



Collecting Victorian Cent Varieties

By Rob Turner FCNRS

What is a Variety?

- **A coin of the same date and basic design as another but with slight differences.**

www.pcgs.com/Lingo/v

- **A variety is a coin that differs from its basic design type in some distinctive way and is thus differentiated by collectors.**

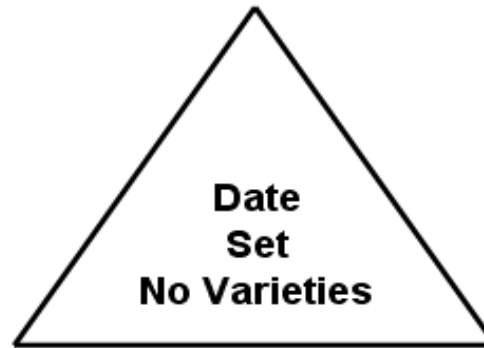
www.ngccoin/news/glossary

- **For the most part, both ICCS and CCCS rely upon the Charlton Standard Catalog to define their varieties.**

The Different Levels of Collecting

Start by Collecting a Date Set

1858, 1859
1876-H, 1881-H
1882-H, 1884
1886, 1887, 1888
1890-H, 1891



1892, 1893
1894, 1895
1896, 1897
1898-H, 1899
1900, 1901

Collect One Coin of Each Date = 21 Coins



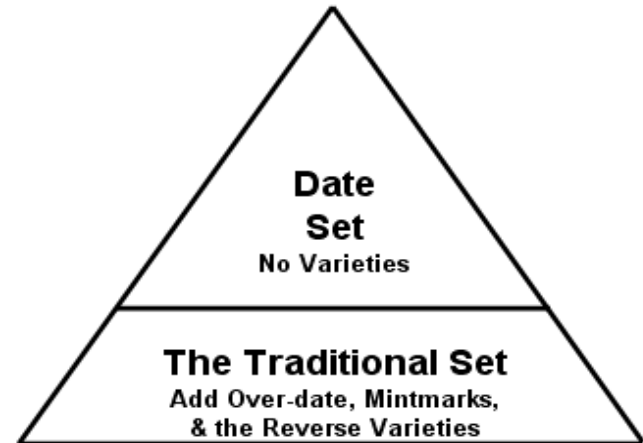
The Traditionally Collected Set

This Traditional Set evolved over time with help from Charlton, Haxby & Willey, Trends (CCN), and others.



- Add Over-dated Cent = 1 Coin
- Add Mint Marks = 1 Coin (1900-H)
- Add Reverse Design Varieties
= 2 Coins (1891 SDLL & SDSL)

25 Coins in Total



The Over-dated Cent **1859 over 1858, or 1859 W9/8**



The Over-dated Cent

1859 over 1858, or 1859 W9/8



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At the start of 1859 cent production, the mint tried to use up the remaining 1858 reverse dies by re-punching a very wide digit “9” over the second “8” in the date.

The Over-dated Cent

1859 over 1858, or 1859 W9/8



There are 13 known W9/8 reverse dies. Each is a unique variety. Collect only one W9/8 example for the Traditional set.

For a truly difficult challenge, collect all thirteen. Coins from several of these dies are very scarce, if not rare.

The Mint Marks

During six Victorian years, the Royal Mint contracted all, or part, of the cent production out to Ralph Heaton & Sons. Heaton minted all the cents in 1876, 1881, 1882, 1890, & 1898. Heaton and the Royal Mint each coined a portion of the 1900 mintage, so add 1900-H to the Traditional set.



On cents dated 1876, 1881, 1882, and 1890 the “H” mint mark of Heaton lies directly below the date.

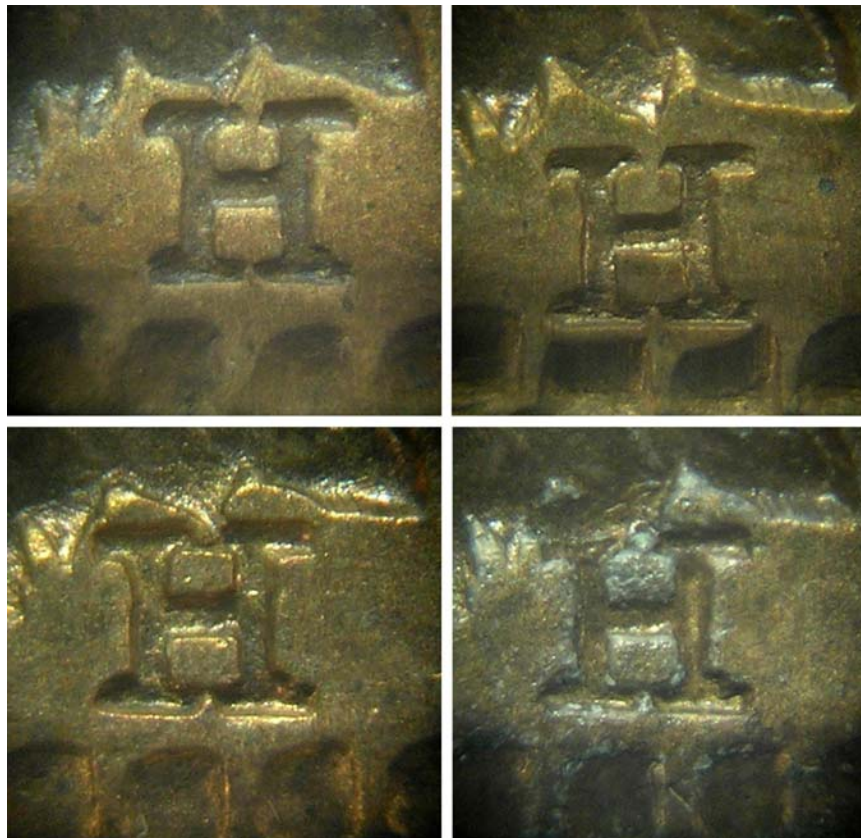
On cents dated 1898 and 1900, it sits between the bottom leaf and the rim denticles.



The Mint Marks

For cents dated 1876, 1881, 1882, and 1890 the mint mark was placed in the matrix, so its appearance and location do not vary.

For cents dated 1898 and 1900, the engravers placed the mint marks into each working die by hand, so their location on each die is unique, creating another specialized collecting theme beyond the Traditional set.



The Reverse Design Varieties

During the Victorian Cent series, the engravers used three distinctly different reverse designs. Each was created by modifying the previous design.

The Provincial Reverse was used in 1858, 1859, 1876, 1881, and 1882. The thin vine and stems suffered almost immediate damage.



1876 (no H) Specimen Cent

The 1884 Reverse Design

The 1884 Reverse was used in 1884, 1886, 1887, 1888, 1890, and 1891.

The engraver made the leaves larger and thickened the vine and stems. The letters of the reverse legends were made courser.



The 1891 Reverse Design



1891 Reverse was used in 1891, 1892, 1893, 1894, 1895, 1896, 1897, 1898, 1899, 1900, & 1901.

The engraver made the leaves much smaller. He maintained a thick vine, but engraved more delicate stems to the leaves.

A Closer Look at the 1891 Reverse Designs

In only 1891 did the Royal Mint or Heaton use multiple reverse designs. The Royal Mint struck 1891 cents using both the 1884 (large leaf) and 1891 (small leaf) reverse designs. They also used two date sizes for 1891 cents having the 1884 reverse. These variations add two more coins to the Traditional set, the 1891 Small Date, Large Leaf and the 1891 Small Date, Small Leaf cents.



Large Date



Small Date

The 1891 Large Date, Large Leaf Cent



1891 Obverse 3, LDLL cent (ICCS MS-65 Red)

The 1891 Small Date, Large Leaf Cent



**1891 obverse 3, SDLL cent
(PCGS MS-64 RB)
Ex-Belzberg**

The Royal Mint used 3 reverse dies to coin 1891 SDLL cents. Since the engraver hand punched the last two digits of the date into each die, all three dies had a different date spacing. All 3 dies had a re-punched "8".

Can you find a coin from each of these 3 dies?

The 1891 Small Date, Small Leaf Cent



**1891 obverse 3, SDSL cent
(PCGS MS-65 RB)**

There were six obverse and reverse design combinations used in 1891. From most common to scarcest they were:

**Obverse C2, LDLL
Obverse C3, LDLL
Obverse C3, SDSL
Obverse C2, SDLL
Obverse C3, SDLL
Obverse C2, SDSL**

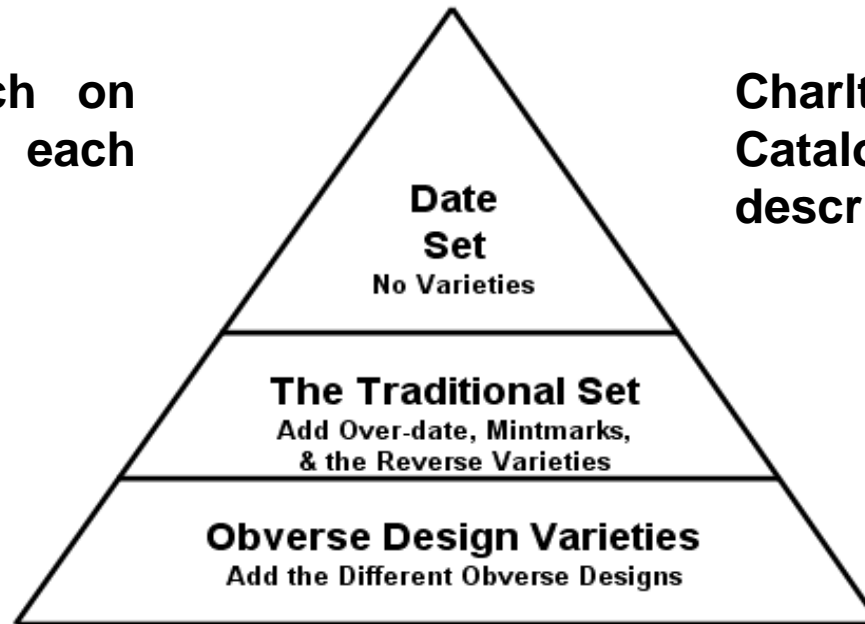
Finding them all in a decent grade presents a moderate challenge.

Obverse Design Varieties

Collecting all of the date and obverse variety combinations will add 10 coins to the traditional set, for a total of 35 coins.

We will touch on the basics of each design.

Charlton Standard Catalog has full descriptions of each.



The Provincial Obverse

1858, 1859, & 1859 W9/8



**1858 cent with full vine (PCGS MS-63 RB)
Laureate effigy.**

Obverse 1a

1881-H, 1882-H, & 1886



1886 obverse 1a cents (PCGS MS-64 Red)
Full top bead, round chin, separation with bottom beads.

Obverse 1

1876-H, 1881-H, 1882-H, & 1884



**1884 obverse 1 cents (PCGS & ICCS MS-62 Brown)
Similar to obverse 1a, except effigy touches bead.**

Obverse 2

1882-H, 1884, 1886, 1887, 1888, 1891 LDLL, 1891 SDLL, 1891 SDSL, & 1892



**1892 obverse 2 cent (PCGS MS-64 RB)
Jewel into top bead, cleft chin, wider truncation.**

Obverse 3

1890-H, 1891 LDLL, 1891 SDLL, 1891 SDSL, & 1892



**1892 obverse 3 cent (PCGS MS-65 Red)
Pinched nose, jowls, and even wider truncation.**

Obverse 4

1892, 1893, 1894, 1895, 1896, 1897, 1898-H, 1899, 1900, 1900-H, & 1901



**1894 Obverse 4 cent (PCGS MS-65 Red)
Back to smooth chin, even wider truncation.**

Hybrid Obverses – Obverse 1a over 1



Some 1881-H & 1882-H cents were minted with Obverse 1a over 1 dies.

These hybrid cents are relatively common.

Hybrid Obverses – Obverse 2 over 1



1882-H with partially covered top bead, rounded chin, and wider truncation.

Only 1882-H cents were minted with Obverse 2 over 1 dies. Three dies are known. These hybrid coins are scarce.

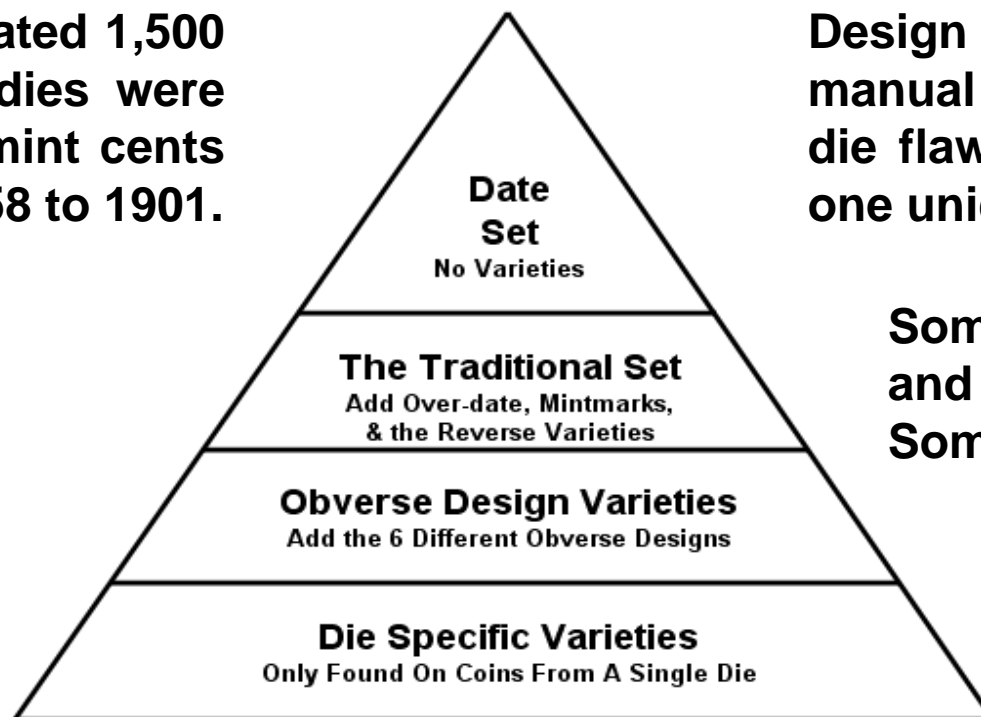
Adding one example of each known hybrid die combination will increase your set by 3 coins, for a total of 38 coins.

**1881 Obverse 1a over 1
1882 Obverse 1a over 1
1882 Obverse 2 over 1**

Die Specific Varieties

Where the Real Fun Begins

An estimated 1,500 working dies were used to mint cents dated 1858 to 1901.



Design changes and manual correction of die flaws made each one unique.

Some are routine and uninteresting. Some are terrific.

Date Spacing Variations

Many dates had the final digit, or two, punched into each working die by hand. This created date spacing varieties during many of the Victorian years.



Re-punched Digits in the Dates

Four popular 1859 dies.



1859 DP #1 Cent
9 over 9
With a die chip



1859 DP #2 Cent
9 over 9



1859 DP #3 Cent
9 over 9



1859 DP #5 Cent
9 over 9

DP#3 & DP#4 Photo Credit to Dan Flynn

Re-punched Digits in the Dates

8 different 1858 dies with re-punched 5's (not the only ones).



Re-punched Digits in the Dates

Other dates had re-punched digits as well.



**1893 Cent
Triple Punched "9"**



**1894 Cent
Double Punched "9"**

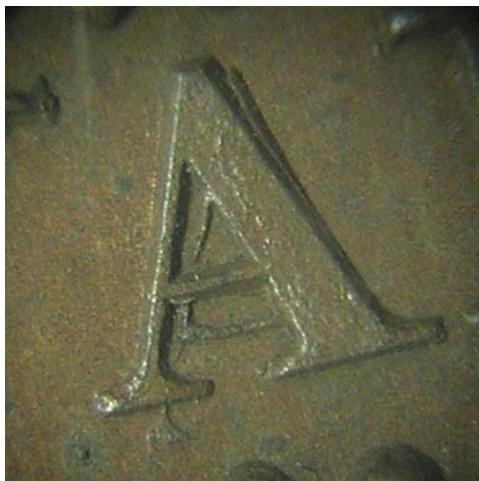


**1899 Cent
Double Punched
Second "9"**

Photo Credits to Dan Flynn

Re-punched Obverse Legends

The engraver had a bad day on some of these.



**Second "A" in CANADA
1858 Cent
Double Punched**



**"G" in REGINA
1858 Cent
Double Punched**



**"R" in REGINA
1859 W9/8 Cent
Quadruple Punched**

Re-punched Obverse Legends

The engraver had a bad day on some of these.



**“G” in REGINA
1859 W9/8 Cent
Triple Punched**



**“I” in DEI
1890-H Cent
Double Punched**



**“E” in REGINA
1892 Cent
Double Punched**

Re-punched Reverse Legends

Not as common as re-punched obverse legends.



Re-punched "O" in ONE
1859 W9/8 Cent



Re-punched "T" in CENT
1859 W9/8 Cent

When the engraver grabbed the wrong punch.

Letters and numerals with different formats.



These two letters “T” are from the same 1891 SDSL cent. The one on the left was re-punched with the correct punch. The one on the right was re-punched with the punch used to create the 1871 PEI cent.



These two digits “4” are from two different 1894 cents. The one on the left was created with the correct punch. The one on the right was created with a punch having a much thicker numeral.

Punch Doubling

Die sinking required multiple iterations of annealing the die to soften it, then pressing the punch into the die. The punch was pressed deeper with each iteration. If the alignment of punch and die was not perfect between iterations, then doubling occurred.

If the same punch was not used for all the iterations, then any differences between punches showed on the finished die, sometimes with spectacular results.



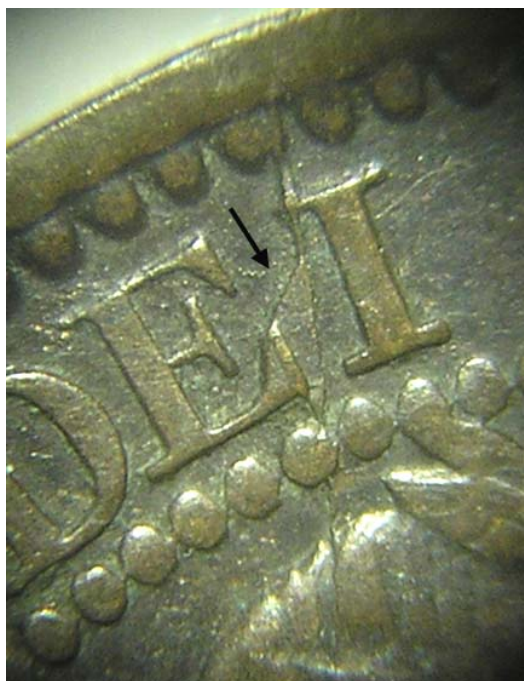
From an 1882-H Obverse 2 over 1 Cent

Die Cracks



Die Chips

Some are big and some are small.



1858 Cent



1896 Cent



1892 Cent

Other Interesting Things You Will Find On Victorian cents



**Filled Die on an
1858 cent**



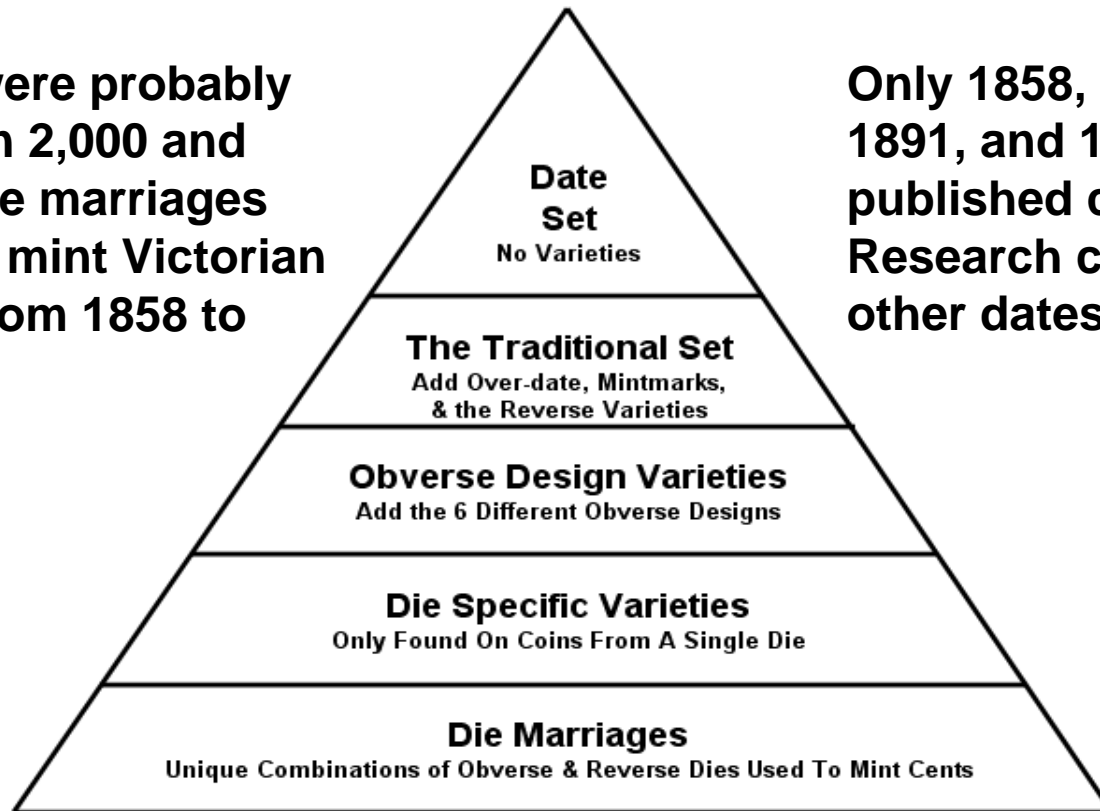
Clashed Die on an 1888 cent

Die rotations of 30 degrees, or less, are relatively common on Victorian cents.

Die Marriages

Where Geeks Like Me Play

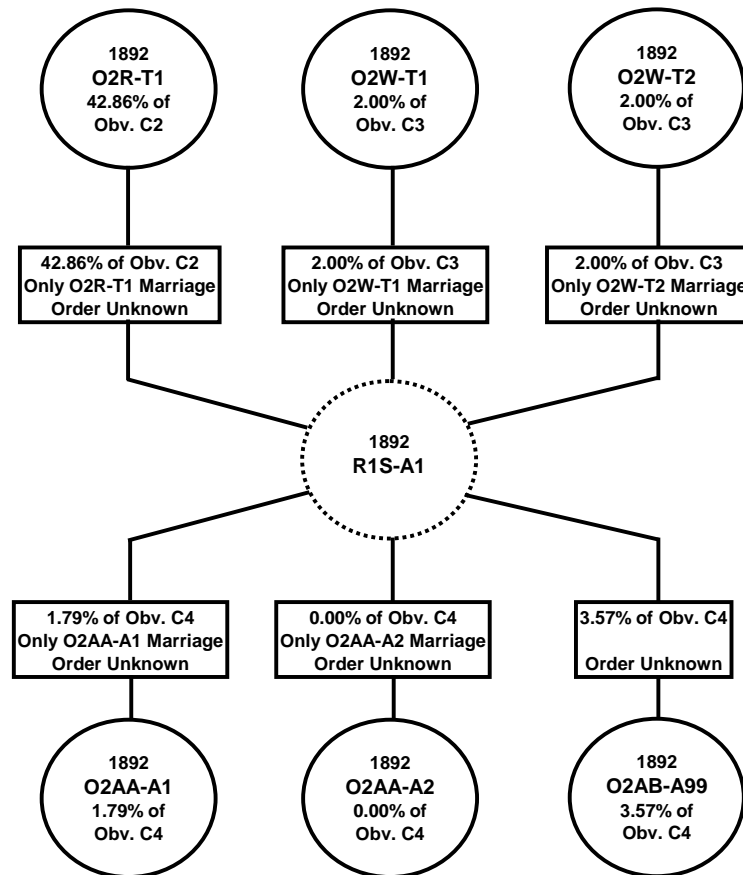
There were probably between 2,000 and 2,500 die marriages used to mint Victorian cents from 1858 to 1901.



Only 1858, 1859, 1890, 1891, and 1892 have published catalogs. Research continues on other dates.

The Study of Die Marriages

Allows us to better understand how these coins were made.



Some die marriages are quite rare, because one of the dies failed very early.

The Study of Die Marriages

I have published die marriages for these five dates:

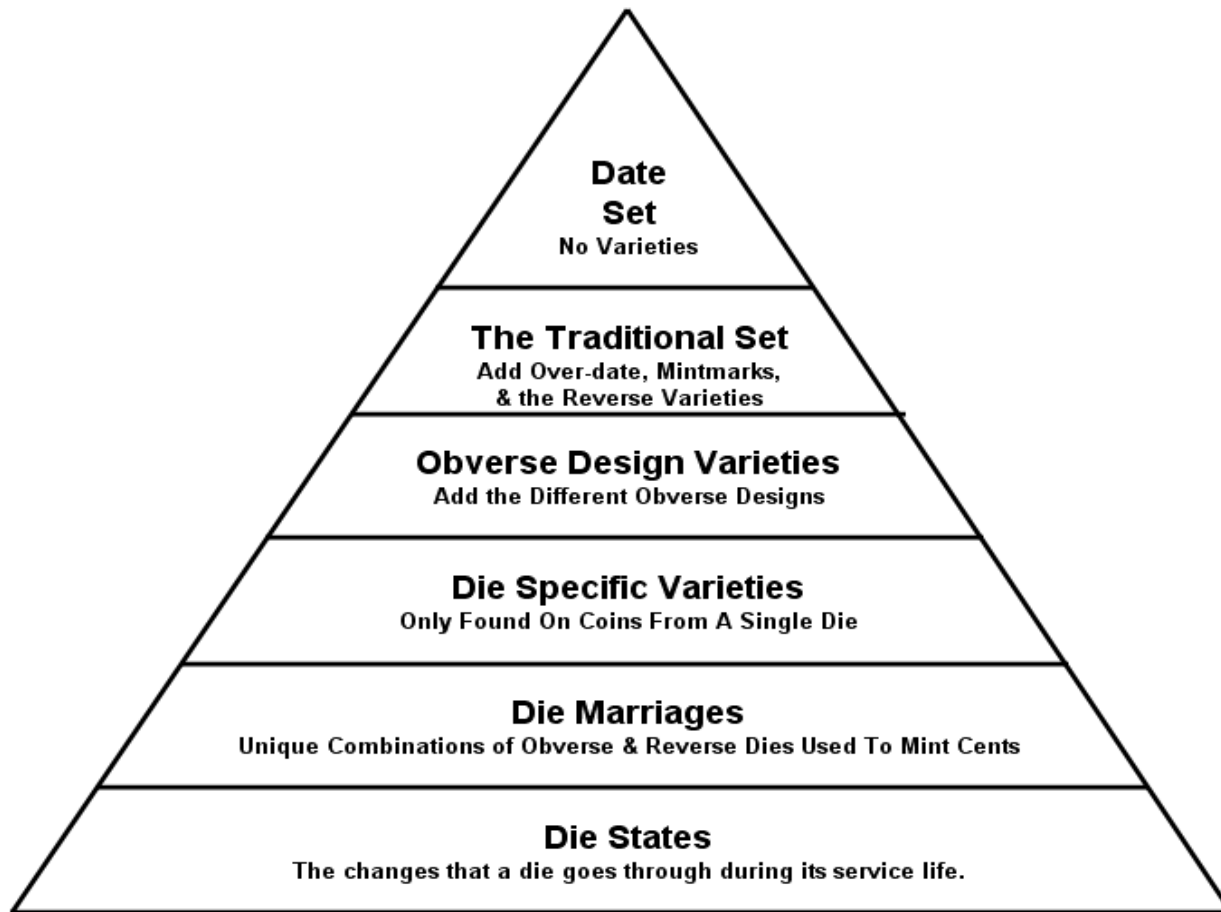
	Mintage	# of DM
1858	1,500,000 (est.)	59
1859 W9/8	740,000 (est.)	20
1890-H	1,000,000	26
1891	1,457,532	31
1892	1,200,000	31

Haxby has published a website on 1859 N9 dies. www.vickycents.com

Research continues on the remaining dates.



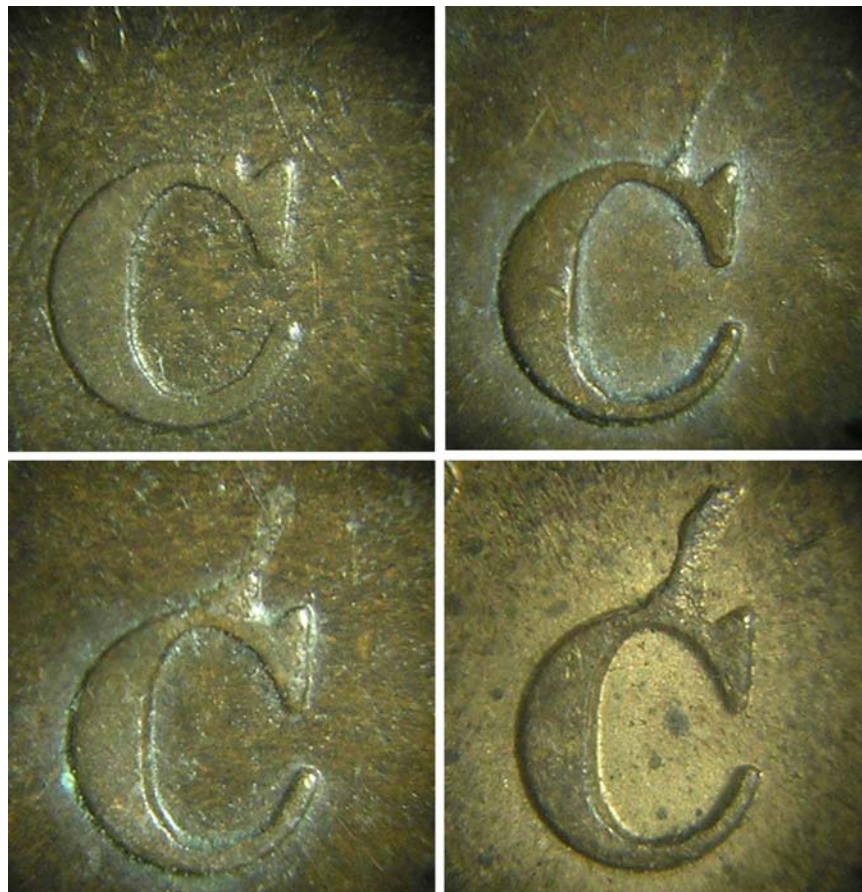
**The only way to dig any deeper is to study die states.
A full study will require thousands of different coins.**



The study of die states requires tracking the sequential order that die cracks, die chips, die collapses, and other damage occurred.



The study of die states usually yields a time lapse study of how these dies deteriorated, such as for this well known die chip from an 1891 LDLL, Obverse 2 cent.



Rob's Advice on Variety Collecting

Do not worry what others collect. Collect what you want.

Find a theme that fascinates you and follow it.

Try to learn something from the coins you collect. It makes things much more interesting.

Have fun with it. If it is not fun, why are you doing it?

Questions?