

\$100 Red Seal - New Gem for Your Collection

By Chuck O'Donnell

Count your blessings—if you are one of the very lucky owners of one of the new \$100 *Legal Tender* (red seal) notes—and double the count if you are so fortunate as to own one of the very, very few *Star Notes*!

Toward the end of November, 1968, the first of the new Series 1966 \$100 *Legal Tender* notes with the new Treasury seal design and carrying the signatures of Granahan and Fowler appeared at the Treasury Department windows in Washington, D. C. About a week later, in early December, the new notes showed up at the banks in New York. Feverish intrigue, long distance calls, "contacts," pressures—all the gimmicks of the business went to work trying to corral the fancy numbers and star notes. Some success was achieved; the first "brick" (4,000 notes) was located in Puerto Rico and the first pack—serial numbers 1 to 100—was purchased and offered for sale by a Washington dealer. The second and third bricks were located in New York; several packs had been paid out "over the counter," but a search of the remaining notes turned up less than twenty-five star notes. Brick No. 4 (Serial 12,001-16,000) produced less than fifty stars, and all the other efforts combined have so far produced less than one hundred of these treasures!

But you say, "The Bureau printed 32,000 stars and 3,450,000 of the regular notes; how can they be scarce?"

Well, I can only suggest that any printing of 32,000 anything in the way of paper money makes a built-in rarity. But even more important, there is every reason to believe that a very limited number of the reported 32,000 printed will ever see the outside of the Treasury coffers.

Why Legal Tender?

Let us review for a moment the "why" of legal tender. As most of you know, the original Act of Congress in 1861 authorized the legal tender issue as an interest-free way of financing the War Between the States. An Act of Congress in 1878 directed that \$346,681,016 be maintained in circulation. And now, more than a hundred years later, this legislation is still on the books! According to the Bureau of Engraving and Printing officials, the production problems of manufacturing and printing red ink for this one series is a big headache. They have long advocated repeal of these Acts of Congress, and now with the new Congress in plain view, we understand that the Bureau is reasonably certain that at long last the Legal Tender Act will be repealed.

As you recall, the first step was to discontinue the deuces. Then in 1968 came the announcement there would be no more red seal fives. The purpose of all of this was to clear the way for issuance of the *hundreds*, which could more easily be controlled and recalled (or retired) in event the repeal of the Legal Tender Act became a reality. And herein lies the basis of our prediction that despite the printing of 345,000,000 pieces, there will probably be less than a hundred thousand that ever are released, and judging from the meager statistics already available, probably half that number will go into

payrolls, to the "street" and end up circulated, far less desirable to the collector than the crisp gems! We base our estimate on a probable 15 "bricks"—20 at the most—ever being released.

Since stars appear to be running considerably less than one per cent, there is a good chance that the issue will end with a total of less than a thousand stars available to collectors. The figure could be much less! With about twenty thousand notes searched so far, less than one hundred stars have come to light! We base our guess on the knowledge that the new \$100 notes cannot be released until a sufficient retirement of the twos and fives in circulation has been accomplished and on the almost certain action in the next Congress. Couple the probable short supply of this note with the almost unprecedented demand and you won't need a crystal ball to see what will happen.

"Demand?" you ask. "What demand? Who collects \$100 notes?"

For the ordinary \$100 note, I'd be tempted to answer not many, perhaps fewer than a dozen collectors. But for this note? WOWIE! It will be the *only* note Series 1966. It will be the *only* \$100 red seal. It will be the *only* Fowler signature with the new Treasury seal. It has so many *only's* that it's practically a unique item, and it will certainly be the (star) attraction, the centerpiece of almost every collection. Personally I don't collect anything above the \$10 (Hawaii excepted), yet you can be sure I'll be proudly displaying my new regular and star "C" note for a long time to come!

Jefferson Davis Bail Bond

Miss Helen Williamson of the Orleans Coin Shop has submitted for review an interesting bit of Americana pertaining to both numismatics and philately. It is a replica of the 1867 Jefferson Davis Bail Bond enclosed in a special envelope advertising it. The portrait of Davis is noted as "lith of Ch. L. Ludwig, Richmond, Va.", a member of the firm of Hoyer and Ludwig, printers of many notes, bonds and stamps of the Confederacy.

