

ORIGIN OF THE TERM “DIXIE”

Notes from many banks were accepted at face value only in the localities where they were present. However, there was one bank which was very well respected up and down the Mississippi, Ohio, and Missouri Rivers. This was the Citizens Bank of Louisiana, one of the strongest in the South. When the bank was fined almost a quarter of a million dollars in 1861, it was able to pay immediately in gold.

New Orleans, where this bank was established, included a large population of French-speaking citizens. Accordingly, the bank began to issue notes printed in both English and French. The ten-dollar bills had “dix”, the French word for “ten”, featured prominently on the back of the notes issued in the 1850’s and again in 1860. These notes circulated extensively throughout the South as well as the towns along the rivers.

As a result of the notes’ wide circulation, the South became known as the “land of dixes”, or Dixieland. This led to Daniel D. Emmett’s composition of “Dixie” in 1859, which became one of the most widespread tunes during the Civil War.