



Bulletin of the
PACIFIC COAST NUMISMATIC SOCIETY
AUGUST 2026

1324th Monthly Meeting
Figuring It Out: Reinterpreting Ancient Coin Designs
Charlie Catlett

Wednesday, August 26, 2026, 7:30 PM PDT
Online



One could say that ancient coins are the root of our hobby. Study of the designs of ancient coins, along with determining when, where, and how they were produced, is a fruitful exercise that has filled the pages of numismatic journals as long as they have existed.

The when (centuries ago), where (subjected to the wear of circulation and less-than-ideal conditions), and how (crude production methods) of these coins can make it a guessing game as to the origins and meaning of their designs.



Join us online on **Wednesday, August 26** when **Charlie Catlett** will tell us more about recent developments in understanding of the designs of ancient coins. Be prepared to exhibit your own ancients, or your latest acquisitions. So that everyone may participate, please take pictures of your exhibits to facilitate viewing on Zoom.

JULY MEETING RECAP

Scott Safe began his presentation with a biography of Joseph Leshner. Leshner was born in Fremont, Ohio on July 12, 1838, and died in his home in Victor, Colorado on July 4, 1918. During his lifetime, he divided his time between Ohio and Colorado. While in the Rocky Mountains, he often worked in mining-related activities. He was a Democrat and a proponent of bimetallism and free silver coinage.

Leshner Referendum Dollars (LRD) are one of several coins, medals, and patterns issued by private and public parties to address the issue of bimetallism and to promote the intrinsic value of silver. There are six types and twelve varieties of Leshner Dollars. The total mintages for all six types are unknown. Farran Zerbe published a paper on the pieces in 1917 and his attribution numbering system is still used by enthusiasts to this day.

The design of the dollars varied from type to type, but all were engraved by Herman Otto. Leshner and Otto tried to comply with guidance to avoid trouble with the federal government, specifically the Secret Service, the agency charged with preventing counterfeiting. Unfortunately, the use of the phrase "At face value" resulted in the dies being seized by the Secret Service.

Turning to the silver mining scene device on pieces, Scott pointed out that in the last 126 years, only 49 words have been published regarding the silver mining scene. Scott has determined that the perspective of Pikes Peak on the coins seems to be from a vantage point of Cripple Creek, Colorado.

Scott revealed that great-grandfather John Johnson Epley built the first silver smelter in Silverton,

Colorado in 1874. Scott's research has provided new insights into this device, which is an illustration of Epley's silver works. But how did that happen? Why did Leshner choose it? And more importantly, how did Herman Otto

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PCNS MEETINGS

PCNS meetings take place at 7:30 pm Pacific Time on the fourth Wednesday of most months. 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 2026

August 26, 2026.....**Charlie Catlett**: *Figuring It Out: Reinterpreting Ancient Coin Designs*
September 23, 2026.....**John Duff**: *London Corresponding Society & Member Tokens*
October 28, 2026.....**Jeff Pritchard**: *The Flag & Early U.S. Coinage*
November 25, 2026*Speaker and Topic TBA*
December 23, 2026.....**Annual Meeting and Election of Directors for 2027** *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.

JULY MEETING RECAP (CONT'D)

produce three new dies and have 1,000 pieces struck in Denver in a two week period?

Scott tells us of the annual Festival of Mountain and Plain (FM&P), which ran from 1895 through 1899 and again in 1901. The festival was comparable to Mardi Gras, down to the existence of a secret society, Slaves of the Silver Serpent, which was modeled on New Orleans' Rex krewes. Medals and ribbons from the FM&P are rare and very collectible.

Scott purchased one such medal on eBay. On close inspection, he found a small inscription "HO", the signature of Herman Otto. Further inspection revealed that major lines and elements align in the Pikes-Peak device on the LRD and the FM&P medal, leading him to conclude that Otto used his models from the 1899 Festival Mountain and Plain medal as the basis for his die work on the 1900-1901 Leshar Referendum Dollars. Mystery solved!

To fully appreciate Scott's excellent and thorough presentation, view a recording of it on the [PCNS YouTube channel](#).

JULY MEMBER EXHIBITS

Bill Hyder showed a 1922 "Days of '49" medal from Sacramento and a photograph of a woman who owns a complete set of 1913 Edward Sawyer Indian Medals

Michael Wehner shared a Bumstead variety Leshar Dollar, with the serial number #20, the lowest of 210 known for that Leshar Dollar type.

Guest **Alex Stacks** shared a slabbed Zerbe #3 variety Leshar Dollar, with a grade of XF-45 by PCGS

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