

Introduction

THE PUBLISHED LISTINGS OF FLORIDA STATE CURRENCY issued during the Civil War are lacking in details and contain numerous errors. An extensive search of records in the Florida State Archives uncovered considerable information about the quantities of notes authorized and issued by denomination and date. An explanation of why some varieties were created and why some listed varieties probably never existed also emerged. This article presents the historical background for each issue and details on the actual notes issued.

Florida Civil War Currency

BY RONALD J. BENICE

Background

The first published catalog to include currency issued by the state of Florida was Bradbeer's *Confederate and Southern State Currency* (1915). Unfortunately, that author did not cite any sources and had only one illustration. He indicated the quantities issued as "about" or "over" for all denominations aggregated in each year. Three aspects are noteworthy:

- (1) A \$500 1861 note was included;
- (2) Four varieties of paper, but no plate varieties were shown for the fractional dollar denominations of 1863; and
- (3) No 1865 issues were included.

Bradbeer remained the standard for more than 40 years. Indeed, a 1,000-copy reprint edition was published in 1945, and another reprint came out in 1956. In 1955, B. M. Douglas and B. H. Hughes published their *Catalogue of Confederate and Southern States Currency* with "estimated values of all Bradbeer types." No notes were added to or deleted from Bradbeer's list. However, in their introduction Douglas and Hughes stated:

"The collector is reminded of these facts: There is ample evidence that a few of the varieties listed by Bradbeer do not exist; at the same time it is definitely known that varieties not listed do exist."

Unfortunately, those authors didn't tell us which notes were nonexistent nor describe any unlisted notes.

In 1957 Grover C. Criswell, Jr. and Clarence L. Criswell published the 1st edition of *Confederate and Southern State Currency*. They prefaced:

"The hope is expressed that this first volume in our series will become even more of an accepted standard than did Bradbeer's somewhat incomplete

1915 publication. The numbering system set down by Mr. Bradbeer still remains the standard, and it is significant that it should be used as the basis of the new Criswell Numbering System."

Criswell pictured most of the notes, but the "over" and "about" descriptions of quantities issued each year were the same as in Bradbeer. With regard to the three aspects previously noted:

- (1) The 1861 \$500 note is included with the words "No information available";
- (2) Both the one-signature and two-signature plate varieties are shown for the 1863 fractional denominations with four paper varieties for each; and
- (3) The 1865 issues are included.

To retain Bradbeer's numbering system, suffixes A and B were added to the catalog numbers as different plate varieties were discovered.

By the fourth edition of *Confederate and Southern State Currency* (1992), the 1861 \$500 was still listed with "no information available." All three special papers for the two-signature 1863 fractional notes, and the watermarked paper for the one-signature notes retained their relatively common rarity ratings, but had higher prices or "extremely rare" designations in the price column.

In 1998, Arlie Slabaugh added state notes to his *Confederate States Paper Money*. He did not list a \$500 1861 note. All of Criswell's watermarked varieties were included.

This article will present what was legislated, what the executive branch reported they did and what the evidence indicates actually happened.

Figure 1, \$1 1861 Essay



1861-Dated Issues

\$500,000 authorized February 14, 1861 and issued 1861-1862

\$340,000 authorized December 6, 1862 and issued 1863

Florida seceded from the Union on January 11, 1861, and joined the Confederacy on January 28, 1861. On February 14, 1861, the General Assembly passed Chapter 1097 of the Laws of Florida, "An act providing for the issue of Treasury Notes." It required the Governor to

"cause to be engraved and printed in the best manner to guard against counterfeiting, notes for circulation in the similitude of bank bills, of the different denominations of ones, twos, threes, fours, fives, tens, twenties, fifties and hundreds in amount not exceeding five hundred thousand dollars. Said blank circulating notes shall be signed by the Governor and countersigned by the Treasurer. ... Said circulating notes shall have expressed on the face of same to be 'receivable by the State of Florida in payment of all dues and demands.' "



Figure 2, \$20 1861 Essay

Essays

Peter Hawes of New Orleans was engaged to design the new currency and produced two essays that conformed to the February 14th law. The full story of the essays can be found in my article in the March/April 2000 issue of *Paper Money*.

1. \$1
2. \$20

Subsequent to the publication of the *Paper Money* article, a signed \$1 essay dated May 4, 1861, surfaced. Whereas the date is appropriate, the signatures do not correspond to any people who ever served as treasurer or governor of Florida or even in the legislature. In fact, the names do not appear in the 1860 Florida census. Perhaps someone tried to pass it contemporaneously, or it was a mockup for review by government officials.

Issued Notes

Actual notes did not appear until September and October of 1861. These were engraved by Hoyer and Ludwig of Richmond instead of Peter Hawes of New Orleans.

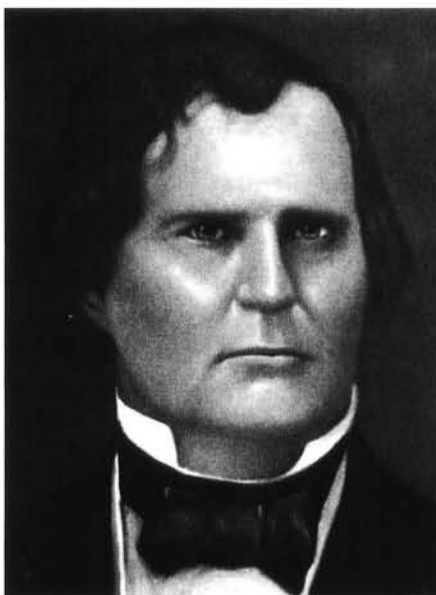
Legal issues contributed to the delay in issuing the state's notes, especially the higher denominations. The February 14, 1861, enabling legislation stated "said circulating notes shall be ... legal tender in payment of all entries of land, taxes, fines, duties, debts, demands and sums payable of whatsoever character ..." However, the Florida Constitutional Convention on April 29, 1861, passed an ordinance "that the Register of Public Lands is hereby instructed to receive in payment for any lands sold nothing but gold or silver coin or the bills of solvent banks."

Since land was the only real backing for the state paper money, this ordinance limited the acceptability of the paper. The remedy came on January 23, 1862, at the Governor's request, when the convention passed an ordinance that stated "...in payment for these lands, the Treasury Notes of the State of Florida shall be receivable."

The reason for giving the engraving contract to Hoyer and Ludwig instead of Hawes may be as simple as Hawes going out of business when he enlisted in the army. Also, the blockade of the Florida coast by Union ships which began in June 1861 impeded commerce between Florida and New Orleans. Also the Hoyer and Ludwig firm was printing many of the notes for the Confederate States of America in 1861.

Or the reason for this could have been politics. Warrant No. 1766 in the amount of \$737.00 for "issue of Treasury Notes under Chapter No. 1097" was

Right: Governor Madison Starke Perry.
Far right: Governor John Milton



issued on October 5, 1861, by the Comptroller to Charles E. Dyke, a delegate to the 1860 national Democratic convention. The firm of Dyke and Carlisle published the *Tallahassee Floridian and Journal* newspaper and printed copies of the new constitution, legislative journals and official reports for the government. Whether they printed the 1861 currency from plates or stones engraved by Hoyer and Ludwig or were just intermediaries in getting the engraving and printing done in Richmond is not known. (In 1998, Brent Hughes published a detailed description of the lithographic technique and presses used for much of the Civil War era currency.)

First Printings (Handwritten dates September-December 1861)

Undated \$1, \$2 and \$3 notes were printed first, without the proper obligation. The wording was corrected when the higher denominations with engraved dates were printed. The same design, based on the Hawes \$1 essay, was used on all three denominations.

Madison Starke Perry was governor until October 7, 1861, and personally signed low denomination notes. Robert Ares estimates that about 3,000 \$1s, 1,000 \$2s and 1,000 \$3s, all bearing the handwritten date September 16, 1861, were signed by Perry. Although all the notes signed by Perry were of the plate variety with the denomination spelled out at the top right, Governor Milton signed both plate varieties, with handwritten date October 9 or 10, 1861.

Figure 3C



Figure 4A



Figure 5B

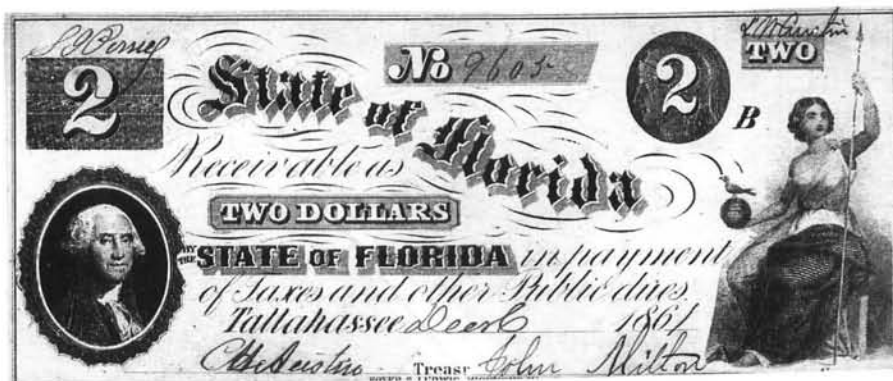
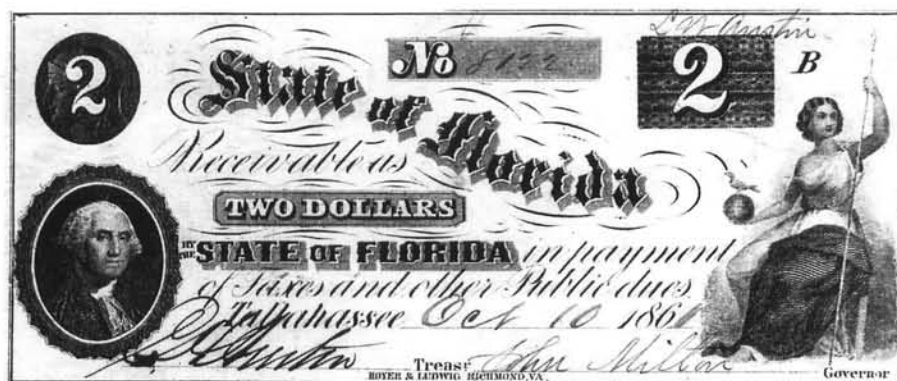


Figure 6B



\$1: 288,000 notes (\$288,000) with Plate letter A

3. "ONE" spelled out in upper right corner
 - A. Signed by Milton
 - B. Signed for Milton and countersigned
 - C. Signed by Perry
4. Without "One" spelled out in upper right corner
 - A. Signed by Milton
 - B. Signed for Milton and countersigned

\$2: 11,879 notes (\$23,758) with Plate letter B

5. "TWO" spelled out in upper right corner
 - A. Signed by Milton
 - B. Signed for Milton and countersigned
 - C. Signed by Perry
6. Without "Two" spelled out in upper right corner
 - A. Signed by Milton
 - B. Signed for Milton and countersigned



Figure 7C



Figure 8B

\$3: 4,454 notes (\$13,362) with Plate letter C

7. "THREE" spelled out in upper right corner
 - A. Signed by Milton
 - B. Signed for Milton and countersigned
 - C. Signed by Perry
8. Without "Three" spelled out in upper right corner
 - A. Signed by Milton
 - B. Signed for Milton and countersigned

The countersigned "B" varieties are the most common. Most of these are dated December 6, 1861, because Resolution 21, providing for five alternate signers in the presence of the Governor, passed the House and Senate on December 5, 1861. Some notes signed by these alternate signers had apparently been dated earlier. The earlier-dated A and C varieties are generally not found above Fine condition.

The notes with the denomination spelled out were printed from different plates than those without the spelled-out denomination, and not from reworked versions of the same plates. The most notable other differences in the plates are in the positioning of the words "BY THE" and the curved calligraphic ornament near the bird in the vignette.

Second Printings (Engraved date October 10, 1861)

\$174,880 higher denomination notes were issued between November 1, 1861, and November 1, 1862. This completed the \$500,000 issue authorized by the legislature on February 14, 1861. However, on December 11, 1862, the Treasurer reported that he had an additional \$340,000 in blank 1861-dated notes from this issue which could be issued to aid families of soldiers in accordance with Chapter 1337 passed on December 6, 1862. These notes were issued in 1863.

A breakdown by denomination is not available. It cannot usually be determined which 1861-dated notes were issued in 1861-1862 and which were issued in 1863, except for those actually signed by Milton or Perry in 1861. It is not clear that the numbering of each denomination began with "1," nor is it clear whether there were any gaps or overlaps when the 1863 release of 1861-dated notes was numbered.

All five higher denominations use the same design loosely modeled after the Hawes \$20 essay.

Figure 9B



Figure 10B



Figure 11B



9. \$5, Plate letter D
 - A. Signed by Milton
 - B. Signed for Milton and countersigned
10. \$10, Plate letter E
 - A. Signed by Milton
 - B. Signed for Milton and countersigned
11. \$20, Plate letter F
 - A. Signed by Milton
 - B. Signed for Milton and countersigned

Figure 12A



Figure 13B



Figure 14B



12. \$50 "50" top left, Plate letter G
 - A. Signed by Milton
 - B. Signed for Milton and countersigned
13. \$50 "L" top left, Plate letter G
 - A. Signed by Milton
 - B. Signed for Milton and countersigned
14. \$50 "L" top left, "Fifty" under "Florida" inverted, Plate letter G
 - A. Signed by Milton
 - B. Signed for Milton and countersigned
15. \$100, Plate letter H
 - A. Signed by Milton
 - B. Signed for Milton and countersigned

It is significant that there was no \$500 note included in the 1861 legislation. No \$500 notes were mentioned in detailed reports by the Treasurer and Comptroller. A survey of auction catalogs has found no \$500 1861 notes. A poll of major dealers and collectors including Grover Criswell found no one who had ever seen such a note, or knew of anyone who owns or has seen such a



Figure 15A

note. From all the evidence available, I conclude that no 1861 \$500 notes were printed.

1862-Dated Issues

\$500,000 authorized

\$233,00 issued in 1862; \$159,605 issued in 1863

Chapter 1279, "An Act to Provide for the Payment of the War Tax" was signed by the Governor on December 16, 1861. It authorized the issue of notes, not to exceed \$500,000, of denominations not less than \$5 nor more than \$100 dollars. Unlike the previous issue that the Governor was too busy to sign, these were to be signed by the Comptroller and Treasurer. The notes' obligation was changed to "will pay to bearer on demand." These notes would be used to pay a tax levied on Florida by the Confederate States of America. Hoyer and Ludwig of Richmond prepared a new design which was used for all denominations in this issue.



Figure 16

16. \$5, engraved date January 1, 1862
 - 7,000 notes A1-7000 issued in 1862
 - 3,025 notes A7001-10025 issued in 1863
17. \$10, engraved date January 1, 1862
 - 4,600 notes E1-4600 issued in 1862
 - 18 notes E4601-4618 issued in 1863
 - A. Plain E plate letter
 - B. Fancy E plate letter
18. \$20, engraved date January 1, 1862
 - 2,600 notes F1-2600 issued in 1862
 - 15 notes F2601-2615 issued in 1863
 - A. Plain F plate letter
 - B. Fancy F plate letter

Figure 19



Figure 20A



Figure 20B



- 19. \$50, engraved date January 1, 1862
2,000 notes G1-2000 issued in 1862
440 notes G2001-2440 issued in 1863
- 20. \$100, engraved date January 1, 1862
1,220 notes H1-1220 issued in 1863
 - A. Plain H plate letter
 - B. Horizontal bar missing in plate letter H

The total value of notes issued under this Act was only \$392,605. This included \$159,605 released in 1863 under the December 6, 1862, Act to aid families of soldiers. As the Governor said in a November 16, 1863 speech, "the amount authorized to be issued for the purposes of the government far exceeded the necessities of the state."

1863-Dated Issues

Chapter 1372, enacted on December 13, 1862, called for the issue of \$300,000 of Treasury Notes with signatures of the Governor and Comptroller

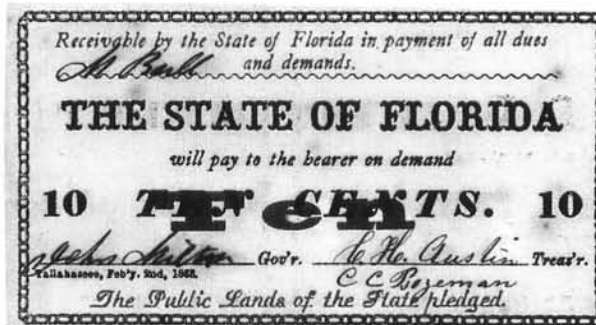
as on the 1861 notes. It specified the eight denominations and quantities shown below plus \$25,000 in \$20s, \$25,000 in \$50s and \$50,000 in \$100s that were not issued.

However, on Nov. 16, 1863, the Governor reported to the legislature:

"It was early discovered that there were too many large bills in circulation, and that there was a great demand for notes of a small denomination, particularly for fractional parts of a dollar. No blanks have been prepared for the twenty, fifty and one hundred dollar bills authorized. ... In lieu, therefore, of the blanks for \$50,000 in bills of the denomination of one hundred dollars, I had that amount of blanks in fractional parts of a dollar engraved, but ... they were not prepared and issued. It is for your honorable body to determine whether they shall be used or not."

Chapter 1398, which became law on November 30, 1863, amended the previous act to substitute \$50,000 of fractionals for \$100 bills.

Figure 21



Fractional Issues, engraved date February 2, 1863

\$50,000 authorized 12/13/62 and issued in 1863

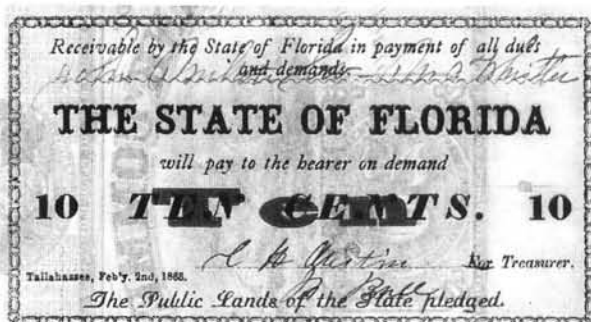
\$50,000 authorized 11/30/63, \$51,084 issued in 1864

No Engraver's Imprint

21. 10¢, two signature spaces – for Governor and Treasurer – plain paper
22. 10¢, one signature space – for Treasurer
 - A. Plain back, no watermark
 - B. Plain back, watermarked paper
 - C. Note back (i.e. these 10¢ notes were printed on the blank backs of sheets of unissued Florida notes, so portions of these other Florida notes appear on the backs of the 10¢ notes.)
 - D. Bond back
23. 25¢, two signature spaces
24. 25¢, one signature space
 - A. Plain back, no watermark
 - B. Plain back, watermarked paper
 - C. Note back
 - D. Bond back

Below: Figure 22C.

Below right: Figure 22C
back



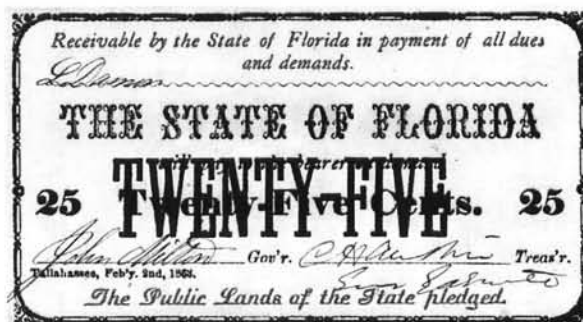


Figure 23

Below left: Figure 24D
Below: Figure 24D back

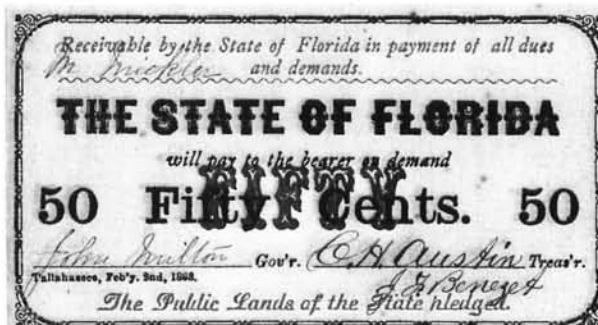
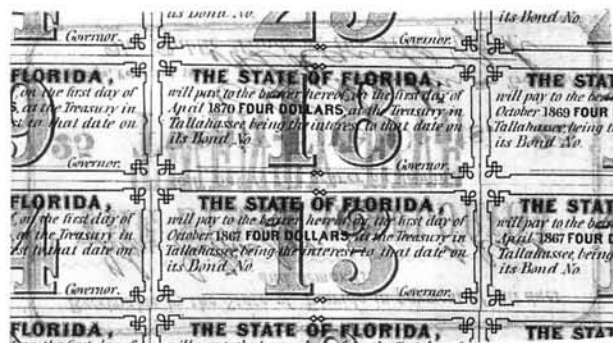
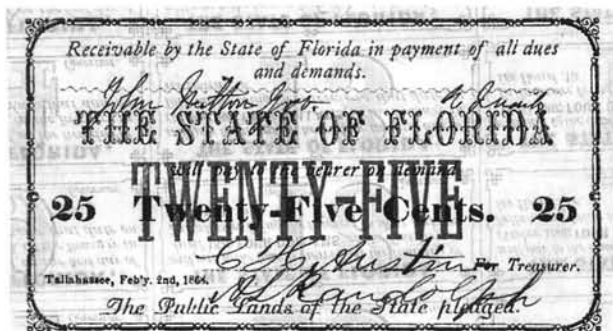


Figure 25

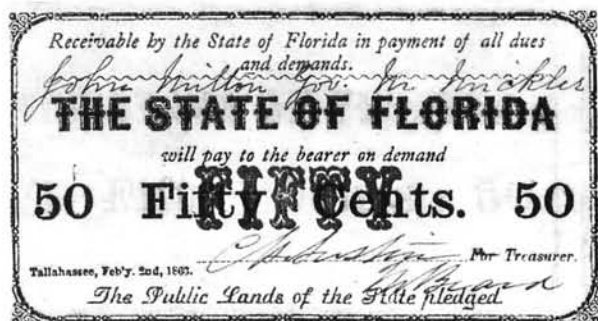


Figure 26A

25. 50¢, two signature spaces
26. 50¢, one signature space
A. Plain back, no watermark
B. Plain back, watermarked paper
C. Note back
D. Bond back

I believe the two-signature-line notes were printed for the 1863 release in accordance with the enabling legislation (Chapter 1372), and that the one-signature-line notes were from the unauthorized printing by the Governor released in 1864 after being authorized by Chapter 1398. The single signature was more expeditious and distinguished these notes from the first printing.

Given the increasing paper shortage, this hypothesis is reinforced by the widespread presence of one-signature notes printed on the backs of other notes or bonds and the absence of such reuse of older fiscal paper on two-signature notes. Indeed, this issue marks a transition point. The 1861, 1862 and early 1863 issues were all on plain paper. The late 1863 and 1864 issues were mostly on paper produced for other purposes, and the 1865 issues were printed on the back of 1864 issues.

The watermarked notes are rare. The nature of the watermarks is not completely resolved. Bradbeer listed the watermarks as W. T. & Co., the same as the common watermarks on the 1864 issues. I believe that Bradbeer made an unwarranted assumption -- at most one letter or two partial letters of the 1864 W.T. & Co. watermark would fit on these small notes. No such notes have been seen by any of the collectors or dealers I surveyed, nor have there been any appearances in auctions. Similarly, I cannot confirm the existence of any 10¢ notes watermarked "Five" as listed in Criswell. On the positive side, I have seen 10¢ notes watermarked "TEN," and they have appeared in auctions and collector inventories. But I cannot confirm the existence of any 25¢ or 50¢ notes watermarked "TEN."

On some notes, incorrect or defective type was used and the date appears as 1866 or 1868. There are 50¢ one-signature notes with an inverted "Ten" overprint. [NASCA sale 11/12/79] Other similar errors probably exist.

Dollar Issues, engraved date March 1, 1863

\$150,000 was authorized for the five denominations printed

\$114,635 issued in 1863, balance in 1864

\$100,000 authorized for \$20, \$50 and \$100 denominations not printed

Engraved by Keatinge and Ball, Columbia S.C.

All have plate letter J and denominations overprinted in red

Signed by Governor and Treasurer

27. \$1	30,000 notes authorized	Approximately 24,000 issued
28. \$2	15,000 notes authorized	" 12,600 "

Figure 27



Figure 28

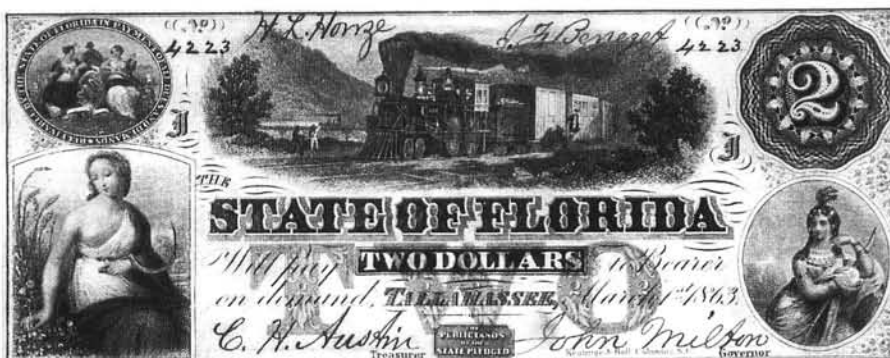




Figure 29



Figure 30



Figure 31

29. \$3	10,000 notes authorized	Approximately	12,600	Issued
30. \$5	6,000 notes authorized	"	4,200	"
31. \$10	3,000 notes authorized	"	4,200	"

1864-Dated Issues

\$300,000 authorized December 3, 1863, and issued in 1864

Engraved by Keatinge and Ball, Columbia, S.C.

Chapter 1420, enacted December 3, 1863, authorized the issue of \$300,000 in treasury notes to help fund a \$500,000 appropriation for relief of families of soldiers. Denominations were not specified in the legislation nor in Comptroller and Treasurer reports that confirmed that all were issued. Designs are the same as March 1, 1863 issues. Notes were signed by Governor and Treasurer. All bear plate letter J.

- 32. \$1 dated January 1, 1864
 - A. Watermarked W. T. & Co.
 - B. Plain paper
- 33. \$2 dated January 1, 1864
 - A. Watermarked W. T. & Co.
 - B. Plain paper

Figure 32



Figure 33

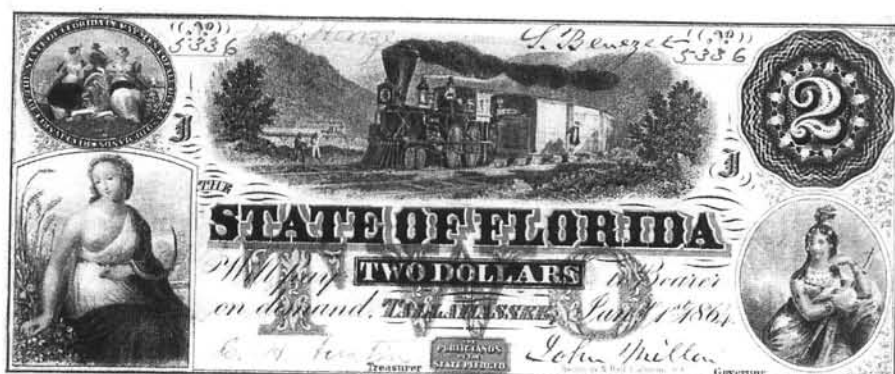


Figure 34



Figure 35



34. \$3 dated January 1, 1864
 A. Watermarked W. T. & Co.
 B. Plain paper
 35. \$5 dated March 1, 1864
 A. Watermarked W. T. & Co.
 B. Plain paper



Figure 36

36. \$10 dated March 1, 1864

- A. Watermarked W. T. & Co.
- B. Plain paper

Douglas Ball has informed me that W.T. & Co. is Wiggins, Teape & Co. of London, a firm that supplied paper to the Confederacy. There is evidence that the watermark didn't always span all notes on a sheet. The unwatermarked \$1, 2 and 3 notes are scarce.

1865-Dated Issues

Chapter 1463, passed December 7, 1864, authorized an issue of \$350,000 in treasury notes "to meet the wants of the government." The denomination selections were left to the Governor. All of the notes are dated January 1, 1865, and have no printer's imprint. They were printed on the backs of 1864 Florida state notes with spaces for the signatures of the Governor and Treasurer. All have plate letter K in Gothic type similar to Cloister Black and Hanover Bold type fonts.

37. \$50 \$40,000 (800 notes) printed

38. \$100 \$120,000 (1200 notes) printed



Figure 37



Figure 38

Figure 38 back



Figure 39

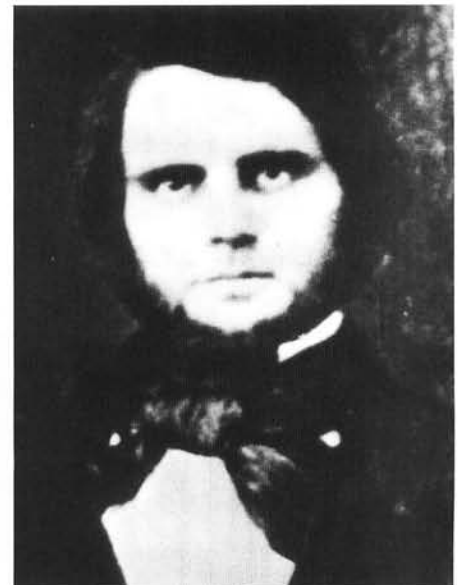


39. \$500 \$190,000 (380 notes) printed

Although records show these notes were printed and sent to Governor Milton in January 1865, all surviving copies were signed for Abraham K. Allison who became Governor on April 1, 1865. Since the Allison notes bear low serial numbers, it is unlikely that Milton signed any 1865 notes. Analysis of known serial numbers indicates approximately half of those printed were actually issued. There is evidence of an additional unauthorized printing of \$363,500 of \$50s in April 1865, but no evidence that any of these were signed or issued.

Although the Civil War and the Confederacy officially ended with

Right: Governor Abraham K. Allison
Far right: Charles H. Austin,
Treasurer on all notes



General Lee's surrender at Appomatox on April 9, 1865, it is possible some of these notes were signed later. Union troops did not reach Tallahassee, the only Confederate States capital never captured during the war, until May 10, 1865.

Acknowledgements

In addition to those cited in the text and references, I would like to acknowledge helpful communications with Gene Hessler, Hugh Shull and Bill Youngerman. The photographs of the Treasurer and three Governors were provided by the Florida State Archives.

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