

# Tenino Area Chamber of Commerce

Thank you for purchasing one of our \$21 Wooden Money Scrips and supporting our Tenino Area Chamber of Commerce COVID-19 2021 Small Business Recovery Program. You can present your Wooden Scrip to participating Tenino Area Businesses. You need to spend the entire \$21 at one location as no change will be given. Please visit our Facebook page for an updated list of participating businesses or look in their store front for the sign that says they are accepting Tenino Wooden Money. For more information please contact George Sharp at [gsharp@thurstonedc.com](mailto:gsharp@thurstonedc.com).



## The History of Tenino Wooden Money

By Don Major, from The Thurston County Independent, Feb. 19, 1965

The Nation, and Tenino, was gripped by the Great Depression in 1931, and money was scarce. The Independent in November of that year advocated editorially that scrip be used to meet the currency shortage. Then on December 5th, 1931, the matter of emergency struck home with the failure of Citizens Bank of Tenino. Joel Gould, now of Olympia, came over from Buckley to act as liquidator. This tied-up the accounts of the depositors while the affairs of the defunct bank were being adjusted. Thus the shortage of money became acute.

The Tenino Chamber of Commerce met to meet the emergency and agreed to issue scrip to permit the depositors to assign 25% of their bank accounts to the Chamber. The printing press at the Independent office was soon running out of assignment forms and definite amounts of limitations. The printing denomination scrip was pieces the size of paper 25 cent denomination bond paper without any of the Chamber of F.W. Wichman, D.M. signed each piece. They certificates "During the of Citizens Bank Of printed in December, which \$1,279 was circulated. Eventually the Chamber redeemed \$1,079.75 of this scrip.



depositors signed for money within the 25% of \$1, \$5 and \$10 done on engraved money then in use. The scrip was the yellow fancy border. Trustees Commerce Committee, Major and A.H. Meyers, agreed to redeem the Process of Liquidation Tenino". This scrip 1931 totaled \$3,255, of

Some samples of "slice wood", a new printing material, had been received from Albert Balch of Seattle, who was promoting it for Christmas cards and other items. This was made in a special machine at Aberdeen by a man named Eckersley. Sitka spruce and Port Orford and red cedar were used. The first pieces were flimsy sheets of 1/80th of an inch thick. The 25 on hand were sufficient to put Tenino in the wooden money business. Later the slices were sandwiched with a paper in between. One issue of a thousand even carried a "watermark" reading "Confidence makes good; Money made of wood", which could be seen by holding it up to the light. This was supported to guard against counterfeiting.

The publicity of Tenino Wooden Money began to snowball in February, 1932, the old Seattle Star carrying the story early that month, followed by the Tacoma News-Tribune, Oregonian, Seattle P-I and others. The Halls of Congress heard of the unique method of meeting the money shortage and in March it was featured in the Congressional Record. Thousands of stories and comments appeared over the world in newspapers and magazines. Orders from collectors and souvenir hunters came in increasing demand and eight issues were printed thru 1932-33, mostly in 25 cent denominations, but also in 50 cent and \$1. In all \$10,308 worth of wooden money was issued of which about \$40 was redeemed by the Chamber of Commerce. In April, 1935, business people used small wooden fifth cent tax tokens due to a state shortage of tokens. Like the original wooden money, they are now quite valuable. End

In 2020 the City of Tenino created the COVID-19 Recovery Grant Program and issued a \$25 Wooden Scrip to Citizens who had been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Word of the grant program quickly spread around the world through many media outlets. A google search for Tenino Wooden Money will bring up many of the stories.

In 2021 the Tenino Area Chamber of Commerce partnered with the South Thurston Historical Society (Tenino Depot Museum) to print the \$21 Wooden Scrip on the same 1890 printing press that printed the original 1932 Wooden Money. We hope you enjoy being part of Tenino's History of Wooden Money by participating in our Tenino Area Chamber of Commerce COVID-19 2021 Small Business Recovery Program.