

The Bank of Zilwaukie, Michigan

By Carl L. Roethke



Only known sheet of the Bank of Zilwaukie notes. The unusual layout was the work of Rawdon, Wright, Hatch & Edson. From the Ralph Byron Collection.

In 1849, two brothers named Johnson came to the Saginaw Valley. At a point on the Saginaw River which, at that time, marked the head of deep water navigation, they laid out and started a village named Zilwaukie. They built a dock, warehouse, sawmill, general store and several houses, and planned to construct a bank for which they had a quantity of currency printed.

The brothers somehow overlooked the twin communities of Saginaw City and East Saginaw, a short distance upstream, which had the river deepened to admit lake freighters to their docks and forged rapidly ahead. In 1858, the brothers failed. Their sawmill property which housed their safe was sold to James H. Hill. Ezra Rust, later to become one of Saginaw's lumber barons, was placed in charge of operations.

Several times in the next few years one brother or the other would show up at the sawmill and request that their old safe be opened, suggesting that some of their personal papers might be inside. Since they could produce no key, Rust refused.

About 1863, Hill's operations at Zilwaukie were concluded and the office records and furniture were moved to Saginaw. One of the last things to meet Rust's eye was the old safe formerly belonging to the Johnsons'. The door was forced open, revealing package upon package of crisp new notes of the Bank of Zilwaukie which had never opened its doors due to the Johnsons' failure.

Rust filled his pockets with the money and returned to Saginaw, where he displayed it to the great amusement of his acquaintances. Whenever he wrote to friends in the Union Army, he would enclose a note or two for curiosity. It wasn't long before letters by the score were thanking him and asking for more of the "good" money. The people down South seemed to like Zilwaukie notes better than their own "shinplasters."

The village still exists today and was recently incorporated as a city. It is now spelled Zilwaukee.

The Confederate Museum

By Everett K. Cooper

The Confederate Museum (White House of the Confederacy) in Richmond houses the largest and most valuable collection of Confederateiana. Included in the collection are many specimens of Confederate paper money but of more interest to numismatists are the many unique items related directly to production of Confederate currency. These are:

LITHOGRAPHIC HAND PRESS

One of a battery of six hand presses used by Ludwig Hoyer and Carl Ludwig. (One other press survives and is owned by the Dietz Press of Richmond.)

The press is described by the Museum as a "frame constructed of cast iron, which is supported by four legs, carrying a bed of heavy oak. The bed is moved to and fro, on a track, by means of cog wheels. The printing stone rests upon this bed. In the printing process the stone with its inked impression is covered first with a piece of printing paper, a layer of several sheets of paper and finally a tight sheet of zinc or copper. The resulting sandwich is run on the bed under a scraper which exerts controllable pressure on the printing stone resulting in an even impression on the printing paper." The press was made by G. Cooper of Augusta, Georgia, and has a size of approximate 30 inches wide by 50 inches long.

PAPER CUTTING MACHINE

This piece of equipment (weighing 2,000 pounds) was used by Hoyer & Ludwig in their plant at Broad and Ninth Streets in Richmond. This cutter, made by Hughes Amber in London, was used in cutting through several

sheets at a time to cut the individual notes from the sheet.

COPPER ENGRAVED PRINTING PLATES

Plate used by Blanton Duncan for the face of the \$10 September 2, 1861, Negro-picking-cotton note, plate A, (Criswell T-29).

Plate for face of \$5 note September 2, 1861, boy and blacksmith vignette. (Criswell T-32).

ENGRAVING OR TRANSFER STONE USED BY HOYER & LUDWIG

Impressions taken from this stone finished and grouped onto a printing stone. This particular note is the \$20 September 2, 1861, sailor leaning on capstan and sailing ship vignette, plate letter BA (Criswell T-18).

TREASURY DEPARTMENT SAFE

Large iron safe used by the Treasury Department, key lock, with two strap hinges.

ALBUM

Printed album prepared by Raphael P. Thian in 1876 with type-set genuine notes pasted on the pages. Included are two Montgomery notes (\$1000 note serial #292 and \$50 note serial #1209).

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