

# No. 1 Wyoming Territorial

by M. Owen Wams



We are indebted to SPMC member Dewitt Prather, specialist in National Bank Note face bank title formats and back seals on First and Second Charter notes, for furnishing the No. 1 Territorial National Bank Note of The First National Bank of Rawlins, Wyoming.

Settlement of Wyoming began in the early 1830s, although French explorers had first visited the area nearly a century earlier. Wyoming was granted Territorial status on July 25, 1868, under President Andrew Johnson and Statehood was attained 22 years later, under President Benjamin Harrison.

This No. 1 Territorial note was from position "C" on the first sheet of the \$18,750 shipment of notes delivered to the bank by the U.S. Comptroller of the Currency. After their arrival, the notes were signed by the bank's Vice President, I.C. Miller and Cashier, John C. Davis. They were then separated from the sheet and placed into circulation. Each such sheet consisted of a trio of \$10 notes and a single \$20. The \$10s carry position letters A-B-C, while the \$20 note is from position A. The sheets were from a 10-10-10-20 plate layout.

It was customary for the No. 1 notes from a National Bank's first issue to be distributed among its officers. More than likely, such a procedure was followed with the Rawlins notes, and it is believed that the position "C" \$10 note was given to Amos Hooker, a director and co-founder of the bank. Why these notes were signed by Vice President Miller instead of bank President J.W. Hugus is today unknown.

The First National Bank of Rawlins was chartered in 1890 with a capital of \$75,000, receiving charter number 4320. As mentioned, \$18,750 worth of Series 1882 Brown Back Territorials was issued, with serial numbers from 1 to 375. All notes were dated May 26, 1890, just 45 days before Wyoming became a state.

The sole surviving Wyoming Territorial Brown Back is unusual in its back design in that twin Bureau of Engraving and Printing eagles adorn the left and right oval panels, instead of the Territorial or State seals that were usually

employed on the backs of First and Second Charter National Bank Notes. Explanation for this curiosity is that during its status as a Territory, (July 25, 1868 to July 10, 1890) Wyoming failed to adopt a Territorial seal. And, a State seal was not adopted until three years after Wyoming had been admitted to the Union. Later Second Charter issues of Wyoming banks carry that State seal.

The survival of the Rawlins No. 1 note is attributed to the many years it was apparently carried in the proud banker's wallet, as evidence by the heavy center crease. However, it is unusual that the note should be the only known Series 1882 Brown Back Wyoming Territorial note to surface to date, as there were seven National Banks chartered prior to Wyoming's statehood. They were:

Charter #3299\*Buffalo, The First N.G. Outstanding \$24,700 (1935)

Charter #3416 Cheyenne, Cheyenne N.B. Outstanding \$33,750 (1891)

Charter #3556 Douglas, The First N.B. Outstanding \$73,500 (1923)

Charter #3615\*Laramie City, Albany Co. N.B. Outstanding \$50,000 (1934)

Charter #3928 Rock Springs, The First N.B. Outstanding \$98,900 (1927)

Charter #4320\*Rawlins, The First N.B. Outstanding \$100,000 (1934)

Charter #4343 Sundance, The First N.B. Outstanding 11,250 (1893)

\*still operating

The Stock Growers National Bank of Cheyenne was the only First Charter bank in Wyoming. It was granted charter #2652 in early 1882. No First Charter Territorial notes are known to exist.

#### SOURCES:

*The National Bank Notes of the 1863-1935 Issuing Period.*  
By Louis Van Belkum.

*U.S. National Bank Notes.* By Dr. F.A. Limpert.

*The Comptroller of the Currency Reports, U.S. National Archives.*

