

Idaho's unique No. 1 territorial National Bank Note. Second charter Brown Bank, 1882 series, Fr. #480, issued by the First National Bank of Lewiston, charter 2972 granted June 11, 1883.

The Idaho Jewel

By M. Owen Warns



The excessively rare Idaho No. 1 territorial National Bank Note has rightly been called the "gem of territorials." Through the gracious cooperation of SPMC member Paul C. Keeton, who supplied the notes illustrated here and the brief sketches of early Idaho history, we are able to acquaint our readers with the area's persistent struggle to gain statehood and financial maturity.

The bill creating Idaho Territory was signed by President Lincoln on March 3, 1863. The first session of the Territorial Legislature convened on Dec. 7, 1863, at Lewiston and adjourned Feb. 4, 1864. A second session met at Lewiston Nov. 14, 1864 and passed a bill on Dec. 7, 1864, effective Dec. 24, 1864, designating Boise as the permanent capital.

No. 1 Territorial National Bank Note

This note was printed from a 10-10-10-20 plate layout with serials 1 to 560, producing 1,680 \$10 and 560 \$20 notes, total value of \$28,000. They were signed by John P. Vollmer, president, and John H. Evans, cashier. Officers at the time of establishment were Vollmer, president; V.P. Ralston, vice-president; M.W. Bonner, treasurer; J.H. Evans, cashier, with G.W. Hawkinson and Arthur E. Clarke, directors. Capitalization was \$50,000 (paid up). Although the bank's charter was sold in 1946 to The First Security Corp., the original bank name has not been changed and business is today being conducted under it.

A knowledge of early Idaho history, with its Indian wars, rich gold discoveries, cattle feuds, raw lumber camps and crime counterpointed by missionary activities, is necessary for an understanding of the growth of banking and commerce.

The large expanses of the Northwest Territory remained untouched and unexplored until President Jefferson sent

out the Lewis and Clark Expedition in 1804. This party included the first white men to arrive in the Idaho region. In 1820 Congress established Oregon Territory consisting of what is now Oregon, Idaho and Washington. Idaho remained a part of Oregon Territory until 1863 when it separated as a distinct territory.

Proclamation

The undersigned having been appointed Governor of the Territory of Idaho, and duly qualified according to law, and having entered Said Territory on the Tenth Instant, will proceed to organize the Same, according to the provisions of the Act of Congress, approved March 3rd, 1863, and Ex Officio will discharge the duties of Superintendent of Indian Affairs.

Given under my hand and seal this tenth day of July, One Thousand Eight Hundred and Sixty-Three.

W. H. WALLACE

Gov. Idaho Territory
and
Supt. of Indian Affairs

Lewiston, I.T.

July 10, 1862

Attent.

WM. B. DANIELS,

Secretary Idaho Territory

Fur traders and trappers exerted a strong influence on the development of Idaho, establishing roads of commerce in the area. Fort Boise, established about 1834, served as a trading post for the Hudson Bay Fur Co., whose chief purpose was to hold the Northwest region for Great Britain.

The stampede to Idaho occasioned by the fabulous gold discoveries turned the tide of commercial progress. The ordinary medium of exchange was gold dust. The person wishing to make a payment carried it with him in a buckskin-like purse and weighed it out on the spot. Gold scales were common in business places and miners' cabins. Between the years 1862 and 1879, greenbacks and National Bank currency were shunned. Even after passage of the Specie Act of 1878, they were not generally accepted for goods or services. Such notes were practically non-existent in the Far West and on the Pacific coast because of their unstable value due to gold fluctuations during the Civil War. During 1863 currency values slipped down to 70% in terms of gold; in 1864 they went as low as 43%, but rebounded to 70% by 1865.

As in the state of Nevada, Idaho was recognized by the nation for its valuable mineral resources and mining became its chief industry, with outstanding production during the 1870s and 1880s. Gold, antimony, zinc, phosphates, cobalt and silver were mined then, and even today the Sunshine Silver Mine in the northern part of Idaho is the largest such mine on this continent.

Lewiston was established in 1861 after the spectacular

gold discovery in Clearwater County in 1860. Situated at the confluence of the Clearwater and Snake Rivers, it was named for Meriwether Lewis of the Lewis and Clark Expedition. The discovery was made by Capt. E.P. Pierce of Walla Walla, Washington after he heard that the Nez Perce Indians had been bringing in gold from the area. The Boise Basin, south of the discovery area, also developed into another rich source of gold. It has been said that \$250 million in gold was extracted between 1861 and 1885.

IDAHO'S TERRITORIAL NATIONAL BANKS

Each of the Idaho territorial National Banks played its own integral part in the shaping of the area by contributing to local business and industrial development which eventually enabled the territory to achieve statehood.

Over the years collectors of National Currency have wondered whether an Idaho territorial note would ever surface. Finally early in 1974, some 107 years after the first Idaho territorial National Bank was chartered, such a note

First National Bank of Lewiston, Idaho Territory, 1883—appearance of the bank during its first year of business. There is no outward sign indicating that a National Bank occupied the building; the bank entrance was at the far left through the arched door entrance. The first wagon in the picture is occupied by soldiers on their way to Fort Lapwai, 12 miles outside of Lewiston. The second wagon near the bank entrance is the stage to Uniontown, Wash., 17 miles west.





The First National Bank of Lewiston as it appeared during the Christmas holiday, 1929.

was recorded. Moreover, it rounded out the roster of notes reported from the 14 territories which had banks issuing National Currency.

It is difficult to understand why it took more than a century to pass before an Idaho Territorial Note appeared; (a \$5 from charter #1668) in view of the fact no less than eight territorial National Banks had been chartered in the territory:

Charter Number	BANK TITLE	YEAR ESTABLISHED
1668	The First National Bank of Idaho, Boise City	1867
2972	The First National Bank of Lewiston	1883
3023	The Lewiston National Bank, Lewiston	1883
3142	The First National Bank of Ketchum	1884
3408	The First National Bank of Moscow	1885
3471	The Boise City National Bank, Boise	1886
3895	The First National Bank of Hailey	1888
4023	The First National Bank of Pocatello	1889

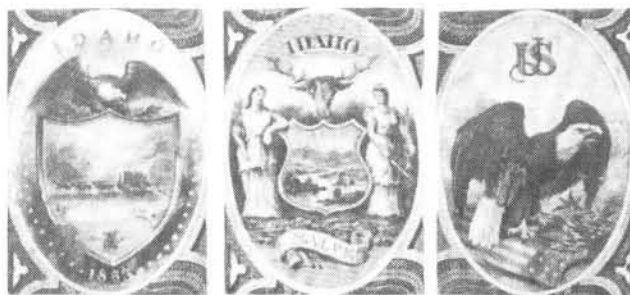
The First National Bank of Lewiston was the first National chartered in the northern sector of Idaho after that area had become progressively commercialized in the early territorial days. (Lewiston was first settled May 13, 1861; the town site was platted in October, 1861; the first government was organized in February, 1862; it was incorporated by the Washington Territorial Legislature Jan. 15, 1863 and re-incorporated by the Idaho Legislature Dec. 27, 1866.)

The bank grew out of the business activities of John P. Vollmer, who was born in Germany in 1847. He graduated from Northwestern Christian University and went to Walla Walla, Wash. to operate a refinery, he later moved to Lewiston to open a general store. His customers were trappers and miners, to whom he extended financial and safe-keeping services. On this foundation Vollmer and his partner, Levi Ankeny, established a private bank in Lewiston. In 1878 Ankeny

founded the First National Bank of Walla Walla, the oldest in Washington. In 1883 Vollmer founded the First National Bank of Lewiston and served as its first president. He was succeeded upon his death in 1910 by his son-in-law, Arthur E. Clarke.

Vollmer became known as the "banking king", forming his own chain of banks in Grangeville, Culesac, Genesee, Kendrick and Craigmont in Idaho and Clarkston and Asotin in Washington. These were known as the "Vollmer chain."

Types of seals used on the Idaho Brown Backs:



1. Territorial Seal 2. Idaho State Seal 3. Eagle Shield

1. Territorial seal—central shield with spread eagle at the crest. "The Union" appears on ribbon below with the engraved date of 1863. The first territorial National Bank in Idaho was chartered in 1867; hence this seal is excessively rare.
2. Idaho state seal—official seal of the state, with an elk at the crest of the shield depicting a river and mountains. At left is the figure of Liberty and to the right is a farmer. This seal is not described by Dr. Limpert.
3. The Bureau heraldic eagle shield with its flag and intertwining script "US" was used in the right panels of the reverses of the two Brown Backs illustrated here. Four other types appeared on second charter notes.



Third charter Date Back \$50 note on First National Bank of Lewiston, Fr. #664. This note was printed from the odd two-subject 50-100 plate layout, with the serials starting with #1 and ending with #440. There were 440 of the \$50 notes printed from this type of plate for a total value of \$22,000. The note is signed by John P. Vollmer, president, and by his son-in-law, Arthur E. Clarke, as cashier.



Third charter Plain Back \$100 note on First National Bank of Lewiston, Fr. #675. This note was printed from a 50-50-50-100 plate layout, with the serials starting with #1 and ending with #1720. Total value of the \$100 notes was \$172,000. It was in the interim between issuance of the Third \$50 Date Back note and the \$100 Plain Back note that cashier Arthur E. Clarke succeeded his father-in-law, John P. Vollmer, as president. The cashier's signature is that of G.W. Hawkinson.

THE INITIAL NATIONAL BANKS ESTABLISHED IN EACH OF THE 10 DIFFERENT TERRITORIES AND STATES WEST OF DENVER

Bank Title	Location	Year Est.	Charter number	Status at the time
1. First National Bank of Nevada	Austin, Nev.	1865	1331	State
2. First National Bank	Portland, Ore.	1865	1553	Territory
3. Miners National Bank	Salt Lake City, Utah	1866	1646	Territory
4. First National Bank	Helena, Mont.	1866	1649	Territory
5. First National Bank of Idaho	Boise, Ida.	1867	1668	Territory
6. First National Gold Bank	San Francisco, Calif.	1870	1741	State
7. First National Bank	Santa Fe, N.M.	1870	1750	Territory
8. First National Bank	Cheyenne, Wyo.	1871	1800	Territory
9. First National Bank	Walla Walla, Wash.	1878	2380	Territory
10. First National Bank	Tucson, Ariz.	1882	2639	Territory

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