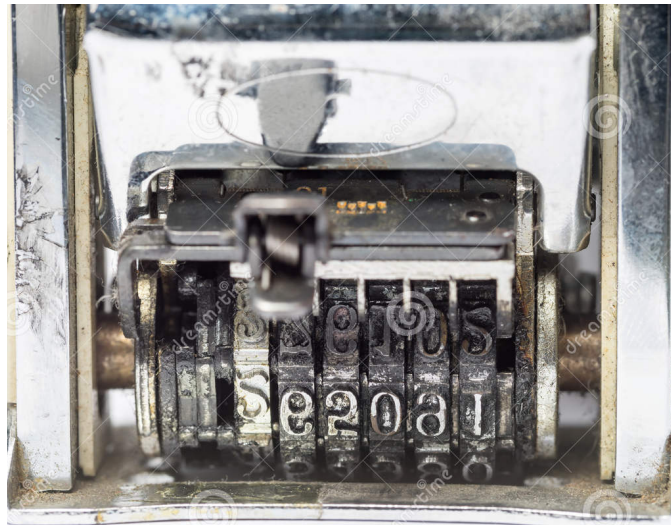


THE X8 FACTOR!

THE SIMPLE TRUTH ABOUT THIS STRANGE PHENOMENON

By AGWire™
July 22, 2017



The nomenclature 'X8' may bring to mind a hot new Jaguar coupe to auto enthusiasts. However, to most Engelhard enthusiasts, the term 'X8' is perhaps the furthest thing from that, as they recognize that it is actually an old and frequently made mistake by our favorite refiner. We know that early Engelhard ingots were serial number stamped using an old-world hand rotary dial similar to the ones shown in the above photos, a dial that likely had 7 or 8 total spaces. The first dial, and occasionally the second, consisted of letters, symbols and blanks. The following 6 dials carried assignment numbers 0 through 9, and likely a blank.

Rotary stamping is truly manual labor and represents what we love about these old-poured ingots. This process of serial number affixation requires the machine operator to manually set or advance the digits to the appropriate prefix and/or serial number prior to each stamping. While Engelhard assembly lines likely had rotary stamp machines securely mounted in place to ensure proper serial placement on each ingot, the dials still required to be manually set for each ingot stamping, or at least checked before stamping, if the machine advanced automatically. With early Engelhard 5 and 6 digit ingots, typically the first few dials were set on blank, leaving only 5 or 6 numbers exposed. But interestingly, due to vibration, momentum, force, or just plain oversight, the dials occasionally rotated out of place. This resulted in the anomaly that we have all come to love and collect. The erroneous 'X8', partial 'X8', and 'Y' and prefix stamping runs usually didn't last very long before they were noticed and corrected, but they certainly created some true gems. These unique ingots have caused an exciting buzz within our collector community.

We have also come to know that the Engelhard US production of 5 and 6 digit serial numerology had initially started off by the weight class and corresponding serial numbers below. We mention this because the majority of these 'X8' and similar prefix stampings we have observed were very early in the production run of these ingots. We've concluded that most of these occurred at approximately the same time and place, and likely under the supervision of the same operator.

Ingot Size:	Serial # Range:
3 oz	30000
5 oz	50000
7 oz	70000
10 oz	10000
25 oz	(0)25000
50 oz	(0)50000
100 oz	(0)10000

Very early in each of the above serial runs, there were also many examples of partial 'X8' stamps, partial 'X' and 'Y' stamps, full 'Y' stamps, as well as a few with interesting prefix symbols. These anomalies all resulted from the rotary dials inadvertently slipping out of proper position.



Engelhard implemented the rotary dial assignment process on its poured ingots throughout its Canadian 6 digit serial run up through the very low 350000 mark for its larger pieces. We will not likely come across an 'X8' error in the Canadian run, as Engelhard seemed to have upgraded and advanced their rotary stamping process by the time Canadian ingot production commenced. That said, the earlier Engelhard Plainville, MA and Anaheim, CA ('West') 'P' and 'W' prefix 10oz bars also used an old-world rotary dial process where prominent blank and occasional symbol prefix examples have been observed, but their stamping technology advanced throughout the production of 'P' bars.

This error stamp phenomenon is truly fascinating to many collectors, and something that Engelhard enthusiasts will continue to fix8 on. Y, you ask? If we compare this to relative anomalies in the coin market, and review how very minor idiosyncrasies have transl8d to HUGE premiums, we just can't Xplain the collector potential or let it go unnoticed. Discovering these rare and unusual mis-stamps is somewhat in8 and Xtremely eXasper8ting when you come across one!

X8citedly,

AE