

Cinderella Coins & Currency

by Serge Huard, Numismatist

CHEROKEE NATION - Monaco on the Rio Grande? That was what Colonel Herbert Williams, a fifth-generation Texan of Cherokee blood, envisioned. "Hell, I'm going to start my own country like God intended a country to be run". Williams' plot was a 400-acre island that was created when Hurricane Beulah changed the course of the Rio Grande in 1967. Because the island was south of the main river channel, the USA decided that the land was Mexican territory. Mexico, however, refused to accept ownership. So Williams bought the island from Mexican citizens for a reported amount of US\$400,000. By his reckoning, the 19th century Mexican treaties of Iguuala and Guadalupe paved the way for him: they gave Cherokee Indians the right to establish a nation. Williams had no vision of deer and antelope, however. "We'll have ambassadors and citizenship" said he. "We'll put in a gambling casino and a TV station and we'll register ships". He also looked at tax-free companies & Swiss-style secret bank accounts. To the question "What if the US and Mexico interfere, as they surely will?" his answer was "I'll take it right to the World Court. It takes them 20 years to rule on anything, and if worst comes to worst, I'll have my country for 20 years". This information is taken from a report that was published in the December 25, 1978, edition of "Time" (the US magazine). Since then not much is known of the Cherokee Nation.... except for a beautiful "coin-of-pleasure" that was issued in 1980. That exnumist issue was limited to 500 pieces only and is now extremely rare, especially in Gem Proof condition because it was issued without an air-tight capsule. The coin is of 42mm diameter and contains the full Troy ounce of pure silver (as inscribed on the obverse). The obverse illustrates a Cherokee Indian head with the inscription of purity, the date of issue (1980) and the denomination "50 Eagles" while the reverse depicts the Cherokee Nation Arms with the inscriptions "Cherokee Nation", "Created by an act of God" and "1967". It was minted in Proof quality with frosted illustrations and inscriptions on a brilliant background. Any information relating to this ephemeral "Country" or its numismatics would be of great interest to the Editor of the numismatic section of ATALAYA.



PRINCIPALITY OF SEALAND - Originally designed as a British anti-aircraft fortress during World War II, the Principality of Sealand is a tiny manmade facility off the coast of England, just beyond the territorial waters of Great Britain. It lay empty for many years following the war...until Roy Bates, an ex-infantry major, rediscovered the facility declaring it a free State, naming himself its first prince, and thus creating the Principality of Sealand. After battling the British authorities in the courts and warding off would-be attackers, Roy Bates has successfully defended Sealand's right to exist as an independent principality. He and his family have established a postal system on the island, issued stamps and passports, and was developing services for foreign business. For more information about the principality and its stamps, please refer to the collection of past issues of ATALAYA. Sealand's first numismatic activity was in 1972 with an issue of a large 40.6mm Ten Dollar coin-of-pleasure minted in sterling silver (28.41 grams). The \$10 piece bears Joan Bates' portrait and the inscription "Principality of Sealand" with the denomination "Ten Dollars" and the year of issue "1972" on the obverse and a three-masted sailing ship and the motto "Heart Within and God Overhead". The total and final mintage, according to a "National Memorandum" of the Principality, was limited to 2,000

