



## Chump Change

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## The SPMC—An Organization on the Move

Just like people, the health of any organization depends a great deal on how it keeps busy and on the move. Given our mission to “promote the study and appreciation of paper money”, most activities the SPMC sponsors revolve around acquiring and communicating knowledge about paper money. Over the last couple years, many excellent changes have been made to the SPMC’s website that reflect well on its mission. This column takes a moment to sum up what these recent changes offer to the SPMC’s growing membership.

*The Paper Money Article Index.* While back issues of *Paper Money* have been accessible for a while through the Newman Numismatic Portal, the SPMC now makes available on its website in convenient pdf form the entire backfile of over 2,500 articles that have appeared in *Paper Money* since 1962. Available to members and non-members alike (except for the latest issues), this trove of writing organized into sixteen topic categories represents the cumulative wisdom and effort of over sixty years’ worth of research into currency and paper money.

*The Bank Note History Project.* Based upon compiled OCC reports between 1865 and 1935, this project has produced a database of information about the banks and bankers that issued and signed bank notes of nationally chartered institutions. In addition to basic information about these banks’ personnel and note circulations, this database increasingly includes biographical details and even pictures of the thousands of bankers active during the era. Additions and improvements to this database occur regularly through the research efforts of a team of SPMC admins who comb through the relevant genealogical and historical records. Full access to this database is limited to SPMC members. For the general public, a more recently established *National Bank Lookup* website provides a more limited access to the same records, confined to searches by individual charter number or town.

*The Bank Note History Wiki.* As a supplement to the banks and bankers database, this wiki provides more in-depth institutional and biographical studies of individual banks and bankers. A crowd-sourced publishing enterprise similar to Wikipedia, this website currently features detailed histories of nearly 200 bankers and over 500 banking institutions. Not only are the contents of this wiki available to all, historical and biographical contributions by anyone with the relevant interests in banking or financial history are both welcome and encouraged.

*The Huntoon-Shiva Encyclopedia of National Bank Notes.* The work of Peter Huntoon, Andrew Shiva, and their collaborators, this encyclopedia takes the form of several dozen article-length explorations of all aspects of the National Banking Era of paper money. This project reflects in particular the intellectual generosity of Peter Huntoon, who has insisted upon the unrestricted availability of his decades’ worth of research into currency issues of this historical period.

*Significant National Bank Note Collections.* Featuring prominent national bank note collections provides a way of closing the loop between the research and writing of banking and financial history and appreciation of the numismatic artifacts themselves. Accordingly, the SPMC now hosts three different major collections of notes from the National Banking Era: The Huntoon Collection of U.S. National Bank Notes, the Walton Collection of Nebraska Bank Notes, and (most recently) the Jorde Collection of North Dakota National Bank Notes. Each collection is presented in the form of a searchable and sortable table, with links to high resolution images of each note. In addition, each table embeds links for all note images back to the relevant records in the Bank Note History Project.

*The Collecting Paper Money Website.* Finally, the SPMC has recognized that growing its membership requires reaching out to a wider public about the basics of currency collecting, including the types of currency that might attract peoples’ interest. To this end, the Collecting Paper Money website offers a wiki-like introduction to the range of paper money categories familiar both to U.S. and world currency collectors.

As a famous pitchman may have once said, “But wait, there’s more!” And indeed there will no doubt be much more to come. As impressive as all this work is, it represents only one small part of the much larger universe of paper money collecting interests. Exploring these interests, both in the present and future, depends upon the work and dedication of individual members of the SPMC. If you have a passion for, or expertise in, a subject, get involved!

While all the undertakings outlined above represent group efforts, including some contributions that go back many decades, one person in particular has been the guiding force behind these recent initiatives, and that is SPMC Governor Mark Drengson. We deserve to pat ourselves on the back for what we have accomplished so far, but we also all owe Mark a debt of gratitude for putting it all together and making it happen.