

**MONEDAS EMITIDAS POR EL GOBIERNO DE REPUBLICA  
1863 –1867 (COINS ISSUED BY THE GOVERNMENT OF THE  
REPUBLIC DURING MAXIMILIAN’S EMPIRE 1863 – 1867)**

By Jose L. Cossio

This information was published in 1963. In a soft cover booklet by the Sociedad Numismatica de Mexico, in Spanish. In going through my reference library I found a English translation, and thought it might be of interest to the numismatic world. I have no idea as to who did the translation or when it was done. This will be published in two parts, the first in this issue and the balance in the December 2001 issue of the *Journal*.

**The coins issued by the government of the Republic, during Maximilian’s Empire.**

There is a set of laws, decrees and notices known as “Code of the Pilgrimage” or “Code of the wagon”, because it includes all the dispositions dictated by Don Benito Juarez from the time of his departure from the capital of the Republic on May 13<sup>th</sup> until his return to the same on July 15<sup>th</sup> 1867.

The work is very scant, being constituted by three volumes which were printed in this city at the government press in the palace at the time it was under the direction of Don Jose Maria Sandoval in 1867.

The picturesque names “Code of the Pilgrimage” and “Code of the Wagon” are attributed to the fact that during the French Intervention, President Juarez was traveling over a great part of the National Territory persecuted by the Empires forces and actually during all his pilgrimage he legislated from his *carretela* (wagon).

The firm character of the Licenciado Don Benito Juarez formed through years of struggle, maintained the government of the Republic by right and fact and that its laws and decrees had a general and compulsory character.

It happens that when a new government succeeds, the first thing it does is to invalidate the old regime’s achievements.

This precise mistake was committed by President Juarez and later Don Venustiano Carranza in relation to Maximiliano and Victoriano Huerta’s actions and legislation’s. Government officials went to such an extent as to deny the existence of people born during those times or to consider people who actually married as to live in concubinage. All transactions concerning payments or obligations or other natures were considered as if it never took place.

Legally, we may say that this article refers to the only legitimate coins minted in the Mexican Republic from May 31<sup>st</sup>, 1863, until July 15<sup>th</sup>, 1867.

Since my purpose when I wrote these notes was to offer information for collectors I just confine myself to transcribing all the legal dispositions effected during the period. We’ll

see: what kind of coins were minted, in what amount, and in some cases when they were withdrawn from circulation. When the dies were destroyed and even about a project of construction of a "Casa de Moneda" outside the national territory.

It is common belief that Maximiliano was the one who adopted the metrical system in our country, basing this opinion on the prices given to the Empire's second issue postage stamps bearing the effigy of Maximiliano in which the "Medio Real" (Half Real) changed to 7 Centavos; the "Real" to 13 Centavos and also values of 25 and 50 Centavos were issued instead of Two and Four "Reales". As we can see the problem of fractions was solved by rounding up  $\frac{1}{2}$  Centavo the Half and one Real stamp.

The government of the Republic established the decimal-metric system in stamps in 1868, but the  $\frac{1}{2}$  Real changed to 6 Centavos and the "Real" to 12 Centavos; also 25, 50 and 100 Centavo stamps were issued.

By decree of October 26, 1863 issued at San Luis Potosi, before Maximiliano arrived in our country, President Juarez said: "as to expect results from the application of the decimal - metric system in respect to the silver coins... etc" which means that President Juarez was already planning on using this system

The first decree was issued at the city of San Luis Potosi, on June 17<sup>th</sup> 1863. In it the copper coins minted by the state are recalled on account of matching neither the weight nor the type of the legitimate issue and for not being authorized for circulation.

The second decree, also issued at San Luis Potosi on October 26<sup>th</sup>, 1863, it states that, "As to expect results from the decimal - metric system in the area concerning the silver coin" all Casa de Monedas of the Republic shall proceed to mint pieces of silver of ten and five Centavo value. These coins would be made according to the law of ten dineros, twenty graneros (i.e., 90.3% silver), which is the finess of the coins of the Republic. For the obverse, between 2 laurel leaves, an eagle on top of a cactus would be engraved, and on top the words "Republica Mexicana". On the reverse, between two laurels, the value of the coin, the year of the minting and name of the Casa de Moneda.

The decree ordered that 10 Centavos coins would be one tenth of a Peso, with a diameter 18.5 millimeters. Those marked 5 Centavos would be five percent of a Peso, with a diameter of 15 millimeters. in diameter. The two pieces will have small lettering in the circumference of both sides and reeded edges. We see later on that the decree made a mistake about the features, mainly about the diameter of the coin.

A decree issued in Chihuahua City on January 1<sup>st</sup> 1865 ordered the minting of 60,000.00 Pesos in copper coins similar in value, weight and type to those coined also at Chihuahua on January 20, 1860.

Another decree issued at Chihuahua on March 7<sup>th</sup> 1865 ordered 40,000.00 Pesos to be minted in copper coins besides the 60,000 coined by the previous decree and was ordered



that under any circumstances coins of this metal were issued thereon. Instructions for the destruction of these dies and matrixes were given.

It is said that on May 1<sup>st</sup> 1865 the minting of 40,000.00 Pesos were finished and the dies and matrixes were destroyed. For this the commissions of the Supreme Government Mr. Blas Balcarcel, the assayer of the Casa de Moneda, the businessmen assigned and the manager of Casa de Moneda got together.

By a document dated on May 4<sup>th</sup> 1865 we find that on May 2<sup>nd</sup> day of the same month the dies and matrixes were destroyed. The mentioned document also said that besides the participation of Iglesias and Blas Balcarcel other citizens did as well. They were Felix Maceyra, Don Domingo Leguinazabal and Don Gustavo Moye who proceeded with the operation. "Having on sight the matrix and dies presented by the director they were heated till red and erased with a hammer the seals of the two matrix's punches and the 46 dies, front and back." The document was signed by Blas Balcarcel, Pedro Sgnacio do Ingoyen, Jose Garcia Gomez del Campe, Jose Felix Meciysn, Domingo Leyuinaxabel Gufuro Moye and H. Miller.

One July 29<sup>th</sup>, 1865 Don Benito Juarez issued a decree which stated that the less costly way of producing resources necessary for public expenses is the minting of copper coin in an amount that under any circumstances could be considered exaggerated since it was already scarce at the capital and other points of the state. He ordered the minting of 60,000.00 Pesos in copper coins similar to the previous one to be made at the "Casa de Moneda" in Chihuahua. In the second article he ordered that the production be allocated to pay the forced loans imposed on the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> of the same month as the decree. As usual he ordered all dies used for that minting to be destroyed, and that is necessary to make new ones again because the previous ones had been destroyed.

The following document refers to an answer given to Don Guillermo H. McKee, of N.Y. in response of a communication of August 2<sup>nd</sup> 1866, sent together with documents related to the contract that intended to have with you, the citizen general, Vesur Gonzales Ortega, in account of establishing a Casa de Moneda in San Francisco of California.

General Gonzales Ortega that gives himself the title of Constitutional President of the Mexican Republic and that is trying to rule the country from abroad doesn't have any legal power nor has the rights to do so. Consequently, his acts as a legitimate ruler of Mexico, are nullified and of no value.

As for your aspirations as to be authorized by the citizen President of the Republic, Benito Juarez to establish a mint in San Francisco of California under similar conditions of contract to the ones General Gonzales Ortega expected to concert with you, that is not possible to grant. Whereas the coined money one of the signs of National sovereignty it should not under any routine or condition be coined outside the territory in which the sovereignty is being exercised.

The last decree shown in the "Pilgrimage Code" in relation to coins was issued in Chihuahua on November 8, 1866. It says that a mistake was done the third article of the decree dated Oct 26, 1863 when the established the "pesp" of 10 centavos and also concerning the diameter specified by decree this article remains as follows:

Article 3<sup>rd</sup> – The pieces of 10 centavos will weigh exactly 1/10 of an ounce and will be 12mm in diameter.

Since it is possible that someone might be interested in decrees in its totality I show here copies taken directly from the publication mentioned earlier.

**Collection  
Of  
Laws, Decrees and Memos  
Issued  
By the Supreme Government of the Republic**

It covers his leaving the capital on May 31, 1863 until his return to the same on July 15, 1867.

**VOLUME I**

Printed Government palace

**Under Jose Maria Sandoval**

Section 5

Whereas the citizen President is aware of the circulation of copper coins in this state whose weight and type do not conform with the general laws, that the coins were neither approved nor its circulation authorized and noticing that because of this the mercantile operations began to malfunction. In view of all this and making use of the powers which he is invested the President decrees the following provisions:

- 1: The circulation of money coined in the whole state cease to do so immediately.
- 2: The treasurer of the proper state will proceed to gather the mentioned money and reimburse the amount in legal money to the owners. This in the shortest time to be established by the citizen Governor. Which by agreement of the Supreme Magistrate I have the honor to communicate to you for its more exact accomplishment.

Independence and liberty, San Luis Potosi, June 17, 1863

(Signed) Numez C. Governor from this state.

A copy made by J. A. Garuboa, San Luis Potosi, June 17, 1863



The citizen President of the Republic sent me the following decree: "Benito Juarez Presidential Constitutional of the United Mexican State" to it's inhabitants Do Know:

That in use of the ample facilities with which I'm invested, and as to make effective the decree concerning the metric-decimal system in the past referring to the silver coin I decree the following:

1. In all mints of the Republic silver pieces of 10 and 5 cents will be coined for which the ministry of...will send the corresponding matrices..
2. Such pieces will have the same law of ten dineros twenty gramos, as in the silver unit of the Republic. On the front side, between 2 small laurels will have engraved in high relief a eagle over a cactus and on the upper part "Mexican Republic". On the reverse they will have between 2 laurels expressing the value of each one and the year on which they were made and the mint where they were coined. Also the mint where they were coined.
3. The pieces of 10 cents will weigh precisely 1/10 of an ounce of silver and measure 18.5mm in diameter. The ones of 5 cents will be 5/100 of an ounce of silver and be 15mm in diameter. Both pieces will have a small border, and the edge shall be reeded.

This I order to be published, circulated and be given due fulfillment in the Government Palace in San Luis Potosi Oct 26, 1863.

**Collection  
Of  
Laws, decrees and Circulars  
Issued by the Supreme Government of the Republic**

It covers from his leaving the capital until his return to the same on July 15, 1867.

**VOLUME II  
Printed Government palace  
Under Jose Maria Sandoval  
1867**

Secretary of State and the Interior and Public Credit.

Section 5

The citizen President of the Republic sent me the following decree:

Benito Juarez, Constitutional President of the Mexican States, to its inhabitants, do know;

That in use of the power with which I am invested, noticing lately scarcity in the circulating copper coins I have to decree the following;

1. It will be coined in the mint of the capital the amount of 60,000.00 Pesos in copper coins, entirely similar in value, weight and type to the coins by virtue of the January 20, 1860 decree of the government of this state.
2. The supervisor of the mint, the assayer from the same and a special commission nominated by the Supreme Government will participate in this minting which will be done in their presence. After the minting is finished they will witness, in the presence of a commission of commerce nominated by the same government all matrices and dies used in this minting be destroyed. Then I order to be printed, published and circulated and to be given proper fulfillment given in the palace of the National Government in Chihuahua on January 1, 1865.

Benito Juarez – Al C. Jose Maria Iglesias Minister of Justice, Foremto and Public Instruction , also in charge of the Secretary of Interior and public Credit. I inform you for your knowledge and pertinent effects.

This will be completed in the December Mexican Numismatic Journal. Our thanks to the late Jose L. Cossio, and the Sociedad Numismatica de Mexico for this information.

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**MONEDAS EMITIDAS POR EL GOBIERNO DE REPUBLICA  
1863 - 1867 (COINS ISSUED BY THE GOVERNMENT OF THE  
REPUBLIC DURING MAXIMILIAN'S EMPIRE 1863 – 1867)**

This is the second part and conclusion of this booklet by Jose L. Cossio and published by the Sociedad Numismatica in 1963.

Section 5 continued:

Having finished the coining of the 40,000 Pesos to which the decree of last March 7<sup>th</sup> refers to, it will proceed to destroy the dies and matrices used for the minting, proceeding in accordance to the 2<sup>nd</sup> article of the decree of January 1<sup>st</sup> of the present year.

So the President decrees that the commission of Commerce will be composed of C. J. Felix Maceyra, D. Domingo Leginuysld and D. Guntaro Noye. Together with you and the supervisor and assayer of the Casa de Moneda of this capital, the commission will witness the destruction of the mentioned dies and matrices.

I inform you for your knowledge and pertinent effects.

Independence, Freedom and Reform Chihuahua, May 1, 1865 – Iglesias – C. Blas Balcarcel, Special Commissioner of the Supreme Government – Present.

Special commissioner of the Supreme Government, in accordance with the directions given by this Ministry in the Supreme Order of 1<sup>st</sup> of the present month, proceeded on the day before yesterday to destroy the dies and matrices used for the minting of the copper coins decreed in the present year. It was done according to the terms expressed in the act, a copy of which I have the honor to send you – fulfilling the disposition dictated by the Supreme Government- Independence, Freedom and Reform Chihuahua, May 4, 1865 – Blas Balcarel –C – Minister of Funds and Public Credit – Present.

At 11:00 on May 2, 1865 the following met at the Casa de Moneda: the special commissioner of copper minting, the Supervisor and the Assayer of the mints, the businessmen appointed by the Supreme Government and the manager of the mint. They gathered in order to witness the destruction of the matrix and dies used this year for the minting of 100,000 Pesos in cuartillas of copper. These were ordered to be coined by the decrees of January 1<sup>st</sup> and March 7<sup>th</sup> of the present year. The following order was read:

“Ministry of Funds and Public Credit – Section 5a – Having finished the minting of 40,000 Pesos mentioned in the decree of last March 7<sup>th</sup> it will proceed to the destruction of the dies and matrices used in the minting proceeding in accordance with the 2<sup>nd</sup> article of the decree of January 1<sup>st</sup> of the present year.

"By virtue of the power invested in the Citizen President, he orders that the Commission of Commerce be made up of C. Jose Felix Maceyra, D. Domingo Leguina Zabel and D. Gustavo Moye. You and the managers and assayer of the Casa de Moneda will witness the destruction already mentioned.

"I let you know .....present."

Immediately they proceeded as follows:

The matrices and dies presented by the Director were heated and, using hammer and punch, the seals were erased from 46 dies, obverse and reverse. All this in accordance with the 2<sup>nd</sup> article of the decree of last January 1<sup>st</sup>, and also in accordance with the order attached.

This act is drawn up for the records. It is signed by all commissioners and keeping the original in the archive of the manager copies are sent to the Ministry of Funds and to the government of state – Blas Balcarcel – Pedro Ignacio de Irigoyen – Jose Maria Gomez de Campo....

A copy Chihuahua May 2, 1865 – Blas Balcarcel.

And copies Chihuahua May 5, 1865 – Iglesias

**Secretary of State  
Department of Hacienda and Public Credit**

Section 5a

The citizen President was pleased to send me the following decree;

Benito Juarez, Constitutional President of the Mexican United States, to its inhabitants, do know:

The least burdensome means of producing the necessary resources for public expenses is the minting of copper coins in a fair amount. It is evident that there is a scarcity of such coin in this capital and other points of the state. In use of the powers with which I am invested I decree.

Article 1. There will be minted in the Casa de Moneda at this capital the amount of 60,000 Pesos in copper coin, entirely equal in value, weight and type to the ones minted lately.

Article 2. The total product of 60,000 Pesos ordered by this decree will be mortgaged and assigned for the payment of the unavoidable loan imposed on the 11<sup>th</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> of the month ending. From which is given notice on this date.



Article 3. A special commissioner assigned by the Supreme Government will take care of the distribution between the money lenders. The free amount coined daily will be distributed proportionally to the amount lent by each of them until the complete suppression of the debt.

Article 4. The same special commissioner will participate in the minting. After finishing the task a commission of commerce nominated by the government and the commissioner will witness the destruction of the matrixes and dies.

Therefore I order to be published and circulated given due fulfillment.

At the Palace of the National Government in Chihuahua on July 29, 1865 – Benito Juarez – C. Jose M. Iglecias, Minister of Justice, Promotion and Public Instruction, and the Secretary of Funds and Public Credit. I let you know for your own knowledge and general interests.

**Collection  
Of  
Laws, Decrees and Circulars  
Issued by the Supreme Government of the Republic**

Including from his departure from the Capital on May 31, 1863 until his return to the same on July 15, 1867.

**VOLUME III  
Printed Government palace  
Under Jose Maria Sandoval  
1867**

**Ministry of Funds and Public Credit**

**Section 5a**

Together with the official statement of last August 28<sup>th</sup>, which arrived with delay I received the copies of the documents relative to the contract that General Jesus Gonzalez Ortega tried to approve with you. This is an account of the establishment of a mint in San Francisco, CA.

General Gonzalez Ortega that gives himself the title of Constitutional President of the Mexican Republic, which he also tries to rule from abroad, though he doesn't exercise and public power nor does he have the right to do it. In consequence, his actions are null and void, and are of no value from which he tries to be the legitimate ruler of Mexico. As to your pretense that the President of the Republic Benito Juarez would bestow the authorization for the establishment of a mint in San Francisco, California, and on the same conditions as your contract with General Jesus Gonzalez Ortega, it is not possible to accept such a petition, as the coinage is one of the signs of national sovereignty, and this

should not be coined for any reason or under any circumstances outside the territory in which that sovereignty is being exercised.

From superior order I'm acknowledging you as a consequential of your communication.

Independence, Freedom and Reform, Chihuahua, October 29, 1866 – Iglencas M. D.  
Gullermo H. McKee ..... New York.

**Ministry of Justice, Promotion and Public Instruction.**

**Section 2a**

The Citizen President was pleased to send me the following decree:

“Benito Juarez, Constitutional President of the United States of Mexico, to its inhabitants, do know:

“Have noticed the use of an inaccurate phrase in the 3<sup>rd</sup> article of the October 26<sup>th</sup> decree, when stating the weight of the 10 and 5 Centavo coins, and when it mentioned the diameters assigned before.

“I decree that such changes in the article be the following: The coins of 10 Centavos will weigh exactly 1/10 of a “Peso Fuerte” and will be 17 millimeters in diameter. Those of 5 Centavos will weigh 1/20 of a “Peso Fuerte,” and will be 12 millimeters in diameter. Both coins will have a filigree in the circumference of both sides.

“Therefore I order this to be printed, published and circulated, and given due fulfillment. Given at the Palace of the National Government in Chihuahua, Nov. 8, 1866, Benito Juarez” - C. Jose M. Iglencas, Minister of Justice, Promotion and Public Instruction.

I let you know for your own knowledge and general interests

Independence, Freedom and Reform, Chihuahua, Nov 8, 1866 Iglencas C. Governor and Military Commander of the State of ....

The editor thanks Jose L. Cossio for putting this information together, and for the Sociedad de Numismatica de Mexico for publishing it.

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