

School #33  
West C., age 13

**"The World of the Roman Provinces"  
In the Reign of Emperor Nero from 58 -64 AD**

Salve, I am a Roman denarius named Nero, age 60, living in the Roman auxiliary cavalry at Fort Cilurnum in England during the reign of the Emperor Hadrian in the year 124 AD.

I was minted in the year 64 AD in Rome under the reign of Nero. He ordered that all silver denarii be debased with other less precious metal. In the past, denarii had contained 4 grams of silver but Nero allowed the amount to slip to 3.8 grams of silver per coin. This allowed Rome to save money and make a temporary fifteen percent profit on every coin minted to help rebuild the city after the fire in 64 AD. Soon, however, the people of Rome realized this change and inflation occurred. On my obverse side, there is an engraving of the Emperor Nero, for whom I am named. On my reverse side, there is the lady Roma dressed in a cuirass and helmet.

After I was minted, the Emperor spent me on an expansive building project, the Domus Aurea, an extravagant palace known as the "Golden House." This vast facility is composed of a complex web of villas and pavilions. The financing of this project angered many citizens who believed that the money should have been spent elsewhere. I was paid to a slave owner in exchange for a day's work done by his slaves on the palace.

The slave owner was a rich patrician who kept me locked away in a wooden chest with the rest of his life savings. Twenty-five years later, his son discovered me. His son, a rich landowner and public figure of importance, spent me while purchasing exotic animals from an Arab trader. These animals were to be slaughtered in the arena. He, like many candidates running for public office in Rome, was host to these games to bribe people to vote for him. At the games, gladiators fight to the death against each other and animals. Also criminals and Christians are often publicly executed during these events. It is a form of entertainment full of bloodshed and death, yet loved by the Roman people. They take place in amphitheaters, the largest of which is the Flavian Amphitheater, also known as the Coliseum, which is located in Rome.

The Arab took me with him on his trip back to Egypt. He spent me buying supplies in Alexandria before he left on his trip into the African interior to capture more wild animals to sell. Alexandria is a rich and prosperous city in the Nile river delta in northern Egypt. It was founded by Alexander the Great in his conquest of much of the known world between 336 and 323 BC. The merchant later paid me in taxes to the Roman Empire.

After I was collected, I was sent to Rome. From there I was shipped to the Roman province of Britannia to be paid to an auxiliary cavalryman stationed there as part

of his salary. A soldier in the Roman army is paid roughly 300 denarii a year. He is an auxiliary soldier, meaning that he is not a Roman citizen. In fact, all of the troops in his cohort stationed in the fort of Cilurnum are from the province of Dalmatia (present-day Yugoslavia). The best cavalymen in the Roman Empire are not native to Italy and have come from faraway lands. In return for their services, they were given Roman citizenship upon retirement. The fort from which he is based is one of sixteen auxiliary forts built along Hadrian's Wall, an impressive structure running seventy-three miles across Northern England. The wall is fifteen feet high and ten feet thick, with lookout towers every 1,600 feet. It was built by the Emperor Hadrian to keep marauding tribes of barbarians from entering Britannia from the north and was completed in 123 A.D.

Throughout my travels of the Roman Empire over a period of sixty years, I witnessed the rise and fall of numerous emperors, the expansion of Rome and finally the largest fortification ever built in Roman times. I traveled to the farthest point north in the Roman Empire and one of the farthest point south. It is with greatest pride that I tell to you of my life and of the great history of the Roman Empire.