of L. IB leans left, B has thin curves, bases IB and ER touch. Center dot is small and rather indistinct.

**Striking Variations:** Obverse is recognizable at a glance by a strong vertical crack from rim at star 2, touching outer points of stars 3,4 to rim opposite brow and another fainter one to the right, from rim down to the top point of ★4. A horizontal crack joins this one to the rim midway between ★3-4. A small chunk has broken away under the right foot of T, joining it to the hair below. Reverse is weak, lightly lapped but not buckled. Later strikes have the double crack up from ★4 developed into a full cud, and final strikes have a large triangular cud from midway ★3-4 and upward.

2



**LL: Weak Legend, No Cracks**

**Reverse B:** This die appears on numbers 2,16. Letters of legend are large. Key leaves point PC, R-, NR, PC. I is below N-T, and serifs of D are finely recut. Bases of E1 and MER are touched up. D is lightly doubled at lower left, and C of CENT at upper right. No center dot.

**Discussion:** R2+, rather common. MS(8), AU(12+), XF(several). This one is popular for its obverse break, but is too common to pull a premium.

3



PHC: No Cracks, Bold Curl

**Obverse 3:** Hair cords are plain bands. Date is closely spaced, with 18 a bit more apart. The 1 has a long, bold peak, and lowest curl is over the right half of 7. Bust is more pointed than on numbers 7,6,17, with just the least hint of a 'hump' left of the throat-line. The coronet line has a notch at its base and nearly touches bottom of L. Browline is offset from coronet. IB lean left and touch at bases, as do ER. B has thin curves as on previous dies. There are several light die-scratches behind the letters of LIBERTY, and one curving across the curl before the ear. Very small, bold center dot. The head, hair, and lowest curl are in bolder relief than on numbers 7,6,17.

**Striking Variations:** Obverse dentilation weakens; no cracks seen. The Davis-Steinberger supplement (1954) reported one cracked from star 13 to hair to star 2 to star 3 to rim, but nobody since has seen such a coin. Reverse dentilation also begins to fade. Reverse is always cracked center of CA, stem, ribbon, center of U, growing progressively weaker across the tops of NITED. Another faint crack

3



C

LL: Crack Center CA to Center U

**Reverse C:** Letters of legend are large. Key leaves point PC, R, NR, SPC. Base of D is a hair above base of E. Baselines (not serifs) of all E's in legend are patched, similar to several 1836 dies. Inner right foot of all A's are crudely patched. Left pendant of T in CENT is broken at root and at tip. Center dot is a weak blur at best, elongated NW-SE. Denomination is bold, with ENT each slightly lower than its predecessor.

joins tops S OF, and another from rim over F, just above A, to top corner of M, center ME base RIC to the first-mentioned crack within the C. Bar under CENT has a backwards-L scratch down from its left tip.

**Discussion:** R1, common in all grades. MS(50+), AU(many). At least three, possibly up to six Proof examples are known from these dies. This is an easy one that draws no premium.



4



PHC: Crack ★3-7

**Obverse 4:** This die appears on numbers 4-5. Hair cords are plain bands. Date is moderately spaced with strong peak on 1, and top of 1 is high as on the beaded cord dies. Lowest curl is bold and is nearly centered over 7. Coronet line has little or no offset to browlock. LIBERTY has B above I-E, bases of ER strongly doubled below, and IBER all but touching at bases. A small point extends southeast from the top of the lowest curl before the ear. Small, plain center dot.

**Striking Variations:** Obverse is instantly recognizable by its arc crack thru ★3-7 to rim between ★8,9. Earliest strikes come with both dies prooflike, dentilation crisp, obverse hairline cracked from rim between ★2,3, thru outer point of ★3, center ★4, inner points ★5-6, center ★7, just outside ★8 to rim between ★8,9. Reverse has been lightly polished so the graver scratch over OF is gone. Early strikes have reverse cracked faintly from bottom pendant of F thru tops AME. Later strikes have dentilation weaker, obverse and reverse

4



A

LL: Crack Below Tops F A

**Reverse A:** This die appears on numbers 1,4. Letters of legend are large. Key leaves point PC-, NR, PC+, SPC. This die is extremely similar to reverse I (numbers 13-14), even to quite similar cracks. I is below N-T, base of E1 is patched, as are the inner right feet of all A's. An arc-like graver-scratch from over O touches right tip to F. Letters ENT are progressively lower. No center dot.

cracks stronger, both sides flowlined, and reverse legend weakened. This variety is often found on tan, "golden biscuit" planchets.

**Discussion:** R2+, rather common in all grades. MS(30+), AU(several). This is another no-bonus variety.

4



PHC: Crack ★3-7

5



D

Small Letters, ATE Apart

**Obverse 4:** This die appears on numbers 4-5. Hair cords are plain bands. Date is moderately spaced with strong peak on 1, and top of 1 is high as on the beaded cord dies. Lowest curl is bold and is nearly centered over 7. Coronet line has little or no offset to browlock. LIBERTY has B above I-E, bases of ER strongly doubled below, and IBER all but touching at bases. A small point extends southeast from the top of the lowest curl before the ear. Small, plain center dot.

**Reverse D:** Letters of legend are quite small and widely spaced compared to all other plain-cord varieties. Key leaves point PC, PC, SPC, NR. First S of STATES is low. T of UNITED is lightly doubled above as are ERI. There is a small chip at right center of this E and another above its right corner. Outer berry under ST has a point. C's are nearly closed. Small, bold center dot.

**Striking Variations:** All seen have obverse strongly cracked from rim between ★2,3, thru outer point of ★3, center star 4, inner points ★5-6, center ★7, just outside ★8 to rim between ★8,9, and a hairline crack along tops of NITED STA. There must have been some die-interchange going on, as numbers 4-5 seem to have been struck in the sequence 4-5-4-5. Flans are often woodgrained or mildly laminated.

**Discussion:** R2, rather common all grades. MS(24+), AU(many). As a one-variety type (plain cords/small letters) this is slightly more popular than its due. But even so it pulls little or no premium.



5



**PHC: Continuous Curve Nose to Coronet**

**Obverse 5:** Hair cords are plain bands. Date is even and widely spaced, but shifted further left than on number 7. The 1 is at tip of bust, unlike number 7 but like number 17. Bust tip is broad, narrower at throat, but not so exaggerated as on number 7. Leading edge of coronet is nearly parallel to L and has no offset at base (diagnostic). This causes the coronet tip to be much more blunt than usual for this year. LI are separated, IBER are all close at bases, with ER touching. Curves of B are broad as normal for this type. Small center dot.

**Striking Variations:** Dentilation fades both sides. Early, pre-lapping strikes show a row of narrow, raised marks below the first outer berry. These are not impressed dentils, but could be the tracks of an accident in die-polishing. It was likely the removal of this injury that accounted for the severity of the lapping normally seen in this area.

6



**LL: Heavily Lapped Under NIT**

**Reverse E:** Letters of legend are large — relative to the 'small' letters of the later 1837-1839 cents. Key leaves point PC-, R, NR, SPC. Base of E in UNITED is obviously patched, E of AMERICA less plainly so. Inner leaftip over O(NE) has an extended point, and lapping has cut severely into the outer leaves under NIT. CENT has ENT successively lower, with left pendant of T broken. Extremely tiny center dot disappears early.

**Discussion:** R2, fairly common in all grades. MS(30+), AU(many). One Proof has been confirmed from these dies — the HRN:682-FS:335 piece. Breen claims that the Pearl:340 "A3 Proof" was also this variety, but that coin is untraced. Number 6 is a fascinating variety for its odd bust-truncation and for the strange marks at first outer berry, but it is too common to command a premium.

6

**PHC: Over-rounded Bust**

**Obverse 6:** Hair cords are plain bands. Date is even and wide with curl centered over 7. Top of 7 is notably closer to curl above than on number 6. Bust is broader to left than at base of throat. Coronet has a decided offset to browlock. Bases LI are apart, I leans left, curves of B are thin, and ER bases are joined. Plain, small center dot.

7

**LL: Arc Crack STATES OF**

**Reverse F:** Letters of legend are large. Key leaves point PC-, R, NR, PC. First A, E, and lower curve of C of AMERICA are patched at bases. C of CENT is heavily outlined. There is always a bold dot between EN, and left pendant of T is broken. Small center dot fades and disappears on later strikes.

**Striking Variations:** Early strikes have bold dentilation on both sides. Later strikes have dentilation weak or absent. All seen (even the Proofs) have reverse crack from rim over S thru top T, center A, bases TES, center OF, to rim over A. Early strikes show several circumferential scratches over ERI and above CA, graver-points from leaftip under ST, a bold dot between EN, and another dot between left foot of N in ONE and E in CENT. Later strikes show only the EN dot remaining, and a new dot above the right upright of N in CENT. This one is often found in a glorious tan.

**Discussion:** R1, very common in all grades. MS(200+), AU(many). At least 200, maybe up to 500 MS examples are known. One or two Proofs are known from these dies. The HRN:684-FS:339 piece may be the Proof it claims to be, but I thought not. I certified another for ANACS as Proof in 1980. As a trivially easy variety in any grade, number 7 draws no premium.



**\*\*\* There Is No Number 8 \*\*\***

The variety designated by Frank Andrews as "A-8" is the same as his number 7. He recognized the reverse as same, but considered the A-7,8 obverses as different dies. They are

not. The early state of these dies has traditionally been listed as number 8 and the later (mushed-out) state as number 7.

7

**BHC: Crack to Throat**

**Obverse 7:** Hair cords are strings of beads as on cents of 1838 and later. Date is close with a heavy-peaked 1. Left edge of curl ends left of center of 7. Lowest curl is quite bold as on all of this type for this year. Bases of LB and ER are joined. Small, plain center dot.

**Striking Variations:** Obverse always has a crack from rim left of 1 to bust tip to throat to front of ear — even on the Proofs — and things go rapidly downhill from there. Reverse is occasionally perfect, but usually comes with two cracks; one thru first S to outer leaf tip opposite O(NE), along wreath and across ribbon to rim at K5.5, the other barely touching right top corner A(TES) to leaf under TE, along wreath, exiting thru A(MERI) to rim between AM. The two reverse cracks grow stronger and new hairline cracks join the bases of AM and RI. The obverse throat crack develops a small chunk out of bust, extends to center dot, R, ★8 to rim; other cracks grow from rim below 83 up thru 37 to curl; from 8 to bust; from rim to ★1, nose, between LI toward outer point of ★8; a wishbone failure between ★7,8; a crack thru outer points ★6; another from rim thru ★9, hairbun, back of hair, exiting lowest curl; another radial crack between

9

**SL: Two Cracks S(T)A to Wreath**

**Reverse G:** This die appears on numbers 9,11. The letters in the legend are small. Key leaves point PC-, PC-, C+, NR. First S of STATES is low. Small, bold center dot.

★11,12 to head, eventually extending thru the ear; another from rim over ★11 thru ★12 to rim over ★13; another horizontal crack from ★1 across bust to lowest curl; heavy flowlining all around periphery; rimbreaks on upper-level rim at ★11, between ★11-12, and above and below ★13. This variety often comes in a lovely tan.

**Discussion:** R1, common all grades. But oh what a truly fascinating variety! MS(100+), AU(many). I have seen two Proofs from these dies, both with a hairline crack up the throat. Though common, number 9 is quite popular for its long series of die states. The amount of deterioration permitted in continued use of this pair of dies has always made number 9 a favorite of mine and of many other collectors. I know at least six collectors who have over a dozen examples each. This is an enchanting variety that can be bought anytime without paying a premium.



37-10

Beaded

8



**BHC: Date Low**

10



**SL: Accessory N**

**Obverse 8:** Hair cords are strings of beads. Date is quite near the border, with bottom of 7 nearly touching the dentils. Bases IB and ER are joined; left top serif of E is weak. Lowest curl is weaker than on number 11, its left edge extending left of center of 7 (as on all but number 12). Medium, quite bold center dot — a bit larger than on other 1837's.

**Reverse L:** This die appears on number 10 of 1837 and 5 of 1838. Legend has small letters. Key leaves point PC-, SPC, C, NR. Though listed by both Andrews and Newcomb as "same dies as numbers 9 and 11" of 1837, this is a proveably different die. First T of STATES tilts left. What appears to be the top of an N is evident just outside the highest ridge of the center leaf below NI of UNITED. Other remnants of this 'letter' (?) extend thru to the inner leaf. Small, bold center dot.

**Striking Variations:** No cracks seen. Later strikes show dentils fading slightly, rather extensive flowlining both sides, minor rust-pitting on the head and wreath, and minor rim crumbling at ★1, left of date, and below.

**Discussion:** R1, another really common one. MS(50+), AU(many). Three Proofs are confirmed from these dies and old sale records may represent up to two more. No premium on this one.

9



**BHC: Out-spike on Lower ★10**

**Obverse 9:** Hair cords are strings of beads. Date is close with bold serif to 1 and strong line upward from left foot of 1. Lowest curl ends left of center of 7. Feet of IB and ER are joined, with left top serif of E weaker. Extraneous marks on right upright of T and inner left arm of Y. Very small, indistinct center dot. Stars 9,10,11 were first punched farther right, then effaced. Early strikes show extra points inside ★8 and to right of ★9,10,11. Even the latest strikes show a bold radial spike outward from the bottom outer point of ★10. By this sign shall all men know that ye are variety 11.

**Striking Variations:** Evidently some examples were struck both before and after number 9, as both the earliest and the latest appearance of this reverse are on number 11. Earliest strikes have the merest hint of the first reverse crack, seen most clearly where it exits the ribbon-fold. Later strikes have two strong cracks; one thru first S to outer leaftip opposite O(NE), along wreath and across ribbon to rim at K5.5, the other barely touching right

11



**SL: Two Cracks S(T)A to Wreath**

**Reverse G:** This die appears on numbers 9,11. The letters in the legend are small. Key leaves point PC-, PC-, C+, NR. First S of STATES is low. Small, bold center dot.

top corner A(TES) to leaf under TE, along wreath, exiting thru A(MERI) to rim between AM. Finally a couple of hairline cracks join the bases of AM and RI.

**Discussion:** R1, another very easy one. MS(70+), AU(many). There could be well over a hundred MS examples of number 11 around. Though the two heaviest reverse cracks are impressive, this is too common to pull extra money.

37-11  
Beaded

G



37-12

Beaded

10



BHC: Gap at Brow

12



SL: Accessory E

H

**Obverse 10:** Hair cords are strings of beads. This is quite similar to the other three beaded-cord obverses of this year, but the bust is a touch broader, reminiscent of earlier varieties. There is an open gap between the browlock and the coronet above. Coronet tip is not as sharply pointed as on other beaded-cord dies. A continuation of its leading edge would cut well into ★6. The date is moderately spaced, with 1 faintly recut at stand and peak, and 8 strongly recut at lower left. Lowest curl is about centered over the 7. IB and ER are joined, with weak upper left serif on E. Small, rather indistinct center dot. Manual touch-up is evident on inner loop of lowest curl, below L, and on hair behind the ear.

**Reverse H:** Letters of legend are small. Key leaves point PC, SPC, NC, PC. F is boldly doubled, the original punch tilting left. Almost the entirety of an E can be made out in the wreath below E in AMERICA. By this hallmark number 12 is recognizable at a glance. Small, bold center dot with a tiny weaker chip to the right of it.

**Striking Variations:** Early strikes have both dies crisp and bold. Later strikes have both dies heavily lapped, with bust, stars, and date weaker, lowest curl severed or nearly so, obverse dentilation still quite well defined. Lapped reverse on later strikes has legend weak, dentilation quite indistinct, but the 'accessory E' still readily evident.

**Discussion:** R3, scarce and popular. MS(12), AU(15+), XF(18+), VF(several). First published by Newcomb in 1940, until then considered same as A10. The "Accessory E" feature was first published by Jules Reiver in the May 1969 issue of Penny-Wise. This one draws around a 2X premium.

11



PHC: No Cracks, Weak Curl

13



LL: Cracks Very Tops All Legend

**Obverse 11:** This die appears on numbers 16-13. Hair cords are plain bands. Date is close with thin, weak figures but strong serif on 1. Bust is rather pointed and lowest curl is quite indistinct, similar to several 1838 dies, covering the right half of 7. Coronet line is straight with a step at this base. Browlock is offset from coronet. LIBERTY is more massive and is in more rounded relief than on numbers 7,6,17,3,15-2, with bases IB and ER touching as before. A hairline die scratch angles upward across the right arm of Y. Extremely tiny center dot.

**Reverse I:** This die appears on numbers 13-14. Letters of legend are large. Key leaves point SPC, R, NR, SPC. N of UNITED is boldly doubled at left top and above left foot, top of T less obviously so. TE are above UNI-D. Left base of all E's and inner right foot of all A's in legend are obviously broken and patched. Left pendant of T in CENT is broken as usual, and the center dot is a faint NW-SE streak, which disappears on later strikes.

**Striking Variations:** Obverse dentilation weakens, light flowlining develops. No cracks seen. Reverse is cracked faintly thru tops UNITED S, heavier thru tops STATES OF AMER, fading thru tops RICA. The doubling on N is obscured and vanishes on later strikes.

**Discussion:** R2+. MS(100+), AU (many). First published by Clapp in his Appendix to the 1924 reprint of Andrews, though he thought the obverse to be a perfect-die number 2. One Proof is known from these dies. There may be up to 200 MS examples. In fact, number 13 is much more common above VF than below. With so many stellar examples so readily available, the only thing challenging about it are its attribution and coming up with the bucks to buy one (or a roll of them). It commands no premium.



1

**PHC: Crack Base Date, Left Stars**

**Obverse 1:** This die appears on numbers 14-1. Hair cords are plain bands. Date is quite close, with lowest curl over right half of 7. Bust is slightly pointed, similar to numbers 16-13. Coronet line has strong offset to browlock. Bases of IB and ER touch. Letters are massive as on numbers 16-13. A small depression touches lower right corner of Y. Small, rather indistinct center dot.

14

**LL: Cracks Very Tops All Legend**

**Reverse I:** This die appears on numbers 13-14. Letters of legend are large. Key leaves point SPC, R, NR, SPC. N of UNITED is boldly doubled at left top and above left foot, top of T less obviously so. TE are above UNI-D. Left base of all E's and inner right foot of all A's in legend are obviously broken and patched. Left pendant of T in CENT is broken as usual, and the center dot is a faint NW-SE streak, which disappears on later strikes.usual, and the center dot is gone.

**Striking Variations:** Although the reverse die is quite similar to reverse A, this variety is generally recognized by its faint, washed-out legend — similar to number 16, but without the buckling and with more flowlining. All traces of the reverse center dot are gone in this marriage. Latest strikes have obverse periphery also much-weakened, with stars and date nearly gone.

**Discussion:** R3, scarce but not rare. MS(12), AU(8+), XF(several). First published by Newcomb in 1940. This one may command a slight premium, rarely if ever above 1.5X.

2



PHC: Vertical Crack thru ★3,4

15



J

LL: Heavily Crack Tops AMERICA

**Obverse 2:** This die appears on numbers 15-2. Hair cords are plain bands. Date is close and even, and 1 has a bold peak. Lowest curl is more massive than obverse 1 (numbers 14,1), its left edge extending well left of center of 7. Bust is well-proportioned and sharply rounded at its tip. Coronet line has a notch at its base, about touching the base of L. IB leans left, B has thin curves, bases IB and ER touch. Center dot is small and rather indistinct.

**Striking Variations:** Obverse is instantly recognizable by a light vertical crack from rim at ★2, touching outer points of ★3,4 to rim opposite brow and another fainter one to the right, from rim down to the top point of ★4. Reverse is always cracked thru tops S OF AMERICA, with other cracks from R to rim. These cracks vary from light to bold. Other lighter cracks develop ribbon to U, rim to N, tops UN, bases NITED, rim over S to T, tops TES, leaf to bases AMERICA to stem, rim below ★5 to top outer point ★4. Better examples occasionally show rimbreaks upon upper-level rim over ★7-8 and faint arc crack thru centers of ★7-8 to rim and along dentils above ★9. Latest strikes have only faint traces remaining of the line below CENT.

**Reverse J:** Letters of legend are large. Key leaves point PC-, NR, PC, SPC. In UNITED, U, I, and D are low and E has a doubled top serif and a patched bottom-bar. All three A's have patched inner right foot, the last one better done than the other two. E of AMERICA has a patched bottom-bar. Leaf under final S and leaves under ME have their tips strengthened. Line under CENT is weak at left, fades out on later strikes. Left pendant T of CENT is broken at root and top. No center dot.

**Discussion:** R4, once considered "very rare", this is another quite scarce one. MS(3), AU(6), XF(8+), VF(20+). First published by Newcomb in 1940. Quite distinctive for the reverse breaks and readily findable in G-VG. To prove a point I once bought every unattributed example I saw for a year — and wound up with 14 of them, all G-F. This pretty well dried up the supply in a three-state area, but proved number 15 to be much less rare than previously supposed. This one draws around a 2X premium.



11



PHC: No Cracks, Weak Curl

16



LL: Weak Legend, No Cracks

**Obverse 11:** This die appears on numbers 16-13. Hair cords are plain bands. Date is close with thin, weak figures but strong serif on 1. Bust is rather pointed and lowest curl is quite indistinct, similar to several 1838 dies, covering the right half of 7. Coronet line is straight with a step at this base. Browlock is offset from coronet. LIBERTY is more massive and is in more rounded relief than on numbers 7,6,17,3,15-2, with bases IB and ER touching as before. A hairline die scratch angles upward across the right arm of Y. Extremely tiny center dot.

**Reverse B:** This die appears on numbers 2,16. Letters of legend are large. Key leaves point PC, R-, NR, PC. I is below N-T, and serifs of D are finely recut. Bases of E1 and MER are touched up. D is lightly doubled at lower left, and C of CENT at upper right. No center dot.

**Striking Variations:** Obverse remains fairly crisp with sharp dentilation. Minor flowing develops. Reverse die is buckled in center, with a raised area covering O-CE. In spite of the buckling, these letters still strike well. Most have the reverse heavily lapped, with legend quite faint and dentilation all but gone. The few pre-lapping examples are easily confused with numbers 3,13, but the usually-seen state with lapped reverse is identifiable at arms' length.

**Discussion:** R4, another quite scarce one. MS(22), AU(several). First published by Newcomb in 1940. This may draw a 2X price.



PHC: Rimbreak at ★5



LL: Cracked Rim @ A3 to Bases UNIT

**Obverse 12:** Hair cords are plain bands. Date is evenly wide, with curl centered over 7. 1 has longer than usual peak. Truncation line is raised, with bust tip sharply rounded and slightly broader left of throat. Rim is boldly embattled, the two-tier effect strongest at top and left. Browlock is slightly offset from straight coronet-line. IB tilt left, with top curve of B thin and bottom curve nearly as broad as it should be. ER bases are joined. Bold, tiny center dot. Almost always readily identifiable by a rim break at ★5.

**Reverse K:** Letters of legend are large. Key leaves point PC-, PC, PC, SPC. Bold inner circle strings the dentil-tips much as a string of beads. Tail of C in AMERICA is extended by a graver-scratch. Several leaves have minimal retouching-marks extending their tips. N of CENT has a bold chip below its diagonal. No center dot.

**Striking Variations:** I have seen one with no obverse cracks or rimbreak. Reverse always shows an obvious crack from rim over final A, extending clockwise thru ribbon and bases UNITED, and an additional light crack tops D STATES. Obverse almost always shows an irregular hairline crack thru base of date and first five stars, to rim above star 6. Later strikes develop an additional reverse crack to tip of stem and around to the ribbon, the enclosed section sinking heavily. A radial crack runs up the left of N(ITED), finally

another from the ribbon tip to rim as the obverse develops extensive crumbling all around the rim, extending to the dentil tips at ★1-3 and beyond them, at ★6-7.5, and right of the date.

**Discussion:** R4, quite scarce but not the great rarity it is often claimed to be. MS(8), AU(10+), XF(12+), VF(several). First published by Newcomb in 1940. Commands around a 2X premium.





# 1838

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By 1838 westward expansion was in full flow, aided by the hard times. For example, a third of New York City's laborers were unemployed. New settlements this year became the cities of St. Paul and Kansas City. Fourteen thousand Cherokees were forcibly resettled westward; four thousand of them died on the 800 mile "Trail of Tears". The "Underground Railway" was active, transporting escaped slaves to Canada.

The hard times caused hoarding of hard coin, which caused a shortage of small change that the mint tried to cure by making millions more. Eleven obverse and eleven reverse dies were paired in fifteen ways to produce 6,370,200 cents dated 1838. This is the largest cent mintage yet — a mark that will not be matched for another ten years. Though this represents less than half a day's cent production at today's rates, it is enough to make 1838 a very common year in any grade desired — even in Proof (over a dozen known).

This is an extremely difficult year to attribute for those not intimately familiar with it. Although two head hubs were

used, they were likely raised from the same master as they differ in only a few trivial points. By all rights, this year belongs with the later series for its monotony. And yet, with experience one can easily recognize each 1838 variety — if the coin is nice enough. This is the same situation as found with the cents of 1800, the nearest analogue to 1838 in the early series.

An XF 1838 can always be identified in a fairly short time. Fine examples can usually be identified eventually, but low grade specimens — even some VG ones — may be beyond attribution. Although this is a great frustration, it is hardly a deterrent as high grade 1838's are available by the thousands.

Are the thousands of nice 1838's even worth attributing? Yes, even if only for the challenge. This is attribution at its niftiest. Nearly EVERYBODY can tell an 1823/2 from an 1823 Normal Date or an 1823 Restrike. But can you tell an 1838 number 9 from an early number 10? Or a late 1838 number 3 from anything? THAT'S a challenge! But can it be worth bucks? With one variety near R5, one near R6, and one at R6, you be the judge.



Sequencing of the 1838's poses somewhat of a dilemma. The 1837's of this head come with long-peaked 1 in date and broken E in LIBERTY. The 1839's of this head are the opposite, with short-peaked 1 and perfect E. Neither has the cracked head hub. Using these three characteristics, the 1838's divide into five groups as follows:

1-Peak	E	Head	Varieties	Notes
A. Long	Broken	Perfect	5,8,14, 9,10,7	Like 1837
B. Short	Broken	Perfect	1,6	Intermed
C. Short	Broken	Cracked	4	Intermed
D. Short	Perfect	Cracked	3,2,11,16	Like 1839
E. Long	Perfect	Cracked	15,12	Like ???

The first reverse of group A is an 1837 die, which is welcome confirmation of

my proposed sequence — but the Proof variety (traditionally start-of-year) is in group D (like 1839). The maverick group E, with features of both 1837 and 1839, doesn't logically fit anywhere, but these varieties were struck after group D (by chaining die-state analysis), so group E has been placed last. A viable emission sequence seems to be 5-8, 14-9-10-7, 1,6,4,3,2, 11-16-15-12.

The two-pronged question for sequencing the 1838's is "do we arrange by commonalities with prior and subsequent years, or do we put the Proof variety first?" I chose the former. As with most 'insufficient data' questions, the TRUE answer is likely 'none of the above.'

1



Broken E, Triple-peaked 1

**Obverse 1:** Broken 1, broken E. Dentilation is strong, without inner circle. Date is bold, close, with short peaked 1 having a dentil a hair right of being centered under its upright. Peak of 1 is boldly doubled both above and below. Lowest curl is heavy and fairly well defined, with a thin-but-bold reinforcement on its lower and upper edges, and a long, deep depression in its center. Leading edge of coronet is bold and slightly curved, with no offset at its base and a thin raised line under L. Browlock comes to a dull point slightly offset from the leading edge of coronet. LIBERTY has left top serif of L very short, broken upper left serif on E and top of E slightly above R. Bases of ER are wavy and not obviously recut. Center dot is small, bold and slightly 'bi-level' — similar to a fried egg, but in higher relief. Crumbling is seen around several stars and roughness from die-rust is usually evident on the headband, hair, and neck, plus two small chips between stars 4 and 5.

**Striking Variations:** The obverse comes perfect but early develops crumbling on its rim, eventually extending in irregular sections all around the coin. Roughness from die-rust is usually evident on the headband, hair, neck, plus two small chips between ★4,5.

1



First I Doubled

**Reverse A:** I2 is dotted by a dentil. Dentilation varies from crisp to mushy, without inner circle. UNITED has U low, with considerable crumbling at lower right of N, and I is boldly recut along its left upright (diagnostic). E of AMERICA is boldly doubled above, less boldly at center, left and right, as are the M above its outer left foot and the final I at top and above its right foot. O in OF is low and leans left (see also numbers 8, 12). Inner berry below C of CENT is heavily joined to the leaf tip below, the joining in fully as high relief as the berry and leaf. Bold, plain center dot.

Reverse develops radial flowlining as the dentilation fades, finally minor rim crumbling here and there outside the disappearing dentils. WEJ's LC167 lists reported one with "heavy crack rim to bust"; I'll believe that when I see it.

**Discussion:** R1, very common in any grade. MS(150+), AU(even more). This is one of the "dirt-common" 1838's (numbers 1,2,3,4,6,7,8), which comprise the group known to Andrews in 1883. There may be several hundred MS examples out there. It is likely second-commonest variety of the year, the commonest in MS, and it draws no premium.



2



**Perfect E, Fused Browlock**

**Obverse 2:** This die appears on numbers 2,16. Broken 1, perfect E, browlock fused to coronet. Dentilation is rather plain to weak, with weak traces of inner circle at left (K8-10), and stronger traces at top (K12-2). Date is very closely spaced, with left top curve of 3 recut and a short point on 1. A dentil is right of center under the upright of 1. Lowest curl is rather heavy, but its lead-in lock is quite indistinct. Leading edge of coronet is straight with a lump under L, and the browlock curves broadly around to fuse with the coronet. LIBERTY has I doubled below, E-serif perfect, ER plainly doubled below, and E plainly doubled above. Top of E is only slightly above top of adjacent R. Bold center dot, with a hub crack extending from below it to the hairbun.

**Striking Variations:** A few extremely early strikes show the extra center dot quite faint or not at all, but this blossoms early. Early strikes have rather strong dentilation, often somewhat mushed around K7 obverse (similar to number 3). This one usually comes

2



**Boldly Doubled Center Dot**

**Reverse B:** A2,A3 are each dotted by a dentil. Dentilation is always rather weak but present. O in OF is low and leans left (see also numbers 1, 6). N of CENT is crumbled below its left foot. Bold center dot has a smaller, equally bold dot nearly (or barely) touching it to the NE (diagnostic) on all but the earliest examples. Center dot is slightly larger than on other 1838's.

satiny rather than mirrored. Even the earliest ones show minor rust pitting around the ear. This progresses and flowlining increases. Dentilation, legend, stars, date, and lowest curl fade on later strikes, but the double center dot on the reverse remains bold.

**Discussion:** R1, common all grades. MS(30+), AU(many). This is one of the "dirt-common" 1838's (numbers 1,2,3,4,6,7,8), which comprise the group known to Andrews in 1883. It draws no premium.

3



Perfect E, Smeared Dentilation

**Obverse 3:** Broken 1, perfect E, dentils smeared lower left. Dentilation is usually strong, although later strikes may have it totally gone. There is no real inner circle, but several false starts at one are found within the dentils at K6-K8, producing a peculiar, smeared appearance from below 18 to star 1. The date is quite close with final 8 a touch high. 1 has blunt, multi-serif point similar to number 1, with a dentil right of center of its upright. Lower parts of all digits are rather mushily outlined. Lowest curl is bold but severed from its lead-in lock. All stars show crumbling — several becoming quite mushy. Leading edge of coronet is crisp and straight, with bold, raised 'torpedo' of a line under L. Browlock ends in a point well-offset from coronet. E has perfect left serifs, with the merest hint of recutting above its top. Bases of ER are plainly recut, with several faint horizontal lines thru the letters of LIBERTY. Right foot of Y is tripled. The hub is cracked from below center dot to hair-bun as on numbers 4,2,16,11,15,12. Plain center dot has crumbling extending SW from it and a smaller dot on the top loop of the curl a full 2mm SW of it.

3



C

Colon Center Dot

**Reverse C:** 12 is dotted by a dentil. Dentilation is usually rather strong, but disappears on later strikes. There is no inner circle. Leaftip under D has a short spike extending its point. O in OF leans left but is not low. Center dot has a smaller dot well above it. Early strikes show six near-vertical lines between ON and E of CENT. Both of these features disappear on the latest strikes, making a late number 3 as hard to attribute as an early one is easy.

**Striking Variations:** There is considerable variation, as noted in description. The latest ones show minor rim crumbling at K4 obverse.

**Discussion:** R1, common all grades. MS(24+), AU(many). This is one of the "dirt-common" 1838's (numbers 1,2,3, 4,6,7,8), which comprise the group known to Andrews in 1883. Its early strikes have some charisma, but the later strikes provide at best a tedious exercise in non-routine attribution. Number 3 draws no variety premium.



4



**Broken E, Strong Line under Date**

**Obverse 4:** Broken 1, broken E, cracked head. Dentilation is strong with heavy inner circle at its tips nearly complete. A second circle, away from the dentil tips, begins between star 1 and date and extends to the right past star 12. The date is closely and evenly spaced. The 1 has a short peak, with a short left and long right foot. Dentil under 1 is left of center of its upright. Lowest curl is massive and pushed upward against its lead-in lock. Tenth and twelfth stars have several points double. Leading edge of coronet is somewhat convex to the left, with a bold, raised line under L and the browlock ending in at least two points well offset from it. LIBERTY has I boldly doubled below, left top of E broken, and wavy bases on ER. Bold center dot before ear has a smaller, weaker one about twice its diameter SSW of it. This die was likely the first use of the "cracked head" hub — with a light crack running from just below the center dot, thru the ear, left arm of Y, hair, second strand of beads, into the upper lobe of the hairbun.

4



**Lump over Right Top E (RICA)**

**Reverse D:** I1,A1,A3 are each dotted by a dentil. Dentilation varies from bold to rather weak. Early strikes show a bold inner circle at the dentil tips over ED STATES. First S of STATES is slightly high and leans left. Highest leaf tip is blunt and short, barely extending to the center of final S. ERI are quite crumbled above, with strong traces of doubling above the centerbar and right top of this E. Small, plain center dot.

**Striking Variations:** Early strikes show crisp dentilation and the circle under the date quite plainly. While this circle still shows, the obverse rusts badly and a light crack develops from the rim at K1, touching the left point of star 9 to the hair. Another crack grows from the lower rim thru 83, double to the lowest curl. Both dies flowline more and more, the doubling above E(RICA) weakens, obverse rust pitting becomes more severe, the lowest crack(s) turn into a heavy bar across the lower curls and send out minor branches, and the upper crack grows heavier and splits across the hairbun. Dentilation remains strong both sides till the bitter end. Finally a rimbreak develops touching the base of 8 and barely missing the base of 3, several more light cracks reach upward thru 838, another small obverse rimbreak develops at K4.5, and rust pitting becomes severe enough to give Miss Liberty a case of acne that should send her to a dermatologist.

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**Discussion:** R1, quite common in all grades. MS(100+), AU(many). This is one of the "dirt-common" 1838's (numbers 1,2,3,4,6,7,8), which comprise the group known to Andrews in 1883. Though very common, this is an extremely popular variety with die state enthusiasts. Most are content with the five basic conditions of this obverse die (perfect; cracked to ★9; cracked thru date; bar in lower hair; cud below 83), but at the EAC89 convention a half dozen collectors lined up over 40 of this variety, shuffling them into eleven columns by die state differences. I am sure a larger sample would show even more graduations than these. No premium for this one.

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5

**Protruding Browlock**

**Obverse 5:** This die appears on numbers 5,8. Perfect 1, broken E, protruding browlock. Dentilation is bold and short (beadlike), with light traces of inner circle here and there under its tips and heavier traces at the roots. Date is bold, moderately spaced, with 83 closer. 1 has a heavy, long peak and a dentil right of center under its upright. Lowest curl is heavy with the highest contour of its lead-in a thin, continuous line. The back strand of beads has an extra 'string' thru the right side of the center four beads. Leading edge of coronet is straight without a line under L. Browlock is complete and protrudes conspicuously (diagnostic). LIBERTY has rounded relief and broken E (upper left serif weak or missing) as on the last 1837's. Top of B is weak. The four hair waves under RT and the three between eye and ear are obviously strengthened. Center dot is bold and two-tiered similar to a fried egg.

**Striking Variations:** All seen have the reverse die fairly well rusted, lapped, and with a swollen clash remnant area thru NT and the right half of the underline, extending to the highest ribbon

5

**Accessory N**

**Reverse E:** This die appears on number 10 of 1837 and 5 of 1838. I1,I2 are each dotted by a dentil. Dentilation is rather faded. Leaf positioning varies so trivially for 1838 reverses that it will be mentioned only by exception. Legend is slightly farther from the wreath than on other 1838's, most noticeable at C of AMERICA. Leaftip under final A extends past the gap between the feet of this A. STATES has TA and ES unusually widely spaced, with first T high and tilted left. Remnants of what appear to be an N are found in the leaf cluster below UNI. The wreath is rusted and the field has been lapped. The line below CENT is javelin shaped — tapering to a point at both ends.

loop. Most show a very faint crack from the left top of E in STATES to the leaftip under the preceding T.

**Discussion:** R3-, slightly scarce. MS(18+), AU(many). This one was grouped by Andrews with number 8, since he didn't notice the minor differences in these two reverses. It draws no premium.

6



Broken E, 38 Well Apart

**Obverse 6:** Broken 1, broken E, 38 apart. Dentilation varies from bold to rather strong, with broken inner circle at dentil tips, strongest at right, between ★9-13. Date is strong and moderately spaced, with final 8 slightly high and well separated from the 3 (diagnostic). The 1 has an extremely short point and a dentil centered below it. Inner circle is quite strong below 18. Lowest curl is massive and heavily connected to lock. Leading edge of coronet is straight, with the browlock overlapping it (also diagnostic), and a strong line under L. Upper left serif of E is broken and ER have wavy bases.

**Striking Variations:** Obverse has hair-line crack from upright of T to first hair-band, between second and third bead from the top. This mark is quite faint and only shows on nice examples; it is the first beginnings of the head-crack seen on the last five obverse dies of this year (numbers 4,3,2-16,11,15-12). Early strikes show the obverse dentilation K3-K5 extending over the rim to the edge of the coin — the only cent die normally seen thus. Later strikes with mushier dentilation do not show this feature. Reverse dentilation over D

6



Long Spike from Leaf under R

**Reverse F:** A1,I2 are each dotted by a dentil. Dentilation varies from strong to rather weak, without inner circle. O in OF is low and leans left (see also numbers 1 and 2). A faint berry-sized lump is found under the right foot of M, another below the following E. Leaf under R has a long spike extending its tip (almost always) and leaftip under U has a short spike. Letters MERICA are crumbled around, growing mushier as the die wears. N of CENT is visibly crumbled below its left foot. Small, bold center dot with a weaker one to the SW of it.

STA is usually less distinct than elsewhere. Evidently the die injured early in this area. Final strikes are mildly lapped both sides — date weak, legend thinner, spike under R gone.

**Discussion:** R1, common all grades. MS(50+), AU(many). This is one of the "dirt-common" 1838's (numbers 1,2,3,4,6,7,8), which comprise the group known to Andrews in 1883. It seems to be slightly the most common of the bunch, and is instantly recognizable by the wide space between 3 and 8. It costs nothing extra.



7



**Weak or Missing Lowest Curl**

**Obverse 7:** Perfect 1, broken E, wide date. This die appears on numbers 10-7. Dentilation is well-defined but not bold, with no traces of inner circle. Date is bold and rather wide, with all figures evenly spaced and 3 slightly below the 8's. Tip of 1 is even with tip of bust, and a dentil is centered under its upright. The 1 is slightly thinner than on number 9, with its upright doubled on the right. The groove between two dentils is centered below the first 8. Leading edge of coronet is straight, sharply defined, with a small step at its base. Lower edge of coronet makes a groove below the L. Browlock comes to a point, offset from the coronet. LIBERTY is identical to number 9 — with broken-serif E, weak-topped B, and rounded relief. The lowest curl is clam-shaped, extremely similar to number 9 with weak, broken lead-in lock, no reinforcing engraving and a short, broad 'valley' between the lowest curl and lowest lock. Stars 10 and 11 each have a spike extending their outermost point.

**Striking Variations:** Bold, pointed 1 is still evident, but its doubling is less distinct. Extensive vertical flowlining is seen before the throat, on neck and

7



**Line to Base of F**

**Reverse G:** I2 is dotted by a dentil. First outer berry has normal (thin) stem superimposed on a stem as broad as the berry. Inner leaf tip under final S of STATES has a short graver-scratch extending its point. Leaf tip under F has a graver-scratch from its tip to the foot of F (diagnostic). N of ONE has a thin, weak left riser. The center dot has several small dots around it — the most noticeable being the ones that extend it to the NW and SW.

below head. Lowest curl is broken, quite weak, and on later strikes vanishes. As the reverse wears, it develops some flowlining thru the legend. The obverse weakens until the date is faint (weakest at right) and the lowest curl is missing. Obverse dentilation remains fairly strong, but reverse dentilation fades considerably. Latest strikes do not show the line to F and are thus difficult to identify. In this case, your first clue is the pointed 1 with missing curl.

**Discussion:** R1, common all grades. MS(36+), AU(many). This is one of the "dirt-common" 1838's (numbers 1,2,3,4,6,7,8), which comprise the group known to Andrews in 1883. It commands no premium.

5

**Protruding Browlock**

**Obverse 5:** This die appears on numbers 5,8. Perfect 1, broken E, protruding browlock. Dentilation is bold and short (beadlike), with light traces of inner circle here and there under its tips and heavier traces at the roots. Date is bold, moderately spaced, with 83 closer. 1 has a heavy, long peak and a dentil right of center under its upright. Lowest curl is heavy with the highest contour of its lead-in a thin, continuous line. The back strand of beads has an extra 'string' thru the right side of the center four beads. Leading edge of coronet is straight without a line under L. Browlock is complete and protrudes conspicuously (diagnostic). LIBERTY has rounded relief and broken E (upper left serif weak or missing) as on the last 1837's. Top of B is weak. The four hair waves under RT and the three between eye and ear are obviously strengthened. Center dot is bold and two-tiered similar to a fried egg.

**Striking Variations:** Obverse lapping has now weakened the lowest curl so its lead-in is a single, thin line (as on 1837 number 12). Light flowlining develops on neck and before throat. Reverse dentilation fades slightly. A

8

**Line across Leaf under M**

H

**Reverse H:** A1,I2 are each dotted by a dentil. Dentilation is rather strong with no trace of inner circle. A of STATES is unusually thick, with broad risers. AMERICA has I and final A doubled on their right side. The inner leaf under M has a radial diecut across it (diagnostic). N of ONE has a thin, weak left riser.

hairline crack, concave downward, develops from the rim over ★5 to the center of ★6. Successive lapping removes evidences of this crack and finally severs the lowest curl. I have seen one whizzed example that shows what looks like a tiny cud at top obverse, but the coin was so stripped that other confirming late-state markings did not show. Latest strikes show a period-like dot after OF. Often found on slightly laminated planchets.

**Discussion:** R1, common all grades. MS(30+), AU(several). This is one of the "dirt-common" 1838's (numbers 1,2,3,4,6,7,8), which comprise the group known to Andrews in 1883. Since Andrews didn't notice the minor differences in the reverses of numbers 5,8 this one was called A-5 by him. It pulls no premium.





8



Flat-bottomed 8's

**Obverse 8:** Perfect 1, broken E, flat-bottomed 8's. Dentilation is strong with no traces of inner circle. Date is bold and close, with 83 slightly closer than 18 or 38, and all figures on the same level. Both 8's have flat bottoms. The 1 has long, well defined tip with a chip below its root. Tip of 1 is right of tip of bust, with a dentil right of center below its upright. The groove between two dentils is well right of center of the first 8. Leading edge of coronet is straight, sharply defined, with a small step at its base. Lower edge of coronet makes a groove below the L. Browlock comes to a point, offset from the coronet. LIBERTY is identical to the previous — with broken-serif E, weak-topped B, and rounded relief. The lowest curl is clam-shaped — slightly pointed at left, in much deeper relief at top and bottom than across its center. Lead-in lock is broad, with a broken reinforcement line. The 'valley' between the lowest curl and lowest lock is ill defined, narrow, and quite short. Top right point of star 7 and outer point or star 8 are recut on the right.

**Striking Variations:** Dentilation remains crisp on both sides. Earliest strikes have perfect obverse rim. Phantom dentil images develop early on the outer rim K7-K8 obverse. A light

9



Short Point under R

**Reverse I:** This die appears on numbers 14-9-10. Well defined, short, beadlike dentilation. A1,I2 are each dotted by a dentil. First S in STATES is slightly high and tilts left. O in OF leans left but is not low. Leaftip under R has a short spike extending its tip. Inner berry below C is joined to the leaftip by crumbling, but the relief of the crumbling is not as high as that of the leaf or berry. ONE shows a thin, weak left riser on N and extensive crumbling around centerbar of E.

arc crack grows across the tip of the bust from its bottom edge above the 8 to the top left of 1. Finally, a rimbreak covering the outer rim grows rightward from under 1, eventually extending to halfway between stars 11, 12. Dentilation remains bold. Reverse remains crisp and perfect.

**Discussion:** R3, rather scarce. MS (20+), AU(many). This variety was first published in the French collection (as "A-8"). Until then these had been considered as perfect-die examples of the variety called "A-12" by Clapp in 1924 (=N-10). Because of the close similarity of numbers 14-9-10 (same reverse all), this confusion is only natural. But since one of these three is scarce, it may be worth your while to examine these carefully. This one pulls no premium.



7

**Pointed 1 Doubled on Right**

**Obverse 7:** Perfect 1, broken E, wide date. This die appears on numbers 10-7. Dentilation is well-defined but not bold, with no traces of inner circle. Date is bold and rather wide, with all figures evenly spaced and 3 slightly below the 8's. Tip of 1 is even with tip of bust, and a dentil is centered under its upright. The 1 is slightly thinner than on number 9, with its upright doubled on the right. The groove between two dentils is centered below the first 8. Leading edge of coronet is straight, sharply defined, with a small step at its base. Lower edge of coronet makes a groove below the L. Browlock comes to a point, offset from the coronet. LIBERTY is identical to number 9 — with broken-serif E, weak-topped B, and rounded relief. The lowest curl is clam-shaped, extremely similar to number 9 with weak, broken lead-in lock, no reinforcing engraving and a short, broad 'valley' between the lowest curl and lowest lock. Stars 10 and 11 each have a spike extending their outermost point.

10

**Comma-crack ME**

**Reverse I:** This die appears on numbers 14-9-10. Well defined, short, beadlike dentilation. A1,I2 are each dotted by a dentil. First S in STATES is slightly high and tilts left. O in OF leans left but is not low. Leaftip under R has a short spike extending its tip. Inner berry below C is joined to the leaftip by crumbling, but the relief of the crumbling is not as high as that of the leaf or berry. ONE shows a thin, weak left riser on N and extensive crumbling around centerbar of E.

**Striking Variations:** The earliest examples seen by me have a tiny comma-like crack from the center of the dentil left of E(RICA). This grows downward across the center of M to the feet of A, and finally beyond to the center of F. The section enclosed by this crack begins to sink. Another radial crack develops to the left upright of M. The first crack extends to the rim beyond F as the enclosed section sinks more. I have not yet seen one with this break as a full rimbreak. Dentilation remains fairly well defined for both dies to the end, but the short point under R fades as the reverse die wears and the crack grows stronger.

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**Discussion:** R2+, rather common. MS(24+), AU(many). This one was first published by McGirk in the March, 1914 issue of "The Numismatist" as his "3G". In 1924 Clapp called it "A-12" keying on the heavy crack thru AM, as had McGirk and most collectors since. This one is popular for its often-seen heavy break at AME (some collectors have a half-dozen of them), but is too common to draw a premium.

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9



Perfect E Well Above R

**Obverse 9:** Short-peaked 1, perfect E, its top well above R. Dentilation is bold, with no trace of an inner circle. Date is bold, moderately close, with short-peaked 1. Tip of 1 is right of bust tip, with a dentil right of center under its upright. This variety has been listed as 'recut date', but I have never seen one thus. Lowest curl is massive, its lead-in lock broad and broken. Two heavy graver marks extend circumferentially below the shoulder point. A short point extends the eyelid. Leading edge of coronet is straight with no offset at its base, and a thin, raised line under L. Browlock comes to a point, does not quite touch leading edge of coronet. LIBERTY has perfect E, top of E well above R, and ER feet doubled below. B is slightly above L-E. Bold center dot before ear (as on all 1838's), with crumbling extending SW from it and a smaller dot far SSW of it, nearly touching the northeast curve of the curl before the ear. The head hub is lightly cracked radially from just below the center dot, thru left arm of Y, across hair a beads-width below the lowest bead of the first strand, thru the fourth-from-bottom bead of the back strand,

11



Broken N in CENT

**Reverse J:** This die appears on numbers 11-15-16. I2,A3 are each dotted by a dentil. Dentil tips are strung by an indistinct inner circle. D of UNITED is slightly high. Foot of F is doubled (noticeable only on near-MS examples). The M has a bold point (extra foot) above its inner right foot — apparent on all but the latest strikes. Tops of ER are lumpy. First outside berry has an ill-defined stem as broad as the berry. Always boldly evident is the broken right upright of N in CENT, which is diagnostic. Single, small center dot.

and across the hairbun towards the highest point of the tenth star. This 'die crack' is found on five 1838 obverse dies, so has to be a feature of the hub that produced these dies. All perfect-E obverses and one of the broken-E obverses are from the cracked head hub.

**Striking Variations:** Early strikes show many fine criss-cross lines on neck and nose (strongest on the neck) and a faint point extending the tip of the inner leaf over O(NE). Letters of LIBERTY are crisp and finely executed, with the base of T noticeably separated from the hair. Dentilation is crisp and bold on both sides. As the dies wear the dentilation fades on both sides, the lowest curl weakens and detaches, the letters of LIBERTY become broader and less crisp (T now resting on the hair), and extensive flowlining develops around the silhouette of the face. Final strikes have a rimbreak below first star almost to second star, not touching either star.

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**Discussion:** R3-. MS(15+), AU(8+), XF(many). At least 12 Proof examples are known to me; one comes up every year or so at a few thousand dollars. This variety was first published by Clapp (as "A15") in Mehl's 1924 reprint of Andrews, though he identified it only by the rimbreak below ★1-2. Even Newcomb failed to recognize the perfect and broken dies as the same variety, calling it his N-11 and N-13. It wasn't until 1974 that I was able to prove conclusively that N-11 and N-13 are the same by discovering the "bridge" coin. This was one showing the exact criss-cross scratch pattern of N-9 (fading but still visible) and the exact flowline pattern of N-13. The confusion that reigned before that is funny now, but didn't seem so then. I lost count of the "misattributed" N-13's catalogued as N-11 and vice versa — there seemed to be dozens thus. And at the time it supposedly made a difference, since N-11 was "rather common" while N-13 was "very rare". The latest state (with rimbreak) is hard to come by, but other states present little challenge unless your heart is set on gem pieces. But then for a gem, try a Proof! This is the only fairly common variety with the "broken-N" reverse — and the most common large cent Proof before 1840. Every Proof large cent of 1838 — regardless of prior claims — has turned out to be this variety. Without the obvious rimbreak, number 11 commands no premium.

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10

**Perfect E, Bold-Peaked 1**

**Obverse 10:** Perfect 1, perfect E. Bold, crisp dentilation (always). This die appears on numbers 15-12. There are broken pieces of inner circle at the dentil tips all around but most evident below date. Date is quite close with first 8 leaning left, 83 closer, and a long, bold, well defined point on the 1. Tip of 1 extends almost to tip of bust, and a dentil is right of center below its upright. Right foot of 1 is doubled. Lowest curl is massive, its lead-in lock broad. Leading edge of coronet is indistinct, but smoothly curved with no offset at its base, and a thin, raised line under L. Blunt point of browlock is offset from coronet. LIBERTY has E perfect, IB feet about even (I the merest hair low), the bases of ER strongly doubled below, and ER tops about even (E just a trifle high). A chip ('dot') develops SW of the center dot, midway between it and the curl, but most examples of this marriage are before the chip becomes visible.

**Striking Variations:** Earliest strikes have both dies crisp and new. Dentilation fades as both dies wear, but the reverse weakens much more rapidly than the obverse. Latest strikes

12

**Low S(TATES)**

**Reverse K:** Both I's and final A are each dotted by a dentil. In UNITED, N has a short point up from its outer left foot and T is doubled along its left upright. Leaftip extends fully to inner curve of D. First S in STATES is low (diagnostic). Final S is doubled outside its lower curve, and final A along its left side. The first two outer berries (at TE and ST) are strongly doubled along their lower side, as are the two inner berries left of ONE, and C of CENT along its inner upright. Single, small center dot.

show a nearly dentilless reverse with obverse dentilation still reasonably well-defined — but not 'crisp and new' as on number 15. Had the year lasted longer this obverse (at least) would have seen many more miles, as the scramble for current, serviceable cent dies continued well into 1839.

**Discussion:** R2+, rather common. MS(24+), AU(many). First published by Newcomb in 1940. Other than the totally illogical obverse with perfect E and long-peaked 1, nothing commends this slightly scarce variety to greatness. It pulls no premium.

\*\*\* **There Is No Number 13** \*\*\*

The coin described by Newcomb as his N-13 is a late state of number 11, with both dies now mushed out and an obverse cud below ★1. HRN consid-

ered both dies to be different from N-11, which is not so. See the discussion on number 11 for more details.



11



**Pointed 1: Bold, Rounded Curl  
w/Raised Center**

**Obverse 11:** Perfect 1, broken E, lowest curl different. Dentilation is bold with no trace of an inner circle. Date is bold and close with 83 slightly closer than 18 or 38, and final 8 slightly high. The 1 has long, well defined serif, slightly doubled above near its tip, which is directly under tip of bust. A dentil is centered under the upright of 1. The first 8 has an unusually thick top, and the groove between two dentils is perfectly centered below this 8. Leading edge of coronet is straight, sharply defined, with a tiny step at its base. Lower edge of coronet makes a groove below the L. Browlock comes to a point, offset from the coronet. LIB-ERTY is identical to the previous — with broken serif E, weak-topped B, and rounded relief. A tiny, circular punch is found in the depressions of the hair behind the neck (visible only on specimens above VF). The shape of the lowest curl is distinctive and diagnostic — well rounded with raised center, its lead-in lock a complete, well defined, raised line. The 'valley' between the lowest wave (below neck and lowest lock) is also well defined, extending leftward to over the center of

14



**Short Point under R**

**Reverse I:** This die appears on numbers 14-9-10. Well defined, short, beadlike dentilation. A1,I2 are each dotted by a dentil. First S in STATES is slightly high and tilts left. O in OF leans left but is not low. Leaftip under R has a short spike extending its tip. Inner berry below C is joined to the leaftip by crumbling, but the relief of the crumbling is not as high as that of the leaf or berry. ONE shows a thin, weak left riser on N and extensive crumbling around centerbar of E.

the lowest curl. A horizontal graver mark strengthens the bottom of the lowest wave at this point. The lowest ball of the 3 is crumbling slightly in its throat. Other than the distinctive shape of the lowest curl, number 3 is very similar to numbers 9,10. Indeed, five of the highest grade perfect die examples were found in well established variety collections attributed as N9.

**Striking Variations:** Usually found perfect. A few are known with a small rimbreak in the dentils between stars 7-8. And a few are known with a massive rimbreak touching the top point of star 5, covering four points of star 6, to rim near star 7. Newcomb had a low-grade example of this die state which he used for his N-14 description, so he did not see enough detail to recognize the reverse as "same die as numbers 9 and 10". Dentilation remains crisp on both sides. This variety is usually found on slightly laminated planchets.

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**Discussion:** R4, the rarest variety known to Newcomb. MS(2), AU(3), XF(8), VF(several). First published in the French catalog (1930). The French:578-HRN:701-Starr:372 coin was considered unique until 1974. Gordon Wrubel found the second example that year, followed shortly by Lillian Willins turning up the third one. In 1976 Dick Punchard claimed to have found a perfect die example. Since I had shot down several purported "perfect die N-14's" I was skeptical

— but Dick's coin was indeed N-14, and a whole new era opened when I showed it at an EAC gathering in 8/76. I provided a full description of all identifying points, sample pressings for all, and my reference collection of 1838's for comparison. Since then they started coming out of the woodwork — several of them from recognized variety collections where they had lain for years as "N-9". I have seen only six of these with the (previously diagnostic) large rimbreak. It was well into the 1980's before ANY attributed example of N-14 sold for less than \$100, and even today it takes less than a VF example to sell so low. Of course, on the conservative side is ANS' reply to my gift of a VF30 example in 1978: "Having talked to several experts in the field of American Numismatics, I feel that we can carry it on our books for no more than \$100." Too bad — that was the second new variety I had given to the ANS collection, and it became the last. Needless to say, this is a variety to watch for. Today it draws a 7X-8X premium.

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10

**Perfect E, Bold-Peaked 1**

**Obverse 10:** Perfect 1, perfect E. Bold, crisp dentilation (always). This die appears on numbers 15-12. There are broken pieces of inner circle at the dentil tips all around but most evident below date. Date is quite close with first 8 leaning left, 83 closer, and a long, bold, well defined point on the 1. Tip of 1 extends almost to tip of bust, and a dentil is right of center below its upright. Right foot of 1 is doubled. Lowest curl is massive, its lead-in lock broad. Leading edge of coronet is indistinct, but smoothly curved with no offset at its base, and a thin, raised line under L. Blunt point of browlock is offset from coronet. LIBERTY has E perfect, IB feet about even (I the merest hair low), the bases of ER strongly doubled below, and ER tops about even (E just a trifle high). A chip ('dot') develops SW of the center dot, midway between it and the curl, but most examples of this marriage are before the chip becomes visible.

15

**Broken N in CENT**

**Reverse J:** This die appears on numbers 11-15-16. I2, A3 are each dotted by a dentil. Dentil tips are strung by an indistinct inner circle. D of UNITED is slightly high. Foot of F is doubled (noticeable only on near-MS examples). The M has a bold point (extra foot) above its inner right foot — apparent on all but the latest strikes. Tops of ER are lumpy. First outside berry has an ill defined stem as broad as the berry. Always boldly evident is the broken right upright of N in CENT, which is diagnostic. Single, small center dot.

**Striking Variations:** None seen. All have extremely early obverse with bold, crisp dentilation and very late reverse with all-but-missing dentilation and inner circle no longer visible. The broken N remains boldly apparent. While this strong obverse/weak reverse combination is a good indicator of number 15, it is not infallible. Later strikes of number 12 share this feature to a lesser degree.

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**Discussion:** R5+, one of the two toughies. AU(2), XF(1), VF(9), F(8), VG(10), G(1). The discovery coin was by Breen in 1959 (AU), since sold as Starr:373 and now living in Minneapolis. Breen also turned up the second one (XF), now in Beverly Hills. Del Bland found the third one (VF) in 1972, I found two in 1974 (VF,F), and Clint Hollins found the sixth in 1977. By 1991 I have seen 31 of these, with multiple-finders being Walter Breen (2), Bob Grellman (3), and me (6). This one commands a heavy premium that has risen from a few hundred dollars in 1972 to consistently over a thousand by 1989, though prices have fallen somewhat now that the heaviest-hitting impatient collectors have been satisfied. Still, this is a goodie that readily pulls an 80X-100X premium.

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2

**Perfect E, Fused Browlock**

**Obverse 2:** This die appears on numbers 2,16. Broken 1, perfect E, browlock fused to coronet. Dentilation is rather plain to weak, with weak traces of inner circle at left (K8-K10), and stronger traces at top (K12-K2). Date is very closely spaced, with left top curve of 3 recut and a short point on 1. A dentil is right of center under the upright of 1. Lowest curl is rather heavy, but its lead-in lock is quite indistinct. Leading edge of coronet is straight with a lump under L, and the browlock curves broadly around to fuse with the coronet. LIBERTY has I doubled below, E-serif perfect, ER plainly doubled below, and E plainly doubled above. Top of E is only slightly above top of adjacent R. Bold center dot, with a hub crack extending from below it to the hairbun.

**Striking Variations:** None seen. All are from extremely worn dies. Reverse has all-but-missing dentilation and inner circle no longer visible, the legend much weakened by wear and lapping, and light flowlining above NE. The double-footed M is barely visible, but the broken right upright on N of CENT is boldly apparent. Obverse

16

**Broken N in CENT**

**Reverse J:** This die appears on numbers 11-15-16. I2,A3 are each dotted by a dentil. Dentil tips are strung by an indistinct inner circle. D of UNITED is slightly high. Foot of F is doubled (noticeable only on near-MS examples). The M has a bold point (extra foot) above its inner right foot — apparent on all but the latest strikes. Tops of ER are lumpy. First outside berry has an ill defined stem as broad as the berry. Always boldly evident is the broken right upright of N in CENT, which is diagnostic. Single, small center dot.

dentilation is weak and no longer shows the inner-circle remnants. The recutting on 3 no longer shows. Besides being weak and very rusted, the obverse is now heavily lapped. The hole in the ear is nearly gone — appears as if the ear is full of water. The coronet behind the lower half of ERTY and the field before the nose and above the head show the effects of polishing, but extensive flowlining remains on and before the throat. The double-topped E still shows but is obscured by extensive rust pitting of the die.

**Discussion:** R6+, slightly the rarest 1838. MS(3), AU(1), VF(5), F(3), VG(3), G(3), AG(1). I bought the discovery piece at the ANA72 Auction, unattributed. Both Walter Breen and I had attributed it as N-13. (Remember? N-13 was “very rare” — see number 11 discussion.) By 1973 I had a first rate reference collection of 1838’s. So did Robbie Brown. And 1838 was still a jungle. Robbie loaned me his 1838’s for several weeks and I pored over the dual sets (both with several die states) in great detail, identifying every little nit of each die — and nearly going blind in the process. But my “early N-13” was real trouble. It didn’t match the N-13 with rimbreak; it didn’t match N-11; it didn’t match ANYTHING! The discovery of a new variety should be a glorious thing, but for me it came as a gradual realization — a growing release from the frustration the coin had been causing for too long. The discovery was officially reported at ANA73, a confused writeup followed in Penny-Wise, skepticism gave way as other

cent buffs examined the coin and concurred. Meanwhile, we all kept looking for another. In late 1973 I found the second one, a VF with a small, deep cut above the head (net F). It later went to Robbie Brown with a 38-15 for his N-14 with rimbreak. Also in late 1973 I noticed the plate of the Forrest:705 (9/72) “1838 N-11”, sold a mere month after the discovery coin — it was another of this variety. That began a twelve-year search for that coin, culminated in 1984. Jon Anderson found a VF example in 1981, I bought the Forrest coin (MS) in 1984, Joe Rose found a VF in 1985, and in 1986 Phil VanCleave’s only 1838 (MS) turned out to be a sixth number 16. Four more turned up in 1986, and about two a year since. Of the nineteen examples now known to me, I discovered five. This is the toughest 1838 and consistently brings heavy money, say around 100X-150X. But be persistent and patient — they’re still being found. And you may be a finder.

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# 1839

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In 1839 Samuel F.B. Morse brought the Daguerrotype photographic process to America from Paris. Charles Goodyear discovered a process to prevent rubber from getting sticky or melting as it warms; called “vulcanizing”, the process vastly extended the uses of rubber. And the rules for a game called “baseball” were devised by West Point cadet Abner Doubleday of Cooperstown, NY.

For U.S. cent coinage this is the end of an era, providing the last oasis of variety before the desert of neuter, stereotyped designs in the forties and fifties. Not since 1794 have so many different heads appeared on cents of a single year. Nor, with the present bureaucratic practices, will such ever happen again. The variety of 1839 cents is the well-earned reward for enduring the tedious task of attributing the previous 3-1/2 years of cents.

Thirteen obverses (with five basic heads) and eight reverses (with three basic types) were mated in fourteen known combinations to produce the 3,128,661 cents delivered in 1839. The rather unimaginative labels ‘Over 1836’, ‘Head of 1836’, ‘Plain Cords’, ‘Head of 1838’, and ‘Head of 1840’ have been in long use and are self-explanatory. The newer term ‘Small Head’, ‘Petite Head’, ‘Tipped Head’, and ‘Braided Hair’ all attempt to describe the design used on cents of 1840-1842 and some of 1839 and 1843. The origin of the terms ‘Silly Head’ and ‘Booby Head’ has been traced in print to the 1860’s and may have been in common verbal use even before that. Though only minimally descriptive, these labels are just whimsical enough to suit the personality of the kind of soul that collects large cent varieties, so they have persisted —

and I wouldn’t presume to suggest a change.

No Proof cents are known of this year, but at least 250 MS examples survive. Surprisingly, Mint State 1839’s generally bring outrageous prices — especially for choice Booby Head examples, which, though the most common design of the year and accounting for half of all MS 1839 cents, represents a one-year type. The variety collector will find this an impossible year to complete in MS, and quite a challenge in any grade. The one ‘rare’ type, though obtainable nice, is quite expensive, and three varieties boast a total of only four MS examples combined.

Die-chaining occurs to such a degree on 1839 cents that sequencing them becomes almost a trivial task. Traditional sequencing has the 1836 head first. But this variety is die-linked to both of the Silly Head varieties, which are new variants of the 1838 head. Since two 1839 varieties bear the exact designs of 1838, they were likely produced at the start of the year — first the one indistinguishable from an 1838 except by date, then the one with no line under L and an unusual reverse. Next comes the head of 1836 (plain haircord) and the two Silly Head varieties. Since these three share a common reverse die, their order is easily determined. Next is the long string of Booby Head varieties (eight varieties), beginning with the sharply-pointed coronet (similar to Silly Head) and progressing by die-chains or similarities to the broken-stem die. And the 1840 head comes last. This gives the most likely emission sequence as 2,3,1-4-9,5-12-7,14,13-15-11-6,8.

The five heads on 1839 cents are distinguished as follows ...



**Type 1838** (2 vars): Haircords are beaded, no browlock. Lowest lock of hair encompasses the shoulder. Reverse has small letters, underline below CENT.

**Type 1836** (1 var): Haircords are plain bands, minimal browlock. Lowest lock of hair encompasses the shoulder. Dentilation is quite short, date has long-peaked 1 and manually-patched 9 — looks almost like an 8. The treatment of the hair is subtly different from the other 1839 heads. Reverse has small letters, underline below CENT.

**Silly Head** (2 vars): Haircords are beaded, conspicuous browlock. Lowest lock of hair encompasses the shoulder. This is Gobrecht's first variant on the Head of 1838. Coronet tip is much more sharply pointed, top of head is more rounded, ear is smaller, and tip of bust is shorter than on other 1839 heads. The eyelash is frayed (triple), the hairbun is looser, the expression is vacant, and Miss Liberty has removed her dentures. Evidently, it's been a hard day and she's glad it's over. Reverse has small letters, underline below CENT.

**Booby Head** (8 vars): Haircords are beaded with many tiny beads, conspicuous browlock. The lowest lock of hair curls behind the shoulder and overlaps the truncation, leaving the shoulder point exposed. This design is a further evolution from the Silly Head. The chin is sharper than on earlier heads. Reverse has small letters, but without underline below CENT.

**Petite Head** (1 var): Haircords are beaded, conspicuous browlock. Lowest lock of hair encompasses the shoulder, ending in a sharp point over 3. This is the end product of the 1839 cent-design evolution. The head is smaller, more refined, and the face is neuter. The date is larger, with long-

peaked 1. The letters of LIBERTY are small, the hair below the coronet appears like a braid, a round hole drills the ear, and the curls at nape of neck are coils rather than ringlets. Reverse has tiny letters, no underline below CENT. The whole aspect is much more refined than on earlier types.

This year presents another good argument FOR renaming the cent varieties of this period, as successive layers of sedimentation have undone the logic in the original naming scheme. The five distinct types as arranged by Andrews are ...

- (I) Over 1836
- (II) Type 1838
- (III) Silly Head
- (IV) Booby Head
- (V) Petite Head

Whose	When	(I)	(II)	(III)	(IV)	(V)
Andrews	1881	1	2,3	4	5,6,7	8
Newcomb	1940	—	—	9	(10),11, 12,13,14	—
Wright	1992	—	—	—	15	—

Gobrecht's propensity to dabble not only with individually-cut dies, but also with production dies during their use confuses Booby Head attribution considerably. Indeed, two of Newcomb's 'new' reverses are mere reworkings of previously known dies.

The Petite Head variety (identical to 1840) ends both the year and the series, simultaneously beginning the final series of U.S. large cents — a series whose differences are marked entirely by date placement, die scratches, and distinctive patterns of breaks, cracks, weaknesses, or other die failures. The identification of that series I leave in the capable hands of Bob Grellman and Jules Reiver, whose expertise in classifying tiny differences far surpasses mine.

1



Over 1836, Plain Haircords

**Obverse 1:** Head of '36. This is an unused 1836 die, identifiable as such on several counts, the most remarkable of which is the plain hair bands. The leading edge of the coronet is strongly curved and splayed far away from the top of L. A sharp, thin browlock overlaps the coronet base, which drops away in a depressed line below L. LIBERTY has thin curves on the B. The mouth of the 9 is closed by an irregular mass of die-crumbling or graver-gouges. This figure matches neither the 9 of other 1839 cents, nor the 6 of 1836 cents, being much too squared for either of these. Three horizontal graver-scratches extend from the lower right curve of 9. The "faint traces of an undercut 6 within and about the 9" claimed by Breen have never been seen by me, but are entirely reasonable. The odd shape of the 9 is wholly consistent with a well-executed attempt to overlay a 6.

**Striking Variations:** The 1839 "overdate" comes in three easily-identifiable states, but progressions exist within the last two. Most seen are from unbroken dies. The obverse develops a swelling which grows to a horizontal crack from the rim between ★3,4 to the

1



A

Rev '38, No Berry at T

**Reverse A:** This die appears on numbers 1-4-9. Dentilation is crisp and well-defined. A noticeable phantom appears below the inner leaf above E of ONE. A line joins the outer leaves under the second T of STATES. There is no inner berry at top of T in CENT. Underline to CENT is bold and center dot is absent.

nose below the eye. Finally this crack is joined by others which bisect the obverse. The first crack splits the eye, another just below it crosses the head to the Y, and a third exits below the hairbun thru ★11 to the rim. These cracks progress from fine to bold. At a glance or on examples below VF (as most are), these three cracks appear as one. The reverse remains crisp and new. Porous black examples are more common than smooth brown ones.

**Discussion:** R3, scarce and popular. MS(1), AU(2), XF(9), VF(30+). Many of the VF's have been offered repeatedly as "XF". The overdate has always been extremely popular. Though readily available in Good or VG at a price, examples above Fine are really hard to come by. As a one-variety type, any current catalogue will show its value.



2



Head of '38, Line under L

**Obverse 2:** Head of '38; no browlock, beaded cords. First star is doubled along the left side of its top point. LIBERTY has a bold underline to L, with LIBER evenly aligned, and two graver scratches up from tail of R. The center dot is larger and more conspicuous than on the other Head-of-38 variety (number 3).

2



Four Leaves under MER

**Reverse B:** Underline to CENT is bold, slightly broader in the center. Highest leaf extends to center of S. Outer berry under AM is bold, even on late strikes. The leaf group under MER consists of four leaves as on all 1838 cents and before. ONE CENT is noticeably more bold than the legend on all but the earliest strikes. Small center dot remains constant, with a tiny dot a millimeter to its southwest.

**Striking Variations:** Earliest strikes show faint die scratches on neck, vertical die scratches thru STAT, horizontal die scratches thru RICA, and bold legend. The legend weakens early, with AMERICA invariably weakest. As the dies wear the head develops a phantom outline to its right. Flowlines develop on and before the throat; reverse periphery weakens more. Both dies remain unbroken.

**Discussion:** R1, common all grades. MS(30+), AU(many). This one draws no variety premium.

3



Head of '38, No Line under L

3



C

Three Leaves under MER

**Obverse 3:** Head of '38; no browlock, beaded cords. Second star has a conspicuous point extending left from its top point. LIBERTY has a broad open space without underline below L, a diagonal graver scratch down thru I, IB tilted left relative to E, R small and low. ER touch at top and bottom. The fusing of two hairwaves produces a slight lump behind the ear below Y, as on both Silly Head dies. Tiny center dot before ear.

**Reverse C:** Underline to CENT is thin, weaker at left. Highest leaf tip falls short of the center of S. This leaf is much shorter than its mate below. The berry under this S has a bold dot to its right. The outer berry under AM is quite faint, fades and disappears on later strikes. The leaf cluster under MER consists of three leaves, the outermost extended by a long spike towards the foot of R. ONE CENT is no more bold than the legend. Left pendant of T in CENT is short. Tiny center dot disappears on later strikes.

**Striking Variations:** Early strikes have both dies crisp, but later strikes are more common. These show strong flowlining both sides, peripheral details fading, and a radial depression north-east of ★1. Indeed, the experienced centist identifies this variety at a glance by this mark. A faint crack grows thru nose, lips, across the chin, and down the throatline to the bust. The outer berry under AM is totally lacking on the latest strikes.

**Discussion:** R2, rather common. MS(24+), AU(many). Though decidedly scarcer than the other Head-of-1838 variety, this one is too common to command any premium.



39-4  
Silly

4



**Silly Head, No Hole in Center**

**Obverse 4:** Silly Head; large browlock. L of LIBERTY has an underline and T rests on the hair. This die has no center dot and no other impairment about the ear. In comparison to the other Silly Head obverse (number 9), the bust is in lower relief, the mouth is more infantile, and the coronet tip is slightly more pointed.

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**Striking Variations:** Edge detail fades on later strikes and flowlining develops behind the legend. No cracks seen.

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4



A

**Rev. '38, No Berry at T**

**Reverse A:** This die appears on numbers 1-4-9. Dentilation is crisp and well-defined. A noticeable phantom appears below the inner leaf above E of ONE. A line joins the outer leaves under the second T of STATES. There is no inner berry at top of T in CENT. Underline to CENT is bold and center dot is absent.

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**Discussion:** R2, rather common all grades. MS(30+), AU(many). Though the Silly Head does pull a slight premium as a type, neither variety brings more than the other.

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5



**Booby Head, Sharply  
Pointed Coronet**

**Obverse 5:** Booby Head; exposed shoulder. Coronet tip is much more pointed than on other Booby Head dies, splaying far left from the top of L similar to the Silly Head dies. Ninth star is boldly recut along the right of its lowest point. Very faint hints of a raised ring appear before the ear, and the curl is broken before the center of the ear.

5



**No Underline, Doubled Leaf  
under CA**

**Reverse E:** This die appears on numbers 5-12-7, listed by Newcomb as dies E and H. No underline below CENT. Stems and outer berry below TE(D) are complete. Early strikes ("N5") show no inner berry right of T in CENT, while later strikes ("N10"-12-7) have this berry added as a small lump. There is a doubling between the outer two leaves under IC, almost as if this leaf pair was intended as a triplet. On worn examples, this is still quite apparent as a double leaftip under C. The broken left pendant of T in CENT is poorly repaired, producing a 'notched top' to this letter.

E

**Striking Variations:** Early strikes from unlapped dies have bold wreath and legend, and no sign of an inner berry right of CENT. These are seen much more frequently than the post-lapping strikes. After the lapping and reworking of the reverse die, a crude 'berry' appears to the right of CENT and Miss Liberty's mouth develops quite an abscess as her pucker is effaced.

**Discussion:** R1, quite common below MS. MS(13), AU(several), XF(many many). Though fascinating as the most highly distinctive booby, the "Sharp Coronet" is far too common to command a premium.



39-6  
Booby

6



**Booby Head, Puckered Mouth**

**Obverse 6:** Booby Head; exposed shoulder. Short coronet point parallels L. The ninth star is boldly doubled along the right side of its lowest point. The overall appearance of this die is one of bold relief — the date is crisper with long-peaked 1, the dentilation is sharply defined with each dentil a rounded entity in bold relief, and the stars show none of the usual fuzziness. However, the bottom of the browlock does not touch the forehead. The left side of the 'center ring' makes a strong, complete loop on the curl before the ear. The lips are full but puckered — positively sensuous.

**Striking Variations:** Obverse is always perfect. Reverse has been reworked since its use with number 11 — which is why Newcomb considered this to be a different die. The leaves below ICA are weaker, severed at their roots, and now appear slightly shorter than before. The outer berries at TE(D) and ST have been poorly reinforced, both now displaying an open-clamshell appearance (Newcomb's 'split berries'). The right inner berry below ES has had a long thread of a stem



F

6

**No Line, Broken Stem below TE(D)**

**Reverse F:** This die appears on numbers 11-6, listed by Newcomb as dies F and I. No underline below CENT. The outer berry below TE(D) is boldly present, but the wreath stem above the berry stem is missing (diagnostic). The outer leaflet under ME folds under, showing no point (also diagnostic). The inner berry right of CENT is plain and well rounded, but does not extend very far. The T of CENT is better patched than usual, making this the only Booby reverse without a notch-topped T.

added, as has the lower of the pair right of ONE. Every leaf has been 'touched up', showing many fine longitudinal graver scratches. Reverse comes perfect, then with a light crack thru D to and along wreath under S, then a fainter crack from left foot of M to and along the wreath clockwise, exiting the ribbon just below the first leaf, towards the base of U.

**Discussion:** R2, rather common below MS. MS(14), AU(8+), XF(many). This one commands no variety premium.

7

**Booby Head, Cracked ★4-6**

**Obverse 7:** Booby Head; exposed shoulder. Short coronet point parallels L (as on all Boobies but number 5). Ninth star is strongly doubled along right side of lowest point. Several conspicuous lumps appear on the curl before the ear. See striking variations below.

**Striking Variations:** All seen have cracked obverse and severely lapped reverse. Obverse is lightly cracked from rim below ★4, thru ★4-6 to rim over ★7. Obverse dentilation begins sharp, grows quite indistinct. Reverse dentilation remains clear in spite of severe lapping. Reverse die is excessively reground, leaving wreath disjoint and all berries severed and weak or missing. Late strikes show an open mouth from obverse lapping, a light clash from throat above O(NE) and from ear between N's of ONE CENT. Some examples show an additional obverse crack from rim over ★2 to ★3 and a hairline crack from rim over ★3, running outside the stars to rim between ★4-5.

7

**No Underline, Heavily Lapped**

E

**Reverse E:** This die appears on numbers 5-12-7, listed by Newcomb as dies E and H. No underline below CENT. Stems and outer berry below TE(D) are complete. Early strikes ("N5") show no inner berry right of T in CENT, while later strikes ("N10"-12-7) have this berry added as a small lump. There is a doubling between the outer two leaves under IC, almost as if this leaf pair was intended as a triplet. On worn examples, this is still quite apparent as a double leaftip under C. The broken left pendant of T in CENT is poorly repaired, producing a 'notched top' to this letter.

**Discussion:** R2, rather common. MS(24+), AU(many). The drastic lapping on the reverse is certainly eye catching, but this is too common a variety to draw a premium.



39-8

Petite

8



**Petite Head, Braided Hair**

**Obverse 8:** Petite Head; identifiable at a glance as the only 1839 variety of this type. The hair is arranged in a braidlike appearance below the coronet with hair coils at nape of neck. Lowest curl ends in a point over 9. It seems that Gobrecht was finally satisfied with this design and turned his creative efforts back to other series — final retouching on his Liberty Seated design on all silver denominations before resuming dollar coinage, and adaptation of the head from his half-dollar patterns for use on all gold coins. Both of these activities bore fruit in 1840.

**Striking Variations:** Dentilation weakens only slightly. No cracks or other deterioration seen.

8



**Tiny Letters**

**Reverse G:** No underline below CENT, legend has tiny letters. The overall appearance is much more refined, but progress has its price. When beauty becomes stereotyped, can the sameness that results still be called beauty? With what does one compare to make that judgment?

**Discussion:** R1, mega-common. MS(30+), AU(many). Though they draw high prices, it is truly amazing how many really choice examples of this variety are around. Below XF this one is both easy and cheap. Above XF it is still easy, but not cheap.

9

**Silly Head, Hole before Ear**

**Obverse 9:** Silly Head; large browlock. L of LIBERTY has an underline and T rests on the hair. Compared to the other Silly Head obverse (number 4), the bust is in bolder relief, the mouth is better formed, the coronet tip is not quite as pointed, and a large, round hole appears where the center dot should be. A few faint vertical graver scratches extend thru the bottom of B, and a cluster of faint horizontal graver scratches extend left from star 7.

**Striking Variations:** All seen by me have lightly-bisected obverse, cracked from rim between ★5,6 or coronet, across head below the ear to rim below ★13. This crack is evident on the neck of even well worn examples. Additional light cracks parallel and support this one near its two extremities. Finally, a faint crack grows downward thru the nose, lips, tip of chin, and across the field to the junction of neck and bust. Early examples have crisp, well defined obverse dentilation. The reverse die has now been lightly lapped, so the legend flowlines are minimized and the defect below N is nearly or wholly missing. Later strikes

9

**Rev. '38, No Berry at T**

**Reverse A:** This die appears on numbers 1-4-9. Dentilation is still reasonably well-defined. A noticeable phantom appears below the inner leaf above E of ONE. A line joins the outer leaves under the second T of STATES. There is no inner berry at top of T in CENT. Underline to CENT is bold and center dot is absent.

have dentilation much weakened on both sides. Minor rimbreaks plague the obverse edge below the date, at top, and down the right side. Reverse, though weak at periphery, remains unbroken.

**Discussion:** R1, common all grades. MS(36+), AU(many). This is an easy one.



**\*\*\* There Is No Number 10 \*\*\***

The coin listed by Howard Newcomb as his number 10 (5-H) is a late-state N5 with both dies now lapped and the reverse die manually touched up by

the engraver. The manual touchup work fooled Newcomb into thinking this a new reverse die. See number 5 for further amplification.



**Booby Head, Sharply  
Pointed Coronet**

**Obverse 5:** Booby Head; exposed shoulder. Coronet tip is much more pointed than on other Booby Head dies, splaying far left from the top of L similar to the Silly Head dies. Ninth star is boldly recut along the right of its lowest point. Very faint hints of a raised ring appear before the ear, and the curl is broken before the center of the ear.

5



E

**No Underline, No Inner  
Berry at (CEN)T**

**Reverse E:** This die is extremely similar to Reverse H, but the legend and wreath are stronger and the dentilation is not as crisp as on 39-10. No underline below CENT. Stems and outer berry below TE(D) are complete. There is no inner berry right of T in CENT (diagnostic). There is a doubling between the outer two leaves under IC, almost as if this leaf pair was intended as a triplet. On worn examples, this is still quite apparent as a double leaf tip under C. The broken left pendant of T in CENT is poorly repaired, producing a 'notched top' to this letter. The I of UNITED, A of STATES, and final A of AMERICA each point between dentils. On the extremely similar Reverse H, these letters are all dotted.

**Striking Variations:** Dentilation fades slightly. No cracks seen.

**Discussion:** R1, quite common below MS. MS(10+), AU(several), XF(many many). In 1979 I published that 39-5 and 39-10 were the same reverse die. In 1993 Randy Snyder proved me wrong. Though fascinating as the most highly distinctive booby, the "Sharp Coronet"/"Missing Berry" is far too common to command a premium.



39-10

5



**Booby Head, Sharply  
Pointed Coronet**

**Obverse 5:** Booby Head; exposed shoulder. Coronet tip is much more pointed than on other Booby Head dies, splaying far left from the top of L similar to the Silly Head dies. Ninth star is boldly recut along the right of its lowest point. Very faint hints of a raised ring appear before the ear, and the curl is broken before the center of the ear.

**Striking Variations:** Obverse is always lapped, showing an abcess behind Miss Liberty's lips. Reverse seems to be a late, lapped and touched-up version of Reverse E, but the dentilation is bold. No cracks seen.

10



**No Underline, Small  
Berry Right of (CEN)T**

**Reverse H:** This die appears on varieties 10-12-7. Extremely similar to reverse E, but wreath and legend are weaker and dentilation is bolder. No underline below CENT. Stems and outer berry below TE(D) are complete. Inner berry right of T in CENT is a small lump. There is a doubling between the outer two leaves under IC, almost as if this leaf pair was intended as a triplet. On worn examples, this is still quite apparent as a double leaf tip under C. The broken left pendant of T in CENT is poorly repaired, producing a 'notched top' to this letter. Dentilation is extremely bold. I of UNITED, A of STATES, and final A of AMERICA are each dotted by a dentil.

**Discussion:** R3-, rather common below MS. MS(4), AU(6+), XF(20+). This was first published by Newcomb in 1940 as a new variety, then was delisted by me in 1979 as a touch-up of Reverse E, then was proven by Randy Snyder in 1993 to be a different reverse die. Newcomb was right and Wright was wrong (this time). The scarcer "Sharp Coronet" normally commands a little extra, but patience will usually turn one up for no premium.

10



**Booby Head, Long Mouth**

**Obverse 10:** Booby Head; exposed shoulder. This die appears on numbers 15-11. Short coronet point parallels L. The ninth star is boldly recut, but on a different point than most other Booby Heads. The lowest outer point (not 'lowest'=lowest inner) is strongly doubled along its left side. The left edge of the lowest curl is LEFT of the inner right curve of the 9 — the only Booby Head thus. The mouth is more evenly formed than on any other Booby Head die. The lips are longer, evenly apart, not puckered. Once the appearance of this feature can be learned, this obverse is recognizable at a glance. A light graver scratch appears in the hair below Y, extending tangential to the wave over the ear.

**Striking Variations:** Obverse dentilation begins crisp, weakens as minor flowlining develops. Reverse dentilation remains sharp.

39-11

Booby

11



**No Line, Broken Stem Below TE(D)**

**Reverse F:** This die appears on numbers 11-6, listed by Newcomb as dies F and I. No underline below CENT. The outer berry below TE(D) is boldly present, but the wreath stem above the berry stem is missing (diagnostic). The outer leaftip under ME folds under, showing no point (diagnostic). The inner berry right of CENT is plain and well rounded, but does not extend very far. The T of CENT is better patched than usual, making this the only Booby reverse without a notch-topped T.

**Discussion:** R1, quite common. MS(30+), AU(many). This is one of the two most common Boobies and it draws no premium. A thrill runs down my spine whenever I recognize the long mouth, but they keep turning out to be this one instead of the number 15 I keep hoping for.



39-12

Booby

11

**Booby Head, Bisected**

**Obverse 11:** Booby Head; exposed shoulder. Leading edge of coronet is close to and parallels upright of L. All Booby Head dies were raised from the same hub, differing only in minor retouchings or different failures. This one, even on later strikes, is unlapped. However, the bottom of the browlock does not touch the forehead. Ninth star is doubled on right side of its lowest point. See striking variations below.

**Striking Variations:** Earliest examples show a light T-shaped chip or interior crack midway between ★12,13. An obvious crack develops early thru ★4 to nose below eye. A second crack then grows parallel to this one from the bridge of nose to just below the ear. This crack finally bisects the die, exiting between ★11,12. Latest strikes have both cracks quite bold, but a nice VF is required to identify the cracks as two rather than one. Reverse state is unchanged for the life of the variety.

**Discussion:** R4+, quite scarce. MS(2), AU(2), XF(3), VF(15+), F(several). This is a variety whose popularity has been "enhanced" by an informal feud between two collectors who are stockpiling them. As prices escalated they

12

**No Underline, Doubled Leaf under CA**

**Reverse E:** This die appears on numbers 5-12-7, listed by Newcomb as dies E and H. No underline below CENT. Stems and outer berry below TE(D) are complete. Early strikes ("N5") show no inner berry right of T in CENT, while later strikes ("N10"-12-7) have this berry added as a small lump. There is a doubling between the outer two leaves under IC, almost as if this leaf pair was intended as a triplet. On worn examples, this is still quite apparent as a double leaf tip under C. The broken left pendant of T in CENT is poorly repaired, producing a 'notched top' to this letter.

kept buying, and dealers responded by raising the price of the next one even higher. But the supply has evidently passed the dealers' greed and collectors' determination. I saw five pieces in G-F offered at EAC90 in the \$500-800 range with no takers — and both collectors were present. This variety definitely commands a premium, but the exact level is up for grabs. Today it is around 30X. Next year it could be a lot different. They are readily available now if you are willing to pay dearly.

12



**Booby Head, Puckered Mouth**

**Obverse 12:** Booby Head; exposed shoulder. Short coronet-point parallels L. The ninth star is not recut — which, for a Booby Head, is unusual. Instead, the lowest point of ★12 is conspicuously doubled. The mouth is puckered as on all Booby obverses except obverse 10 (numbers 15-11).

**Striking Variations:** Early strikes show crisp dentilation, no flowlining. Obverse dentilation fades and flowlines develop around head (strongest below chin) and thru legend (strongest at left). Leaf under D fades to a phantom, as do outer berries below TE(D) and ST. All examples show light crack from rim over U, tops of NIT, centers of ED STA, top of T to rim over E. Later strikes show additional crack thru centers ES to rim over O. The crack between D-S is evident at a glance.

39-13

Booby

13



**No Underline, Cracked D-S**

**Reverse J:** This die appears on numbers 13-15. No underline below CENT. The stems and berry below TE(D) are complete, though usually faint — as is the outer berry below ST. The inner berry right of CENT is a wedge shaped ridge between the inner leaf and the wreath stem, ending in a sharp point. Perhaps the berry is gone, leaving only a very heavy stem. CENT has a notched T from a poorly repaired left pendant. This die is instantly recognized by its cracks — see striking variations.

**Discussion:** R2, rather common. MS(30+), AU(many). This is an easy one in any grade and draws no premium.





13



**Booby Head, Scratch before Ear**

**Obverse 13:** Booby Head; exposed shoulder. Short coronet point parallels L. In date, 8 is a hair low. A fine graver scratch cuts across the lowest point of the curl before ear (visible only on nice VF and better). The “raised center circle” peculiar to the Booby Head type is plainest on this die, its left loop curving thru the curl before ear. The ninth star is boldly doubled along the right side of its lowest point as on most other Booby Head dies.

**Striking Variations:** All seen have a light crack from the rim over D, extending along the tops of STATES OF A. Why Newcomb failed to mention this crack is a mystery to me. Dentilation is usually well defined on both sides. Later strikes show dentilation fuzzy, reverse crispness faded at left.

39-14

Booby

14



**No Underline, No Berry at TE(D)**

**Reverse K:** No underline below CENT. Though the stem is bold and complete, there is no outer berry below TE(D) (diagnostic). The inner ‘berry’ to right of CENT is questionable — a mere lump. Several berries are disjoint, and a few are doubled. CENT has a notch-topped T from a poorly repaired left pendant. This is the only Booby Head reverse to show a center dot, though indistinctly.

**Discussion:** R3, scarce. MS(10), AU(7), XF(10+), VF(many). McGirk first published this variety in 1914. After three fourths of a century it still arouses overwhelming indifference. Its scarcity may entice up to a 2X premium from an impatient variety collector.



39-15

Booby

10



Booby Head, Long Mouth

**Obverse 10:** Booby Head; exposed shoulder. This die appears on numbers 15-11. Short coronet point parallels L. The ninth star is boldly recut, but on a different point than most other Booby Heads. The lowest outer point (not 'lowest'=lowest inner) is strongly doubled along its left side. The left edge of the lowest curl is LEFT of the inner right curve of the 9 — the only Booby Head thus. The mouth is more evenly formed than on any other Booby Head die. The lips are longer, evenly apart, not puckered. Once the appearance of this feature can be learned, this obverse is recognizable at a glance. A light graver scratch appears in the hair below Y, extending tangential to the wave over the ear.

15



No Underline, Cracked D-S

**Reverse J:** This die appears on numbers 13-15. No underline below CENT. The stems and berry below TE(D) are complete, though usually faint — as is the outer berry below ST. The inner berry right of CENT is a wedge shaped ridge between the inner leaf and the wreath stem, ending in a sharp point. Perhaps the berry is gone, leaving only a very heavy stem. CENT has a notch-topped T from a poorly repaired left pendant. This die is instantly recognized by its cracks — see striking variations.

**Striking Variations:** All seen have sharp, crisp dentilation on obverse. Reverse has outer leaves and berries notably weak, especially at left. All examples show light crack from rim over U, tops of NIT, centers of ED STA, top of T to rim over E, with an additional crack thru centers ES to rim over O. The crack between D-S should be evident at a glance.

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**Discussion:** R6. MS(1), XF(5), VF(3), F(3), VG(5), G(1). Eighteen pieces known to me. Walter Breen claims to have discovered this variety in the mid-late fifties. Willard Blaisdell seems to have been the first to identify it as "Obv.N11/Rev.N13" in 1972 or before. Helfenstein:193-Starr:390 was the first confirmed example of this variety (1964). The second was turned up by Jerry Bobbe in 1972 (MS), now in Beverly Hills. In 1978 one of Jules Reiver's N-13's (XF) turned out to be this variety, and Dan Holmes discovered the fourth one (VG) in 1980. I found the fifth and sixth in 1981, three more turned up in 1982, and nine more in 1983-1991. Except for the Helfenstein coin, all auction appearances of this variety before 1984 (including Kreisberg, Kagin, and NN) have been exposed as misattributions. It obviously draws a very heavy premium — consistently into four figures — but this should taper off as the rarity falls.

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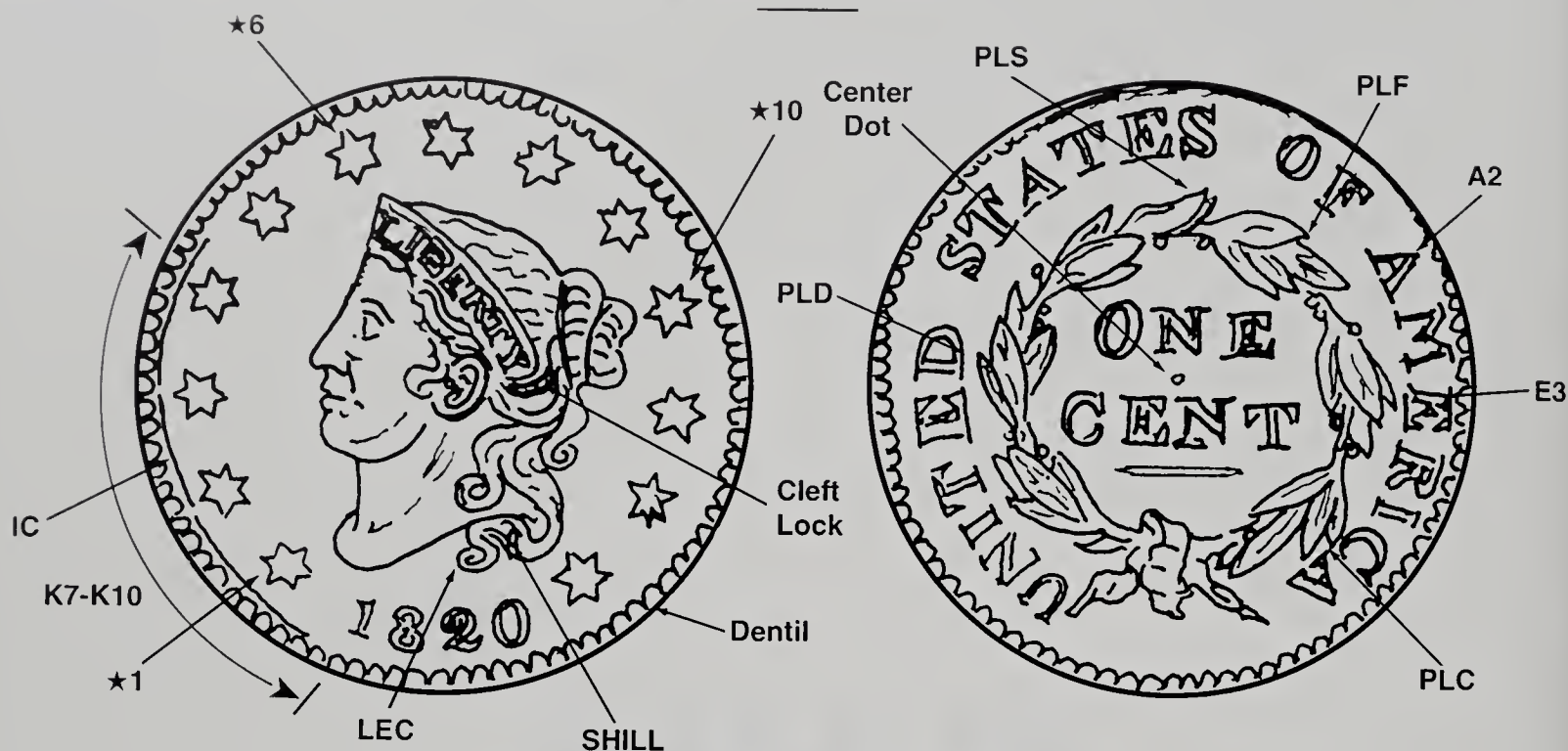
THE  
CENT  
BOOK

# PLATES

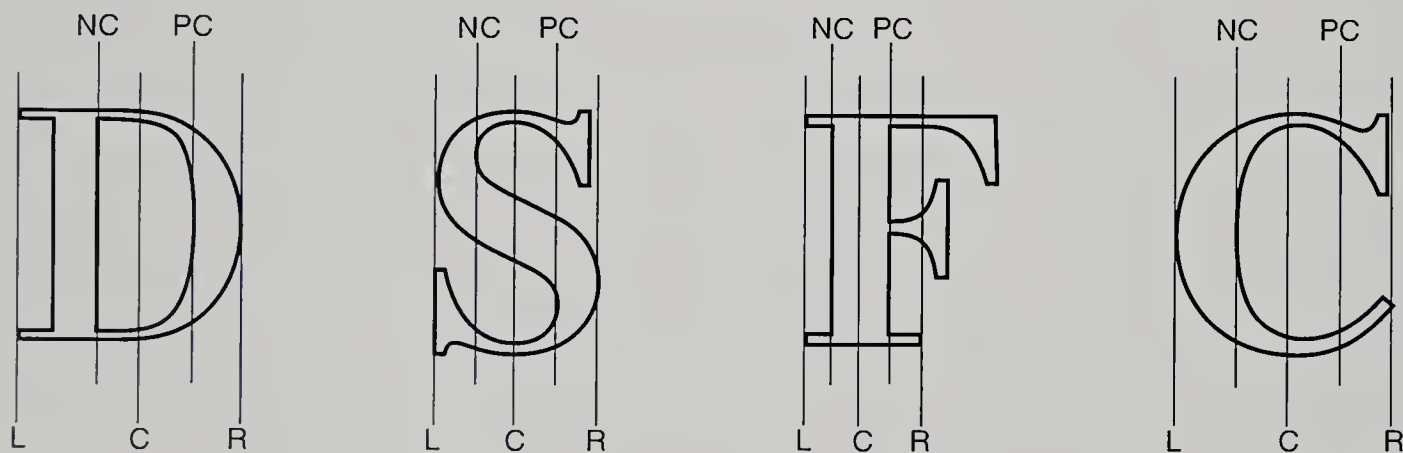
WRIGHT



# METHOD



These pictures illustrate terms defined in the glossary.



Leaf positions refer to the **base** of the letter

- Far Past Left
- Past Left
- Left
- Nearly Left
- Nearly Center
- Center
- Slightly Past Center
- Past Center
- Nearly Right
- Right
- Slightly Past Right
- Past Right
- Far Past Right

Pictures are the key to attribution.  
The purpose of descriptions is to point out  
in the pictures distinctive die features

1816

Rim breaks at right obverse	
16 closer than 18 .....	8
18 closer than 16 (slightly)	
PLF about R .....	2
PLF about C .....	1
Bold rim left rev,	
dbl dentil over E .....	3
Same reverse, plain obv ctr dot .....	9
Open mouth .....	4
No lump on 6 loop .....	7
PLD NL .....	5
Triple dentil K6.5 reverse .....	6
B of LIBERTY square rt bottom	
Three long dentils K6 obv .....	8
PLD PC, "OF" centered .....	1
PLF PR .....	3
PLF about R .....	2
PLS PR, PLF NL .....	4
PLS SPR, PLF SPC .....	7
Extra line over ERTY, PLD C.....	6







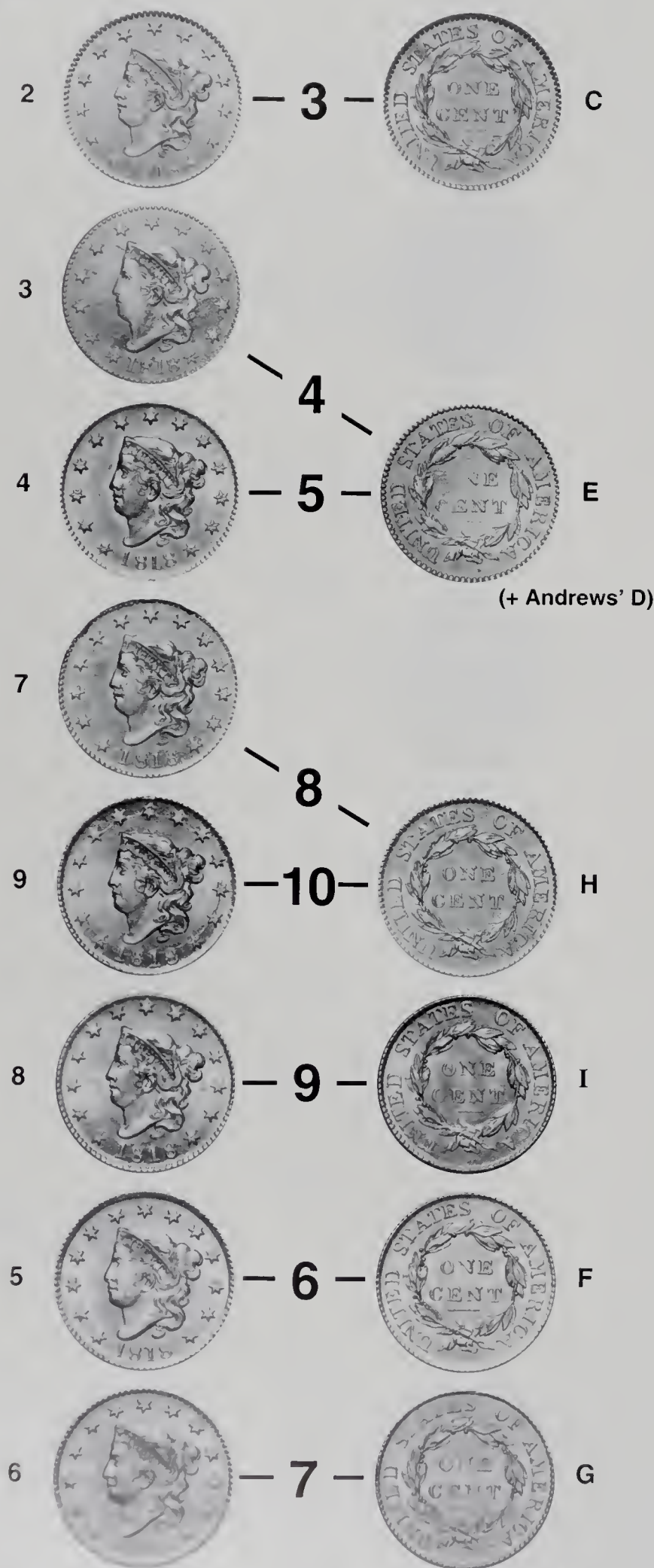
1817

Blunt 1's, Fifteen stars .....	16
Lump atop head	
Lump large, semicircular .....	7
Lump thickest at left .....	8
Lump thickest at right	
Date close, even .....	3
Date spaced 18 17 .....	9
Die crack thru top of date .....	12
Die crack thru base of date .....	4
1 ENTIRELY left of bust	
A in STATES slightly high .....	14
Otherwise .....	15
Divided date 18 17 .....	9
8 open at bottom .....	3
NE/SW bisecting crack on rev	
PLC R- .....	2
PLC C- .....	17
Cracked tops TAT .....	17
PLD NR, PLF PR.....	6
Double dentil over left uprt N	
Stray hair over back of ear.....	8
B recut inside top loop.....	7
1 8 widely spaced	
Sixth star far right .....	12
PLS midway S O, PLF PC .....	10
PLS SPC .....	11
Very close date	
1 off tip of bust.....	13
PLC R- .....	2
Double dentil K6.5 reverse.....	1
A in STATES slightly high	
Strong rev dentils,	
large rev ctr dot .....	4
Lapped, small rev ctr dot .....	5

NOTE: Numbers 4,5,17 are quite similar.







Closed hair bun..... 8

Circular crack obverse  
 thru outer star points..... 8  
 thru inner star points ..... 10  
 thru inner points but  
 not date, 81 very close..... 5

Cleft lock behind Y  
 PLS PR, obverse IC complete..... 6  
 PLS NR, rt foot (CEN)T short..... 7

Stars very close to date  
 Berry under left foot of M..... 3  
 Tip of 1 about at tip of bust ..... 5  
 1 well under bust; point of  
 ★1 and serif of 1 aligned ..... 4

Stars far from date, no cleft lock  
 date close, spaced 1 81 8  
 PLF R, PLC NR ..... 1  
 PLF SPR, PLC C-..... 5  
 PLF SPC..... 2  
 date widely spaced  
 1 off tip of bust ..... 10  
 Triple dentil under first 8 ..... 8  
 Left edge of lowest curl  
 about at left uprt of 1 ..... 9

1819

First 1 almost touches bust..... 2

Overdate: 8 under 9

PLD NC, PLS C ..... 1

PLS NR..... 2

First 1 well apart from bust

Rev: Square-serif letters

PLC NR..... 6

PLD &amp; PLC nearly touch letter ... 9

O in OF high, PLS PR ..... 10

Rev: Century letters

PLS about midway S O

Stars close to date..... 3

Stars far from date..... 5

PLD PC, tiny berries..... 8

PLD C, large berries

Stars close to date..... 4

Stars far from date..... 7

**SQUARE-SERIF LETTERS:**

Front &amp; back curves of S are broad

Inside curves of O and C are rounded

Center serif of E and F are square

Tail of R is straight

**CENTURY LETTERS:**

Front &amp; back curves of S are thin

Inside curves of O and C are straight

Center serif of E and F are triangle

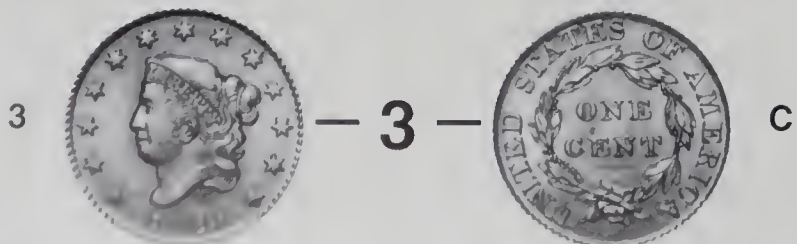
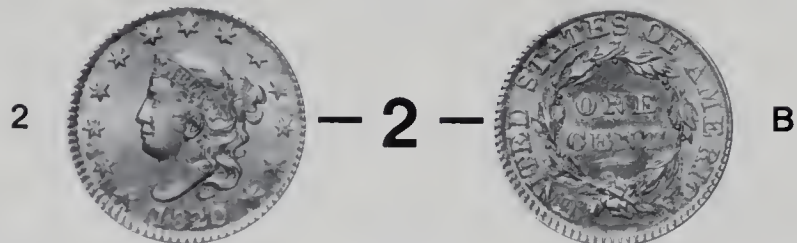
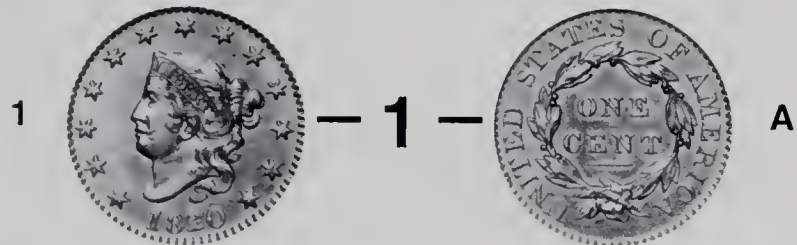
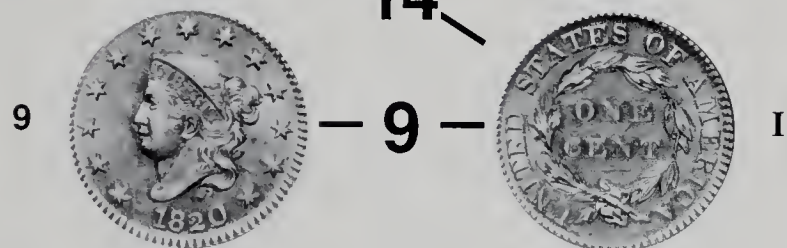
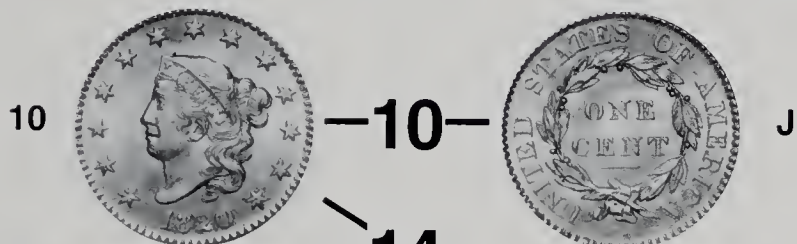
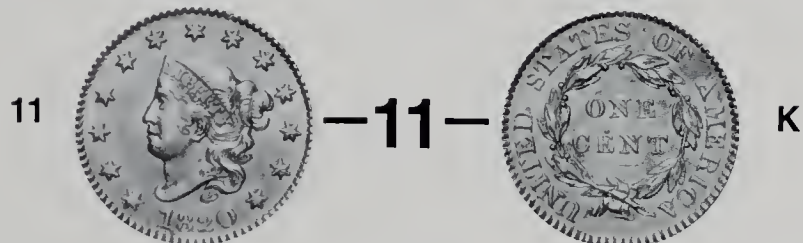
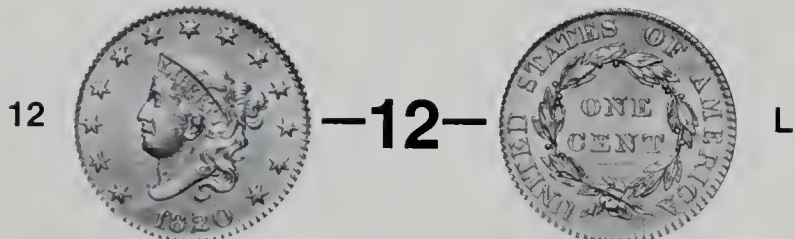
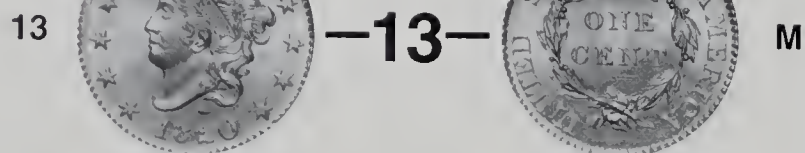
Tail of R is curved





1820

1820



Large Date

Overdate

1820

**CLUB-TOP 2 IN DATE:**

PLD PR, PLS midway S O .....	13
PLD NR, PLS well PR .....	12
PLS C, tiny berries .....	14
PLS about R	
Long peak to 1 in date .....	11
Normal peak to 1 in date .....	10

**CURL-TOP 2, STRAIGHT-TAILED R (LIBERTY):**

Overdate: 1 under 2	
Large oval 0 in date .....	1
Sixth star R of coronet tip .....	3
Lump outside 0 of date at K7 ....	2
Not overdate	
Close date, 0 high, SHILL .....	9
Date 1 8 20, 1 at tip of bust .....	3
(may not look like an overdate)	
PLS NC, PLC NC .....	7

**CURL-TOP 2, CURL-TAILED R (LIBERTY):**

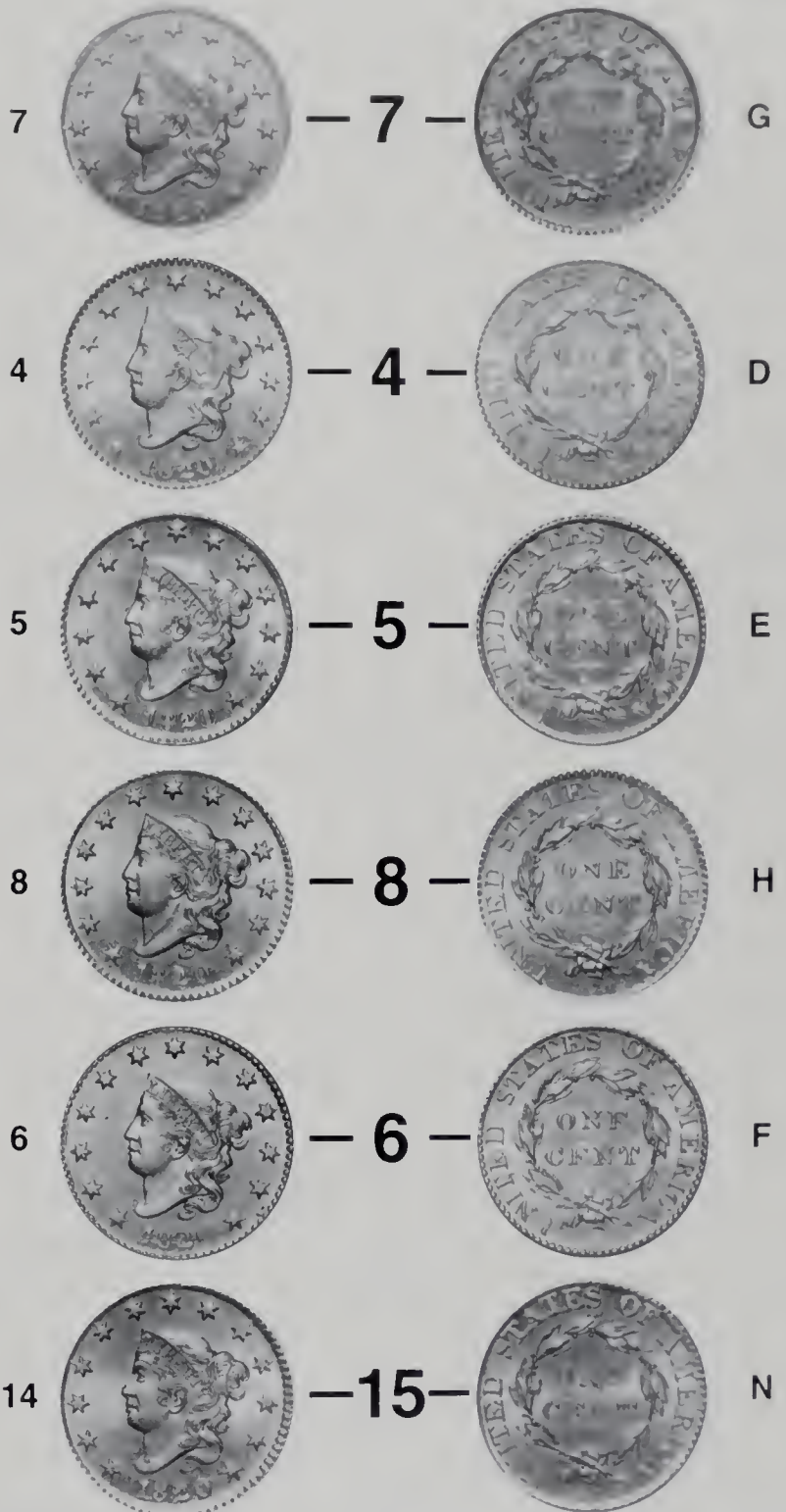
With SHILL	
PLS midway S O .....	4
PLD NC, PLS SPC .....	5
Without SHILL	
T along coronet top, PLC NR .....	15
T of LIBERTY normally placed	
PLT1 about C .....	8
PLT1 NR, PLS about R .....	6
Obv: IC remnants K7-K9 .....	6

**SHILL:**

Stray Hair In Lowest Lock,  
cuts upwards across the  
lowest wave below the head.

**CLUB/CURL 2:**

Look at the left top of 2.





1821

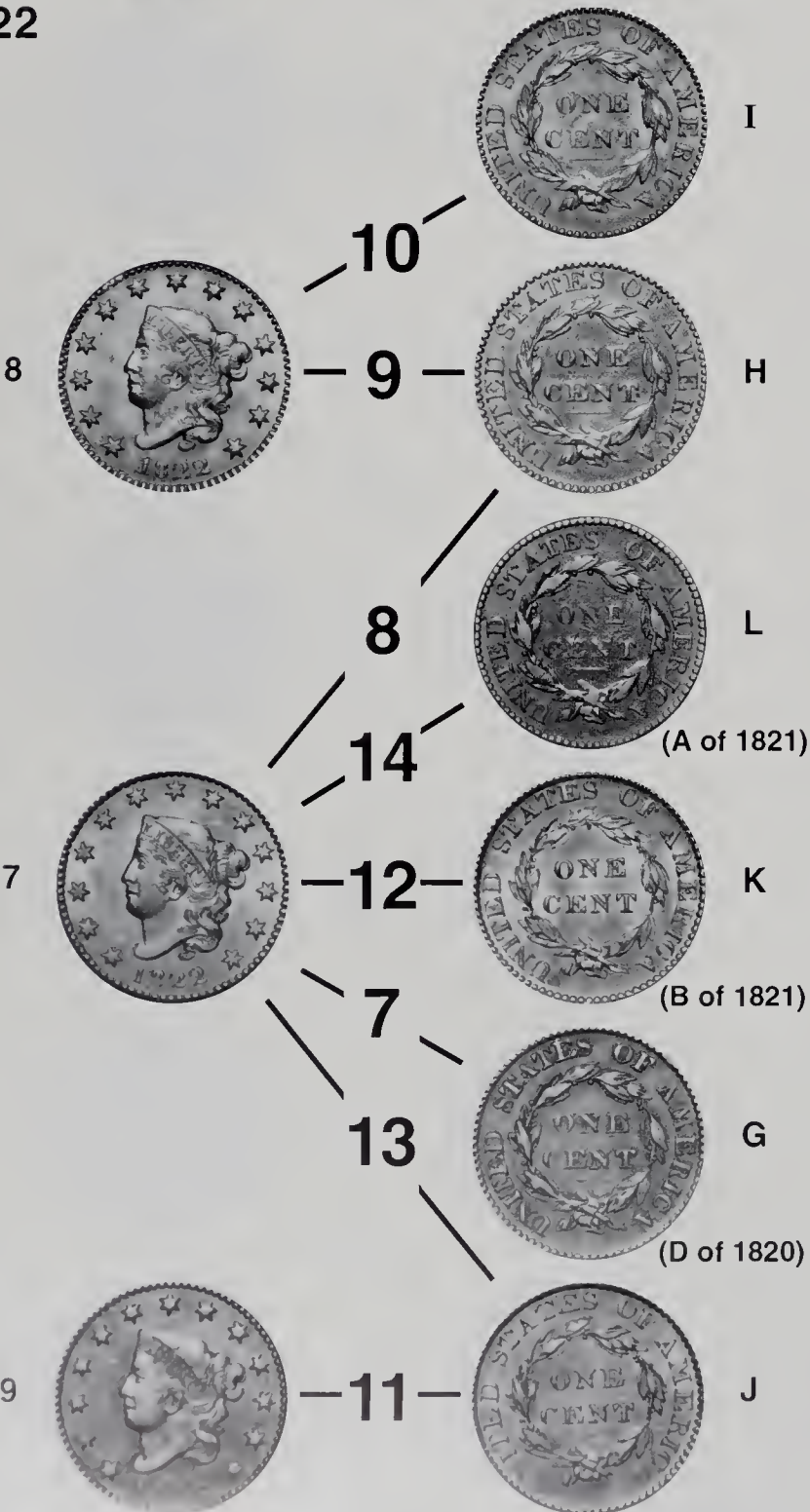


1821

Rev: Square-serif letters, PLF NL.....1  
Reverse: Century letters, PLF C.....2

Letter-styles: See 1819

1822



1822

Rev: Square-serif letters  
(see 1819) .....14

Coronet base line under E (LIBERTY)  
Date very closely spaced  
822 tops almost touch..... 1  
crack thru ★8-11 ..... 2  
Date widely spaced .....11

SHILL (skip unless SHILL visible)  
Date very closely spaced ..... 1  
PLC NR ..... 6  
Dentil exactly dots I of AMERICA .. 9  
Dentil exactly dots I of UNITED  
PLS SPC .....11  
PLS NR .....10

IC K7-K12 obv, away from dentils  
22 notable closer..... 3  
PLC NR ..... 6  
PLS SPR, PLC C ..... 4

Weak IC K7-K10 obv, broken at ★4 ..10

IB bases even, no line under E,  
T low (rests on hair), WITHOUT SHILL  
PLD NC, dentil dots I (AMERICA) .. 8  
PLD C, dentil dots I (UNITED).....13  
PLD SPC, PLF NL .....14  
PLD SPC, PLS R-.....12  
PLD R, "ghost leaf" at E3 & C ..... 7

PLT3 NR (not SPR), PLS SPR,  
PLC C ..... 5

No trace of IC at left obverse  
PLS SPC ..... 9  
PLS NR.....10  
PLS SPR..... 5  
PLS well PR ..... 2

1822

Table below shows which stars point  
**X**actly between dentils or  
**J**ust about between dentils.

Variety	Star number												
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
1	X					X			X				J
2							X		J	X			
3		J						J	J				X
4	X				X	X	J	J	X				J
5				X		J				J	J		
6	X	J					J		J	J			
7-8, 12-14								X	J			J	
9-10	X	X	J						X	J	X		
11				X							J	J	

### 7-8,12-14

PLD NC, dentil dots I (AMERICA) .. 8  
 PLD C, dentil dots I (UNITED) ..... 13  
 PLD SPC, PLF NL..... 14  
 PLD SPC, PLS R- ..... 12  
 PLD R, ghost leaf at E3 & C ..... 7

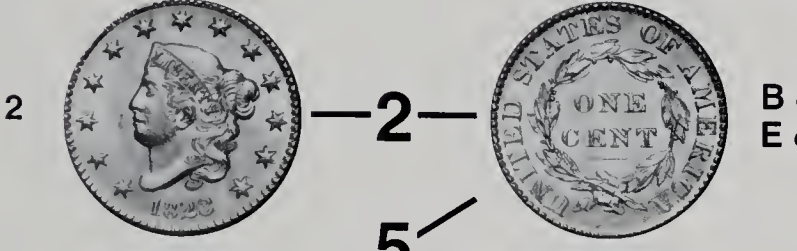
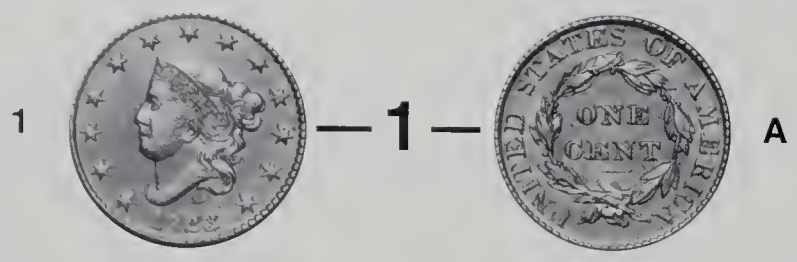
### 9-10

PLS SPC ..... 9  
 PLS NR..... 10





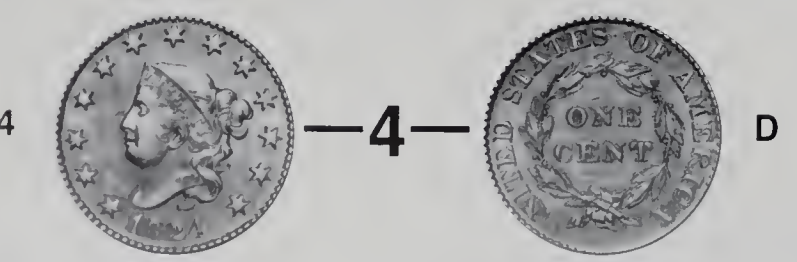
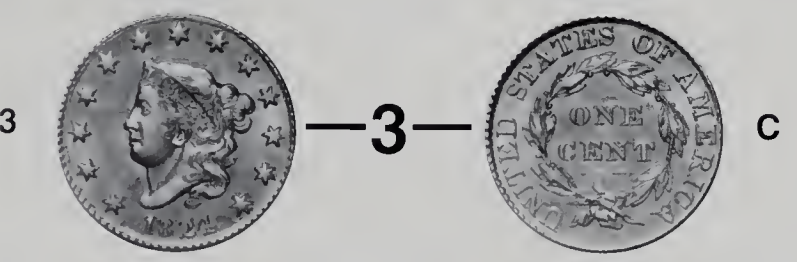
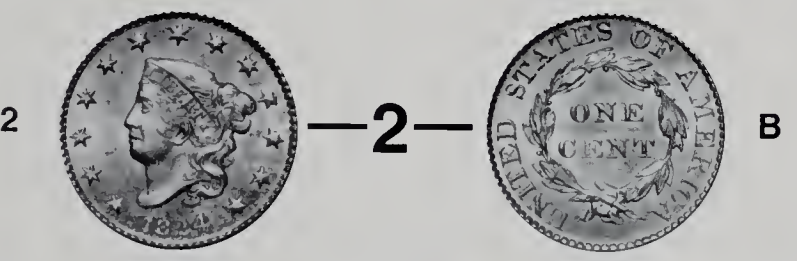
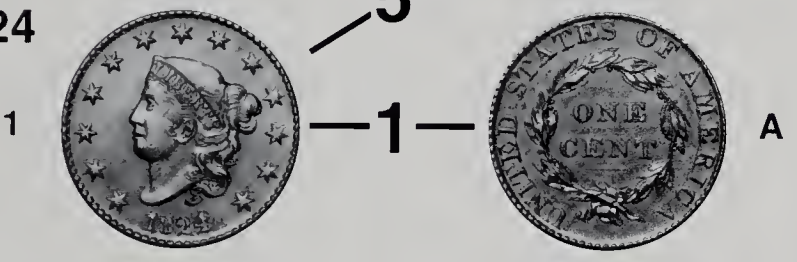
# 1823



## 1823

Overdate; berry left of uprt of R.....1  
 Berry right of upright of R .....2  
 Rusted dies, PLS FPR .....RS

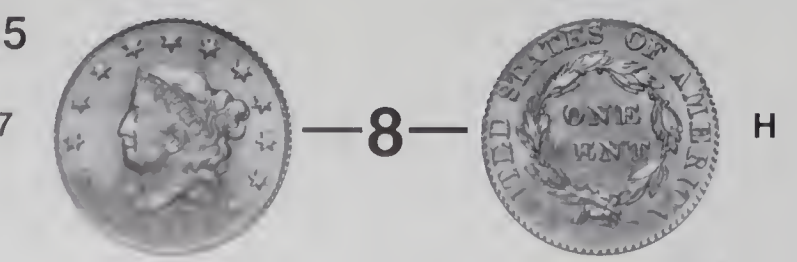
# 1824



## 1824

Overdate: lump on back of 4  
 PLC C .....5  
 PLC PC .....1  
 Date close & even, no SHILL .....2  
 Date spaced 18 24 .....3  
 Date spaced wide, PLS well PR.....4

# 1825



1825

IC at left obverse

Straight-tailed, dbl-footed R..... 8

Curl-tailed R

★1 points to base of bust ..... 9

★1 points between date &amp; bust... 4

Smaller A's, normal F

PLS SPC ..... 6

PLS SPR, PLF C ..... 3

PLS PR, PLF NR..... 8

Normal A's, normal F

PLF PR, large rev center dot..... 7

Square lump under T of CENT ..... 9

Date v.close, digits almost touch ... 1

Normal A's, long topbar on F

PLS PR..... 2

PLS PC, PLF C- ..... 10

PLS SPC, PLF SPC ..... 4

3



— 3 —

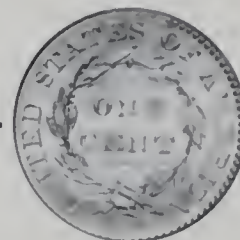


C

5



— 6 —



F

1



— 1 —



A

6



— 7 —



G

8



— 9 —



I

9



— 10 —



J

4



— 4 —



D

2

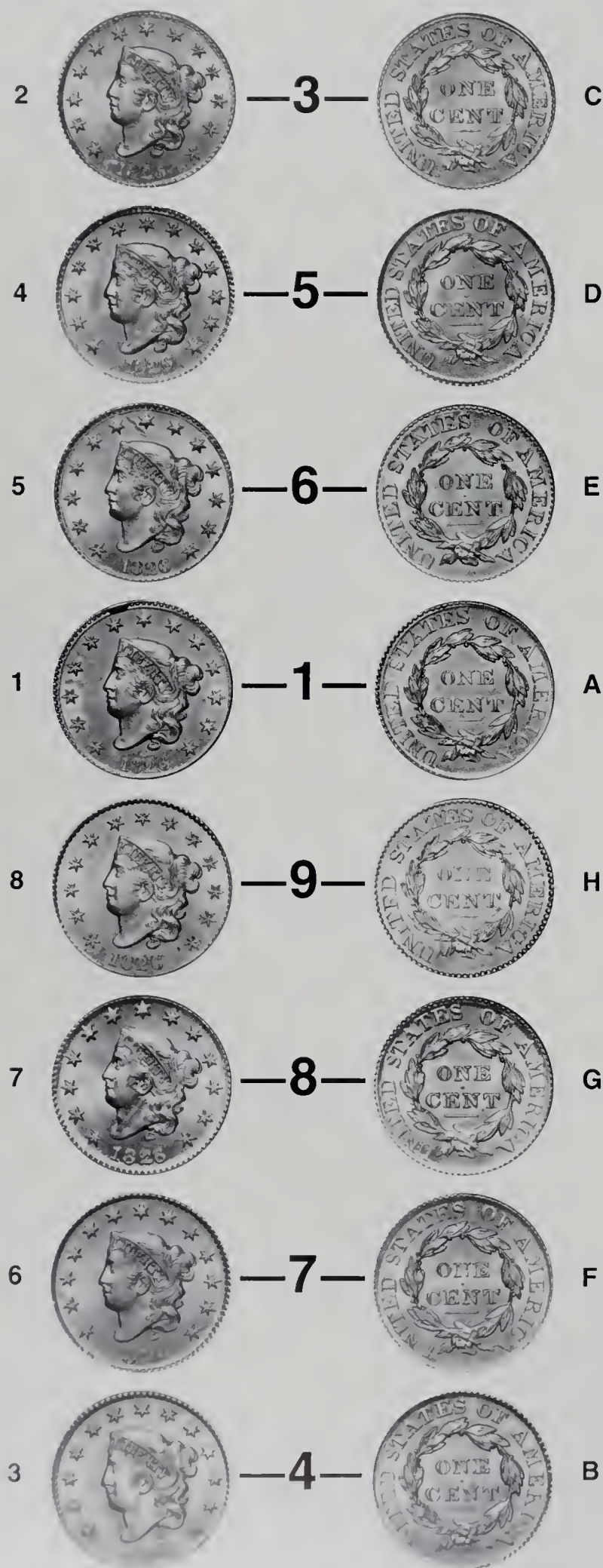


— 2 —



B





Point of coronet midway betw stars ....4  
 Date spaced 1 8 26 .....8

Obv: strong IC left and above  
 A3 nearly touches stem  
 PLF PC .....1  
 PLF C .....6  
 A3 away from stem  
 PLF FPR.....5  
 PLF SPR, ★ at coronet tip.....3

Obv: no IC  
 A3 nearly touches stem, PLT2 NC ...7  
 A3 away from stem  
 PLS PC .....9  
 PLS FPR, PLF R.....8

Overdate

1827

T of CENT has doubled (lumpy) foot . 11

PLF FPR

Date not close, ★ above bust tip.... 10

Curl at least half over 2 ..... 1

RT feet even, ER tops even..... 6

A2 has long rt foot, rim crumbling K6 rx

Curl at least half over 2 ..... 2

Sawtooth dentils,

★8 points between dentils ..... 4

Smoothly rounded dentils,

★8 points at center of dentil ..... 9

RI feet widely separated

AT feet apart with A higher ..... 7

AT feet even, almost touch

Curl mostly over 7 ..... 8

Curl mostly over 2 ..... 3

Curl wholly over 7,

berry centered under left uprt M .... 5

Curl at least half over 2,

IC fuses dentils K10-5 obv

PLF SPR..... 3

PLF SPC, dash between S-O .... 12

Crack betw 18 up neck to back

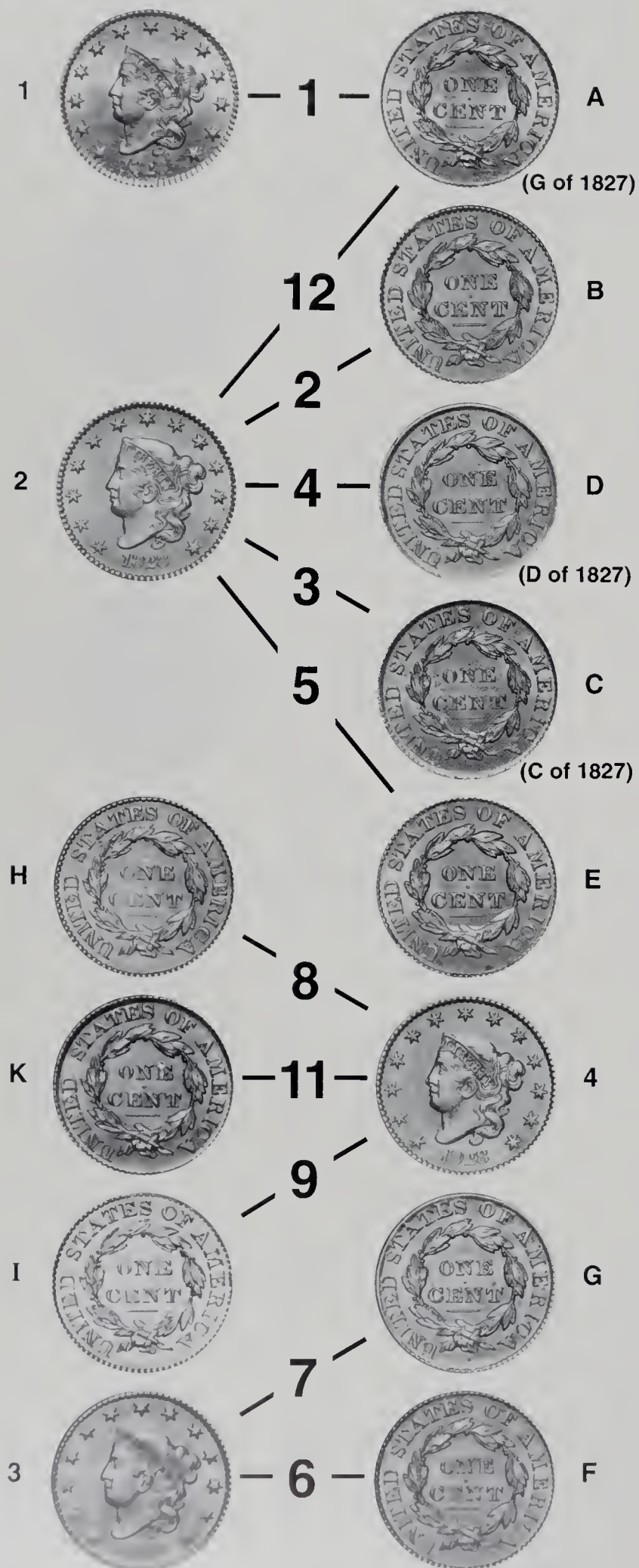
of ear..... 12



Plate 13



1828



SMALL WIDE DATE: script 8's..... 10

LARGE CLOSE DATE: block 8's

82 tops do NOT nearly touch

PLS PC-..... 8

Diagonal dashes betw F A..... 9

Vertical dash betw S O..... 11

AMERI feet all nearly touch..... 11

RI feet well apart..... 9

82 tops nearly touch

E below B; ER feet even, joined.. 1

Die crack from center of last 8

PLS R..... 6

PLS midway S O..... 7

Obv: right top of E above R

PLS FPR, PLF FPR..... 5

PLS PR, PLF SPR

PLD R..... 3

PLD PC+..... 4

PLS NR, PLF SPC

AME feet evenly close..... 12

AM more apart than ME..... 2

**1828**

Small Wide Date

**1829**

TA, TES, OF widely spaced (small letters)

1 short, leans far right .....9

I above L-B, tops far apart .....5

IB feet even, E slightly low .....3

Reverse letters closely spaced, PLC PC

Sixth star left of coronet tip .....8

Sixth star point at coronet tip .....2

PLC C-, PLS PC

Sixth star right of coronet tip .....7

Sixth star point at coronet tip .....4

PLC SPC, PLS PR

Obv: strong IC.....1

Obv: no trace of IC.....6

1828

5



—10—



J

3



—6—



1829

E

4



—7—



D

4

1



—1—



A

5

6



—9—



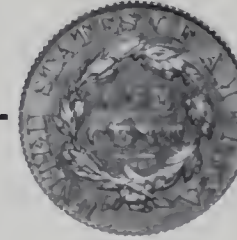
C

3

2



—2—



B

5



—8—



F

(I of 1828)





- Obv: no trace of IC  
Curl wholly over & right of 0  
A nearly touches stem  
PLS R, PLF PC ..... 7  
PLS C ..... 9  
A away from stem  
PLF PR, CA apart ..... 8  
CA and leaf all close ..... 11  
Leading edge of curl left of 0  
PLD NR, ES apart ..... 6  
PLS C  
Earring behind ear ..... 2  
No earring ..... 5
- Obv: with IC (at least partial)  
Die crack thru top of date ..... 2  
Die crack thru base of date  
PLF R+, PLC SPC ..... 10  
PLF PR, PLC PC ..... 3  
CA and leaf all close ..... 4  
Date straight across bottom  
PLD C, PLS C ..... 5  
PLD NR, PLS SPR ..... 6  
No cracks, strong IC nearly complete  
AM feet closer than ME,  
PLE3 left of inner upright ..... 1  
ME feet closer than AM,  
PLE3 right of inner upright ..... 10

Small Letters

1831

Sixth star WELL right of coronet point

PLS C (or NC)

PLC NC.....3 Sm

PLC PC.....5 Sm

PLF FPR.....2 Sm

PLF R (or SPR)

Leaf close under D .....4 Sm

Leaf far below D .....1 Lg

Sixth star nearly even with coronet point

Circular break thru stars

Break is thru TOP of date .....9 Lg

Break is thru BASE of date

PLD NR .....11 Sm

PLD SPC.....12 Lg

No obverse die break

PLD NR .....11 Sm

PLS SPC.....8 Lg

PLS R

PLF SPC

Date 1's have weak serifs 7 Lg

Date 1's have heavy

serifs .....10 Lg

PLF R, leaf far below D....14 Lg

PLF NR, leaf close under D

Obv: straight-tailed R .....9 Lg

Obv: curl-tailed R.....6 Lg

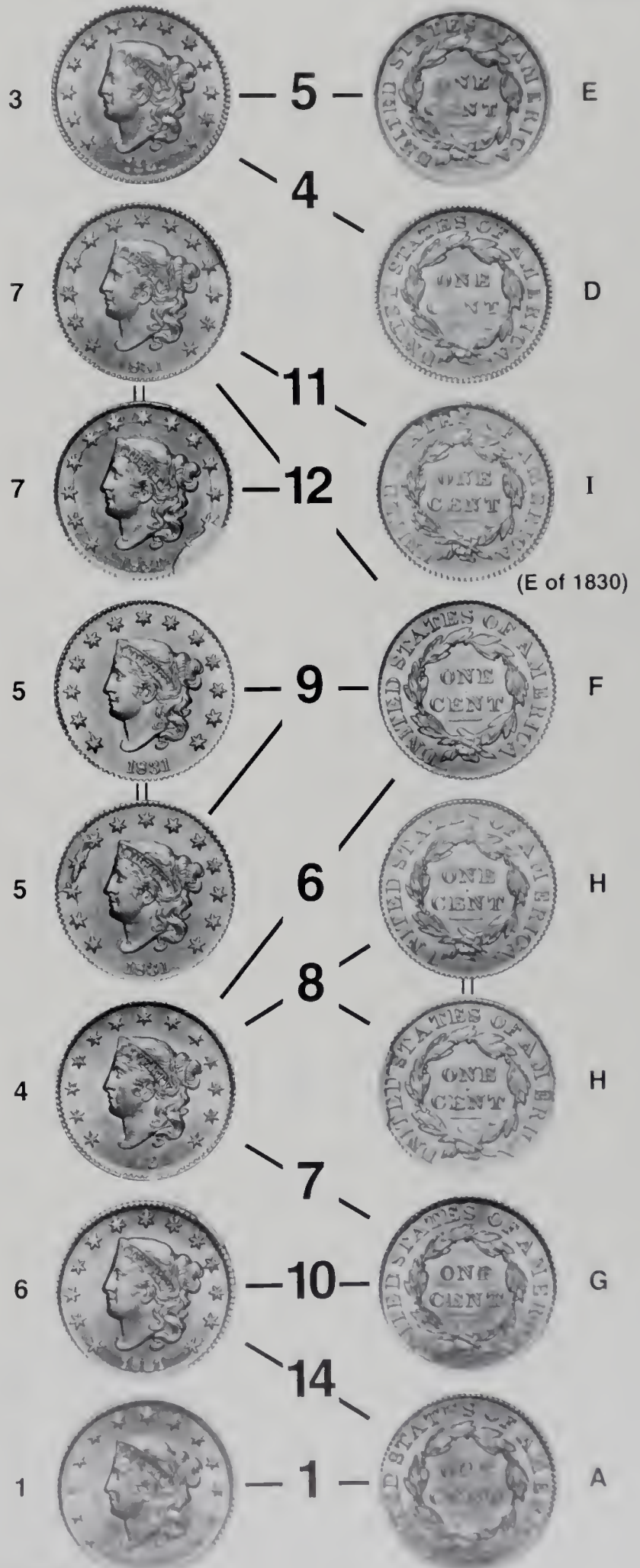
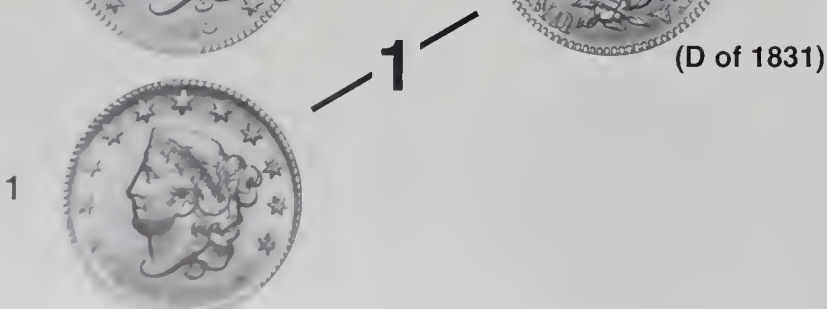
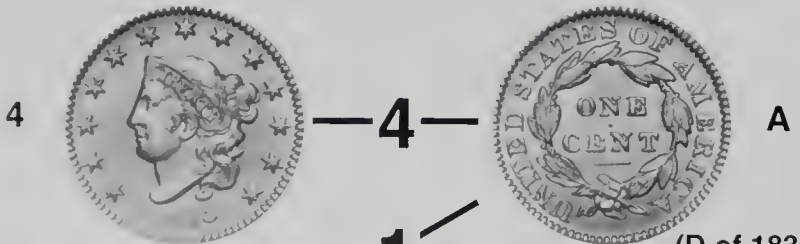
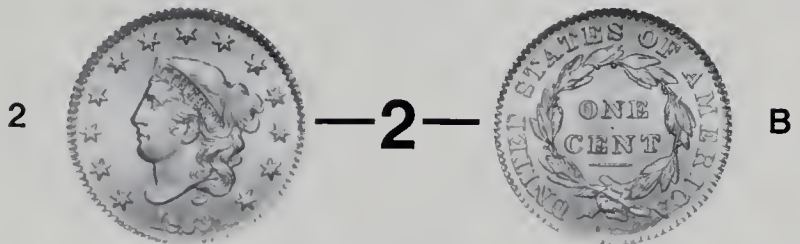
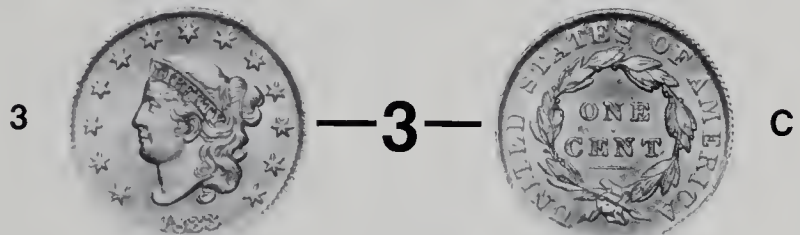
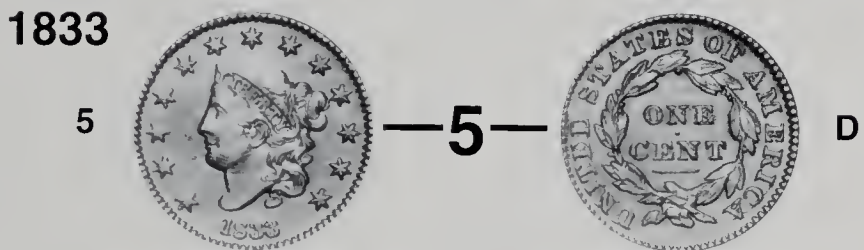
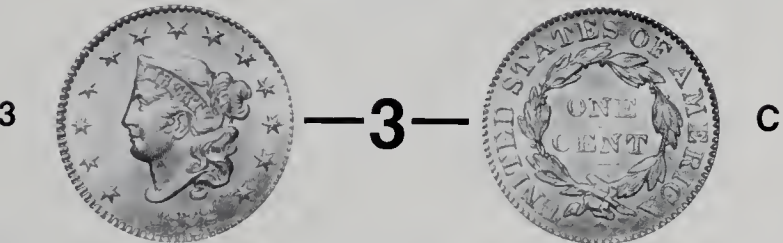
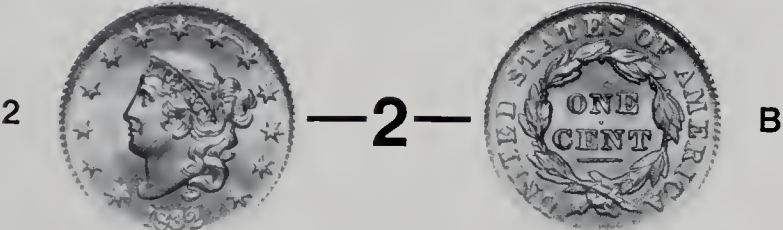
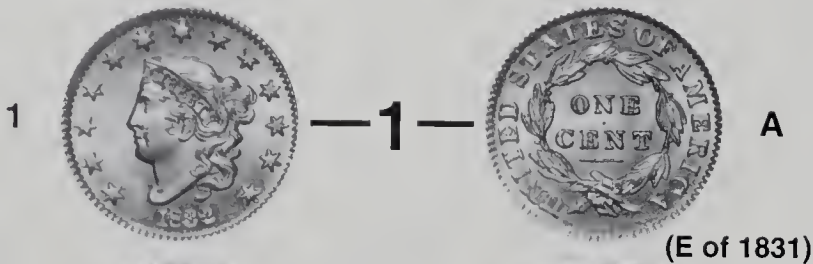


Plate 17





1832

Crack thru top stars .....2

Sixth star right of coronet point  
A3 away from stem .....1  
A3 nearly touches stem .....3

Sixth star slightly left of point .....2

1833

Sixth star right of coronet point  
PLS PR .....4  
PLF NL .....3  
PLS SPC, PLF PC .....5

Sixth star not right of coronet pt  
PLC SPC .....1  
RI very widely spaced .....2  
C of CENT nearly closed .....6

1833

1834

83 same size

PLC SPC .....2  
PLC FPR.....1

8 larger than 3

Sixth star over coronet point .....3  
C in CENT wide open .....4  
C in CENT nearly closed.....4  
Sixth star well right of point  
PLS NC .....5  
A3 nearly touches stem .....6  
PLS R, A3 away from stem .....7

# 1834 CENT PUNCH FEATURES

FEATURE	TYPE	VARIETY						
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	Large			X	X	X	X	X
	Small	X	X					
Stars	Large	X	X					
	Medium					X	X	X
	Small			X	X			
Obv Dentils	Broad		X					
	Embatt			X	X			
	Narrow	X				X	X	X
Rev Dentils	Broad		X			X		
	Embatt			X				
	Narrow	X			X		X	X
Legend	Large						X	X
	Small	X	X	X	X	X		
ONE CENT	Large				X		X	X
	Small	X	X	X		X		

Proof  
Only

1833

6



6



E

2



2



1834

B

1



1



A

4



D

3



3



C

5



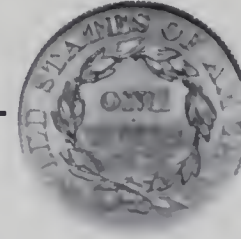
E

(C of 1831)

4



6



F

5



7



G



1835

## BROAD BUST (Head of 1834)

## Oversized 8, ball-top 3

PLS NC.....	1
PLS R .....	9

## 8 not oversized, curl-top 3

Line joins tops of LI

PLS NR .....	6
PLS NC, PLF C .....	5
PLS NC, PLF NL .....	11
PLD NL	
Sixth star slightly right .....	2
Sixth star well right.....	4
PLD NR, PLC C .....	10
PLC FPR.....	3

A1 and A2 lack inner right feet

5 recut below .....

Sixth star far right of point

1 nearer dentils than bust .....

1 nearer bust than dentils .....

Plate 20

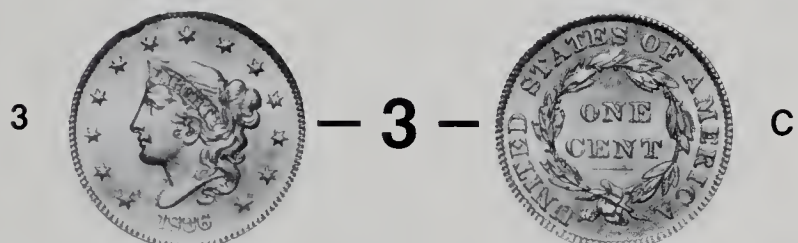
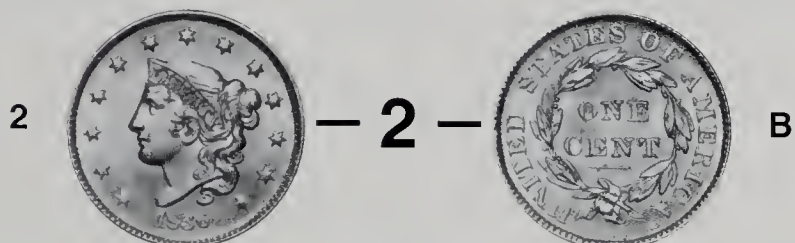
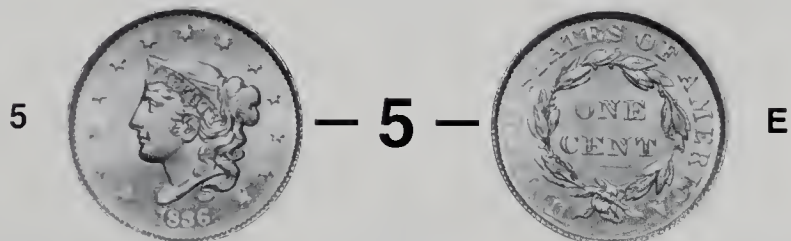
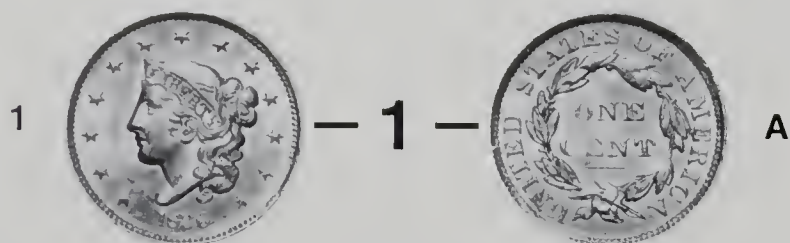
1835

## SLIM BUST (Head of 1836)

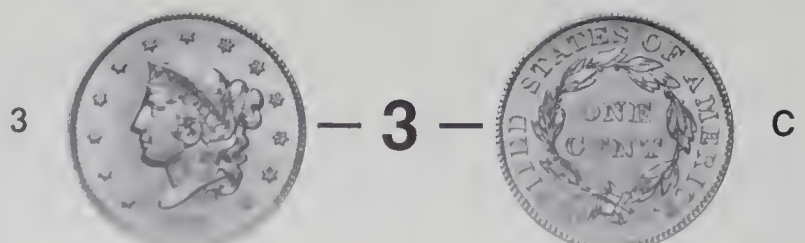
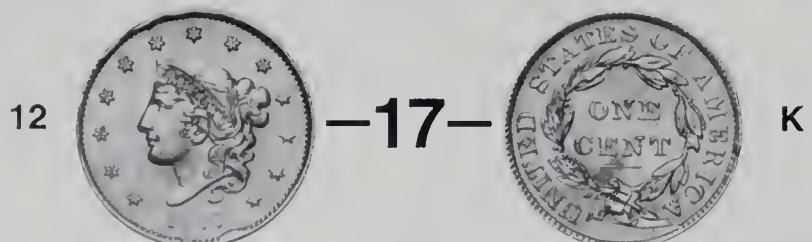
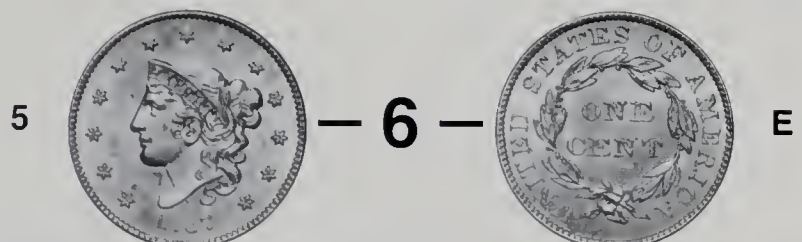
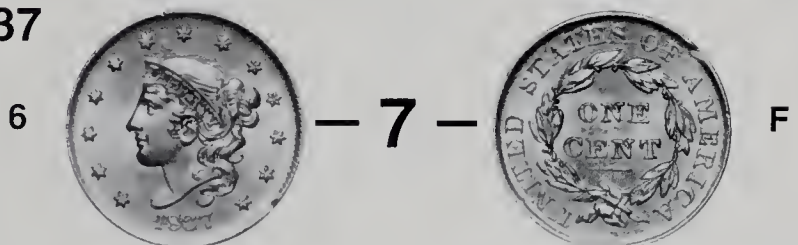
- Rev die cracked thru tops legend  
 Crack strongest over UNITED ..... 15  
 Crack strongest over AMERICA .... 16
- Obv die cracked 1 to behind ear ..... 8
- Plain round center dot in ear ..... 14
- PLD slightly past inner curve of D .... 7
- Coronet line bent at center front ..... 15
- Top of C in AMERICA flattened  
 Obv/Rev both same  
 (both early or both late) ..... 14  
 Rev early/Obv late; annular  
 swelling thru all stars & date ... 19
- C farther than its own width  
 from leaf below ..... 16
- Left center reverse bulged ..... 7
- Center of 3 mushy ..... 15
- Center of 3 heavy, broad, perfect ..... 8







1837



Rim break obvious on obverse

Break at ★6 (K11).....3

Break at ★8 (K1).....6

All E's on reverse have broken bases

A3 feet perfect .....5

All A's lack inner right foot

Wavy-top hair .....6

Rounded-top hair .....4

Wavy-top hair: all E's perfect .....7

Radial crack at S(TA)

Crack well left of S.....4,6

Crack slightly left of S .....2

Crack rt side S to tops of ONE .....3

Crack rt side S to base O(NE).....1

Rounded-top head: all E's perfect

Very plain center dot on rev.....1

C in AMERICA completely closed....2

Date close with 8 low .....3

None of the above, 1 perfect .....5

1 has double peak .....1

1837

**PLAIN CORDS:** Over-rounded bust tip,  
broader at tip than at throat

- 1 at tip of bust ..... 6  
1 back from bust tip ..... 7

**PLAIN CORDS:** Straight, narrow bust  
tip

Vertical crack thru stars 3,4

Perfect reverse ..... 2

Cracks top AMERICA ..... 15

Crack thru date, ★1-6, rim over ★7

Die scratch angles down over F.. 1

E1 has broken lower left foot ..... 14

Crack ends over ★6 ..... 17

Crack thru or almost thru ★3-8

Rev letters close,

MER nearly touch ..... 4

Rev letters apart, esp STATES ... 5

Crack rim over A3-ribbon-bases

UNITED ..... 17

Crack thru centers of CA ..... 3

No noticeable obverse cracks

Reverse legend very weak ..... 16

Lump below diagonal of N in

CENT ..... 17

NE/SW elongated reverse center dot

Center dot small ..... 13

Center dot large ..... 3

Left upright of N in UNITED recut... 13

**BEADED CORDS:**

Lower right and upper left serifs  
of E show in leaves below

E(RICA) ..... 12

Tenth star has obvious horiz spike

below center, pointing to rim ..... 11

Crack left of date to throat ..... 9

No cracks obv or rev, 83 tops

apart ..... 10

83 tops nearly touch, no spike

on ★10 ..... 9





1838

## THE EASY ONES



Rim break covers ★6..... 14  
 Rim break almost touches ★1 ..... 11  
 Obverse bisected, date to ★9..... 4  
 Heavy dentil-blurring K6-K7 ..... 3  
 Extra IC below date ..... 4  
 Date spaced 183 8 ..... 6  
 Crack rim to rt side M, bases AM ..... 10  
 Broken right uprt N in CENT ... 11,15,16  
 Protruding browlock

Rev: line across leaf under M..... 8  
 Rev: T1 high, leans left ..... 5

Spike from leaftip

Under F..... 7  
 Under R, long spike..... 6  
 Under R, short spike ..... 9

Recut legend letters

I1 on left side ..... 1  
 M above right inner foot ..... 11,15,16  
 E3 at top right, I1 perfect..... 4  
 R on right side ..... 8

Grossly misplaced legend letter

U low ..... 1  
 S1 low ..... 5,12  
 T2 high, tilted left..... 5

Multiple center dots

Obv: smaller dot K7 ... 2,4,11,12,15,16  
 Rev: strong dot K2 ..... 2  
 Rev: weak dot K12..... 3  
 Rev: "pincushion", many dots..... 7

1838

## AND THE HARD ONES

E of LIBERTY has perfect upper left serif

E slightly above R top

E not recut, dentils fused K7 obv ..3

ER recut below only

Rev: S1 low, N & M perfect .....12

Rev: N of CENT broken rt uprt .15

ER recut ABOVE, maybe below too

Rev: N of CENT broken rt uprt .16

Rev: U low, double ctr dot..... 2

ER tops v.close, E top far above R .11

E of LIBERTY has upper left serif weaker

Browlock complete, protrudes distinctly

Rev: cut across leaf under M .....8

Rev: T2 high, tilted left .....5

1 has multi-serif at top.....1

Strong IC K4-K6.5 .....4

Date spaced 183 8.....6

None of the above: date widely spaced

Rev: center dot bulges NW/SE ... 7

Rev: center dot perfect .....10

None of the above: date closely spaced

1 wide, lowest curl has

raised ctr .....14

1 thin, lowest curl has

hollow ctr ..... 9





1839



1839

**HEAD OF 1838:** No lock at brow  
 Three leaves under ME..... 3  
 Four leaves under ME ..... 2

**1839/6:** Closed 9, plain hair bands .. 1

**SILLY HEAD:** Over-rounded head  
 with browlock  
 Center-hole before ear ..... 9  
 No obverse center-hole..... 4

1839

**BOOBY HEAD:** Exposed shoulder-point

Front of coronet splays away  
from L ..... 5

Front of coronet nearly parallel to L  
Outer leaf under C tucks under  
Rev: die lapped, wreath thin .... 7  
Obv: crack ★4 to ★6 ..... 7  
Obv: crack ★4 towards nose ... 12  
Obv: radial t-flaw betw ★12-13 . 12

Outer leaf under C pointed  
Stem-loop at TE(D) broken  
Lips evenly apart ..... 11  
Lips puckered ..... 6  
Browlock open at bottom ..... 6  
No outer berry under TE(D) ..... 14  
Light crack thru ctr TED STAT  
Mouth evenly open,  
long lips ..... 15  
Mouth puckered, short lips .... 13

**PETITE HEAD:** Sm head  
bust points to 8 ..... 8







# RARITY TABLE

YEAR	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
1816	4	1-	4	3-	3-	2	1	1	3-										
1817	3+	3-	2	3-	3-	1	3	1	2	1	1	3-	1	1-	3+	1+	4		
1818	1	3+	3-	4+	3-	1	1	3-	2+	1-									
1819	1+	1	3	4-	3	1	4	1-	1	3									
1820	1	2+	2	4-	3	4-	3	2+	3	2	2+	2+	1-	5-	2+				
1821	1+	1																	
1822	3+	2+	1+	2-	2	1+	4-	4	5	1	1	4-	5+	8-					
1823	2-	2	2+ (Restrike)																
1824	2-	1	3	1	4+														
1825	4+	2+	3	3	—	2	2	2	2	3+									
1826	2-	—	3-	2-	1	2-	1	3	3										
1827	1+	3	2	2+	2+	3+	3-	3	3+	5-	1	5							
1828	1+	1	2	4+	2	1+	3	3+	4	2-	2	4							
1829	2	1+	3+	4+	3-	2-	4	1+	4-										
1830	1	2+	3	1	3	4	4	1	6+	5-	5+								
1831	1	2+	1	4-	4	1	1	3	3-	3	2	1	—	4+					
1832	2	3-	1																
1833	2	2	1	4-	1	1+													
1834	1	1	1	2+	4+	3	7												
1835	1	3	3	4+	1	1	1	2	4	4+	5	4-	4-	2	2	2	—	5-	6
1836	1	2-	1	3	3-	2	4												
1837	3	2+	1	2+	2	2	1	—	1	1	1	3	2+	3	4	4	4		
1838	1	1	1	1	3-	1	1	1	3	2+	3-	2+	—	4	5+	6+			
1839	3	1	2	2	1	2	2	1	1	—	1	4+	2	3	6				

John D. Wright  
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