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PACIFIC COAST NUMISMATIC SOCIETY
PO BOX 475656
SAN FRANCISCO CA 94147



The Athenian Owl

Daniel Feldman

DURING THE DAYS of Ancient Greece, the lands of Asia Minor and Northern Greece were abundant in gold and silver. Some say there was an astounding 26,000 kg of gold mined annually, and surely hundreds of tons of silver mined too.¹ A coin was a piece of metal which served as a medium of exchange and payment, the weight and standard of which was guaranteed by the state by means of weight and inscription.

By the Archaic period (*circa* 600 BC) there already existed mints in several kingdoms, including Lydia, in present-day Turkey.² The ancients found coinage to be a useful tool to stabilize their economies, yet Greek cities had not yet been exposed to a *system* of coinage until quite a while after the first mints.

In 525 BC, the famous Greek city of Athens began minting her first coinage. Athens had been a port town, so a system of coinage was useful in trade and became a means of artistic expression. Athens was too the center of classical culture and a great military power. Their most prominent and extensively-coined issue was the Athenian *owl*, which became the most respected coinage of classical Greece.

These first coins, minted around 525 BC, bore the helmeted head of Athena, patron goddess of Athens, on the obverse, and her owl, a symbol of wisdom, on the reverse.

During the 400 years that these coins circulated

in the Ancient world, their artistic style changed considerably (see figures 1–3), but they always maintained the Athena and Owl theme. It is considered by many numismatists that the art of these coins contains elements of Greek history and philosophy, and articulately represents Athens, her ideals, and her history.

The Athenian owl appeared on several issues of Greek coinage. The basic unit of Athenian currency was the drachm. Drachms were divided into smaller denominations—the obol and its multiples, such as the diobol, triobol, and trihemiobol.³ Likewise, some coins were worth multiple drachms, in particular, the didrachm, tetradrachm, and the decadrachm.⁴

Though “Owl” may refer to any silver coin showing a likeness of Athena and her owl, they came in many denominations. At auctions, the tetradrachm denomination appears most frequently, in part because the small physical volume of the lower denominations



FIGURES

All specimens are Silver Tetradrachms struck in Athens.

Fig. 1: Archaic Style Owl (16.3g), c. 490–482 BC.
Sear 1842v, Seltman Group Gi, Price and Waggoner
Group IVg, SNG München 29, Szego 3.

Fig. 2: Intermediate Style Owl (17.2g), c. 393–300 BC.
Dewing 1635, Sear 2537, SNG Cop. 63,
SNG München 91, SNG Lockett 1873,
SNG Delepierre 1469.

Fig. 3: Classical Style Owl, c. 449–431 BC.
(weight not specified)

Fig 4: Classical Style Owl with test-cut (17.0g),
c. 449–431 BC, Sear 2526v., SNG Lockett 1841,
Szego 13.

Fig. 5: Classical Style Owl, c. 454[?]-415 BC.
(17.23 gm). Notice the distinct square within the
circle on this exceptionally well struck piece.

made those coins both less likely to survive and more likely to be struck poorly. The larger denominations are much rarer—too rare to have been in widespread circulation.⁵

What impact did the *owls* have in the history coinage? The *owls* began the continuing numismatic trend of placing pictures of people on the obverse and images of animals on the reverse. The recent American quarter, for example, shows George Washington on the obverse and an eagle—another bird with great symbolic meaning—on the reverse. Athena was literally the goddess of Athens, and the owl represented the city state itself just as much as it represented its patron goddess.

One can see this by the iconography of the coins—the olive branch was the symbol for peace and

prosperity in Ancient Greece. In Greek mythology, Zeus bestowed the city of Athens to the god who provided the most useful gift to humanity. Poseidon gave a war chariot, but Athena offered the olive tree. The olive tree became the symbol for peace.⁶

Though the olive branch and portrait of Athena remained constants on the coinage of Greece, earlier issues are considered primitive and archaic looking. During the “Classical period” (400 BC), Greek coinage reached a high level of technical and aesthetic quality due to better struck coins because the minting process became more advanced (better equipment, dies, and advances in technology).⁷

The *owls* were money, and their abundance or scarcity had significant impacts on economic conditions, which in turn affected politics and

warfare. During the Persian War, there was a surge in *owl* production to aid in the Persian War.

The *owls* circulated outside of Athens, and they probably became a standard currency in many countries. This is in part due to the *Athenian Coinage Decree*, a policy that Athens implemented around 450 BC. From then on, Athens' colonies were forced "to use Athenian coins, weights, and measures."⁸ One can see on the coins the effect of this wide circulation of *owls* in *punch marks* or *test cuts* to either signify a commercial transaction or ensure the purity of the silver the coin contained (see fig. 4).

So how did the *owls* reflect the attitudes of Athenians and of the Ancient world? First, the *owls* are round, but not perfectly circular. Ancient minters tried to attain perfect circularity; perhaps this pertains to Plato's *Theory of Forms*.

There is also a faint correlation to Leonardo's "Vitruvian Man" as there is a distinct square within the obvious circle (see fig. 5). He believed that the human body can fit perfectly within the circle and the square.

Thus, the *owls* of Athens reflected many ancient ideals and beliefs such as these, and the imagery of the coins reflect the values of Athenian society. For example, to commemorate the victory of Athens in the Persian wars, a wreath was added above the image of Athena on the tetradrachms.⁹ The crown is visible on the top of the obverse of mid 5th century *owls*.¹⁰

These coins were a reflection of the world around them. The essence of Athens, her ideas, her culture, and her preeminence in the Western world was encapsulated in these coins. The coins had the power to express the values and color of a culture—the culture of Athens and the Ancient world.



ENDNOTES

1. British Museum.
2. Unknown author.
3. Wikipedia.
4. *ibid*.
5. Shear, 223.
6. Encyclopedia Britannica.
7. *ibid*.
8. Vickers, 171–174.
9. Goldsborough, 1–19.
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PHOTO CREDITS

Figures 1–5 were supplied by the author with the permission of the owners of these websites:

1–4 from <<http://rg.ancients.info/owls/>>.

5 from <<http://www.usask.ca/antiquities/coins/greece.html>>. Background and color cast removed.

Athenian coin photos on this article's title page and the publication's cover are by Stephen Huston.

Line drawings were prepared by Stephen Huston from plates published in *The Coin Collector's Manual*, H.N. Humphreys, Bell & Daldy, London, 1871.



Coinage in Transition

Mechanization of the Minting Process in England

Elliot M. Wehner

THE ENGLAND WHICH Queen Elizabeth I inherited in 1558 was a nation rife with domestic problems. Nearly executed by her Catholic sister Queen Mary over religious differences, the Anglican Elizabeth had plenty of issues to deal with. One of the more substantial ones was the state of the economy, ravaged by inflation caused by Henry VIII's and Edward VI's substantial debasements of the coinage. The silver content of the previous two decades of coinage sank to as low as one part in three (.333 fineness), lowered in an attempt to prop up the royal finances.

All debased coins were called in for a revaluation within the first year of Elizabeth's reign (revalued coins were countermarked to indicate their actual silver value).¹ Elizabeth raised the silver content of her coinage nearly to the previous sterling standard, adopting a fineness of .916.²

However, her most important contribution to numismatic history lies in her experiments in milled, or machine-made, coinage. The milled process revolutionized coinage by replacing the two millennia-old method of manufacture with a new mechanical process born out of the Renaissance. The impacts on coinage subsequently influenced commerce and economics by providing a superior

medium of exchange.

Until the Renaissance, coins had been produced virtually the same way since their conception in antiquity. Traditionally, a blank planchet of relative roundness was placed between a fixed stationary die (afixed to an anvil or wedged into a tree stump), called the *pile*, and an upper die, the *trussel*, held by hand. The coiner would strike the trussel with a hammer, pressing the designs into both sides of the planchet, yielding a coin.



Engravers of medals, who used the same process,

realized the limitations of such methods, and eventually invented a new process to produce coins. Coins and medals struck by the *hammered* method were routinely poorly centered, weakly struck, and of inconsistent shape (*i.e.* not round).

Hammered coinage was plagued by two additional problems, counterfeiting and clipping—stemming from the method of manufacture. Clipping was a process whereby an unscrupulous individual would *clip* off a piece of the coin, save the piece of metal to be melted and recoined, but pass the clipped coin at its full face value.

Hammered 6d of Elizabeth I

Hammered coins often had parts not struck by the die and thus not easily missed once clipped. The irregularity of the shape also contributed to clipping, as it was (and still is today for numismatists) difficult to determine what was clipped during the coinage process and what was clipped later on.

Because the hammered method was both crude in process and product, counterfeiting coins was simple, common, and profitable. The new *milled* method of coinage helped to eliminate or at least curb these problems.



INVENTION OF THE SCREW PRESS

The first person credited with using a machine to strike coins or medals was the Italian architect and artist Donato Bramante. Bramante used a screw press, which would become the standard for milled production methods in England and much of Europe, to strike medals for Pope Julius II during his ten year papacy, 1503–1513.

Renowned *Renaissance Man* Leonardo Da Vinci is also associated with early machine methods; notes and sketches from his work at the Rome mint in 1514, the year Bramante died, indicated designs to punch perfectly round planchets from strips of metal.

The screw press was slowly adopted into the realm of coinage, appearing in France around mid-century. Henry II of France implemented the new methods in an attempt to reduce counterfeiting and clipping, and to have the most modern coinage.³

Although the operation in Paris was cut short, most numismatists agree a mysterious French moneyer, Eloye Mestrelle, learned the details of the system in the late 1550s from the mint in Paris. Mestrelle petitioned the Tower Mint in London in late 1560, and was given a job. However his name was never recorded as a member of the mint staff.⁴

MILLED COINAGE

In 1561, milled coinage arrived in Britain through the French coiner Eloye Mestrelle. Elizabeth was intrigued by the ability of the new technology to produce stronger (and more flattering) portraits and designs, although *interest in producing coins of perfect weight and roundness was an old idea in the Tudor monarchy*.⁵ The machine-made coinage solved both the problems of commerce and Elizabeth's vanity. By late 1561, Mestrelle and his estimated dozen employees produced the world's first real production run of milled coins.⁶

The milled coins proved much superior to their hammered counterparts, and were well received by the public. Some scholars suggest that the milled six-pence pieces (6d) in particular may have even circulated for a 1d premium. Scholars draw evidence from William Shakespeare's *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, where Slender is robbed of "seven groats worth of mill-sixpences." Seven groats was worth 28d, an amount not divisible by sixpences. However, if milled sixpences traded for 7d apiece, Slender easily could have been robbed of four *milled-sixpences*. This theory was first formulated by the great English numismatist John Evans in 1905.⁷

THE SUCCESS FAILS

Despite superior quality and popular acceptance, the first milled coinage experiment in England was short-lived. Although Mestrelle's methods were at the time more expensive, his dismissal from the Tower Mint was unanimously attributed to the intense resentment by other mint employees, particularly the so-called *hammer-men*, who feared Mestrelle's new machinery would replace them.⁸

Mestrelle's nationality also clearly worked against him. After Mestrelle left the mint, it would be more than a half century before milled coinage reappeared in England, again by means of a Frenchman.

BRIOT'S SERIES

Nicholas Briot arrived at the Tower Mint first as the chief engraver of coinage. Briot produced two series of milled coinage during his employment, in 1631–32 and 1637–39. Both series featured the high craftsmanship associated with Mestrelle's coinage.

Although improvements were made to the milled coin processes, Briot fell out of favor with mint officials, possibly for reasons similar to the dismissal of his predecessor. However, Briot did find employment in Scotland, where he produced

milled coinage until the outbreak of the Civil War in 1642–43.

BLONDEAU & SIMON

Once the Commonwealth took power in 1649 following the Civil War, the new government again tried to implement milled coinage. Peter Blondeau, another moneyer invited from the mint in Paris, worked with an Englishman, David Ramage, to produce a set of milled patterns.

Blondeau contributed greatly to the progress of milled coinage in England, adding design to the third side of the coin, the edge. Blondeau introduced the addition of wording and reeding to the edge, which further accomplished the original goals of milled coinage—to decrease fraud. The addition of edge inscriptions, be it words or vertical lines (officially known as grains), helped merchants and consumers to identify clipped coins much easier. If a coin did not have reeding around its circumference or words were missing from the edge inscription, it was suspect. The new edge of the coin also allowed moneyers and engravers another canvas for expression.

On a pattern crown bearing a bust of Oliver Cromwell struck under the Commonwealth, Thomas Simon the engraver inscribed:

THOMAS SIMON MOST HVMBLY PRAYS
YOVR MAJESTY TO COMPARE THIS HIS
TRYALL PIECE WITH THE DVTCH AND
IF MORE TRVLY DRAWN & EMBOSS'D
MORE GRACE; FVLLY ORDER'D AND MORE
ACCURATELY ENGRAVEN TO RELEIVE HIM

demonstrating the potential of edge lettering, fitting all thirty-four words in two rows around the circumference.

Blondeau briefly returned to France due to opposition within the mint, but he was reinstated at the Tower Mint by Charles II shortly after the Restoration. The monetary situation Charles II



Hammered Half-crown of Charles II

inherited was a hodgepodge of pre-war Charles I coinage, Royalist and Parliamentary issues of

the Civil War, and issues of the Commonwealth. Charles II called for the melting and recoinage of the pieces circulating.

The recoinage was completed by hammered processes, although by the third year of Charles II's reign, milled coinage was and would remain the sole method of manufacturing coins in England.⁹

By 1662 the milled process was well established, and the improvements made since Elizabethan times stamped out any of the opposition to progress. The improved screw press of the Roettiers brothers combined with the new edge marking methods, nearly eliminated the threat of clipping.



Charles II milled farthing [gold pattern] 1665

Finally, England had the secure and beautiful currency Elizabeth sought over a century earlier. Also, trade was now smoother because arguments that arose regarding the weight of a coin could easily be resolved by examining the edge. However trade was only facilitated when the coins were in good enough condition. It was not uncommon for coins of this period to circulate so long that their edge inscriptions wore off.

GRESHAM'S LAW

The elimination of clipping helped address the problem Sir Thomas Gresham had recognized at the beginning of Elizabeth's reign. Gresham identified two types of money in circulation, the *good* (full weight coins) and the *bad* (clipped or debased coins). He postulated *that good and bad coin cannot circulate together* because the bad money pushes the good out of circulation.¹⁰

When a consumer made a purchase, he would tender the most underweight coin he had, as this was the cheapest way for him to buy the product. The merchant was mandated by law to accept the coin at face value. However, if the merchant had to make change, he would give the consumer the most clipped coin he had for the same reason. Both the merchant and the consumer kept their *good* coins, and only the *bad* coins circulated. Thus coins of varying quality encouraged hoarding, which reduced the supply of money, causing more expensive goods and inflation.



Thomas Simon's 1663 Petition Crown for Charles II

Gresham described this phenomenon in a letter to the Queen in 1558. His letter likely had influence in her recoinage and restoration of the fineness in the following few years.

However, when milled coinage was firmly implemented in 1662, it did not yet eliminate the issues addressed in what was later named *Gresham's Law*, it simply redefined *good* and *bad* money. The milled coinage became the good money, and the hammered, the bad, because both were allowed to circulate side by side.

RECOINAGE & REFORM

It was not until a half century later, when William III issued another recoinage decree, that hammered coinage began to disappear from circulation.¹¹ Thus, the added security of milled coinage did not take full effect until all hammered coinage was demonetized shortly after the recoinage of 1696.

Nearly two centuries after its birth in Italy, milled coinage finally replaced hammered coinage in the English economy. Despite the numerous attempts to implement a milled coinage, the issues Sir Thomas Gresham addressed about good and bad money prevented it from improving the efficiency of the economy until the beginning of the 18th century.

By 1700, Britain was beginning to engage in foreign trade at a rate that was increasing rapidly. Without a standardized and secure currency it is unlikely that England would have been so successful; a strong currency is essential to any growing economy or nation.

The story of milled coinage serves as an important symbol of progress in the evolving Britain. Although mechanization of coinage was slow, the ancient hammered method was eventually replaced, marking a final shift from the England of the Middle Ages to the Great Britain of modern times. ♦

PHOTO CREDITS

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1. H.A. Seaby, 134.
2. *ibid*, 151.
3. Davis, 114–5.
4. *ibid*, 116.
5. *ibid*, 115–6.
6. *ibid*, 117.
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10. Selgin.
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PAX QVÆRITVR BELLO

English Coinage during the Great Rebellion

Elliot M. Wehner

JANUARY 10, 1641/2 — King Charles I has fled the capital city of London. The impending civil war is certain. Since the beginning of his reign in 1625, the Stuart King had been at odds with Parliament. An ardent follower of the Church of England, Charles disagreed with the predominately Puritan parliament on the issue of prayer and ritual.

In reaction to this conflict, Parliament did not vote the King the right to impose *tonnage* and *poundage* for life, as had been the tradition with past rulers. Charles viewed the act as a challenge to his established royal rights, and continued to collect the duties without consent. Parliament passed the *Petition of Right* with the reluctant approval of the King in 1628, which among many things, forbade the King from imposing taxes without consent of Parliament. Charles argued that *tonnage* and *poundage* were custom duties, not taxes, and thus did not violate the *Petition*. The duties were essential for the crown, amounting to one-fourth of the annual revenue.¹

Though it would be another decade and a half before war, members of Parliament forced a resolution on a representative of the king in regards to the custom duties, which caused the king to abolish parliament for eleven years, paving the way for an armed conflict.

Desperately needing money to control a Scottish rebellion, Charles was forced to recall Parliament. After a botched attempt to seize alleged traitors, Charles left London to raise an army.

Up to the beginning of and through the Civil War, the mint in the Tower of London (the Tower Mint) was the main manufacturer of coinage. Charles inherited a long history of coinage, arguably dating back to the Romans, with the base unit of currency being the silver penny. By Charles' reign, the pound-shilling-pence (£.s.d.) system was well established, with one pound equal to twenty shillings, and one shilling equal to twelve pence.

Although a slew of denominations were issued during this time, the half-crown (2s 6d) saw large production in the 1630s due to an agreement with Spain that contracted recoinage of sizable quantities of Spanish silver from America to pay Spanish troops

fighting the *Thirty Years War* in the Netherlands.² Discoveries of hoards from the English Civil War largely consist of silver *groats*, four-pence pieces, although it is assumed that most of the smaller denominations down to the copper farthing ($\frac{1}{4}$ pence) circulated heavily.³

Five years before the outbreak of war, Charles set up a branch mint in Aberystwyth to coin Welsh silver. Those coins are marked by the Welsh plumes above the shield on the reverse and the open book privy mark. Up until the outbreak of war, only the Tower mint and the branch mint in Aberystwyth officially struck coins.

After Parliament seized the Tower mint in August 1642, both combatants, the Parliamentarians and the Royalists, produced different coinages until the formation of the Commonwealth. As will become apparent, this split yielded copious varieties of coinage that add to our understanding of the English Civil War.

More often than not, coinage of this period served a political purpose on top of a functional purpose. Though Parliament was fighting a war with Charles, legally they still acknowledged him as king. Careful not to disturb the general population or appear treasonous, Parliament adhered to the tradition dating back to the conception of coinage, keeping the likeness of the monarch. The Tower mint had a steady stream of work, coining around £1,000,000 a year, fueled in most part by Spanish silver, but also by plate from Puritan supporters.⁴ The influx of Spanish silver can be attributed to the sizable quantity of specie arriving from the Americas carried on British ships.

The Tower under Parliament continued with basically the same hand-struck methods used under Charles, retaining the *Trial of the Pyx*. However, the quality of the coinage declined under Parliamentary control, exemplified by the weakly struck and poorly shaped coins typical of this period. Coins of this time can be identified with specific mints by privy marks; other features of the Tower coinage remained generally the same.

Although approximately fifteen mechanical coin presses were delivered to the Tower mint during 1640–41/2, there is no evidence in the coinage to suggest that they were used during the war.⁵ This fact is consistent with the Parliamentary attitude

towards coinage. They were careful not to disrupt the everyday lives of people more than they had to in order to rally support for their cause.

The coinage of the Royalists is much more fascinating than the Tower coinage, as the Royalists and their mints were always on the move. By the end of the war, the Royalists had struck coins in at least ten different towns, while the Parliamentarians primarily struck coins at the Tower Mint (although near the end of the war they reopened a mint near Aberystwyth).

The position and multiplicity of mints parallel the trajectory of Charles' war. At the beginning of the war, Charles fled London to York where he established a mint that operated until its capture in 1644. By September/October of 1642, Charles ordered the entire mint operation in Aberystwyth to move to the less remote Shrewsbury, closer to the battlegrounds. When the Crown moved its capital to Oxford, logically, another mint was founded.

As the Royalist cause became more desperate, more mints were founded, both attested and unattested. Charles was inspired to continue striking coinage mainly because he needed to pay troops. England was a cash economy at the time; without coin to pay troops,

Charles would not be able to field an army.

Like his enemies, Charles used his coinage as a medium of expressing his political sentiments. Charles had many messages inscribed in the legends of his coinage. Although written in abbreviated Latin, they were clear and exemplified his views. Charles kept the inscription familiar to the obverse of his pre-war coinage that expressed his claim to the throne through the *divine right of kings*:

CAROLVS : D : G : MAGNI : BRITANI :
FRAN : ET : HIB : REX (Charles, by the Grace
of God, King of Great Britain, France, & Ireland).

A similar legend exclusive to the half-groat (2p) and penny pieces reads:

IVSTITIA : THRONVM : FIRMAT
(Justice Strengthens the Throne).

It is interesting to note that the coinage of the Tower Mint under Parliament retains these ironic inscriptions, despite political and religious differences.



Charles I Half-crown

DECLARATION COINAGE

Despite the previous examples, undeniably the most bold of inscriptions Charles put on his coins appeared after his *Declaration at Wellington*. Although this declaration scarcely appears in general histories of the war, this short summary of Charles' objectives is essential to his coinage and appears on many coins from his branch mints. On the reverses, in abbreviated form, Charles declared that he fought for "The Religion of the Protestants, the Laws of England, and the Liberties of Parliament."

RELIGIO PROTESTANTIVM LEGES
ANGLIÆ LIBERTAS PARLIAMENTI

Declaration coins from the Oxford mint are abundant, as the new reverse dies were prepared as the mint operation was beginning in the town. Upon arrival in Oxford, Charles demanded the University of Oxford colleges send him "all such plate of what kind soever" as a sign of allegiance and loyalty to the Crown. (They were promised an interest on their *loan*, though it is rather doubtful that even the original amount was repaid).⁶

£10,000 worth of Oxford silver had been sent to the King by 20 July 1642. Early in the war, the typical days wage for a standard infantryman was around 8d to 10d, however for a siege of Warwick Castle, the Earl of Northampton offered 2s (24d) per day.⁷ The price of wheat hovered around 4s 8d per bushel during this time (Oxford, July 1642).⁸

Although there were differences in the coinage of the Parliamentarians and the Royalists, the style of coinage was generally preserved (it looked like pre-war Charles I coinage), and it can be assumed that the coinages circulated interchangeably. Hoards from the civil war show examples of both Parliamentarian and Royalist pieces, confirming this assumption.⁹

SIEGE PIECES

The siege coinages from the Civil War do not follow the traditional style of English coinage. Despite the many sieges of the War, siege issues are only known to have survived in significant numbers from the sieges of Carlisle, Scarborough, Newark, and Pontefract. Siege issues were used to pay troops when the standard coinage supply was insufficient.

A true coinage of necessity, the siege coinages are often irregular in shape and crudely made. The siege coinage of Carlisle is well documented in the journal of Isaac Tullie. Tullie recounts that "an order was published to every citizen to bring in their plate to be



Charles I Half-groat (2d)

coyned [sic], which they did chearfully [sic]."¹⁰ This story is consistent with other sieges in demonstrating the manner in which silver was acquired for the making of emergency coinage.

The coinages of Scarborough and Newark are distinct due to their peculiar shapes and range of denominations. There are over twenty different denominations for Scarborough and four Newark types, including a strange ninepence denomination. The shapes of the former are inconsistent, while the Newark types are lozenge- or diamond-shaped.

Pontefract was the final siege issue of the war with political legends pertaining to Charles I's imprisonment and ultimately his execution:

DVM SPIRO SPERO
(Whilst I live [or breath], I hope).

That graces an earlier type, while a legend supporting Charles II is inscribed on a later issue:

POST MORTEM PATRIS PRO FILIO
(After the death of the father, for his son).

These inscriptions show support for the Loyalist cause, despite the bleak future.

BEGINNING OF THE END

Before the capture of Pontefract, Charles I had been executed, signifying the beginning of the end for the Civil War. Charles II and uprisings in Scotland and Ireland would pester the Parliamentarians for a few more years, however the war is not said to have ended completely until the Battle at Worcester in September 1651.

The formation of the Commonwealth had a profound impact on English coinage. Parliament first standardized the design of the coinage throughout all denominations, silver and gold. The Latin legends were removed and replaced with inscriptions in English.

Obv: COMMONWEALTH OF ENGLAND
Rev: GOD WITH VS

Both the standardization of design and elimination of Latin legends are results of the strictly Puritan

Parliament. Specifically, the rejection of Latin inscriptions was an attempt to sever ties with Rome further.

AFTER THE BATTLE

Before the "Great Rebellion" the Tower mint experimented with milled coinage, however it seemed too expensive and unfamiliar to deal with during wartime. Although, under the Commonwealth, multiple pattern pieces with a likeness of the Lord Protector Oliver Cromwell were struck using a screw press, it is unlikely any pieces were actually issued for circulation.

The coinage of the Interregnum was a hodge-podge of pre-war Charles I coinage, Royalist and Parliamentary issues of the Civil War, and issues of the Commonwealth. When Charles II was restored to the monarchy in May 1660, there were many problems facing the Crown, including the currency situation.

In the first years of his reign, most of the earlier silver was melted and recoinage. This recoinage was again a hammered issue, favored for its speed. However, by early 1663 all new money was machine-made.¹¹ The milled issues proved much superior to the traditional hammered coinages, as they were much more round, could easily be made thicker, and could have edge inscriptions, which deterred counterfeiting and clipping significantly. The full adoption of machine-made coinage marked the end of the Civil War coinage, as from this point forward, designs were much more standardized and resemble the coinage we see today.

The coinage of the "Great Rebellion" is a permanent account of the most significant war fought in Great Britain since the 1066 Invasion. The multiplicity of character in the coins explains the people, ideas, and circumstances of those who lived during the time. The coinage changed with the people and the times, propagating political sentiments, whilst serving as the medium of exchange.

While the changes in coinage may have gone unnoticed in the day to day routine of the general population, they reflect a changing Britain.

ENDNOTES

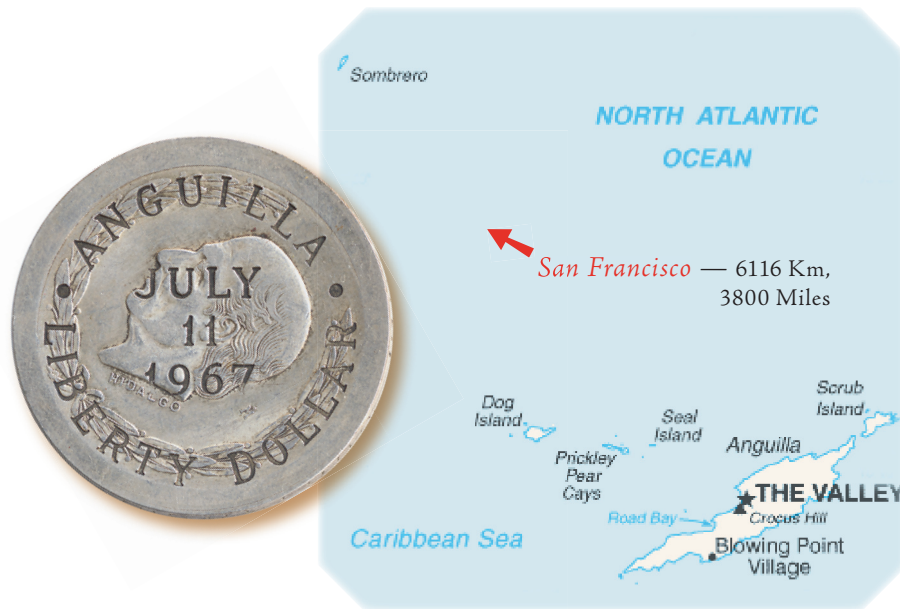
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|----------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Cheyney, 417. | 7. <i>ibid</i> , 22. |
| 2. Besly, 3-4. | 8. Poynder. |
| 3. <i>ibid</i> , 6. | 9. Cotswold. |
| 4. <i>ibid</i> , 91. | 10. Besly, 75; BM2 |
| 5. <i>ibid</i> , 91. | 11. Besly, 104. |
| 6. <i>ibid</i> , 33. | |

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PHOTO CREDITS

All photos by the author.



Anguilla's Concoctions

Jerry F. Schimmel

ANGUILLA ISLAND IS thirty-four or thirty-seven square miles, depending on the account you read, about twelve miles long and two wide in an irregular shape. (According to the CIA, it is 102 square kilometers.) By comparison, the City and County of San Francisco is forty-five square miles—seven across North to South and about the same East to West. So Anguilla is smaller than *Frisko*, with which it once had an incongruous relationship.

The City by the Golden Gate lies nearly 4000 miles to the west of Anguilla as the 747 flies, but the closest U.S. mainland city is Miami, about twelve hundred miles WNW. Between Miami and Anguilla are Cuba, Haiti, the Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands, American and British.

Travelers cannot land on Anguilla in a jumbo jet because the airstrip is too small. From Miami, at least two transfers to progressively smaller craft are necessary if visitors want air travel. The alternative is a long meandering boat trip through the warm sunny Caribbean.

Anguilla is nearly the northernmost of the leeward islands in the West Indies. A large rock called Sombbrero Island, forty miles beyond, bears that honor, though it really has nothing to do with

this story. With a few other water-surrounded pieces of *terra firma*, Anguilla performs the signal task of separating the Caribbean from the North Atlantic Ocean.

There were about 13,500 inhabitants on Anguilla in 2006, mostly descendants of West Africans imported to the territory against their will and made to work on sugar plantations for nothing except substandard room and board. Today the island is a British dependency with a form of limited self-government courtesy of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth.

In the past two decades Anguilla has latched onto the tourist industry and given it a twist. Unlike Aruba, Santo Domingo, San Juan, and the Bahamas, there are no casinos or huge international hotel

chains, just small restaurants, tiny almost-inns and stunning white beaches. Idyllic is what the tourist books say, however vacation-seekers pay through the nose as soon as the taxi drops their luggage at the hotel door.

If you have gotten this far and not fallen asleep you might reasonably ask, “What did San Francisco ever have to do with Anguilla?” If Scott Newhall, one-time Executive Editor of the *San Francisco Chronicle* and failed mayoral candidate, were still around, he could tell us. However, we have to be content with fragments of his oral history, odds and ends gleaned from the *Chronicle*’s morgue and other bits and pieces taken from the internet.

REVOLUTION

In the mid-1960s Anguilla was a distant part of the British Dependency of St. Kitts and Nevis, some sixty miles to the south. In his oral history, Newhall said, “Although the residents were unhappy with the government in St. Kitts for withholding British aid that should have been shared with them, the revolution started with a beauty contest in Anguilla in 1967. The winner turned out to be a ringer from St. Kitts, not an Anguillan girl at all. The contest ended up with a shooting, and somebody was killed, one person was, I think, and the Anguillans declared their independence from St. Kitts and Nevis. They got up a militia—you know, a ragtag affair.”

Apparently Newhall read about the event in a wire-service story and decided to visit the island along with *Chronicle* investigative reporter George Draper. After a long adventure they returned to San Francisco where Newhall got together with Howard Luck Gossage, a prominent ad man (“the Socrates of Advertising”), Dr. Gerald Feigen, an equally well-known proctologist and political activist, and Art Finley (real name Art Finger), who was a *Chronicle* columnist (*Art’s Gallery*) and children’s KRON TV personality (Mayor Art).

There were probably others, though, if there were, their names were never mentioned. With that the assemblage decided to assist Anguilla in getting a better deal than it had received from St. Kitts in the past. Why they decided to get involved in something so obscure is anybody’s guess.

Newhall, Gossage, and Feigen were instrumental in bringing the Anguillan “government” to San Francisco. “We borrowed the Mayor’s car,” Newhall said. “We designed flags for Anguilla and put the flags on the car and had a press conference in town.



It all makes no sense, but anyway, it was intriguing.”

The *Chronicle* makes no mention of Newhall *et al* on the fateful day, but the Mayor’s car was dispatched to the airport on July 22, 1967, bearing Supervisor Peter Tamaras as Mayor Jack Shelley’s personal representative. A photo shows Tamaras holding one of the new flags as he greets Anguilla “President” Peter Adams and Jeremiah Gombs, an American citizen of Anguillan birth who on different occasions was called Foreign Minister, Defense Minister, and possibly other titles.

A face-to-face meeting was arranged between Adams and Shelley who must have been amused at the committee’s lark and thought the gathering was at least worth the publicity. Otherwise there was nothing at all San Francisco could do to assist the island except be nice to its representatives.

THE PLOT THICKENS

However, San Francisco did become more involved with Anguilla when Newhall, Feigen and Gossage got the bright idea of issuing *Anguilla Liberty Dollars* as a fund raiser for the cash-strapped *Freedom for Anguilla* movement. More than ten thousand foreign silver dollar size silver (and two gold) coins were counterstamped on one side with the declaration:

• ANGUILLA / JULY / 11 / 1967 / LIBERTY DOLLAR •

According to David Mitchell of the *Point Reyes Light*, Newhall used a hydraulic press in the *Chronicle* basement at Fifth and Mission streets to accomplish the deed. [Right across from the Old Mint! —ed.]

The actual date of striking Anguilla's singular numismatic trove has been lost. However, Feigen, then chairman of the *Anguillan Development Advisory Committee*, announced on July 17 that bonds would be offered for sale to fund the Anguillan economy. The committee was also taking donations. It must have been around this time the coins were counterstamped.

Mitchell goes on to say: "Although the *Chronicle* played the story straight, Newhall's shenanigans delighted the Bay Area. Not, however, the British. The CIA added in its *World Factbook*, 'several attempts at separation failed and in 1971, two years after a second revolt, Anguilla was finally allowed to secede from St. Kitts and Nevis. The new arrangement was formally recognized in 1980 with Anguilla becoming a separate British dependency with local government beholden only to the crown.'"

Mitchell concluded, "In effect, the Newhall scheme had succeeded."



DOLLARS OF LIBERTY

Coins countermarked with the Liberty Dollar legend came from eight countries including China, Ecuador, Great Britain, Mexico, Panama, Peru, Philippines, and Yemen. Mexico was the largest contributor, around 7,800 pieces, 4,000 of which were later melted, according to *The Standard Catalog of World Coins* (SCWC).

However, there is uncertainty as to how many were actually stamped. Adding up the figures listed by the SCWC, 10,272 were struck. According to Mitchell, who listened to Newhall's tapes, there were 11,600 made. One other estimate was 13,600, though I don't know the source for that figure. That leaves 6,272 for collectors if the SCWC total is correct.

The Dollars were sold here at \$10.00 per, but as

I recall, did not go over too well with the public at the time. A few were unique or virtually so, struck only in handfuls, including two gold pieces. Needless to say, these days those Dollars command a huge premium over the initial investment. Probably few ever reached Anguilla, although of that we can't be completely certain.

The Dollars were mentioned briefly in the *Anguilla Beacon* of September 1967, so obviously they were known on the island. Possibly Newhall or a committee member carried some to the island and distributed samples. We'll never know.

The *Standard Catalog of World Coins* lists these coin types as counterstamped for Anguilla:

KM1	Mexico KM467 (5,987, but 4,000 were melted)
KM2	Mexico KM465 (1,530)
KM3	Peru KM218.1 (1,531)
KM3A	Yemen Y31 (included below)
KM4	Yemen Y17 (494)
KM5	Philippines KM172 (340)
KM6	Mexico KM474 (250)
KM7.1	Panama KM13 (91)
KM7.2	Panama KM21 (included above)
KM8	Ecuador KM79 (21)
KM9	Mexico KM409 (15)
KM10	China assorted Yuan Shi Kai Dollars (10)
KM11	Mexico KM468 (2)
KM12	Great Britain Y-T5 (1)
KM14	Gold \$100 Mexico KM481 (2)

POSTSCRIPT: SCOTT NEWHALL (1914 – 1992)

Newhall served as Executive Editor of the *San Francisco Chronicle* from 1952 to 1971. Many sources credit him for boosting the paper's circulation by adding columnists like Herb Caen, Dear Abby, and others who drew in thousands of new readers. By the late 1970s the *Chronicle* was the largest circulation daily in Northern California, outstripping its only competitor, the old *San Francisco Examiner*.

Newhall ran for Mayor of San Francisco in 1971 against the popular incumbent, Joe Alioto, and finished fifth.

He was the great-grandson of Henry Mayo





Newhall, founder of Newhall in Los Angeles County.

Scott married Ruth Waldo, a UC Berkeley art major, in Reno in 1933, and the couple had four children. The family lived in the San Francisco Bay Area until 1968, when they moved into the Piru Mansion of Ventura County, meanwhile keeping a house in San Francisco.

They purchased the *Newhall Signal* in 1963, and for the next 25 years recorded and influenced goings-on in the Santa Clarita Valley of Los Angeles County.

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Anguilla Liberty Dollar photos by Stephen Huston.

Map of Anguilla adapted from *The World Factbook*, a public domain government publication.

Photos of Scott Newhall and his campaign badge were provided by the author.





California Gold Rush Bills of Exchange

Michael Wehner

MANY A MINER left a sweetheart, wife, or parents back East when he came to California seeking his fortune in the Gold Rush. Sending some of that newfound wealth back home was a risky proposition. Carrying it back himself on the several-week trip east was not an option for those anxious to stay in the hills to look for more of the precious metal. Neither was sending an individual package of gold dust a viable alternative, as it was almost certain to be stolen. However, by the early 1850s, a miner could purchase a *Bill of Exchange* from a variety of banking companies to guarantee that the money would get to its destination safely.

These notes were often issued in triplicate, with one sent overland, and a duplicate sent by sea, to better the odds that the money reached its intended destination in a timely manner. The third copy might be kept as a receipt or sent via a tertiary route. Generally payable to a specific individual, the first of the three copies presented to the Eastern bank would be redeemed and the remaining copies were voided and discarded. Of course, some of these remainders survive to present a tangible connection to the early transfer of California's wealth to the rest of the country.

EARLY CALIFORNIA BANKING

With the memory of the financial panic of 1837 fresh in their minds, the writers of the 1849 California Constitution prohibited the use of paper money and forbade the granting of charters to banking

corporations. Instead, banking functions were restricted to individuals or groups of individuals, causing them to be personally liable for such financial obligations.

Since banks are essential to the success of a local economy, numerous opportunities to provide such services were exploited by eager entrepreneurs. This system of banking was largely unregulated and the subject of many scandals. Embezzlement, thievery, and simple incompetence caused a series of bank panics.

These early bankers provided the traditional financial services such as depositing and loaning money. They also provided services unique to a gold rush economy relating to precious metals. Merchants who bought significant amounts of gold dust, and the express companies who transported it, were among the first to start offering banking services.

Advertisements in the *Alta California* newspaper illustrate some of these establishments.

BURGOYNE & CO.,
BANKERS,
CORNER OF BATTERY AND WASHINGTON STREETS,
SAN FRANCISCO.

EXCHANGE FOR SALE, at sight or time, in sums to suit purchasers, on—

Baring, Bros. & Co.	London.
Hottinguer & Co.	Paris.
Wm. Hoge & Co.	New York.
Phoenix Bank	New York.
J. E. Thayer & Bro.	Boaten.
Brown, Johnston & Co.	New Orleans.
L. A. Benoit & Co.	St. Louis.
Chubb Brothers	Washington.

GOLD DUST and BULLION purchased.
COLLECTIONS made and Funds remitted at the lowest rates.
Particular attention given to orders for the purchase of State, City, and other securities, and to the Investment of Money.

In this typical ad, Burgoyne & Co. advertised "EXCHANGE FOR SALE, at sight or time" on a variety of banks in Eastern and European cities. These were banks in which Burgoyne had accounts, where the receiver of a *Bill of Exchange* could go to get their money. A single bank is usually listed on the actual note. The larger San Francisco banks would have contracts in more cities than the smaller banks. Clients would have to choose a bank that had a contract in a city near where the receiver lived.

The clause "at sight or time" refers to the terms of the contract. "At sight" meant that the note was redeemed for cash as soon as it was presented to the receiving bank. "Time" meant that redemption would be delayed several days. This is usually indicated on the notes themselves, with periods of a few days, or even weeks. The purpose of the waiting period is unknown, but it would seem likely that "at sight" terms would have been more expensive. The ad also notes that Burgoyne purchased gold and offered other investment services.



This 1851 Burgoyne & Co. note is among the earliest of these notes (see also page 23). It reads:

Ten days after sight of this Second of Exchange.
(first and third of same tenor and date unpaid),
Pay to the order of S.M. Cartney Caldwell One
hundred fifty two pounds, nine shillings Sterling.
Value received, which place to account. To Mess.
Baring Brothers & Co. London.

This note is then the *duplicate* or *second* copy. The first copy was the one most likely to have been redeemed. In fact, most surviving notes of any early California bank are *duplicates* or *triplicates*. The rare *firsts* that are encountered are usually blank.

This particular note was sent to Great Britain and denominated in Pounds Sterling with a rather lengthy waiting period of ten days. The note is engraved with a maritime scene suggesting a rapid transit across the ocean.

Burgoyne & Co. survived the 1851 depression that gripped San Francisco, but many of the California banks of the period failed spectacularly. One of the most memorable of the early bankers was James King of William. Unlike many of his competitors, King actually had previous banking experience. King's bank would fail in 1851 after one of the many fires in San Francisco destroyed his building. He was severely injured in the conflagration, but, upon recovery, he went to work as the cashier for the much larger firm of Adams & Co. because he was bankrupted.

BANKING HOUSE OF
JAMES KING OF WM. & CO, corner of Montgom-
ery and Commercial streets.

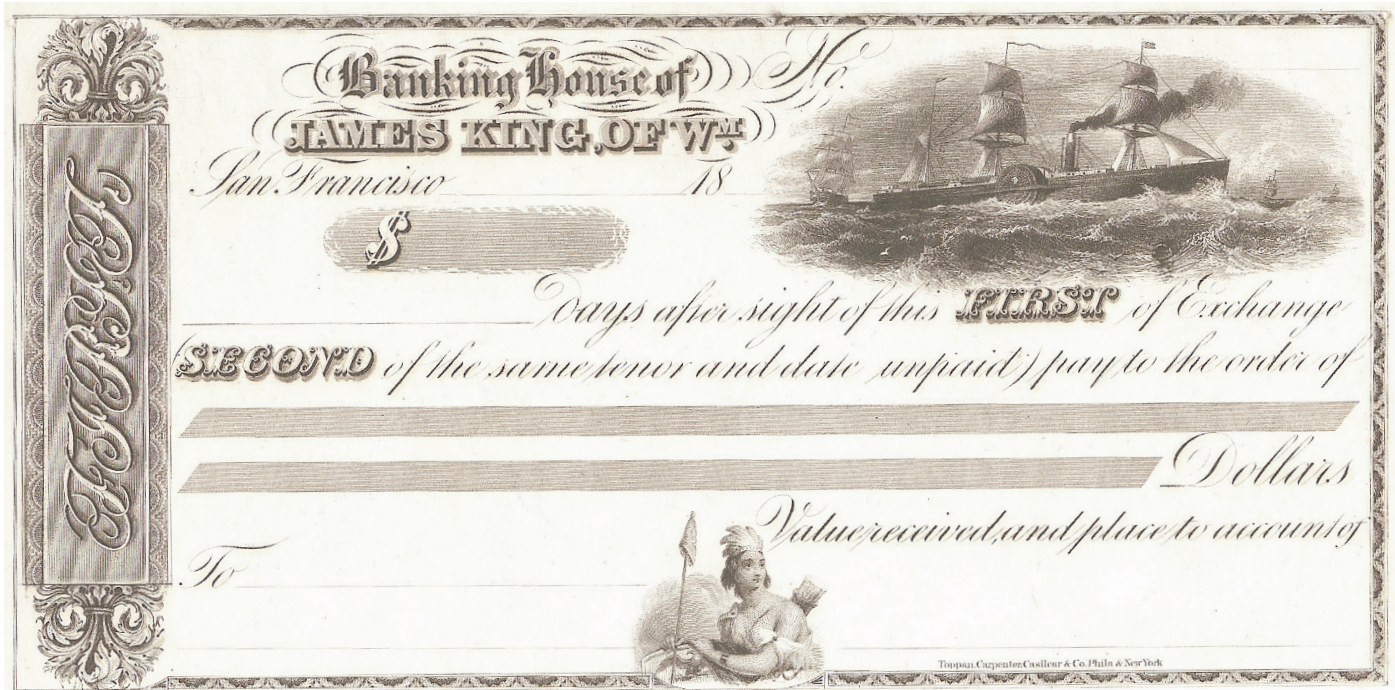
EXCHANGE ON

George Peabody, Esq.	London,
Messrs. Cammann & Whitehouse	New York,
" J. Corning & Co.	New Orleans,
" Riggs & Levering	St. Louis,
And on Messrs. Corcoran & Riggs—	
Payable at their office,	Wash'n City,
" Merchants' Bank of	Boston,
" Philadelphia Bank,	Philadelphia,
" Bank of Baltimore	Baltimore,
" Bank of Virginia and Branches.	je 3

James King of William & Co's advertisement in the *Alta California*.



This small \$20 gold ingot, stamped "James King of William" on the reverse, is on exhibit at the Union Bank of California, at the corner of Sansome and California Streets, San Francisco.



An unissued First of Exchange from the Banking House of James King of William. All of King's notes are very rare. Most are unissued but in high grade.

BANKERS & SCANDALS

By 1854, the two largest banks in San Francisco were Adams & Co. and Page, Bacon & Co. Located in the same building on the corner of California and Montgomery Streets, these two banks would fail in a sensational scandal in February of the following year. The building itself, known as the Granite Block, was built by John Parrot out of stone imported from China to withstand the many fires that plagued San Francisco at the time. It is depicted on notes from both banks, but, having survived the 1906 earthquake, it was torn down in the 1920s. The Omni Hotel currently occupies the site.

Page, Bacon & Co. was actually a branch of the St. Louis parent firm of the same name. The California branch was established in either 1849 or 1850 and moved to Parrot's building in 1852. Bills of Exchange from this firm are known from St. Louis, Sacramento, and San Francisco.

This 1852 duplicate note of Page, Bacon & Co. features three prominent engravings. At the bottom is a version of the California State Seal. Towards the left are a seaman, nautical equipment, and an allegorical figure indicative of transit.

At the top of the note is another female allegorical figure bridging the two parts of the country. On her left are scenes from the Eastern US, a bridge and a railroad. On her right is the San Francisco Bay in the background, and mining equipment in the foreground.

Page, Bacon & Co. Second of 1852
(see page 23 for larger image)



This particular note was drawn on a New York City bank with the waiting period crossed out and "At sight" handwritten on it.



This 1854 Duplicate note of Page, Bacon & Co. also features three engravings—the State Seal at the bottom, a steamship at the top and the Parrot building on the left.

In 1854, Adams & Co. was the largest express company in California, larger than the now better known Wells, Fargo & Co. Newspaper advertisements appear at the time for both its stage coach lines and banking services. Adams & Co. was a well-respected banking firm, responsible for introducing many of the privately-minted gold coins of the time into general circulation. However, the company was corrupted by its chief California officer, Isaiah Woods, who speculated its assets on his own behalf in mostly bad investments.

Not coincidentally, the Boston parent firm was reorganized in 1854, making the California business a separate entity. The corruption was also known to its cashier, James King of William, whose disgust led him to start his own newspaper and crusade against the rampant corruption in San Francisco. (King's death as a result of one of his exposés in 1856 led to the famous Second Committee of Vigilance.)

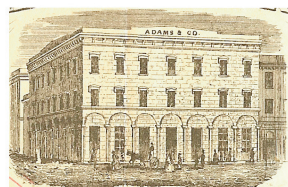


1853 Adams & Co. note

This rare 1853 Adams & Co. duplicate note also features a vignette of the Parrot Building, as well as the State Seal, and an allegorical transportation figure. The building vignettes on the notes from each of the two banks



April 1, 1854 Page, Bacon & Co. note



January 31, 1853 Adams & Co. note

features only the name of the issuing institution on the top frieze. The contradiction becomes even more interesting when examining another contemporary engraving of the building (top) compared with close-ups from the notes (beneath).

The contemporary engraving at the top shows a building bearing neither firm's name at the top, but indicates that each firm occupied half of the building. Compare this to the vignettes on the two bank notes. The view in all three engravings is looking towards the northwest corner of California and Montgomery Streets. The top figure shows Page, Bacon & Co. on the left side, and Adams & Co. on the right side of the building with each of the firm's names above the windows. This would seem a more equitable way to share advertising.

BLACK FRIDAY

In early 1855, Page, Bacon & Co. had been informed that the home office was in financial trouble, and was instructed to send \$1,000,000 in gold to cover the debts. However, transit between California and Missouri took several weeks, and the payments did not arrive in time to save the firm.

On February 17, 1855, a steamer from Panama brought the news that the St. Louis-based parent firm of Page, Bacon & Co. had failed. With \$2,000,000 outstanding, a run on the bank ensued as the San Francisco office ran out of cash. Entreaties to prominent San Francisco financiers fell on deaf ears, and, by February 22, the bank was unable to meet its obligations and shut its doors.

The very next day, the severely overextended

Adams & Co. announced that they would not open at all, paying out none of the cash that it had on hand. The resulting panic, known as "Black Friday," forced the failure of several other San Francisco banks. However, Adams & Co. still had considerable assets that had not been paid out to its debtors when it closed. A lengthy series of lawsuits and countersuits followed, during the middle of which the account books of Adams & Co. were found washed up on the shores of the San Francisco bay. Curiously, the pages for February 21 and 22 were missing!

The legal proceedings terminated several years later when it became apparent there was nothing left to pay out. The assets presumably were embezzled by Isaiah Woods and the officers of Palmer, Cook & Co., the bank to which the Adams assets had been transferred on Black Friday. No criminal convictions were ever made in the matter.

WILLIAM TECUMSEH SHERMAN, GOLD RUSH BANKER

Much of what is known about early San Francisco banking comes from letters of William T. Sherman, the famous Civil War Union general. A graduate of West Point, Sherman had come to San Francisco with the United States Army in 1847. Resigning his commission in 1850, he was persuaded by Henry Turner to establish a San Francisco branch of the St. Louis firm, Lucas & Simonds, who had noticed the success in California of his St. Louis competitors. Known as Lucas, Turner & Co., Sherman had a one-eighth interest in the bank and was made the managing partner in San Francisco.



*William Tecumseh Sherman
in the early 1850s*

His correspondence to his St. Louis partners survives, and it covers many interesting events in 1850s San Francisco. Sherman provided news of his business and competitors, including the revelation that the three percent fee charged to send money from California to the

Eastern states was not profitable due to shipping costs and losses from thefts.

His quick actions to obtain emergency loans on Black Friday, and his impeccable reputation for



Sherman's Bank, 498 Jackson Street in San Francisco

honesty, allowed Lucas, Turner & Co. to meet its obligations and survive the panic. By 1857, business in San Francisco had slowed, and Sherman moved to New York City to open a branch there. He arrived just in time to get entangled in the financial panic caused by the sinking of the steamer, *Central America*.

After the failure of the firm, he was sent briefly to San Francisco to liquidate the remaining California holdings. He then returned to the Midwest to pursue other opportunities, eventually rejoining the US Army. The original Lucas, Turner & Co. bank building still stands at 498 Jackson Street (at Montgomery Street).

An 1854 duplicate Bill of Exchange (below) from Lucas, Turner & Co., the San Francisco branch of Lucas & Symond, has a top vignette of an allegorical figure holding a caduceus, the magic staff of Hermes (Mercury). The bottom figure is Hermes himself wearing a winged cap, symbolizing swiftness. It was printed by Rawdon, Wright, Hatch & Edson, of New York.

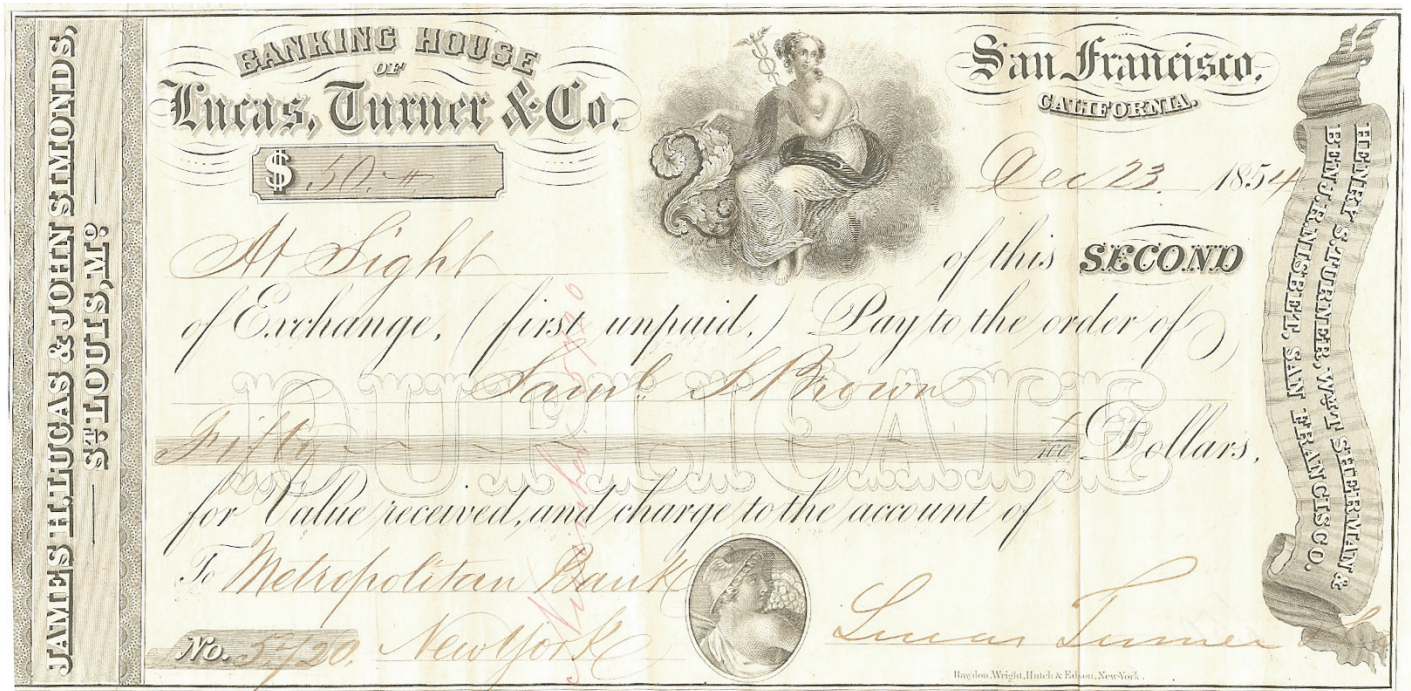
SUMMARY

Like much of life in Gold Rush San Francisco, the banking business was an unregulated free-for-all. Because of a distrust of paper money that would last well into the 1870s, there are no collectible California banknotes of this period such as there are from eastern states. However, the Bills of Exchange used by the pioneers to export money to other parts of the nation remain as an interesting substitute collectible.

PHOTO CREDITS

All photos by the author.

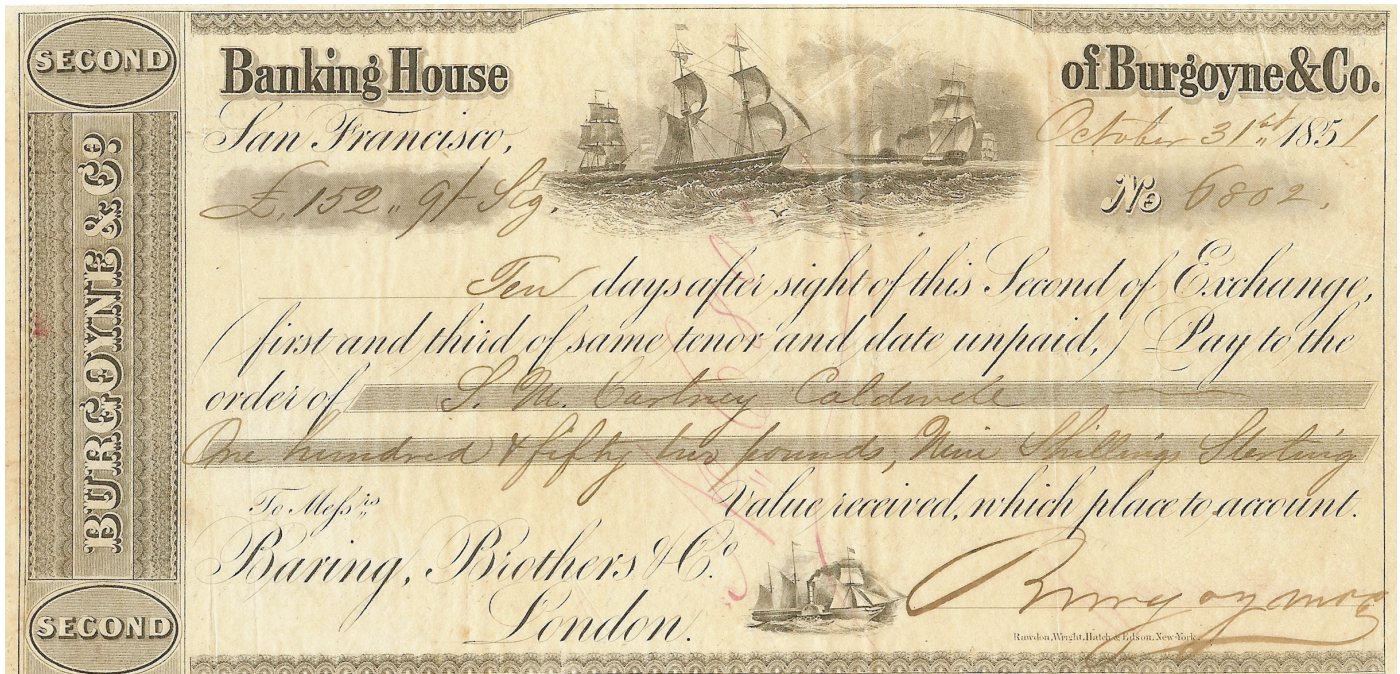
Lucas, Turner & Co. 1854 Bill of Exchange
The name "WM T SHERMAN" appears on the scroll along the right edge of this note.





Page, Bacon & Co. Second of 1852 (above)

Burgoyne & Co. Second of 1851 (below)



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German American Roots The Schlaraffia Franciscana Token

Jerry F. Schimmel

ONE OF THE oddest American tokens comes from my city, San Francisco. In the past twenty-five years I've seen only two examples. Made of aluminum and 28mm in diameter, it's unusual because the legend was composed in an archaic form of German.



o: Schlaraffian Spring-source (as in water hole),
1 Pint Coin, 1883, L.H. MOISE S.F.

r: (Schlaraffia) Franciscana, California. 1/20th of
One Dollar

Thus we have a nickel token for a pint of unrevealed Schlaraffian liquid.

It reads as follows:

o: SCHLARAFISCHES QVELL-AMBT / ★1★/
VHVDEVT / - + - / 1583 / L. H. MOISE S.F.

r: FRANCISCANA CALIFORNIA / ★XX★/
EYNEN / ★★ / ROSENOBLE

Can't understand it? Even though you read German? Well, neither could I, nor just about anybody else save a handful of Germans in the know. It took some digging to find out what the words meant and the story behind them. Here's an approximate translation:

SCHLARAFFIA ORIGINS

Place: *Bohemia of the Austro-Hungarian Empire*
Time: *1859 and the early years of Emperor Franz Josef*

The Johann Strauss family of Vienna played to packed ballrooms all over Europe that year, though their *Beautiful Blue Danube* would not premier for another eight seasons. In the States, John Brown and a ragtag band raided the Harper's Ferry armory in one of the most publicized events leading to the Civil War. Out West, the Comstock Lode mines were in full swing, a magnet for thousands of wannabe millionaires.

In Prague, artists and actors from the *Landstheater* (State Theatre) organized a “proletariat club” called *Schlaraffia* because they were ticked off. Their favorite comrade, opera singer Albert Eilers, had been blackballed from membership in the prestigious *Arcadia Society*, an upper crust gathering devoted to the arts. The Arcadians included any number of dukes, duchesses, earls, and princes, all connected to the Habsburg imperial court, and they made sure everybody knew about it.

Eilers was not royalty nor part of the wealthy elite, and, though the Arcadians enjoyed his performances, his remarkable ability would not suffice for membership. Actors, singers, musicians and artists were free to perform on stage or display their works and be applauded, but don’t attempt to rise above your station in life, please. Ironically, in later years Eilers was invited by composer Richard Wagner to sing at Wagner’s annual *Bayreuth Festspiele*, then as now a world-class music festival. Hopefully Eilers thumbed his nose at the Arcadians, but since many of them were his patrons he probably didn’t.



Schlaraffia token of Nürnberg, Germany

Accompanying Eilers in the new proletarian venture was a well-known actor named Tobisch, and twenty-three others of like nature. On October 10, at the *Gasthaus zum Hopfenstock* (Hop-Pole Inn) they formalized *Schlaraffia* as a society where creative people would be free to revel in their own *gemütlichkeit*, and to hell with anyone who objected. Only men were allowed to join, and only German would be spoken, rules which have been unchallenged for a century and a half, and which will no doubt always stay that way. In later years, notable Schlaraffians would include Franz Lehar of *Merry Widow* fame, and symphonic composer Gustav Mahler.

Schlaraffians sought to emulate the fantasy world described in a 16th Century poem by *meistersinger* Hans Sachs unsurprisingly titled *Schlaraffenland*. The name translates to something like “land of dreams” or “land of milk and honey.”

In Sachs’ imagination, cottage roofs would be shingled with pancakes, ready-cooked sausage chains would hang on posts to serve as edible fences, and



Schlaraffia Franciscana gathering circa 1909

water buckets would draw wine from the village wells. Tellers of tall tales, or even of outright lies, would become acknowledged community leaders, and the best circumlocutors would be feted with the highest honors and ranks.

For fun the members adopted the trappings of the middle ages and insisted on the use of medieval German spellings and pronunciations. Three centuries were subtracted from the founding date, so Schlaraffian clocks were moved back to 1559.

Each chapter became a *reych*, a meeting place became a *burg*, a meeting was a *sippungen*, and members were called *sassen*. They became a sort of “anti-fraternity,” for lack of a better word — a deliberate effort to counterbalance and maybe poke fun at self-important associations such as *Arcadia*.

In keeping with medieval themes, the *sassens* adopted grades of membership which included pages, squires and knights. The purpose of meetings was to provide a creative and enjoyable venue away from the cares of daily life. Politics, religion, and business would be banned from their gatherings. Poems, plays and hijinks were encouraged. Members embellished themselves and the *burg* with frivolous caps, knightly armor, banners, and thrones. In a most unroyal practice, all officers were democratically elected.

MONDO SCHLARAFFIA

Today the worldwide *Grand Reych* is located in Berne, Switzerland, and busily coordinates individual *reychs* on every continent. In 1995 there were 12,500 Schlaraffia members in more than 400 chapters. Among them were one thousand U.S. members, more than a hundred of whom lived in New Jersey.

Since the 1850s, membership has crept away from its artistic, bohemian character. Business and professional men and academic leaders now provide its core constituency. For German speakers wanting to find the nearest *reych*, the internet provides an exhaustive international listing of *reychs* and *burgs*. In the 21st century, *Schlaraffia* is very much alive and telling tall tales.

SCHLARAFFIA

FRANCISCANA

Munich author Wolfgang Hasselman dates the San Francisco *reych* to 1879, suggesting it may have been the first in the United States. However, today's *Schlaraffia Franciscana* now celebrates 1883 as its founding year, the date on the token. As with many early San Francisco civic groups, Franciscana records were destroyed in the earthquake and fire of April 1906, and no one remains to tell about the old days.

From 1912 on the San Franciscans met in California Hall on the northwest corner of Polk and Turk streets, for decades San Francisco's German-American cultural center. In the late 1960s, as an aside, the Hall's booking schedule read like a *Who's Who* of rock music: Janis Joplin with Big Brother and the Holding Company, Steve Miller Blues Band, Jefferson Airplane, and so on. Bravely withstanding the city's Summer of Love, *Schlaraffians* forged ahead with their monthly *sippungen*.

In 1995, the *reych* was forced to move across San Francisco Bay to Hayward because of hyperinflated San Francisco rents. The *sassens* have ensconced themselves in what used to be a bank at the corner of Tennyson Road and East 12th Street, and, keeping themselves up-to-date, they now have a website. If you google the name *Schlaraffia Franciscana*, you can get meeting dates and where to find a *sippungen*. But don't go if you can't speak German.

I talked with Gerhard Gipner of Hayward,



Schlaraffia Franciscana's California Hall in San Francisco

a newer member of the Franciscana. He said the chapter recently celebrated its 120th anniversary in 2003. Like members of many lodges and fraternities, he complained that the *reych* is graying, that younger men no longer join like they once did.

SUPPRESSION

In Germany during the Nazi period, *reychs* were forced to disband, along with Masonic lodges, rotary clubs, and civic associations in general. The first step toward dissolution came in 1935, when *Schlaraffians* were commanded to purge themselves of Jewish members or be abolished.

Publicly and officially the *reychs* conformed to Hitler's decree and dropped

all Jewish names from their lists. But the Nazi proclamation was contrary to the *Schlaraffians'* basic premise (and promise) — religious and political matters had no place at the *sippungen*.

The *sassen's* acquiescence must have been tinged with annoyance at the heavy-handedness of the Nazis. Their delivery of "sanitized" rosters to Hitler's overseers were no doubt accompanied by stiff one-armed salutes — with fingers of the other hand crossed behind their backs.

The upshot was that while Jewish members were "expelled," they were also quietly told to keep coming and to blazes with the decree. Eventually the Nazis got wind of what was going on, and in 1937, they closed the *reychs* by trashing *burgs*, burning books, and nailing up doors, typical of Hitler's favorite techniques in coping with "subversive influences." This was nothing new. *Schlaraffian reychs* had occasionally received the boot under the German and Austro-Hungarian Empires at different times depending on which way the political winds were blowing.

But that wasn't the end. During the German Democratic Republic era, the *sassens* once again had to meet secretly, always under threat of arrest if somebody squealed. The travails of European



European Token Designs:
One Rosenoble (left),
One Uhudeut (right)



Schlaraffians ended with the fall of the Berlin Wall, and no one has bothered them since. Why they were targeted remains a mystery, since at the very least, Schlaraffians were apolitical, and at most, irreverent. Maybe that was enough.

BITS AND PIECES

In Eilers' time Schlaraffians adopted the Eurasian Eagle-Owl as their symbol (family: *bubo bubo*). While holding forth at the *Hopfenstock*, one member, probably a bit tiddly, spied a stuffed owl over the door and said "there's our mascot," or words to that effect. From then on the owl's image has been appended to all Schlaraffian literature and sundry artifacts such as beer steins, badges, and tokens.

As a point of information, the unstuffed version can be found pouncing on small night creatures from the Atlantic Ocean east to the Pacific throughout the temperate climes of Europe and Asia. *Bubo bubo* is also the largest owl in the world and has a call that sounds like *uhu-uhu*. Consequently, Schlaraffian literature and public pronouncements are rife with the word "uhu," which is also the German word for "Eagle-Owl!" But it doesn't stop there because the term has a more poignant meaning. In Schlaraffenland *uhu* means a liter of beer. And it has a companion, *aha*, a half liter.

From 1885 through at least 1920, Schlaraffians had a rather complicated money system. In their universe, the largest denomination was a *rosenoble*, which in America equaled one dollar. Each American *rosenoble* contained twenty *uhu-deuts*, each *deut* counted for a nickel.

Before the *euro* in Germany, the *rosenoble* equaled three *reychsmarks*, each *reychsmark* equaling 100 *pfennig* or 100 Austrian *heller*. The *reychsmark* was further

divided into 10 *uhu-deuts*, one *uhu-deut* equaling 5 *reychsheller*, *ad infinitum* through the other European currencies. Non-Schlaraffian money, such as what we spend daily, was deemed "profane currency."

WHY THE TOKEN?

It was the custom for some *reychs* to issue tokens which could only be purchased by members. At special events Schlaraffia tokens became "legal" currency, and, by agreement with the *burg's* bartenders and waiters, *reych* tokens were accepted in payment (to be exchanged later for the profane). Thus, if a purchaser did not present a *deut* at the *quell-amt* (bar), he could not buy anything. So nonmembers could count on a hard time if they tried a sneak into the *sippungen*.

One clue as to when the token was made lies in the diesinker signature, L.H. MOISE S.F. The small letters were used on metal checks by Moise from mid- or late-1893 through 1906. The ornate style of the token suggests a manufacture date in the early 1890s, possibly right after Moise opened shop.

THE CALIFORNIA MIDWINTER EXPOSITION

In January 1894, San Francisco held its famous Midwinter Exposition in Golden Gate Park to advertise that the Golden State had an unbeatable climate even in its coldest months.

Dozens of German-American associations, clubs, and civic leaders organized huge public events in connection with the festivities. In fact, many of San Francisco's German-American leaders were financial backers of the fair. For days newspapers were replete with lists of German-speaking groups involved in the festivities, although the name Schlaraffia Franciscana was not among them.

Regardless, this was most likely the time when



View of the California Midwinter Exposition, San Francisco – 1894

the token was issued, perhaps for a *sippungen* held to commemorate the *reych's* tenth anniversary. That's the best explanation.



The token bought a one *deut* beer.
No profane nickels accepted!



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PHOTO CREDITS

- All Schlaraffia tokens photographed by Stephen Huston, who also edited the drawings provided by the author.
- Stan Bransgrove of Mill Valley, CA, gave permission to use the old photo of a Schlaraffia Franciscana meeting.



Bernal Heights Money

Tokens from My Neighborhood

Jerry F. Schimmel

Author's Note: The following text was prepared for a personal memoir of my forty years' life in Bernal Heights — a southern hilly area of San Francisco. I modified the narrative as a noncompetitive submission to the papers contest. The photos were prepared by long-time PCNS Member and Fellow Stephen Huston. As I said to Steve: *All of these tokens are rare, but rarer still are collectors who want them.*

FOR THOSE UNFAMILIAR with the district, Bernal Heights is bounded on the north by Cesar Chavez Street, Mission Street on the west, Alemany Boulevard on the south, and the 101 Freeway on the east. Its two principal commercial streets are Cortland and Precita Avenues, on or near which these tokens were issued. The name Bernal comes from the holder of the original Spanish land grant, José Cornelio Bernal.

The metal tokens depicted, more commonly known as *trade checks*, were issued in Bernal Heights mostly between 1890 and 1930. At that time, San Francisco was the main western production center for metallic checks employed in the western states and as far away as South America. Their purposes were varied, but by far their greatest use was to activate slot machines. Between 1898 and 1909, nickel size pieces were in constant play at saloons and cigar stands all over town.

The machines were outlawed by the city's Board

of Supervisors in the latter year, although they remained legal elsewhere. Without slot machines, the production of tokens was severely curtailed.

Other tokens served as discount vouchers, much as we might clip coupons from the newspaper, and of course everyone is familiar with bus tokens.

Today, tokens are still used in bars as drink credit chips, although they are usually made of plastic or wood. All such pieces were rarely issued in more than one or two hundred specimens, and not all businesses emitted them.



1. Bernal School, Bread & Milk

The Bernal School, sometimes called Primary School and at other times Grammar School, goes back to 1886, according to the Bernal Heights Preservation Society (BHPS). The school's address was 500 Cortland Avenue, and its last city directory entry was in 1929. BHPS has an excellent photo of the original structure which you can see by googling their name. On the school's original site now stands the Bernal Heights Branch Library which opened in 1940.

The token was issued between 1925 and 1929 as part of a pioneer food supplement program for children of low income families. There is a series of identical metallic checks for nearly all city schools of that time.



2. Elephant's, 605 Cortland Avenue, 1¢ In Trade

Directories show Adolph Elefant at his Cortland Avenue shop from 1921 through 1928. Before then he is described as a machinist. The store's functions were listed variously as notions, stationery, confections, and hardware. Bertha is mentioned in 1921 and 1922 as his wife, but in 1923 she was replaced by Esther. His home addresses were on Anderson, Cortland, and Moultrie Streets at various street numbers. In 1929, Adolph and Esther moved to Bartlett Street just off Mission Street, and he became partner in a 22nd and Mission Street poultry store.

The token was given to those customers who made a minimum purchase. By handing in the token during a future visit, they could make a second purchase at reduced rates. A penny was still worth something in the 1920s.



3. E.W. Moore, 316 Andover Street, 5¢ In Trade

Edgar W. Moore is a bit of a mystery. From 1908 through 1915 he was listed as a carpenter living at 316 Andover Street, just off Cortland Avenue. Why he would have a token struck with his name and address on it is the puzzle. Carpenters do not ordinarily use tokens (or slot machines) in the course of building things, and there was no indication of a different occupation anywhere else. The token is typical of those made between 1906 and 1915.

The most likely explanation is that Moore had a cigar business on the side that was never written up, a common practice. He may have sold smokes out of Andover Street or leased cigar dispensing machines to Cortland Avenue shops for a percentage.



4. Young Navarra, 3216 Folsom Street, 5¢ In Trade

The name Young Navarra was not found in directories, though the token is typical of those manufactured in San Francisco between 1906 and 1915. The address number is the same as today's Cancilla's Market.

It may have been used for a slot machine, though, if issued after 1909, it would have been for a cigar dispensing device. According to the Caruso family who lived and ran a grocery next door, there was a shoe repair shop at 3216 at unspecified times.

Navarra is the name of a province in Spain, although most early 20th Century merchants in the Precita Avenue and Folsom Street area were Italian. The name was probably for a retail cigar operation, few of which were acknowledged by directory compilers. The name *Young Navarra* may even have been a cigar brand.



5. Jos. Powers, 300 Precita Avenue, 5 Cents In Trade

Joseph P. Powers took over 300 Precita Avenue in 1899 from James Powers, no doubt a relative. Joe ran it as a grocery store and bar until 1909, when he turned it into a straight saloon. His living space was upstairs at 302, entered by the small doorway just east of the main entrance. After 1913, Powers was no longer listed.

The Caruso family women recall the pre-prohibition saloon with some horror. Before prohibition was introduced in 1920, it was common for grocers to have a bar in back, its swinging door often vaguely labeled "Sample Room." Over time, many such businesses expanded their wet goods department at the expense of the grocery section because doing so would make more money.

The token was struck in 1908 or 1909 for a slot machine which was kept on the bar's counter. The machines of Powers' time were considerably smaller than those found at modern Indian casinos.

Today the old saloon is known as Cafe Cozzolino, an Italian restaurant.



6. Wiedemann's Bakery, 5 Cent Loaf of Bread

Jacob Wiedemann was burned out of his 17th Street bakery, where he had been since 1902, by the April 1906 fire. By December he was in place at 629 Cortland Avenue, where he remained until 1910, living next door at 625, with Christina.

Listings show he became partners with Frederick Sulger in a Sixth Avenue bakery in the Richmond District in 1912. He and Christina continued living

on Cortland Avenue until 1920.

Bakers sold their tokens at a discount. If a customer purchased multiple loaves of bread in advance the baker would give her an extra token—a free loaf as a reward for buying in advance. Each token was redeemable for a loaf, in this case a small one. Some bakers had discount checks made up for small loaves (5¢) and others for large (10¢).

CATALOG OF BERNAL HEIGHTS TOKENS

Tokens are illustrated at 150% of actual size.

All tokens listed are round with plain edges.

1. Aluminum 21mm denticled borders.
O: **BERNAL** / (bowtie) / **SCHOOL**
R: BREAD / ★ & ★ / MILK
2. Aluminum 18mm denticled borders.
R: GOOD FOR / * 1¢ * / IN TRADE
O: AT **ELEFANTS** / * 605 * / CORTLAND
3. Brass 21mm.
O: **E.W. MOORE** / 316 / ANDOVER / ST. /
SAN FRANCISCO, CAL.
R: GOOD FOR / ★ 5¢ ★ / IN TRADE
4. Brass 21mm.
O: **YOUNG NAVARRA** / (6 dots) / 3216 / (6 dots) /
FOLSOM STR. .
R: GOOD FOR / ★ 5¢ ★ / IN TRADE
5. Brass 21mm.
O: **JOS. POWERS** / . ♠ . / 300 / . ♥ . / PRECITA
AVE. / IRVINE JACHENS
R: GOOD FOR / ★ 5¢ ★ / CENTS / IN TRADE
6. Aluminum 25mm recessed denticled borders.
O: **WIEDEMANN'S BAKERY** / -★- /
★ COR. ★ / COURTLAND/ ★ AVE. ★ / -&- /
★ ANDERSON ST. ★
R: GOOD FOR / ★ 5 ★ / CENTS / . LOAF OF
BREAD .

SOURCES

Most of the information for this article was obtained from city directories and telephone books.

PHOTO CREDITS

All photographs by Stephen Huston.

Token photographs within this article are shown at 150% of their actual size.



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