
Madison County Coin Club Newsletter

Volume 7, Issue 10

Founded 2001

November, 2007

ANA Member #C-195870 (Region 20, AL & GA)

ANS & GNA Member

Meeting: Thomas W. Davidson, Sr. Senior Center

Meeting Time: 6:30-8:30 p.m.

Location: 2200 Drake Ave. SW
Huntsville, AL 35805
256-881-6268

Meeting Dates: 4th Monday
of every month, except
May & December

Web: <http://mccc.anaclubs.org/>

Editor: Harold Fears

ANA Club Rep.: Jon Stimpson

President's Report

By: Harold Fears

Another year has come and gone and I would like to thank all the people that volunteered their time, energies, and efforts in making our coin club a club that people want to be part of. A special note of thanks goes to all of the officers, who help keep the club running. Next, we had a great group of speakers this year. Their presentations help broaden our knowledge and the love of numismatics. Once again, we had several people make substantial donations to the club, including both cash and gifts for door prizes. Both are greatly appreciated and help keeps the door opens. Another round of thanks goes to the Senior Center that allows us to meet in their building. Finally, I would like to thank all the members for making this a fun place to be.



Robert Patrick talked about the Oregon Trail Commemorative program and the coins that were minted for it.

November Meeting Notice

The November meeting will be held Monday the 26 at the Senior Center in Huntsville. We will be meeting in the Ceramics Room. It's our annual potluck and bourse night. Also, we will elect our 2008 officers.

November is Our Annual Potluck and Bourse Month



The November meeting is our annual end of the year potluck supper. The club will provide drinks, paper products and utensils. Please bring a dish to share with your fellow club members. It is also our bourse night. Come see what treasure you can find! We will also vote for the 2008 officers. Doors open at 6:00 on Monday, November 26.

Some Scenes from the October Meeting



**Please bring a coin,
medal, note, or something
for Show-and-Tell.**

**It's easy, fun, and adds
interest to our meeting.**



2007 Officers

President	Harold Fears
Vice-President	Bob Jaques
Secretary	Richard Jozefiak
Treasurer	Michael Campbell
Board Member	Mark Larson

Numismatic Journey of Alaska:

An Overview from 1784 to the Present

Part 2: 1867-1912

By

Richard Jozefiak

Unorganized U.S. Territory Period 1867-1912

In 1867, the Russian government decided that it was not worth its expense to defend and development its Alaskan territory. The Russian government decided to offer the vast Alaskan territory to the U.S. Government instead of the British.

The U.S. Government knew not much of Alaska at the time, but Secretary of State Seward (under President Andrew Johnson) received the Russian offer and decided to purchase Alaska. The Russian purchase price was \$7,200,000 U.S. dollars in gold. That was about two cents an acre.

Many in the U.S. at that time considered the Alaska purchase foolish as both to the cost and location. Alaska was many thousands of miles away from Washington, D.C., no easy access, sparsely populated by mostly non-

English speaking peoples, and the U.S. was only starting the recovery period from the end of the U.S. Civil War in 1865.

An unorganized territory did not have any internal self-government, courts, law enforcement, or delegate in Congress. This lasted in Alaska existed for 45 years.

During most of this period, the U.S. Government had very little control or presents in Alaska. Alaska was controlled by a number of different government departments and agencies over the years.

The Russians in Alaska did not all leave when the U.S. bought Alaska. Most Russians stayed on and continued to trade with the native Alaskans for furs, and trap for furs. The Russian Orthodox Church was the major organization in Alaska.

During this time, primitive money was in use in the North Pacific

Coast area by the Kwakiutl Indians (Brown, p. 140 and Gibbs, p. 234). They made copper plates to use as high value money, equivalent to a large number of blankets in trade. The copper came from copper ore of the bottom of shipwrecks, and local available natural copper.

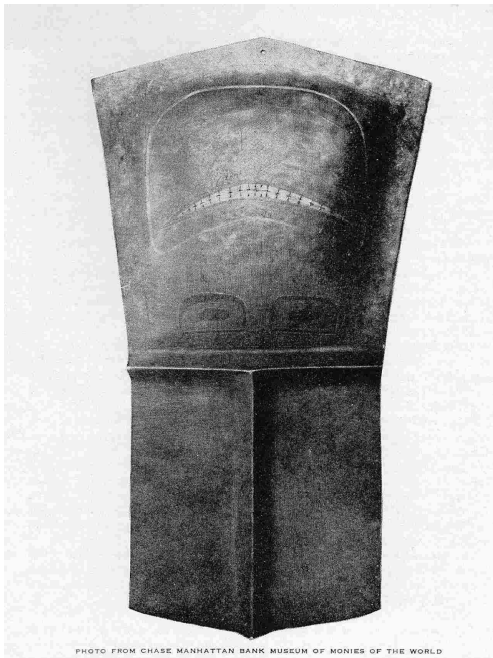


Figure 9- Kwakiutl Copper Plate

*From Former Chase Manhattan Bank Museum
of Monies of the World
(Gould & Bressett, p. 8)*

The plates had a weight from a few ounces to about 175 pounds. They could be broken into pieces when needed and put back together again with rivets. The plates also were decorated with native symbols.

The Copper Plate Money today is considered to be sacred to native Alaskans, and its sale outside of native Alaskans is tightly controlled. Very few pieces of copper plate money exist for collectors.

The Unorganized U.S. Territory Period continued until 1912, but overlapped with a separate but highly charged period that changed the future of Alaska forever: The Gold Rush Period.

Gold Rush Period 1895-1912

Gold was discovered in Alaska first in 1895, and a major gold rush started. Gold was discovered in different areas of Alaska over the years.

In a short period of time, Americans from the Continental U.S. came to Alaska to seek their fortune. They came with the promise of striking it rich quickly, and returning wealthy. Americans pushed into the interior to find riches, and many ended up dying unprepared for the harsh Alaskan winters.

Compared to other past gold rushes in the U.S. (CA, CO & GA), the Alaskan gold rush differed in a number of ways:

Transportation- Steam ships were traveling along the Pacific Coast. A person could travel from Seattle to Anchorage in about a week. Gold could also be removed quickly once it reached Anchorage.

Production- No gold is documented to have been produced into coin, bar, or token in Alaska itself. Gold was transported out of Alaska to the Pacific Coast.

Money- U.S. Federal coins (gold & silver) were in wide use. Federal currency less. In major areas (Fairbanks, Anchorage, Sitka) gold dust and nuggets could be converted to Federal money for ease of transport.

Communication- The telegraph was run to many areas, and people could follow the latest gold news.

Many men entered Alaska to prospect, but only a few hit it rich. A large number died due to the harsh weather, lack of proper supplies, and ill prepared for the Alaskan wilderness.

With the rapid growth of population, support people followed to sell to the prospectors. Mining would follow later.

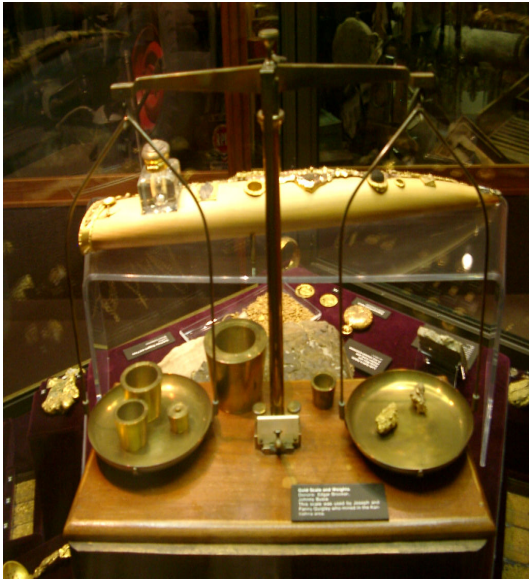
Prospectors were searching for “easy” surface gold.



Figure 10- Prospector checking his gold dust to add to his poke. Typical size of cabin built, and a person would stay in it for many months of the winter season.

(Anchorage Museum of History & Art, photo by the author)

Mining followed after the easy gold was removed. Mining in Alaska is unlike mining in the Continental U.S. due to the permafrost, harsh weather, and lack of easy interior transportation and distance.



*Figure 11- Gold nuggets and dust were assayed and valued, and used in trade. Gold nuggets are still found today and can be purchased in many Alaskan towns.
(University of Alaska Museum (Fairbanks) photo by the author)*

During the gold rush, a number of businesses issued trade tokens for use. These are highly collectable (Benice, 1994). Trade tokens in this time were normally issued in the larger populated areas. Most trade tokens in this period are rare, and in fair to poor condition.

Also in the gold rush, a number of banks were open in Alaska, and two of them issued bank notes (Huntoon, 1980):

Juneau- First National Bank,
Assigned Charter in 1898, #5117
(large and small size notes issued)



*Figure 12- Typical 1900's Cash Register showing money prospectors could see and use
(Photo by the author, at Alaska Mint, Anchorage)*

Fairbanks- First National Bank,
Assigned Charter in 1905, #7718
(large and small notes issued)

Alaskan territorial notes are the rarest of all U.S. Territorial notes.



Figure 13- Notice: Gold coins in left back tray, large notes, and Barber pieces
(Photo by the author, at Alaska Mint, Anchorage)



Figure 14- Note has on it: "District of Alaska".
The term was used prior to 1912 when Alaska
was made an official
U.S. Territory.
(Photo by the author, ANA Collection)



Figure 15- Uncut sheet of \$5 from First National
Bank of Fairbanks. Only two known sheets of
this type exist. Large size 190 mm x 80 mm
(7.50 x 3.15 inches)
Photo by the author, ANA Collection

--- TO BE CONTINUED ---

Inclement Weather Notice

If the Huntsville City Schools are closed due to inclement weather, then the Huntsville Senior Center is closed. There will be no club meeting if the Huntsville Senior Center is closed. Local TV and radio stations will give notice of any Huntsville school closure.

On-Line Information

Club's web site:

<http://mccc.anaclubs.org/>

Coin Community Forum:

http://www.coincommunity.com/forum/forum.asp?FORUM_ID=86

Pictures and photographs to share:

<http://flickr.com/groups/coinclub/>

E-mail: hkfears@knology.net

*Please bring a friend to a
meeting,
all are welcome!*

Meetings for 2007

January 22 – Bob Jaques
presents “Military Payment
Certificates”

February 26 – “State of the
Coin Market” by Charles
Cataldo

March 26 – David Hollander
presents “An Introduction to
the National Banknotes of the
United States, Supported by
the Alabama National
Banknote Trial Census and the
Alabama Collection”

April 23 – Richard Jozefiak
presents “The Modern British
Sovereign and Half-
Sovereign”

June 25 – Pot Luck / Bourse
Night – Dennis Delong
presents “Building a West
Point Set”

July 23 – British Night by Bob
Jaques

August 27 – Dwight Maxwell
presents Roman Coinage

September 24 – Computers
by Mark Larson

October 22 –
Commemoratives by Arthur
Patrick

November 26 – Pot Luck /
Bourse Night

