



**YOUNG NUMISMATIST (YN) Page 7 by Gary Catlin**

**Homework for April 2<sup>nd</sup> is write 5 questions with answers and we will use them at the meeting on April 2<sup>nd</sup>**  
**No homework for April 16<sup>th</sup> – our National Coin Week Show**



**The Spanish Reale**  
**by YN Michael Johnson**

The history of the reales was one that has always intrigued me. From the very infancy of the country during the colonial period, all the way up to 1857, the Spanish reales played a major part in our nation's economy. The coins in the denominations of the ½ reales, 1 reales, 2 reales, 4 reales, and the 8 reales were also a leading influence in the dimensions of our present day coinage. The alluring pieces of eight captivated many to this day with such tales of privateers and Spanish treasure ships. Throughout the western hemisphere Spanish coins were king.

The beginning of the coinage is a troubling account. In Central and South America there were once great civilizations including the Aztecs in what is modern day Mexico, Incas in what is modern day Peru, and the Mayans of modern day Yucatan. Despite being technological behind with other parts of the world, these empires had bountiful quantities of gold and silver. They understood the value of those metals, and often used them in rituals. However, others caught wind of their possession of such. The thought of such munificent riches drove many from Spain, salivating in the mouths. Conquistadors, bearing arms and armor, sailed across oceans seeking God, glory, and gold. In only a short period, the imperialistic and covetous Spain would conquer the American civilizations and transform them into a vast array of colonies from the hills of California to the southern tip of South America. Millions perished quickly from disease and war, an often forgotten plight. Yet Spain's goal was achieved; they unlocked the great gold and silver mines and became a wealthy powerhouse for centuries.

As early as 1535 with the creation of the Mexico City Mint, the immense stores of gold and silver were converted into reales. According to the Mexican mint records an astounding 68,778,411 gold and 2,082,260,637 silver reales were minted from 1537 to 1821. The dominance of the coinage spread across the globe, with the 8 reales being one of the most popular coins used. They were the first coins from the New World, and influenced the coinage systems of countless countries. Even during the 1850's around \$2,000,000 of the Spanish coins were circulating in the U.S. The titillating history of the reales still reverberates to this day, and they always seem to find a place in the collections of numerous coin enthusiasts.

**We appreciate the article by Michael Johnson and remind everyone, adults and YN's that we are happy to receive articles by all our members.**

**In a court of law - -**

**ATTORNEY: What is your date of birth?**

**WITNESS: July 18th**

**ATTORNEY: What year?**

**WITNESS: Every year**