



Pismo Treasures

Key Coins and Creative Cons | Spring 2024

Hello everyone,

I hope you're having a good start to 2024. It's hard to believe it's already April!

The weather's beautiful here on the Central Coast and the hills are as green as emeralds. If you haven't been to Pismo Beach lately, I hope your plans bring you here soon.

In this issue, I share more about a certain group of collectible coins called Key Coins that aren't quite what you'd think. In fact, they're fake!

But for knowledgeable collectors, these are a fun adjunct to a collection of quality, genuine coins. I also hope that what I share in this issue helps everyone avoid falling for these types of quality fakes.

Key Coins: A Word to the Wise

It's buyer beware when buying key coins that are not professionally graded (slabbed) by one of the accepted grading services like PCGS (Professional Coin Grading Service) or NGC (Numismatic Guaranty Company).

What's a Key Coin?

Key coins, also known as key date coins, are coins that are relatively rare and valuable due to their low mintage, historical significance, and/or other

unique characteristics.

Key coins are those that are among the most challenging (and expensive) to obtain within a series. In the Lincoln Cent series, for example, the 1909-S VDB would be considered the key, as would the 1914-D and often the 1922-Plain.

These coins are often sought after by collectors and investors alike, as they can appreciate over time.

Here are a few scary examples of key coins that are fake or altered. Even some very experienced collectors or coin dealers were fooled by these.



1879 Trade Dollar

Not genuine. Should not have been sent to NGC for grading because it doesn't weigh right.

These coins were used for intercontinental trade in the 1800s. This 1879 coin was only a proof and not issued for circulation.

If genuine: value \$1,250



1909-S VDB cent with altered mint mark

This very well done alteration would fool many collectors and dealers. Someone added a mint mark. It was made in the Philadelphia mint, but the mint mark was altered to look like San Francisco.

The genuine coin also had the letters VDB, which were the coin designer's initials

This is the most expensive key date Lincoln penny.

If genuine: value \$1,300

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1922 Plain cent (no mint mark)

With this fake, someone removed the Denver mint mark, making it a "Plain" penny. Genuine Plain cents were minted in Denver, but in the initial minting, grease obscured the "D" mark on the die and a few of these were minted before the error was caught.

With this coin, someone used a precise tool to grind off the Denver mint mark, then artificially aged the spot. Scary good job. Use a good microscope on this one.

If genuine: value \$300

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1916 D 10C
NOT ENCAPSULATED
ALTERED MINTMARK
3467176-001



1916-D dime

Altered mint mark, skillfully done.

The mint mark was altered from "S" to "D."

If an unsuspected collector bought this, they would be out a few thousand dollars.

If genuine: value \$4,000



Another 1916-D dime

This same vintage dime had a "D" mint mark added.

I'm betting a skilled jeweler probably did this one.

If genuine: value \$1,300



1943 copper cent

Have your magnet handy. If you're a rich beginning coin collector without a magnet, you could lose a fortune if you bought this fake.

In 1943, during the war effort, copper penny production was replaced by steel pennies. A few copper blanks were left in the machine when they switched to steel. These copper 1943 pennies are highly prized.

If genuine: value \$200,000



Fake \$5 gold piece

Someone back in the day didn't get a chance to apply gold paint to this good fake of an 1855 gold piece.

Good thing, too, because it probably would have fooled many a shop keeper.

If genuine: value \$700



Advertising Hand Mirror

At the turn of the century, a popular advertising and marketing piece for businesses was to hand out small hand mirrors. About 2.5 inches in diameter, the company advertising was on one side and a handy mirror on the other side.

This good example from 1909 is from the Thomas Bros. store in Williamstown, PA, which is still in operation. What makes it even more special is that a beautiful 1909 Indian cent is embedded.

And that leaves me with a dilemma and a choice to make.

Option A. If I extract this 1909 Indian cent, it will destroy the value of this great advertising pocket mirror.

Option B. If I remove the coin and discover there is an "S" mint mark on the reverse, it's a coin easily worth \$1,000... or more.

What do you all think I should do? Reply to this email and let me know!

Don't miss the upcoming Santa Maria Coin Club's semi-annual Coin & Collectible Show!

Knowledgeable vendors, free appraisals, and a range of collectible coins as well as sport cards, beanies, casino chips and more.

Saturday, May 11, from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm

Location: Elwin Mussell Senior Center, 510 E. Park Ave. in Santa Maria.

Free admission!



SANTA MARIA COIN CLUB'S SEMI-ANNUAL
COIN & COLLECTIBLE SHOW
Sports Cards, Beanies, Casino Chips, and More

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Elwin Mussell Senior Center
510 E. Park Avenue
Santa Maria, CA 93455

Free Appraisals

Coins Bought and Sold

FREE ADMISSION

I hope you've had fun learning about key coins and the ways people have created fake versions over the years.

That's one of the many things I love about the world of coin collecting. There's always more to learn and treasures to discover along the way.

Thanks to you for the friendships we've fostered since I opened my dream-come-true shop, and for trusting me with your family stories. Sharing my passion for coins and collectibles is a joy, and I love nothing more than helping you find a special coin or giving you information about your collection, and I am honored with the continued opportunity to serve your coin and collectibles needs.

I look forward to seeing you in the shop soon.

And until then, stay curious!

John Zalesny

Proprietor

Pismo Beach Coins Etc. Gallery

www.pismocoinsgallery.com

P.S. A question for you.

What would you like to read in this newsletter? Whether it's what makes jewelry valuable, why certain coins are collectible, how old something needs to be before it's called an antique, or any other question, let me know!

Just reply to this email with your question and I'll cover it in a future issue.

Learn More about Our Shop!

On my store's [website](#), you'll find more information about the services and selections in the store, as well a bit about my background and how the store came to be.

Please Share Your Experience!

Our business is built on word of mouth referrals and our dedication to service, honesty, and integrity.

If you've had a good experience with our business, whether having a collection evaluated, selling a collection, or purchasing items for your own collection, we'd appreciate you leaving us a review on Google. Your review helps others find our store and all the treasures you've discovered.

And please share with your friends – your recommendation is the best way small businesses like mine can grow.

Pismo Beach Coins Etc Gallery

355 Pomeroy Ave, Pismo Beach
United States of America



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