

Golden Spike Token

For the 100th anniversary of driving the Golden Spike into the Alaska Railroad I created 1/10-ounce silver octagonal tokens. I would like to give a special thanks to Dick Hanscom of Minoer Mint for providing time, experience, and equipment.

First, I made the dies. For the obverse I stamped a train on a track with the words: ALASKA RAILROAD. The train was a premade punch, but I made the track with the letter I. For the reverse I created a spike going diagonally across the die. I stamped on it: 1923-2023 100 YEARS. I made the token do a coin



turn(flipping a coin up or down to see the other side.)

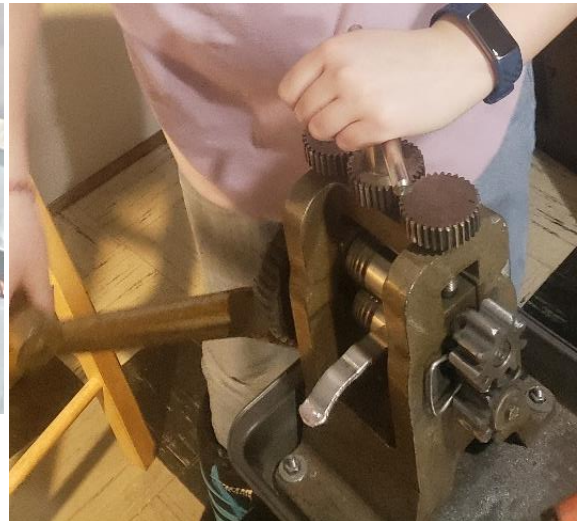


After I finished the dies, I made the silver planchets (blanks for stamping coins or tokens). The first step was melting the silver. I used a propane oxygen torch. I first heated the crucible to glowing. Then I melted one ounce of silver to molten and added another ounce.

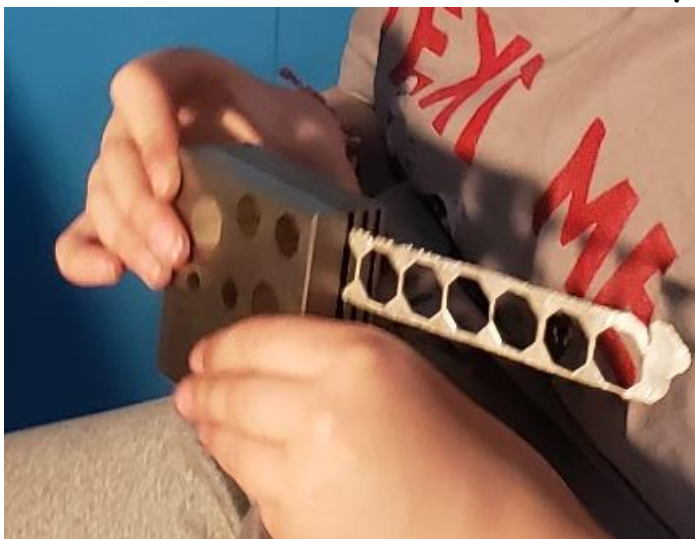
When it was all a fluid, I heated the ingot mold. In the time it took me to heat the mold, the silver solidified, so I reheated it. Once it was molten again, I poured the silver into



the mold keeping the torch on it at all times. I spilled silver on some of the pours and had to have Dick pour some for me. Then I quenched it and took it out of the mold.



Next, I clipped off the spurs. Then I started to roll it out in a hand rolling mill. We tried to roll it out to 1.3 mm thick, but it ended up a little bit thinner.



Occasionally, I flattened out the silver because the rolling process warps the bar. This makes it easier to roll. It got about thrice as long

from when it started. My dad did most of the rolling because it is really tough, but he rolled two too thin.

Then, when it was the desired-ish thickness, I started to punch out the planchets. I used a punch guide and a disc-cutter. I screwed the silver bar in-between the punch guide's plates and put the disc cutter in the hole. Next, I put it under the screw press and gently tapped it until the silver planchet fell out. I repeated this many times until I had no room on the bar. In the end, I had 100. Some of them were them only 46 or 47 grains, but 48 grains make a 10th ounce of silver, so they were too light.

With the planchets that were too light, I plugged them. I used some 1.8 mm thick silver planchets that Dick had and rolled them to 1.5 mm. I punched out little plugs from them. Then I punched out the





same size holes from my planchets. Then I set the thicker plug on the hole of the planchet in between two dies under the screw press. I whacked it with the screw press to push it into the hole. Sometimes it even snapped in. The plugs raised the planchet's weights enough to make them a 10th ounce.



Next, I annealed the planchets to make them softer for stamping. I used the torch again. First, I heated an upside-down crucible then put the planchet on it and carefully heated

it to glowing. Then I quenched it. I repeated this for all of the planchets. I over heated two and they became scrap.



After all the planchets were made, I sanded the dies to make the letters sharper. Then I placed a planchet between them, lining it up to form a coin turn (flipping a coin up or down to see the other side). I then used **RED** duct tape to hold them together. I slid it into a wooden block with a hole in it so it wouldn't fall over. I then used the screw press to stamp it. I threw the bar as hard as I could, rotated the dies 180 degrees and threw it again. The plugs were barely visible after being stamped. After every one was stamped, I used a gold leaf pen to color the spike golden.



Finally, they were done. Thank you, Dick for everything and thank you Daddy for doing the hard work of rolling for me.



On July 15, 2023, I went down to Nenana to sell. We found a nice sheltered spot to set up our table and sign. People easily noticed the sign and wandered over. Right before I sold them, I hand stamped their

**GOLDEN SPIKE TOKEN
1/10 OZT .999 FINE SILVER**

Designed and
Minted by
Liza Claar

\$10 Each



Very limited 1/10 ozt Native Alaska Gold Tokens
minted with the same design by Liza Claar \$200 each

number on them going from 1 to 100. Everyone was very nice and happy, especially the railroad employees, including the #1 conductor. I sold 87 silver tokens and 3 gold tokens at the event. I will not make more than 100 silver tokens unless I modify the die first. The event people gave out 30 gold painted railroad spikes to mayors, governors, employees and important people. At the end of the event, one lady who works for the railroad was giving out the last three spikes and gave one to me. She had bought a token and was super nice. Thank you to Nenana, and the people attending the event for supporting me.

