

WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?

Rarities I have never really understood - Examining Varieties, Errors and Numismatic Subtleties
By Stephen Kuhl, March 17, 2018

Author's Note: This is the initial article of a planned, periodic, series that seeks to examine and understand the subtle differences that make some varieties of coins more collectible and valuable than other versions. If you have questions or suggestions on topics, please send me an e-mail on your topic of interest at sjcsracoinclub@gmail.com



Photo courtesy of Littletoncoin.com, at <http://www.littletoncoin.com/shop/ProductDisplay?storeId=10001&catalogId=29555&productId=32034>

THE 1979-P SUSAN B. ANTHONY NEAR DATE / WIDE RIM \$1 COIN

When it comes to the 1979-P Susan B. Anthony dollar coin, I am so confused! Near date or Far date? Wide rim or Narrow rim? I know there is a variety of this coin that is worth much more than the standard version, and I remember that it has to do with the distance between the rim and the date, but I simply can never remember the details. This article briefly explores: the background of the woman whom this coin honors, the coin's specifications and history, variety diagnostics, and its estimated value, population and rarity.

Who was Susan B. Anthony?

Susan Brownell Anthony lived from February 15, 1820 until March 13, 1906. Anthony was a social reformer throughout her long life, focusing on temperance, abolition of slavery, equal rights, and women's suffrage. Arrested and convicted in 1872 for voting, she was pivotal in getting American women the right to vote. In 1878 Anthony convinced US Senator Aaron Sargent (R-CA) to introduce a bill giving women the right to vote. Forty-two years later, in 1920, the bill was ratified and became the 19th Amendment to the US Constitution. Anthony's lifelong contributions to American society, and to women's rights in particular, were honored by a new \$1 US coin first minted in 1979.

1979-P SBA Coin Specification

Mint: Philadelphia; **Mintage:** 360,222,000

Designer Obverse & Reverse: Frank Gasparro

Composition: 91.67% Copper; 8.33% Nickel

Mass: 8.1000g; **Diameter:** 26.5mm; **Edge:** Reeded

Description: Obverse: Susan B. Anthony bust right; 7 stars left, 6 stars right; IN GOD WE TRUST at 3 o'clock; LIBERTY above bust; Date below bust. Reverse: Eagle landing on the moon; earth, E PLURIBUS UNUM, and UNITED STATES OF AMERICA above eagle; ONE DOLLAR below eagle: The rim on both sides is encircled by an eleven sided outline that denotes the "Goodwill messages" Apollo 11 left on the moon on July 20, 1969.

Coin History:

In the late 1970s the Quarter dollar was the largest denomination of US coinage in general circulation, however its purchasing power had declined, producing an interest in issuance of a new dollar coin. First minted for circulation in 1979 through 1981, and then again in 1999, the coin failed to gain public acceptance and use, most likely due to its extreme similarity in composition to the US Quarter dollar. According to the mintages provided in the Red Book™, approximately 877 million coins were minted for circulation by the three mint branches, with almost half (approximately 47%) coming from the Philadelphia mint. Also per the Red Book™, inclusion of Anthony's image on the coin marked the first time that a woman, other than a model or mythical figure, appeared on a circulating US coin.

Two die hubs were manufactured to produce the 1979-P SBA dollars – one with a wide rim and one with a narrow rim. Most of the 1979-P SBA coins were minted in the Narrow rim / Far date variety; many fewer used the wide rim hub, and only the Philadelphia mint produced this variety. In subsequent years the wide rim was used in production of circulation strikes by all the branch mints.

Wide Rim / Near Date Diagnostics:

So back to my confusion, and how to overcome it. The most straight-forward way to determine whether the coin is a Wide rim or Narrow rim variety is to look closely at the spacing of the first and last digits of the date. In the Wide rim / Near date variety the bottom of these numerals are significantly closer to the edge of the coin. In fact, they are less than the width of the numeral "1" away from the rim, whereas the Narrow rim has a gap between the rim and the numerals that is obviously greater than the width of the numeral "1" (see illustration below). As for a memory mnemonic to remember which one is scarcer, and hence more valuable, I remember that the wide rim is NOT widely available. This device helps me from having to dig out my Red Book™ each time I think about this coin!



Photo courtesy of USA Coinbook, at <https://www.usacoinbook.com/coins/3360/dollars/susan-b-anthony/1979-P/wide-rim-near-date>

For further information, a good basic YouTube video to watch from early 2017 is called: *BACK TO BASICS - What is a 1979 Wide Rim Variety Susan B. Anthony Dollar? What's it Worth?* By Videographer BlueridgeSilverhound. The web address is: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X9abMEleE8w>.

Pricing, Populations, and Rarity:

The vast majority of 1979-P SBAs are Narrow rim / Far date, and are essentially worth face value. As seen below, in reviewing different pricing sources for the 1979-P SBA Wide Rim / Near date variety, prices for an MS63 example range from \$30 - \$60, but one can expect to pay much more in the higher Mint State grades. NGC and PCGS populations are also shown in the chart, and one sees that there have been several thousand high grade (MS65+) coins graded by these two services. The PCGS CoinFacts Rarity Scale™ provides the following population estimates for this variety:

- All grades: 15,001 - 20,000;
- MS60+: 9501 - 10,000;
- MS65+: 4501 – 5000

Estimate Source	XF40	AU50	AUS8	MS60	MS63	MS65	MS66	MS67
2018 Redbook					\$38.00			
USA Coinbook					\$60.00			
NGC		\$6.90	\$9.20	\$11.50	\$30.00	\$80.00	\$145.00	\$3,750.00
NGCS Population		0	0	0	79	547	511	51
PCGS	\$12.00	\$13.00	\$16.00	\$19.00	\$35.00	\$45.00	\$100.00	\$3,500.00
PCGS Population	0	1	96	0	264	1438	513	17

Sources:
 Redbook: A Guide Book of United States Coins - 2018 - 71st Edition
 USA coinbook: <https://www.usacoinbook.com/coins/3360/dollars/susan-b-anthony/1979-P/wide-rim-near-date>
 NGC: <https://www.ngccoin.com/coin-explorer/susan-b-anthony-dollars-1979-1999-pscid-52/1979-p-wide-rim-1-ms-coinid-818526>
 PCGS Coinfacts: <http://www.pcgscointfacts.com/Coin/Detail/99571>

Sources / References:

- *A Guide Book of United States Coins - 2018 - 71st Edition (Red Book™)*
- USA coinbook: <https://www.usacoinbook.com/coins/3360/dollars/susan-b-anthony/1979-P/wide-rim-near-date>
- NGC: <https://www.ngccoin.com/coin-explorer/susan-b-anthony-dollars-1979-1999-pscid-52/1979-p-wide-rim-1-ms-coinid-818526>
- Susan B. Anthony Dollars Key Dates, Rarities and Varieties, Key Dates, Rarities and Varieties for SBA Dollars, By James Bucki; <https://www.thespruce.com/susan-b-anthony-dollars-key-varieties-768243>
- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Susan_B._Anthony
- The PCGS CoinFacts Rarity Scale™
- United States Coins by Design Types - An Action Guide for the Collector and Investor by Q. David Bowers
- <http://www.littletoncoin.com/shop/ProductDisplay?storeId=10001&catalogId=29555&productId=32034>.
- Jaime Hernandez. <http://www.pcgscointfacts.com/Coin/Detail/9571>
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- *BACK TO BASICS - What is a 1979 Wide Rim Variety Susan B. Anthony Dollar? What's it Worth?* By Videographer BlueridgeSilverhound. The web address is: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X9abMEleE8w>.

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Even though you hardly ever see SBA dollars in circulation, in my experience I have found that local banks almost always have SBA dollars available. So next time you stop in at your bank, ask if they have any, and see if you can find this variety. Perhaps you will find one - Happy Hunting!

