



Robert Gurney
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COUNTERFEIT PORTRAIT EIGHT-REALES



The Un-real Reales

Robert Gurney

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before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Counterfeit Portrait Eight-Reales: The Un-real Reales (Counterfeit Eight-Reales) (Volume 1):

13 of 13 people found the following review helpful. Highly recommended - very valuable resourceBy mudwomanI purchased Bob Gurneys book Counterfeit Portrait Eight-Reales The Un-real Reales for my husband. He loves it. Here's what he has to say about it:As a collector of Spanish colonial coins I have found his book to be indispensable. The information within was gathered over a lifetime of experience and his presentation is based on science, engineering concepts and rational deduction. It sheds new light on an area of collecting that previously was supported only by long-out-of-print reference books and verbally shared information between collectors. The book is well organized and provides an interesting read for collector and non-collector alike. The photographic catalog that follows

the text portion of the book is also well done and is supported by a pair of CDs that can be purchased separately. This book has more thoroughly educated me and provided a broader base of understanding of the hobby of coin collecting in general. I would highly recommend this book for all Spanish colonial collectors, whether their focus is regal or counterfeit.

The portrait style Spanish-American eight-reales was one of the most well known, and extensively circulated silver trade coins that the world has ever seen. Produced in Spain's new world colonies from 1772 to 1825, the coin made Spain a major player on the world financial stage in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. This was due in large measure to the fact this coin accounted for about sixty percent of the annual silver production worldwide. The popularity and general acceptance of this particular coin the portrait style piece-of-eight made it the object of forgers who operated in all areas of the globe. It was a coin not merely counterfeited in the countries of origin, but in all of the places where it was accepted as currency in day-to-day transactions. It was produced in small back-room operations and in large factories. It was produced at times in utter secrecy, yet at other times it was more or less an open secret. It was produced as both worthless base metal copies and as perfect imitations containing the correct amount of silver. It

has been made to circulate as currency, as well as to specifically deceive collectors. The fascinating story of these counterfeit issues created from shortly after the coin appeared until the present, is the subject of this book. The author,

Robert Gurney, known to many coin collectors as Swamper Bob, has been a lifelong enthusiast of the series. His interest commenced as a teen when he met and spoke to one of the forgers who actually made these coins for a living in the 1920's. The story may at times not seem possible, but the newest scientific tests available provide conclusive evidence for the production of counterfeit versions made for circulation as late as 1930. With contributions made by several notable collectors, including Richard August, John Lorenzo and Gordon Nichols, this book documents the four different classifications of counterfeit eight-reales developed by the author to fit the needs of this particular series. The book illustrates and describes literally hundreds of different types of counterfeits known to have circulated alongside the genuine versions. It specifically expands upon the Thirty-nine varieties noted by Dr. John L. Riddell as existing in circulation in New Orleans in 1845, and swells that number to some 589 varieties. This book was not written just for coin collectors, the subject is actually much broader. It is at its heart a history of the coin covering a period of 240

years of use and production. It is also the story of the methods and reasons for producing both counterfeits and forgeries during that same interval. The players and their motivations for the production of deceptive copies for over 240 years, provides insight into human nature. The book is presented as a start to a long needed discussion - one that is decades overdue. It is only a start. The author hopes that this publication will bring old counterfeits out of their hiding places and into the light of day, where the varieties from childishy crude to artistically superb can be appreciated by everyone. Solamente el comienzo!

About the Author Robert Richard Gurney is a native son of Massachusetts and a Twelfth generation Yankee, now retired and living in the land of Andy Griffith. Educated as a Civil Engineer, he holds a B.S in Civil Engineering, S.C.L. from the University of Massachusetts, Dartmouth. He is married to his first true love, Elizabeth (Bixler) Gurney and together they have three children. A nearly lifelong coin collector and avid student of history, Gurney has spent decades collecting and analyzing counterfeit coins that circulated as currency in the United States before 1857. Since meeting a self confessed forger, who claimed to have produced counterfeit silver Mexican eight-reales in the 1920s, Gurney has been fascinated by these foreign coins that represented about 90% of the circulating silver specie in the United States before the Civil War. Always a supporter of the UNDERDOG (think the Red Sox in 1967), Gurney hopes to place the eight-reales counterfeit coins on an even footing with other series of counterfeit coins seen as being collectable. He views the Contemporary Counterfeit Portrait Eight-Reales as a long neglected underdog in the world of numismatics.