

MINT OF THE UNITED STATES AT SAN FRANCISCO

STRIP CAST / SHEARED INGOTS

Paper by Ken Conaway, February 10, 2020



Mint Of The United States At San Francisco strip cast / sheared ingots have long been a mystery. Until discovery of the +/- 50-year-old Xerox copied photo above, all that we knew about these massive, strip cast ingots was derived from the sheared pieces, cut from these massive originals, as listed in the United States Government Silver Ingot Collection of Ken Conaway Registry.

The photo came to me from Clarence Criswell and represents a strip cast ingot, formerly in his collection, in its original entirety; 14 3/4" in length, 3 3/4" in width and 1/2" thick; serial number 1558 with Lot number 108; 142.13 ozs and 999.75 fine. The description is from the 1984 American Numismatic Association Convention Auction by Kurt R. Kruger in Detroit, Michigan on July 28 - 30, where Clarence sold his collection of United States Government silver ingots.

At about the same time that I received the photo and information from Clarence, I was able to acquire the example to the right. This is the first strip cast / sheared ingot I have seen that shows an original pour end or top of strip casting.

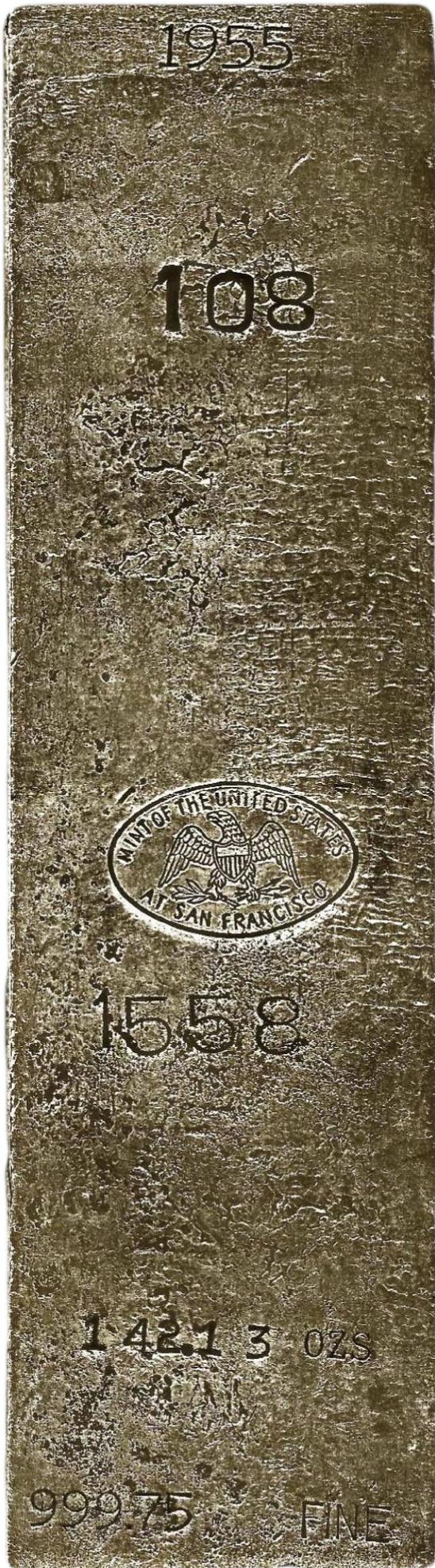
This is the same ingot shown in the top right on the full-page comparison with similar markings to the top of the No. 1558 ingot in the photo received from Clarence. On the very top of the ingot, at the edge closest to the pour end, there is the date of 1955. Immediately below that is the Lot No. 53.

Obverse and reverse photos of this ingot follow on the next-to-last page of this paper.



With the discovery of this photo and understanding of original ingot size and Mint Of The United States At San Francisco markings, we can begin to interpret the markings that we find on strip cast / sheared examples.

The large Type III Oval Hallmarks were not a reverse stamping of pre-cut material as previously assumed, but rather the original, primary obverse hallmark stamp.



Discovery of the +/- 50-year-old Xerox copied photo shows that what was previously thought to be the reverse of strip cast / sheared ingot material, is actually the original obverse. In the comparison on the previous page of No. 1558 to the sheared examples on the right, we can see how original markings remain on some sheared ingot surfaces. Sometimes original markings end up on the reverse as we see in the top dated example; sometimes they remain the obverse as we see with No. 12.

The upper righthand example on the previous page is the same as the first example on the following page. On this ingot we can see that a new Type II oval hallmark and all new makings were applied to the opposite side of the strip cast / sheared ingot.

With the second righthand example on the previous page, the original Type III oval hallmark remains. Possibly the serial number 12 and the added number 63 remain as well from the original. The fact that the original weight stamping is nowhere to be found causes the originality of the 999.75 FINE to be questioned; it might have been added after shearing.

In the other examples on the following page, all new markings were applied to the reverse side of the original strip cast / sheared ingots, but telltale signs of original obverse markings remain on what are now the reverse surfaces.

Through examination of photographs or handling of many of the examples listed in the United States Government Silver Ingot Collection of Ken Conaway Registry, I have long wondered what the originals looked like that these sheared examples were cut from.

Not a United States Government Mint or Assay Office photo, but found online as a jeweler's mold, we now know that these ingots were cast in a mold that would have been at least similar to the one in photo to the right.

While the +/- 50-year-old Xerox copied photo sheds a tremendous amount of light on the mystery of strip cast / sheared ingots, it certainly raises other questions. Why would the Mint Of The United States At San Francisco cast +/- 150 oz ingots just to cut them into pieces? Why have we never seen even one original? Why would a delivery order as we see on the last page of this paper, be filled with sheared ingots rather than the original strip cast ingot?

Mint Of The United States At San Francisco strip cast / sheared ingots will continue to be a topic of my studies in search of more answers. As always, if anyone has anything to contribute, please contact me through SILVERINGOTS.COM or at kenconaway@aol.com

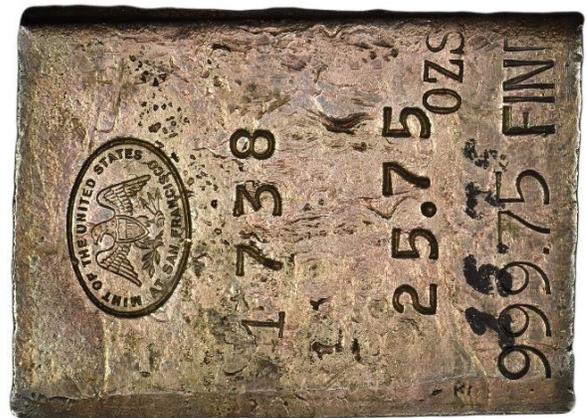


SILVER INGOTS

ORIGINAL OBVERSE / SHEARED REVERSE



ORIGINAL REVERSE / SHEARED OBVERSE



999.9 SILVER BARS ISSUED FOR
CASH OR EXCHANGE

U. S. Mint San Francisco, California.

April 29 19 35.

ISSUED TO:

NAME Polarad Electronics Corporation. RATE \$.87 PER FINE OUNCE

ADDRESS _____

MELT NO.	LOT NO.	BAR NUMBERS	NUMBER IN BAR	GROSS WEIGHT		FINE-NESS	FINE WEIGHT		VALUE	
				OUNCES	GR.		OUNCES	DEC.	DOLLARS	CT
		1767		2.749						
		1768		2.342						
		1769		2.197						
		1770		2.184						
				9.272						81.51
TOTAL										81.51

CHARGES:
 HANDLING - 1 OF 11
 BAR #
 BAR #
 BAR #

