

# Discrepancy in Carson Mint Silver Dollar Production Reports – 1880

The Carson Mint has long been credited with delivering 591,000 standard silver dollars during calendar year 1880. This quantity appears in official publications and numismatic literature. Further, it is well known that 96,000 1880-CC dollars were condemned due to substandard fineness and these were recoined at a later date. While this does not affect total production, it means that the maximum of 1880-CC dollars is 495,000. This investigation indicates that a further 18,000 coins were either not actually minted, or were omitted from Mint Bureau Headquarters documentation. If these coins were not produced the maximum would shrink to 477,000.

During 1880 the Carson Mint did not produce or deliver silver coins during January through April. This was attributed to a shortage of bullion, for which California Nevada Bank and others wanted a premium over the London rate paid by the U.S. Mint Bureau.

Enough silver was acquired to begin dollar manufacture in May and 87,000 coins were delivered, all from the same pair of dies.<sup>1</sup>

The Mint of the United States at Carson, Nevada,  
SUPERINTENDENT'S OFFICE,  
....., 18

*Statement showing the average  
number of pieces struck by each pair  
of Standard Silver Dollar dies at the  
U. S. Mint, Carson, Nevada, during  
the month of May, 1880.*

<i>Obverse</i>	<i>Pieces</i>	<i>Reverse</i>	<i>Pieces</i>
<i>1</i>	<i>87,000</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>87,000</i>

*James Crawford  
Superintendent*

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<sup>1</sup> RG104 E-229 Box 17 of 17. Statement dated June 12, 1880 to Burchard from Crawford.

These standard silver dollars were delivered on:<sup>2</sup>

May 1880 —	17 <sup>th</sup>	28,000
	24 <sup>th</sup>	32,000
	29 <sup>th</sup>	22,000
	31 <sup>st</sup>	5,000

For June 1880 we do not have a die report, but a tabular report of Carson Mint coinage by quarters covers all of 1880.

June	30		
Dec.	31		56,000
March	31	1880	198,000
June	30		234,000
Sept.	30		159,000
Dec.	31		146,000
March	31	1881	
June	30		

Figure 1 Extract from “Statement Showing Denominations, Value, and Standard Weight of Silver Coinage Executed at the U.S. Mint, Carson City, Nevada from January 1<sup>st</sup> 1875 to June 30, 1881,”

This shows silver dollar production in 1880 by quarters as:<sup>3</sup>

Jan-Mar	\$0
Apr-Jun	\$198,000
Jul-Sept	\$234,000
Oct-Dec	\$159,000

If no coins were struck in April, and 87,000 struck in May, then according to the report by calendar quarters, June’s delivered mintage was 111,000 dollar pieces. However, the headquarters volume “Coinage for each mint by delivery date” volume 2 shows deliveries on

June 1880 —	9 <sup>th</sup>	22,000
	14 <sup>th</sup>	18,000
	23 <sup>rd</sup>	22,000
	25 <sup>th</sup>	31,000

Accordingly, total deliveries of 93,000 in that month. This is 18,000 less than the quarterly report. Further, the same quarterly reporting shows 591,000 Morgan dollars were struck at the Carson City Mint in 1880, and the HQ delivery journal shows a total of 573,000. A check of available correspondence does not reveal either the source of the discrepancy or any discussion about origin or correction.

<sup>2</sup> RG104 E-271 Vol 2. Coinage for each mint by delivery date.

<sup>3</sup> RG104 E-229 Box 17-17. “Statement Showing Denominations, Value, and Standard Weight of Silver Coinage Executed at the U.S. Mint, Carson City, Nevada from January 1<sup>st</sup> 1875 to June 30, 1881.”

For the balance of 1880 delivery quantities match. Delivery dates are:

<b>July 1880</b>	<i>By Day</i>	<i>By Month</i>	<b>August 1880</b>	<i>By Day</i>	<i>By Month</i>
15 <sup>th</sup>	12,000		25 <sup>th</sup>	44,000	
31 <sup>st</sup>	68,000	80,000	30 <sup>th</sup>	34,000	78,000
<b>September 1880</b>			<b>October 1880</b>		
25 <sup>th</sup>	40,000		29 <sup>th</sup>	54,000	54,000
30 <sup>th</sup>	36,000	76,000			
<b>November 1880</b>			<b>December 1880</b>		
30 <sup>th</sup>	50,000	50,000	31 <sup>st</sup>	55,000	55,000

The quantity of 591,000 has long been used in official publications and numismatic literature. At present, and without additional corroboration, we must presume that a delivery of 18,000 pieces was omitted from the HQ journal.

**Prepared by Roger W Burdette**

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