

Discovery of an 1833 Bust Quarter Re-marriage

Encompassing the years of 1831-1838 and having the same basic design throughout, the small diameter bust quarters were both the forerunner of the steam press era and what we would consider the modern quarter coinage we have today. While this small part of the bust series formed from 1796-1838 has been treated like the proverbial stepchild, the large size coins have been the subject of much interest and activity over the preceding century. But, the latest new die marriage discovered was an 1837 and I for one, believe that the small size quarters are due to produce many interesting and provocative things. I hope that the following proves as much.

Die remarriages exist in many other series as well as in the bust quarter series. One of the best examples that comes to mind in the bust quarter series is the 1818 B-7 and B-9 reverse remarriage, which was written about by John McCloskey in John Reich Journal Volume 14/1. Breen also listed several other possible remarriages, without showing any proof, in his 1992 update of the Browning book. A die remarriage is defined as a set of obverse and reverse dies used to produce a die marriage; then one or the other of the dies is paired with a different die to produce a different die marriage; subsequently the die used in the first marriage is again paired with its original die marriage die and all coins struck from this last pairing are considered to be remarriage coins.

The first three photos show a B-1 EDS with no rust anywhere on the obverse.



1833 B-1 EDS NO RUST

1833 consists of two known bust quarter die marriages. B-1 and B-2 share a common obverse die. The B-1 obverse is known both with no rust defects and with heavy die rust. The B-2 obverse is only known with heavy die rust. While looking through several of my coins and in comparing them with the pictures in the Browning book, I noticed that the picture for the B-2 obverse showed a very late die state with heavy rust all over. The B-2 in my collection had rust, but nothing as severe as in the Browning plate. I was intrigued and decided to see if I could find a later die state of the B-2 to add to my collection.

On the three photos of the B-2, there are several rust pits between the back of the liberty cap and star 8; rust beginning around the clasp and the date; and rust in the field @ star 5 and above star 7.



1833 B-2 OBVERSE RUST

After several years of looking, I was at a local show and thought I had found the coin I was looking for. However, to my surprise, when I turned it over it was a B-1! I compared it with the picture in Browning and decided it was too close to tell and I needed to compare it to other coins I had at home. I purchased the coin and couldn't wait to put all my coins together and see what was revealed.

And finally the last three photos of the B-1 remarriage coin showing increased rust at all the areas listed in 1833 B-2, clearly at an advanced state.



1833 B-1 LDS OBVERSE RUST

When I lined them up and studied the rust patterns what I found was that a re-marriage had occurred. Starting with the early die state B-1 with no rust, to the B-2 late die state with rust in many places, and finally to B-1 again with heavier rust at all the places found in the B-2.

The Browning plate coin for B-2 is very close to the die state of my B-1 and in fact, due to the high grade of the Browning coin, it looks like a later die state. The rust found on the highest levels of the portrait were the first to wear away and on my EF+ coin they are hard to see. Until a higher grade B-1 LDS is found it is hard to say at what point the switching of dies occurred.

In conclusion, as you can see, there are still many things to learn from this series. I would be interested to hear about any other die states, which other collectors may have found.

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