

MYSTERY OF THE FIELD



BOTTOM TWO PICTURES ARE OBTVERSE AND REVERSE OF THE MLM-13F ERROR CUD

For many years people have wondered about the Reno Nevada Motherlode Mint MLM-13s no field vs field Silver art bars. On these bars the first mintage was only 98 on which the obverse had the word "field" as in MLM-13F and MLM-13FV. Why did they only strike 98 and then switch to unlimited open mintage on the no field variety?

Due to the keen eye of Brian Raines last year a die break cud was found. I was attending a coin show and Brian, who is an expert in error coinage, was set up in the bourse. I walked by and while scanning the tables for silver bars, sure enough, the error art bar. I asked him about the error bar and he explained the error to me and I explained the art bar to him. I explained the situation with the field versus no field to him and Brian explained in greater details the cud error and how that happened to me. Apparently, the field Reno Nevada was the first die and being that 98 were struck this would be either the 98th or the 99th depending on how they counted. This was the last bar ever struck with that die.

With Reno, poker and gambling being a very popular theme then as it still is today and being these dies were hand cut and difficult to make exact replicas of it appears they decided to change the die to create a separate and distinguishable art bar variety. They added the poker chip stacks along with the 6-8 in the right lower corner onto the second die and continued to strike more bars.

This find goes to show the overlap between coin collecting and art bar collecting we all have seen and experienced throughout the years. Brian and I have spoken and hung out at shows since then and along with becoming friends have explained each other's hobbies to one another over dinner.

PS I was fortunate enough that he sold me the cud error for my collection.

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