

PCNS Minutes for April 28, 2021

The board meeting for April 28, 2021 was called to order via Zoom at 7:13PM by President Jason Macario. Remote attendance included Treasurer Stephen Huston, Secretary Charlie Catlett, past president Dan Hipple, Governors Paul Turner and Bob Somers, as well as Michael Wehner, Bill Hyder, and Robert Jesinger. Governor Ed Treuting sent his regrets for being unable to attend.

The minutes for the March meeting were approved.

The treasurer's report for reporting period April 1 to April 21, 2021 was accepted.

Speakers are needed for July and beyond.

Ordering new medals: 100 bronze and 25 silver octagonal uniface medals are needed. Charlie was thanked for a donation toward the medals. After a brief discussion, it was moved, seconded, and unanimously approved to authorize the plan where all bullion is supplied by Daniel Carr, who will produce the medals. Bill will contact Daniel to set up production of the medals, and Stephen will be kept in the loop to provide funds. Dan H has the die and will send it to Daniel C when needed.

New Business: None

Adjournment 7:21PM

At 7:31 PM, general meeting #1260 was called to order via Zoom. In attendance along with those from the board meeting were Herb Miles, Scott Safe, Dean Neald, Mike McDaniel, Doug Ward, Don Kagin, Mark Benvenuto, Erik Frankenfeld, Rick Webster, Chris Morrison, and Harold Tuchman.

Papers for the 2021 PCNS Papers Contest are due by midnight of this meeting.

Financials remain in good order.

Speakers are still needed for July and beyond, as well as back up presentations in case we cannot find (or lose) a speaker. Please let Jason and Stephen know if you have any.

New medals were voted on at the board meeting and will be produced to meet future need.

Featured speaker: Guest speaker Harold Tuchman spoke about: Close Trans-Pacific Commercial Embrace: San Francisco & Hawaii – 1876 to 1916

Harold started out describing Hawaii being strategically located in the middle of the Pacific Ocean, a convenient location for navies and fishing vessels to stop at. It was also a stopping off for troops from the US heading to the Philippines during the Spanish American War. They initially camped at the Presidio and stopped in Hawaii before heading off to the Philippines.

King David Kalakaua (1836-1891), the "Merry Monarch", was both convivial and an extravagant spender and gambler. He built the Iolani Palace in 1892-3, still standing in Honolulu.

After an 1876 reciprocity treaty with the U.S. lifted tariffs on trade goods, particularly sugar, he took a trip around the world to promote the Sandwich Islands (Hawaii). He made other trips to the US as well. His last trip was to San Francisco in late 1890. On January 20, 1891 he died of a stroke while staying here at the Palace Hotel.

His sister Liliuokalani became queen, lasting three years until being overthrown by the 'Committee of Safety', descendants of white missionaries who worked to have Hawaii annexed; they were helped by enlisting the aid of sailors on a U.S. Navy ship which happened to be anchored there. A provisional government led to the Republic of Hawaii which eventually led to it becoming a U.S. territory April 30, 1900 – a sad day for native Hawaiians.

Claus Spreckels (1828-1908) owned plantations, refineries, shipping, and more, and was quite arrogant. He also loaned large sums of money to Kalakaua. The two were close friends until 1886 – detailed later in this summary. Spreckels had a large mansion on Van Ness, which unfortunately was damaged in the 1906 earthquake and was removed in the 1920s. He obtained rights to land in Maui for growing sugar cane and created the town of Spreckelsville, now a resort town. But there was no water for growing sugar cane there. So, he enlisted the aid of Herman Schussler, who helped build Crystal Springs Reservoir, to build a forty-mile irrigation ditch to carry water from Haleakala to his plantation. Spreckels also built the world's largest sugar mill with the help of a San Francisco ironworks expert. It had outdoor lighting at night, which was a spectacle people would come to see. In addition, Spreckels built the Kahului Railroad to transport processed cane to port. Harold showed a token from the railroad. Processed cane was then shipped to San Francisco and processed at the world's largest sugar refinery at the base of Potrero Hill.

King Kalakaua saw the coinage of other kings while on his world voyage. He contacted several European mints to inquire about having coins minted with his image. Spreckels convinced him to go with the U.S. Mint as the U.S. was the main trading partner, and their coins would be most appropriate. Spreckels arranged a contract with Kalakaua to mint \$1 million in coins. After accounting for the cost of the bullion, the dies, and the minting process, Spreckels made a profit of \$130,000 on the contract! Charles Barber was the designer, with denominations of dime, eighth dollar (12.5 cents), quarter dollar, half dollar, and dollar. Only twenty of the eighth dollar coins were minted. Many more of the others were minted, but (except for the dimes) most were melted. This is why quarter-dollar denominations are more costly.

How did the friendship with Kalakaua and Spreckels end? A friendly card game of Euchre was played at Spreckels' Honolulu boathouse, involving the two along with another two dignitaries. At one point Spreckels boasted that if it were poker, he would be the winner. One person said he had three aces (the highest possible hand). Spreckels said he had four kings (not possible with the game): three kings *and himself*. This huge insult was not tolerated by King Kalakaua, who promptly left and arranged for his debts to Spreckels to be cleared; thus ended the friendship.

Spreckels had five adult children. Son John had the Oceanic Steamship Company (based at 613 Market Street, SF), and sold it to Matson Line in 1926. Son Adolph, president of S.F. Railway Company, shot Michael DeYoung after being accused of fraud. He was tried and found innocent due to temporary insanity. DeYoung irked just about everybody with his S.F. Chronicle; Adolph owned the rival S.F. Call newspaper.

William Matson owned a barge taking coal to the Spreckels plant in Crockett. Spreckels advanced Matson money to purchase ships, and Matson shipping grew to eventually include tourists (with the purchase of other steamship companies).

Finally, Harold talked about the California Midwinter Exposition and its So-Called dollars; the laying of the Pacific Cable (to Hawaii) originating near the Cliff House; and the Panama Pacific 50 cent coin. These connected stories about Hawaii and San Francisco were welcomed with comments from club members.

Member Exhibits:

Doug: a Manx penny from 1798 featuring King George III on the obverse and a triskeles on the reverse. He also has a halfpenny, but in very worn condition. They both came from his grandmother, dating back five generations to the Isle of Man. He discussed the triskeles symbol

Bill: Counterstamped coins (with likely Santa Cruz origin); and an early Betts medal made of white metal with a tiny copper plug called a "scavenger plug" which has prevented corrosion very nicely

Charlie: an 1859 token from New York with a depiction of a befuddled numismatist on the obverse and advertisement for coin dealer on reverse

Jason: 1928 half dollar commemorative featuring Captain Cook as the "discoverer of Hawaii" on the obverse/native Hawaiian on the reverse. The bulk of them were apparently sent to Hawaii, though it is unclear what premium locals would have paid (if they even bought them)

Michael W: Counterstamped 1876 CC quarter, Honolulu military token, Hawaii plantation token

Erik: 1883 Hawaii dime

Mike M: He talked about Joe Flores recently passing. Joe was an expert and author on Mexican Revolution coins

Herb: Hawaiian 'Bangos'. The Japanese word for 'number', these were worker tags/tokens. Workers came from different nations, spoke different languages, perhaps had difficult names. Each one was assigned a specific token at the plantation where hired, and the token was his or her identification for pay, company store purchases, work history and even ethnicity. They were usually worn on a chain around the neck.

The general meeting adjourned at ~8:45 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Charlie Catlett, Secretary PCNS