

Years ago a friend suggested that the "C" stamp might have been used to correct an accounting problem at the Confederate Treasury. Perhaps the plate-letters Bb were difficult to write in the ledgers and the Treasury stamped them with the "C" to convert the notes to the printed plate-letter C variety. He stated that the counterstamp always appears on or near the Bb and indeed is turned horizontally, seemingly to make it fit in. This theory sounds good, but it has two problems. First, not all Bb notes are counterstamped—in fact, very few are. Secondly, Raphael Thian would probably have found the ledger entries and mentioned the "C" stamp somewhere in his book, the *Register of the Confederate Debt*, but he does not. So the suggestion is interesting but not valid.

That leaves one other theory that might have merit. In the tradition of the time the "C" must stand for "100". Many Confederate notes use the Roman numeral to designate one hundred dollars. So let's extend the idea to the following scenario:

Suppose that a substantial number of the Type 8 Bb notes had been set aside for some special purpose or purchase. Packs of one hundred notes were made up, each worth \$5,000. A clerk at Treasury or at one of its depositories counted the notes in each pack and wanted to indicate that one hundred notes were in place. So he counterstamped the top note of each pack with the green "C" and placed the packs in his safe. He could then pay out the funds in \$5,000 increments without recounting. Now also suppose that when the notes were paid out, the payee or a Confederate Treasury official objected to the "C" stamp. He had the clerk take out the stamped note from each pack and replace it with an

unstamped note. The accumulated notes with the green "C" were then placed back in the vault, never paid out and thus preserved. After the war the notes gradually fell into collectors' hands and we find them today.

How else can we explain the nearly flawless condition in which these notes are found today? I have a number of them, with and without the counterstamp, and most of them are still pristine white and clean. Obviously most of the issue was paid out and lost or the notes were called in and destroyed by the Confederate Treasury Department. But a good supply of truly uncirculated Type 8 notes is available today, one of the very few early 1861 notes in that condition that can still be bought for less than \$35. Some event caused them to be preserved—if only we knew what.

To sum up then, and until someone comes up with something better, we can accept the following points:

1. The counterstamp is the letter "C".
2. It appears only on this particular type of note.
3. It is always imprinted at one particular spot on the note.
4. It is always imprinted sideways.
5. It is always green in color.
6. The best guess is that it stands for "one hundred".
7. Since we know that it does not stand for "cancelled" or "counterfeit", the purpose of the counterstamp remains a mystery.

So that's the story. Do you have a better theory? If so, your collector friends are waiting—why not tell us about it? ■

RARE TERRITORIAL POSTAL NOTES LOCATED

by CHARLES SURASKY

COLLECTORS of Arizona territorial material or U.S. Postal Notes have reason to rejoice at this time: a hoard of 102-year-old Postal Notes from the Tucson, Arizona Post Office have entered the market.

First offered for sale at the recent Long Beach Coin and Stamp Convention, the rare notes are starting to appear throughout the nation. They all bear two-digit serial numbers and have a face value of one-cent.

The notes arrived in Long Beach under the arm of an unidentified man. He showed the items to several dealers, but didn't sell them all as a group as he had hoped. He told several dealers that the notes had been purchased, along with a large quantity of other papers, in the liquidation of a post office building. Apparently the notes had rested undisturbed for more than a century.

The notes were uniformly Extremely Fine to Almost Uncirculated.

There are two unusual aspects to this group of notes: first, no Arizona Postal Notes had previously been reported; second, not one of the notes had the post office's postmark where it should have been.

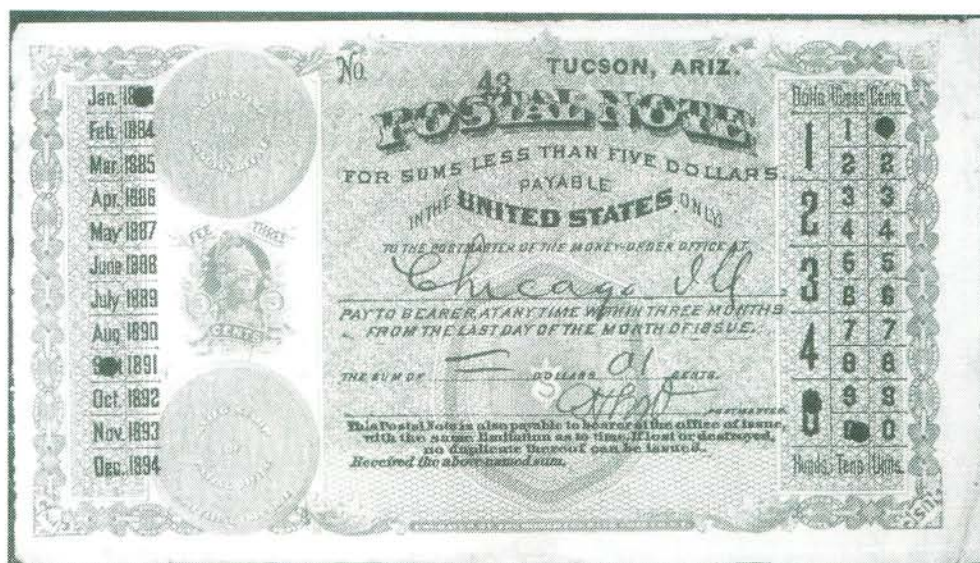
Collectors of historical paper know that items from the southwest tend to be difficult to locate. There weren't many people in

that region until recently and from the small group that lived there, there weren't many collectors. Combine these two facts with the rising interest in items from the "Old West," and it's easy to understand why demand is strong.

Now, a group of postal notes from the autumn of 1883 have hit the market. Dealers who saw the original group estimate that twenty-five to fifty notes were in that stranger's envelope. What a wonderful opportunity for collectors, researchers and historians.

I have a theory that explains why the notes don't have a postmark. I suspect the notes were prepared in advance of the September 3rd, 1883 initial day of issue. The postmaster, recognizing the demand for the new items, prepared several two-note pages in advance. Prepared, that is, except for the final application of his postmark. After collector sales died down, he was left with a quantity of 1-cent notes; so he set them aside. How could he have known they'd be found 102 years later?

Postal notes are the direct descendants of postage and fractional currency issued during the Civil War. Three different bank note companies produced the notes in six distinct types. The Tucson, Arizona notes are all Type I, the first design produced by the Homer Lee Bank Note Company of New York.



Typical of the Tucson notes is this example. It is the 43rd note issued and is a Type I. The Homer Lee Bank Note Company produced this design. (Photo courtesy Superior Stamp and Coin Co., Inc.)

HOW RARE ARE ARIZONA POSTAL NOTES?

Exactly how rare are postal notes issued in Arizona prior to statehood? Exceedingly rare. In fact, not one note on any Arizona city was known before this group surfaced.

This chart shows the raw number of postal notes issued in the Arizona Territories and in the entire country during three fiscal years. Notice how few notes were issued in Arizona.

YEAR ENDING June 30th,	NOTES ISSUED	FACE VALUE
1884		
Arizona Territory	5,602	12,856.45
National Total	3,689,237	7,411,992.48
1886		
Arizona Territory	11,243	23,341.42
National Total	5,999,428	11,718,010.05
1893		
Arizona Territory	18,502	34,139.39
National Total	7,753,210	12,903,076.73

Type I postal notes were printed on a yellow paper stock. Types II through V were printed on a reduced-size light, gray paper stock. Collectors who wish to learn more about U.S. Postal Notes are referred to an award-winning series of articles by Nick Bruyer in the final edition of *PAPER MONEY* for 1973 and the first three issues of 1974.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Charles Surasky is a member of a postal note study group attempting to catalog all existing notes. If you have a postal note issued between 1883 and 1894, please forward a photocopy of the front and back to him. He will enter it in the group's records and will identify it for you. Address all correspondence to: 3360 Flair Drive, El Monte, California 91731. ■

FINIS

Fearful that some readers might confuse the last day that national bank notes were printed (see *Paper Money* No. 115, p. 30) with the last day that notes were sent to national banks, M. Owen Warns requested that the following should be printed.

May 14, 1935: the last Ty. II \$5 and \$10 notes were sent to The National Bank of South Carolina of Sumter, charter 10660.

May 20, 1935: Ty. II \$10 notes were sent to The Manufacturers National Bank of Newman, Georgia, charter 8744.

June 10, 1935: the absolute final notes were sent to The First National Bank of Chillicothe, Ohio, charter 128. On this date, \$50,000 in Ty. II \$10 and \$20 notes was sent to the bank to satisfy an overlooked bond adjustment.

In each instance, notes were sent after March 11, 1935, the last day of printing.