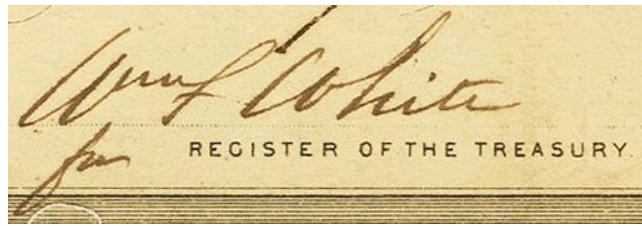


William Fraser White, a Newly Identified Assistant Register and Bond Signer for the Confederate Treasury

Charles Derby



The Register of the Confederate Treasury was responsible for recording the government's debt, including signing bonds and their coupons.¹ Many men and women signed bond coupons, but only a few signed the bonds themselves.^{1,2,3} As Register, Alexander Clitherall and later Robert Tyler signed some bonds, but three other men signed most of them over the course of the war. Charles T. Jones, the Treasury's second chief clerk of the Register, signed in his other appointed capacity as Acting Register, and he signed bonds up until early 1863. By then, the Confederate government realized that the increasing number of bonds being issued, all of which needed to be signed, and the need for the Register to focus on tasks besides signing documents required establishing a new position, Assistant Register.¹ Charles Alexander Rose and Edmund Bacon Williamson Apperson⁴ were appointed Assistant Registers, and Rose signed bonds from 1863 until the end of the war and Apperson from mid-1864 to the end of the war. Confederate bonds with signatures other than by these men can be found, and these have typically been attributed to spurious signatures on remainder or counterfeit bonds.¹ But among the bonds with signatures other than these five Treasury officials are several from 1865 signed "Wm. F. White." In this article, I argue that these bonds were legitimate issues and were signed by a newly recognized Assistant Register, William Fraser White, appointed by Memminger's successor, George Trenholm.

Bonds signed by "Wm F. White" as Assistant Register of the Confederacy

Confederate bonds signed by "Wm. F. White" for the Register are 6% nontaxable call certificates with the "*Man at a turnstile*" vignette, authorized by the Act of February 17, 1864.¹ Three denominations with this signature are known: \$100 (Type 178, or B-362 and -363), \$500 (Type 179, or B-364 and -365), and \$1000 (Type 180, or B-366 and -367). Examples of \$1000 and \$500 bonds with Wm. F. White's signature are shown in Figure 1. Known examples include bonds to be issued in Richmond or Norfolk Virginia, Augusta Georgia, and Mobile Alabama. They were initialed by recorders such as "PFG" and "HGA" who also initialed other bonds. One bond appears to be fully issued, initialed by "TGB" to indicate that it was entered into the register and issued to the Exchange Bank of Virginia at Norfolk on March 22, 1865 (Fig. 2). All known examples are hand dated March 9, 1865, which makes them some of the last issued bonds of this type, since April 1, 1865, appears to be the last issue date for any of these "turnstile" bonds.¹ These bonds have serial numbers, which because of their late issue date are high, with known numbers being 28061 for the \$1000 bonds, 16371, 16372, 17876, and 19579 for the \$500 bonds, and 17373 for the \$100 bonds. Interestingly, two of these – the \$500 bonds with serial numbers 16371 and 16372 – are from Thian's albums. The other Assistant Registers, Rose and Apperson, also signed some of these

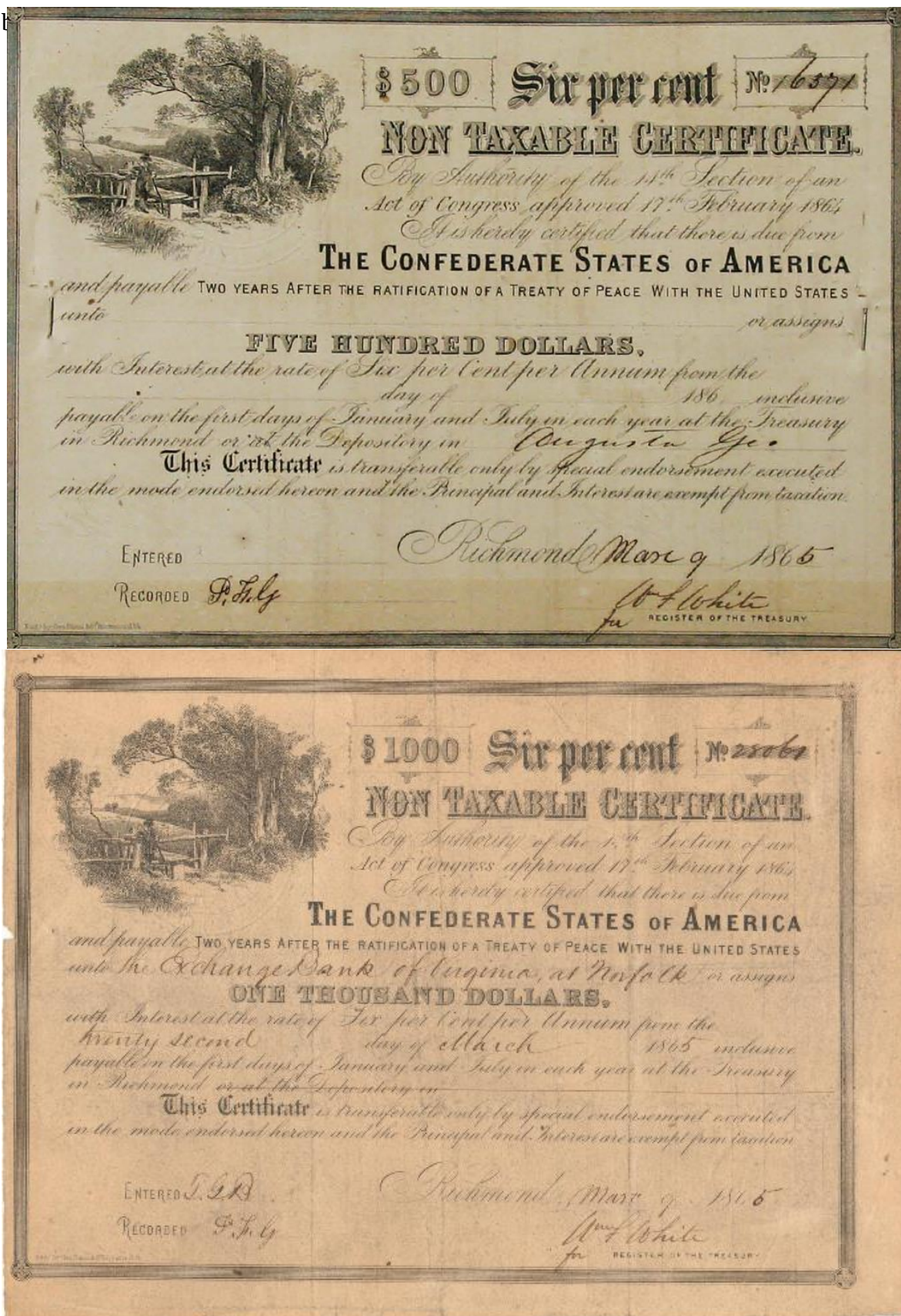


Figure 1. Valid issues of bonds signed by Wm. F. White (top from Heritage Auctions, bottom from Henry Simmons).

[No. 12.]

The Confederate States,
To *Wm. F. White* Dr.

DATE OF PURCHASE		DOLLARS	CTS.
<i>Apr 9 1863</i>	<i>11 shoe knives</i>	<i>22</i>	<i>00</i>

\$ *22* -

I CERTIFY that the above account is correct and just, and that the articles have been accounted for on my Property Return for the quarter ending on the *30* day of *June* 186*3*

Quartermaster.

RECEIVED at *Richmond* the *9* day of *April* 186*3*
of *Wm. F. White* Quartermaster C. S. Army,
the sum of *Twenty Two* Dollars
and _____ Cents, in full of the above account.

(SIGNED IN DUPLICATE.)

Wm. F. White

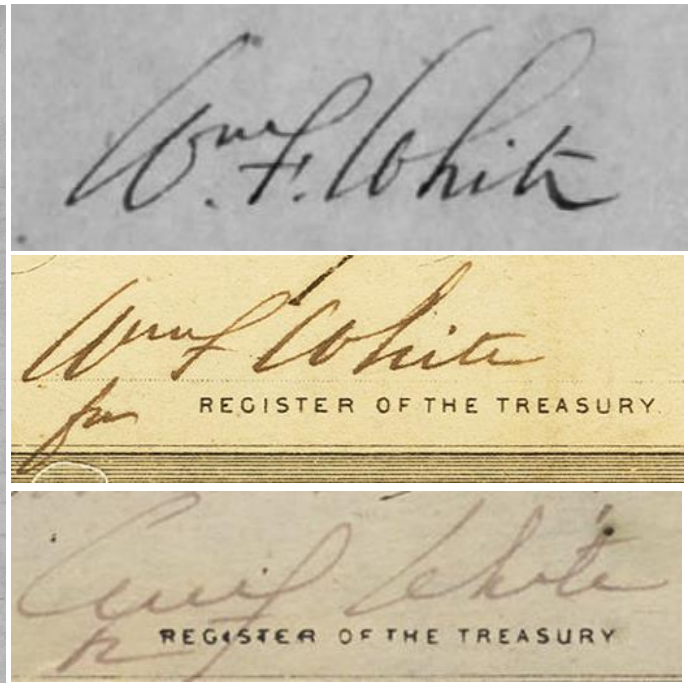


Figure 2. Left: Receipt for sale of 11 shoe knives by Wm. F. White to the Confederate Army in Richmond on April 9, 1863. Right top: signature from the receipt. Right middle: valid signature on 1865 bond. Right bottom: spurious signature on 1865 bond.

numbers, so White's late signing seems not to be because the other Assistant Registers were no longer available to sign.

The question at hand is, are these "Wm. F. White" bonds valid or spurious issues? Certainly there are known examples of spuriously issued remainders and counterfeit Confederate bonds, including, as we will soon see, spurious issues of these "Wm. F. White" bonds. There are several lines of evidence supporting the validity of these bonds and that they were signed by William Fraser White as a duly appointed Assistant Register. Key to this argument is the discovery of a receipt from Major James B. Ferguson, a Confederate States quartermaster in Richmond, for the sale on April 9, 1863, of 11 shoe knives for \$22 by a "Wm. F. White" (Fig. 2).

A comparison of the "Wm. F. White" signatures on the Confederate bonds and on

this receipt reveal a perfect match, as shown in Figure 2.

Beyond these examples of arguably validly issued bonds, other \$1000 turnstile bonds are known with a "Wm. F. White" signature that appears different from valid signatures, as shown in Figure 3. I argue that they are spuriously issued. These bonds are \$1000 denomination, dated March 9, 1865, recorded by "WCI" and with serial numbers of 18164, 18213, 18509, 18612, 18707, of 18809, thus suggesting that at least 645 of these were produced. None were fully issued as all lack other information to be handwritten on the bonds. Further evidence of their spurious nature is that the issuer attempted to copy the initials of a valid recorded bond but failed to do this accurately, as shown in Figure 3.

The question remains, who is this "Wm. F. Fraser" who was selling shoe knives to the Confederate army in Richmond in 1863?

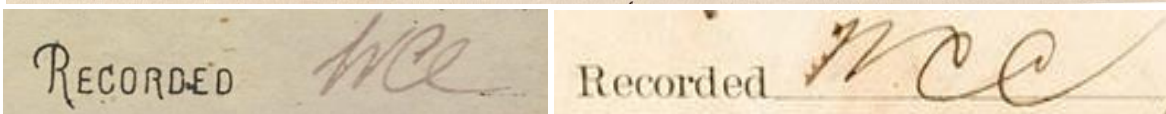
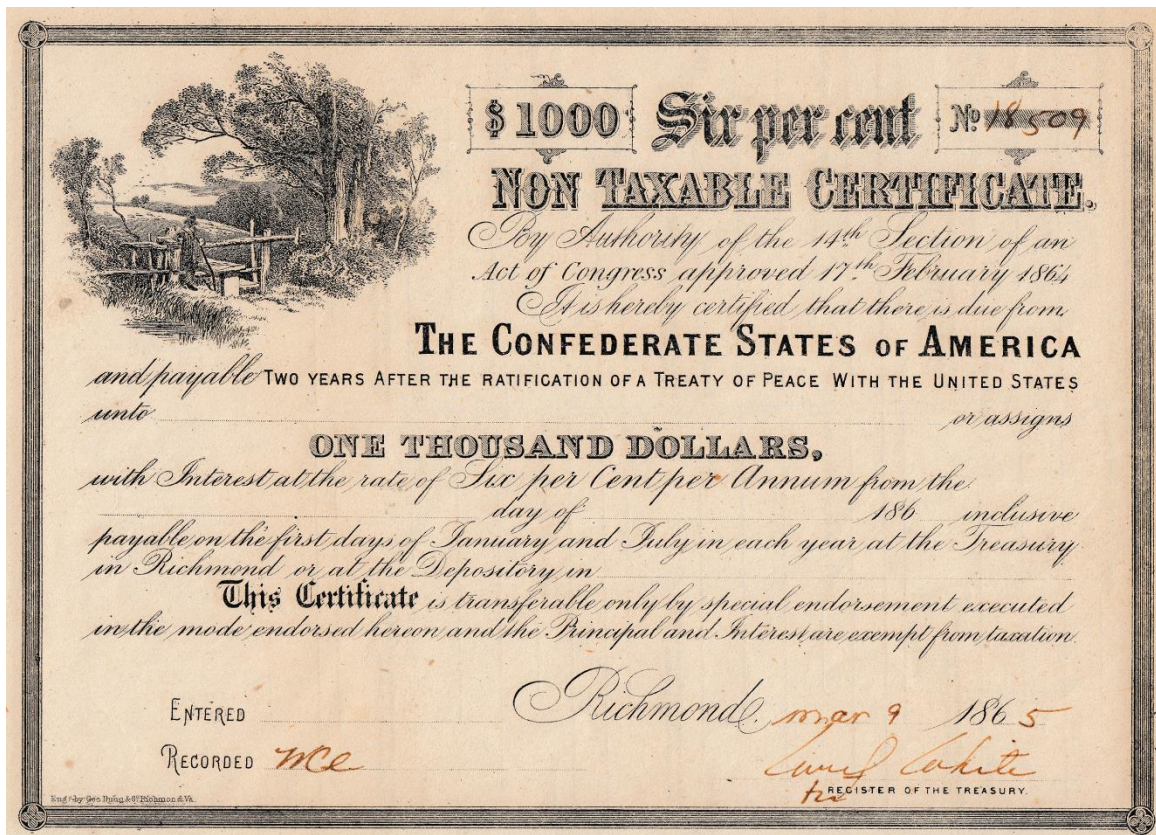


Figure 3. Spurious signatures of “Wm. F. White.” A comparison of this spurious signature and that on valid bonds is shown in Figure 2. The spurious issuer also attempted to copy the initials of a valid recorder but mistakenly used “WCI” (bottom left) compared to the valid initials of “WCC” (bottom right).

William Fraser White

William Fraser White (Fig. 4) was a Richmonder his entire life (1824-1884). His parents were Hannah J. Fraser White (1800-1873) and Phillip King White (1799-1865) (Fig. 5). William had only one sibling, a sister, Mary Matilda White (1831-1845), but she died at age 13 by a lightning strike that also killed her friend Eliza Ann Putney.⁵ Phillip was for many years one of the most prominent shoe merchants and influential businessmen in Richmond,⁶ having real estate valued at \$10,000 in 1850 and personal estate of \$8,000 in 1860.⁷ Figure 6 shows a newspaper business advertisement from

1857. Both before and during the War, William worked and lived with his father⁸ (Fig. 7). The Whites profited from their business with the Confederate army, selling shoes, brogans, and shoe knives to the

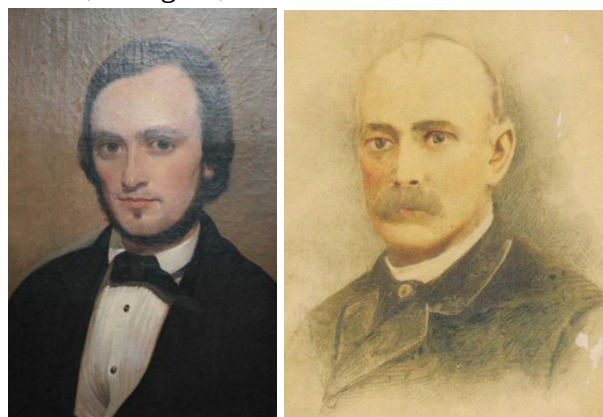


Figure 4. William F. White, young and old.



Figure 5. William F. White's family. Top left to right: his father, Phillip King White (1799-1865); mother, Hannah J. Fraser (White) (1800-1873); and father-in-law, William Henry Greanor (1793-1868) Bottom, three of his eight children, left to right, Mary Matilda White (1851-1925), John Henry White (1857-1922), and Margaret B. "Maggie" White (1860-1941).

Confederacy for "the defense of Richmond," as attested through contracts and receipts.⁹ One major contract between Phillip King White and Major James B. Ferguson, Quartermaster of the CSA army in Richmond, was for the sale of 5000 pairs of brogans at \$3.50 per pair¹⁰ (Fig. 8). Perhaps because of his business with the Confederacy, William's military service was as a Private in Company I, 1st Regiment, Virginia State Reserves (2nd class militia), from August 28, 1863, to March 1, 1864.⁹ In his personal life, William married Margaret Shardale Greanor (1828-1909) in 1848 in Richmond. Margaret's father was William Henry Greanor, also a leading Richmond businessman, engaged in the tobacco industry. In 1850, he owned \$43,300 in real estate.⁷ His tobacco factory and warehouse was Castle Thunder, located on Tobacco Row (Fig. 9), and which during the War was converted into a prison by the Confederacy to house civilian prisoners. William and Margaret had seven children born between 1849 and 1862,¹¹ three of whom are shown in Fig. 5.

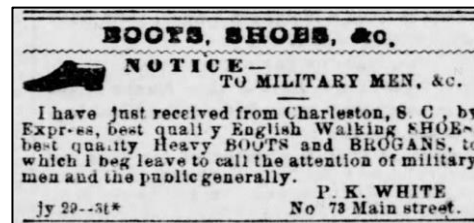


Figure 6. Phillip and William White, prominent Richmond shoe merchants. From *Richmond Dispatch*, top, Dec. 8, 1857, bottom, May 13, 1867.

Phillip White died suddenly, after a brief illness, on August 27, 1865, at 66 years old. William took over the business and continued to advertise using both his and his father's name, as in the advertisement from May 1867 shown in Figure 6. William moved to a new store, "a large and commodious store in the new building lately erected by Mr. John Graeme."¹² During this time, there were some highs: William was appointed to the Board of Commissioners of Election and was registrar for his local precinct in Jefferson Ward.¹³ But things quickly unraveled for William. By the fall of 1868, three years after Phillip's death, William auctioned his stock of shoes and other items, sold his store to J. C. Page, Jr., another shoe merchant in Virginia, and appealed to all with debts owed to his father's estate to pay those forthright.¹⁴ William took a clerk job in the office of the City Gas Inspector⁷ but that too did not go well. Complaints of malfeasance against him and the head of his office – that neither had



Figure 7. Home of Phillip and William White on 2717 East Grace St.

not paid their own gas bills since their appointments – were investigated by the Committee on Light of the Richmond City Council, and both William and his boss were both removed from office.¹⁵ By 1880, at age 56, he was suffering from “rheumatism.”⁷ Four years later, on July 30, 1884, he died of “Paralysis” and was buried at Shockoe Hill Cemetery.¹⁶ The plot in which he rests was co-purchased in 1845 by his father Phillip and his friend Samuel Putney, to bury their daughters who died in the lightning accident. William was buried next to his father Phillip and sister Mary, later joined by his mother Hannah and wife Margaret.

The Case for William Fraser White as Assistant Register

That William Fraser White was the “Wm. F. White” who signed Treasury bonds is supported by his signature, his location in Richmond, and his business and his political connections with the Confederacy during the War. Two additional facts that link William Fraser White to the Confederate Treasury add even more support for this conclusion. First, Phillip and William’s residence at the time of Phillip’s death was a house between Broad and Grace Streets. That house was formerly

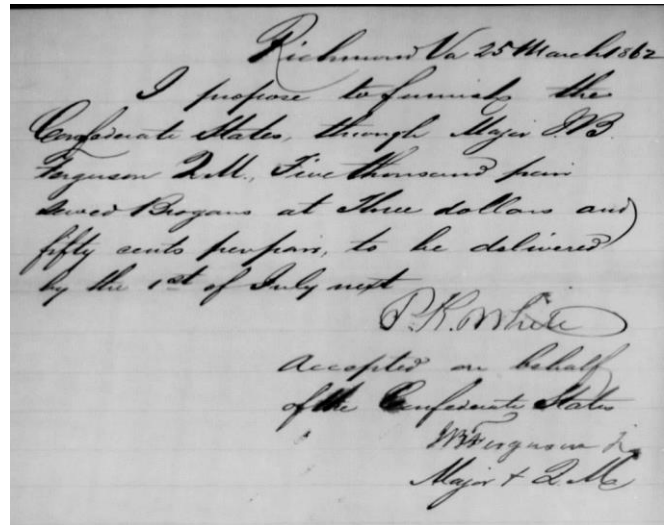


Figure 8. Major contract between Phillip White and Maj. Ferguson, Quartermaster of the CSA army.⁹

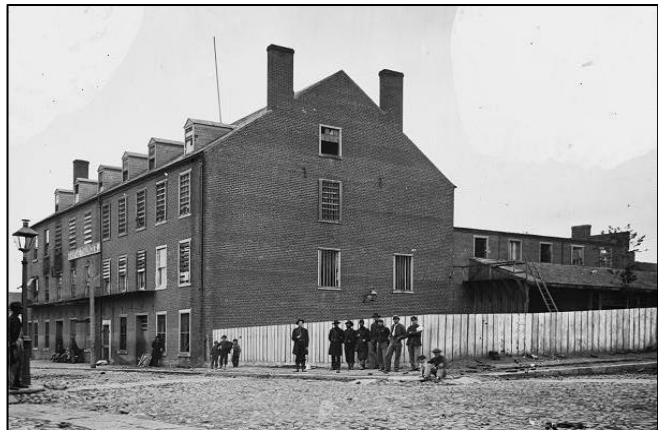


Figure 9. Castle Thunder, tobacco warehouse of William F. White’s father-in-law, William Henry Greanor, later converted into a Confederate prison.

the residence of Christopher Memminger, which Memminger sold after he resigned as Treasury Secretary on July 1, 1864.¹⁷ Second, when William’s father died and William took over the business, he hired as one of his salesmen Charles S. Maurice, a Treasury note signer.^{2,18} The totality of evidence provides an overwhelming case for William Fraser White to join Charles A. Rose and Edmund B. W. Apperson as Assistant Register of the Confederate Treasury.

Acknowledgments. Many thanks to Henry Simmons for his encouraging me to research this topic, and to Henry Simmons, Mike McNeil, and Bill Gunther for providing comments on the manuscript.

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- 1 Ball, Douglas B., and Simmons, Henry F. Jr. (2015) *Comprehensive Catalog and History of Confederate Bonds*. 2nd edition. BNR Press, Port Clinton, Ohio.
- 2 McNeil, Michael (2003) *The Signers of Confederate Treasury Notes 1861-1865. A Catalog of Their Signatures*. Michael McNeil, Publisher, Nederland, Colorado.
- 3 Thien, Raphael P. (1972) *Register of the Confederate Debt*. Quarterman Publications, Inc., Lincoln, Massachusetts.
- 4 Derby, Charles. Edmund Bacon Williamson Apperson, Assistant Register and bond signer for the Confederate Treasury. (Manuscript to appear in *Paper Money*)
- 5 Ancestry.com.
- 6 *History of Virginia. Volume IV. Virginia Biography*. The American Historical Society. Chicago and New York. 1924.
- 7 U.S. Censuses, accessed through Ancestry.com
- 8 <https://www.genealogy.com/ftm/m/a/l/K/athleen-Malicki/index.html>.
- 9 Documents in the National Archives, accessed through fold3.com.
- 10 Major James Boswell Ferguson Jr. (1822-1896) was a dry goods import merchant before the War, and so he was perfectly qualified for his appointment in 1861 to the quartermaster's department in Richmond under Fitzhugh Lee, where he was responsible for procurement, especially of uniforms, garments, shoes, and boots. It was in this capacity that Maj. Ferguson contracted with the Whites in March, 1862, for a large order of brogans (shown in Figure 8), as well as other orders with the Whites throughout the war. But Maj. Ferguson was soon part of the Confederacy's effort to expand their sourcing to Europe, and in September 1862, he became Quartermaster purchasing agent in England. There he contracted with 16 different mills there for shoes and bulk woolen cloth and blankets, and within a year and for the remainder of the war, many of the new Confederate uniforms were made with English wool. In fact, Maj. Ferguson sent uniforms to Robert E. Lee, including the one that Lee wore at his surrender at Appomattox. [Wilson, Harold S. (2002). *Confederate Industry: Manufacturers and Quartermasters in the Civil War*. University Press of Mississippi: Jackson. Jensen, Leslie D. (1989). A survey of Confederate central government quartermaster issue jackets, Part 1, in *The Military Collector & Historian*. Fall 1989 issue. Lee Family Digital Archive. <https://leefamilyarchive.org>, accessed January 10, 2021.]
- 11 The children of William and Margaret White were: Phillip Greanor White (1849-1850), Mary Matilda White West (1851-1925), William Ambrose White (1853-1858), James Nichols White (1855-1856), John Henry White (1857-1922), Margaret White Scarff (1860-1941), and May H. White Cottrell (1862-1919). From Ancestry.com and findagrave.com
- 12 *Richmond Dispatch*, January 12, 1867.
- 13 *Richmond Dispatch*, May 10 and May 26, 1870.
- 14 *Richmond Dispatch*, August 6, August 27, and September 17, 1868.
- 15 *Richmond Dispatch*, August 19 and September 17, 1872.
- 16 Records from Shockoe Cemetery and Ancestry.com.
- 17 *Alexandria Gazette*, November 4, 1865.
- 18 *Richmond Dispatch*, January 12, 1867.