







# The Variety Side

by **Jim Brown**

This month, I will mention some Lincoln cent alterations. The two most common dates, of course, are the 1909 S VDB and the 1914 D.

The 1909 S VDB can be altered by adding the "S" Mint Mark, by changing the date from a 1939 S, or by adding the VDB. The best piece of knowledge a collector can have is to know what the "S" looks like on a genuine coin. One thing to keep in mind is that the end of the S cannot have a point on it on the top or the bottom. You should be able to draw two parallel lines up and down on each side of the mintmark, and no point should stick out. (See drawing) There will be a groove or notch in the top right serif.

The point should end flat, not at angle as shown in the

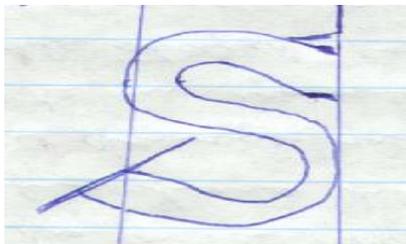


diagram. There are four obverse dies. On die #1, the S is close to the date, directly below the gap between the "90" in 1909. On die #2, the S tilts to the right, it is Southwest of the "0", and the top of the S is line with the bottoms of the nines. On die #3, the S is slightly farther to the left, with the top of the S even with the bottoms of the nines. On die #4, the S is the lowest of the 4 dies. It is also the farthest to the right, below the 0. This one is the most common of the four varieties.

On the 1914 D, keep in mind the mintmark must be the same style as found on the 1916 D Mercury, with the parallel notching on the D on top and

bottom. There have been 1914 Lincolns that have had the D Mint Mark added, but nearly all of them have the wrong style D, and there will be buffing or polishing marks around the Mint Mark. Watch for extra space between the 9 and 1 in the date. Also watch for the VDB on the shoulder that should not be on Lincoln Cents until 1918. Also, check the area on Lincoln's shoulder where the VDB would be on a 1944D Cent. Thousands of 1944D Lincolns have been altered in this way, and as a dealer, it amazes me how many of these could be passed off to an unsuspecting collector. There are die struck counterfeit 1914 D Lincolns out there, and they are much more difficult to detect. When these coins are encountered, they are almost always in EF condition or higher. They will have a sharp or squared edge resembling a proof coin, and have a general lack of detail. Also, look for tool marks or depressions. Other Lincoln Cent alterations to beware of are: 1910S altered from 1940 S, 1911 S altered from 1911 S, 1912 S altered from 1942 S, 1922 plain altered from a 1932 D or 42 D, and a 1931S altered from a 1937 or 39 S. Authentication skills are not that difficult if you use good resource material and you work at it. There is no other series of U.S. coins that has anywhere close to the number of alterations found on the Lincoln Cent. A good rule of thumb is that any coin worth more than \$10 is a possible candidate for alteration. I hope some of these tips can help some of our members not become victims of alterations or counterfeits.



This time there did not seem to be the great interest among either the general public or the collection community. Many banks that had ordered one or two boxes of the Washington coins, and in some cases extra boxes for customers after the plain edge coins hit the news, found themselves sitting on thousands of coins after the public searched them all for "Smoothies". Then they dumped the rejects back to the banks. With all those unwanted dollars sitting in their vaults, they had no great desire to order any Adams dollars. It's bad enough they still have all those unwanted Susan B's and Sacagawea. How much will that desire decline with future releases?

The burning question with the release of the Adams coin was whether or not there would be a repeat of the plain edge error. While a few have been found, it appears they have corrected whatever fault that led to the large release of Washington coins. This coins when they first came out were selling on eBay for \$600.00, and now are around \$35 to \$40 in a holder. It is estimated that over 85,000 have been slabbed. And of coarse the first fake plain edged coins have shown up already as well.

The error on the Adams coin though seems to be coins with doubled edge letters from being sent through twice. This happen on the Washington's too, but not as many of them turned up. Judge them for yourselves.

