

160 XIV. THE NATIONAL GOLD BANK NOTES OF CALIFORNIA

These notes are the most romantic of all American currency issues. Their existence is directly traceable to the California Gold Rush of 1848 and they remain today as tangible mementos of the winning of the West.

These notes are instinctively associated with gold. First, the paper on which they are printed is yellowish in imitation of gold and second, the reverses show a group of American gold coins of all denominations from 1 to 20 Dollars. See the illustration in the text.

As the population of California continued to grow, trade and commerce increased to such an extent that California's banks were soon handling enormous quantities of gold coin in their daily transactions. In those days in California, gold was the universal medium of exchange. The counting and handling of so much coin was burdensome and time consuming and was a barrier to the efficient operation of the banks.

Therefore, in order to facilitate these numerous gold transactions, Congress passed the Act of July 12, 1870, which authorized nine Gold Banks in California and one in Boston to issue and circulate currency redeemable in gold coin. This was indeed remarkable, since the Treasury Department had not yet resumed specie payments (which were not to come until 1879.) The denominations issued were 5, 10, 20, 50, 100 and 500 Dollars, but not all banks issued all denominations.

The vignettes on the obverse of these notes are the same as on the National Bank Notes of the First Charter Period.

The name of the Boston bank that was authorized to issue National Gold Bank Notes was the Kidder National Gold Bank of Boston, Mass. It is believed that its entire issue of gold notes was recalled and destroyed before they were released to the public. Only two specimen notes are known to exist, one of 50 Dollars and the other of 100 Dollars.

These banks were Gold Banks in addition to being National Banks, and so their operation came under the general provisions of the

National Banking Act of 1863 and they were required to deposit the legal amount of United States Bonds with the Treasurer of the United States.

It must be remembered that the obligation of redeeming these notes in gold coin rested with the bank and not with the government.

These notes were readily accepted in California at par with gold, and they went through a long life of active and useful circulation. Indeed, so active was this circulation that very few notes have survived in their original new condition.

Any National Gold Bank Note in crisp new condition is practically unheard of and is an outstanding rarity. The general condition in which these notes are found is one of advanced circulation and notes in very fine or better condition are extremely rare. All these notes, regardless of their preservation, are very rare today and are greatly in demand by collectors.

The obligation on these National Gold Bank Notes is as follows. "This note is secured by bonds of the United States deposited with the U.S. Treasurer at Washington.... The (name of bank and city) will pay Dollars to bearer in gold coin on demand This note is receivable at par in all parts of the United States in payment of all taxes and excises and all other dues to the United States, except duties on imports, and also for all salaries and other debts and demands owing by the United States to individuals, corporations, and associations within the United States, except interest on public debt."

All the notes in this section have a red Treasury Seal and the signatures of Allison and Spinner except the following:

1153, 1160a and 1163 have the signatures of Bruce and Gilfillan.

1147, 1150 and 1157 have the signatures of Scofield and Gilfillan.

ALL NOTES IN THIS SECTION ARE INFREQUENTLY FOUND IN A STATE OF PRESERVATION BETTER THAN VERY GOOD.

5 Dollar Notes

DESIGN 1 4 2

(Notes 1136–1141)

Vignettes similar to Design 101, but with wording pertaining to gold coin.



Design 1 4 2 Reverse

A group of gold coins, showing the 1, 2 1/2, 3, 5, 10 and 20 Dollar pieces.



The note illustrated is from the collection of the American Numismatic Association, no. 1987.0126.0476.

No.	Date	Name of Bank	City	Fr2	Gd4	VG8	F12	VF20	EF40
1136.	1870	First National Gold Bank	San Francisco						
1137.	1872	National Gold Bank and Trust Company	San Francisco						
1138.	1872	National Gold Bank of D.O. Mills and Co.	Sacramento						
1139.	1873	First National Gold Bank	Santa Barbara						
1140.	1873	First National Gold Bank	Stockton						
1141.	1874	Farmer's National Gold Bank	San Jose						

10 Dollar Notes

DESIGN 1 4 3

(Notes 1142–1151a)

Vignettes similar to Design 102 but with wording pertaining to gold coin.



Design 1 4 3 Reverse

The note illustrated is from the collection of the American Numismatic Association, no. 1987.0126.0477.



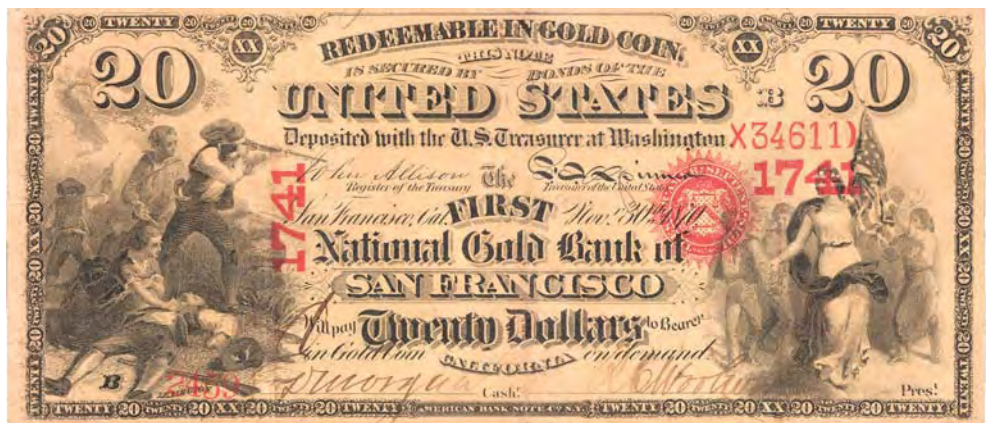
No.	Date	Name of Bank	City	Fr2	Gd4	VG8	F12	VF20	EF40
1142.	1870	First National Gold Bank	San Francisco						
1143.	1872	National Gold Bank and Trust Company	San Francisco						
1144.	1872	National Gold Bank of D.O. Mills and Co.	Sacramento						
1145.	1873	First National Gold Bank	Santa Barbara						
1146.	1873	First National Gold Bank	Stockton						
1147.	1875	Series. First National Gold Bank	Stockton						
1148.	1874	Farmer's National Gold Bank	San Jose						
1149.	1874	First National Gold Bank	Petaluma						
1150.	1875	Series. First National Gold Bank	Petaluma						
1151.	1875	First National Gold Bank	Oakland						
1151a.	1875	Union National Gold Bank	Oakland						

20 Dollar Notes

DESIGN 1 4 4

(Notes 1152–1159b)

Obverse: Vignettes similar to Design 103 but with wording pertaining to gold coin.



Design 1 4 4 Reverse

The note illustrated is from the collection of the American Numismatic Association, no. 1987.0126.0478.



No.	Date	Name of Bank	City	Fr2	Gd4	VG8	F12	VF20	EF40
1152.	1870	First National Gold Bank	San Francisco						
1153.	1875	Series. First National Gold Bank	San Francisco						
1154.	1872	National Gold Bank of D.O. Mills and Co.	Sacramento						
1155.	1873	First National Gold Bank	Stockton						
1155a.	1875	First National Gold Bank	Stockton						
1156.	1874	Farmer's National Gold Bank	San Jose						
1157.	1875	Series. First National Gold Bank	Petaluma						
1158.	1875	First National Gold Bank	Oakland						
1159.	1875	Union National Gold Bank	Oakland						
1159a.	1873	First National Gold Bank	Santa Barbara						
1159b.	1872	National Gold Bank and Trust Company	San Francisco						

50 Dollar Notes

Design 1 4 5

(Notes 1160–1161f)

Vignettes similar to Design 104 but with wording pertaining to gold coin.



Design 1 4 5 Reverse

The note illustrated is from the collection of the American Numismatic Association, no. 1987.0126.0479.



No.	Date	Name of Bank	City	Fr2	Gd4	VG8	F12	VF20	EF40
1160.	1870	First National Gold Bank	San Francisco						
1160a.	1875	Series. First National Gold Bank	San Francisco		Four known				
1161.	1874	Farmer's National Gold Bank	San Jose		Unique				
1161a.	1872	National Gold Bank and Trust Company	San Francisco		Unique				
1161b.	1872	National Gold Bank of D.O. Mills and Co.	Sacramento		Unknown				
1161c.	1873	First National Gold Bank	Stockton		Unknown				
1161d.	1873	First National Gold Bank	Santa Barbara		Unknown				
1161e.	1874	Series. First National Gold Bank	Petaluma		Unknown				
1161f.	1873	Union National Gold Bank	Oakland		Unknown				

100 Dollar Notes

Design 1 4 6

(Notes 1162–1166IV)

Vignettes similar to Design 105 but with wording pertaining to gold coin.



Design 1 4 6 Reverse

The note illustrated is from the collection of the American Numismatic Association, no. 1987.0126.0480.



No.	Date	Name of Bank	City	Fr2	Gd4	VG8	F12	VF20	Thre	F40
1162.	1870	First National Gold Bank	San Francisco		known					
1163.	1875	Series. First National Gold Bank	San Francisco		Two known					
1164.	1873	First National Gold Bank	Santa Barbara		Unique					
1165.	1874	First National Gold Bank	Petaluma		Two known					
1166.	1875	Union National Gold Bank	Oakland		Unique					
1166I.	1872	National Gold Bank and Trust Company	San Francisco		Unknown					
1166II.	1872	National Gold Bank of D.O. Mills and Co.	Sacramento		Unknown					
1166III.	1873	First National Gold Bank	Stockton		Unknown					
1166IV.	1874	Farmer's National Gold Bank	San Jose		Unknown					

500 Dollar Notes

Design 1 4 6 -A

(Note 1166a)

Vignettes similar to Design 106 but with wording pertaining to gold coin.

Reverse is similar to Design No. 146.

1166a. This denomination was issued by three banks—the two in San Francisco, and the one in Sacramento. No specimens are now known to exist, although four notes are still outstanding.