

Proof “With Motto” Seated Liberty

*An amazing number of these collectable dollars have survived,
more than many numismatists might expect.*



DESIGNED BY Christian Gobrecht, the Seated Liberty dollar with the motto IN GOD WE TRUST was struck from 1866 to 1873. As

I mentioned last month (p. 31) when I discussed the varieties, mintages and survivors among “No Motto” Seated Liberty proofs, certified populations can vary as much as 20 percent because some coins have been submitted to grading services more than once.

In the case of “With Motto” proofs, the survival rate is higher than I would expect (and expert Andy Lustig agrees), but because of their desirability and high value, some of the coins could have been resubmitted many times. From a probable mintage of 6,060, between 2,700 and 3,400 coins have been certified. This indicates a very high survival rate of 44 to 56 percent. With that said, the type is rare in Proof-65 and all but uncollectable in better grades.

1863. This is the first of the so-called “transitional patterns” described in J. Hewitt Judd’s *United States Pattern, Experimental and Trial Pieces* (ANA Library Catalog No. GA90.J8). In silver (J-345), perhaps 4 or 5 are known; in copper (J-346 and 348), 7 and 1 known, respectively; and in aluminum (J-347), 4 known. No coins were made as business strikes, and Lustig presumes that all the patterns of 1863-65 were made for collectors after 1865.

1864. Six specimens of this transitional pattern are known in silver (J-396), 7 in copper (J-397), 3 in aluminum (J-398) and 1 in nickel (J-399).

None were made as business strikes.

1865. This is the last of the transitional patterns, with 11 in silver (J-434), 10 in copper (J-435) and an unknown number in aluminum (J-436). A die trial (J-437) also is known, with 4 in copper. No coins were made as business strikes.

1866. This issue marked the beginning of regular production. According to *Walter Breen’s Encyclopedia of U.S. and Colonial Proof Coins* (ANA Library Catalog No. GA80.B7c), 725 coins were struck in three varieties. Between 380 and 480 have been certified in all grades; 24 are known in copper (J-541).



▲ This Proof-64 1866 “With Motto” Seated Liberty dollar, auctioned in January, sold for \$5,060.

1867. Mintage has been established at 625, with three known varieties. Of those, 380 to 480 have been certified as proofs. Fourteen are known in copper (J-592) and 4 in brass (J-593).

1868. Six hundred coins were struck in two varieties. At least 340 have been certified (perhaps as many as 430), with a couple known in aluminum (J-652). At the time, there were extensive discussions about the possible use of aluminum for U.S. coinage, and at

least five complete, cased aluminum proof sets were made, of which I have seen two. Some numismatists, including Lustig, believe this is the only year an aluminum pattern dollar actually was struck. (Other specimens are contemporary fantasies struck by the U.S. Mint for collectors.)

1869. Mintage is 600, with three varieties, one of which (Breen-1) features the “Reverse of 1868.” At least 340 coins have been certified (possibly as many as 435), with 6 known in copper (J-763), 4 in aluminum (J-764) and 1 in nickel (J-765).

1870. A thousand were struck in two varieties, both with the “Reverse of 1869.” Certified pieces total 350 to 440, and some trial pieces are known: 6 in copper (J-1020), 1 in aluminum (J-1021) and 5 in nickel (J-1022).

1871. Mintage is 960. At least two varieties are known, and Breen alluded to a third. Between 300 and 390 coins have been certified, and some die trials have been documented: 2 in copper (J-1151), 2 in nickel (J-1153) and an unknown quantity in aluminum (J-1152).

1872. An unknown number of the 950 coins struck were melted in July 1873. Of those remaining, 300 to 375 have been certified, with one die trial in copper (J-1210) and some in aluminum (J-1211).

1873. Six hundred were minted, all with the “Closed 3” date logotype. Between 300 and 380 coins have been certified, and some are known to have been struck from regular dies. Six die trials were made in copper (J-1274) and 6 in aluminum (J-1275).

This completes the proof Seated Liberty series. Enjoy your collecting!

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