

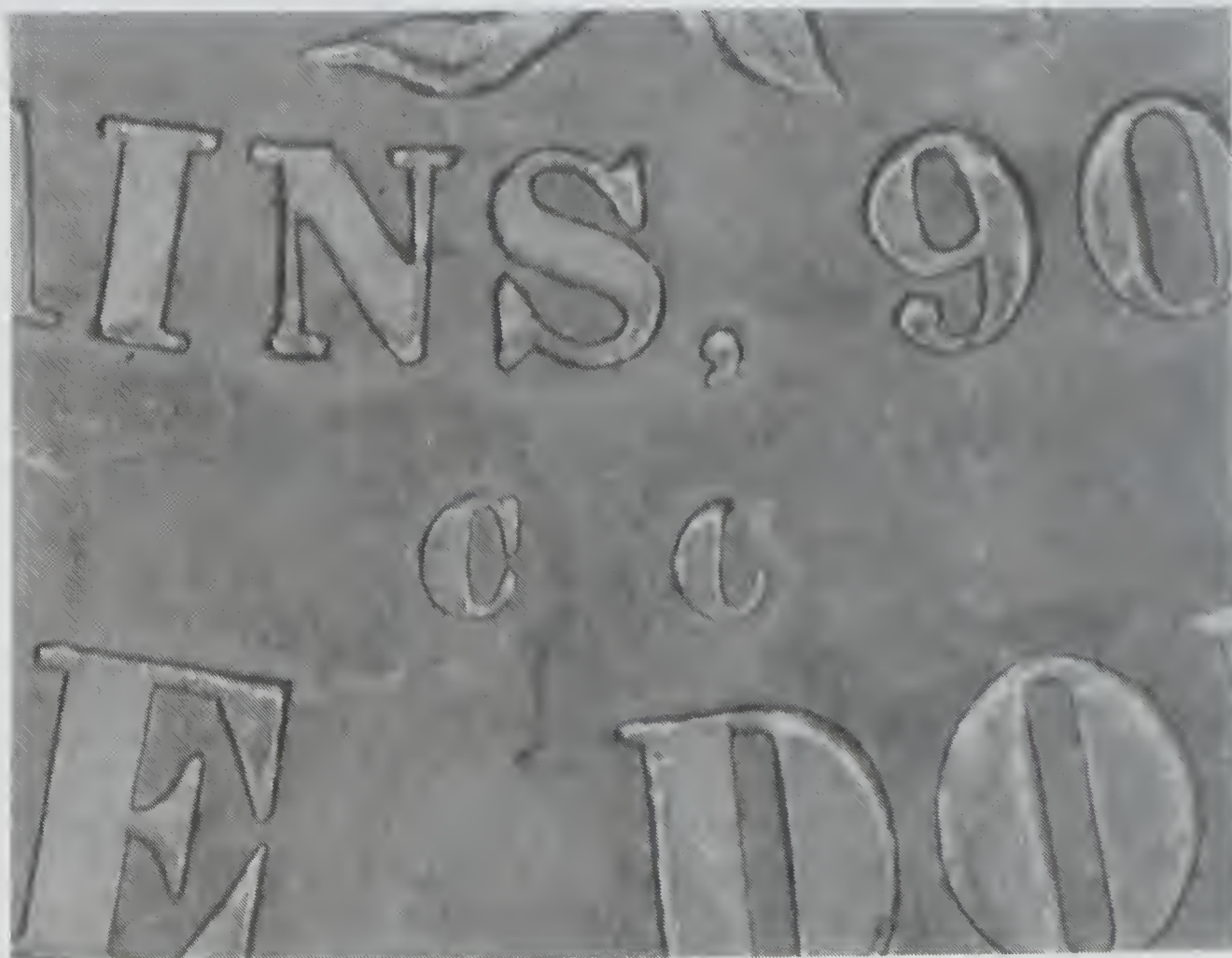
The Wide CC Mintmark on the 1873-CC Trade Dollar

by

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The 1873-CC Trade Dollar is one of the more elusive dates within the Trade Dollar series. The mintage for this issue was limited to 124,500 pieces and it is believed that most of the coins struck during the early years of the Trade Dollar series made their way to China. These coins provided a US trade currency alternative to existing trade currencies circulating in Asia at that time. In Bowers' excellent reference, "Silver Dollars & Trade Dollars of the United States: A Complete Encyclopedia", the CC mintmark for this date is listed as being .9 mm high with spacing between the two Cs varying from .6 mm to .75 mm for the varieties mentioned.

Recently I had the opportunity to examine and acquire an interesting reverse variety for this date. This variety had a CC mintmark spacing much greater than any 1873-CC Trade Dollar that I had previously seen. The height of the CC mintmark is the typical .9 mm but the spacing width between the two Cs is approximately 1.0 mm. The only other Trade Dollar with a CC mintmark spacing this wide is the 1876-CC Micro cc variety identified as Breen #5804 with a spacing of 1.2 mm. I have made a catalog search looking for additional examples of this variety and have come across only two others. I was able to examine one of these coins for comparative purposes. On one

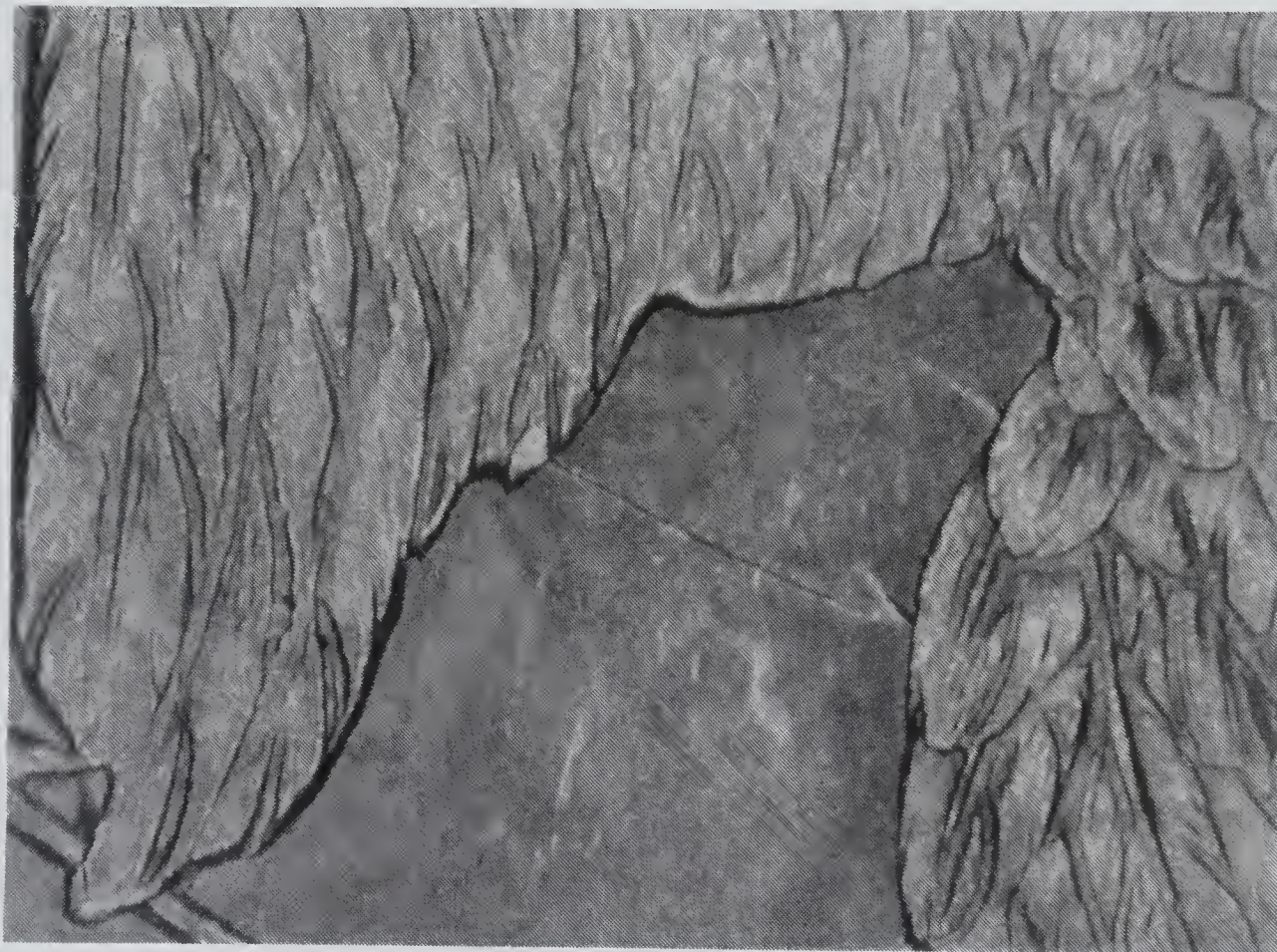


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example of this variety, both the obverse and the reverse were well struck around the periphery but weakly struck in the center of the coin. The other example of this variety was very well struck on both sides of the coin. Both coins have a peculiar die crack on the reverse that runs from the eagle's wing to the eagle's leg on the left side of the coin. Originally, I believed that this was a scratch on the coin, but under a good microscope it is clear that a die crack created this defect.

Both examples of this variety that I have examined exhibit a minor Triple Die Reverse around the many letters on the coin. The final strike is pulled to the center of the coin in all the letters around the periphery of the reverse. The N in UNITED, the two Ts in STATES, the M and I in AMERICA and the two Ls in DOLLAR are all good examples and show some evidence of the final strike being biased toward the center of the coin. I recently sent one of the coins to ANACS and they concurred that the coin had a Triple Die Reverse. Unfortunately, the example that I own has been cleaned in the past.

From my own personal observations and from the infrequency of its appearance in catalogs, I would speculate that this is a very rare die variety. The individual from whom I acquired the coin had a hoard of over fifty 1873-CC Trade Dollars with this coin being the only example of this die variety. Three other reverse die varieties were noted in this hoard. I will try to characterize each of these reverses in a future article. As usual, the observation of a new die variety often raises more questions than it answers. I would be interested in corresponding with other club members who own an example of this variety or who have seen an example of it. I can be contacted as follows: Joe Kirchgessner, 45 Derby St, Concord, MA 01742.



Die Crack on Reverse of 1873-CC Trade Dollar