

Lincoln Cents Through the Years

by Aaron Wales

The Transition

- ◉ Indian head cents were issued up until 1909
- ◉ That had been the design minted for 50 years
- ◉ Note, these are "cents" and not pennies (pennies are British coins)
- ◉ To honor the 100th anniversary of President Abraham Lincoln's birth (which was February 12, 1809) mints began issuing a Lincoln head cent
- ◉ Fun Fact: Construction of the Titanic began in 1909 in Belfast, Ireland



The Public Release

- ◉ Before the Lincoln cent no regularly circulated U.S. coin had featured an actual person
- ◉ The Mint did not permit any images of the new coin to be printed in newspapers which raised public interest
- ◉ For the public release in 1909, long lines formed to obtain the Lincoln cent
- ◉ Coins had to be rationed as the supply was not sufficient to meet the demand
- ◉ People paid as much as a quarter to get a Lincoln cent second hand



Line in New York City

Wheat Lincoln Cents

- ◉ Lincoln Cents were first issued in 1909
- ◉ The obverse features Lincoln's profile and the reverse features two ears of wheat
- ◉ In the first few months of issuance, they included the initials of the designer, Victor David Brenner, but later that year the initials were removed. So, collectors can find both 1909 cents with a VDB and without a VDB
- ◉ Wheat Lincoln cents were issued until 1958



Contents of Wheat Lincoln Cents

- Wheat Lincoln cents were originally produced primarily out of copper
- For a single year, 1943, steel cents were issued due to a shortage of copper which was needed for ammunition during WWII
- Cents struck in 1944-1946 used salvaged gun shells from WWII
- Fun fact: Over 25 billion Wheat cents were minted from 1909-1958



Lincoln Memorial Cents

- In 1959, they issued Lincoln Memorial cents because it was the 50th anniversary of the Lincoln cent
- Fun Fact: In 1959, Alaska was admitted as the 49th US state
- Lincoln's profile remains on the obverse and the reverse contains the Lincoln Memorial from Washington D.C.
- In 1982, there was a change in content which equated to a change in weight. That year there are cents that weigh 3.0 grams (95% copper) and 2.5 grams. (97.5% zinc). So, be sure to get out your handy scale to weigh your coins when determining what you have.



Lincoln's statue is visible on the reverse

2009 Special Reverses

- In 2009, to commemorate the 200th anniversary of Lincoln's birth, 4 special reverses were minted
- These are referred to as the Lincoln Bicentennial Cents
- The 1st reverse features his birth and early childhood in Kentucky (Log cabin)
- The 2nd reverse features his formative years in Indiana (Reading a book as a rail splitter)
- The 3rd reverse features his professional years in Illinois (Standing by the state house representing his career in law)
- The last reverse features his Presidency (Construction of the Capitol building's dome in Washington D.C.)



The Union Cent

- In 2010, there was a new reverse with a shield design called the Union cent
- This showed how President Lincoln preserved the Union during the Civil War
- The Union cents are still being minted as we speak
- Fun Fact: E pluribus unum (featured on the shield) is Latin for "Out of many, one"



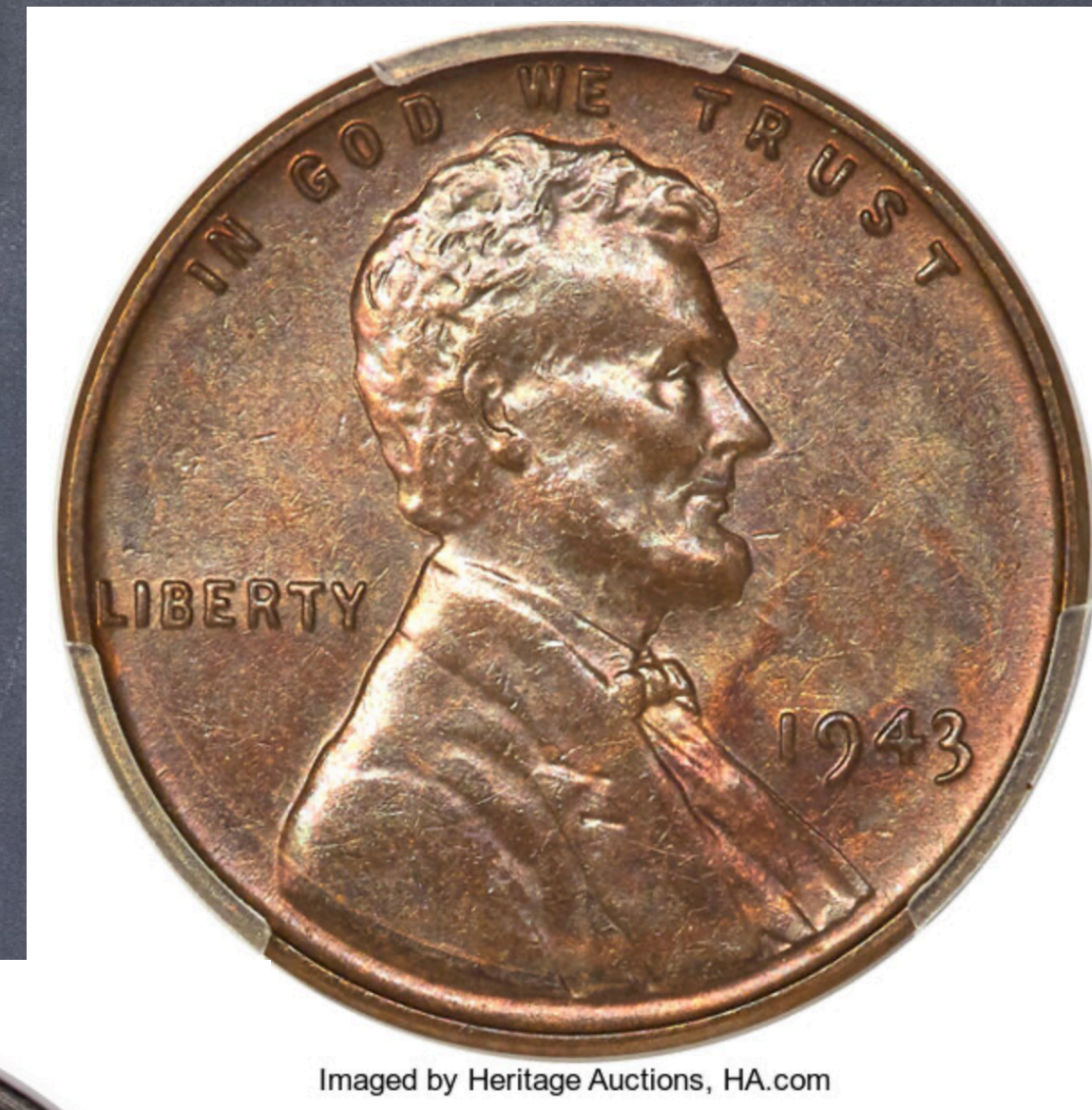
Mint Marks

- Lincoln cents have been minted in Philadelphia (no mint mark), Denver (D), San Francisco (S), and West Point (W)
- In the years 1965-1967, mint marks were removed in response to a growing coin shortage in hopes it would help by discouraging collectors from stashing away "S" and "D" coins
- Ultimately, the removal did not reduce the coin shortage and mint marks resumed in 1968
- All cents minted in Philadelphia in 2017 were marked with a P to commemorate that mint's 225th anniversary
- Lincoln cents were only minted at West Point in 2019
- Fun Fact: In the 19th century, there were mints in Carson City (CC), New Orleans (O), Charlotte NC (C), and Dahlonega GA (D)

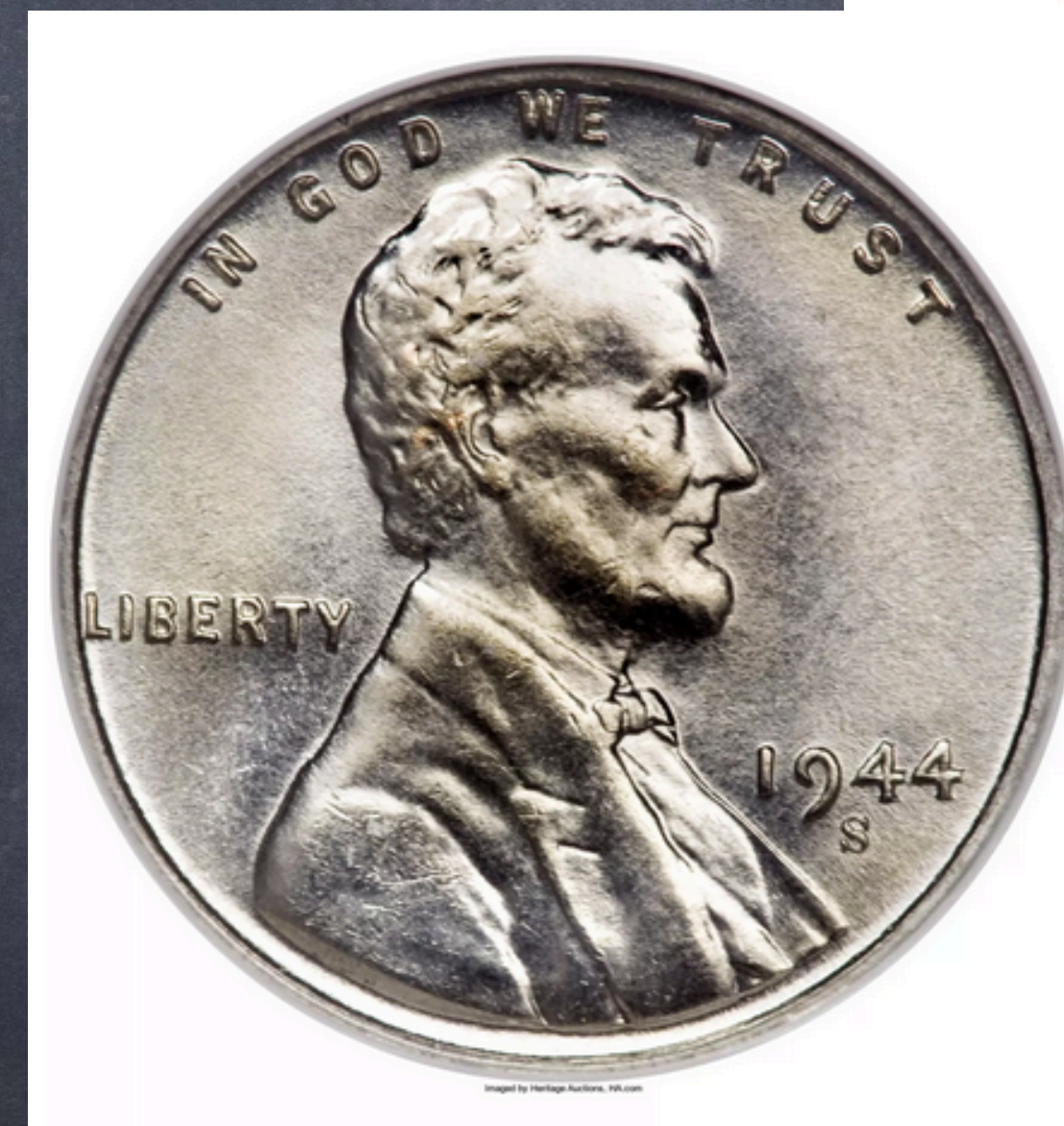


Value of Lincoln Cents

- A cent's worth is based upon its quality and rarity
- At a local coin store today, one can obtain 50 wheat cents for \$2.50 (5 cents each)
- One of the rarest Lincoln cents is a 1943 bronze Lincoln cent that is considered an error coin as all 1943 cents were intended to be steel
- Similarly a few 1944 cents were mistakenly made of steel and are extremely rare
- Other variations include double strikes and different sizes of dates



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- These coins incorporate much of our history as a nation
- Lincoln cents feature the longest running obverse minted in the United States (Lincoln's profile)
- Lincoln cents are a fun coin to collect because of the many years and variations minted
- Questions?

THE END