

Who's Who on Venezuela Notes



Miguel Chirinos

Who's Who on Venezuelan Notes

by Miguel Chirinos, I.B.N.S. #5992

Recently Banco Central de Venezuela (B.C.V.) put into circulation new coins of different denominations such as: 10, 20, 50 100 and 500 bolivares. Those coins are going to replace the notes of lowest denomination. For this reason, I would like to share with you a brief biographies that I found about illustrious patriots such as: Gral. Francisco de Miranda, Grand Marshall Antonio Jose de Sucre, Gral. Jose Antonio Paez, Gral. Rafael Urdaneta, Libertador Simon Bolivar and a famous writer and educator Don Andres Bello.

Gral. Francisco de Miranda (Bs. 5)

He was born in Caracas on March 28, 1750, the son of a Spaniard from the Canary Islands. Early in life he entered the Spanish army and went to Madrid supplied with ample funds and letters of introduction. He bought a captaincy and began to keep a dairy which in time became the nucleus of an immense archive. His military career was not fortunate. Accused of neglect of duty, he was eventually cleared and was sent to Cuba, where he again fell out with the authorities.

In 1783, he left the Spanish army and fled to the United States. Henceforth, Miranda was in open rebellion against the Spanish crown.

Spurred by the example of the 13 colonies that had achieved independence from England, he aspired to set up an independent empire in Hispanic America. Among his friends in the United States were such men as Washington, Hamilton and Thomas Paine. Constantly hounded by Spanish agents he visited England, Prussia, Austria, Italy, Turkey and Russia. Catherine the Great took a liking to him and allowed him to wear the Russian uniform and use a Russian passport.

In 1790, he offered his services to French Army. He fought in several wars during the French Revolution and his name was later inscribed at the Arc of Triumph and he became a unique Latin American which appears there.

In 1810, he met the envoy of revolutionary Venezuela, Simon Bolivar. Bolivar induced Miranda to return to his native country, and after 40 years of absence, the aging conspirator again set foot in his homeland. In addition, Miranda was creator of the Venezuelan flag and later Colombia and Ecuador adopted the same colors and its symbolic emancipation from Spain in South America. Gral. Miranda suggested to the Venezuelan congress to issue some notes of these denominations: 1, 2, 4, 8, and 16

pesos. In 1811 those notes were put into circulation but only for one year. So, Venezuela became the first country which issued notes in Spanish America.

As Venezuela was into a civil war, he concluded an armistice with the Spanish counterrevolutionary Monteverde. The victorious Monteverde sent him to Spain and threw into prison, where in 1816 he died in Cadiz, in the fortress of the Four Towers.

His portrait appears only on notes of 5 bolivares since 1968 until 1974 and the same design in 1989 with his friend Bolivar.

Grand Marshall

Antonio Jose de Sucre (Bs.10)

Antonio Jose de Sucre was born on February 3, 1795, in Cumana (capital of Sucre state today) in northeast Venezuela. He was the son of Don Vicente Sucre and Manuela Alcala. He received his education in Caracas where in 1808 he started his studies of mathematics and, subsequently, of engineering.

In the Patriot Army he began his brilliant military career in 1810, and was involved in the Independence War, leaving apparent his intelligence, his nobility and, above all, his moral integrity.

Sucre played a large role in the



5 bolivares (1989) Bolivar at left and Miranda at right.



10 bolivares (1990) Bolivar at left and Sucre at right



10 bolivares (1958) Bolivar at left and Sucre at right



10 bolivares (1981) Marshall Antonio J. de Sucre at right

military and political liberation of several South American countries and he achieved extraordinary military success and fought alongside Libertador Simon Bolivar.

Among his military victories of major relevance are: Battle of Boyaca, Colombia (1819) which secured the independence of Colombia; Yaguachi, Ecuador (1821); Pichincha, Ecuador (1822) which secured the independence of Ecuador; Pasto, Colombia (1822); Junin, Peru (1824) and finally in Ayacucho, Peru (1824) the place where he received a promotion to Grand Marshall for consolidating the independence from Spain for the entire northwest of South America.

On the other hand, for his great accomplishments and his honesty, Sucre was named by Simon Bolivar, president for life of the rising Republic of Bolivia, as well as the first president of this country in 1826, a position he practiced for two years due to a failed rebellion which depressed him even more. He became desperate to return to Quito, Ecuador, where, in 1828, he married his longtime sweetheart Marquis Mariana Carcelen and established his permanent home.

In January 1830, Sucre was designated President of the Constituent Congress of Colombia. Soon after he received Bolivar's presi-

dency he resigned from the Republic of Colombia. The formal disintegration of Gran Colombia was just months ahead.

On June 4, 1830 when he was going to Quito, Ecuador, he died of musket fire in the Berruecos mountains in Pasto province in southern Colombia. In 1842, an undistinguished army Colonel Apolinar Morillo was convicted for it.

The portrait of this Venezuelan revolutionary and notable statesman appears also on notes of Bolivia, Colombia and Ecuador adopted "Sucre" as their currency unit in tribute to him. Actually, in Venezuela he appears since 1994 on notes of 2,000 bolivares.

Gral. Jose Antonion Paez (Bs. 20)

Paez was born on June 13, 1790 at Acarigua, Portuguesa State, on the edge of the plains (Ilanos), of Venezuela's Orinoco Basin.

In 1810, he joined the patriot

forces and after in 1814, when the Spaniards reoccupied the major population centers, he was instrumental in keeping resistance alive on the Ilanos. After Bolivar transferred his operations to the Ilanos, Paez agreed to serve under his command.

Paez fought beside Bolivar at the victory of the Battle of Carabobo in 1821, the last major engagement of the war in Venezuela. While Bolivar then carried the struggle as far as Peru and Bolivia, Paez remained in Venezuela. He shaved the widespread dissatisfaction of Venezuelans with the inclusion of their homeland in the United Republic of Gran Colombia, and in 1826 he led a revolt for greater autonomy.

Paez served as president of Venezuela from 1830 to 1835 and again from 1839-1843. He kept effective control of the country until 1848, ruling through what came to be called the Conservative oligarchy.



20 bolivares (1990) Gen. Jose A. Paez at right

Despite the conservative label of his regime, it carried out such progressive reform as the introduction of religious freedom and abolition of the state tobacco monopoly.

Paez went into exile but returned in time to serve as dictator from 1861-1863 in the last stage of the bitter Federal War. His portrait appears on coins of different denominations such as: 10, 4, 2 reales and 1 and 1/2 real which didn't circulate because they never came to Venezuela and are considered rare coins in this country.

Defeated in the struggle, Paez left Venezuela for good, travelling in North and South America and in 1867 publishing his autobiography in New York. He died in New York on May 6, 1873.

His portrait appears on notes of 20 bolivares from 1974 until 1979 and after in 1991-1995.

Gral. Rafael Urdaneta (Bs.20)

Rafael Urdaneta was born on October 24, 1788 in Maracaibo, Zulia State northwest of Venezuela. His parents were Miguel J. Urdaneta and Maria Alejandrina Faria.

His brilliant military career began in Bogota in 1810. He fought under the orders of libertador Simon Bolivar in 1811 and 1812. In 1813 he got a promotion to Colonel. Also he participated in the Campana Admirable (Admirable Campaign) led by Bolivar. In addition, he participated in some important battles in Venezuela such as: Barbula, Las Trincheras and he got another promotion as brigadier general.



50 bolivares (1992)
Andres Bello
at right

In 1814, Urdaneta defended heroically Valencia city. In 1815, he was promoted to division general and in 1821 to officer in command of Colombia Army. He was an excellent military strategist.

He participated in 27 battles, 9 under sieges and 2 assaults.

In 1832 he was a senator for Coro province for two years. In 1835, he defended Dr. Vargas government against military coup. When Carlos Soublette was president of Venezuela, Urdaneta was war secretary.

In 1845, he was in the agreement when Spain recognize the independence of Venezuela. Urdaneta died in 1845.

In 1987, Banco Central de Venezuela issued a the commemorative note of 20 bolivares. His portrait appears on this note for the bicentennial of his birth. The naval Battle of Lake Maracaibo on back.

Don Andres Bello (Bs. 50)

Andres Bello was born on November 29, 1781, in Caracas into a middle-class Creole family. In 1797, he entered the University of Caracas, receiving of arts degree in 1800. He then studied law and medicine there. To augment income, he tutored his friends, the most out-

standing of whom was Simon Bolivar, the future liberator of South America.

In 1802, he abandoned his studies to enter government service. He edited the first newspaper published in Venezuela, the *Gazeta de Caracas* (1808), he wrote the first book *Calendarlo, manualyguia universal* (1810). When a provisional government was established in 1810, he was sent to London as part of a diplomatic mission headed by Bolivar.

In the British capital, he collaborated, in the publication of the magazine *El Espanol* (1810-14) and *Censor Americano* (1820). Finally, he edited the *Biblioteca Americana* (1823) and *Repertorio Americano* (1825-27). He became a cultural ambassador in this city. When he was offered a position in the Chilean government, he accepted, and he departed with his family in 1829.

In Chile, he helped write the constitution in 1833. Bello was editor of the newspaper *El Araucano* between 1830 and 1853; he was senator (1837-1864). His Spanish grammar is perhaps the greatest ever produced. His civil law is still effect in Chile and many other Latin American countries. His works on philosophy are very esteemed and his book on international law was acclaimed as a classic. Also, he funded the Universidad de Chile. Bello died in Santiago de Chile on Oct. 15, 1865. Therefore, he is considered the greatest humanist and intellectual of the 19th Century.

In Venezuela, Bello appears on notes of 50 bolivares since 1972 until 1977. Later, in a commemorative



20 bolivares (1987)
Gen. Urdaneta
at right



100 bolivares (1992)
liberator simon
Bolivar at right

note of the bicentennial-birth of Andres Bello (1781-1981) and a scene showing Bello teaching young Bolivar on back. Finally, an issue like the first one was issued 1985 and 1988. Finally, in 1990 to 1995 another was released with light modifications.

Recently, Banco Central de Chile issued a new note of 20,000 pesos (1998). Bello appears in this note and Universidad de Chile on back.

Simon Bolivar (Bs. 100 & 500)

Simon Bolivar was born into a wealthy Creole family in Caracas, on July 24, 1783.

Revered by many South Americans as "El Libertador," he is also called by some the "George Wash-

ington of South America." Simon Bolivar led a successful 14 year revolution to relinquish Spain's colonial rule of the area that comprises Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Panama, Peru and Venezuela.

During this conflict, he earned a reputation as a resolute commander and exceptional military tactician, but perhaps his most enduring contribution to the South American independence movement was his political vision for the colonies he liberated. This vision consisted of an unusual combination of authoritarianism and republicanism.

Ultimately, Bolivar's lifelong ambition was to replace the Spanish colonial system in Latin America with a closely allied confederation of

republics (known as Gran Colombia) that share common political and economical goals.

On December 17, 1830, Bolivar died of tuberculosis near the town of Santa Marta, Colombia.

On March 31, 1879, under the second presidency period of Gral. Guzman Blanco, was adopted the "Bolivar" as currency unit of Venezuela. His portrait appears in several South American countries as mentioned above.

Actually, in Venezuela he appears in new coins of several denominations such as: 10, 20, 50, 100 and 500 bolivares. Also, he is on notes of 1,000 (1991), 5,000 (1994) and 10,000 bolivares in 1998.

References

Billetes de Venezuela, by Richard L. Rosenman, 1980
Dictionary of Hispanic Biographies, 1986
Encyclopedia of World Biography, 2nd Edition, Studi Visser, 1998
Standard Catalog of World Paper Money, modern issues 1961-1999 by Cohn R. Bruce & Neil Shafer, 1999



Miguel Chirinos