

The SJ CSRA CC of Aiken, SC meets on the 1st Thursday of the month at the Aiken Public Library

Pres. Steve Kuhl
V.P. Pat James
Sec. Jim Mullaney
Treas. Chuck Goergen
Sgt. in Arms: Jim Sproull



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the Stephen James CSRA Coin Club, Founded in 2001
Monthly Newsletter

June, 2015

Our next meeting will be held on Thursday, June 4, 2015 at the Aiken Public Library

Show & Tells Sessions Stimulate Coin Collecting

2015 Club Meeting Schedule

Jan. 8	Apr. 2	July 2	Oct. 2
Feb. 5	May 7	Aug. 6	Nov. 6
Mar. 5	June 4	Sept. 3	Dec. 3

Show & Tells, Highlights of A number of Club Meetings

A large number of coin clubs follow a procedure that includes a business meeting, news of upcoming shows and an auction. Others add an important feature, missing in the foregoing group and that is the presentation of numismatic program by either members or guest speakers. There is still another aspect of coin collecting that has proven to be extremely essential in arousing members' interest both in collecting and in attending meetings and that is the Show & Tell session. In point of fact, this facet of the meeting agenda has become the most important feature of an increasing number of local clubs scattered throughout the United States. The members literally cannot wait to attend in order to show off their latest numismatic acquisitions. Please make no mistake about it. This is not an ego trip on the part of the members. At its highest level, it is the sincere desire to share one's personal numismatic experiences, even adventures—as it were—including discoveries with one's fellow members. In the past fourteen years the SJ CSRA CC has been in existence, we have had a number of meetings in which four to five members exhibited their recent acquisitions. Some meetings have included as many as nine to eleven Show & Tells when no program was presented.

It was at such a club back in New Jersey that the writer was introduced to a fascinating coin series that helped to influence a change in his collecting area. One of the members was a Rutgers University professor of Geography who collected a number of coins relative to his travels while doing research for his books and classes. One evening he displayed a large dollar-sized silver coin in which the obverse featured the rising sun at the lower left rising behind five volcanic mountains. The legend (country of origin) circling the top read **REPUBLICA DEL CENTRO DE AMERICA**. Below the main device was the date, 1824 (which happened to be the first date of issue.) The reverse featured a Ceiba Tree with the inscription **LIBRA CRESCA FECUNDO** above and the mint mark, NG and other signs plus the denomination 8. R. along the bark. It was an awesome coin!

The Coins of the Central American Republic

By Arno Safran

Reprinted from the June, 2111 issue



An 1824 8 Reales silver coin of the Republic of Central America
Struck at the New Guatemala Mint (Guatemala City today)
[Use 3X glass or magnify 200% to see details.]

In 1821, towards the end of the War of Independence between Mexico and Spain, The Commission known as the Captaincy General that governed the five provinces of Central America declared the region free of Spanish rule. The countries involved were Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua and Costa Rica. (Panama had also declared its independence from Spain in 1821 but chose to be confederated with Colombia and remained part of the South American continent until 1903.) During Iturbide's short two-year reign as Emperor Augustin I of Mexico, he sent an army to invade El Salvador, because unlike the other four countries, El Salvador decided to join the USA instead of Mexico. No sooner was El Salvador overrun when Iturbide was ousted leaving the five Central American countries to decide for themselves how they wanted to form a government. On July 1, 1823, The Assembly established the Central American Republic and began issuing coinage the following year. Ten denominations were authorized, five to be struck in .903 fine silver, the ¼ Real, ½ Real, 2 Reales and 8 Reales. The obverse featured the sun with extended rays rising behind five volcanoes, each mountain emblematic of one of the five countries. The reverse featured a Ceiba tree in full bloom representing freedom. Five denominations were also struck in .875 fine gold; the ½ Escudo, 1E, 2E, 4E and 8 Escudos. The obverse was modified showing the sun and its rays shining directly overhead.

(Continued on page 2, column 1)

The Coins of the Central American Republic

(Continued from page 1, column 2)



Actual sizes of C.A.R. coinage with obverses above reverses
 seen clockwise from the 8 Reales down to the 1/4 Real
 1824 8R, 1831 2R, 1824 1R, 1824 1/2 R and the tiny 1840 1/4R
 [Use 3X glass or magnify page to 200% to view details.]

Pictured above are the five silver coins that were struck by the Central American Republic. The dollar-sized 8 *Reales* was essentially used as specie to back larger business transactions (*much as our early Bust half dollars*) and was coined on a regular basis in fairly large numbers. Due to its size (ca. 38 to 39 mm in diameter) the C.A. R. 8 *Reales* is likely to be the first C.A.R. coin in the series to attract a collector's attention. Ironically, its \$1.00 value was well beyond what most native Central Americans could afford to possess at the time these cartwheel silver pieces were issued. Containing .903 fine silver, the coin was accepted as legal tender in the US until 1857. The minor silver coinage--when it was struck at all--circulated heavily among the general population and specimens are far less common today, especially in grades above Fine-12.

Of the five silver pieces only the 1/4 *Real*, with a diameter of roughly 12 mm, had a different obverse design altered to fit its tiny area. One mountain peak appears on the obverse. It's value was 3 & 1/8 cents on the dollar at the time it was placed into circulation. The 1/2 *Real* was close to the size of our silver half dime. It was 15 mm in diameter and had a value of 6 & 1/4 cents. Despite being minted a number of years it seldom surfaces. Certified Unc specimens are worth at over

\$250 today. The 1 *Real*, valued at 12 & 1/2 cents when issued, was slightly larger than our dime at around 19 mm in diameter. It was struck in six different years, (1824, '25, '30, '31, '48 & 1849, but only the 1824 date surfaces with any regularity. The quarter-size 2 *Reales* (valued at 25 cents at the time of issue) was struck mostly at the Tegucigalpa Mint in Honduras in 1825, 1831 and 1832. An 1849 2 *Reales* was minted in Costa Rica long after the Central American Republic dissolved and is seldom seen. The only date that one is likely to encounter is the 1831T. Most survivors of even this date grade AG to Fine-12. The VF example shown is the highest-grade specimen the author has seen and it contains a serious planchet flaw at 12:00.



Approximate sizes of C.A.R. 1848 1/2 E, 1844 1 E & 1850 2 Escudos
 [Use 3X glass or magnify page to 200% to view details.]

While assembling this partial set of C.A.R. pieces between 1997 and 1999 I found the lower denomination gold coins to be not only accessible but surprisingly inexpensive. During the late 1990's the price of gold per ounce had dropped from around \$369 to \$255.00. One merely had to pay a numismatic value price for the minor gold coins based on demand in addition to the gold value at the time of purchase which by today's levels wasn't very much. Common date foreign gold coins didn't become relatively expensive until one was seeking the higher gold denominations such as the 4 and 8 *Escudos* among the Latin American gold types. These were always in demand; the 8 *Escudos* because it was a large, although not especially scarce gold coin about the size of our Saint-Gaudens \$20.00 Double eagle, and the 4 *Escudos* because it was generally a low mintage issue and the scarcest of all the gold denominations. Even back in the late 1990's I knew the 4 and 8 *Escudos* denominations were beyond my discretionary income but being able to assemble eight out of the ten issues from this important region of the western hemisphere was in itself a source of satisfaction.

What became of the Central American Republic? After centuries of Spanish Rule each country had different ideas on how to develop their concept of democracy. The union between these five nations never went beyond the stage of our own Articles of Confederation.. By 1838, the Central American Republic was dissolved, each country going its separate ways. Honduras would continue to use the Ceiba tree on its coins in and Nicaragua would eventually restore the Sun rising behind the mountains to its coinage beginning in 1912. Thanks to the Show & Tell, many a collector will seek a C.A.R. 8 *Reales*.

STEPHEN JAMES CSRA COIN CLUB Regular Meeting May 7, 2015, Aiken County Library

President Steve Kuhl called the regular meeting of the club to order at 6:48 p.m.

Jim Sproull reported that there were 25 members present and 3 guests. Jim announced information concerning several upcoming coin shows in the vicinity.

Vilma Safran won the members' door prize, a Franklin Half Dollar.

A motion was made by JJ Engel, seconded by Willie Simon, and passed to dispense with the reading of the April 2015 minutes. A copy will be on file with the other club records, and a copy will appear in the club newsletter.

Treasurer Chuck Goergen presented a Treasurer's Report stating that the current balance is \$1339.

Willie Simon reminded members that the ordering period for shirts bearing the club logo had come to a close and that members should see him before the end of the meeting if they would like to order shirts and had not done so.

The club has received a shipment of Red Books and they are offered to club members for the discounted price of \$10.

The program in May will be by Garry Naples: "My Favorite Chicago Worlds Fair Elongated Coin."

Arno Safran presented a program entitled "Collecting Early Year sets of the U.S. Ending in 5's (Excluding Gold): 1795-1835." Arno did an excellent job of condensing a lot of coin history into a single presentation.

Roger Seitz won the 50-50 drawing, \$12.00.

Following the auction, Steve Kuhl adjourned the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Jim Mullaney, Secretary



President Steve Kuhl, (left) presents Arno Safran (right) with a certificate of appreciation for his program on "US Coin Year Sets ending in 5 from 1795 to 1835" (exc. gold)

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