

North Carolina Gold

O A R R E L T H C E B R E R
S L L E W D L A C N U A B I
B E C H A Y W O O D A V I D
O X G T K I L L I D R A N E
R A T I E R D S I L L F V T
N N S A G E I P O B S O A T
E D U G O L D H I L L N R O
H E G U L E A I F W O O D L
G R U T H E R F O R D L V R
I G A R P H N E R O S I K A
E T G O R W O R E I D S I H
L U B M O C C M E D B U L C
R E H P O T S I R H C O I N

Gold was first discovered in North Carolina by a young boy named **Conrad** Reed (sometimes spelled **Reid**) in the autumn of 1799. The seventeen pound nugget he found was but the tip of the iceberg of what would be found on his father John Reed's farm. The **Reed** mine as it became known was a partnership between John and his friends and relatives - Frederick **Kisor**, James **Love**, and Mathew **Phifer** and is now a state historical site.

Other mines such as the **Gold Hill**, the **McComb** and the **Rudisill** (operated by the flamboyant Italian Count **Ravafonoli**) soon dotted the gold region of North Carolina. However, with all the gold there was still a problem. There was an acute shortage of hard money. The money situation in North Carolina was so bad that State Secretary of the Treasury John **Haywood** eventually had to authorize an illegal issue of state currency.

In the early 1830s a German immigrant family relocated to North Carolina and opened a private mint. The **Bechtler** family, **Christopher**, Christopher, Jr. and **August**, coined \$1, \$2.5 and \$5 coins in **Rutherford**, North Carolina. Today, these simple coins are highly sought after by collectors today.

In 1838, the federal government opened a Branch Mint at **Charlotte**, North Carolina. The "Mint" as it was called locally would produce \$1, \$2.5 and \$5 coins until it was forced to close by the Civil War. During its operation the position of Superintendent was part of the political spoils system which resulted in changes nearly every election cycle. As such, John H. **Wheeler** was the first Superintendent of the Charlotte Branch Mint, Burgess S. **Gaither** the second, Green W. **Caldwell** the third and sixth, William J. **Alexander** the fourth, and James W. **Osborne** the fifth.

The mint reopened as an Assay Office after the war and Frank P. **Drane** was the last of a long line of post war assayers serving from 1911 until the Charlotte Branch Mint Building closed its doors on July 31, 1913. The Mint would eventually be moved to a new location and operate as an art museum to this day.