

`GOLD MEDAL JOURNAL
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Nevada County

February, 2004,

- ★ 2004- the hundredth year celebration of the year Nevada County won the gold medal at the 1904 World's Fair for the best mineral exhibit from any one county. We have begun the task of trying to uncover as much information as possible concerning the 1904 World's Fair gold medal awarded to Nevada County and to be creative in ways to inform the public about the history of the medal. Some ideas include a reproduction of the medal for display and also smaller reproductions for souvenir pins, tie tacks, commemorative coins. A larger reproduction could be used as a centerpiece for the 4th of July county float and the Constitution Day parade. Contacts will be made with photographers to get prices on 8x10 glossies, posters, and post cards. Other ideas could be T-shirts, or caps with an image of the medal.
- ★ Research, research, research- the first place to look is old newspaper articles from 1904. The Union newspaper had a daily edition called "The Daily Morning News". It is on microfilm at the Doris Foley Historical Library. A couple of hours going through the old editions uncovered several articles about the mineral display and the final article declaring that Nevada County won the gold medal, dated October 21, 1904.
- ★ Wayne Miller, goldsmith, with Gold Ventures has agreed to make a wax casting of the medal. Once a casting is made, the medal can be reproduced at actual size and can also be enlarged or reduced.
- ★ Chris has found several websites that have general information on the 1904 World's Fair. There are some promising books that may have the information we seek and so an order is being placed.
- ★ Chris has contacted Max Storm with the 1904 World's Fair organization. He provided some interesting history on the medal.

"Tens of thousands of medals were awarded at the 1904 World's Fair -Grand Prize, Gold, Silver, Bronze, and commemorative. All of them were made with the same alloy and were all the same color. They had different shapes but all contained the same information in the circular center part. (Except it would say Gold Medal, Silver Medal, etc) They were mailed to the winners in a well-marked small rectangular tan colored box. The medal was contained in a velvet lined square box with gold lettering on the lid. Most medals were accompanied with a very large certificate – often framed by the winners. The Medal that you have containing Gold would be a reproduction of the Official Gold Medal. The Official Medals were not marked on the edges. If you were to find a loose Medal, you could not tell who won it. If you are only going to produce a few of the medals, it may be cheaper to buy the actual medals. You can often find them on eBay. I have seen several that the owner had gold plated or silver plated."
- ★ February 26, Wayne has returned the medal and the casting. He will provide an estimate for reproduction costs.

March, 2004

- ★ March 1 The Union newspaper has run a front page story of the metal and our quest for information concerning the mineral exhibit that won the award. Great coverage from The Union and reporter Millete Birhanemaskel. The article has generated some phone calls from people with information on the Hagues. A few people have suggested other people to contact for information. All leads will be followed up. Still no information on the exhibit itself.
- ★ Georgia Martinson with the Board of Supervisors office has discovered old board minutes that discuss the mining exhibit. She will make copies. They provide much information on the Promotion Committee, the funds allocated for the exhibit, etc. Very helpful-thanks Georgia! One of the entries made in April 1907 state that the Supervisors approved funding of a gold quartz monument to be built in Colfax to advertise the county. A picture of the monument is part of an old postcard collection belonging to my family! I often wondered why such a monument would have been built in Colfax, Placer County. Now it makes sense!
- ★ Two photographers came by this week with samples of their work and some creative ideas on the best way to feature the medal, Jim Beckett with Sugar Pine Studios and Frank Pedrick. A deadline of March 12th was established for all estimates to be submitted.
- ★ March 11, 2004 I have taken a trip to the California State Library in Sacramento to do further research. There is an extensive newspaper collection there as well as a few books on the 1904 World's Fair.

Parking was illusive, however, but finally a parking garage was found close to the State Capitol. Success

- ★ The research was successful. In the Evening Bee, an earlier version of the Sacramento Bee, dated October 21, 1904 I found an article that confirmed the awarding of the gold medal to Nevada County. Many articles were found in a publication called the Foothill Weekly Tidings. These articles describe the exhibit, which mines contributed ore and many other interesting facts. The exhibit used a cabinet being built by J. H. Rogers of the Nevada Planing Mill. The cabinet was intended to contain a permanent exhibit of the mineral exhibit of the county in the ground floor hallway of the courthouse. There was also mention of a loving cup trophy from the 1890's that would be housed in the cabinet.
- ★ I have been trying to find out what may have happened to the cabinet that housed the exhibit. Went to the courthouse to look at the different displays of trophies, etc. to find anything pertaining to the World's Fair and to find the loving cup mentioned above. The loving cup is in a display cabinet behind the security guards station at the entrance to the courthouse. Seems to be a much lighter version than a true silver cup would be. Very lightweight. . . . In another display cabinet there is a red box that says "Lewis & Clark Exposition 1905". I know from another newspaper article that the same mineral exhibit was entered into the Lewis & Clark Exposition in Portland, OR the following year. The exhibit won a silver medal. Nick from Buildings and Grounds opened the cabinet for me. But when we opened the box, it was empty! Also, there was another smaller box in the same cabinet. Couldn't read the writing on the box but it was definitely a box that contained a medal of some sort. When we opened that box, it was also empty. Disappointing afternoon. I looked at some of the other cabinets that line the hallway. They are all smaller than the description of the mineral cabinet. Nick suggested that the butterfly collection might have been housed in the old cabinet but it was moved to Truckee.

April, 2004

- ★ E-mail from Missouri Historical Society arrived. I had requested from them a list of the medal winners and any photos of the exhibits. The email stated, "I searched through our materials on the 1904 World's Fair but did not find any mention of the Nevada County mining exhibit. I was able to find information on the other mining exhibits but there no mention of Nevada County. In addition, I searched the list of exhibitors for the Mines and Metallurgy Department and it was not listed there either." It has been a frustrating search for us to uncover any information on the exhibit. The medal is proof we received an award and the newspaper articles describe the exhibit in great detail. But it's as if outside this county there was no recognition of the exhibit or award. Even inside this county the number of people who know of the existence of the medal are very few. It's important to give people this information and to show how universally recognized Nevada County was for it's important resource.
- ★ I had a meeting with Pat Dyer from Utopian Stone. He had some useful suggestions on how to proceed. He thought the better option for duplicating the medal was to contact the Philadelphia Mint and to have them make some duplicate copies. Copies from their die would be the best quality. There will be significant loss of detail and size with the process we are pursuing. The copy will degrade every time it's reproduced. Smaller versions could be minted through the Nevada City Mint and he suggested contacting Don Schmidt. A die will have to be made whether larger or smaller versions of the medal are made. There is a minimum price of \$1000 to make the die. He explained briefly a three-dimensional panagraph to make smaller versions from a clay model. He volunteered his services if we need community members to help with the project and suggested some other contacts, Ron Sturgill and possibly Ed Scofield to see if there are any old photos from the county fair that shows some of the magnificent exhibits that used to be displayed at the fair.
- ★ Research material from the Missouri Historical Society has arrived. Included is a list of the exhibitors from the "Official Catalogue of Exhibitors" which seems to include mostly the private vendors, no states or counties. Also they sent copies of pages from the book "The Universal Exposition of 1904", chapter XIV Mines and Metallurgy. The pages describe the mining exhibits in detail with descriptions of the private vendors and each state's exhibit. Under California is the statement, "**A special exhibit of gold ores was made by Nevada county.**" This is the only reference we have found so far in the World's Fair material that mentions Nevada County.

- ★ Still no mention of Nevada County winning a medal in anything other than the local paper. The conclusion we are drawing is that California as a state won several gold, silver and bronze medals. I found a newspaper article in the Evening Bee that mentions the total medals won by California. Nevada County's exhibit was part of the total exhibit for California. Nevada County did not have a separate exhibit. It was one large exhibit from the State of California and several counties were represented in that one exhibit. The State Mineralogist, Lewis Aubury, visited all the gold-mining counties in the state and collected various ores and other historical materials for the California exhibit. The earlier newspaper articles in The Morning Union and the Foothill Weekly Tidings substantiate this. Nevada County's medal seems to be one of the many medals awarded to California. It was not an individual medal awarded to Nevada County by the World's Fair Commission. However, Nevada County's display must have been very impressive for it to be mentioned in the book listed above! No other county received that special recognition. Did the State of California present one of its gold medals to Nevada County and could it be that James Hague wanted Nevada County to have a special acknowledgment and as a good-hearted gesture commissioned the US Mint to cast a special medal for its magnificent display? I wish I could find a picture of the display. From newspaper accounts, almost every mine from the county except for the North San Juan district and the Eureka district contributed gold ore, quartz or some other specimen for the exhibit. Must have been an amazing display!
- ★ Unless we can uncover documentation that Nevada County's medal was presented by the World's Fair Commission and was not a good will gift from James D. Hague for the county's part in California's exhibit, we will not go farther with research. I would like to think that the recognition came from the World's Fair and that Nevada County was one of the few counties that received that special recognition. It would be a very distinguished honor for the county and one that should be publicized. However, we will table this project for now. Chris has suggested that I contact Beryl Robinson to see if he would like to continue with the research where I left off. He is a local historian and coin collector and would possibly be interest in the medal from a historical standpoint.

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May, 2004

- ★ I spoke with Beryl Robinson to see if he would be interested in continuing the research on the medal. He thanked us for thinking of him but said his interest lies with coins. He isn't strong in the area of historical research but suggested Steve Cottrell as a possibility.
- ★ May 21, 2004, Carolyn Fields with the US Mint returned my call. She is in the Public Information Branch of the US Mint. I spoke to her a couple of weeks ago, explaining my research. I asked if the mint would have any record of Hague's commission of our medal or if they would still have the original dies. She contacted the History Department. They have completed their research and reported that they have no record of producing the medal for us in 1904. The mint has various dies from the 1904 World's Fair for coins, etc. but does not have the die that produced our medal. I explained that the medal may have been commissioned in 1905 because we didn't receive the medal until 1907. She explained that the mint often did work for private individuals and when the production was completed, the finished product as well as the dies were returned to the individual. The mint did not keep the dies. So it's another brick wall that we've come to.

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