



Money in Tallahassee

The Transactions of Territorial Florida



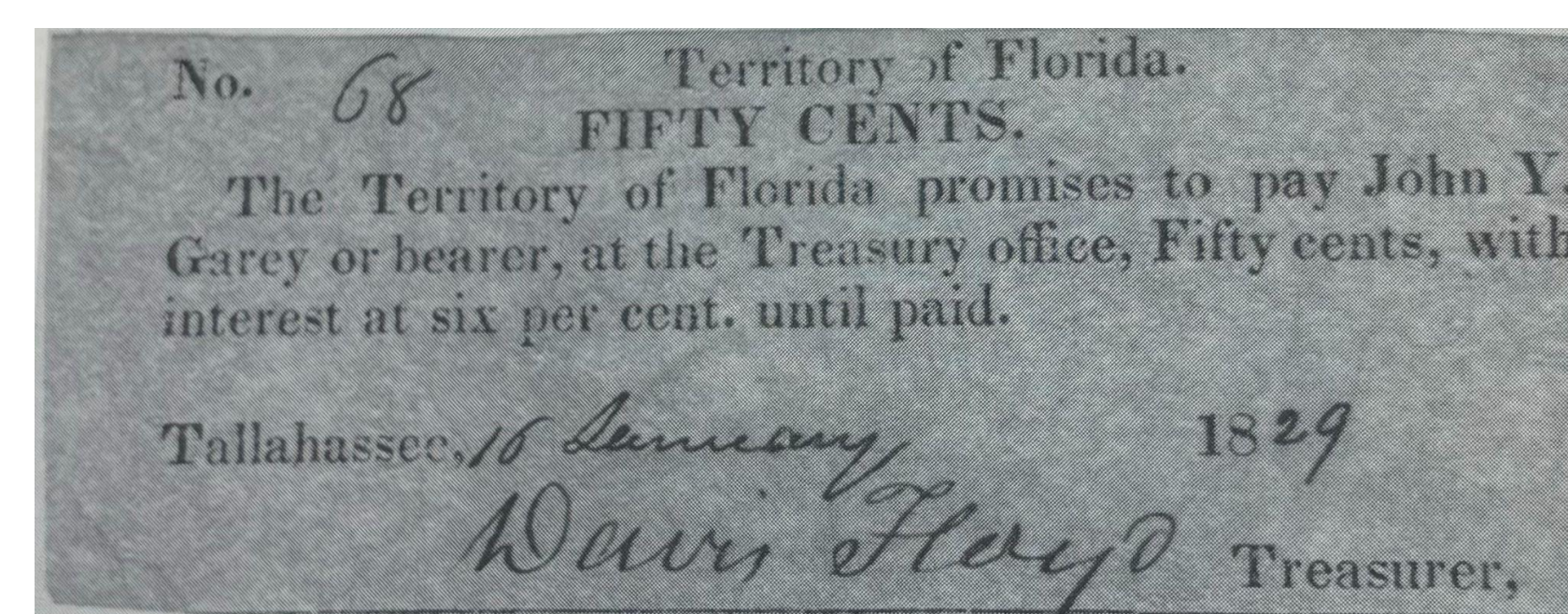
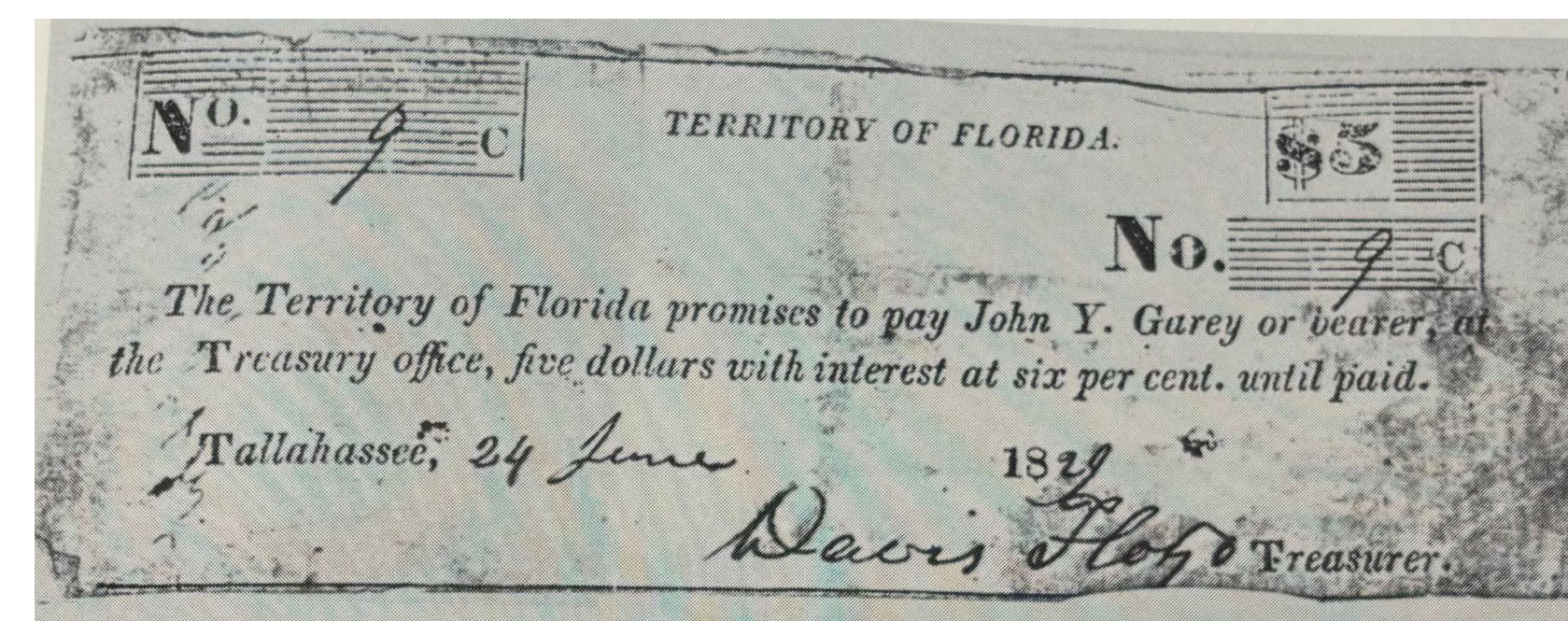
Matthew Turner, Mentors: Dr. Benjamin Gunter, Ms. Idy Codington

Abstract

A defining event in the history of Florida was the establishment of a capital in Tallahassee in 1824. This research tracks a timeline of currency in circulation during Tallahassee's territorial economy from 1824-1845 in order to learn more about how financial transactions were completed during this era. Mediums of exchange range from leftover Spanish gold and silver to bills of exchange, barter, documentation of transactions, and even playing cards up until Florida began establishing banks and printing banknotes. The research will help historians and reenactors alike as Tallahassee celebrates its bicentennial.

Methods

- The study follows a multi-case research design.
- It comprises a deep analysis of various forms of exchange in Territorial Tallahassee.
- Emphasis is placed on the first settlements in 1824 until about 1840 (some currency studied date beyond).
- Understanding the history of exchange in Tallahassee is essential, including the settlement of Tallahassee and attempts to establish banks.
- Several historians, archaeologists, and anthropologists were consulted, and their works were studied.
- Craig Willis' article titled "Merchants and Planters Bank of Magnolia: A Case Study of Florida Territorial Banks" in the *Apalachee* magazine was referenced.
- Dr. Lou Hill provided several archaeological findings, including coins used in early Florida exchange, including U.S. coins and Spanish currency..
- Denly's of Boston, a website that auctions off territorial Florida currency, supplied images of bank notes and cash from various established banks.



Types of Currency

- Bank notes, scrip
- Spanish currency, U.S. coins
- Promissory notes of exchange

Results

- Territorial Tallahassee had little access to banking.
 - Difficulty in setting up banks under Florida territorial governor William Pope DuVal.
 - DuVal believed banks were "unsound in principle" due to lack of limits on loans and charter forfeiture provisions.
 - Most banks crashed from excessive loaning.
- Transactions primarily conducted on an individual level through the exchange of promissory notes due to scarcity of specie.
 - Interstate transactions used essentially imaginary currency.
- Spanish currency in circulation leftover from Spanish control.
- In 1828, the Territorial Council established the first bank in territorial Florida: the Bank of Florida, overcoming DuVal's veto.
- Another 17 banks received approval for charters in the following decade.
- Banks loaned and accepted different types of bank notes with varying values and imagery.
 - Imagery often depicted everyday Floridians, farmers, merchants, and Native Americans.

References

Benice, Ronald J., and Fred L. Reed. *Florida Paper Money: An Illustrated History, 1817-1934*. McFarland & Co., 2011.

"Denly's of Boston." *Collectible Currency, Collectible Paper Money, U.S. Paper Money*, www.denlys.com/inventory/display.asp?table=%5BInventory+-+Obsoletes%5D&state=FL. Accessed 18 Feb. 2024.

Florida Memory • Tallahassee Rail Road Company Scrip, www.floridamemory.com/learn/classroom/learning-units/railroads/documents/scrip/1. Accessed 15 Feb. 2024.

Hill, Lou, personal communication, February 29, 2024

Sampson, Paul, personal communication, March 8, 2024

Willis, Craig. "Merchants and Planters Bank of Magnolia: A Case Study of Florida Territorial Banks." *Apalachee*.