

The octagonal shape was again recognized to be characteristically San Francisco in 1916 when the noted numismatist Farran Zerbe designed the octagonal logo for the Pacific Coast Numismatic Society, the oldest numismatic organization in the Western United States. In the intervening years, numerous private medals commemorating San Francisco and California Gold Rush events have been issued as octagonal pieces of the same general dimension as Humbert's fifty dollar ingots.

The obverse design concept presented here incorporates a minimally modified version of the reeded edge variety of the Humbert pieces. The date and denomination are changed to reflect the design guidelines as well as the word "Liberty" added below Humbert's original fineness designation. The words "In God We Trust" appears on the ribbon through the eagle's beak.

The reverse design concept presented here is a new design as the original ingot reverse was a simple machine engraving. This reverse features a bold central representation of the Old Mint Building from a photograph taken by the designer. The words "The Second United States Branch Mint San Francisco Fifth & Mission Sts. 1873-1937" appears around the building in the same style as Humbert's proclamation of the Assay Office on the original ingot design. The words "The Granite Lady" appear below the edifice and the words "In God We Trust" appear above it.

This design would be suitable for either the \$1 silver or the \$5 gold commemorative coin. As the vast majority of the Humbert ingots were later melted to manufacture more convenient denominations, surviving original pieces are out of the financial reach of most collectors. The concept proposed here would give collectors a chance to own an example of this fascinating design at a much more modest cost.

Michael Wehner is a member of both the American Numismatic Association and the San Francisco Museum and Historical Society.



**1077th meeting of the
Pacific Coast Numismatic Society
8:00PM Wednesday, January 25, 2006
Fort Mason, Building C, Room 370
San Francisco, California**



**Numismatic Antecedents of Low 54,
"Am I Not a Woman and a Sister"**

Herb Miles

**Pacific Coast Numismatic Society
Box 475656 San Francisco, CA 94147-5656
Bulletin Editor: Michael Wehner**

The 1838 Hard Times token cataloged as Low 54 is the most famous American anti-slavery token with many mythical stories surrounding it. Perhaps it was used on the Underground Railroad to secure passage, to inflame passions against slavery, or to raise money for the American Anti-slavery Society. Please join us Wednesday, January 25, 2006 to hear Herb Miles separate fact from fiction about this important numismatic reminder of a painful chapter of United States history.

1076th Meeting: Holiday Party The annual potluck party featured many tasty items and the good company of fellow numismatists, both from the PCNS and the San Francisco Coin Club. As usual, PCNS officers were sworn in for the upcoming year. For 2006, they are:

President: *Sarah Nordin*

Vice President: *Michael Wehner*

Secretary: *Herb Miles*

Board: *Rick Webster, Mark W. Clark & Federico Castillo*

The position of treasurer remains open. Please consider volunteering for the job.

New Members

Please welcome Sandra Whalen of Santa Cruz as a new member. Sandra has been very active in PCNS with Whalen for some time now. It is good to have you on the membership roster!

Papers Contest

Numismatic papers for the 2006 contest are actively solicited. The submission deadline is the April 2006 and is rapidly approaching!

Short articles

Your show and tell exhibits can be the start of your numismatic writing career! Write a paragraph or two about them and it will be published in the PCNS Bulletin. We know you can do it, you are the expert!

Exhibits

Gordon Donnell exhibited a number of recent acquisitions from the NCNA show held in Fremont; a Turkish 1,000,000 Lira coin, an 1883 No Cent Liberty Nickel in Brilliant Uncirculated condition, and a 400th meeting of the San Jose Coin Club commemorative token.

Mark Wm. Clark brought a number of new Mexican silver center coins which are commemorative of the various states of Mexico similar to the United States quarter program. Mexico has made several series, the one featuring churches is quite nice, probably better than that of the states that have the state coat of arms. Mark also brought a 400th anniversary of Don Quijote coin from Mexico, some very interesting paper enclosed celluloid tokens from San Francisco advertising the Bercovich Cigar Store and its locations in Oakland, San Jose, and SF, a Cuban coin that is overstruck, and Mark's ANA President's award for his efforts in keeping the San Francisco Coin Club going! Way to go!!!

Federico Castillo brought some Costa Rican coffee plantation tokens, which he is not collecting of course! Two feature 1 & 2 cazuelas (boxes perhaps?) and 2 other tokens without denomination from a famous rancher.

Ken Takahashi brought a Cable Car bank from the Citizens Federal Savings (now apparently owned by Citibank) to tempt our avid Cable Car collectors, Michael Wehner and Jack Free. However, both were absent for this meeting and Ken will have to suffer with the bank for at least another month.

San Francisco Coin Club Junior Member *Mishal Al-asfous* brought his recent acquisition, a silver three cent piece from 1852!!

Design Concept for the San Francisco Old Mint Commemorative Coin *Michael Wehner*

The ANA is soliciting designs for a US commemorative coin set to raise money for the American Gold Rush and Money Museum to be housed in the Old Mint at Fifth & Mission Streets. Here is my submission:

A large octagonally shaped coin is uniquely characteristic to San Francisco. In 1851, August Humbert was selected to head the United States Assay Office to relieve an acute coinage shortage in gold rush California. Initially authorized to strike only large denominations, Humbert turned out thousands of fifty dollar octagonal ingots. These ingots circulated as coinage due to the lack of any other available government issues and are the only instance of this size and shape coin issued for circulation by the United States.

The significance of this coin to San Francisco's rich numismatic history was recognized early on. In 1915, when commemorative coins were struck for the Panama Pacific International Exposition in San Francisco, an octagonal shape was chosen for one of the fifty dollar gold commemoratives. This was the only other time that the octagonal shape was used in official coinage.