

## **An 1876-CC Presentation Dime Specimen?**

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**#RM-0008**

A few Carson City coins of various denominations have been certified by the grading services as branch mint Proofs or Presentation specimens as pointed out in Rusty Goe's fine article in the fall 2007 issue of *Curry's Chronicle*. These coins are among the most desirable and sought-after coins by numismatists.

The four basic characteristics that are used to classify these coins as Proof or Presentation specimens are described below:

1. The pieces most often display bold details for the date.
2. The coins exhibit square or wire rims because of the extra pressure put on the planchet during striking.
3. They are devoid of bag marks, although other damage can be present.
4. The coins exhibit deeply reflective Proof fields as a result of specially polished planchets and dies.

However, the absence of any one of these four characteristics does not disqualify a coin from being a Proof or a Presentation specimen strike. It is generally known that the equipment at the branch mints was inferior to that at the Philadelphia Mint and as a result, their products tended to be of a lesser quality.

The 1876-CC dime showcased in this article is a possible branch mint Proof or Presentation specimen. It was purchased at a Bowers and Merena, Inc. auction in 1990. Below is the catalog description:

Mint State 1876-CC Dime, possible presentation strike. Ahwash-4 Rarity 6. MS-64, prooflike. Brilliant surfaces. Boldly struck details of design sharply

rendered. The fields and deepest crevices of the devices are highly reflective, with the remainder of the devices lightly frosted. The rims are bold and even, with nearly a complete wire edge. The edge reeding is precisely defined. At first glance, this glittering gem looks absolutely like a proof. Consultation of references indicate no past records of a presentation strike for this issue. As such, this is an important opportunity which deserves very careful consideration.

Well, did the buyer of this coin make out big time? Since 1990, the grading services have certified several 1876-CC dimes as branch mint Proofs or Presentation specimens. It has been suggested that they may have been struck for the Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia in 1876. What is a Proof-65 worth today? *Coin Values* lists a figure of \$300,000.



*Exceptional example of an 1876-CC dime which is a possible candidate for the Specimen strike designation.*

The 1876-CC dime pictured appears to meet the four characteristics used to classify branch mint Proofs or Presentation specimens. The coin does have a circular indentation on Miss Liberty's left breast. However, this may have been caused by a small particle of grit on the die when the coin was struck. It certainly does not appear to have been caused by being in a bag with other dimes. Will the owner ever submit this dime to a grading service for their opinion? Who knows?

Rusty Goe in his article on branch mint Proof "CC" coinage makes reference to a possible 1877-CC half dollar branch mint Proof that appeared in a *Stack's* sale in May of 1993. The writer of this article has an identical coin in terms of die characteristics as showcased in the spring 2007 edition of *Curry's Chronicle*. This was confirmed by *Stack's* when I sent them photos of my specimen several years ago. Perhaps these DMPL 1877-CC WB-101 Variety I half dollars with a small mintmark are not branch mint Proofs or Presentation specimens. But who really cares since this variety in DMPL is rarer in higher grades than most Proof coins are anyway?

### Reference

Neil S. Berman. "Morgan Proofs and Specimens." *Numismatist*, July 2007, page 28.

*(Images Courtesy Weimar White)*