

More About the Newly Discovered Territory of Washington National Bank Note

As Reported and Illustrated in Paper Money No. 39

By David A. Hakes

The Ellensburg (properly spelled Ellensburg) National Bank was assigned charter #3867 on April 14, 1888, and started with a capital of \$50,000. The bank was suspended July 27, 1893, but resumed business on October 21st of the same year. The title then changed to Kittitas Valley National Bank in October of 1895. Due to incompetent management the bank was closed on July 10, 1896, and eight days later was placed in receivership. Outstanding amount at this time was \$11,250.

Ralph Kauffman (cashier) was a locally prominent banker in the area for many years but nothing else is known about him from this author's research. Austin Mires signed the note as vice-president. Mires had much to do with the history of Ellensburg and Washington as evidenced by books such as: *History of Washington, Idaho, and Montana* (Bancroft: 1890) and his personal diary.

Mires was born in Des Moines County, Iowa in 1852, the son of farmers. A year later his parents moved to Oregon, where Mires remained until 1874. In 1880, he moved to Ann Arbor, Michigan, to study law. After graduation in 1882, he was admitted to the Oregon bar and was elected chief of the Senate of the Oregon legislature.

In 1883, he moved to Ellensburg and upon the town being incorporated February 26, 1885, was elected as Mayor. In addition to serving two terms as Mayor he was City Attorney, City Treasurer, Prosecuting Attorney, and delegate to both the Admission and Constitutional Conventions of Washington.

The existing note was saved by Mires' daughter who died two years ago; it was willed to the present owner (who wishes to remain anonymous). A few other items from Mires' personal diary:

- 2-26-1886 Elected as Mayor of Ellensburg.
- 2-25-1888 Elected Vice-president of Ellensburg National Bank.
- 12-20-1888 Appointed as delegate to Admission (State) Convention.
- 5-16-1889 Elected as delegate to Constitutional Convention.
- 7- 5-1889 Most of Ellensburg burns down. Same time that Mires was in Olympia attending the Constitutional Convention.
- 11-11-1889 State of Washington is admitted to the Union.
- 1-20-1894 Sold bank stock. No longer vice-president. (Bank was liquidated two years later due to incompetent management.)
- 5-25-1903 President Roosevelt in Ellensburg.
- 11- 8-1904 Elected Prosecuting Attorney.

Washington was a Territory from March 2, 1853 until November 10, 1889. Ellensburg was founded by John Shoudy, who was born in Rock Island County, Illinois.

Shoudy served the Union Army during the Civil War. He lived in California and Seattle through 1871, then moved to the Kittitas Valley and bought out a small trading merchant for trading with the 12 to 14 settlers having families. In 1885, there were four general stores, each having a stock of \$25,000 to \$40,000. Shoudy took out a preemption claim, a Soldier's Homestead Claim (each 160 acres), and having purchased another 160 acres, laid out the town of Ellensburg, naming it after his wife, Mary Ellen Stewart of Kentucky, whom he married in 1867.

As to the Bank of Ellensburg, 825 sheets of Brown Backs were printed. The sheets were \$5-5-5 and carried bank serial numbers 1 through 825. It is not known how many of these notes were actually issued or whether part of these were issued as a state.

This quiet community of 13,000 is situated at a mountain base in south-central Washington not far from Wenatchee, the apple capital of the world.

This author wishes to express deep gratitude to the present owner for the loaning of the note to the SPMC for this article. Also the assistance of Louis Van Belkum who supplied most of the newest statistical data, Frank Nowak (The Vault) for his encouragement, and Barbara Mueller for her patience.

Other References

- Personal: Peter Huntoon, M. Perlmutter, Hickman & Waters, W. Philpott, Aubrey Bebee, M. O. Warns
- Books: *Paper Money* #4, 1969 Pg. 111
- Personal Diary of A. Mires
- History of Washington, Idaho, and Montana* by Bancroft. Pub. 1890 (which is in archives of University of Montana)

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