



Money, Mayhem & Might™:

*How the Civil War Changed Our Money and
How Money Changed the War*

“War is Hell”...Union General William T. Sherman

War is also as expensive as hell and in this tumultuous era (1860s & 1870s) the landscape of our money and our banking system was literally transfigured by the exigencies of the War of the Rebellion. Some of the changes were quite sudden; most were due to the National Bank Act and related legislation which were at the time were considered as “war-time measures.” The “greenbacks” (paper money) that we carry today started in the Civil War; the legend “In God We Trust” appeared in 1864; our national banking system swept in during the Civil War. There are tales and stories of men and women who shaped the US Treasury and ran the Mints (North and South), of rare forgotten coins, of rumors of lost wealth following the War; and many other upheavals that took place in one explosive era that led up to and followed the US Civil War.

Contact the Author, R. J. Lank, for further information:

Email [**diesinker1861@gmail.com**](mailto:diesinker1861@gmail.com) Phone 301-797-4146

Facebook @mintandprint

Impact of the Civil War Era

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Highlights and Factoids

- Federal “greenbacks” are first introduced
- Thousands of private tokens emerged in 1862 & were outlawed in 1864.
- “In God We Trust” introduced on the two-cent piece in 1864; motto causes controversy to this day
- Having the likeness of a living person on U.S. currency is outlawed in 1866, due to controversy during the Civil War.
- Only living woman printed on currency was Lucy Pickens on a Confederate \$100 bill in 1863.
- Secret Service is created to fight rampant counterfeiting
- U.S. Treasury hires many women; begins a lasting trend.
- Smallest coin ever minted by the U.S., in Philadelphia, is a silver three-cent piece called a “trine”.
- Three out of five U.S. Mints seized by the CSA in 1861; two are closed forever (in Georgia and North Carolina).

Author R.J. Lank (Hagerstown, MD)
is an amateur historian and numismatist.
Lank developed a general interest program,
No Small Change™ sharing many highlights of the
upcoming book, **Money, Mayhem & Might™**.

