

## The Confederate States

One of the pleasures of paper money collecting is that because notes were usually only issued in dire emergencies in the early days, many relate closely to historical events. The issues of the Confederate States of America are a case in point. The financial resources of these states were very limited and their notes were taken on trust by Confederate supporters, most of whom soon found that they were not likely to get much back. In fact when General Robert E. Lee surrendered in 1865 they got nothing back! Some rare Confederate notes turn up every now and then which poignantly show the hopelessness of the Confederate cause by the overprinted poem on the reverses headed "IN MEMORIAM":

Representing nothing on God's earth now,  
And naught in the world below it,  
As a pledge of a nation dead and gone,  
Keep it dear friend, and show it.  
Show it to those who will lend an ear,  
To the tale this paper tells:  
Of liberty born of the patriot's dream,  
Of a storm cradled-nation that fell.  
Too poor to possess the precious ore,  
And too much a stranger to borrow.  
The days rolled by, and weeks became years,  
But our coffers were empty still,  
Coin so scarce, that the Treasury quacked  
If a dollar should drop in the till.  
But the faith within us was strong indeed  
Our poverty well discerned:  
And these little checks represented the pay,  
Our suffering veterans earned.

We knew it had hardly a value in gold,  
Yet as gold the soldiers received it.  
It gazed in our eyes with a promise to pay  
And each patriot soldier believed it.  
But our boys thought little of price or pay,  
Or of bills that were ever due.  
We knew if it bought us our bread to-day,  
'Twas the best our poor country could do  
—keep it — it tells our history o'er  
From the birth of the dream to the last.  
Modest and born of the Angel Hope,  
Like our hope of success, it passed.

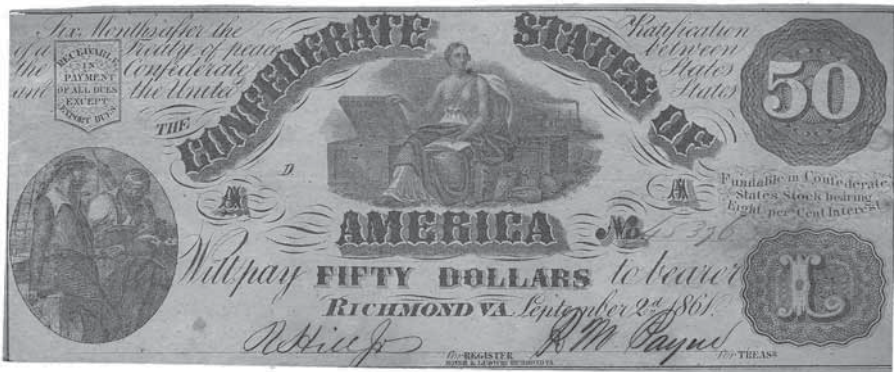
When the Southern States broke away from the US there was only one small steel plate engraving firm in the whole of the South. To relieve the situation agents of the South approached the National Banknote Co. in the North who appeared to have no problems in printing notes for the Confederacy. In fact just ten days before war was declared a shipment of notes arrived in the South. This first issue of Confederate notes dated 1861 are today extremely rare and catalogue at \$65,000 each in Extremely Fine condition. The reason is not hard to find: they are the very first interest-bearing notes issued at Montgomery, Alabama, dated 5 June, 1861. At that time Montgomery was the capital of the Confederacy. Notes for \$50, \$100, \$500 and \$1,000 were printed in sheets of four with all four notes on each sheet. It is thought that only 607 sheets were printed. They included the only \$1,000 notes produced by the South.

Strangely, the \$1,000 has portraits of John C. Calhoun, a patriotic Southerner, and Andrew Jackson who proclaimed “The Union, it must be preserved!” But there were to be no more. The North woke up to what was happening and armed Federal Marshals moved into the printing works in New York and confiscated the plates. It is understood that only 607 sheets had been delivered.

This created a major problem for the South whose paper money had mostly been printed in the North in the past. Banks in the South were asked to hand over any unused plates so that they could be converted to Confederate notes. One printer, Jules Manouvrier, was a first class printer and produced high quality notes. Unfortunately there was a large theft of his notes, many of which were recovered by Confederate officials. But when they tried to establish how many had been put into circulation by the thieves, they found that the printer had no idea of how many he had printed. The officials cancelled his contract and burned the notes. To fill

the gap many printers were employed to produce notes. The workmanship was often of poor quality and this made it easy for forgers. There were some seventy-three types of notes produced during the war and, taking into account varieties of date, engravers' names etc., collectors can create a collection of many hundreds of different notes at reasonable prices.

One prominent printer was Hoyer and Ludwig, a small lithographic firm in Richmond which became the capital when the Confederates hurriedly left Montgomery. The work on some of their early notes was so poor that they were easily forged and soon merchants began to refuse to accept them. Finally, the Secretary of State recalled the notes to exchange them for new ones, but as there were no new notes available he issued 'call certificates' payable ninety days after issue with interest, while new notes were printed.



*\$50 Confederate States of America note dated 2 September, 1861 and payable "Six Months after the Ratification of a Treaty of peace between the Confederate States and the United States".*

Forgery was a major problem at the time. From a collectors point of view forged notes are just as interesting as genuine ones, as they were contemporary and not produced to deceive a collector. Confederate notes all have two hand-written signatures. The notes were shared out among many people for signing. Most counterfeits can be identified by serious collectors because there is a *Register of the Confederate Debt* by Raphael P. Thian. This lists all the signatories and the batch numbers each pair were given. It would be pure luck if a forger chose the right signatures for the right serial number on a note.

The printers themselves were often at loggerheads. One printer, Blanton Duncan, sent men round to try and burn down the press of Keatinge, his main rival. But Keatinge was aware of the dangers and had armed men on the premises who successfully beat off the attack.

Duncan had his own problems too. Soldiers who had been seconded to him for use as printers, took time off to go in the local brothels. Duncan went to the Provost Marshal for help as the Columbia Garrison depended on his printing firm for their wages. The Marshal showed no interest at first. Then it was pointed out that if he took no action he was unlikely to be paid himself. Soldiers were sent out to round up the errant printers and put them back to work.

Duncan was involved in printing one of the famous Confederate notes showing 'the Sweet Potato Dinner'. This note shows a scene from the War of Independence when Marion entertained the British officer, Tarleton, to discuss an exchange of prisoners. His black servant prepared a seven course 'banquet', all based on the sweet potato, attempting to give the British the impression that there was no food shortage among the US forces.

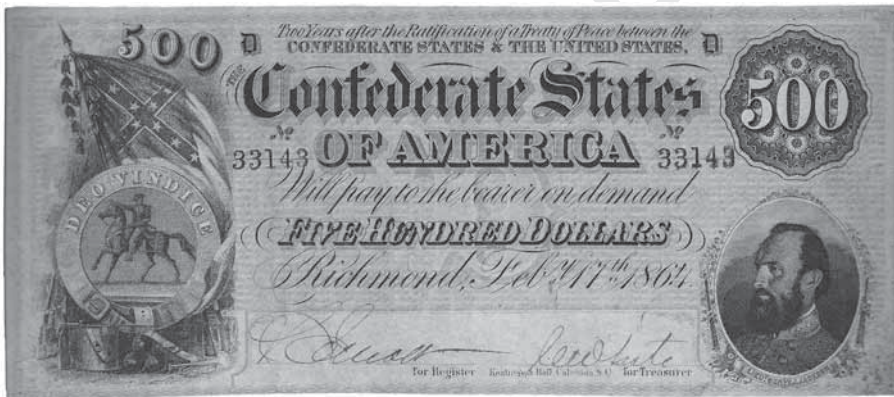
One popular note which can be found dated 1862, 1863 and 1864 is the Richmond \$100 with portrait of Lucy Holcombe Pickens, the governor's wife. Her portrait also appears on the \$1 types of 1862 (P.39 and 40). A very attractive lady, she was regarded as a pin-up among the soldiers. A fairly common note of the Confederacy is the \$10 of 1864 which shows part of a painting of Colonel Bragg taking the artillery into action during the Mexican War. The picture was used because he was to become a general in the Confederate Army.

Perhaps the most famous and popular note among the Confederate supporters was the 1864 \$500 issue showing a picture of General 'Stonewall' Jackson. He was the most successful of the Confederate generals and got his nickname 'Stonewall' because the Union troops could not break through his lines. When on one occasion General Lee told him the enemy was pushing them back he replied, "Then sir, we will give them the bayonet". And they did. The \$500 also showed the Union flag. Printed first in 1864, a final issue was actually made in 1865. General Sherman burned Columbia in February 1865 and the plates were smuggled out to Richmond where Ludwig ran off some 5,000 sheets before the Confederates had to evacuate the city. The difference is easily identified as the originals were in light red and the last printing was in dark red. Unfortunately for the Confederacy, General Jackson was returning from a reconnoitring trip when he was mistaken by his own men for the enemy, and shot dead.

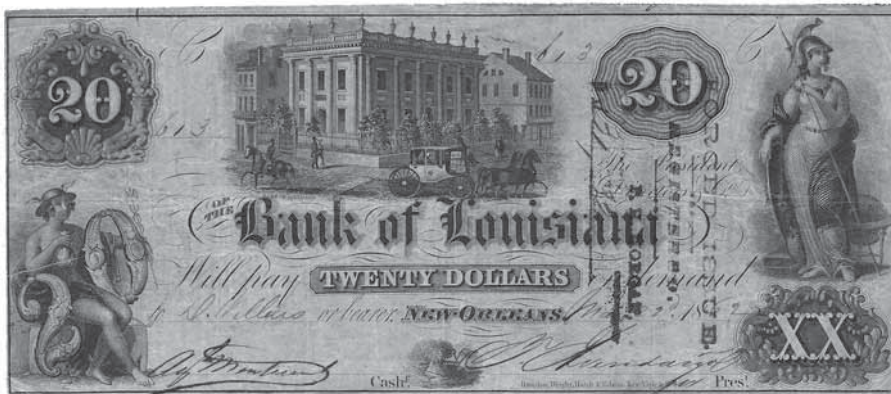
One particular private bank deserves attention for those interested in the Confederacy and that is the New Orleans Bank of Louisiana. Major General Butler had taken his men into New Orleans and one of the first things he did was to make the bankers issue more notes. The bankers were



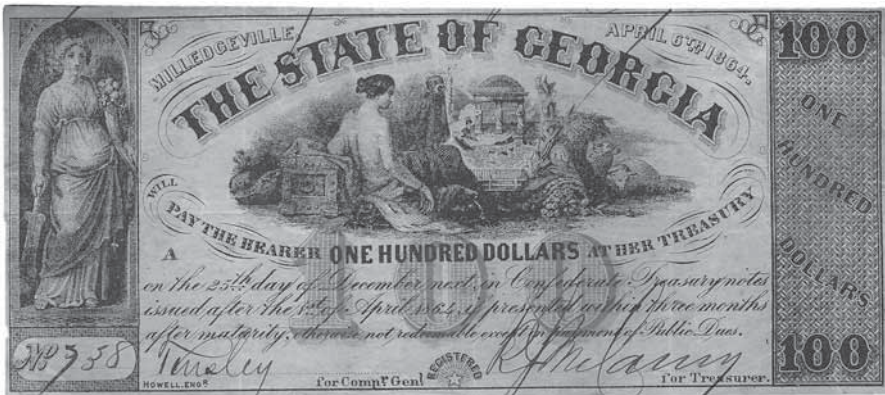
*\$10 Confederate note of 1864 with a picture of Colonel Bragg taking artillery into action in the Mexican War. It was used as Bragg became a Confederate general.*



*General 'Stonewall' Jackson on the \$500 note of 1864 with the Confederate flag.*



*\$20 "Forced Issue" note of the Bank of Louisiana. General Butler, who took the city of New Orleans with Union troops, forced the bank to issue more notes against their wishes, so they over-stamped them "Forced Issue".*



*\$100 State of Georgia note dated 6 April, 1864, issued at Milledgeville and payable in Confederate Treasury Notes.*

against this, but General Butler was not asking them, he was telling them at the point of the bayonet. So the bankers had the notes over-stamped "Forced Issue". New Orleans had surrendered on 28 April, 1862 without fighting. He became nicknamed 'The Beast Butler', as many things he did outraged the people. He seized \$800,000 from the Dutch consul's office, and imprisoned Charles Heidsieck, the French Champagne magnate. But something which caused world-wide criticism was when he issued an order that if any woman should insult an officer or soldier of the Union Army she was to be treated "as a woman of the town plying her avocation" (prostitution). When he executed a man for tearing down the Union flag on the New Orleans Mint he was denounced by Confederate President Jefferson Davis as a felon to be given capital punishment if caught. His severe rule led to him being removed from command.

The South had a major problem with paper supplies and when the paper mill at Bath in South Carolina burned down in 1862 the situation became desperate. The British, despite being officially neutral, came to the rescue and 'blockade run' paper was soon arriving for the Confederates. In most cases it is easy to recognise notes printed on this paper because it was usually pink in colour. One very rare batch of paper has the watermark of Wookey Hole – famous English caves.

It has been estimated that during the conflict the amount of currency issued was \$1.7 billion. The late 'Colonel' Grover Criswell wrote the standard works on Confederate notes listing the enormous number of minor varieties and giving detailed information. A strong supporter of the South, Criswell for many years would turn up at banknote shows in the full uniform of a Confederate colonel and was a popular character.



*Confederate \$100 note with picture of Lucy Pickens, the governor's wife and regarded as a 'pin-up' by the soldiers, two of whom are shown on the left. George W. Randolph is pictured bottom right.*

At the end of the war the North refused to redeem any Confederate notes. For years the disbanded soldiers used them to stuff in their boots to keep warm. Later some firms printed details of their businesses on the plain backs of the notes to hand out to customers. After the surrender the South suffered badly at the hands of their conquerors. Former slaves, who could not read or write, were often appointed sheriffs!

Apart from the Confederate issues there were numerous banknotes produced by individual states such as North and South Carolina, Alabama, Virginia and others. Many such notes refer to redemption in Confederate notes.

Collectors will soon see that the Confederate period is a fascinating area to collect and one where many of the notes which are around 150 years old are still comparatively inexpensive. They are a record of a great turmoil in history. It is not always realised that the US lost more men killed in the Civil War than they lost in World War II.