



Bulletin of the
PACIFIC COAST NUMISMATIC SOCIETY
NOVEMBER, 2023

1291st Monthly Meeting

JB Frener: Central America's Most Prolific Engraver

Matt Ruttle

**Wednesday, November 29, 2023, 7:30 PM PST
Online**



Johann-Baptist Frener was born in Luzern, Switzerland in 1821. His skill as an engraver was noticed at an early age. This led to a scholarship at École des Beaux-Arts. He was subsequently commissioned to engrave coinage for Guatemala, becoming the director of its mint. His talents were also applied to coinage in other Central American countries, including Honduras and El Salvador.

Join us online on **Wednesday, November 29** when **Matt Ruttle** relates the decade of research that went into his recently-published biography, *Johann-Baptist Frener, Life & Works 1821-92*. Plan to exhibit your own favorite Frener medal or Central American coin, or one of your recent acquisitions. So that everyone may participate, please take pictures of your exhibits to facilitate viewing on Zoom.



OCTOBER MEETING RECAP

Jeff Pritchard's talk was a look back in history at an ancient but somewhat obscure symbol and its numismatic appearances up to and during the US Civil War. The Phrygian cap developed into a symbolic item starting with the Romans around 200 BCE. Manumission, the act of a slaveowner freeing a slave, became a ceremony consisting of touching the slave with a rod of manumission, shaving the head, and placing a pileus (cap) on the head. Around the time of the French Revolution that cap developed into a Phrygian cap and came to represent not just freedom from slavery but also liberty and freedom from tyranny. The 1782 Libertas Americana medal created under the direction of Benjamin Franklin featured a bust of Liberty, with a Phrygian cap being held up by a staff of manumission behind her.

Jeff then described three historical vignettes relating to the use of the Phrygian cap up to the time of the American Civil War. First was a painting commissioned by the Library of Philadelphia called *The Genius of America*. It was the first American painting with allegorical figures of slavery and emancipation. He explained the meaning of the figures and various symbolic objects in the painting.

The second vignette was all about the Liberia "solution" and controversies. And the first coin from Liberia was an 1847 one cent coin featuring a Liberty cap.

Third was "Numismatics' Greatest Irony". This discussed the attempts at developing coinage for the Confederate States of America and the use (whether approved or not) of the Liberty cap design. There were lots of very interesting details, well documented in Jeff's presentation. We encourage you to watch Jeff's talk on the [PCNS YouTube channel](#).

STEP UP!

As another year comes to an end, it's time to elect officers for 2024. We're always looking for fresh faces to get involved in the leadership of PCNS. Note that "fresh faces" can include well-rested veterans as well as well as relative newcomers.

Nominations are open until the December 27th meeting, so feel free to nominate yourself at any time.

PCNS MEETINGS

PCNS meetings take place at 7:30 pm Pacific Time on the fourth Wednesday of most months. Currently, meetings are held online using the Zoom platform, thereby allowing members, presenters, and guests to attend no matter where they are located. Everyone with an interest in numismatics is welcome to attend. A meeting code/invitation link will be emailed to all members separately the day before the meeting; non-members can request a link by emailing webmaster@pcns.org.

Special occasions, such as the annual BBQ, will continue to occur in person.

PCNS CALENDAR FOR 2023-24

November 29, 2023 **Matt Ruttle**, *JB Frener: Central America's Most Prolific Engraver*
December 27, 2023 **Annual Meeting** and **Election of Officers** for 2024 and
*Federico Castillo, Topic TBA**
January 24, 2024 *Speaker and Topic TBA**
February 28, 2024 *Speaker and Topic TBA**

SPEAK UP!

There are always opportunities for **you** to make a presentation. Thanks to Zoom, you don't even need to be in San Francisco. Your topic can even be something about which you have submitted or plan to submit a *Paper*. Please email webmaster@pcns.org to sign up.

OCTOBER MEMBER EXHIBITS

Bill shared two items. First was a store card token from Moise. The obverse featured the State Seal of California, the reverse an advertisement for Moise. It was the first use of that die after the 1906 expo. Next was an 1836 token commemorating the first steam press use for coinage at the U.S. Mint.

John was at a token show in England and showed photos of two items seen at a museum while there. First was a Henry VIII medal; the second was a medal featuring Queen Mary and King Phillip in celebration of the (brief) return of Catholicism to England.

Stephen showed us his new acquisition from a Sacramento coin show. It was a small Ptolemaic bronze chalkous attributed to Ptolemy III. But Stephen has collected in that specialty area for decades and is certain it is misattributed. The fun part will be determining the correct ruler.

Federico shared a Cuban medal commemorating the end of WW I, with a small Phrygian cap above a shield. He also showed a 1952 Cuban medal for the 50th Anniversary of its

independence, also with a cap on it. Finally, there were two central American coins with Liberty caps.

Charlie C talked a few months ago about 1790s Conder Tokens of radical socialist Thomas Spence, and showed two of those tokens again with Liberty caps. Next was a recent acquisition of another token of Spence, with the reverse showing a Phrygian cap mounted on a staff of manumission, surrounded with rays of the sun and the inscription "Libertas" - Spence's only token with Latin on it).

Jason shared a Halloween Horror, a promotional flyer for the first in a series of D***** T***** Presidential campaign medals, each 99.99% pure silver...plated.

NEW MEMBER APPLICATIONS

As announced at the October meeting, we have received new member applications from **Henry Goodman** of Prineville, OR and **Claudia Kraeche** of San Francisco. Per PCNS bylaws, Henry and Claudia will become Active Members at the **November 29** meeting.

2023 PCNS BOARD OF GOVERNORS

President Jason Macario
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Meetings of the Board of Governors normally take place 15 minutes before the membership meeting.
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Email messages to PCNS webmaster@pcns.org
PayPal address for PCNS money@pcns.org

PCNS WEBSITE

Visit www.pcns.org to read our *Papers*, get the latest *Bulletin*, or to check our meeting schedule.

You can also view a recording of most recent presentations on our [YouTube channel](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCv8v8v8v8v8v8v8v8v8v8v8), available through links from pcns.org! Use a QR scanner/reader to open pcns.org via this code.

