

Another Opinion on the 1858 WB-105 Half Dollar

by

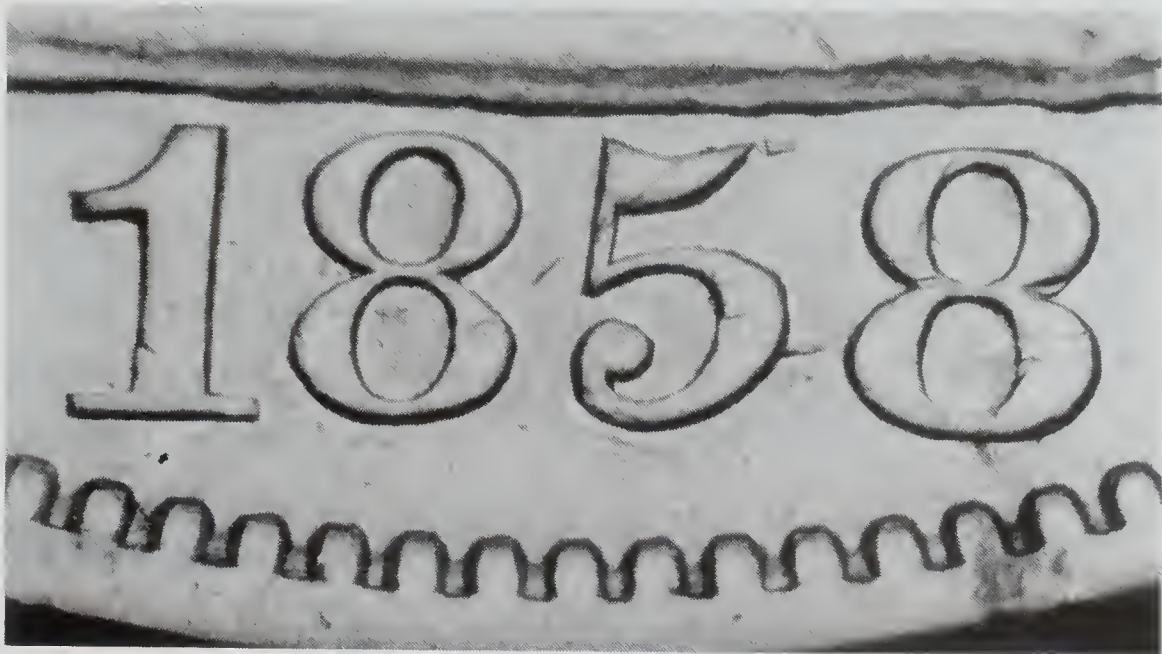
Tom DeLorey

I would like to offer a differing opinion on the blundered date 1858 half dollar listed by Wiley and Bugert as WB-105, 1858 Recut over Inverted 1. It is their opinion that the two horizontal dashes to the right of the 5 are the upper left and lower left serifs of an upside down 1. Having recently examined the specimen shown below in the picture taken by J.T. Stanton, I do not agree that the earlier 1 is inverted. Note that the left end of the upper dash is squared off like the left end of the upper serif of an upright 1. The left end of the lower dash overlaps the 5, and therefore provides no additional information.

The right end of both dashes tapers down into the field and disappears as though the four digit gang punch was held at an angle with only the left end of the first digit making contact with the die. If the 1 was indeed inverted and punched into the die at an angle, the squared off end of the dashes would be on the right and the dashes would taper down into the field to the left.

Inverted dates are certainly possible, as shown by the 1858 over inverted date half dime, but I do not think that this is the case for the 1858 WB-105 half dollar. There are however other questions on this variety that I have been unable to satisfactorily resolve. I do not see how a digit this far out of place could have occurred if the Mint was using the date punch guide as described by Del Romines. I likewise cannot explain the extra spur inside the upper left curve of the second 8.

I wonder who really punched the dates into the dies for all of these blundered date 1858 half dollars. The only Assistant Engraver at the Mint in 1858 was Anthony Paquet, having started there the previous year. It is possible that he was learning his craft on these dies while Longacre was busy creating the Indian cent. If so, I thank him.



1858 WB-105 Half Dollar