



# Pacific Coast Numismatic Society

Post Office Box 475656, San Francisco, CA 94147-5656

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## Minutes of the PCNS Meetings of April 26, 2017

*Status — Approved at the May 24<sup>th</sup> 2017 Board Meeting*

### Board Meeting

President Bill Hyder called the meeting to order at 7:02 PM. Vice President Dan Hipple, Recorder Stephen Huston, Governors Jason Macario and Bob Somers and Gold Member Jerry Schimmel attended. We had regrets from Governors Herb Miles and Ed Treuting.

The March Minutes and the latest Financial Report were approved as submitted by email.

### Old Business

President Hyder still has the existing PCNS publications in hand and will take them to ANA.

Centennial Medal sales have begun for the remaining brass specimens.

CSNA's symposium hosting letter, tabled in March was again tabled. No action is required unless we decide we want to host it, which seems unlikely at this time.

Papers deadline is tonight's meeting, and we have 5 at the start of this meeting.

### New Business

The Board approved reimbursing Herb for a set of the PCNS 1000th Meeting Medals which he offered from his duplicates to fill a gap in the PCNS official archives.

Stephen noted that we could request the dies for our 1990 75th Anniversary medal from Masterpiece Medallions, according to a report in The California Numismatist, but it turns out we already have them; they were photographed by Bill Hyder for his 2015 medals paper, so no action needed.

The Board Meeting was adjourned at 7:21 PM.

### Membership Meeting

The meeting was called to order about 7:30 with the additional members Mark Wm Clark, Chris Donaldson, Michael Wehner, and Kenneth Takahashi present.

The Papers deadline was announced, and Federico Castillo submitted his paper, for a total of 6 this year.

The BBQ was discussed briefly, June 24 starting at 1pm, with tickets at \$10 per person. Stephen will put a PayPal button on our site for buying tickets.

A new Membership Application was recorded from Benny Haimovitz in Florida. He collects

seated-liberty coinage and pieces issued by Daniel Carr, who did the PCNS Centennial medals.

Future speakers: May will be Dan on *The Circle of Friends of the Medallion*; July will be Bill.

## **Program**

Jason presented *The Secrets of the Old Mint*. He noted that what we call the Old Mint at Fifth and Mission streets was actually the second SF mint. Having little public access, mysteries and rumors have grown up around it.

Nazi Symbols at the Old Mint. There was a rumor that Nazi sympathizers had an influence on the mint's design. This was based on the so-called swastikas used as decorative features. Research revealed that the lamps and other swastika-like decorations were installed around 1914, well before the Nazi party's origins. The symbol was once common in many cultures for good luck, but it's reputation became tarnished by Nazi use.

Jason noted that the first SF mint was created to deal with a lack of official coinage in the state during the Gold Rush era. That original SF mint building was abandoned, and was largely burned in 1906. An government inspector had described it's use as a mint as essentially a shack unsuitable for mint purposes.

The Missing Corner Stone. The second mint's corner stone was prepared in 1869/70. There had been a gold panic in late 1869. That same year brought a recession, and the opening of the Transcontinental Railroad, which could have eased pressures on getting money across the country.

The cornerstone should have been placed at the NE corner of the building, by Masonic tradition, but the event records and program make no mention of its actual location. The May 25, 1870, official program exists, but also makes no mention of the capsule's contents. As a government building, it was expected to have 11 denominations saved based on the current coinage types, including the 1870-S coins. Nine 1870-S dollars are known. One half-dime and a \$3 gold piece are unique. If such coins are in that corner stone, the 1870-S quarter still would be unique. We don't even know where the corner stone is located, or what may be inside.

Hunting for Hidden Gold. The gold vault for paying out cash for bullion was short \$30,000 when inventoried on June 29, 1901. The chief cashier, who had the combination to the vault, and his chief clerk, who had access during work, both fell under suspicion of the theft. Audits and work records revealed that the cashier had a spotless record, but his clerk, Walter Dimmick, was a known gambler who lived beyond his means and was implicated in other thefts and embezzlement. Dimmick was soon fired, then arrested and tried repeatedly! He was convicted on related charges, but the jury was hung on the theft of the \$30,000. It took 4 trials before a jury could be impaneled without any of his friends serving on it, which finally brought in a guilty verdict on the gold theft. The 1,500 missing double-eagles were never found.

Mystery of the Lost Tunnel. Also in 1901, the Selby Smelting Works was burglarized of \$280,000 in gold being processed for the mint. It went missing via a tunnel into the vault from a nearby railroad tunnel. The SF Mint Superintendent claimed he heard of a similar plan to steal directly from the US Mint basement vaults in December. Mint security was put on high alert, strange sounds and vibrations were reported, but exhaustive searches of the area around the mint failed to reveal any cause. No loss occurred, no tunnel was found, and the reported disturbances ceased after a short time.

## **Members' Exhibits**

- Ken had his Numismatic Misfits that he didn't get to last month, including some coins of the Golden Horde, one of which he got from Stephen years ago.
- Chris had an ANACS certified 1832 Bust half dollar, Overton 107 with an 18K countermark stamped in the center of both sides.
- Jason had his 1870-S coins: the dime, gold dollar, quarter eagle, half eagle, eagle, and double eagle. (He's missing the 50¢ of that issue.)
- Bob had 1973-S cable car centennial medals in bronze and silver, and the 1969-P Westminster College Churchill memorial medals in both metals. The Churchill medals was struck to raise funds for issuing a Gold medal to Churchill's widow.
- Stephen brought an aluminum CSNA medal showing a Red Car trolley.
- Bill had a massive Chinese bronze art medal with a big-horned sheep to illustrate his account of seeing one on a recent trip, and 1889 Utah Territory medal probably issued by the local railroad to hype its resort at Garfield Beach, and a store card from 1851-52 for Berenhard, Jacoby & Co.
- Dan brought a 1620 Salzburg thaler along with a PCNS Archive piece — Farran Zerbe's large aluminum store card issued around 1904.
- Jerry had a group of Chinese-American tokens for which photos were being prepared for his latest TAMS Journal paper.
- Michael brought San Francisco gold of 1906: \$5, \$10, and \$20.
- Mark showed an unused pass for signing out of the US Mint during a shift (c.1996).
- Federico had several tokens and medals of Brazil, Colombia, and Mexico, including one for sheep shearing.

## **Drawing**

Prizes included: 1940s blank checks from SF business Star Engineering, PCNS medal for service honoring Maxine Bryce, PCNS 800th Meeting medal (1982), Silver Bicentennial medal honoring Paul Revere, SF bullion receipt of 1934, and an album of 72 Chinese reproduction crowns (donated by Dan).

Winners included: Bill (1), Dan (2), and our big winner of the evening, Jason (3).

The meeting was adjourned close to 9:30PM.

Submitted by Stephen Huston, *PCNS Recorder*