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ANA's New Exhibit, "Coins, Crown and Conflict," Set to Open June 7

As a brilliant general, political revolutionary and Lord Protector of England, Oliver Cromwell lived by the motto, "Let peace be sought through war." Almost 350 years after his death, Cromwell is remembered by some as a great leader and hero for freedom, and by others as a vengeful dictator and hypocrite.

"Coins, Crown and Conflict: An Exploration of Cromwell's England," a new exhibit opening June 7 at the American Numismatic Association's Edward C. Rochette Money Museum, chronicles the era of Oliver Cromwell – one of the most important and turbulent periods in British history.

During the English Civil War (1642-1651), the struggle between Parliament and the Monarchy affected English life down to the money people carried. Coins made during the rule of Charles I, Oliver Cromwell and Charles II document a time of bloody battles, executions, struggles for increased liberties and a transformation in how England was governed.

One of the exhibit's extremely rare and valuable coins is The Petition Crown, produced by Thomas Simon, the chief engraver at the Royal Mint during Cromwell's rule. Created in 1663 to convince Charles II to change his mind about the selection of a Dutch minter's coin design, Simon engraved his petition to the king around the coin's rim. It read: 'THOMAS SIMON MOST HVMBLY PRAYS YOVR MAJESTY TO COMPARE THIS HIS TRYALL PIECE WITH THE DVTCH AND IF MORE TRVLY DRAWN & EMBOSS'D MORE GRACE; FVLLY ORDER'D AND MORE ACCURATELY ENGRAVEN TO RELIEVE HIM.' The silver coin features an image of Charles II so detailed it shows the King's neck veins in candlelight shadows. But the coin came too late for Charles II to change his plans.

There are very few remaining Petition Crowns. The finest, from the collection of Geoffrey Cope, is part of the ANA's exhibit and marks the first time in many years a Petition Crown has been exhibited in the United States.

"Pieces during these turbulent times comprise the most interesting and exciting of all British issues," Cope said.

Cope also lent the ANA several artifacts pertaining to Oliver Cromwell for the exhibit, including his death mask, his spectacles and a penny Bible.

“Coins, Crown and Conflict: An Exploration of Cromwell’s England” opens June 7 with a free public reception from 5 to 7 p.m. at the Money Museum, 818 N. Cascade Ave. The exhibit runs through November 2008.

The Money Museum is open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday through Friday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday, and noon to 5 p.m. Sunday. Admission is free and group tours are available by calling 719.482.9834.

The American Numismatic Association is a nonprofit educational organization dedicated to educating and encouraging people to study and collect money and related items. With nearly 32,000 members, the Association serves the academic community, collectors and the general public with an interest in numismatics.

The ANA helps all 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. For more information, visit www.money.org, or call 719-632-COIN.