



## Grading United States Coins EPISODE 4

### But It Came From The Mint...: Key Aspects of Mint State Grading

#### INTRODUCTION

This episode focuses on the key factors that play a role in determining the grade of a Mint State coin. Those factors are strike, luster, bag marks, and eye appeal. It is important to remember that not all series' grade the same. Morgan and Peace Dollars are unique in that they are mostly uncirculated.

#### Contact Marks

- The creation of contact marks is most often associated with one coin touching another coin
- Contact marks come in multiple sizes:
  - Small marks are referred to as ticks
  - Medium marks are referred to as bag marks
  - Large marks are called scrapes
- It is important to note the size, location, and severity of contact marks, not necessarily the number
- It is recommended that graders look at the metallic composition and coin series to determine any coin-specific factors that may influence a coin's grade

#### Strike

- The amount of pressure used determines the strike of a coin
- A fully struck coin will have crisp details
- A weakly struck coin will be rounded at the highest points
- The Mint where the coin originated, the year, and the die used can all influence the strike of a coin
- It is possible to have a Mint State coin with a weak strike

#### Luster

- Luster refers to the shine of a coin, resulting from die flow lines when the coin is struck. A coin should have original shine from when it was freshly struck
- Die flow lines radiate out from the center of the coin
- Luster is one of the first aspects to disappear when a coin is circulated or cleaned
- There are different types of luster
  - Brilliant luster – flashy, bright, and shows a cartwheel reflection
  - Satin luster – more mellow than brilliant luster with a satiny glow

#### Eye Appeal

- Eye appeal plays a key role in market grading
- Eye appeal encompasses the strike, luster, bag marks, and wear of a coin
- Eye appeal can vary from person to person and be influenced by factors such as toning
- It is the most subjective aspect of coin grading

#### COIN OF THE EPISODE

##### 1882-CC Morgan Dollar

- Minted in Carson City
- Moderate contact marks
- Strong strike and original mint luster

Graded as MS 63



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