Engraved in Prejudice:
How Currency Displayed the Mindset of the South

by

Holly Johnson Floyd

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Accepted by:
Thomas Brown, Director of Thesis
Allison Marsh, Reader

Tracey L. Weldon, Interim Vice Provost and Dean of the Graduate School
Dedication

To my son, Eli

Without your love and daily testing of my sanity,

this adventure would have not been nearly as exciting.

Thank you for taking this journey with me.
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Abstract

This paper discusses the utility of currency as a promotional technique for southern ways, most specifically a mindset surrounding the social status of African Americans. Prior to the start of the Civil War, southern states began using images depicting enslaved labor on multiple types of currency. This practice continued through the creation and fall of the Confederate States of America, but the most telling images come from the financial instruments used between the war’s end and the start of Jim Crow. A brief history of southern and northern hostilities, with slavery at the forefront of the southern culture, sets the stage for the currency’s coining. The thesis also addresses the significance of the slavery scenes chosen by engravers during an approximately twenty-year timeframe, while situating the discussion into secondary literature. Additionally, the context provided establishes the reasons the Confederacy utilized its bills for ideological and promotional purposes. The continued use of enslaved and African American labor force images on a variety of currency reveals the prevailing mindset that led to Jim Crow.
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Chapter One: Fundamentals of Southern Economy

When the United States government ordered all Confederate currency destroyed, the Union Army confiscated some bills while fortifying in Confederate territory. However, the ability to view and purchase these bills today proves that many of those who maintained Confederate ideals, rebelled against this action. While some White South Carolinians turned in their bills for cancellation, some individuals kept bills as mementos of the past.¹ Furthering the effort to maintain ideologies found in southern states that eventually entered into the Confederacy, states like Georgia and South Carolina continued to use slavery images on newly printed bills years after the fall of the Confederacy. Many of these bills still exist. Families have passed down these relics. Collectors have purchased and stored many types of currency, and organizations like archives, museums, or auction houses collect these artifacts for public use or sale. In true rebel fashion, the State of South Carolina neglected to destroy all relinquished bills and left them undisturbed for many years in the basement of the State House, until the South Carolina Department of Archives and History obtained of them. This discovery has allowed the archives to utilize the bills for patron viewing and funding various projects through the profits of selling some of the bills.² These bills tell the story of two different

races of people during a time when racism stood as the undertone of the entire society’s foundation.

A man smiles as he carries a basket of corn across the field. His life as an enslaved individual allows him to contribute to society by harvesting the cotton, tobacco, or fields of produce necessary for community survival. He has blossomed into his full potential under the eye of his master and overseer. He lives happily alongside his family, who all benefit from this institution of Black ownership by a White man (Figure 1.1). The White man looks after his needs better than he could himself, or so the southern culture of the Confederate states believed and hoped others believed. As southern states considered northern aggression towards the institution of slavery a threat to their culture and livelihood, the South felt it necessary to provide a visual representation of the southern culture in order to justify continuing this institution. The representation came in the form of illustrations on southern financial instruments. The Confederate States of America wanted to drum up support by displaying the foundation of the utopian society it
envisioned to the masses. Currency notes presented an easy method of distribution. As history shows, Confederate currency does not provide the last example of populated images representing ideologies through the use of currency, but it does provide an interesting narrative of the southern culture dependent on slavery.

By analyzing the engravings used in southern currencies, one gains an understanding of how White southerners viewed their society and culture, and how they desired others to view it. It creates a narrative quite different from the reality of the lives depicted in the slavery scenes on the currency. Analysis of these pictures stands as the basis of this essay’s argument and contextualizes the scenes into the specific era in question. Additional secondary sources provide support for the imagery analysis and construct a detailed comparison of both the enslaved and the free, who were intricately tangled within the southern economics and culture. Not only will the imagery offer glimpses into the historical southern ways, the atmosphere of wartime in the Confederacy, and the aspirations of the Confederacy; the imagery also reflects the steadfast commitment to degrading the social status of African Americans. The use of specific illustrations demonstrates a technique for drumming up support for southern livelihood and the Confederate cause. Southern states and the national Confederate government forced interaction between citizens and southern ideologies through the distribution of currency. Banknotes from state institutions and Treasury notes created by the Confederate government are two of the currency methods used to circulate the images. Southern states attempted to explain their way of life and persuade residents of the Confederacy to participate in the fight against northern ideologies interfering with their lives.
Several scholars have discussed their own interpretation of Confederate currency. Historian Richard Doty argues that the images used on colonial to antebellum engraved notes advertised the way that Americans, and specifically southerners of the Civil War era, lived and the important aspects of their culture. While his *Pictures from a Distant Country: Images on 19th Century U.S. Currency*, aligns with the argument presented in this paper, that the pictures printed on banknotes conveyed ‘what they thought of themselves, what they thought of each other; how they viewed issues of the day… the future,” Doty’s lack of specificity in identifying the types of currency used in his argument has created questions about his argument. As seen later in this paper, noting who issued the bills and what type of bills were printed remains a vital part of the argument that the images displayed an unwavering southern mindset. Doty leaves his analysis at a basic level, allowing the viewer to draw his or her own conclusions based on the images provided. The following paper builds on his generalizations by further analyzing what was seen in the images and what was absent. By doing this analysis Doty’s questions of how the imagery ‘evolved over time, reflecting a growing national sentiment,” are answered.

With Doty’s work as a foundation, historian Michael O’Malley’s book *Face Value: The Entwined Histories of Money and Race in America*, examines the ideology of slavery and the design of Confederate money. However, O’Malley focuses his analysis on the contrast between the two. The Confederacy’s money existed without backing, as a worthless representation of a unified cause. Enslaved individuals, on the other hand, held

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4 Doty, *Pictures from a Distant Country*, 6, 7-9, 55-66, 196.
immense value, especially if they were young and in good shape, making “black flesh” literal currency for Whites. This approach binds race with the value of currency, demonstrating how both maintain a financial value within society. O’Malley takes a more metaphorical approach to the ideas that the images represented, differing from Doty’s analysis, but still filling in gaps in the historical analysis of banknote engravings.

Ian Binnington explores the face of printed bills as a symbol of nationalism in Confederate Visions: Nationalism, Symbolism, and the Imagined South in the Civil War. Binnington generalizes the engravings into themed groups, without going into details of the illustrations. He describes how the value of currency, pricing of necessities, and earned wages changed throughout the course of the war, directly linking the changes to the iconography of various issues of the currency. Because Binnington focuses solely on Treasury notes printed by the Confederate States of America, his analysis creates contrast to Doty’s and his sample fails to include state banknotes that more regularly displayed enslaved individuals. Binnington presents an argument that iconography changed midway through the Civil War, shifting from an emphasis on slavery to an emphasis on war. While this claim may be true for Treasury notes, evidence shows that southern states continued to display similar imagery well after the Civil War on banknotes and certificates of deposit, each a vital financial instrument. This study expands on Bennington’s study of currency types, by utilizing a similar source, John W. Jones’s art exhibition, “Colors of Money.” As seen through Binnington’s work and the exhibit, details of imposed ideology of southern beliefs come to life.

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Jones’ exhibit enlarges the images used on currency to provide a voice for those who had had their voice taken (Figure 1.2). Binnington dives into analysis of the success of the messages sent through the visual representations, while this essay keeps a narrow focus on the messages displayed through the images. His description of the ‘Silent Slave’ fits in with the argument of White supremacy seen in later discussion of specific bills mentioned in this analysis.  

A newly published work by historian Ross A. Brooks, *The Visible Confederacy: Images and Objects in the Civil War South*, analyzes the imagery and material culture of the Confederate side of the Civil War. Brooks spends an entire chapter on how the South defended the institution of slavery, and in this chapter, he explores the images of slavery found in Confederate Treasury notes, much like Binnington. Brooks also discusses banknotes and provides pictures alongside the text of his book to allow the reader to visualize the “little shame or embarrassment about chattel slavery in depictions by Confederate artists and designers.”

Brooks acknowledges the need to include Confederate state banknotes in addition to Confederate Treasury notes, though he draws from the national financial instruments discussed by Binnington’s *Confederate Visions*. He also emphasizes that less than ten percent of Confederate issued notes displayed enslaved men and women. Brooks and Binnington both stress that, bills and other financial instruments exhibiting the images of enslavement comprised a small portion of the total number issued by governments.

Both, Brooks and Binnington deviate from the ideas seen in Doty’s work.

Christian M. Lengyel’s work also appears in Brooks’ *The Visible Confederacy* analysis. In Lengyel’s article, “Pictures Frozen in Time: Determining Whether or Not Confederate Currency Vignettes Functioned as Proslavery Propaganda,” he argues that the images of enslavement placed on Confederate financial instruments “promoted the

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‘Southern cause,’ but did not promote slavery to any significant degree.”\textsuperscript{9} More closely focused on iconography than O’Malley, Lengyel’s publication anticipated Binnington and Brooks in opposition to the interpretation advanced by Doty. As a primary source, Lengyel references Arlie Slabaugh’s \textit{Confederate States Paper Money: Civil War Currency from the South}. This crucial guidebook of paper money printed during the lifespan of the Confederate States, is the foundation of Lengyel’s argument. In concluding his findings, Lengyel emphasizes that “What remains to be seen is a project that examines these ‘unaccounted currencies’ and determines why slave scenes were more regularly depicted on state and private-issue notes.”\textsuperscript{10}

The images of enslaved individuals demonstrate the attitudes that permeated southern culture, foreshadowing the legal segregation between Blacks and Whites that continued to keep freed African Americans from equality. While White southerners argued that the reason for Confederate withdrawal stemmed from states’ rights, not the ability to maintain slavery, the images that will be seen throughout this paper identify enslavement as the foundation of southern culture. In reviewing the literature surrounding the topic of imagery used on printed financial instruments, the paper offers new a focus in the conversation that complements some works while answering the questions left by others to show the evolution from enslavement to segregation.


\textsuperscript{10} Lengyel, “Pictures Frozen in Time,” 21.
Chapter Two: Pre-War Efforts

“We hear often of the distress of the negro servants, on the loss of a kind master; and with good reason, for no creature on God’s earth is left more utterly unprotected and desolate than the slave in these circumstances. The child who has lost a father has still the protection of friends, and of the law; he is something, and can do something, has acknowledged rights and position; the slave has none.”\[11\] These words came from one of the forty-one installments of Harriett Beecher Stowe’s *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* in *The National Era* that began publication on March 20, 1852. Stowe’s words stood among many devices used by northern abolitionists trying to rid the nation of the institution of slavery.\[12\] These words echoed in the ears of southern planters, forcing calculated moves by the southern states to defend their believed ‘right’ to owned enslaved men and women.

The narrative begins during the slavery years in the South. For well over one hundred years, the colonies, eventually to become states, exploited the use of enslaved labor to run their homes and care for their fields. As Americans began to acknowledge the atrocious nature of this institution, hostilities arose. The justification for the institution of slavery and differing southern ideologies formally began forty years prior to the war but gained momentum in the 1850s, as a political crisis ensued. The slave owning states


recognized that opposition to the institution was growing.\textsuperscript{13} Society named the many northern, and a few southern, individuals that chose to stand up against the legality of the practice as abolitionists. They led the movement to end the use of slavery, which caused many uprisings and much violence. Southerners knew they needed to begin publicly advocating for the continued institution, as their way of life embraced the “contradictions and the inherent challenges slavery posed to American culture.”\textsuperscript{14} Validation for this contradiction came in several themes: “theology, history, political theory, law, science, and economics.”\textsuperscript{15} Southerners utilized illustrations on printed financial instruments to convey these themed messages. Several instances of campaigns advocating for the continuation of slavery launched through banknotes printed in Georgia and North Carolina. These states started printing such banknotes at approximately the same time, and while each used a different image, the message remained consistent. During the 1850s, Georgia began printing a two-dollar bill with a famous enslaved engraving design that maintained momentum throughout the war.

\textsuperscript{13} Paul Finkelman, \textit{Defending Slavery: Proslavery Thought in the Old South, A Brief History with Documents} (Massachusetts: Bedford/St. Martin’s, 2003), 2-4, 25.

\textsuperscript{14} Finkelman, \textit{Defending Slavery}, 2, 19.

\textsuperscript{15} Finkelman, \textit{Defending Slavery}, 26.
The Exchange Bank of Griffin, Georgia began its normative propagandic efforts with a small image of enslaved males working in the field. In this image, one sees two well-dressed African Americans with hats and aprons adorning their clothes, an appropriate outfit for someone working in the fields. As Brooks describes in his work, the fact that the image only shows the enslaved in the fields promotes the idea that the enslaved men would not run from their owners (Figure 2.1). There remained a mutual trust between the two, showing how southerners believed the institution benefited everyone.16

Another interesting piece of the image was that one of the enslaved appears without shoes, while the other carrying the load walks with loafer style shoes. This image gives an impression that the enslaved were well-regarded, and their needs always provided for. However, it ends at the impression, as one of the individuals’ lacks the entirety of his clothing needs. Without shoes, the man constantly risks injuring himself.17

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As research has shown, masters did in fact provide the material needed for sewing clothes, in some instances, plantation owners gave new fabric, typically twill, linsey, snaburg, or flannel, annually for the purpose of new clothes. This would equate roughly one new outfit a year, which constant wear soon shredded. Through these images similar to those printed on the banknote from Georgia, slave owners appear more charitable towards their enslaved. In reality, planters lost money to clothe their enslaved individuals. This cost led plantation owners to retrench on “the quality and quantity of the clothes.”\(^\text{18}\)

While begrudgingly equipping their enslaved workers with clothes, the planter maintained the ability to still leave their mark of ownership upon the person through the clothes. With no access to income of their own, these individuals had no choice but to wear the material provided by their owner. “It was one of the badges of slavery.”\(^\text{19}\) In some cases, owners took the costs of these clothes out of the enslaved person’s ‘wages,’ echoing the idea that all the enslaved had was because of the planter’s allowance.\(^\text{20}\) Their clothes provided the outside world an illusion of a people that were well-tended to by their master and showed an attempt by the planter to assimilate his enslaved Africans. However, the raggedness reiterated an enslaved person’s status and easily contributed to injury or health issues when working outdoors in the incorrect dress for the weather and


\(^{20}\) Shaw, “Slave cloth and Clothing Slaves.”
fueled the belief that those enslaved remained ignorant to the proper, “European concepts of decency.” Due to this ignorance, Whites believed enslaved Africans needed the Whites to help them create civilized versions of themselves. Antebellum era dress created a stark contrast between the Whites and Blacks, even as children. This bill’s examples, among several others, demonstrates this contrast and treatment by society between the races. As one of the first examples of the slavery imagery used, it provides a base to see how the planters viewed the morality of the institution. Southern planters believed enslavement was not only moral but also provided a purpose of life and status for Africans that they would not have been able to reach on their own.

Figure 2.2 $10 Banknote, The Bank of North Carolina, 1859 Heritage Auction Collection

The banknote printed by the Bank of North Carolina in Charlotte in 1859, mirrored this effort to promote southern culture. The ten-dollar banknote displayed two coordinating enslaved images in the center of the bill. Again, one sees images of fully dressed, well-groomed African Americans with hats, shoes, and vests on top of their

22 White and White, “Slave Clothing,” 151.
shirts. One is driving a bull pulled wagon with a whip in his hand to aggressively coerce the bulls forward, a common instrument used by Blacks and Whites for wagon pulling during the time. The other scene shows the man grooming a fully saddled horse next to a bare-back horse. A small silhouette of another enslaved individual working in the field sits in the background of this image. Both images on this bill attempt to signify the importance of enslaved African to the economy of the southern states and show a lifted status for those enslaved persons in society, echoing Georgia’s effort (Figure 2.2). These fine clothes and the appearance of dignified work contradicted the conditions under which most enslaved individuals toiled; their lives were painful, dirty and short, despite what White southerners wanted others to see.

![Figure 2.3 $20 Banknote, The Bank of North Carolina, 1859. Heritage Auction Collection](image)

As tensions between opposing sides to slavery continued to grow, efforts to place the institution of slave in a prominent place ramped up. Changes in the imagery began

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with more realistic depictions of the enslaved and placing them on bills beside leading American figures. This trend continued into the Civil War years. The Bank of North Carolina in Raleigh printed the first of these changes on a $20 banknote in 1859. The image of the enslaved sits on the left corner of the bill beside an illustration of a planter or overseer in the middle, and an image of young Benjamin Franklin standing at his printing press, to the right. Above these illustrations sits two formal portraits of President George Washington and Chief Justice John Marshall, placing the institution of slavery in a prominent position amongst these important figures (Figure 2.3). The slavery scene exhibits an adult male slave standing hunched over picking cotton off the bush into his baskets. Suspenders hold up his oversized pants, and his shirt sits just as largely on him as his pants, demonstrating the lack of individuality afforded to the enslaved. Planters, many times, had clothes made bulk, creating a one-size-fits-all predicament. Beyond his ill-fitting clothes, his face appears weathered and his mouth rests open in exhaustion from the strenuous labor he performs daily on the plantation.24 While the image contrasts from the other two with its more realistic approach, it still embeds the institution of slavery within the foundation of southern society, in a very prominent place.

The placement on the bill also compares slavery with the great fathers of United States by placing the image next to an image of George Washington, who owned enslaved men and women. More importantly, Washington served as crucial figure in creating the foundation of the United States of American following the Revolutionary War. Washington’s image sought to inspire those Confederate loyalists who would

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eventually find themselves fighting for sovereignty. The connection southerners make to Washington as a man who stood against the British monarchicaly oppression and fought for the republic becomes evident. They maintained that the rightful society they belonged to held every right to utilize enslaved labor. Southerners believed their actions mirrored those of the founding fathers, like George Washington.

The other prominent figure on this note, Benjamin Franklin creates some mystery, as he stood against the institution of slavery later in his life (Figure 2.2). In a petition to end the institution he addressed to Congress; he describes the Christian undertones of the American society that were also rooted in southern culture in his words that call for the end of discrimination by race. He pleads for all God’s people to live freely under the Creator. While southern states had always immersed their lives in religious nature, Franklin’s words went against the fabric of their society. The South rebutted this notion with religious interpretation of their own. In the justification of slavery stemmed from the “power of slave owners over slaves [that] paralleled the power of husbands over wives and of parents over children.” As the superior race, planters were tasked with training the inferior race. Moreover, the New Testament of the Bible advocated for the enslavement of peoples, or so they believed as “it was sanctioned by the Bible and by God himself.” The apostle Paul spoke several times on the slave arrangement, even

27 E.N. Elliott, “Introduction,” in Essay on Slavery in the Light of International Law, E.N. Elliott, ed. Cotton is King and Pro-Slavery Arguments: Comprising the Writings of cotton is king and pro-slavery arguments: comprising the writings of
honoring it by returning those enslaved that attempted to flee. Baptist minister, Thornton Stringfellow presents Paul’s letter to Ephesus as evidence. Paul listed the line of appropriate servitude, only surpassed by obedience to God, “First between wife and husband; second, child and parent; third servant and master.”²⁸ Thus, the depiction chosen of Franklin was that of a younger man, working tirelessly in a society that aligned with the traditional southern culture which led to the fight for independence but contrasted with its religious context. This image demonstrates their choice of Franklin for different reasons than his later opposing views to enslavement, which makes an interesting contrast to the other illustrations chosen for engraving.

Chief Justice John Marshall also creates a unique divergence to the pro-slavery narrative of Confederate currency (Figure 2.2). While Marshall inherited and purchased his own enslaved African Americans and made his views of White superiority known, his influence in the Supreme Court presents another reason for the southern states to choose him. As the justice who pushed for the first repeal of a federal law in Marbury v. Madison, he wrote an opinion for the court regarding the ability to declare legislation unconstitutional. He believed in checks and balances.²⁹ Marshall’s opinion served as a model for slave states that believed the national government was acting unjustly by trying

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to rid the nation of the institution of slavery. The southern states continued to help others visualize the criticality of enslavement of Africans and chose images with messages that fit their own beliefs.

In the late 1850s, as tensions began to truly rise, one theme banknotes encouraged was the illusion of the happy slave. Several bills featured the enslaved realistically in tattered clothes, always shown in a field working but added that subtle touch of a smile to the face of the enslaved individual. A twenty-dollar bill printed by the Central Railroad and Banking Company of Georgia in 1858 shows three enslaved men working in a cotton field. The man standing in the foreground wears loafer style shoes, rolled up pants and shirt with an apron covering his midriff. A basket of cotton sits on his shoulders and rests against his head, similar to another illustration previously discussed. However, in this instance, the man stands in the field with a smile, giving the impression of contentment and happiness in his forced labor.³⁰

![Figure 2.4 $10 Banknote Proof, The Bank of Hamilton, State of Georgia, 1850s. Heritage Auction Collection](image)

Another, more noticeable use of this theme depicts a more zoomed in view of an enslaved man carried a basket of cotton. Like the instance before, two other men stand behind him, continuing to pick the field. This man’s hair sticks out from under his hat, his overalls and button shirt with pushed up sleeves lay loosely on his skin as he holds the overflowing cotton basket in front of himself with both hands. He stares at the person holding the currency with a wide grin on his face. The engraving created a sense that he appears proud and happy with his work (Figure 2.4 and Figure 1.1). This face appeared on banknotes from Alabama, Georgia, and North Carolina, all attempting to push the impression of a satisfying life for all the enslaved inside southern states. This newly emerged theme promoted the benefits of the institution of slavery that would continue into wartime. Confederates also used these images as answers to the morality question posed by Union states. The image promoted the idea that as long as they remain happy in their lives, enslavement worked. The institution, theoretically, benefited all that are involved. Southerners believed that the African American race remained unable to create and sustain a respectful life, thus they needed Whites to direct them in the ways of a “civilized” life.

Through the depicted smiles of the enslaved man, White southerners emasculated all enslaved males to demonstrate their belief that Africans remained unable to live with dignity. Continuing to compare the images of the enslaved with those of founding fathers or even the young female shown on Figure 2.1, generally the enslaved individuals are

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hunched over, lacking the posture of a sophisticated man. Also, in no other engravings involving men, especially White men, were the individuals smiling. In this time, that would have seemed rudimentarily casual for those within the upper class. In these engravings, the enslaved man lacks the knowledge of knowing he should hold himself at a higher standard, leading with his image of ragged clothes and a smiling face, thus he remained content with this subservient life. In this same thought, many southerners believed that “the words slave and servant were perfectly synonymous.”

These beliefs further explained that Whites credited the tasks given to the enslaved laborer as meeting the limited capabilities of the African population, providing more reason for the enslaved to stay within the comforts created by the boundaries of slavery. Renowned physician, Samuel Adolphus Cartwright, published a piece entitled “Report on the Diseases and Physical Peculiarities of the Negro Race,” in the Medical Association of Louisiana. This piece circulated through several more journals, validating the White Southerners’ idea that enslavement was the optimal life for African men and women. Cartwright suggests that African male brain was smaller than other men, along with the nervous system connecting the brain to the rest of the body. This medical deformity prevented the men from functioning to the intelligence level of a White man. He furthers this thought by stating, “Like children, they require government in

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33 Elliott, “Introduction.”
everything; food, clothing, exercise, sleep—all require to be prescribed by rule.”34 Cartwright used his position to further emasculate enslaved men.

Medical reasoning was not the only device the future Confederates utilized to advocate for the institution of slavery through these and future visual messages. Thomas Reade Roots Cobb, a well-known Georgia lawyer, used his expertise to further this message with political theory and legal themes to defend enslavement of African men and women in 1858. He stated, “Our conclusion from this investigation must be, that the negro race is inferior mentally to the Caucasian…Certain it is that the negro, as we now find him, whether in a state of bondage or in his native wilds, exhibits such a weakness of intellect that…his mind never inventive or suggestive. Improvement never enters into his imagination.”35 These boundaries imposed by White masters offered foundational needs of the enslaved, including their happiness, which was key to enslaved life. There remained a mutual benefit in the mind of the southern planters. They believed the little they provided for the enslaved individuals was more than they would be able to afford for themselves, and they lived under the protection and guidance of their master.36

Both professionals challenged the abolitionists ideas that slavery was immoral and unconstitutional, while demonstrating slavery’s place in southern society beginning a decade before the nation became formally divided and continuing into the war years.

36 Elliott, “Introduction.”
Already a change in representation of enslavement became noticeable, and this change would progress through the next decade. Keeping in mind that these tensions grew not only in relation to slavery but also states’ rights and differences in economies, the scenes of slavery found in banknotes and Treasury notes still held a significant place of almost ten percent of engraved bills during the war.\(^{37}\) These tactics of demeaning enslaved men, in pre-war efforts, did not mean that enslaved women were immune to the ridicule; a new layer of abuse targeting enslaved women emerged during wartime imagery completing the disseminated narrative of positivity towards the institution of slavery. The pre-war efforts set the stage in exhibiting the mentalities of the South that never wavered with time.

Chapter Three: Seceding into Civil War

“Sons of the South arise! Rise in your matchless might. Your war cry echo to the skies, ‘God will defend the right.’ Let haughty tyrants know, Our sunny land shall be, In spite of every foe, Home of the brave and free,” sang the fighting men of the Confederacy, proudly proclaiming the reasons they fought. Once South Carolina took the step to secede from the Union, it became more abundantly clear that the Confederacy needed to assert its national claims in sovereignty with White southern customs at the forefront. As the Secession Years began in 1860 and the Civil War commenced the following year, all loyalist states began utilizing various images to uplift the values and culture of the southern life. While Confederate states continued to print their own banknotes, the repetition of images unified those fighting against the Union. Surviving records show that throughout the war, as many as six states repeated the use of a single image, in a show of solidarity and unity in their ideologies. In addition to this repetition, more change occurs with the imagery. Southern States began utilizing, but editing, engravings crafted by northern states. These edits further highlight the Confederacy’s strong belief in the institution of slavery. Even with changes to the images, these recycled and created engravings continued to manifest the South’s stance.

The Bank of Howardsville in Virginia printed one of the first bills that strongly resembled northern banknote engravings in 1861. The fifty-dollar bill transformed the illustration of a white harvester from a bill printed in Washington DC in the 1853, into a tattered, Black enslaved laborer (Figure 3.2). The differences between the two bills are obviously clear, as well as the differences portrayed through currency images before and during wartime. The three-dollar note from Washington DC depicted a white man carrying a basket of corn, and he is well dressed from head to toe (Figure 3.1). Virginia’s variation of this clearly showed a man of much darker complexion, who wears a shirt
with ragged, torn sleeves.\textsuperscript{39} The enslaved individual wears torn and tattered clothes, contrasting from the image used as inspiration. This image holds some truth for the status of the enslaved in southern culture; however, one would not notice these small details at a quick glance of the currency. The enslaved individual compares to the everyday White harvester without careful examination of the illustration. In normal encounters with money being used through exchanges for goods or services, the engravings situate the institution of slavery at an equal elevation with the White population, and hold a level of importance in society as it sits in the right corner of the bill, adjacent to another portrait and the depiction of a Roman warrior goddess standing on the head of her enemy (Fig. 3.2).\textsuperscript{40} This conjoined message states that through the continuation of slavery, the Confederacy can stand on top of their enemy as a sovereign nation.

This example produced by Virginia only begins the discussion on ‘Recycled Images,’ as formulated by South Carolina artist John W. Jones. Through his analysis of the currency, he desired to provide a voice to those forced quiet by the institution, by creating enlarged, color paintings of the small illustrations. One example he remastered originally comes from Michigan, only for South Carolina to edit the image enough to promote the use of enslaved labor (Figure 3.3).

\textsuperscript{40} Jones, “Recycle Images.”
A first look, the two images look the same, a White man rides a horse looking over at a field of harvesters. The difference between the two images really becomes evident when looking closely at the field workers. In the one-dollar bill from Michigan, three harvesters load a horse-drawn wagon full of wheat bags, while South Carolina’s five-dollar bill shows a field full of Black enslaved workers. The bill displays both enslaved male and female in the field, while what would appear as the White planter or overseer watches intently from a close distance (Figure 3.2). Other depictions also cover the face of the two bills, still holding to the same messages of White class status through the portrait on South Carolina’s bill and the depiction of a Native American warrior in traditional breechcloth on Michigan’s banknote. The image of the Native American holds similar racial undertones as those slavery images on Confederate currency. The banknote demonstrates that southerners viewed the Native American as unable or unwilling to adorn himself like the White population, which they considered the only appropriate

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dress. Though this comparison did not continue as pronounced as other ideas portrayed on the currency produced by Confederate states, it still creates interesting comparison to slavery engravings. The image mirrors the previous discussion of slave clothing from banknotes printed prior to the war. These tattered clothes remained a symbol of lower-class status for the enslaved African, reiterating the idea that planters needed to quell the savage naturally within the slave by clothing them but not in adequate clothing, giving only the appearance of having provided for them, but instead exploiting them as labor, “not as human beings.”42 This idea maintained the idea of the enslaved and White relationship as an imagined necessity.

Figure 3.4 $10 Banknote, The State of Florida, 1862, Heritage Auction Collection

While many images stemmed from recycled engravings, the Confederacy also created engravings to further demonstrate a sense of cohesiveness in the emerging nation. This reflection of an unbreakable bond between the states became more important as the war went on and the fledgling nation immediately encountered challenges on the battlefield and home front. These engravings also continued efforts of presenting slavery

42 Dorothy Schneider and Carl J. Schneider, Slavery in America: From Colonial Times to the Civil War: An Eyewitness History (New York: Facts on File, 2000), 78.
as a necessary and socially acceptable institution. The previously mentioned image of the two enslaved males picking cotton, one with a basket resting on his shoulders and against his head reemerged many times during the war (Figure 3.4). This image found its way onto several banknotes from Arkansas, Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia throughout the four-year time period. The perpetual use of this image provides evidence to the enduring mindset of southern society that became the Confederacy.

The image seen in Figure 3.4’s placement with prominent figures creates another continued theme seen on bills with this image. Again, this image sits amongst significant figures like General Francis Marion of the Revolutionary War and Benjamin Franklin on the three-dollar bill from Alabama, reiterating the message of the importance of institution to the Confederate economy. Marion presents a narrative similar to the use of Franklin on banknotes. This depiction of Franklin contrasts from the one used prior to the war. This portrait of Franklin illustrates the matured, well-established man most identify. 43 While his ideologies at that time in his life shied away from slavery, his steadfast commitment to the founding of the United States still shined through as an idol for Confederates fighting to support their “Lost Cause.” The cause for the war stemmed from the South’s desire to continue living life the way they had always done. In order to promote this culture, banknote imagery presented key themes dealing with the institution of slavery.

Confederate state banknotes used the reemergence of themes or specific illustrations in creating the uplifting narrative of enslaving Africans, like the earlier message of the ‘happy slave.’ Immediately following the commencement of war, the Bank of Wadesborough in North Carolina printed a note showcasing a mother and child. In the vignette shown just above, a mother holds her tobacco filled apron with one hand and her joyful child in the other. Her dress consists of several layers with headdress covering her hair and earrings. Her son, who holds on to his mother’s shoulders plays with a leafy branch. He wears an oversized shirt with rolled up sleeves and loose pants, held up by suspenders. One could use this image to represent any loving White family at the time, minus the dark complexion created by engravers (Figure 3.5). As hostility grew towards the southern use of enslavement, Confederate officials began finding new ways to justify the institution, like conveying a traditional and nurturing family unity created within the bounds of slavery. The mother and child demonstrate a close, loving bond with each other. Both have smiles on their face, and the illustration gives a sense of strong independence within the mother. The bills show this strength in both the literal and
figurative sense. The picture defines her arms clearly, using strength in both holding and carrying the apron full of tobacco leaves and her child. Her face also displays a confident woman, who is accustomed to tending to her children while also completing her work, mirroring the ‘happy slave’ narrative started in pre-war years (Figure 3.5). The images give the illusion that both she and her child appear comfortable and happy in the life they live.\textsuperscript{44}

Not only does this image reiterate the happiness message, it introduces the element of enslaved family units. This mother smiles joyously because her work offers her the opportunity to care for her child while also tending to her responsibilities as an enslaved woman. The enslaved life allows them to live and work as a family unit, at least until their master sells one of them to another plantation owner. The banknotes neglect that reality of the family unit for those enslaved. They also fail to recognize that only few planters afforded the opportunity to maintain the traditional family unity to their enslaved people, as portrayed in the engraving. This reality does not negate the fact enslaved men and women felt emotions, fell in love, and desired to create families of their own. This image also neglects to acknowledge the interruption of these family units by selling of enslaved individuals by planters. Many of these children that run around the plantation, that mothers scooped up in their arms to care for and love, came from an inappropriate, sometimes violent, relationship or encounter. In many cases, owners compelled enslaved males to force themselves on the enslaved females in efforts to produce more enslaved

individuals for the plantation. This method provided more enslaved for the White family without any extra expenses. Other times, the White owner forced one or more of the enslaved females to have sexual relations with him on a regular basis. Planters even constructed separate quarters for these women, who were called concubines, to make the forced relationship easily accessible for the master. In any of these instances, if the enslaved woman resisted in any way, the owner would beat or even kill her. In the cases resulting in childbearing, the White owner and his family treated these children, despite being his own offspring, by their mothers’ enslaved status. This reaction towards mixed children stemmed from several reasons. The planter’s wife would refuse to acknowledge the extra-marital relationships of her husband, and the culture of the time still regarded mixed-race people as Black. To them, the Black portion of their heritage tainted the purity of the White, “loathing the sight of mulatto children, white women sometimes physically attacked and maimed enslaved women and their children, and/or demanded their sale.”  

However, despite their origins, the enslaved mothers unconditionally loved their children, as depicted in the engraving.

Society could not witness the genuine details of enslaved lives through the smiling faces of the slave mothers cradling their children or the happy male slave laborer picking cotton illustrated on the bills of the Confederate currency. These owners, who


committed the acts as normal behavior, glossed over these truths, while it remained reality for the enslaved. Southerners’ inability to take responsibility for the actions against African Americans indicates their belief in the ignorance and inferiority of African Americans remained strong, making their case for continuing the practice. Confederates needed these glossed facts promoted through society in order to maintain loyalties during the war, which further demonstrates the racially motivated mentalities of the southern states.

Wartime performance became a novelty, and banknotes facilitated these acts. The banknotes mentioned above, in addition to the ‘happy slave’ theme introduced prior to the war, denote the sense of performance on the part of the enslaved and their owners. As discussed by historian Walter Johnson in *Soul by Soul: Life Inside the Antebellum Slave Market*, both competing individuals of the slavery practice, owner and enslaved individual, conducted a performance for others to witness. While Johnson’s work explores the narrative inside a traditional slave market, Confederate Treasury Notes and state banknotes displayed several of these same acting methods on the parts of owner and enslaved. Just as a slave owner would boost up the individuals he wanted to sell for a good price at a market, the Confederate government wanted to improve the outlooks on slavery by utilizing these depictions of smiling individuals that the plantation owners provided for all their needs.47 Banknote engravers also acted upon the idea that enslaved families lived happily together, boasting on the idea of the traditional family unit offered to the enslaved through the institution’s practice. These southern planters put on this

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performance through the images printed on the Confederate currency. While those enslaved had no input on the illustrations made of them, one can see a comparison to the performance put on by the enslaved mentioned in Johnson’s work. When an enslaved individual wanted to resist his or her own sale to certain individual, they would make themselves less desirable through the exposure of scars or acting unruly.\textsuperscript{48} In the example of smiling slaves and loving mothers shown through currency images, these images may hold some accuracy. As most humans do in the face of indignity, they hold their heads high. Many would have used a smile as a way of showing their master that they had not won. Even though their enslavement controlled every aspect of their life, their spirit remained unbroken by their reality.\textsuperscript{49}

This unbroken spirit created the foundation for the “invisible institution” formed between enslaved men and women. They relied on one another for support, and “created a world in which the moral values of respect, cooperation, and comparison were central to group identity and survival.”\textsuperscript{50} Within this institution, enslaved individuals formed their own culture and set of beliefs that were based on their African heritage. Religion became the center of this informal and unspoken union. While the core of the beliefs mirrored that of the White denominations, the morality of African Americans’ actions drastically contrasted with those Whites continued to justify through Christian beliefs.\textsuperscript{51} Each of these note images expanded on the White knowledge and culture of the Antebellum South into the Civil War years, negating the culture of those depicted by the

\begin{footnotes}
\item[50] Collier-Thomas, \textit{Jesus, Jobs, and Justice}, 6.
\item[51] Collier-Thomas, \textit{Jesus, Jobs, and Justice}, 6.
\end{footnotes}
images. Planters believed the practice as moral and necessary to the foundation of the society, as Africans stood as the inferior race in their eyes. The Confederate States needed this mentality to spread, especially on the cusp of emerging as an independent nation from the United States.

Confederate engravers used banknotes to physically show the differences between the races. Peering at the same four-dollar bill that displayed the loving enslaved mother holding her child, her opposing image on the left side of bill displayed a White woman also working the fields. Her clothes appear similar to those of the mother, but the image highlights her beauty with the flowers arranged in her hair. She sits with a cloth full of wheat on her lap with her hand rested on top with a scythe. Her hat hangs in her other hand, while a friendly dog sniffs her (Figure 3.5). This image created many questions of comparison for enslaved women and White women. Were the Confederates simply attempting to create a sense of equality between the women, or did the separate images of the two women literally placed on two opposite ends of a bill and metaphorically sit on two ends of the debate on slavery? The image presented the idea that all Confederates, man or woman, worked hard for their country and way of life. She illustrated a tried-and-true Confederate.52 This comparison continued to create the illusion of White supremacy and justification for enslaving others.

The efforts of sustaining a successful economy and society for the new nation became another justification for enslavement used on wartime banknotes, as mentioned with earlier pre-war notes and recycled images that appeared in early wartime. As seen

through the various elements chosen for slavery engravings, plantation owners depended on enslaved labor for agricultural tasks. This theme can be seen throughout all the images, through the enslaved man carrying a basket of cotton or corn, or the mother carrying not only her child but also an apron full of tobacco. In several other scenes, backgrounds illustrate multiple other enslaved men working fields. The first official issuing of Confederate Treasury Notes in March 1861, a fifty-dollar bill printed in Montgomery, Alabama shows three enslaved African Americans working in a cotton mill. The wardrobe appears similar to those depicted in earlier discussed bills, and this scene becomes all too common for enslaved individuals and currency illustrations. Another note detailing the work of the enslaved emerged from the Confederate states in the third issuing in September 1861. Two enslaved men, watched by an overseer, pack barrels of cotton onto a steamboat, which would transport the cotton as an export for selling. In this same issuance of currency, a ten-dollar bill from Richmond, Virginia displays a less detailed picture of an enslaved man hunched over in a field, picking cotton. On this same bill, a boat appears again in a serene landscape scene, nodding to one of the most utilized transporting methods for goods. Several hundred dollar bills printed between August 1862 and January 1863 include the engraving of several enslaved Africans tending to a cotton field. This imagery demonstrated the need for slave labor all the time, because the fields required work between planting and harvesting seasons. In the same month, Mississippi produced a fifty-dollar bill with two scenes of slavery. The one in the right, lower corner compares to the same scenes used time and time again. An enslaved male with oversized, rolled-up clothes picks cotton into a basket. However, the

one in the top center of the bill puts more girth behind the status of enslaved individuals.

A male slave sits upon a saddled horse, dressed from head to toe with a whip. He rides along on the front horse of a group of four that are pulling a wagon full of crops. His well-dressed appearance alludes to the image of a White man; however, his dark complexion confirms the use of the enslaved in moving the harvest from field to market or further transportation methods.\(^\text{54}\) Repeatedly, a connection to both cotton and the institution of slavery becomes obvious through the themes printed on the currency.

This theme carries through a twenty-dollar banknote printed by Georgia Savings Bank in June 1863. The figure in the forefront resembles an enslaved man carrying a basket of cotton utilized on many banknotes. This time the image expands to show his fellow enslaved men and women working in the cotton field of the plantation. This small illustration displays at least seven enslaved individuals picking or loading cotton baskets indicating the amount of forced labor required for tending to the fields.\(^\text{55}\) The crops also represent the backbone to the Confederate economy, driving home the continued use of slavery.


Macon, Mississippi continued to set the need for cash crops at the front of banknote imagery in 1864. The twenty-five-cent bill exhibits a cotton boll full of the harvestable, white cotton in the lower, left corner (Figure 3.6). The fifty-cent bill replaces this image with an enslaved man hoeing the field, most likely getting ready for planting season. His wardrobe compares to the ones seen on earlier bills; he wears a wide brimmed hat with a buttoned shirt and rolled up sleeves. His pants appear to fit
incorrectly for his size, the length rises above his ankle without a noticeable roll of the pants leg. In this picture, the enslaved man also works barefoot. (Figure 3.7) At first glance, each of these depictions may not hold much significance but in breaking down what details the engravers included, a large history emerges.

Starting with the cotton boll on the twenty-five-cent bill, this image stands for a major backing of the Confederate economy, in which the production of cotton relied greatly on the institution of slavery. “Since the South produced most of the world’s supply of cotton at the time…Keeping the proceeds from of the cotton loaned to it by the planters was expected to provide ample money for the government.” The Confederacy relied heavily on the cotton produced and sold for the foundation of their economy. The foundation also incorporated the supposed need for enslavement of African Americans to plant, tend, and harvest these cotton crops, as seen in the fifty-cent bill. As mentioned in prewar literature, working as enslaved men or women served the greater good by tending to the corps for food or cash, like cotton. The enslaved sacrificed their freedom for the betterment of the nation. Both of these individual aspects combined into the basis of the Confederate ideology and plan for a sustainable future as a sovereign nation, providing a reason for so many bills to illustrate enslaved labor in the harvesting and transportation of crops. Looking at these other examples only drives the ideas of the southern culture home.

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58 Fitzhugh, “Sociology for the South, 1854” in Defending Slavery: Proslavery Thought in the Old South, A Brief History with Documents, 191.
However, this plan of sustaining the needs of the nation and continuing the use of slavery would fail. While the reason for both failures comes from different avenues, the results remained the same. The Confederacy failed to realize that Great Britain had stockpiled cotton in previous years, and that the Union would eventually blockade imports from the Confederacy during the height of the war. This situation prevented the cotton sales from booming, as the Confederacy intended. The result was a domino-effect in the inability to provide rations, guns, ammunition, and any other necessities soldiers or civilians needed as the war waged. This shortfall directly affected the results of the war, as the Confederate soldiers were unable to stand equally against Union soldiers causing an inevitable defeat for the Confederacy. This defeat also ended to the institution of slavery on which the southern states had relied from the beginning of their settlements. The United States ordered all Confederate currency destroyed, mirroring the destruction of the Confederacy and practices of slavery. However, this destruction did not end the promotion of the ideology of African American inferiority. Several financial instruments encouraged the restriction of now freed African Americans, years after the war’s end, ultimately advocating Jim Crow segregation.  

Chapter Four: Slavery to Segregation and the In-Between

“The Negro, on the contrary, is imitative, social, easily domesticated, and, as long as kept in subordination to a higher race, will ape to a certain extent its manners and customers. But the Negro rises only to a certain point of imitation-his intellect permits no approach to civilization but that of imitation,” Dr. Josiah C. Nott wrote these words in 1866, despite the conclusion of the Civil War and cease to the institution of slavery. He reiterates the idea that southern mentalities of superiority did not end with the ending of the war, which financial instruments of the 1870s also demonstrated through the continued used of imagery of enslaved men and women. With these images, southerners rebelled against the military control allowing African Americans to live lives equal to that of a White man, even granting them the right to vote with the ratification of the 15th Amendment in February of 1870.

The conclusion of the Civil War also ended the fight between the North and the South and the institution of slavery, which ultimately freed African Americans to live their own life. This era became known as Reconstruction, which historian Eric Foner has dubbed the Second Founding of the United States. African Americans leaped over centuries of discrimination with adoption of the 15th Amendment that began journey for equality between men of all races. However, this newly granted freedom did not suit

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60 Josiah C. Nott, “Instincts of the Races, 1866”, in Defending Slavery: Proslavery Thought in the Old South, A Brief History with Documents ed. Paul Finkelman (Massachusetts: Bedford/St. Martin’s, 2003), 205.
well the southern mentalities of racial superiority. In other words, “The slavery problem became the Negro Problem.” The desire to inhibit African American equality continued, and the engravings on several financial instruments made this evident. Several states’ use of images once seen on Confederate banknotes remained unrelenting, especially after the 1870 ratification. While states issued banknotes very year leading up the 1865 institution of the national banknotes introduced in the North during the war, there remained a five-year gap in banknotes and other financial instruments that used images of African Americans. Once the images appeared again, the continued promotion of African American inferiority, into the 1870s, promoted the approval of legal segregation for Blacks and Whites became evident. However, what led up to the reissuing of these images?

The early days of Reconstruction turned the tables for southern Whites and many African Americans. Southern states left the war penniless, without even basic necessities to live on. Their livelihoods in ruin with little food, their livestock gone, even their homes destroyed by the war. As money became scarce during the war and its aftermath, jobs disappeared too, as no one could afford to pay White or Black workers. In some states, like South Carolina, the state allowed southerners to exchange their banknotes for bonds at half the value. But, this was not the most mortifying part of the aftermath for the former Confederates. Many escaped enslaved men joined forces with the North, and now stood as armed guard in the occupied South. Now, the inferior race became the master

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63 Mark Moyar, Donald Kagan, and Frederick Kagan. "Reconstruction in the South." In A Question of Command: Counterinsurgency from the Civil War to Iraq. Yale University Press,
and the South would not let this stand, prompting the renewed interest in advocating for separation between the races.

Starting in 1870, the State of Mississippi issued a two-dollar bill showcasing three African American males pushing large wheat bushels into a horse drawn wagon. The engraving illustrates men fully dressed in still tattered clothing. This image continued to reiterate the messages of labor needs seen before and during the war. Looking closely at the image, another pre-war message appears on the face of the African American standing on the wagon, pulling on the bushel. In this image, the man pulls this bushel with a smile on his face, changing the idea of the ‘happy slave,’ to the ‘happy farm laborer.’ (Figure 4.1)  

This image continues the idea of contentment for African Americans at this level in society. While contentment with the life remained doubtful for

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64 Heritage Auctions Texas, “Jackson, MS-State of Mississippi $2 1870,” Heritage Actions: The World’s Largest Numismatic Auctioneer.
those who continued to live and work on plantations that once enslaved them, many had no choice but to stay in the same conditions. Sharecropping prevailed, and “despite the abolition of slavery, the plantation remained the basic unit of production, the landlord maintained strict control over the labor process and work schedule, and the workers and their families continued to be housed in centralized slave quarters.”  

New conditions came with destruction of enslavement. While freed African Americans continued to live and work on the land, plantation owners had to pay wages, and many times wages were miniscule or simply crop portions in lieu of currency. Planters also had to refrain from physical violence against their workers. By the year this banknote mentioned above was printed, sharecropping had become common place across the South. This institution allowed Whites to continue controlling the African American race and place a glass ceiling above them.

Figure 4.2 $2 Railroad Bond, Selma, Marion, and Memphis Railroad Company, Marion, Alabama, 1871. Heritage Auction Collection

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Within a year, other financial instruments emerged advocating the once enslaved labor. In March 1871, Selma, Marion, and Memphis Railroad Company printed two-dollar railroad bonds displaying two of these images. The image to the left came directly from banknotes issued during the war with an African American individual carrying a basket of cotton on his shoulders and another behind him harvesting the fields (Figure 4.2, Figure 2.1, and Figure 3.4). To the right of this engraving, reveals another recycled image from the bill printed in 1870 in Macon, Mississippi. (Figure 4.2 and Figure 4.1)\textsuperscript{67} This note serves as the first with multiple images of previously enslaved individuals. These promotional illustrations also informed the rest of the nation of the mindset of the South, who refused to revise their way of thinking towards African Americans. Southerners remained determined to keep those they believed to be inferior as subservient. These images continued to pronounce the theme of agriculture and the need for this labor force, as justification for needing to confine African Americans.

For the next two years, South Carolina became a leading advocate for continuing African American labor through more recycled images on various financial instruments. On two March 1872 revenue bond scripts, South Carolina recycled an infamous image of General Francis Marion with his troops and enslaved individuals, eating a meal with a British officer during the Revolutionary War. The one-dollar revenue bond scrip reused an image of an enslaved individual driving a bull drawn wagon full of wheat bushels,

\textsuperscript{67} Heritage Auctions Texas, “Marion, AL- Selma, Marion, and Memphis Railroad Company $2 1871,” Heritage Auctions: The World’s Largest Numismatic Auctioneer; Heritage, “Jackson, MS-State of Mississippi $2 1870.”
seen on several banknotes used during the Civil War to promote the necessity of slavery.68

![Figure 4.3 $50 Certificate of Indebtedness, State of South Carolina, 1873. Heritage Auction Collection](image)

This advocacy for the subjection of African American became even more prominent on an 1873 State of South Carolina Certificate of Indebtedness (Figure 4.3, Figure 4.2, and Figure 4.3). On this instrument, engravers recycled two images of the enslaved from the years of tension and war. This printing mimics ones seen before the war as President George Washington sits between the two illustrations. The once enslaved labor sits in a prominent place upon the bill, like seen earlier.69 This certificate also displayed the signature of South Carolina’s first African American elected state officer Francis L. Cardozo signed the bill as State Treasurer. While this elected African American’s signature inscribed on the certificate would serve as a contrast to the images,

69 Heritage Auctions, “Columbia, SC-State of South Carolina Certificate of Indebtedness 1873 $50.”
his moderate politics aided in his election. Cardozo was born of a white father and a freed Black woman in 1836. He was well-educated and lived his life in as an advocate for the education of African Americans. Even with his mixed racial background, Cardozo identified as a free Black man, teaching and running the segregated school for African Americans in Charleston, which laid the foundation for a successful institution devoted to educating African Americans. Once he entered politics, his teaching days were over, but that did not prevent him using his influence in politics to continue to elevate African Americans in society. Cardozo won his first election in 1868 as Secretary of State, then successfully ran as State Treasurer in 1872. He petitioned for landowning and suffrage for all males. Instead of directly challenging the mindset of White South Carolinians, Cardozo fought their ideology by demonstrating a sense of equality amongst his peers through dress and educated speech. With this effort, he found success as the Secretary of State which led to his victory as treasurer. During his political years in South Carolina, which ended with the destruction of Reconstruction, Cardozo infiltrated the unrelentingly prejudice South Carolina government and validated the abilities of African Americans, ultimately challenging White beliefs even if Cardozo deliberately chose not to publicly declare the inaccuracies of their beliefs, which were displayed regularly in images engraved on all types of currency.  

The reuse of the images found on the 1873 State of South Carolina Certificate of Indebtedness, among several others, demonstrated the continued southern mentality full of racial hostilities and superiority complexes (Figure 4.3). Despite the loss of war and livelihood that the institution of slavery provided for southern planters, those who had sat on the side of the Confederacy refused to give up the fight. While at a glance, one could argue that these images printed following the Civil War advocated sharecropping, the continued use of recycled images from before and during the war indicated otherwise. In fact, these images allude to the “Lost Cause” narrative of the South. The states’ rights and pro-slavery cause unified the states and promoted the idea that Confederate led a just battle in the fight against Union imposition to abolish slavery. The idea provided the illusion that Confederates fought as heroes.71

Bringing honor to those heroes and countering the efforts of the federal government, in 1878, southern governments, now under their own rule, began enacting laws to segregate and restrict the recently granted rights of African Americans. Jim Crow laws permeated throughout the South. “The new Southern system was regarded as the ‘final settlement,’ the ‘return to sanity,’ the ‘permanent system.’”72 Sometimes, also referred to as the Second Reconstruction, Jim Crow laws prevented African Americans from using the same doors, rooms, water fountains, business, and more as Whites. African Americans even faced inferior education standards and supplies, all in efforts to limit their capabilities. At times the efforts to impede African Americans resulted in great

violence. These actions by the southern states should have come as no surprise to the rest of the American nation, as their mentalities and desires shined through the imagery engraved on the various types of currency used within the states before, during, and after the Civil War. Even when options to use state banknotes ended after the Civil War, southern states utilized other various financial instruments to influence attitudes towards African Americans. This unrelenting propaganda foreshadowed the decades-long ‘separate but equal’ policies that were anything but equal.

Chapter Five: The Haunting Life of Confederate Currency

Prior to the crumbling of the Confederacy, the stories told through the bills also stood as messages of support for the nation’s ideology and economic systems. Several themes appear repeatedly throughout all printings of the bills that represented the continuation of cultural dependence upon agriculture and the enslavement of African Americans to perform the laborious jobs associated with large-scale farming, while also paying homage to influential people of the past. Both agriculture and the institution of slavery remained the basis of the newly formed republic, and the bills promoted the ongoing and future processes that the Confederacy planned to exploit in sustaining the economy. The bills justified the existence and utilization of slavery but also connected to those individuals that any American would hold in high regard, stating that this new nation held steadfast to the ideals of the founding fathers and presented a sense of staying power through the chosen engravings, just like the beginnings of the United States of America. The use of financial instruments as propagandic methods became an obvious choice, which continued years past the end of the Civil War and the failure of the Confederacy.

In each example of propagandic currency used historically, a powerful statement was created, just like the images chosen for Confederate currency, which created a physical representation of what soldiers fought and died for. The *Lost Cause* became personified as these engravings illustrated the exact reasons for their just case. They
allowed for the “blend of romance and politics that still has enormous resonance today.”

Confederates were heroes of a White supremacy, and this ideology continued into the years following the Civil War, proven by the recycled images used on printed bills into the 1870s. This influential method left lasting impressions upon all those in contact with the bills.

However, do experts consider this effort successful? Binnington’s previously work dives into just this question. After the surrender of Fort Sumter in South Carolina, four additional states officially seceded, making a total of eleven states joining forces to support the Confederate cause. None of the Confederates states seceded from their newly formed nation, excluding the split of West Virginia from Virginia, even as their side’s likelihood of success loomed gloomily. Even after defeat, it remained clear that Confederates still believed in the same ideologies, as legalized racism continued throughout the history of the United States. The Confederate flag continues to evoke political debate due to its origins in racial bias, and people’s insistence on continuing to publicly display it. Binnington claims the messages sent through currency images remained unsuccessful in creating “national sovereignty and economic policy.” His words hold some truth. Yes, the images did not generate enough support to base a national independence on, but they did help breed the ideology throughout the states. Currency alone cannot create a sustaining power, but it created support to the extent of its reach. Furthermore, as Binnington also notes, the images had the potential of aiding in the shared understanding and support of the idealized nation the Confederates

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75 Binnington, Confederate Visions, 92.
envisioned. Consequently, collective thought encouraged by these images no longer rested in nationalism but led to the continued discriminatory beliefs many descendants still hold on to.

The end of the war lead to the destruction of a nation and its currency, but it did not bring a destruction to the beliefs of those loyal to the cause. The images engraved on the bills printed by the Confederate States create visible evidence of the thought processes, attitudes, and experiences of both those enslaving men and women and the enslaved. What these images also induce are questions about the realities of those enslaved versus the romanticized life exhibited on the bills. The morality of the use of slavery always takes the forefront of the discussion, but also how the planters and slave owners saw their own actions. As a result, they continued to utilize the illustrations of enslavement well after the destruction of the institution. From a society woven by the idea of paternalism, the images on various currencies accurately display these Confederate ideals while also glossing over the truths that come with these practices, creating an illuminating window into the past that still looms in the air of today. Many groups strived to continue the work started by the Confederacy; the Ku Klux Klan, Dixie Republic, the League of the South all aimed to keep the status of Whites and Blacks skewed, in the name of honor and southern justice. The institution of Jim Crow Laws also reiterated this message. However, what did these images invoke for those who witnessed them after the war?

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76 Binnington, *Confederate Visions*, 92.
A local resident of Frogtown, a segregated African American community that formed in Columbia, South Carolina during the 1930’s, retells her grandmother’s stories of finding Confederate banknotes scattered along the banks of Gills Creek. These bills, presumed to have been dropped by fallen Confederate soldiers during Sherman’s March through the area, symbolized the time of enslavement in the area, metaphorically and physically in the currency images. Furthering that idea, the artifacts invoked new daily routines enriched in African American spiritual beliefs. Residents would intentionally leave the creek around which centered their day-to-day clothes washing, fishing, swimming and religious practices, by dusk. This was to prevent any disturbance of the dead in the area, especially those whose money then lined the creek and had spent their last days fighting to keep Blacks enslaved. The scenes of slavery seen on many bills throughout the Confederate United States existence have continued to leave a lasting impression on folks on both sides of the images.

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78 Frogtown Resident, Conversations with Author, 10 September 2020.
Works Cited and Consulted

Secondary and Published Sources


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Collections

John W. Jones, “Color of Money” Exhibit Collection

Heritage Auctions: The World’s Largest Numismatic Auctioneer Collection

National Archives Collections

WPA Collections