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Images of the Old Mint are available as high-resolution digital files. They may be downloaded at www.sfhhistory.org/?pageid=7 <<http://www.sfhhistory.org/?pageid=7>> or received on request by emailing gnance2@sbcglobal.net

Commemorative Coins to Benefit San Francisco Historical Museum

Old Mint coins approved by Senate Banking Committee

The Senate Banking Committee today approved a bill that authorizes the U.S. Mint to strike two commemorative coins to raise funds to transform the Old Mint building in San Francisco into a museum that will showcase city history and numismatics. The full senate is expected to vote on the measure on next week; it has already been passed in the House of Representatives.

The San Francisco Old Mint Commemorative Act instructs the U.S. Mint to issue one \$5 gold coin and a \$1 silver coin with images emblematic of the Old Mint, also known as "The Granite Lady." It is the first time U.S. commemorative coins will be produced to raise funds to benefit an historic mint building. A total of 600,000 coins will be minted, 100,000 in gold and 500,000 in silver.

The selection of the Old Mint building coincides with the anniversary marking the Centennial of the Great Earthquake in San Francisco. The Old Mint, a classic Greek revival building, was one of the few structures to survive the disaster, at which time its use as a financial center was critical in rebuilding the city.

"This legislation allows us to preserve one of San Francisco's most important historic structures," said Jerome Dodson, president of the San Francisco Museum and Historical Society (SFMHS), which is spearheading efforts to transform the national treasure into a museum. "Now we can keep the story alive for future generations.

"Millions of residents and visitors, students and historians alike will be able to visit the City's museum and the American Money & Gold Rush Museum (AMGRM). This bill has the potential to raise up to \$8.5 million for our project — part of a fundraising effort that totals \$60 million."

Nearly half the 70,000 sq. ft. building will become the San Francisco Museum of History. The American Money and Gold Rush Museum will occupy approximately 9,000 square feet. Other tenants of the building will include the San Francisco Visitors Center and a white-table restaurant, café, bar and museum shops.

The coin legislation was originally introduced by Senators Diane Feinstein, Barbara Boxer (D-Calif.) and John Ensign (R-Nev.) in October, 2005. Companion legislation was introduced by House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) and Representative Michael N. Castle (R-Del.).

The Old Mint's unique history and survival reflect the vision and spirit of San Francisco. The building's architect, Alfred B. Mullett, knew that the Pacific Coast was subject to earthquakes, and with remarkable foresight he designed the Old Mint to "float" on its foundations in a quake, rather than shatter. His insight was validated when the mint rode out the severe tremors of Wednesday, April 18, 1906, practically undamaged. Heroic efforts by Treasury Department employees, using only a one-inch hose connected to wells that had fortunately been built just weeks earlier, saved the mint and \$200 million in gold in its vaults from the fire that destroyed commercial San Francisco after the earthquake.

With the downtown area and its banks destroyed, the San Francisco Mint was the only financial institution able to open for business in San Francisco, and it became the depository and treasury for the city's relief fund. By 1934, one-third of the United States' gold reserve was stored in the vaults of the San Francisco Mint. Its new life as a museum will portray many of the rich stories of its multi-ethnic residents and allow patrons to experience what makes San Francisco the city it is.

The American Money and Gold Rush Museum will be developed in partnership with the American Numismatic Association (ANA), which will help create exhibits, conduct research and operate the museum. The ANA, headquartered in Colorado Springs, Colo., currently operates the country's largest museum dedicated exclusively to exhibits of coins, paper money, medals and tokens.

"This is a great opportunity to honor the Old Mint and help restore this historic building in downtown San Francisco," said ANA Executive Director Chris Cipoletti. "This exciting new museum will be a national showcase of numismatic history, and give visitors a chance to see how money reflects our culture, history and art through the ages."

The non-profit **San Francisco Museum and Historical Society (SFMHS)** preserves, interprets and presents the historical heritage of San Francisco. It fulfills these objectives through a broad spectrum of exhibitions, programs and special events and was organized in February 2002, following the merger of the San Francisco Historical Society and the Museum of the City of San Francisco. A year later, SFMHS plans to renovate the building and establish a permanent home for the San Francisco Museum won unanimous support from the Mayor's Old Mint Task Force.

For additional information, visit www.sfhistory.org [<http://www.sfhistory.org>](http://www.sfhistory.org) or call 415.775-1111.

The **American Numismatic Association (ANA)** is a nonprofit organization dedicated to educating and encouraging people to study and collect money and related items. With nearly 33,000 members, the Association serves the collecting and academic communities and the general public with an interest in numismatics. The ANA helps people discover and explore the world of money through its vast array of programs including its education and outreach, museum, library, publications, conventions and seminars.

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