

MINUTE ITEM
This Calendar Item No. C33
was approved as Minute Item
No. 33 by the State Lands
Commission by a vote of 3
to 0 at its 1-30-02
meeting

CALENDAR ITEM
C33

A 13
S 3

01/30/02
W 25823
Griggs

CONSIDER ARTIFACT TRANSFER

PARTY:

San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park
National Park Service
Building E, Lower Fort Mason, Room 265
San Francisco, CA 94123

BACKGROUND:

In 1980, a sport diver recovered an engraved spoon and brass plaque from the shipwreck of the SS *Samuel S. Lewis*. Photographs of the artifacts are attached as Exhibit A. The shipwreck lies on state sovereign lands off Agate County Beach a few miles north of San Francisco. The spoon may be a silver condiment spoon and has the ship's name lightly engraved on it. The plaque is the engine builder's plate and reads:

JAS. T. SUTTON & C [illegible]
FRANKLIN IRON WORKS
KENSINGTON PHILADA US
1851~N [illegible] 160
R.F. LOPER'S PROPELL [illegible]

The ship was a 1,100-ton wooden steamer, 217 feet in length, built in Philadelphia in 1851. Richard F. Loper designed the ship using screw propulsion, a technology still in its infancy. The vessel was also fitted with three masts and sails for use when the propeller failed or the coal supply ran out. After a brief trans-Atlantic service, the SS *Lewis* moved to the Pacific Ocean. When she sank on April 9, 1853, she was part of Cornelius Vanderbilt's "Independent Line" operating between Nicaragua and San Francisco. Although the ship was lost, all the crew and passengers survived.

As with many other shipwrecks, sport divers retrieved artifacts from the SS *Lewis* for decades before the laws protecting shipwrecks were enacted. San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park has worked hard to develop a relationship with the sport diving community with the hope that many of these artifacts retrieved long ago may eventually

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be donated for museum use. In this case, the diver has "given" the two SS Lewis artifacts to the San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park (Park). The Park would be pleased to have these artifacts in its collection but knows that title to the artifacts rests with the State Lands Commission. It cannot accept them into its collection unless the ownership issue is resolved. The Park has formally requested that the State Lands Commission transfer ownership of the artifacts by letter dated October 25, 2001. The Park would like to display them in a new exhibit being developed for its museum so that the public may study and appreciate them.

Staff recommends that title to the spoon and plaque, which is vested in the State and in the custody of the Commission, pursuant to P.R.C. 6313(a), be transferred under authority of that section to the San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park. It is recommended that title, rather than custody, be transferred consistent with best museum practice. The Park has the specialized expertise, facilities, and security to properly care for these objects.

STATUTORY AND OTHER REFERENCES:

A. P.R.C. Division 6, Public Lands, Part 1, Section 6313; Division 13, Environmental Quality, Section 21065.

B. Cal. Code Regs. Title 2, Div. 3; Title 14, Div. 6., Section 15378(a).

PERMIT STREAMLINING ACT DEADLINE:

N/A

OTHER PERTINENT INFORMATION:

1. P.R.C. 6313(a) provides: The title to all abandoned shipwrecks and all archaeological sites and historic resources on or in the tide and submerged lands of California is vested in the state. All abandoned shipwrecks and all submerged archaeological sites and submerged historic resources of the state shall be in the custody and subject to the control of the commission for the benefit of the people of the state of California. The commission may transfer title, custody, or control to other state agencies or recognized scientific or educational organizations, institutions or individuals by appropriate legal conveyance.
2. The San Francisco Maritime National Historic Park is a major Pacific Coast center of maritime heritage. Its collections feature several historic vessels located at the Hyde Street Pier, ninety small watercraft, as well as maritime art, artifacts, photographs, and other documents. The Park includes the 21,000 volume J. Porter Shaw Library and museum that are open to the public and scholars. The Park plans to move its museum into new facilities located near its current location at Aquatic Park in September 2002.

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3. Pursuant to the Commission's delegation of authority and the State CEQA Guidelines (14 Cal. Code Regs. 15378), the staff has determined that this activity is exempt from the requirements of CEQA because the activity is not a "project" as defined by CEQA and the State CEQA Guidelines.

EXHIBIT:

- A. Photographs of spoon and plaque

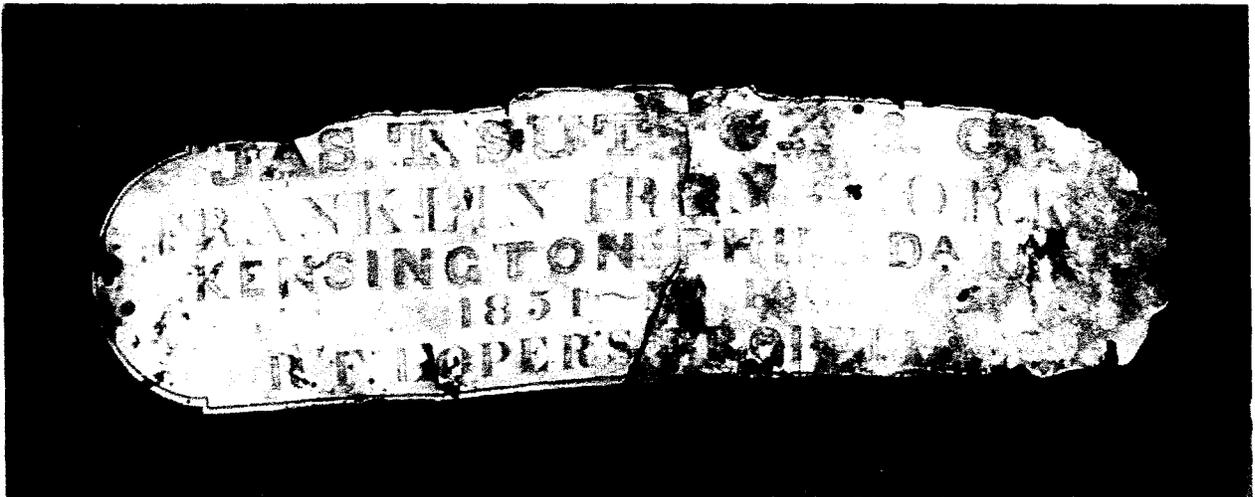
IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT THE COMMISSION:

1. FIND THAT THE ACTIVITY IS EXEMPT FROM THE REQUIREMENTS OF CEQA PURSUANT TO 14 CAL. CODE REGS. 15378 BECAUSE THE ACTIVITY IS NOT A PROJECT AS DEFINED BY P.R.C. 21065 AND 14 CAL. CODE REGS. 15378(a).
2. AUTHORIZE THE TRANSFER OF OWNERSHIP (TITLE) OF THE SPOON AND PLAQUE FROM THE SS *LEWIS* TO THE SAN FRANCISCO MARITIME NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK FOR PERMANENT PUBLIC DISPLAY AND RESEARCH.

Artifacts from shipwreck of SS Lewis



Silver Condiment Spoon
Engraved with ship's name on handle



Brass Engine Builder's Plaque

EXHIBIT A

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