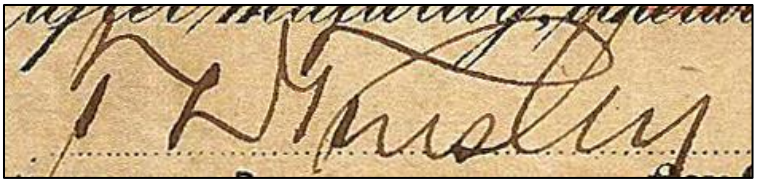
T.D. Tinsley, Teenage Soldier and Signer of Georgia Currency during the Civil

by Charles Derby



T.D. Tinsley's signature is very familiar to collectors of Georgia currency during the Civil War. He signed nearly 800,000 notes with a face value of over $7 million. Many of these notes still exist today and are available to collectors at affordable prices. He signed them over a period of less than one year during 1864, when he was just 18 years old. This article tells the story of Theodosius Davies Tinsley and how he came to sign Georgia wartime notes.

Aching to Fight and Getting the Chance

T.D. Tinsley couldn't wait join the fight for the independence of his home state and new nation. He decided it was time when his very close cousin, Charles DuBignon, returned to Georgia from France where he was in school, so that they could enlist together. Both were young – T.D. was 17 and Charles 18.

Both T.D. and Charles came from privileged backgrounds. T.D. was born Theodosius Davies Tinsley on January 25, 1846, in Milledgeville, Georgia. His father, William Bowe Tinsley, was mayor of Milledgeville (1837-1838), Inferior Court Justice (1845), State Treasurer (1847-1851), and Cashier of The Bank of Savannah (1851-1864). T.D.'s mother, Sarah Grantland Davies Tinsley, was daughter of Judge William Davies of the U.S. Circuit Court in Savannah. T.D. was even named after a Roman Emperor: Theodosius the Great, the last to rule the eastern and western parts of the Roman Empire. But his name was unwieldy, so he was called "T.D." [1,2]

Charles Fleming DuBignon was born in 1845 on the family plantation, Woodville, in Baldwin County.[1,2] His father, Charles Joseph Poulain du Bignon, the son of a French Royalist who moved to Jekyl Island during the Napoleonic era, was a lawyer, president of Central Railroad and Banking Co., member of the Georgia legislature, and rich plantation owner when his father-in-law, Seaton Grantland, died. T.D. and Charles were cousins: Charles' father was married to William Bowe Tinsley's sister, Anne.

In July of 1863, T.D. and Charles enlisted. T.D. entered as 1st Sergeant with Company A, 26th Battalion, Georgia Infantry, Walker's Division, Army of Tennessee.[3] Charles enlisted as Private with Company A, but in Phillips' Legion.[3] They were following the footsteps of other family members already in the Confederate army, so why wouldn't the war be a grand adventure for young T.D. and Charles?

The answer is told by T.D. 46 years later in his application for a soldier's pension on Oct. 25, 1919: *"I enlisted with Capt. Jno. B. Fair in Milledgeville, the latter part of July 1863 to join the 66 Ga. Regt., being organized by Col. J. Cooper Nisbet at Macon. When we reached Macon it was found he had 13 Companies, so three companies, including Capt. Fair's, were formed into a Battalion, the 26th Georgia, and the Command given to Maj. Jno. Nisbet, Col. Cooper Nisbet's brother. Fair's Company was Company "A", of which I was 1st or Orderly Sergeant….We organized in Macon in August 1863. Were sent to Atlanta, Ga. where we remained from Sept. 20th, 1863, to Oct 21st guarding prisoners from the front, from that point we were sent to Lookout Mountain to join General Braxton Bragg, Commanding the Army of Tennessee. I participated in the Missionary Ridge fight, and went into winter quarters with my Command at Dalton, Ga., from which point I was furloughed and was discharged at Savannah."*

T.D. wrote in his petition that he left the Dalton winter quarters in January 1864 on a 15-day furlough due to illness and with approval of his division commander, Maj. Gen. William Henry Talbot Walker (Fig. 1). He wrote that while on furlough in Savannah after six months of service, he was discharged from the army and never returned to his unit.

Charles' fate was worse than T.D.'s. He was also in the Dalton winter camp but never left: he died on February 11, 1864, of meningitis. His body was returned to Milledgeville and buried in Memory Hill Cemetery. His death was "*a grief from which his mother never fully recovered.*"[4]

T.D. wrote in his 1919 petition, "*I do not know of any member of my Company, Company "A", 26th Ga. Bat., now living*." Nonetheless, his account of his wartime record was supported by a signed and notarized statement written 15 years earlier, on Sept 15, 1904, in Milledgeville, by his captain, John Fair. Fair's letter stated that T.D.'s discharge was "honorable" and that "*During the entire time he was with the Company, he did his full duty, and his conduct was such as to merit the approval of myself and other officers of the command.*"

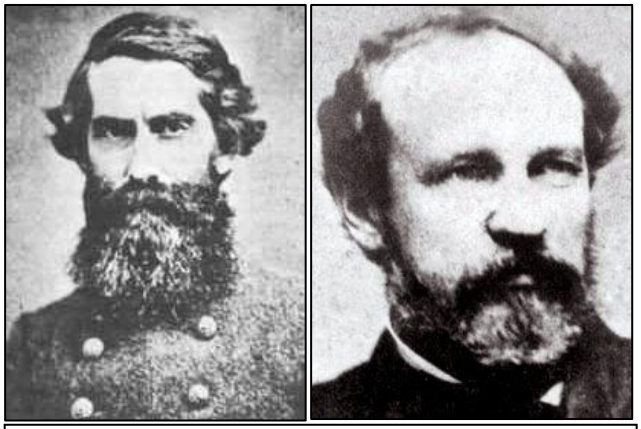


Figure 1. T.D. Tinsley's commanding officers during the war. *Left:* Maj. Gen. Wm. H. T. Walker, his division commander in north Georgia. from July 1863 to Jan. 1864. Walker was shot and killed by a Federal picket on July 22, 1864, in Battle of Atlanta. *Right:* Gen. Henry C. Wayne, adjutant and inspector general of Georgia, who T.D. served as an aide during Sherman's march from Milledgeville to Savannah. Wayne commanded Confederate troops at the Battle of Ball's Ferry at the Oconee River in Wilkinson County, on Nov. 23–26, 1864.

How was T.D. discharged from the Army after only six months, with Sherman's forces moving on Atlanta and the army in need of able bodied soldiers? Documentation of his furlough or discharge are not in public records. Company muster rolls for November and December of 1863 indicate that T.D. was paid by Captain Bomar on November 1st but not December and that he was "*absent without leave*." That may have just been a clerical error, with the person taking this record unaware of his furlough. In any case, T.D. was soon working for the Georgia Treasurer, signing notes in Milledgeville. As T.D. wrote in response to the pension petition's questions, "*Were you actually present with your command when it was surrendered or discharged?*" and "*If you were not actually present, state specifically and clearly where you were.* His answer: *"No. At Milledgeville, Ga., in the service of the State*."

One might hypothesize that T.D.'s father – former Georgia Secretary of Treasury and current cashier of a major bank in Savannah and with a summer residence in Milledgeville– played a role in helping his son transition out of the army and into a civil servant's job in Milledgeville.

T.D. spent the remainder of the war signing notes. But he added in his petition that he took part in the resistance against Sherman during his march to Savannah: *"I might state in addition that when Sherman's Army came through Georgia, I was made aide on the Staff of Gen. Henry C. Wayne, Adjutant General of Georgia, and served in that capacity with him until his Command reached Savannah. At the fight at Oconee Bridge I obtained his permission to go in the breastworks with the Marietta Cadets, where we held the bridge for two days."*

Signer of Georgia notes

As a clerk in the Georgia Treasury, T.D. Tinsley signed notes for Comptroller General, Peterson Thweatt, who served in that position from 1855

to 1864. Most notes signed by T.D. were also signed by R. J. (Robert Julian) McCamy, who signed the Treasurer, John Jones. T.D. also co-signed with F. B. (Frank Barlow) Mapp.

T.D. signed notes of eight denominations: 25 cents, $2, $3, $4, $10, $20, $50, and $100. All were engraved and printed by Richard H. Howell of Savannah. Altogether, Tinsley signed 785,500 notes worth $7,043,375 over about six months.[5] Examples of notes that he signed are shown in Figure 2.

The first notes that T.D. signed were the 25 cent notes (ML11, Cr 15). These notes were authorized by the Act of December, 1862, have the printed date of dated January 1, 1863, and were issued between June 30, 1863, and October 14, 1864.[5] There actually were two varieties, differing in the size of the Georgia seal at the bottom center of each note (Fig. 2). A total of 898,900 of these 25 cent notes were issued, with 381,500 signed by T.D. These include plate letter A-E and serial numbers 27,601–27,900 and 28,501–35,000, and plate letters F–K (omitting I) for serial numbers 3,201–24,800, 44,301–67,000, and 105,901–131,100. All were signed by Tinsley and McCamy except for the 105,901-131,000 notes, which Tinsley co-signed with F. B. Mapp. No Tinsley–Mapp notes are known to exist today, probably because they were the last to be signed on Oct. 14, 1864 and not yet issued before they were destroyed by Sherman's troops who occupied Milledgeville on November 13 [5].

The next notes that Tinsley signed were $2, $3, and $4, notes authorized by the Act of December 14, 1863, dated January 1, 1864, and issued between April 6 and August 30, 1864 (Table 1). All were plate letter A and signed by Tinsley and McCamy. There were a total of 99,000 $2 notes, 50,000 $3 notes, and 25,000 $4 notes.

The next notes signed by Tinsley were $10, $20, $50, and $100 notes dated April 6, 1864, issued between April 30 and July 30, 1864. All were signed by Tinsley and McCamy. The $10 notes had plate letters A–K (no J) totaling 100,000 notes, and the $20, $50, and $100 notes were only plate letter A and numbered 75,000, 30,000, and 25,000 notes respectively.

T.D. Tinsley was not the only member of his family to sign notes issued during the War. In fact, three other relatives signed notes. His father, William Bowe Tinsley, signed notes as "W. B. Tinsley" as the Cashier for The Bank of Savannah. Seaton Grantland Tinsley, his cousin once removed (son of his uncle, Thomas Garland Tinsley), signed many thousands of Confederate notes as "S. G. Tinsley"[6] in 1861 and 1862. T.D. brother-in-law, Augustus Merritt (married to T.D.'s sister, Sarah Augusta Tinsley Merritt), signed in 1862 his own merchant notes in Griffin, Georgia, and several denominations of notes for the treasurer of the Inferior Court of the County of Spalding in 1862.

After the War

Soon after the war, T.D. and many of his brothers and sisters moved to Macon, where they engaged in the grocery business. T.D. and his older brother, Addison Reese Tinsley, became co-owners and junior partners with senior partner James Seymour in Seymour, Tinsley & Co. They hired as clerks two brothers William and Fleming. An advertisement for their business from 1868 is shown in Figure 3. In 1871, T.D. married Emma Seaton Ragland, of

TABLE 1. Georgia Notes Signed by T. D. Tinsley

Note Type		Denomination	No. of Notes	Value	Issued
ML11	Cr15	25 cent	381,500	$95,375	June 30 1863 to Oct 14 1864
ML24	Cr29	$2	99,000	$198,000	April 6, April 30, May 31, July 30, Aug 30 1864
ML25	Cr28	$3	50,000	$150,000	April 6, April 30, May 31, July 30, Aug 30 1864
ML26	Cr27	$4	25,000	$100,000	April 6 1864
ML28,29	Cr24/25	$10	100,000	$1,000,000	April 30, May 31, June 30, July 30 1864
ML30	Cr 23	$20	75,000	$1,500,000	April 30, May 31, June 30, July 30 1864
ML31	Cr22	$50	30,000	$1,500,000	May 31, June 30, July 30 1864
ML32	Cr21	$100	25,000	$2,500,000	April 30, May 31, June 30 1864
			785,500	**$7,043,375**	

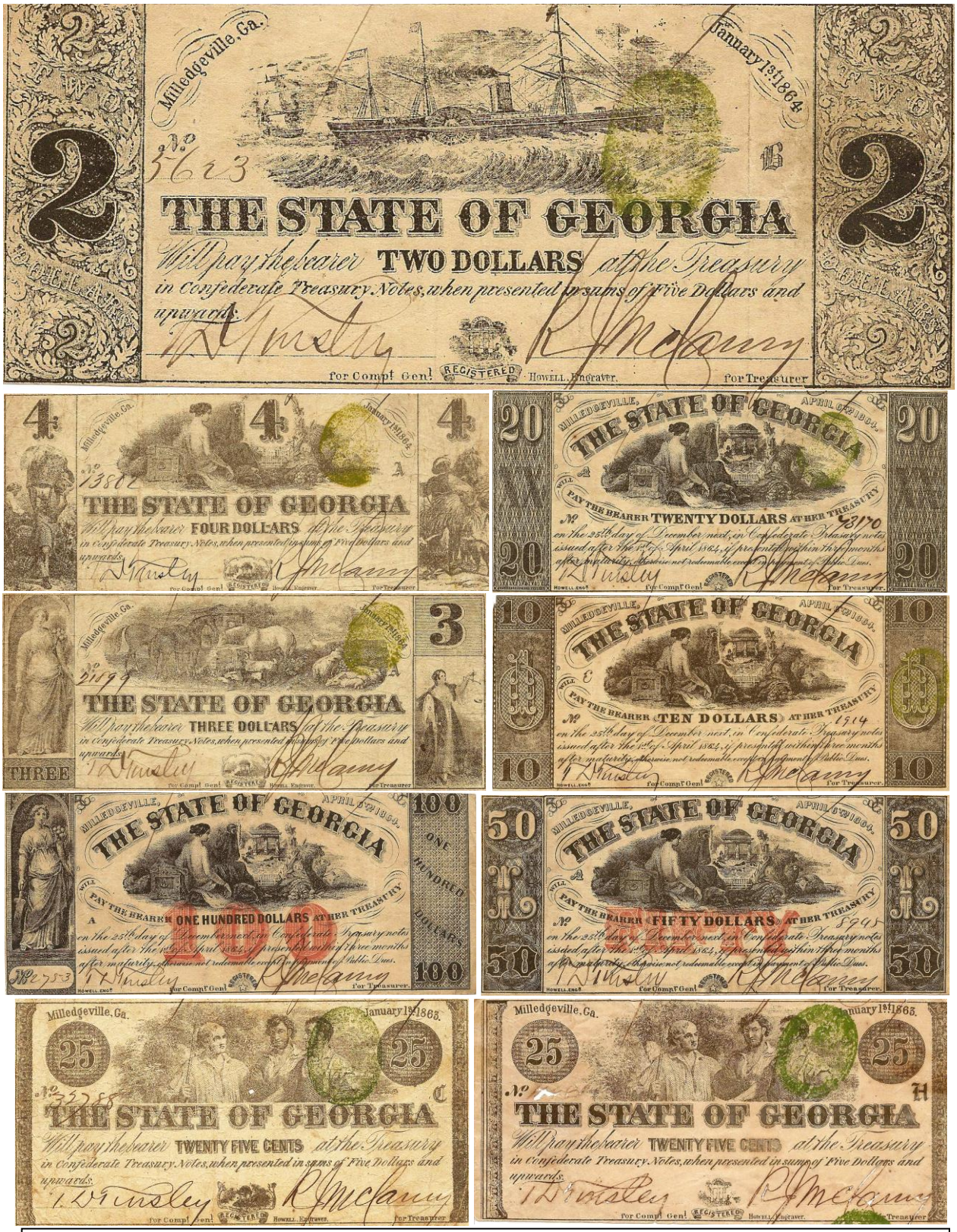


Figure 2. Notes signed by T. D. Tinsley. See Table 1 for information about these notes.



TO THE PLANTERS & MERCHANTS OF GA.

We deal largely in all kinds of Groceries and Provisions, Liquors, Cigars, Lime, Plaster, Cement, Guano, Mackerel, Herring, White, Blue and Trout Fish, Flour, Butter, Cheese, Nails, Salt, Molasses, Syrup, Sugar, Coffee, Tea and Spices, which we will sell on as good terms as any house in Macon, Georgia.

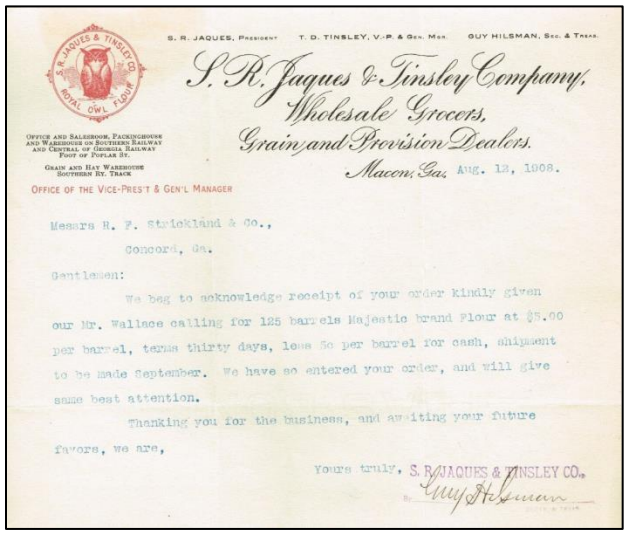
SEYMOUR, TINSLEY & CO.,

Oct 68—6m—pd Macon, Ga.

Figure 3. Advertisement for Seymour, Tinsley & Co. from 1868.

Columbus, Georgia, daughter of Thomas Ragland, who owned *The Columbus Enquirer* newspaper. They had four children (William, Theodosia, Thomas, and Anna), three of whom lived into adulthood.

After the death of James Seymour in 1877, the Tinsleys continued the grocery business as Tinsley Bros. & Co. By the mid 1880s, Tinsley left the family business and became partner in S. R. Jacques & Tinsley Co., a wholesale grocery (Fig. 4).[7] The business flourished and T.D. prospered. He also engaged in other business ventures. One was a 1899 partnership with a Dr. Glover and S. R. Jaques to build the Juliette Milling and Glover Manufacturing Company, a cotton mill that produced string, twine, and yarn.[8] In the same year, T.D. served on the board of directors of the Georgia Southern and Florida Railway Company, which operated between Macon and Palatka, Florida.



S. R. JAQUES, President T. D. TINSLEY, V.-P. & Gen. Mgr. GUY HILSMAN, Sec. & Treas.

S. R. Jaques & Tinsley Company,
Wholesale Grocers,
Grain and Provision Dealers.

Office and Salesroom, Packinghouse and Warehouse on Southern Railway and Central of Georgia Railway Foot of Poplar St.
Grain and Hay Warehouse Southern Ry. Track

Macon, Ga. Aug. 12, 1908.

OFFICE OF THE VICE-PRES'T & GEN'L MANAGER

Messrs H. F. Strickland & Co.,
Concord, Ga.

Gentlemen:

We beg to acknowledge receipt of your order kindly given our Mr. Wallace calling for 125 barrels Majestic brand Flour at $5.00 per barrel, terms thirty days, less 5c per barrel for cash, shipment to be made September. We have so entered your order, and will give same best attention.

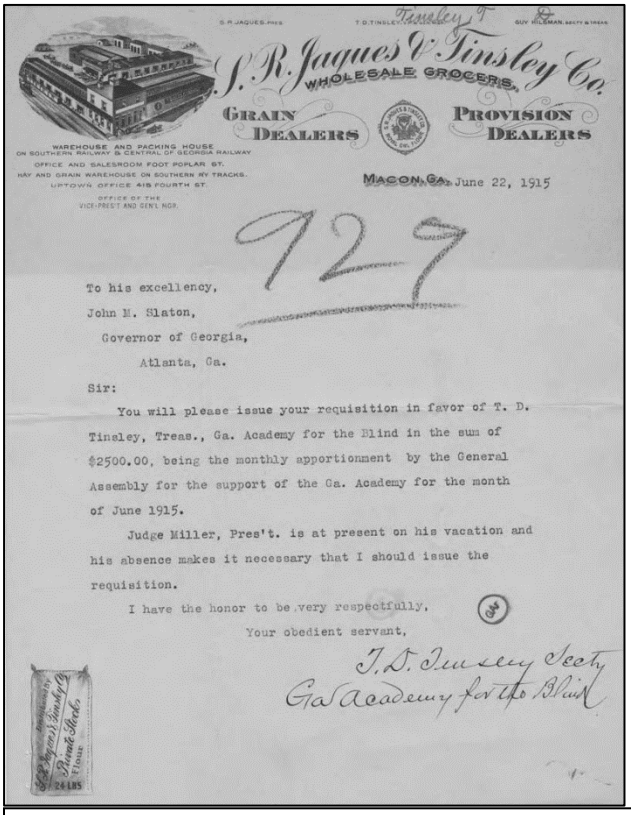
Thanking you for the business, and awaiting your future favors, we are,

Yours truly, S. R. JAQUES & TINSLEY CO.

Guy Hilsman

Figure 4. Receipt from the S. R. Jaques & Tinsley Co., wholesale grocers, from 1908.

T.D. gave back to his community, and for this he is perhaps best known. A lifelong cause was the Georgia Academy for the Blind, founded in 1852 and still operating. T.D. was for many years its secretary and treasurer. Figure 5 shows a letter written by T.D. in 1915, on stationary from Jaques & Tinsley Co., requesting the Academy's monthly funds from the Governor of Georgia, John Slaton. Later, in memory of his passion for education, he was honored as the namesake of T.D. Tinsley Elementary School, which educated many Macon citizens over the years. This school no longer exists though another school, Northwoods Academy, was built on it site in 2009.



S. R. Jaques & Tinsley Co.
WHOLESALE GROCERS,
GRAIN DEALERS PROVISION DEALERS

WAREHOUSE AND PACKING HOUSE ON SOUTHERN RAILWAY & CENTRAL OF GEORGIA RAILWAY
OFFICE AND SALESROOM FOOT POPLAR ST.
HAY AND GRAIN WAREHOUSE ON SOUTHERN RY TRACKS.
UPTOWN OFFICE 418 FOURTH ST.
OFFICE OF THE VICE-PREST AND GEN'L MGR.

Macon, Ga. June 22, 1915

927

To his excellency,
John M. Slaton,
Governor of Georgia,
Atlanta, Ga.

Sir:

You will please issue your requisition in favor of T. D. Tinsley, Treas., Ga. Academy for the Blind in the sum of $2500.00, being the monthly apportionment by the General Assembly for the support of the Ga. Academy for the month of June 1915.

Judge Miller, Pres't. is at present on his vacation and his absence makes it necessary that I should issue the requisition.

I have the honor to be very respectfully,
Your obedient servant,

T. D. Tinsley Secty
Ga Academy for the Blind

Figure 5. Letter from 1915, from T.D. Tinsley to Georgia Governor Slaton, requesting funds for the Georgia Academy for the Blind.

Still standing today is T.D. home of many years – the North-Tinsley-Corn-Holliday House, 607 College Street, on the corner with Tinsley Lane (Fig. 6). The house was built in 1854 by Macon city council member Henry North.[9] Tinsley purchased it in 1886 and renovated it with the

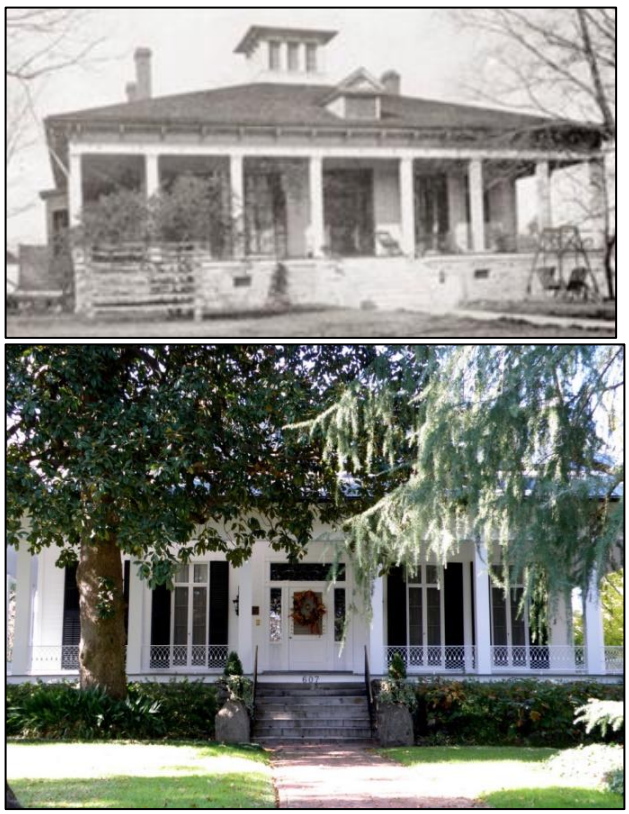


Figure 6. North-Tinsley-Corn-Holliday House. *Top*, in T.D.'s time (from Comer 1996). *Bottom*, in modern times.[9]

help of famed Atlanta architect Neel Reed. Ernest and Pauline Corn owned the home from 1937 to 1984, and Peter Holliday since 1984.

T.D. Tinsley died May 15, 1929, and is buried in Macon's Rose Hill Cemetery with his wife and children. His tombstone reads, "*Numbered with thy Saints in Glory Everlasting.*" His legacy lives on through people, architecture, education, and numismatics.

Acknowledgments. Many thanks to Mack Martin, for encouraging me to research the signers of Georgia notes and for enthusiastically sharing his vast knowledge of Georgia numismatics, and to Gary Doster for his support and comments on the manuscript.

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