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*Santa Cruz Island Company Sheep Shearing Tokens*  
William D. Hyder

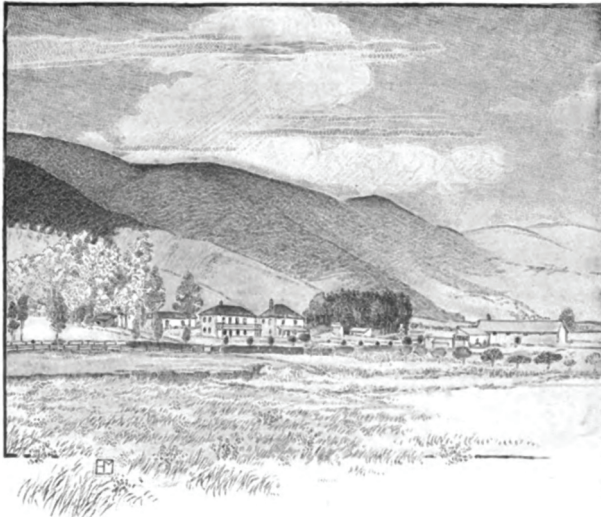
Santa Cruz Island, the largest of California's Channel Islands, occupied an important role in the region's economic history long before the first contact with Chinese or European sailors. At the time of European contact, Chumash islanders had developed a lucrative trade in shell beads produced on the islands that were traded into the American Southwest. With the removal of the last of the island's native population to the Spanish missions in Ventura and Santa Barbara, title to the island passed to Andres Castillero via a Mexican Land Grant for his service during Mexico's War of Independence.

The first ranch house was built in the early 1850s, and the first sheep were introduced on the island. Castillero shared ownership of the island with business partners in the New Almaden Company in San Jose, California in an attempt to protect his land holdings when Alta California became part of the United States. He successfully defended his land claims before the U.S. Supreme Court, but he never returned from Mexico to manage the lands himself. He deeded the land to William Barron in 1857 who had tried unsuccessfully to sell

the island for Castillero. Barron directed the ranch manager to expand the sheep operations, and the flock grew to almost 24,000 by the time the island sold to investors in San Francisco in 1869.

The investors formed the Santa Cruz Island Company to manage their interests, but a national depression and drought limited the return on their investment. One investor, French emigrant Justinian Caire, took personal interest in the island and became the sole stockholder by 1880. Although he had never visited the island before acquiring full ownership, he endeavored to expand operations on the island. He built ten separate ranching locations, diversifying into meat, wool, wine, and olive production. The various ranches raised vegetable and other crops to feed the island population. Caire built winery buildings, a blacksmith shop, and even a chapel at the main ranch location to make the island relatively self-sufficient.

Newspaper reports indicate that there were 50,000 sheep running free on the island by 1890. Sheep shearers and vaqueros were transported to the island from Santa Barbara twice a year for six weeks of sheep shearing.



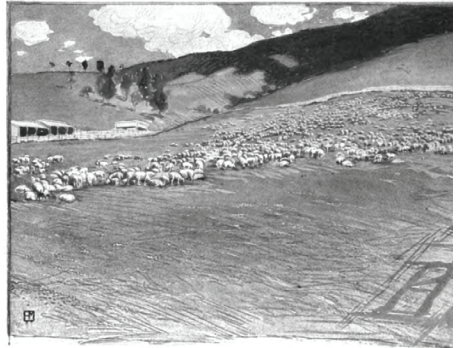
*Figure 1 left: Santa Cruz Island Main Ranch as illustrated in the November 1898 issue of Harper's New Monthly Magazine (Bennett 1898).*

The vaqueros were dispatched to various fenced districts on the island, and sheep would be herded to holding pens at the Main Ranch and the outlying Christy's Ranch for shearing.

Operations were geared to efficiency. Sheep were moved from the holding pens into smaller pens adjacent to the shearing shed. Shearers would pick out a sheep, grab it by a back leg, and drag it into the shed where it was sheared. The sheep were then sorted into groups to be returned to their island territory or to be shipped to the mainland for sale.

Justinian Caire's granddaughter Helen Caire (1905–2002) spent much of her youth on Santa Cruz Island until her family sold their interests in 1937. Her recollections of life on the island were published as *Santa Cruz Island, A History and Recollections of an Old California Rancho* in

*Figure 2 below: Sheep corralled at the Main Ranch as illustrated in the November 1898 issue of Harper's New Monthly Magazine (Bennett 1898).*



1993. Her book provides a first-hand description of sheep ranching on the island and is the source of first-hand information about the use of sheep shearing tokens. A family hoard of 136 small tokens (17.29mm) and 125 large tokens (19.77mm) was distributed as inserts in 261 signed and numbered special editions of her memoirs.

Kappen (1976) cataloged the Santa Cruz Island token:

SANTA CRUZ ISLAND (Santa Barbara Co.) 1:



*Figure 3: 17.29mm uniface brass Santa Cruz Island Co. token*

S.C.I. Co. / (cross on bow-shaped base) // (Var. portions of S.C.I. Co; some tokens bear S.C. and others bear Co) B Irreg. rd. 17 to 19 Ltrs., designs incuse. Plate

The relative rarity of the tokens was indicated by the \$17.50 price assigned in the 1976 catalog. Album's 1974 catalog entry describes the tokens as 19mm with an incuse Co. on the reverse. Album does not provide a rarity rating for the token. In his 1997 supplement, Kappen added:

2. (S.C.I. CO. token reported with CENT, incuse on rev.)

My first purchase was a uniface, 17.29mm token. The 1976 catalog entry did not mention uniface versions, and mine seemed rather simple to duplicate. Was it an original or a copy? As I asked around, I found little information or opinion as to whether mine was original. I heard about and saw references to Caire's book identifying the tokens as sheep shearing fichas and that special editions included an example of the token. There was a question whether the book's actual tokens were originals or reproductions.



*Figure 4: 19.77mm brass Santa Cruz Island Co., incuse lettering on reverse*

Kappen left the impression that the tokens were of irregular size, varying between 17mm and 19mm. The CENT reverse was interpreted as possibly standing for CENTAVO, which indicates that they were cut down from other tokens of an unknown origin.

Rather than continue speculating about the origin and use of the tokens, I purchased a special copy of Caire's book from the Santa Cruz Island Foundation. Although after-market copies were available, most indicated the token was no longer present, and the cost was significantly higher than buying a new copy from the foundation. I specifically ordered a copy with a large ficha laid in at a price \$25 higher than a copy with the small ficha. I had already acquired a 19.77mm token by this time, and I wanted to confirm what constituted a large ficha.

Caire provides a detailed description of the roundups and shearing activities. After the turn of the century, shearing took place over 50 days in the spring. Teams were sent out on horseback to various points on

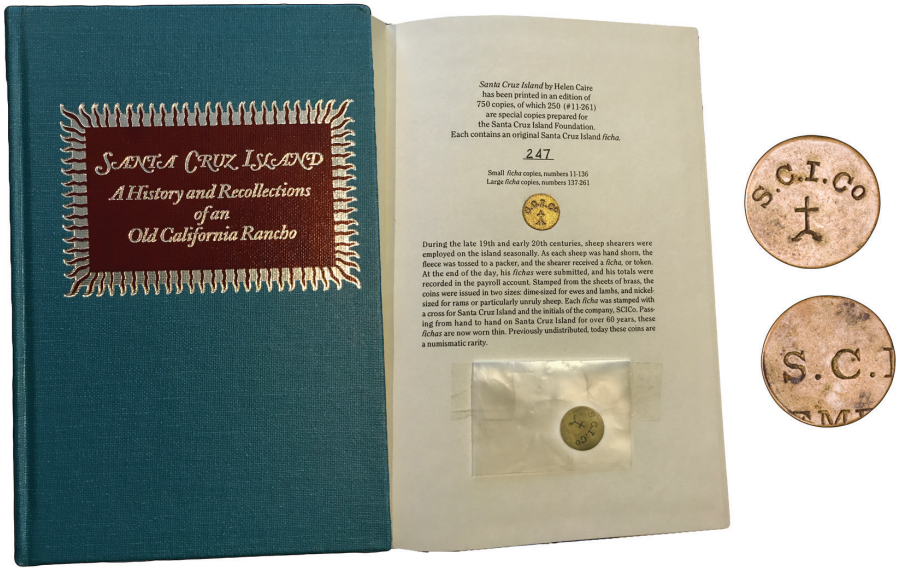


Figure 5: Helen Caire's Santa Cruz Island memoir showing an inlaid token on the colophon that appears before the signed half-title page.

the island to begin herding the sheep towards the Main Ranch or Christy Ranch, the two shearing locations. Some men cut trees and dragged branches to construct or repair crude fences to funnel the sheep in the desired direction. The distances were sufficient that the vaqueros broke for a meal and siesta before continuing towards the two ranches. A few young lambs were slaughtered and roasted over an open fire to accompany coffee, bread, and other supplies left for them by other ranch hands. Eventually, the sheep were herded into pens near the shearing house and the vaqueros retired for the evening.

Shearing began early the next morning and continued for

thirty to fifty days depending on the numbers to be sheared. The *trasquilia*, as it was called, involved driving sheep into holding pens adjoining the shearing area. Caire describes the shearing:

During the shearing the mayordomo perches himself in the high seat built in the narrow space joining the two sections of the shearing shed. Across his knees is a wooden shelf with a number of slits in its broad surface. Into them he slips small metal disks, fichas, about the size of a penny, stamped with a cross for Santa Cruz mounted on a hill signifying the island, with the company's initials, "S.C.I.Co." curved above it. Passed from hand to hand for over sixty



*Figure 6: Vaqueros shearing sheep as illustrated in the November 1898 issue of Harper's New Monthly Magazine (Bennett 1898).*

years, the disks are worn thin.

When a vaquero has shorn a sheep, he wraps the fleece into a bundle, tosses it on one of the broad shelves flanking each side of the seat, and takes a *ficha* to keep tab on the number of sheep he had shorn. At the end of each day's shearing, the vaqueros form a long queue in the office. The *fichas* of each are taken and recorded to his account. In addition to his wages, the vaquero's record of *fichas* adds to his pay.

The colophon notes that small tokens were distributed for ewes and lambs and the large tokens for rams or difficult sheep. In other words, the large tokens were for a larger fleece and the small tokens for a smaller fleece. Caire does not note the value of a token and that likely changed with the relative value of the wool on the open

market.

The fleece was bagged and stored for shipping at various intervals to the mainland depending on market prices. The number of sheep declined in the early 1900s to around 13,000 head. A vaquero could shear 70 to 80 sheep a day. We do not know the actual number of men shearing at a time, but the length of the *trasquilia* and the numbers of sheep suggests 500 to 1,000 sheep a day between the two ranches. I suspect maybe 2,000 tokens were produced around 1900, perhaps more allowing for loss over the years. They remained in use for over forty years.

Caire states the tokens were punched from sheets of brass. That accounts for the uniform 17.29mm and 19.77mm sizes that I have observed. The same Santa Cruz Island Co. logo punch was used to stamp the blanks regardless of size.





*Figure 7: Hypothetical reconstruction of a brass sheet used to create the tokens.*

I believe the sheets of brass were surplus from some other island business based on the pattern of stray letters observed on the reverses. The blank reverse sides of the sheets were used to stamp the company logo as I have not observed any stray letters on the logo side. Although my sample is small (three 19.77mm tokens of my own, one posted on [tokencatalog.com](http://tokencatalog.com), and one pictured by Kappen), I attempted to reconstruct what might have been previously stamped on the brass sheets.

A better reconstruction would require many more examples of the tokens, but I believe the five used here are sufficient to illustrate my assumptions. (My 17.29mm token could serve as a sixth example except that it is blank on the reverse and therefore, provides little information.)

Token *a* in Fig. 7 is from Kappen's plate in his 1976 catalog. It has Co. on the reverse and aligns with the Co. on my token marked as *b*. The fact that these two overlap perfectly suggests there were multiple brass sheets available for re-use.

Tokens *b*, *c*, and *d* are from my own collection. Tokens *b* and *c* align to form the S.C.I. Co. name, implying the brass sheets were related to a Santa Cruz Island Company business, perhaps shipping labels affixed to wine casts, olive crates, or some other product shipped in wooden crates or barrels. I have not encountered any examples of S.C.I. Co. artifacts to suggest what they might be.

Tokens *c* and *d* align to suggest a word or label with EMP or similar letters such as EME, EMF, or EMB. The word may begin with

E, but the preceding space is not large enough to know for certain. On a separate line is a word starting with CENT. The space before the C seems to be sufficient to indicate the start of a word. The EMP of *c* and *d* does not appear to align exactly, so I cannot say that the AS on *b* is part of the EMP word.

Token *e* is pictured on [tokencatalog.com](http://tokencatalog.com) with the image contributed by Lloyd Wagner. The notes on the catalog site argue that the tip of an A precedes the VOS and that it completes the word, CENTAVOS. To test the proposition, I copied the letter A from token *b* and inserted it into my reconstruction. The letter fits, lending credence to the centavos interpretation. The S matches the S in S.C.I. Co, but it does not match the S on token *b*. That may indicate brass sheets made at different times with slightly different S letter punches. (The serifs match on both letters).

Santa Cruz Island is part of the Channel Islands National Monument contributing to the preservation of the island's archaeology and history. While no longer a working ranch, Helen Caire's memoirs of her life on the island provide a first hand account of the creation, purpose,

and use of the enigmatic fichas that played a small role in the islands agricultural economy. I can safely say they were not cut down from Central or South American centavo tokens. However, I cannot identify the actual source of the brass sheets from which they were produced except to say they were repurposed from some other Santa Cruz Island economic activity.

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*Colonel Warren: First Medals for the  
California Agricultural Fairs*  
Michael Wehner

Many, if not most, of the 49ers who came to California in search of gold were disappointed in such ventures. For the more enterprising among these early pioneers, there were plenty of opportunities other than mining to make their fortunes. Colonel James L. L. F. Warren was one of these. Older than most of these so-called *Argonauts* at 44 years of age, and married with several children, he was born in Bristol, Massachusetts, and was well-established in Boston in the 1840s. He came to California via the arduous journey

around Cape Horn as part of the *Sweden Mining Company* on their chartered ship appropriately named the *Sweden*. Arriving on August 5, 1849, their mining company promptly failed, as did many of these arrangements, as the members scattered individually into the mining fields rather than pooling their efforts as they had previously agreed to.

Col. Warren promptly put his considerable business skills to use by establishing a general provisioning store in Sacramento in November of 1849. Back in Massachusetts, Warren had a successful nursery and floral business. Recognizing a similar

**WARREN & CO.,**  
J STREET, NEAR FRONT,

**W**HOLESALE and Retail Dealers in General Merchandize, Groceries and Miners' Goods of every description.  
Fresh Garden Seeds just received. m19 Im\*

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**\$17 THE OZ. FOR GOLD DUST.**

**T**RADERS AND MINERS are invited to call at our store and look at our assortment of Goods. We believe it to be as well selected as any in the market, and we can sell as low; and we will give you in exchange for goods, \$17 the oz. for gold dust.  
WARREN & CO.,  
J street, near Front.  
m29

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**500** VOLUMES MISCELLANEOUS BOOKS, consisting of a sufficient variety for a Circulating Library, for sale low in one lot—many of them choice and valuable. \$17 the oz. for Dust, at  
m29 WARREN & CO'S, J st., near Front.

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**3000** ROLLS RICH PAPER HANGINGS, in lots to suit purchasers, for sale by  
m29 WARREN & CO., J st., near Front.

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**50** BBLs. best Mess Pork, 100 kits No. 1 Mackarel, 100 dozen Pickles, 50 cases Spices, for sale by  
m29 WARREN & CO.,  
J street, near Front.

**RARE VARIETIES OF GRAPE.**— We are happy to announce the arrival of the finest varieties of Grape Vines ever cultivated, viz:  
"Cannon Ball Muscat." This variety is the largest and most magnificent variety of Grape known in the world.  
"Black Hamburg." A grape of the most universal cultivation among grape-growers, both in Europe and America, as a superb desert grape.  
"Muscat of Alexandria"—splendid varieties.  
"Golden Chasselas"—splendid white grape.  
"Black St. Peters"—immense clusters.  
"Catawba" and "Isabella"—fine American varieties.  
March 5. WARREN & CO., Seed Store.

**OSAGE ORANGE, &c., &c. for Hedges.**— The finest hedge for security and for beauty is the Osage Orange. Quick growing strong and secure, the rich and luxuriant foliage, added to the magnificence of its appearance while in fruit, make it the most valuable variety of hedge plant known—especially for California. We offer the seed for sale.  
Also—Buckthorn for hedges.  
Ailanthus or Tree of Heaven, Catalpa, and Honey Locust, ornamental tree seed. WARREN & CO.,  
m29 Agricultural Warehouse, J st

*Warren & Co. advertisements in the Sacramento Daily Union newspaper.*

*Left: April 17, 1851. Right: March 16, 1852*



*Warren & Company, Sacramento. About 1852.  
(Honeyman Collection, Bancroft Library, UC Berkeley)*

opportunity, particularly in the need for farming supplies, Warren & Company supplied fruit trees, seeds and equipment to the state's burgeoning agriculture business. The two advertisements in the *Sacramento Daily Union* reflect how his business changed from general provisions in 1851, to agriculture and horticulture in 1852.

The Warren & Company store in downtown Sacramento on J Street near Front Street was a two-story building with the rooms on the second floor dubbed the "Agricultural Hall." It was here that Col. Warren staged the first agricultural fair in California in October 1852. Back in Massachusetts, Warren had won many prizes and awards

at agricultural and horticultural fairs. Aware of the benefits to his business as well as to the newly founded state itself, he patterned his fair after these events in New England. *The Sacramento Daily Union* presented detailed coverage of the "Horticultural Fair of Messrs. Warren & Co." in five installments from October 12 to 17, 1852. Prizes were awarded in a wide variety of categories ranging from needlecraft to fruits and vegetables to grains, with many categories in between. These included grand prizes of silver cups, valued at \$25, first class premium medals, valued at \$10, and second class premium medals, valued at \$5. The newspaper reports indicate that both medals were made of silver but no



*Silver award medal of the Warren 1852 Agricultural Fair in Sacramento.  
(Image courtesy of Fred Holabird Western Americana.)*

distinction between them other than value is given.

The silver medal pictured above is one of those medals. Its details are:

Obverse: DESIGNED  
ARRANGED & PRIZES  
PRESENTED BY / (basket of  
flowers) / WARREN & SON /  
OF / SACRAMENTO / CITY /  
S&H Ft / CALIFORNIA

Reverse: AGRICULTURAL  
& HORTICULTURAL  
EXHIBITION /  
AWARDED TO / (name) /  
SAC. CITY, CAL.

The engraving on this particular medal, sold at auction in 2005 by Fred Holabird, is barely legible and is undated but was awarded to “Messrs. Warren & Co.” Indeed, it is noted in the reports in the Sacramento Daily Union, that despite being the organizers of the fair, the prize committees awarded

them several medals for floral and vegetable displays. The medal is rare, with only one additional yet unawarded example known to the author.

Early attempts to protect Sacramento from the seasonal flooding of the American River through the construction of a levee had failed in December 1852. By spring of 1853, an even larger flood destroyed his Agricultural Hall, and Warren relocated his business to San Francisco as *Warren and Son*. They abandoned the J street lot, and it was sold at a Sheriff’s sale in July of that year for \$4500.

Col. Warren and his son, John Quincy Adams Warren, reopened for business in San Francisco as prime tenants of Henry Meigg’s newly constructed Music Hall building on the southeast corner of Montgomery and Bush Streets.



*Silver medal from Col. Warren's second agricultural fair in San Francisco, October 1853. Awarded to T.P Robb, Esq. for best onions*

They took a prominent first floor location on Bush Street for their horticultural business and used part of the second floor for their “exhibition rooms.”

This new and larger location would be an ideal venue for Col. Warren's second agricultural fair. Opened to the public on October 6, 1853, the fair was well attended. The *Daily Alta California* newspaper reported extensively on the various exhibits and awards. This second fair featured a larger number and wider variety of participants as well as evening lectures on agricultural sciences. The last entry in the newspaper accounts dated November 28, 1853, announces the fourth of these lectures and indicates that many prizes had been awarded and that the fair was still open to the public more than six weeks after it opened. In fact, the only specific mention of award winners in the newspapers is from

the previous day when it is noted that a silver cup valued at \$50 was awarded to Horner's Mill in San Jose for their exhibited flour. A second place silver cup and three runner-up silver medals were also awarded in this category.

Regardless of the lack of news coverage for the winners, it is likely that many medals and cups were awarded. The silver medal shown above was awarded to “T.P. Robb, Esq.” for his onions. He received a similar medal (not pictured) for his squash. The opening day article in the *Daily Alta California* states:

One squash, from T. P. Robb, of Sacramento, measures 6 feet 9 inches in circumference, and weighs 131 pounds.

His local paper, the *Marysville Daily Herald*, wrote a few days later:

Some pumpkins from T. L. (*sic*) Robb, Esq., Sacramento River

...are indeed 'some' Very large specimens of onions from Mr. Robb... are also to be seen.

The details of the medal are:

Obverse: DESIGNED  
ARRANGED & PRIZES  
PRESENTED BY WARREN  
& SON / (two allegorical female  
figures representing horticultural  
on the left and agriculture  
on the right) / F.B. SMYTH  
& HARTMANN Ft / SAN  
FRANCISCO / OCT. 1853

Reverse: AGRICULTURAL  
& HORTICULTURAL FAIR  
/ (state seal) / AWARDED  
TO / (name) / BALL,  
BLACK & CO. N.Y.

Diameter: 2 inches

Interestingly, the diesinker signatures are different for the obverse and reverse. The New York City partnership of Smyth (or Smith) and Hartmann, credited with the obverse of this medal, also issued a pair of 1860 storecard tokens listed in the Civil War token catalog as Miller NY818 (brass) and NY819 (white metal):

Obv: UNITED STATES OF  
AMERICA / S&H / 1860 /  
(Native bust left). Rev: F.B.  
SMYTH & HARTMANN  
/ MEDAL / & GENERAL  
/ DIE-SINKERS / & /  
ENGRAVERS. / 122 FULTON  
ST. / COR. NASSAU, /  
NEW YORK. Brass, 29mm.



*Smith and Hartmann's 1860 storecard.*

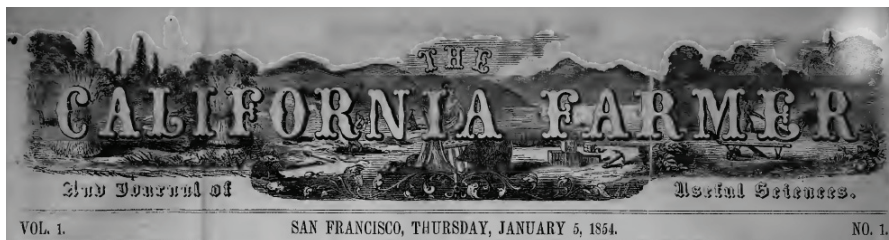
*Image courtesy of Steve Hayden.*

*<https://www.civilwartokens.com>*

They are listed as diesinkers at 122½ Fulton Street in the 1850 New York City business directory and were clearly active when Col. Warren required their services. It is also quite likely that the "S&H" signature on the obverse of 1852 Sacramento Fair Award medal is that of Smyth and Hartmann.

The firm taking credit on the reverse of the 1853 San Francisco fair award medal, Ball, Black & Co., advertised in the 1853 New York City business directory as "Manufacturers and importers of silver and plated ware" located at 247 Broadway.

While their hallmark can be found on all types of silver ware and service, they also occasionally struck medals. The most well known of these was the Gillmore medal, an 1864 medal of honor for the Union army privately commissioned by Major General Quincy Adams Gillmore for soldiers under his command during the second battle of Fort Sumter and the bombardment of Charleston, South Carolina.



*Masthead of the first issue of the The California Farmer and Journal of Useful Sciences. January 5, 1854.*

However, they also made the very rare Wreck of the *S.S. San Francisco* Rescuers medal in 1854. (Ford Sale Catalog XX, 2007)

We do not know why Warren contracted both of his medals with New York manufacturers. Indeed, there were active engravers in California in the early 1850s, the most well known being Albrect Kuner in San Francisco. However, despite a fairly large number of pioneer gold coin dies designed and engraved in California at this time, there do not appear to be any large die-struck medals made in the state prior to Vashon and Giron's 1855 Crimean War medal (Hyder and Wehner 2018). Although it might be natural to look east for these services, it is bit surprising that New York rather than Boston makers were selected given Col. Warren's background.

Following the success of the 1853 San Francisco fair, Col. Warren and his son founded the first western US magazine devoted to agriculture, *The California Farmer and Journal of Useful Sciences*.

The publication enjoyed a long run from its first issue in January 1854 to its last in April 2013, and was known for its independent editorial stances rather than simply a trade publication. We learn from the 2<sup>nd</sup> issue of January 19, 1854, that the 1853 medals had arrived by steamer at Warren and Son, and that they were being engraved. The announcement goes on to state that when the cups and plates finally arrive, the presentation will take place.

By this time, it appears that Col. Warren had shifted most of his attention on his magazine. Using this venue, Warren was a strong advocate for a California State Agricultural Society, and waxed poetic when the legislature incorporated it in May of 1854 and authorized \$5000 in annual premiums for a fair. With further great fanfare, the *California Farmer* announced in an extra edition on August 14, 1854 that the "Grand Agricultural and Horticultural Fair of The California State Agricultural



Society” would take place in October, 1854.

As the Society’s first corresponding secretary, Col. Warren took an active role in its management including providing the same facilities above his store in the Music Hall for the fair as he had used in the previous year. However, a list of premiums only includes cash prizes with no medals, cups or plates. It was not until 1858 that the gold and silver award medals designed by the Nahl Brothers of San Francisco were struck for the Society usage as premiums (Wehner 2016). Subsequent state fairs were to be held in different cities, but, by 1859, the Society decided to make a permanent location in Sacramento. The state fair continues to this day in Sacramento as the “Cal Expo.”

The numismatic story of Colonel James L. L. F. Warren ends not with these two medals but with a mysterious third variety. Silver and bronze versions of a Warren & Son award medal very similar to the 1853 design also exist and are in fact more common than the either of the two medal types described above. These medals are only known in an unawarded state. The difference from the 1853 award medal is that on the obverse, the additional words “SEPTEMBER 18 / SACRAMENTO CITY CAL.”



*Historical Landmark #861 on Bush St. near Montgomery in San Francisco, marks the site of the 1854 California State Fair. This was also the site of Col. J.L.L.F. Warren’s private agricultural fair in 1853. (photo by the author)*

appears below the allegorical figures and diesinker signature. On the reverse, the additional words “SACRAMENTO CITY” appears at the bottom below the other diesinker signature. These words are part of the die, rather than engraved as on the 1853 San Francisco medal. All other diework is identical.

Why and when did Col. Warren have these silver and bronze medals made? The words “SEPTEMBER 18” may not refer to the eighteenth day of the month. Rather, as with the “Oct. 1853” engraving on the 1853 medals, it may be intended that the remaining two digits of the year could be engraved later when awarded. Thus the medals could have been used for multiple years. The fact that the extra



*The mystery Warren medal from Sacramento City in bronze. (also known in silver)*

wording is part of the die and all other elements and die markers are unchanged, suggests that the words must have been added to the existing 1853 die.

We know that Col. Warren privately hosted only two fairs, those in 1852 Sacramento and 1853 San Francisco. A die analysis suggests that these mystery medals were likely not intended for his 1852 fair. If they had, words would have to have been removed from the die for the striking of the 1853 San Francisco medal, which would likely be visible under magnification, and it is not.

The 1855 fair of the California State Agricultural Society was held in Sacramento during the month of September, curiously coincidental with “SEPTEMBER 18” which appears on the mysterious third medals. While Warren and Company had abandoned their property on J Street in Sacramento in early 1853 following the floods,

Col. Warren himself probably moved back in June 1855 as the masthead of *California Farmer* changes Warren & Son’s location to 4th Street between J and K streets near to his old location. Perhaps Warren felt that they could use medals from their old 1853 dies, suitably modified, to fulfill the need for prizes. In fact, he advocated in the *California Farmer* for donations to be made to the State Agricultural Society to endow named medals citing examples back in Massachusetts. He may have even desired for this design to become the “Warren medal”. However, some of the letters to the editor of *California Farmer* were highly critical of Warren profiteering from the agricultural fair. In any event, none of the examples of this medal that are known to the author are awarded and no mention of medals are made in the newspaper accounts of the prize winners in the *California Farmer* or *Daily*

*Alta California.*

By September 1856, Col. Warren likely moved back to San Francisco at 130 Washington Street as the *California Farmer* masthead states it is published simultaneously in both cities. By January 1857, he certainly had moved back to San Francisco as the masthead claims only the single city. In January 1858, Col. Warren's son also moved back to San Francisco to rejoin his father and the *California Farmer*. However, by 1859, he ventured out on his own to start his agricultural book store and publishing house at 149 Clay Street (later at 511 Montgomery Street). The confusion about who was editor after this lasted for years as there were numerous announcements stating that Col. Warren was the sole editor of *California Farmer*. It is from one of these announcements in 1870 that we learn how his title was earned:

The original Editor and Proprietor of the Farmer still continues to be same, and is known as Col. Warren, from having been one of the first appointed Colonels on the Staff of Gen. John A. Sutter, the first Major-General in California, and Californians knows (sic) that Titles in California in early days are hard to shake off.

Colonel Warren lived to the ripe

old age of 90 living most of his later life at 1004 Howard Street in San Francisco. Even at that age, he was still publishing *California Farmer* from his residence.

In addition to his interests in agriculture and horticulture, Warren was also a collector of many things, including coins. Leigh H. Irvine of San Francisco wrote in 1894, shortly before his passing:

His modest residence is a storehouse of valuable historical relics and treasures of art, which he has been collecting for eighty years...he can place his hands on thousands of books, papers, memoranda, rare stamps and coins without effort.

His obituary in the May 10, 1896 issue of the *San Francisco Call* goes on to describe his collection that would be put up for auction, against his intentions:

The collections of old European and American coins, and of stamps from nearly all nations, are extensive and valuable. There is no telling, indeed, what a new wealth of curios and relics may be discovered when the contents of the old shop are thoroughly explored.

I like to think that Col. Warren would be pleased that 21<sup>st</sup> century numismatists find his medals, indeed his life, to be interesting.

Perhaps some quantity of the unissued Sacramento mystery medals was found when his shop was thoroughly explored. Such would explain why this unissued medal is more available than those from the two agricultural fairs that he held by himself prior to the establishment of the California Agricultural Society. His legacy as the “Father of California Agriculture” has been forgotten by most in this day of a subsequent multi-billion dollar industry. However, this recently rediscovered numismatic legacy places him as the first California medalist and for that we remember him.

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*The Baldwin Hotel:*

*Fire, Lucky Baldwin and Brass Checks*

Jerry F. Schimmel

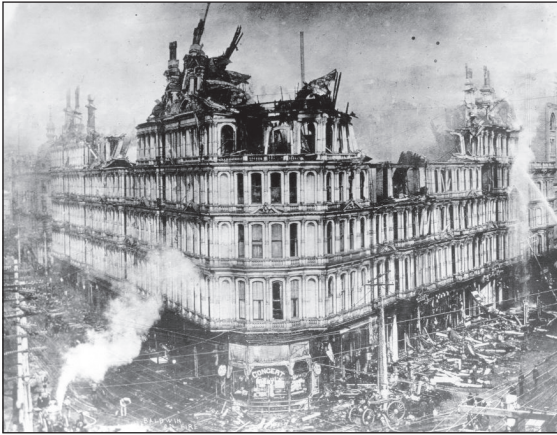


*Baldwin Hotel — engraving by T. J. Pettit & Co., San Francisco, 1870s-1880s*

*San Francisco Call*, Nov. 23, 1898:

The Baldwin Hotel is a ruin. The most tremendous conflagration that has ever happened in San Francisco burst forth shortly after three o'clock this morning... There has never been in San Francisco a blaze of such dramatic interest where the lives of so many men and women were involved and where so many escaped from a furnace that raged upward until the very sky itself seemed in flames.

The Baldwin counted two hundred registered guests that night. All survived save Captain J.L. White, a local man, and Lewis Myers, a merchant from Alaska. The proprietor was the investor and venture capitalist, Elias Jackson “Lucky” Baldwin, who had been working at his hotel office earlier in the evening. He returned from his home at 1217 California Street and spent the wee hours on Powell Street beside fire commanders as his treasured investment collapsed



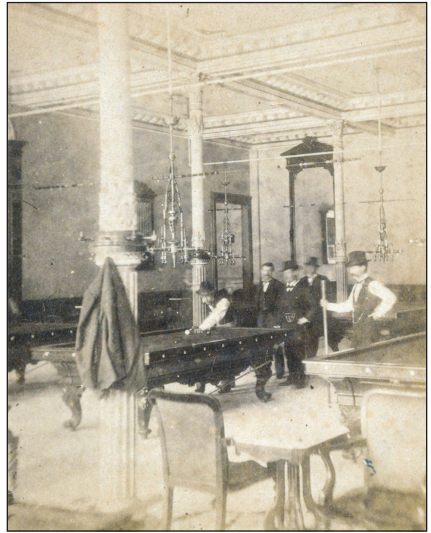
*Left: Baldwin Hotel Ruins,  
November 23, 1898.  
Courtesy of the San Francisco  
Public Library History Room*

*Below: Pre-Fire views of  
hotel interiors*

into smoldering wreckage. (There was confusion later when some newspaper reports claimed he had to be rescued from his hotel.) Insurance covered only a fraction of the building's value. Brokers complained that it was a fire trap, a warning echoed repeatedly by city fire inspectors.

#### **THE HOTEL**

The Baldwin boasted 495 rooms and suites, several bars and restaurants, gaming rooms and the city's most prestigious playhouse, the 1500-seat



Baldwin Theatre.

Extravagant decorations for the hotel had been transported by rail from the East at enormous expense. They included deep red plush upholstery, velvet hangings, decorative gilt scrolls and overhead filigree work, making the hostelry a jewel in San Francisco's public crown. You told the folks back home you were at the "The Baldwin." One did not use the word "hotel."

Construction began in 1873. When completed in 1876 the triangular, five story hotel covered half the 900 block of Market Street, the east side of Powell Street from Market to Ellis Street, and half of the low-numbered block of Ellis Street. Its main entrance opened on Powell. The Baldwin Annex stood next door, a four-story business structure using the 924–930 addresses of Market Street with a ground floor billiard parlor and cafe.

The projected cost of building was \$3.5 million (in today's dollars, \$82 million). The final expense of completion soared far beyond original estimates. San Francisco's other five-star hotel, the Palace, three blocks east at Market and New Montgomery streets, was finished in 1875 and the two remained competitors for the city's carriage trade. The Baldwin, designed in "Second Empire Style"

by architect Sumner Bugbee, was finished in 1876.

The ravaged property was ultimately sold to San Francisco entrepreneur James C. Flood in 1902. The Flood Building constructed there in 1904, survived the 1906 earthquake and fire. It still stands on the corner next to the popular turntable stop of the Powell Street Cable Car.



*Lucky Baldwin 1904*

#### **E. J. "LUCKY" BALDWIN**

In 1859, the silver boom of Virginia City was in full swing and Baldwin reportedly paid pennies for stock in the Norcross mine. Soon after the purchase he had to travel away from California, leaving instructions to dump the stock if its value dropped. When he returned he found that Norcross had indeed hit bottom, but his broker was unable to sell.

Baldwin absent-mindedly had taken the key to his safe. While his Norcross paper remained locked away its value unexpectedly rebounded to an estimated \$67 million in today's money. From then on he was "Lucky," a name he didn't appreciate and rarely acknowledged.

Elias J. "Lucky" Baldwin came into the world in rural Hamilton, Ohio, on April 3, 1828. The fourth of fourteen children, he was remembered as a youthful wanderer and adventurer. Like many men of the time he had little formal education, however he made up for his shortcomings by becoming one of the last of America's self-made tycoons of the nineteenth century. A risk-taking investor and real estate speculator, he opened grocery stores, businesses, hotels, saloons, ranches, and mines. He traded grain and even sold canal boats. His favorite saying when things went bad was, "By gad, I'm not licked yet."

After his marriage to Sarah, the new family moved to California in 1853, bringing wagonloads of tobacco, tea, and brandy, crossing prairies and mountains and on the way dealing with seriously uncooperative Native Americans when his wagons crossed ancestral lands. In San Francisco he bought a brick manufacturing plant, many products of which helped

build Fort Point and the first San Francisco Mint. He founded the Pacific Coast Stock Exchange and became its first president.

In Southern California he came to be the largest land holder ever in the Los Angeles area. He bought former ranchos which ultimately provided much of the land for cities like Arcadia, Baldwin Hills, Baldwin Park and Monrovia. The first Santa Anita race track was a significant investment. On March 1, 1909, Baldwin passed away at his ranch adobe in Arcadia.

(For further reading on the remarkable life of Lucky Baldwin see References at the end under Glasscock and Snider.)

#### **MARCUS STONE, PARTNERS & BRASS CHECKS**

By the time of the fire, brass and nickel alloy tokens were in daily use at the hotel, the majority of which carried the obverse legend "The Baldwin Hotel, M. Stone & Co., Grill Room." In 1895 Stone came to be fiscal management officer for the hotel through a partnership agreement signed by Baldwin, O.B. Stanton, M. Stone, and Charles Asher. Stanton took charge of daily hotel operations, and Asher, the bars and pool tables. On March 3, 1896, the *Chronicle* announced a gala of the Spring season, the opening of a new Grill Room at The Baldwin with its main entrance on Powell



Street. It was rumored to be a pet project of Stone's.

Marcus was born in San Francisco in 1860, the second child of a prominent Jewish business family. His father, Isaac Stone, had been San Francisco's first officially acknowledged dairyman. As the story goes, Isaac kept his original business license framed on the wall where it proudly announced "San Francisco Milk Permit No. 1."

Marcus followed his father's example, described in the *Chronicle* as "the well-known wholesale butcher and dairyman."

In 1896, Stanton became disillusioned with how things were going and resigned, leaving the hotel with new management in 1897, M. Stone & Company.

Marcus' hotel career ended with the Baldwin Fire, and, after that, little more was heard about him. Directories for 1899 show him presiding over his dairies and packing plants. He passed away at San Francisco in 1910.

### BRASS CHECKS

"Brass Checks" was the public term for a wide range of tokens used by businesses regardless of the metal selected for their striking.

Known for The Baldwin are five 21mm diameter Drink tokens and ten brass Grill Room pieces. All M. Stone & Co. tokens carry the

diesinker signature L.H. MOISE. S.F. A lone drink token displays a J.C. IRVINE & CO. S.F. signature. The Baldwin Annex and Baldwin Cafe checks show none. No token appears to be fire damaged and most come in higher grades. There may be others as yet unrecorded. All items described here are very scarce to rare.

The small 21mm tokens neatly fit one-arm bandit slots then popular in saloons and cigar stands across the West. Drink tokens were typically good for a shot of house whisky, beer, or bar snack when not being dropped into machines. The Annex and Cafe tokens circulated at concessions in the Annex.

Grill Room tokens were issued in 1897 after the first partnership dissolved. Checks with the legend M. Stone & Co. actually served as minuscule legal documents, Stone's name in the legends serving management purposes much as signatures do on dollar bills.

How were they used? Most likely they were given to guests for special dishes or meals as part of a package deal. A more distant possibility is that Grill Room tokens were used for gambling, but there are simply too many odd denominations. For gaming one only needed chips or metal checks to represent 10¢, 25¢, 50¢, \$1, and perhaps \$5.

There were other Baldwin

restaurants in the hotel but if they used separate tokens is unknown, though it's highly probable the drink tokens were in general use at all of the hotel bars. Tokens 6 through 15 show common

obverses with occasionally different minor design flourishes. Some reverses are very ornate. Album and Kappen listed tokens for 15¢ (#7) and 40¢ (#11) which were unavailable for study.

### TOKEN CATALOG



### DRINK TOKENS

1. Round Brass 21mm.  
O: Baldwin Annex / (10 point starburst) / Cafe  
R: Good For 5¢ (¢ in curl of 5) In Trade (curved at top)
2. Round Brass 21mm.  
O: Baldwin Cafe / - ★ - / 928 / Market St. / - S.F. -  
R: Good For / 10¢ / ••• Drink •••
3. Round Nickel alloy 21mm.  
O: The Baldwin / (abstract design) / ★ Hotel Co. ★  
R: Good For / - • - / One / - • - / ★ Drink ★ / J.C. IRVINE & CO. S.F.
4. Round Nickel alloy 21mm.  
O: The Baldwin / (abstract design) / ★ Hotel Co. ★  
R: Good For / - • - / One / - • - / Drink / L.H. MOISE. S.F.

5. Round Nickel alloy 21mm.  
O: Baldwin / M. Stone / & Co. / ★ Hotel ★  
R: Good For / - • - / One / - • - / Drink / L.H. MOISE. S.F.

### GRILL ROOM TOKENS

6. Round brass 21mm, recessed denticled borders.  
O: Baldwin / - / Hotel / M. Stone & Co. / - / Grill Room  
R: 10¢ / L.H. MOISE. S.F.
7. Octagonal brass 22mm, recessed beaded border. *Unavailable.*  
*Description from Album.*  
O: Baldwin / Hotel / M. Stone & Co. / Grill Room  
R: 15¢ / L.H. MOISE. S.F.



6



8



9



10



12



13



14



15



8. Eight-lobed brass 28mm.

O: Baldwin / -:- / Hotel •- /  
M. Stone & Co. /(scrollwork)/  
Grill Room

R: 20¢ (ornate) / L.H. MOISE. S.F.

9. Twelve-lobed brass 26mm, recessed  
beaded borders.

O: Baldwin / ★ / Hotel / M. Stone  
& Co. / - / Grill Room

R: 25¢ / L.H. MOISE. S.F.

10. Round brass 24mm, recessed  
denticled borders.

O: (Same as No. 8)

R: 30¢ (ornate) / L.H. MOISE. S.F.

11. Round brass 28mm. *Unavailable.*  
*Description from Kappen.*

O: Baldwin / Hotel / M. Stone &  
Co. / Grill Room

R: 40¢

12. Square brass 23mm.

O: (Same as No. 8)

R: 50¢ / L.H. MOISE. S.F.

13. Four-lobed brass 28mm.

O: (Same as No. 8)

R: 60¢ (ornate) / L.H. MOISE. S.F.

14. Octagonal brass 26mm, recessed  
denticled borders.

O: (Same as No. 8)

R: 75¢ (ornate) / L.H. MOISE. S.F.

15. Round brass 32mm, recessed  
denticled borders.

O: (Same as No. 8)

R: \$1.00 / L.H. MOISE. S.F.

## TOKEN PHOTO CREDITS

- Tokens 1, 2, 6, 8, and 14  
photographed by Ron Lerch
- Tokens 3, 4, 5, 9, 10, 12, 13, and 15  
photographed by Stephen Huston

## ADDITIONAL IMAGE CREDITS

- Hotel street scene engraving  
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- Hotel Interiors  
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- Destroyed Hotel  
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## *Seated Figures: Who Influenced Who?*

Mark Benvenuto

### INTRODUCTION

The Seated Liberty design, the artwork of Mr. Christian Gobrecht, has long ago moved from being a circulating coin into one that is now considered a classic US type coin.

Issued from the late 1830s until its replacement by the Barber coinage for dimes, quarters, and half dollars in 1892, the Seated Liberty design went through five significant changes in design elements or in weight, became the only design to have been used on six different denominations — from half dime through to dollar, inclusive of the short-lived 20¢ piece — served our nation through two major wars, and is one of very few designs to have been produced at the Main Mint in Philadelphia, as well as the Branch Mints of New Orleans, San Francisco, and Carson City.

While that makes this design a highly recognizable one, and a piece of American history, it might be worth looking at this in some broader context. How did a man like Mr. Gobrecht choose this design? What influenced him? And in turn, who might have been influenced by him?



*Seated Liberty half dollar.*

### GREAT BRITAIN AND GREAT, BIG PENNIES

When the United States got serious about making some form of national coinage in the 1790s, it's fair to say we were the "little kid" in that playground, as it were. France and England had been pounding out a river of coins for many years before that, as had Spain, Portugal, and several other European nations. But two among this deluge of coinage from the Old World are two that bear a striking resemblance to our Seated Liberty coinage — the one penny and two penny coppers of Great Britain, issued in 1797.

For those of us who do not collect in this area, these two coins are big, or on the case of the two pence piece, monstrous. These are the first of what can be called the British large cents, although it might be fairer to say they

are simply the first to have been produced in copper. Indeed, the tradition of British pennies goes back over a thousand years. But a British penny was routinely a small silver coin, with pieces in smaller denominations being made of copper. These big guns were something new. The one penny pieces weighed in at an ounce, while the two pence piece actually weighed two ounces. The work is not truly that of the Royal Mint, but rather of industrialist Matthew Boulton, who won a contract to produce the coins, and who did so until 1799, even though all are dated 1797.

The feature on these British coppers that is of interest to us in terms of our Seated Liberty design is the allegorical figure of Britannia that dominates the reverse. She is seated, facing left, holding a trident in the crook of her left arm, offering an olive branch with her right, with a shield sporting the Union Jack at her side, wearing what the art world calls classical drapery. A clipper ship on the waves is seen in the background. While this may seem almost common to us today, and thus taken for granted, the image is loaded with symbolism. Let's elaborate a bit.

First, the trident the lady holds is a symbol of Britain's power as a maritime nation. So is the ship

in the background. Offering an olive branch is still symbolic of wishing someone peace; doing so with the right hand indicates the importance of peace, in this case for Great Britain. The shield with the Union Jack is an obvious symbol of Great Britain as a nation. And that classical drapery is also a symbol, one of the dignity and aristocratic mien of the subject.

But where does this lattermost image come from, and why reach back to some former age to find a symbol for dignity – or for what we might today call respectability? Well, the answer appears to lie in the artwork of the age. As the eighteenth century ended and the nineteenth dawned, an art movement we now call the Neoclassical came into full bloom, one that easily mixed with what is called the Romantic. Numerous artistic works blend the new and the old.



Perhaps the single most famous such work is "Liberty Leading the people" (above) — in the original

French: *La Liberté Guidant le peuple* — by noted artist Eugène Delacroix, although admittedly, this particular painting was created in 1830, after the 1797 British coppers.

For those of us who are complete novices in the field of neoclassical art, we can be forgiven for thinking that the artists and sculptors of the day believed that the classical world was filled with nude or semi-nude figures, all of whom seemed to be wearing bedsheets or tablecloths, and almost all of whom were chiseled out of white marble. To be more fair, the movement itself came along with the swing in thought that well-to-do people no longer had to be dressed in the stiff, formal wear that had dominated Europe in the 1600s and 1700s, thus bringing back into fashion the loose, drape-like clothing thought to have been worn in the ancient world, meaning ancient Greece and Rome.

At the same general time, the field of archaeology was in its own birth throes, and it is not too difficult to believe that the coinage of Roman Britain, some of which also sported a seated allegorical figure on the reverse side (with some emperor's royal face on the obverse), would have been found and excavated then, and perhaps been an influence to the engravers



*British two pence of 1797*

of the British one penny and two pence coins.

One other factor comes into play here: the continued output of British coppers into the 1800s. The two coins of 1797 make a fun short set, or collection of two, but were so large and unwieldy that the Royal Mint downsized, perhaps for convenience sake, and shortly after began to produce what collectors today continue to call the British large penny.

So, it seems fair to believe that Mr. Gobrecht was influenced by the artistry of the coins of Great Britain, certainly of those that had been produced earlier in his own life. While there are most likely other influences as well, the claim can be made that this is an almost direct connection. At least, it is hard to imagine the two images looking so much alike without any connection at all.

### INDEPENDENT PERU

If the British coppers of the last decade of the 1700s are an influence on the Seated Liberty design that served United States coinage for over five decades, what influence might our own coinage have had on others? In what might seem like an odd answer, it appears our design influenced that of another young nation in the Americas, Peru.

Peru had been one of the lands of the Spanish Empire for over three centuries before conditions ripened enough for it to break away from Spain and declare its independence. What was called the Viceroyalty del Peru was a land rich in mineral wealth, from which gold and silver flowed, as well as other commodities that would help keep a series of Spanish monarchs in power. Indeed, so much silver came from the mines of Central and South America that it has recently been proved that by the year 1580, the wars of Europe were being financed with the silver of the new World and not the Old. For much of that time, the design of the 8 reales coins was that of the reigning monarch on the obverse, and the coat of arms of the Spanish royal house on the reverse.

Peru winning its independence in the 1820s did not automatically mean that the new nation changed and overhauled its coinage system.



*Peruvian Sol*

That occurred in the 1860s. The year 1863 marks the first to see what is called the Peruvian sol. Much like the silver coinage of the young United States, the design of the sol was used on the minor silver coins of Peru as well. And for the purposes of our discussion, that design once again bears some amazing similarities to our Seated Liberty image.

The reverse of the sol bears not only a seated figure — this time one can claim is an allegorical figure of Peru itself — but a figure that sports many of the same design elements we have seen before. The figure holds a pole with a freeman's cap on the end of it, just like our figure of Liberty. She holds a shield at her feet, in her right hand. The image on the shield is the sun — the sol — the image of Inti, a sun god of the Incas, still revered in some way by many in Peru. And yes, our figure sports classical drapery.

Standard numismatic references do not list who the designer and



artist was for the Peruvian sol of the 1800s. But again it is difficult to believe that there is simply no connection between it and the Seated Liberty of Mr. Gobrecht. The two are simply too similar.

#### FRENCH INDO-CHINA

Long before the nation of Viet Nam gained its independence, it, Cambodia, and Laos were chopped up into five colonial holdings of France. In a monetary twist that mimicked Peru, what gets called the “seated Statue of Liberty” image appears on several denominations of the silver coinage for what was then French Indo-China. Once again a seated figure of a woman dominates one side of the coin. This time she holds a fasces in her right arm — quite possibly a symbol of the discipline the mother country is imposing on her colonies. She wears a crown that appears so much like that on the statue in New York that it lends its name to the coin. An anchor and agricultural products are behind her — most likely symbols of France’s power on the seas and domestic might in the form of farming and food production. And yes, she wears classical drapery as well.

The French Indo-Chinese trade piaster, as it is also called, was issued significantly after the Peruvian sol, and right about the time our own Seated Liberty



*French Indo-Chinese trade piastre*

got up and walked off. But once again it is so strikingly similar to the other designs we have just examined that no one could conceivably bet that all four of these designs were produced in isolation from each other. One artist’s vision simply had to be influenced in some way, shape or form by that which came before.

#### OVERALL?

There are certainly other seated allegorical figures that have been placed on coins, some in the nineteenth century. It is probably impossible to determine with complete certainty how each was influenced by those before it, or by those issued at approximately the same time. But it does seem clear that the Seated Liberty design of Mr. Christian Gobrecht is not an isolated piece of work by an accomplished artist, but rather one link — an important link, but a single one nonetheless — in the greater chain of artistic accomplishment that graces our coins and coins of the world today.

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