

The Little King Comes Home To the "Queen City" For ANA Show

The "King of Southern Gold Coins" - a tiny, 1849-C "Open Wreath" gold dollar - is returning to Charlotte, North Carolina - the "Queen City" - for the American Numismatic Association's (ANA) National Money ShowSM March 21-23.

Produced for regular circulation nearly 155 years ago at the United States Mint's first branch in Charlotte, this \$500,000 coin has a past shrouded in mystery. Only four examples of these 1/2-inch gold coins are known to exist, and none were discovered until the late 1920s or early '30s - the last in 1978.

The little gold coin will be exhibited at the ANA show by New Orleans-based rare coin dealer Blanchard and Company for its owners, who wish to remain anonymous.

The roots of the King of Southern Gold Coins can be traced back to North Carolina's gold rush in the 1820s, the development of the Charlotte Mint in 1837 and the discovery of gold in California in 1849. The last event spurred creation of two new gold coins - \$1 and \$20 - which proved to be the lowest and highest denominations issued by the U.S. Mint for regular circulation.

The Charlotte Mint issued its now rare \$1 gold pieces - the smallest of American coins - the first year they were authorized by Congress. However, no records exist that shed any light on why only four of that mint's open-wreath gold dollars remain today.

"The story about this coin may be lost to the past, but for us it is a wonderful piece of history returning home," says Jerry Sajbel of Charlotte, who is the general chairman of the ANA National Money Show. "This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to see this and other great rarities that represent the history of this city and state."

This "King of Southern Gold Coins" will join an assortment of other historic Charlotte gold pieces, valued at more than \$250,000, displayed by Douglas Winter Numismatics of Dallas, Texas. Author of the reference book *Charlotte Mint Gold Coins: 1838-1861*, Winter is a consultant to the Mint Museum of Art, which once housed the city's coin production facility.

Thousands of collectors and hundreds of rare coin dealers from across the nation will attend the ANA National Money Show at the Charlotte Convention Center. Co-hosted by the Charlotte Coin Club and North Carolina Numismatic Association, the show (free and open to the public) will feature more than 30 hours of educational programs, a treasure hunt for school-age children, a wide array of exhibits, and a sale by Heritage Numismatic Auctions of Dallas.

The ANA has arranged discounted room rates at The Westin Charlotte (866-837-4148) and Hampton Inn Charlotte Uptown (704-373-0917). To make reservations, call the hotels directly and mention the show. (To take advantage of the discount, reservations must be made by February 17.)

The ANA also has arranged airfare discounts on Delta Air Lines (call Delta Meeting Network® Reservations at 800-241-6760, File No. DMN191440A) and United Airlines (call United Meeting Specialists at 800-521-4041, Meeting Code 510CW). Or call M&M World Travel Service at 800-426-8326.

The National Money Show at the Charlotte Convention Center, 501 S. College St., will be open from 10 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. on Friday and Saturday, March 21-22; and from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Sunday, March 23.

For additional information about the National Money Show, contact the ANA Convention Department, 818 N. Cascade Ave., Colorado Springs, CO 80903-3279; telephone 719-632-2646, fax 719-634-4085 or e-mail convention@money.org; or visit the ANA web site at www.money.org.

The American Numismatic Association is a congressionally chartered nonprofit educational organization dedicated to encouraging people to study and collect money and related items. The ANA helps its 28,000 members and the public discover and explore the world of money through its vast array of education and outreach programs, as well as its museum, library, publications, conventions and seminars. For more information, call 719-632-2646 or go to www.money.org.