



The Curious Collector

by Len Augsburger, LSCC #1271

Joe Kirchgessner Publishes *U.S. Trade Dollar: Rarity, Collection Types and Top 37 Varieties*

Among Liberty Seated denominations, the Trade dollar has heretofore lacked a comprehensive guide to the die varieties in that series. With the publication of Joe Kirchgessner's U.S. Trade Dollar, that problem has been solved, and collectors looking to explore the world of Trade dollar die marriages now have a well-defined starting point.

This 522-page compendium contains just about everything collectors need to know, with the strengths of the book being the Top 37 varieties (I'm not sure why it wasn't the "Top 25" or "Top 50" – perhaps Kirchgessner likes the fact that the number 37 has some interesting mathematical properties) and the lengthy enumeration of obverse and reverse dies for each issue. For these chapters, Kirchgessner has adapted the variety attribution template from Bill Bugert's "Register" volumes on Liberty Seated halves, making the layout appear immediately familiar and straightforward to use. The large format (8.5x11) and photographic enlargements make attribution a snap, with ample arrows highlighting the pickup points.

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US Trade Dollar: Rarity, Collection Types, and Top 37 Varieties



Joe Kirchgessner



1877-CC PCGS MS66 CAC (Top Pop.)

**1876-S
Obverse Double Die
at Liberty's Foot**



**Example of an
1876-S Double Die Obverse**



*Joe Kirchgessner is long time
LSCC member #1560*

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Kirchgessner is quick to note that the hunt continues for new obverse and reverse dies, and continued discoveries are expected. Some authors insist on “perfection” before publication, and as a result never publish anything. The author has found a sweet spot here – the present work is substantial but will still motivate others to join the chase. Joe writes of the 1877-S issue, for example, “this was a ‘best effort’ attempt and many other dies and die marriages exist.” With a mintage of nearly ten million pieces, I do not doubt it.

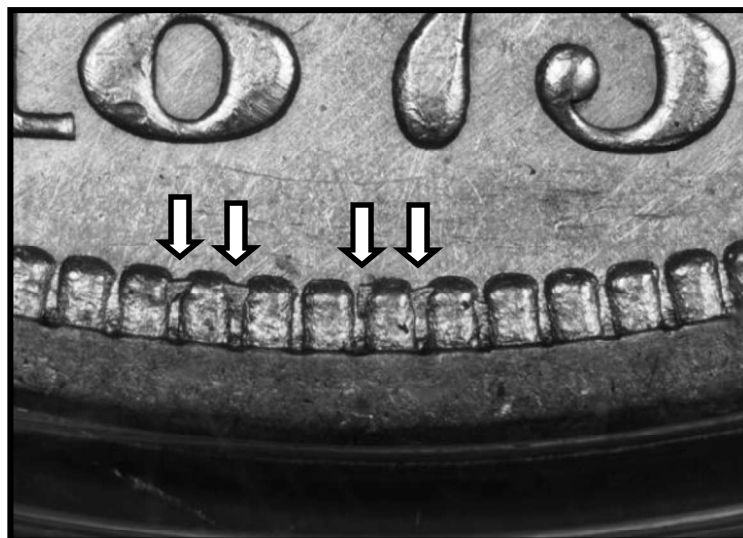
Apart from the die variety analysis, there is plenty here for those who collect only by date and mintmark. Counterfeits, chop marks, exnumia, proof v. business strike attribution, and a host of other related topics all appear within these pages. Kirchgessner’s inclusion of Trade dollar lore is a welcome addition and will appeal to those who are not specifically interested in die varieties. In terms of historical treatment, Kirchgessner provides a concise overview of the evolution of the coin, but defers to previous authors (Willem, Bowers) for more in-depth analysis.

I expect that dealers, auction houses, and grading services will adopt the Kirchgessner attributions, with the “Top-37” attributions (TDV-1 through TDV-37) being the most likely to first appear in commercial use. These coins can be readily identified and most carry scores of 2 or 3 on Kirchgessner’s three-point “cool factor” scale.

U.S. Trade Dollar is priced at \$75 and can be ordered online at <https://www.lulu.com/shop/joe-kirchgessner/us-trade-dollar-rarity-collection-types-and-top-37-varieties/hardcover/product-gjqjgg5.html>.

This is a hardcover, print-on-demand publication. While the cover price will defray much of the printing cost, we should recognize that such books are a “labor of love” and that the cost of the book will never compensate Kirchgessner for the thousands of hours involved in its preparation. For that, let us offer profound thanks to Joe for his important contribution to the study of Liberty Seated coinage!

**Example of a Multiple
Punched Date (MPD)
in the denticles
of an 1873-CC
Trade Dollar**



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1873-CC - Wide CC - TDV-04

Reverse Die D

Obverse/Reverse Hub Type: I/I

**Attribute Description:**

A 1.0 mm spacing between the Cs. Please note the position of right edge of the first C relative to the left edge of the "S" in GRAINS is slightly different than TDV-03. Images of both varieties are shown on the following page. Several examples examined are weakly struck on the feathers of the leg on the right side of the coin.

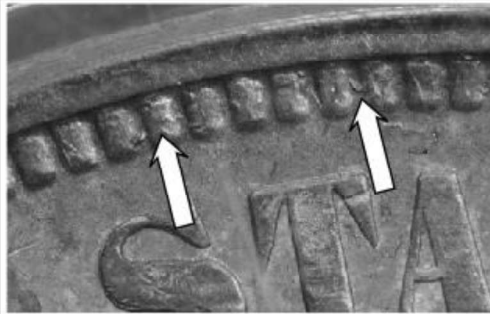
66

Example of Trade Dollar Variety (TDV - one of the 'Top 37')

Sample pages 66-67 from the new Trade Dollar book

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TDV-04 (cont.)**Attribute Description:**

Distinctive set of die tics in denticles above ST in "STATES". Particularly what looks to be a small die gouge in the denticles above the right top of the T.

Variety Comments: This is a second wide CC die used in the production of 1873-CC coins. It is often confused with TDV-03. No die line exists in the denticles above the second S in "STATES" and the CC spacing is slightly narrower with a 1 mm spacing between the Cs. It is estimated that the 1873-CC Wide CC (TDV-04) variety is approximately twice as available as the 1.2 mm Very Wide CC variety (TDV-03). It is possible that the TDV-04 might be rarer than the Estimated Population numbers presented below. The rarity of TDV-04 might be closer to the rarity of TDV-03.

This variety was first reported in *The Gobrecht Journal* (Issue #69, Jul '97).

Both the Very Wide and Wide varieties are shown below for comparison. Note the position of left C relative to the bottom left serif in the second S in "GRAINS".

**Very Wide CC TDV-03****Wide CC TDV-04**

Note: Three coins examined of this variety, TDV-04, all exhibited a die clash mark in the field between the eagle's right wing and the right leg (indicated by an "arrow" shown in the full reverse image of the prior page).

Mintmark Physical Details: CCs are .9 mm tall, 1.0 mm between Cs. reverse die has been observed to be married with two obverse dies (see Chapter 9).

Estimated Population - MS-60 and higher: ~12 coins R-7

Estimated Population - All Grades: ~96 coins R-4

Chopmarked Examples - Unconfirmed

Cool Factor - 1

Cherrypickers Guide #
Not Uniquely Identified

Breen #
Not Uniquely Identified - Breen references the possibility of a wide CC variety

Notable Examples: MS-63 (PCGS), AU-53 (PCGS), etc. Other examples are known.

Grade of Coin Shown: AU-53 (PCGS)