

“YOTIN KÒRTÁ”



From the discovery of Curaçao by the Spaniards in 1499 up to the end of the 18th century, Spanish colonial coins were the main form of payment. At the end of the 18th century, the flowering of commerce stagnated in Curaçao. Due to a larger import than export of goods, there was soon a shortage of coins.

Subsequent to this, Governor Johan Lauffer took the decision in 1799 to cut 8,000 Spanish silver pesos (8 reales) into four pieces and give each quarter part the value of 3 reales. Because of the alleged production method, these new coins got the name of “guillotine”, the word used for the headman’s instrument in the French Revolution. In Papiamentu, “guillotine” was corrupted to “Yotin Kòrtá”.



INSTRUMENTS OF PAYMENT 1821-1880



The first production of coins, especially for Curaçao, dates back to 1821. In an unknown factory in the United States, coins with a value of 1 real were minted by order of the Governor of Curaçao. A year later, the order for five-cent pieces followed. In 1826, it was established by

law that legal coins in the Netherlands also had to be used in Curaçao. Nevertheless, several types of foreign coins remained in circulation. The number of Dutch coins shipped to Curaçao remained insufficient. Cutting coins into “triangles” was now so generally accepted, that it was done again in 1838. Instead of Spanish coins, Dutch guilders with the image of King William I were now used. Each guilder was cut into four quarters.



THE DUTCH COINAGE SYSTEM

At the beginning of the 19th century, the financial housekeeping in the colony of Curaçao was tremendously chaotic. Money was in constant shortage, and a great number of foreign coins were used in commerce. The Netherlands intervened.

On October 31, 1826, the Coin Regulation for Curaçao was implemented. This law stipulated that the coins used in the Netherlands had to be used in the islands. Only a few Curaçao coins were allowed to remain in circulation: the 3 reales and the Curaçao five-cent piece.

Unfortunately, the introduction of a new system of coins did not bring about any change in the chaotic financial housekeeping. King William I then pinned his hope on establishing a Government Bank, the forerunner of the present Bank of the Netherlands Antilles.

A SEPARATE SERIES OF COINS FOR THE ANTILLES

During the Second World War, The Dutch Government introduced a separate currency system for Curaçao. As the Netherlands was occupied, the coins were minted in Denver, in the United States.

After the liberation of the Netherlands in 1945, the minting of Antillean coins was taken over by the Royal Mint in Utrecht. Although a completely new series of coins was opted for in the Netherlands, it was decided in the Antilles to hold on to the coins used before the Second World War.



The rise in the price of silver made it necessary to revise of the series of coins at the end of the sixties. By way of experiment, a new series of coins was introduced in 1969 in an issue of only 200 pieces. A year later, the definitive execution in greater issues was initiated. The coins were not only provided with new designs, but were also made of different materials. Silver was replaced by nickel and in 1979 bronze was replaced by aluminum.



In 1986 the island of Aruba acquired its “status aparte” and a completely new coin of its own. On account of this, the necessity arose to revise the series of coins for the remaining five islands of the Antilles, in which case more than only the coat of arms was changed.

A completely new series of coins was developed by the Royal Mint in Utrecht, taking as a starting point the design of the square five-cent piece from 1913: **a fruit-bearing orange branch.** In the new series of coins, the 2½-cent piece did not return and the five-cent piece or stiver was executed in a round shape.

The characteristic square shape of the Antillean series of coins was reserved in the new series for the newly introduced fifty-cent piece. The pieces with a higher value are executed in a gold-colored metal.

