

— TRIDENT STORMS —

POCKET CHANGE, HIDDEN FORTUNE

The Collector's Guide to
U.S. Coin Errors and Varieties



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Reader Sample

Pocket Change, Hidden Fortune · JT Henry

Selected material from the first digital edition, October 2026. This sample contains the opening guidance and one worked examination from Part 2. The complete edition includes all six denomination chapters, comparison tables, auction examples, an examination record, and full source notes.

Before You Begin

An unusual coin gives you a reason to look more closely. A missing letter, a doubled image, or an unexpected color may point to something that happened during manufacture. It may also reflect wear, corrosion, an alteration, or an ordinary feature of that particular issue. The useful question is what the coin can actually establish. An attractive explanation is only the beginning of that examination.

This guide helps you examine selected United States coin errors and varieties, recognize the features that deserve further attention, and decide what evidence to gather before buying, selling, or paying for professional evaluation. It covers cents, nickels, dimes, quarters, half dollars, and dollars. Historical pieces appear alongside circulation-era targets because an inherited collection or an old proof set calls for a different search than a handful of recent change. Gold coinage, bullion issues, territorial coinage, and a complete catalog of every die variety are outside its scope.

The denomination chapters are working references. Their descriptions tell you where to begin looking; the linked specialist photographs and attribution records help you compare the actual shapes and positions of the features. The original diagrams explain manufacturing principles. They are schematics, not photographs of genuine rarities and not substitutes for attribution.

How to use the guide

Read the minting explanation and examination method first. Then work through one denomination at a time, using an ordinary example of the same issue as a comparison. Record what you see before assigning a variety name. When an entry refers to a proof, confirm that manufacturing format before treating a missing mint mark as significant. A circulation coin does not become a proof because its surfaces look bright.

Keep the quick reference and examination record near your work area. A promising coin should leave the first examination with useful photographs, measurements, and a specific question. Those records help a specialist assess it and help you resist the temptation to price it from a headline.

Understanding the evidence and the prices

Numbered references lead to the source notes and live reference pages. U.S. Mint material establishes official specifications and production changes. Grading-service and specialist references provide attribution guidance. Original auction records document particular sales. A reported new discovery receives more cautious treatment when its mechanism, recognition, or market is still unsettled.

The auction examples are dated transactions for identified specimens. They are not current appraisals, expected returns, or estimated values for a coin that has not been authenticated. Grade, surface condition, exact variety, strike format, and buyer demand can make visually similar coins unsuitable comparisons. Before a material transaction, use recent realized sales of comparable certified coins and calculate the likely proceeds after costs.

A Worked Examination

Consider a hypothetical reader who notices a 1975 dime without a mint mark. The purpose of this exercise is to decide what the missing mark can establish. No real specimen, grade, measurement, or value is being reported. Start a record before assigning the name of a rarity.

Record field	Initial entry in this exercise
Observed feature	The date reads 1975. No mint mark is visible in the expected area.
Initial question	Is this an ordinary circulation issue or a proof whose intended S is absent?
Measurements and images	Not supplied in this exercise. Record actual measurements and photographs when examining a real coin.
Format and attribution	Unresolved at the first observation. A missing mark alone does not identify the manufacturing format.
Next comparison	Compare the entire coin with documented examples of the ordinary circulation issue and the recognized No S proof.

The dated comparison supplies the essential distinction. An ordinary 1975 Philadelphia circulation dime normally has no mint mark. The recognized 1975 No S rarity is a proof issue. [1, 2] If the comparison confirms the ordinary Philadelphia circulation format, the empty mint-mark area is normal. Record that conclusion and the reference used; the missing mark gives no basis for calling this coin the No S proof.

If the format remains uncertain, leave that field unresolved and improve the photographs or seek an informed examination. Bright surfaces, visible wear, or finding the coin in change cannot by themselves settle whether it began as a proof. The useful result is a record that separates what was observed from what still needs to be established.

Source Notes

References for this sample, checked for the October 2026 edition. Titles and URLs open the original pages. These attribution references support the worked examination; the complete guide includes the full source notes for its six denomination chapters.

1. PCGS CoinFacts. 1975 No S Proof Dime

<https://www.pcg.com/coinfacts/coin/1975-10c-no-s/5254/67>

2. PCGS. No Mintmark Roosevelt Dimes Shine

<https://www.pcg.com/news/no-mintmark-roosevelt-dimes-shine>

End of sample

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