

A Date, Grade and Color Analysis of Proof Indian Head Cents.

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The following date by date information for the Proof Indian Head Cent series has been compiled from data available from the PCGS and NGC Population reports, together with information acquired from my own personal experience looking for quality proof Indian Head Cents. This article has also been generously helped by information compiled by Richard Snow of Eagle Eye Rare Coins. Rick has previously compiled a date by date analysis of the Heathgate Proof Indian Head Cent collection. Many of Rick's comments are included in this analysis, and to distinguish his comments from my text, I have italicized his information so that I don't continually repeat: "as noted by Rick Snow". In some instances I have expanded upon Rick's commentary, and added my own observations as to date, grade and color rarity. This will always be an evolving project, and as more coins are seen and graded by the grading services, this compilation is subject to change. However, as we now have over 15 years of statistical data, we are able to quantify and understand which dates and grades are rare and which ones are difficult to find in full "Red". This gives us a better understanding of which coins are relatively easy to locate in the marketplace, which ones are scarce and which ones are great rarities. The grade information will refer to what I consider collectable grades for the majority of the coins in the proof Indian Head Cent series: PR64 through Proof 66. Although there are a few eye-appealing PR63 coins, it is difficult to consistently find nice examples, so I would recommend that for the most part you try to obtain examples in PR64 or higher. Proof 67's, though available, are generally very expensive and it is not possible to complete a set of proof Indian Head Cents if limited to that grade alone. However, if anyone is interested in putting together the "finest" set, there are several dates that have Proof 67 or higher examples available, with the majority being dated 1877 or later, as prior to 1877, PCGS has only graded two 1864's and one 1874 in PR67 in any color grade. From 1877 on, the only dates not available in PR67 are the following: 1886 Type 2, 1887, 1890, 1891, 1894, and 1896, but there are a number of dates that have only 1 or 2 examples in this designated grade.

One has to bear in mind that the Pop reports may actually reflect a higher number of coins graded than there may actually be found in plastic slabs due to the fact that oftentimes nice coins are cracked out for re-grading and the old grading inserts are not always returned to be deleted from the Pop report data base. This will be particularly true with higher value dates such as the 1877 where a one point grade increase might be worth several thousand dollars.

All presently known die pairs of all proof Flying Eagle and Indian Cents are being listed in the new Flying Eagle and Indian Cent attribution guide, 2nd edition by Rick Snow. It is being published by Eagle Eye Rare Coins in 6 volumes and if you are interested in forming a collection of Indian Head Cents, whether mint state of proof, I would highly recommend these books.

Date by Date analysis

(Pop report information is current as of 11/15/2002):

I. Copper-Nickel Proofs

This short-lived series is relatively easy to complete in PR64 or PR65. The two key dates are the 1861 and the 1860 respectively, with the 1861 being particularly difficult to locate in PR65 and above. This series also contains the most readily available cameo dates, with the 1862 being "common" with 30 examples graded by both PCGS and NGC and the 1864 the next most "common" with 26 examples graded by the two services; but again the 1860 and the 1861 are very scarce in cameo designation with only two cameo coins of each date by either grading service. There are also 10 deep or ultra cameos, with the only dates available with that designation being the 1862 and the 1864 with 5 each. Any of the cameos or deep cameo coins would be suitable for a high grade type set as in "cameo" they are very eye-appealing coins. Note, utilizing only PCGS population data, about 4.4% of all PCGS graded CN proof Indian Head Cents are cameo or deep cameo coins.

1859 Proof: Readily available in proof grades 64-65. PCGS has graded 18 PR66's with 1 PR67; NGC has graded 17 PR66's, with 1 PR67. This date is available in Cameo: PCGS has graded 4 cameo examples with the highest a PR65Cam; NGC has graded 6 Cameo examples, with the highest a PR67Cam.

Popular and important as a one year type design featuring Longacre's Indian head design and a simple reverse design featuring a Laurel wreath reverse around the denomination, "ONE CENT". However, the obverse portrait is actually "Lady Liberty", a Caucasian representation of Liberty borrowed from the Three Dollar design of 1854. She is wearing a headdress of a Native American of the Chippewa tribe. The reverse is actually an olive wreath, although the laurel wreath description is somewhat accurate as their leaves are visually similar.

1860 Proof: Available in PR64, a tough date in PR65 and above. PCGS has graded 4 PR66's with no PR67's; NGC has graded 6 PR66's, with 1 PR67 and 1 PR68. This date is available in Cameo: PCGS has graded 2 cameo examples, with the highest a PR66Cam; NGC has not graded any Cameo examples. This is the second rarest CN proof Indian Head Cent.

The first year of the series featuring the Lady Liberty in a Native American headdress paired with the new reverse featuring a wreath of oak with a sprig of olive and three arrows knotted at the base with a ribbon. The federal shield of the Union is featured above the wreath. This design is continued until the end of the series, with minor modifications along the way. This is a very tough date to find in full gem condition. The majority of the estimated mintage of 542 was struck only once, imparting an impression that usually did not strike out all of the planchet marks. The quality of the 1860 issue is always somewhat lacking in the quality seen up to 1859 and after 1861. They are nearly always seen with mirrors that are only moderate and edges that are rounded, which is why these are sometimes confused as being prooflike strikings. The population figures bear this out with only 19 examples presently graded with 2 better by PCGS. In early 1860 the portrait was redesigned significantly for some unknown reason. The main difference in the two designs is the shape of the bust truncation. The type of 1859 has a short pointed bust truncation. The type adopted in 1860 has a more rounded bust point. All proofs are struck from the rounded bust design.



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1861 Proof: Available in PR64, a very tough date in PR65 and above. PCGS has graded just 2 PR66's with none higher; NGC has graded 3 PR66's, with none higher. This date is available in Cameo, but PCGS has graded none and NGC has graded 2 PR65 Cameo examples. This is the rarest CN proof Indian Head Cent.

As with the 1860 issue, many coins struck this year were struck only once on moderately mirrored dies. This lack of quality standards at the Mint has made this a real tough issue to locate in gem condition. Out on an original mintage of 1000 pieces, only about 400 were released. The survivor rate seems to be quite low, perhaps many substandard examples were subsequently spent, or included collections as non-proofs. There is enormous collector demand for this issue in gem condition.

Based on my experience in locating this date, I believe that the total released mintage to be less than 300 coins. The civil war had already started and based upon the very low number graded by both services, either less were sold to collectors or, if 400 were in fact released, many must have been released into circulation and not to collectors. One has to bear in mind that minor coins became very scarce during the civil war - hence the need for civil war tokens for commerce. It is not unlikely that the mint would have released any left over proof coins to help alleviate that shortage.

1862 Proof: Readily available in proof grades 64-65. PCGS has graded 34 PR66's with 1 PR67; NGC has graded 30 PR66's, with 7 PR67's. This date is available in Cameo: PCGS has graded 17 cameo examples with the highest a PR67Cam; NGC has graded 13 Cameo examples, with the highest a PR68Cam. There are 5 deep (or "ultra") cameos with 2 PR66 deep cameos from each service.

This is the "type" date in the copper-nickel Indian Cent series. Usually available much more often than any other date from 1860 to 1864, even though the mintage of 550 is not substantially higher. This issue is found much better than 1860 and 1861. In addition to higher quality standards at the Mint, there was a substantial hoard of approximately 200 coins, which came to light many years ago.

1863 Proof: Readily available in proof grades 64-65. PCGS has graded 8 PR66's with 1 PR67; NGC has graded 6 PR66's, with none higher. This date is available in Cameo: PCGS has graded 6 cameo examples with the highest as PR66Cam; NGC has graded 5 Cameo examples, with the highest as PR67Cam. The 1863 is the 3rd scarcest of the CN proofs, slightly less available than the 1864CN.

Nearly the entire issue of 460 pieces was struck from a single set of dies.

1864 CN Proof: Readily available in proof grades 64-65. PCGS has graded 11 PR66's with 2 PR67's; NGC has graded 9 PR66's, with none higher. This date is available in Cameo: PCGS has graded 10 cameo examples with the highest as PR67Cam; NGC has graded 16 Cameo examples, with the highest a PR67Cam. There are 5 deep (or "ultra") cameos with at least one PR66 deep cameo from each service.

The reported mintage of 370 pieces is the lowest of all the copper-nickel Indian Cents. Survivors are typically below average compared to the quality of the 1862 issue.

II. Bronze Proofs

The bronze proof Indian Head Cents are also relatively "easy" (there are 46 coins not counting the 1864-L and 1886 Type 2) to complete in PR64 or PR65, BUT only as proof red-brown coins. If you decide to complete your set in full "Red" examples, be prepared for a difficult task, as there are several dates that are extremely difficult to locate in full red condition. Also, be prepared to scrutinize the coins carefully sometimes, the holder says "red" but the coin is red-brown. I have personally requested that PCGS "decertify" one of my high grade PR66RD coins to a PR66RB as it was definitely not red. As you acquire both RD and RB examples, you will begin to see that sometimes a high-end RB is "redder" than the same grade coin in a RD holder. There are several difficult dates to acquire in full red condition; using just PR65RD as the criteria, the following dates will be a challenge: 1864, 1865, 1866, 1867, 1868, 1869, 1872, 1874, 1875, 1882, 1883, 1885, 1887, 1888, 1889, 1890 and 1896, with the 1887 and the 1888 being particularly difficult to locate in PR65RD. An interesting anomaly in the proof bronze Indian Head Cent coinage is that it is generally "easier" to acquire a PR66 or better example in a proof RD grade than it is in a RB or BN grade.

Some comments with respect to coins designated BN: Some of the most beautiful Indian Head Cents are actually graded BN - it seems that when a bronze proof Indian Head Cent acquires wonderful deep blue, violet, mahogany and/or black-cherry red colors, the grading services designate these coins as brown. This is a misnomer and a dis-service to those few coins that have some of the most spectacular eye appeal of all Indian Head Cents. These coins sell for premiums (sometimes substantial) over plain-jane, dull brown coins, and I believe the greatest challenge would be to put together a complete set of these wonderfully colored "brown" coins. I would highly recommend acquiring at least one example these beautifully toned bronze proof Indian Head Cents, as they tend to be what I refer to as "Wow" coins - when you pick one up and look at it, your first reaction is "WOW!!". I always try and buy "wow" coins when I see them, but unfortunately, they are sometimes just too expensive - the added beauty of these colorful BN proof Indian Head Cents is that they are actually affordable wow coins! (Dealers often refer to wow coins as "monsters", "Godzilla" and other superlative terms that usually mean "lots of money" if you want to own it.)

The bronze Indian Head Cents also contain several available cameo dates, but none can be even remotely considered common, and deep cameos are almost non-existent, with there being only two bronze deep or ultra cameos graded by both grading services, both coins being the 1864 Bronze issue. Further, PCGS ONLY grades red coins as cameo, so if you see a PCGS graded bronze Indian Head Cent graded as PR65Cam it is a Red Cameo. PCGS just started adding the RD designation to the label for bronze proof Indian Head Cents, so any of the first cameo proof Indian Head Cents graded by PCGS will not indicate that the coin is RD. Because toning will tend to obscure the cameo contrast of bronze proof coins, there are not many RB cameo examples, and I believe that is the reason why PCGS does not apply a cameo designation to RB coins. However, NGC will grade RB coins with a cameo designation, with the following dates having been graded as Proof RB-Cameos by NGC: 1864, 1865, 1866, 1871, 1874, 1876, 1878, and 1891. Any of the bronze cameo coins would be suitable for a high grade type set as in "cameo", they are also very eye-appealing coins, but all are scarce. Interestingly, as of the writing of this article, the 1877 is the one of the most available dates in Red cameo, with there being a total of 8 Red cameo examples graded by both services, and the 1878 is probably the most available "common" date, also with 8 red cameos graded by both services, and 3 RB cameos graded by NGC. Note, utilizing only PCGS population data, less than 1/2 of 1% (0.47% or .0047) of all PCGS graded bronze proof Indian Head Cents are cameo coins, and there is only one bronze deep cameo coin. Cameo proof Indian Head Cents are very rare.

1864-1869: As a group, probably the most difficult dates to acquire in any grade. None of these dates can really be considered common, but nice examples can be found.

1864 No L Proof: Probably the least number available coins in proof grades 64RB & 65RB. A very rare coin in RD. PCGS has graded only 10 PR65RD's with 1 PR66RD and 1 PR67RD; NGC has graded but 1 PR65RD, with none higher. This date is available in Cameo: PCGS has graded 3 cameo examples with the highest a PR65Cam; NGC has graded no RD Cameo examples, but they have graded a PR64RBCam. There are 2 deep (or "ultra") cameos with one PCGS PR64RD Deep Cameo and one NGC PR66RD Ultra Cameo. (I have seen both coins and the NGC PR66 Ultra cameo has a very pink, un-natural dipped out look, and the PCGS PR64RD Deep Cameo has a cherry-red color and looks under-graded in comparison).

A very important coin as a one-year type, the type of 1860 - 1864 struck in the new bronze alloy. This is one of the rarest dates in the proof Indian Cent collection. The mintage of 1864 proof cents is open to some debate. Breen recorded a total of 470 proof sets of the silver and minor coins sold by the Mint. He breaks down the deliveries to those made before the Mint Act of April 22 as the mintage of the copper nickel ex-

amples (370) and those after as the mintage of the bronze No L pieces (100). This cannot be correct, since there are nearly 200 1864 No L proofs graded from all the grading services combined. There must have been an unknown number of specimens made and distributed later in the year. Up until this time, and continuing until 1878, the mintage figures of minor coins must be reconstructed from sales figures of sets and any other collateral evidence that can be found. The Mint was under no legal obligation to record mintage figures for minor coin proofs. We can guess at the original figures based on what we see in the marketplace, accounting for a quantity of examples being lost to the ravages of time, but even an educated guess will undoubtedly be off the mark. Regardless, perhaps 300 is the correct mintage.

1865 Proof: The second most difficult date to find in proof grades 64RB & 65RB. A very rare coin in RD. PCGS has graded only 9 PR65RD's and only 1 PR66RD; NGC has graded 5 PR65RD, and only 1 PR66RD. This date is available in Cameo: PCGS has graded no cameo examples; NGC has graded one PR64RD Cameo.

This is a very difficult date to find in gem full red. Like many other dates in this series, the rarity of the coins struck in proof format have no relation to the rarity of the regular issues. Non-proofs are fairly common for this date. Not so for the proofs. The mintage currently given in references is 500, which may be generous. This issue is notorious for having low percentage of red. Many of the planchets used for the proofs were on streaky planchets. When the alloys of Tin and Zinc are not mixed well into the copper, pockets of alloy remain in the bronze ingot. As the ingot is rolled out, these pockets get elongated and eventually turn into streaks on the finished planchets. Tin and Zinc are very volatile and will not hold the original color of the coin. The few 1865's that remain in full red are presumably from a higher quality melt, and are very rare and desirable because of this.

1866 Proof: More readily available than the 1864 & 1865, but still a difficult date to find in proof grades 64RB & 65RB, especially ones that look nice. A very scarce coin in RD. PCGS has graded only 17 PR65RD's and 3 PR66RD's; NGC has graded 8 PR65RD's, and 4 PR66RD's. This date is available in Cameo: PCGS has graded 5 cameo examples, with the highest being PR66RD Cam; NGC has graded one PR64RD Cam and a PR67RB Cam.

Closer inspection will reveal small depressions on Liberty's cheek and neck. These are presumably die rust marks and are on every 1866 example and are therefore not considered in determining the grade of any 1866 proof. The reverse die is the same die used on the 1865, although it was repolished between the two issues.

1867 Proof: Again, more readily available than the 1864 & 1865, but still a difficult date to find in proof grades 64RB & 65RB, especially ones that look nice. A very scarce coin in RD. PCGS has graded only 13 PR65RD's and 1 PR66RD; NGC has graded 11 PR65RD's, and 5 PR66RD's. This date is available in Cameo: PCGS has graded 1 cameo example, a PR66RD Cam; NGC has graded 2 PR65RD Cam's.

The dies used for proofs this year show many anomalies, which sometimes get mistaken for problems on the coin. On the obverse there is always a die line on the neck, which to the uninitiated eye may look like a scratch. The reverse die is a leftover die used in 1865 and 1866. By its usage in 1867 it has acquired numerous die polishing marks which may look like hairlines. None of these are grade limiting and are on all examples seen to date.



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1868 Proof: Again, more readily available than the 1864 & 1865, but still a difficult date to find in proof grades 64RB & 65RB, especially ones that look nice. A very scarce coin in RD. PCGS has graded only 13 PR65RD's and 2 PR66RD's; NGC has graded only 4 PR65RD's, and 2 PR66RD's. This date is not available in Cameo.

About 100 examples were struck with a widely rotated reverse (about 170 degrees). Examples of this date are very hard to locate in gem condition.

1869 Proof: Again, more readily available than the 1864 & 1865, but still a difficult date to find in proof grades 64RB & 65RB, especially ones that look nice. A very scarce coin in RD. PCGS has graded only 17 PR65RD's and 3 PR66RD's; NGC has graded 14 PR65RD's, and 2 PR66RD's. This date is available in Cameo: PCGS has graded 4 cameo examples, with the highest PR66RD Cam; NGC has graded 2 PR66RD Cam's.

Many die polishing lines in the field may be mistaken for hairlines. Many of the dates in the late 1860's and early 1870's are only found with moderately deep mirrors. The reason for this seems to be that the dies had been polished after they were hardened, which does not impart as deep a mirror as found on later dates. Additionally the reverse dies were normally held over and used for many years, being repolished many times throughout its life.

1870-1879 As a group these dates are not as difficult to acquire in collectable grades, but still scarce. The dates in the early 70's (1871-1875) are very hard to find as high grade examples and full RD coins are particularly difficult to find, but less so than the 1864-1869. Starting in 1879, the dates are considered common, and nice examples can be found with much less difficulty.

1870 Proof: Again, more available than most of the dates in the 1860's, but still a difficult date to find in nice examples of higher proof grades. A scarce coin in RD. PCGS has graded only 20 PR65RD's and 4 PR66RD's; NGC has graded just 9 PR65RD's, and 4 PR66RD's. This date is not available in Cameo.

The dies on all 1870 proof Indian Cents are rather roughly polished on both sides. The resulting criss-crossing die polishing marks may be confused with hairlines on the field of the coin. The reverse die used to strike this example is the same die that struck some of the 1864 With L proofs (PR-2).

1871 Proof: Again, more available than most of the dates in the 1860's, but still a difficult date to find in nice examples of higher proof grades. A moderately scarce coin in RD. PCGS has graded 29 PR65RD's but only 1 PR66RD; NGC has graded 16 PR65RD's, and 3 PR66RD's. This date is available in Cameo, but there is only one example graded PR66RD Cam by PCGS.

All 1871 Indian Cents come with moderate mirrors, and this coin is no exception. The beauty of this example is magnified when you realize how the typical 1871 looks. As in the previous lot, the apparent hairlines on the fields are actually die polish lines imparted at the Mint. These do not limit the grade, however they may have influenced the graders to be a but too conservative on this example. A wonderful example. The reverse die used

on this example is the same as used in 1870. This is a shallow N reverse, which was the old style used prior to this date. Most 1871 non-proof Indian Cents have the new redesigned reverse which has a bold N in "ONE".



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1872 Proof: Again, more available than most of the dates in the 1860's, but still a difficult date to find in nice examples of higher proof grades. A very scarce coin in RD. PCGS has graded 10 PR65RD's and 6 PR66RD's; NGC has graded 11 PR65RD's, and 3 PR66RD's. This date is not available in Cameo.

The 1872 proof issue was struck in about the same quantities as the other dates in the early 1870's, but for some reason, are much scarcer than other dates in gem full red grades. Most of the encountered examples are some shade of red brown. There is strong additional date demand for this issue due to the rarity of the non-proof format issues. The reverse die used on this coin has a curious anomaly. There is a distinct bulge on the right serif of the T in CENT. This die is seen on later issues until 1877.

1873 Proof: Again, more available than those of the 1860's, but still a difficult date to find in nice proof examples. A scarce coin in RD. PCGS has graded only 24 PR65RD's and 3 PR66RD's; NGC has graded 6 PR65RD's, and 2 PR66RD's. This date is available in Cameo: PCGS has graded 2 cameo examples, with the highest PR66RD Cam; NGC has graded no cameos of this date.

This issue typically comes with moderate mirrors. The obverse fields has been drastically polished to the point where the eye socket is now part of the field and the first feather is disconnected from the headband. Nearly all 1873 proofs seen to date are like this. The reverse die is a reuse of a die first used for the 1872 proof. The Closed 3 date style is used on the early dies made prior to Chief Coiner A.L. Snowden's complaint on January 18th regarding the similarities of the look of the date to 1878. All proofs this

year are of the closed 3 style. The reported mintage of 1100 seems to be in line with the rarity of examples seen in the marketplace. This is a very tough coin to locate in gem full red condition. This is due to the sloppy die preparation, which produced coins that do not seem to excite very often.

1874 Proof: Again, more available than those of the 1860's, but still a difficult date to find in nice proof examples. A very scarce coin in RD. PCGS has graded only 11 PR65RD's and 7 PR66RD's; NGC has graded 11 PR65RD's, and 2 PR66RD's. This date is available in Cameo: PCGS has graded 3 cameo examples, with the highest a PR66RD Cam; NGC has graded no RD cameos of this date, but has graded one PR65RB Cam.

This example shows die finishing lines from the 10:30 clock position to 4:30. These may look like hairlines to the untrained eye. These are caused by a rougher polishing of the die than typical for proofs. This is in fact a fairly early die state of this issue. The mirrors are moderate at best, but represent best available for this issue in this die state. The entire issue was struck from a single pair of dies. The obverse exhibits a die anomaly by 4 in the date. This looks like a repunched date but was probably caused by a defective digit punch. The reverse is struck using the same workhorse proof die used in 1872 and 1873.

1875 Proof: This date is essentially on a par with those of the 1860's, and particularly difficult to find in higher grade proof examples. A very scarce coin in RD. PCGS has graded only 11 PR65RD's and 2 PR66RD's; NGC has graded 6 PR65RD's, and no PR66RD's. This date is available in Cameo: PCGS has graded 2 cameo examples, with the highest a PR65RD Cam; NGC has graded but one PR65RD Cam.

Moderate mirrors, as is typical for this issue. This is a very tough date in gem full red. This is a year where the production of proofs was not given the quality control seen in other years. Every denomination in the proof set is hard to find in the higher grades due to this lack of quality standards. For years they were unknown in PR65RD. A few are now known, but it is perhaps because the grading services lowered their expectations due to the quality of extant examples.

1876 Proof: Again, more available than those of the 1860's, but still a difficult date to find in nice proof examples. A scarce coin in RD. PCGS has graded 24 PR65RD's and 10 PR66RD's; NGC has graded 8 PR65RD's, and 3 PR66RD's. This date is available in Cameo: PCGS has graded but 1 cameo example a PR65RD Cam; NGC has graded two RD cameos of this date, with the highest a PR66RD Cam and also one PR66RB Cam.

The reverse die is the same die used to strike Proofs from 1872, 1873 and 1874 as well as a few 1875's. It was lightly polished this year, removing some of the light die polish marks seen on earlier issues.



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1877 Proof: Again, more available than dates in the 1860's, but still a difficult date to find in nice examples of higher proof grades. There is a lot of date pressure on this coin due to the scarcity of the mint state 1877. Another mid-level scarce coin in RD. PCGS has graded only 20 PR65RD's, but 11 PR66RD's and 1 PR67RD; NGC has graded 13 PR65RD's, just 2 PR66RD's and 1 PR67RD. This date is the most "common" available date in Red Cameo with 8 total coins graded in cameo (if 8 coins out of the 528 coins graded - less than 2% - can be considered common!). PCGS has graded 4 cameo examples, the highest graded is PR65RD Cam; NGC has likewise graded 4 RD cameos of this date, with the highest a PR66RD Cam.

Always popular as a proof example of the key date in the Indian Cent series. No precise mintage figure exists for the proof 1877 Indian, but enough information is available to make an educated guess. Breen lists 510 in his Proof Encyclopedia. The present estimate is now 910. It is known that 510 "Silver" sets were sold which included the five silver coins, the two nickel coins and the cent. Additionally, there were about 400 "Nickel" sets struck which included just the cent and the two nickel coins, of which we know 260 were mailed out, with the unknown remainder being sold over the counter in Philadelphia. The reverse die used to strike this example is the "Bulged T" reverse, which was first used in 1872 and was used to strike many of the proof issues between that date and 1877. The right pennant of the T is in much higher relief than the other parts of the letter. This feature neither raises nor lowers the desirability of the coin.

1878 Proof: From this date forward there are more “common” dates than there are scarce or rare dates. You could almost draw a line between 1877 and 1878 when it comes to collecting proof Indian Head Cents, with the later dates far more easily obtainable than the earlier dates. From this date forward, I will provide the Pop report figures for the scarce and rare RD coins only. If no Population figures are given, you can assume that the date is readily obtainable even in high grade red condition (Proof 65 and above, often with proof 67RD coins available). PCGS has graded 37 PR65RD’s, 12 PR66RD’s and 1 PR67RD; NGC has graded 24 PR65RD’s, 5 PR66RD’s and 1 PR67RD. This date is the most common date available in PR64RD. It is also the most “common” available date in Cameo with 11 total coins graded in cameo (but 11 coins out of the 551 coins graded is still less than 2%). PCGS has graded 5 cameo examples, the highest graded is PR66RD Cam; NGC has graded 3 RD cameos of this date, with the highest a PR67RD Cam (the Starr coin) and 3 RB cameos of this date, with the highest a PR66RB Cam.

Starting in 1878 many things changed at the Mint. Proof production of minor coinage increased to two to three times the previous year’s mintage. The actual mintage of minor proofs were now recorded with accuracy. The Mint’s minor coin production was based more on expected demand than actual demand. The many unsold examples were sold in bulk to local coin dealers at or near face value. Also starting this year planchet production for minor coinage was shifted from the Mint to outside sources. The quality of proof coinage improved.

1879 Proof: Readily available in all grades. This date is available in Cameo: PCGS has graded 2 cameo examples, both graded PR67RD Cam; NGC has not graded any cameos of this date.

This date is more commonly found in higher grades than most other dates in the proof series. This would be a perfect date for a high quality type set.

1880-1889 As a group these dates are the most common in collectable grades, and not considered scarce. The dates in the late 80’s (1887-1889) are very hard to find as high grade examples and full RD coins are nearly impossible to find; Red 1887 and 1888’s are on a par with the rare 1864 & 1865. The 1880 through the 1886 Type 1 are considered the most common of the proof Indian Head Cents and nice examples can be easily acquired.

1880 Proof: Readily available in all grades. This date is available in Cameo: PCGS has graded 2 cameo examples, the highest graded is PR65RD Cam; NGC has graded 3 cameo examples, the highest graded is PR67RD Cam.

A common date in the proof series, if in fact any date can truly be called “common”. The two 8’s in the date show some punch breakage. The digit punches used this year show broken or partially missing elements to varying degrees. Many different dies were effected.

1881 Proof: Readily available in all grades. No Cameos of this date have been graded by either service.

1882 Proof: Readily available in all PrRB grades; but scarce in RD grades. PCGS has graded 14 PR65RD’s, 10 PR66RD’s and 4 PR67RD’s; NGC has graded 9 PR65RD’s, only 1 PR66RD with none higher. Thus, the two grading services have only graded 38 total coins in PR65RD or higher. No Cameos of this date have been graded by either service.

1883 Proof: Readily available in all PrRB grades; but scarce in RD grades. PCGS has graded 15 PR65RD’s, 5 PR66RD’s and 1 PR67RD; NGC has graded 11 PR65RD’s, only 3 PR66RD’s and 1 PR67RD. Thus, the two grading services have only graded 36 total coins in PR65RD or higher.

Full red gem proof Indian Cents for this year are very tough to find. Presently the PCGS population is 4 in Proof 66RD and 1 in Proof 67. This is curious since the mintage is one of the highest of the series. This situation also exists for the 1886 and 1888 issues which have an even higher mintage and are even rarer than this date in gem full red.

1884 Proof: This is probably the most common date and is one of the more available dates in all grades, but no Cameos of this date have been graded by either service.

1885 Proof: Readily available in all PrRB grades; but scarce in RD grades. PCGS has graded 17 PR65RD’s, 8 PR66RD’s and 3 PR67RD; but NGC has graded only 4 PR65RD’s, only 3 PR66RD’s and 1 PR67RD. Again, the two grading services have only graded 36 total coins in PR65RD or higher. No Cameos of this date have been graded by either service.

1886 Type 1 Proof: Readily available in all PrRB grades; but scarce in RD grades. PCGS has graded 18 PR65RD’s, 10 PR66RD’s with none higher; but NGC has graded only 3 PR65RD’s, only 2 PR66RD’s with none higher. Thus, the two grading services have only graded 33 total coins in PR65RD or higher. No Cameos of this date have been graded by either service.

The more common design type with the last feather pointing between the I & C of AMERICA. The PCGS population report grouped both the Type 1 and Type 2 1886 Proof Indian into one listing as late as 1999. When they were separated, the entire population was

moved into the Type 1 listing. This makes the Type 1 seem more common than it actually is if one looks solely at that data. However, the reality is not much different for gem full red proofs. The Type 2 turns out to be prohibitively rare in high grades in full red.

1886 Type 2 Proof: I include this coin even though it is a variety because, unlike the 1864-L which is virtually unobtainable, this date is available in PR64RB & PR65RB; but it is prohibitively rare in RD grades. PCGS has graded 3 PR65RD's, and only 1 PR66RD with none higher; but NGC has graded only 1 PR65RD with none higher. Thus, the two grading services have graded only 5 total coins in PR65RD or higher, and there are only 9 PCGS PR64RD coins graded. If you want to add this date to your set, you will probably have to settle for a RB coin, or at best a PR64RD example. No Cameos of this date have been graded by either service.

One of the rarest dates in the proof Indian Cent series in gem full red. The few full red examples that exist have a light gold tone, nearly straw colored. Other issues, like 1887 show this same peculiar color. Be aware that this is normal for the issue and may be a clue to the reason so few have been graded of these dates in full red. It's not that these get unfairly rejected by the grading services, I think they know an original coin when they see them. The coins are just not out there in full red. (The PR66RD was just offered in Heritage's F.U.N. sale featuring the "Joshua" collection of proof Indian Cents.) NGC has graded a PR65RD example also. The populations may not reflect the overall rarity of this issue properly due to the addition of this listing in 1999, however years of experience have shown this to be an outstanding rarity.

1887 Proof: Readily available in all PrRB grades; but very rare in RD grades. PCGS has graded only 24 1887's in Red (less than any other date other than the 1886 Type 2) with only 10 PR65RD's and 2 PR66RD's; NGC has graded only 11 total 1887's in Red, with 3 PR65RD's and but 1 PR66RD. Thus, the two grading services have only graded 16 total coins in PR65RD or higher. The 1887 in proof Red is on a par in rarity with the 1865 and is a very tough date to acquire in full red condition. No Cameos of this date have been graded by either service.

This is one of the top condition rarities of the series. As with the 1886 Type 2, this issue is usually rather pale in color when found full red. It would be interesting to know if this is due to a different alloy used or if the cause was some external procedure used at the Mint. Perhaps the cent planchets were washed in an acidic solution prior to striking. Regardless of the cause, the coins remain very difficult to find full red.

1888 Proof: Readily available in all PrRB grades; but very rare in RD grades. PCGS has graded only 33 1888's in Red with only 7 PR65RD's and 4 PR66RD's; NGC has graded only 5 total 1888's in Red, with 1 PR65RD and 1 PR66RD. Thus, the two grading services have graded only 13 total coins in PR65RD or higher. Arguably, the 1888 in proof Red may be the rarest non-variety date in proof Red as it is the single scarcest date in PR65RD and only the fact that there are 5 total PR66RD's between the two services prevents it from a claim of the rarest date in Proof red. Like the 1887, this is a very tough date to acquire in full red condition. Two Cameos of this date have been graded by PCGS with the highest being a PR66RD Cam. NGC has not graded any cameos of this date.

The mintage indicates that this is one of the more common dates in the proof Indian Cent series. However experience and the PCGS population reports show that this is a moderately scarce date over all, and an exceptionally scarce date in full red. Only 10 examples are graded PR64RD, with 4 PR65RD's and 4 in PR66RD. Like the 1887, this date commands a large premium equal in gem full red.

1889 Proof: Readily available in all PrRB grades; but very scarce in RD grades. PCGS has graded only 39 1889's in Red with only 13 PR65RD's and 8 PR66RD's; NGC has graded only 16 total 1888's in Red, with 4 PR65RD's and 2 PR66RD's. Thus, the two grading services have only graded 27 total coins in PR65RD or higher. Like the 1887 & 1888, this is a very tough date to acquire in full red condition. No Cameos of this date have been graded by either service.

There are clash marks clearly evident on both sides of [these coins]. This is found on all coins from this die pair. A high percentage of the proof issues in the 1880's show some type of a lack of quality control. It is common to find coins that were struck from known proof dies that were obviously struck only once, possibly on a high speed press. Although these coins will have mirrored fields, they will also have rounded edges and some striking weakness on the feathertips and lower hair curl. These were struck as proofs and included in the proof set sales of the year.

1890-1899 As a group these dates are moderately common in collectable grades, and particularly the later dates (1897-1899) are not considered scarce. The dates in the early 90's (1890, 1891, 1893 and 1896) are very hard to find as high grade examples and full RD coins are very difficult to find, with the 1890 and 1896, both being very rare in PR65RD and above.

1890 Proof: Readily available in PrRB grades, but rare in full Red. PCGS has graded 16 PR65RD's and but 2 PR66RD's; NGC has graded 11 PR65RD's and none higher. Thus, the two grading services have only graded 29 total coins in PR65RD or higher. This date is available in Cameo: Three Cameos of this date have been graded by PCGS all PR64RD Cam; NGC has graded no cameos.

1891 Proof: Readily available, but moderately scarce in full Red. This date is available in Cameo: PCGS has graded 1 cameo, a PR65RD Cam; NGC has graded 1 Red cameo, a PR64RD Cam and 2 PR64RB Cam's.

1892 Proof: This is a relatively common date and readily available in all grades. This date is available in Cameo: PCGS has graded 1 cameo, a PR65RD Cam; NGC has graded 1 cameo, a PR66RD Cam.

1893 Proof: Readily available, but moderately scarce in full Red. This date is available in Cameo: PCGS has graded no cameos; NGC has graded 1 cameo, a PR64RD Cam.

1894 Proof: Readily available, but moderately scarce in full Red. This date is available in Cameo: PCGS has graded 2 cameos the highest being a PR66RD Cam; NGC has graded 1 cameo, a PR65RD Cam.

1895 Proof: Readily available in all grades. This date is available in Cameo: PCGS has graded 2 cameos, both being PR65RD Cam's; NGC has graded 1 cameo, a PR64RD Cam. Early die state examples have "orange peel" fields. Here is Rick Snow's description as to how this occurs:

After the dies are hubbed and the date is applied, the die is given multiple polishes with progressively finer and finer polish. The last polish given to the dies prior to being hardened gives the field a surface quite like a mirror. This is the deepest mirror attainable on the dies. When the die is hardened, the metal shrinks slightly creating a wavy effect on the polished surfaces. It looks somewhat like the surface of an orange. When you see orange peel on a proof issue you can be sure that it is one of the first examples struck from those dies. Later polishing to the already hardened dies will produce a flatter and shallower mirror.

1896 Proof: Readily available in all PrRB grades, but this is a very scarce date to locate in gem full red. PCGS has graded 9 PR65RD's and but 1 PR66RD; NGC has graded 9 PR65RD's and but 1 PR66RD. Thus, the two grading services have only graded 20 total coins in PR65RD or higher. This date is available in Cameo: PCGS has graded no 1896 cameos; NGC has graded 1 PR65RD Cam.

1897 Proof: Readily available in all grades, but slightly scarcer in Red. This date is available in Cameo: PCGS has graded 2 cameo examples, the highest graded is PR68RD Cam, the single highest graded proof Indian Head Cent graded by PCGS (there are 2 1902 PR68RD's but they are not cameos); NGC has not graded any 1897's as cameos.

1898 Proof: Readily available in all grades. This date is available in Cameo with four Cameos of this date graded by both services: PCGS has graded 2 cameos with the highest being a PR67RD Cam; NGC has graded 2 cameos with the highest being a PR66RD Cam;

1899 Proof: Readily available in all grades. This date is available in Cameo: PCGS has graded 1 PR66RD Cam; NGC has not graded any 1899 cameos.

1900-1909 As a group these dates are, like the early dates in the 1880's quite common in collectable grades. However, the dates in the later 1900's (1904 through 1909) are scarce in high grade RD examples, with the 1904 having only 10 examples grade PR66RD between both services, and the 1907 being particularly difficult in any grade of RD. The 1904 - 1906, the 1908 and 1909 are perceived to be common dates, but they are somewhat undervalued in PR66RD and above due to their scarcity. Cameos are uncommon for these later date issues as the mint began to fully polish the dies prior to the proof strikings.

1900 Proof: Readily available in all grades. This date is available in Cameo: PCGS has not graded any 1900's as cameos; NGC has graded a PR65RD Cam;



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1901 Proof: Readily available in all grades. This date is available in Cameo: PCGS has graded 2 PR66RD Cam's; NGC has graded 1 PR65RD Cam.

1902 Proof: Readily available in all grades. No Cameos of this date have been graded by either service.

1903 Proof: Readily available in all grades. No Cameos of this date have been graded by either service.

Proofs of this year were produced without any frost on the devices. The present example is known to be a very early die state due to the strength of the orange peel fields. This issue is always seen with the misplaced 0 and 3 digits in the denticles below the date.

1904 Proof: Readily available in all grades, but rare in PR66RD and higher with only 5 PCGS PR66RD's with a sole PCGS PR67RD; NGC has graded 5 PR66RD's with none higher. This is the scarcest date in high grade proof red in the 1900's. No Cameos of this date have been graded by either service.

Perhaps it is because of the existence of fine die finishing lines in the field on both sides. These are typical for this issue and should not limit the grade.

1905 Proof: Readily available in all grades, but somewhat scarce in PR66RD as are all of the dates after 1903. No Cameos of this date have been graded by either service.

Fine die finishing lines are present on the fields of both sides. Like many dates in the 1900's this is normal and is many times found on the earliest die state pieces.

1906 Proof: Readily available in all grades. This date is available in Cameo: PCGS has graded 2 cameo examples, the highest a PR66RD Cam; NGC has graded no cameo examples of this date.

Unlike the earlier and later dates, die finishing lines are not found on this issue.

1907 Proof: Readily available in all grades, but scarce in full red. No Cameos of this date have been graded by either service.

Very tough date. The lowest mintage date of the proof Indian Cents after 1878 with only 1,475 produced. This is a very early die state with deep mirrors with orange peel fields. With this issue when you have an early die state example, you will also find fine die finishing lines on both sides. These are typical for the issue and do not detract from the desirability of the coin or limit the grade. Die finishing lines tend to appear and disappear as the coin is turned in the light.

1908 Proof: Readily available in all grades No Cameos of this date have been graded by either service.

1909 Proof: Readily available in all grades No Cameos of this date have been graded by either service.

A very popular issue due to the change to the Lincoln design.

PCGS Registry set information:

If anyone is interested in putting together a high grade proof Indian Head Cent PCGS Registry set the following information will be helpful with regard to those coins that are considered high grade and therefore high point value coins. These coins will ultimately be needed to put together a top rated Registry set. Also, you should be aware of how PCGS determines the values of each coin in the proof Indian Head Cent Registry set: All cameo coins receive a 3 point bonus in addition to the grade value - so a PR65Cam coin is worth a grade value of 68; deep cameo coins receive a 4 point bonus - so a PR65DCam coin is worth a grade value of 69. RB coins receive a 1 point bonus - so a PR65RB coin is worth a grade value of 66; RD coins receive a 2 point bonus - so a PR65RD coin is worth a grade value of 67. Higher graded coins receive their respective higher grade plus any applicable bonus points.

With respect to the availability of high grade Indian Head Cents, both Copper-Nickel and bronze coins graded PR66 & PR66RD, the following is a summary of their rarity (Pops of 10 and lower) Note all PR66RB coins dated prior to 1878, and those dated 1887 through 1896 and 1903 through 1908 all have Pops of less than 10 examples graded. So any high grade proof Indian Head Cent set in PR66 and higher will be a real challenge.

Pr66RB Pop 0/0 dates:	1873, 1893, 1894
Pr66RB Pop 1/0 dates:	1869, 1871, 1878, 1890, 1891, 1904
Pr66RB Pop 2/0 dates:	1865, 1874*, 1903, 1906
Pr66RB Pop 3/0 dates:	1866, 1867, 1872, 1876, 1877
Pr66RB Pop 4/0 dates:	1868, 1870, 1888, 1889, 1896, 1900*
Pr66RB Pop 5/0 dates:	1875, 1887, 1892, 1905, 1907*
Pr66RB Pop 6/0 dates:	1895
Pr66RB Pop 7/0 dates:	1881*, 1908
Pr66RB Pop 8/0 dates:	1864*, 1898*
Pr66RB Pop 10/0 dates:	1902

(Dates with an * have higher graded examples. The dates between 1883 and 1886 are the most common, all having 20 or more examples graded in Pr66RB or higher)

Pr66 Pop 2/0 dates:	1861
Pr66 Pop 4/0 dates:	1860
Pr66 Pop 8/1 dates:	1863
Pr66RD Pop 1/0 dates:	1865, 1867, 1871
Pr66RD Pop 1/1 dates:	1864Br
Pr66RD Pop 2/0 dates:	1868, 1875, 1887, 1890
Pr66RD Pop 3/0 dates:	1866, 1869, 1873, 1890
Pr66RD Pop 4/0 dates:	1870, 1888, 1891, 1896
Pr66RD Pop 5/1 dates:	1883, 1904
Pr66RD Pop 5/2 dates:	1893
Pr66RD Pop 6/0 dates:	1872
Pr66RD Pop 7/0 dates:	1874
Pr66RD Pop 7/8 dates:	1898
Pr66RD Pop 8/0 dates:	1889
Pr66RD Pop 8/3 dates:	1885
Pr66RD Pop 8/8 dates:	1897
Pr66RD Pop 9/0 dates:	1894
Pr66RD Pop 10/0 dates:	1876, 1886 Ty1
Pr66RD Pop 10/4 dates:	1882

Proof Cameo Dates:

Pr65Cam Pop 1/0 dates: 1859
 Pr65DCam Pop 1/1 dates: 1864CN
 Pr65DCam Pop 1/2 dates: 1862
 Pr65RD-Cam Pop 1/0 dates: 1864BR, 1875, 1876, 1880, 1891, 1892
 Pr65RD-Cam Pop 1/1 dates: 1894, 1906
 Pr65RD-Cam Pop 1/2 dates: 1869
 Pr65RD-Cam Pop 2/0 dates: 1895, 1877
 Pr65RD-Cam Pop 2/1 dates: 1874
 Pr65RD-Cam Pop 2/2 dates: 1866
 Pr65RD-Cam Pop 3/1 dates: 1878

Pr66Cam Pop 1/0 dates: 1860
 Pr66RDCam Pop 1/0 dates: 1867, 1871, 1873, 1874, 1878, 1888, 1894, 1899, 1906
 Pr66RDCam Pop 1/1 dates: 1898
 Pr66DCam Pop 1/0 dates: 1864CN
 Pr66Cam Pop 2/0 dates: 1863
 Pr66Cam Pop 2/0 dates: 1864CN
 Pr66RD-Cam Pop 2/0 dates: 1866, 1869, 1901
 Pr66DCam Pop 2/0 dates: 1862
 Pr67Cam Pop 2/0 dates: 1862
 Pr67RD-Cam Pop 1/0 dates: 1898
 Pr67RD-Cam Pop 2/0 dates: 1879
 Pr68RD-Cam Pop 1/0 dates: 1897 The ultimate proof Indian!

How to submit coins for attribution

What should be submitted: Any premium value variety which is has not been previously listed in the Flying Eagle and Indian Cent Attribution Guide. Any overdate, doubled die, repunched date, die anomaly (if it's dramatic enough to ensure collectability) and misplaced digit (provided it is dramatic enough) should be submitted.

All coins should be sent with a listing of the coins, their insurance value, and a return address and phone number.
How much does it cost?: Please include \$4 per coin, plus return postage. All coin will be returned via the U.S. Post Office by registered and insured postage. Their cost is \$8 plus \$1 for every \$1,000 in insured value.

How to submit a coin for attribution: There is no limit on submissions. All coins should be sent to Fly-In Club Attributor,

What will I get?: All new listings will be added to future editions of the Flying Eagle and Indian Cent book by Rick Snow. New varieties will be listed in a future issue of Longacre's Ledger, space permitting.

**Rick Snow,
 P.O. Box 65645,
 Tucson, AZ 85728**

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