

Penny Fun Facts

www.ustreas.gov



From 1859 to 1909, the Indian one-cent coin was in use. The obverse of the coin shows UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, an Indian head facing to the left, wearing a feather bonnet. The word LIBERTY is shown on the band across the bonnet, and shows the production date below.

The coin's reverse side shows ONE CENT within a laurel wreath. In 1860 the reverse design was changed slightly, showing ONE CENT within an oak wreath, with three arrows inserted under the ribbon that binds the two branches of the wreath. Above and between the ends of the branches is the shield of the United States.



The Lincoln penny was designed in 1909 in honor of his 100th birthday.

The Lincoln penny was the first time a president had been on a coin. Previously, the public had strongly opposed using portraits on coins because it stemmed back to the European tradition.

The back of the first design of the Lincoln penny was a wreath of wheat.

“E Pluribus Unum” means “One out of many”.

“In God We Trust” appeared for the first time on the Lincoln penny. Congress passed the Act of March 3, 1865, authorizing the use of this motto on our coins during Lincoln’s tenure in office.

Victor David Brenner was the artist who was commissioned to design the coin. The public did not like his name being on the coin, but “VDB”, his initials, in minute form are on the rim, just under the shoulder of Lincoln.



There are more one-cent coins produced than any other denomination.

In 1959, the penny was redesigned to have the Lincoln Memorial on the backside. It was in honor of his 150th birthday.



The initials “FG”, for Frank Gasparro, the engraver who designed the new backside, appear on the right of the design, near the shrubbery.

In 2009, four new backside designs will be released to honor Lincoln’s 200th birthday. Each design will depict four different scenes from his life.