

Lancaster's Infamous Counterfeiters

By Richard D. Shindle

On April 19, 1899, two Lancaster businessmen were taken into custody by United States Secret Service Agents for producing counterfeit revenue stamps. During the approximately 3 years in which the counterfeiters used bogus revenue stamps on a large portion of cigars manufactured by William M. Jacobs, it is estimated that they defrauded the United States Government out of \$125,000 in tax revenues.

In addition to being apprehended for the above crime, they were also implicated in a conspiracy to produce \$10 million in counterfeit currency.

This case represented the most ingenious and boldest counterfeiting scheme ever to confront the United States Secret Service.

Inception

Although the United States Secret Service was originally organized by Allen Pinkerton during the Civil War to gather information on persons engaged in treasonous activities, it was disbanded when the hostilities ended. However, it was later recreated in July, 1865 as a branch of the Treasury Department to investigate and apprehend counterfeiters.

Since its inception for this purpose, the Secret Service has been confronted with many counterfeiting cases but probably the most dangerous counterfeit scheme ever perpetrated in the United States was conceived by two Lancaster businessmen.

Conception of this plan is credited to William M. Jacobs who operated a cigar factory on the northwest corner of Grant and Christian Streets in Lancaster, Pa. His partner in this scheme was William L. Kendig who ostensibly operated a leaf tobacco warehouse at 212 N. Queen Street but was in reality employed by Jacobs.

In 1892, these two men devised a plan to reproduce the revenue stamp that was required by the federal government to be placed on every box of fifty cigars that was manufactured in the United States.

Jacobs, the chief conspirator in this crime, was born in Bucks County and before moving to Lancaster in 1892, operated cigar factories in Boyerstown and East Greenville, Montgomery County. Prior to becoming involved in the cigar business, he had been employed as a clerk in a bank in which his father was a director. Shortly before moving to Lancaster in the previously mentioned year, his cigar factory in East Greenville was destroyed by fire. Consequently, he relocated his cigar business in Lancaster.

Kendig, his partner in this scheme to defraud the Government, was born in Conestoga Center and moved to Lancaster in 1882, when he accepted a position with his brothers as a jobber for tobacco products. He later became a salesman for the Eagle Cigar Company.

Although Kendig and Jacobs had been involved in some illegal ventures earlier, this was the largest conspiracy ever undertaken by them.

It is alleged that Jacobs and Kendig became involved in a scheme in the early 1890's whereby a fictitious company was created to purchase merchandise for resale to the public. The firm which was supposedly located in New York City, had the merchandise shipped to Philadelphia where they sold it at an auction. When their creditors sought payment for their products, they were dismayed to find that the firm was nonexistent.

However, before they could proceed with their counterfeit operation, there were certain problems to be surmounted. Among these were securing paper that possessed the same texture as that used by the Government. To facilitate this obstacle they gained entry to the factory in Massachusetts that manufactured all the paper used by the United States Government to print their monetary notes. While inside the building, they tripped over a wire attached to the alarm system and alerted the guards to their presence. They then quickly secured a few pieces of this unique paper as samples and beat a hasty retreat to safety.

Their next problem was finding someone who was capable of duplicating the texture of the paper. This obstacle was resolved when Kendig located William Heiser, who operated a paper mill near Chambersburg, Pennsylvania. Heiser assured Kendig that he would be able to reproduce the paper without any difficulty.

Kendig informed Heiser that the paper was to be used as labels for an Indian patent medicine to be shipped to Europe. In explaining the watermark "U. S. I. R.", Kendig informed the owner of the mill that it was a secret mark used by the firm making the medicine.

After securing the paper for their counterfeit scheme, Jacobs and Kendig were still faced with the problem of finding an engraver who could reproduce an exact copy of the vignette of Henry Clay on the fifty cigar stamp.

Since Philadelphia at this time was noted for the expertise of its engravers, Kendig began his quest for an engraver in this city. His search eventually led him to an engraver's office at 1005 Walnut Street which was operated by Arthur Taylor and Baldwin S. Bredell. These two men were exactly the type of individuals he had been looking for, both morally and professionally.

Taylor was a master at the art of photo-etching and had invented a process superior to anything known up to that time. His partner, Bredell, was the inventor of a pantograph, a mechanical device used to reproduce a drawing on the same or different scale, and was also an expert transferer.

The exact date when Jacobs and Kendig began printing their bogus revenue stamps is not known but it is generally agreed that it was during the early months of 1896.

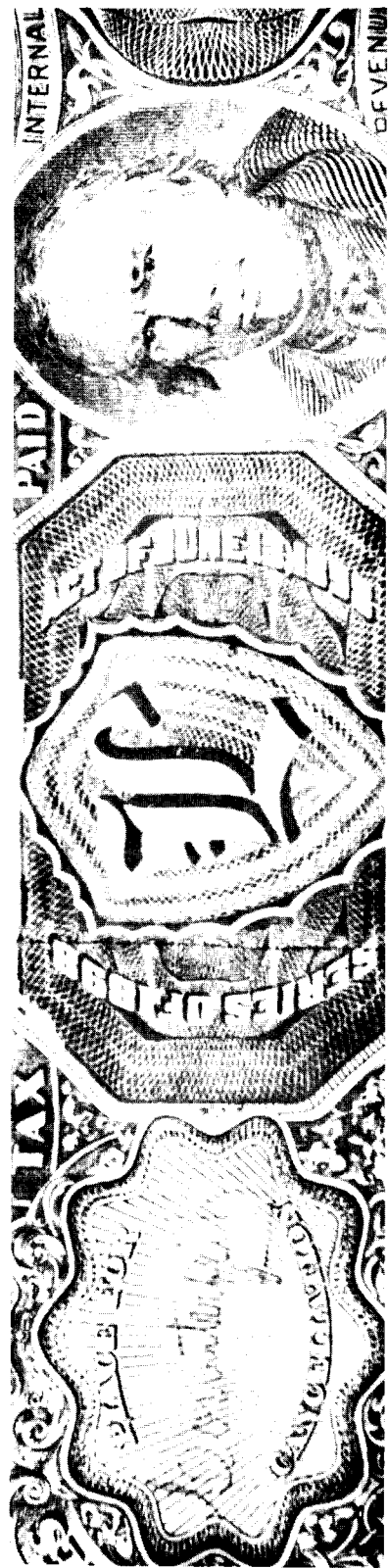
Printing operations were located on the second floor of Kendig's tobacco warehouse at 212 N. Queen Street, with Kendig doing the actual printing. Aiding him in this pursuit was his warehouse foreman, James Burns, who performed any mechanical repairs that were necessary.

Burns, a native of Lancaster, had previously worked as a jobber and seller for tobacco products but when Robert Clark was elected as Mayor of Lancaster in 1890, he accepted an appointment as a policeman for the Ninth Ward. After serving in this position for a year, he resigned to become a foreman in Kendig's tobacco warehouse.

After the stamps were printed in Kendig's tobacco warehouse, they were placed in cases that had previously held leaf tobacco and shipped to Jacob's cigar factory where they were affixed to a large portion of the cigars manufactured by Jacobs' 300 employees.

Jacobs, always an enterprising businessman, devised a plan that allowed him to utilize the counterfeit stamps to the utmost. He obtained the names of a large number of cigar dealers throughout the United States and would ship them cigars that they had not ordered. Naturally, the dealers refused to accept them until through correspondence with Jacobs they were offered the cigars at bargain prices.

Approximately one year after the inception of their spurious revenue stamp operation, Jacobs, Kendig and their engravers, Bredell and Taylor, con-



Photograph of Kendig/Jacobs counterfeit cigar tax stamp used as evidence in the trial of the local counterfeiters. The stamp was presented to the Lancaster County Historical Society by the late F. Lyman Windolph, prominent attorney and son of J. Rathvon Windolph, Deputy Collector of Internal Revenue at the time of the counterfeiting. This 1898 series stamp had been issued less than a year before the counterfeits were detected, which means Kendig/Jacob had printed earlier issues under the previous Internal Revenue Act.

ceived a scheme which would enable them all to retire as wealthy men.

Their grandiose plan involved the printing of 10 million dollars, in denominations of 20, 50 and 100 dollar certificates. They then planned to bribe a cashier in one of the Government's Sub-Treasuries and deposit the whole 10 million dollars, exchanging it for genuine currency. By using this method, the Government would unwittingly circulate the spurious notes.

Discovery

To insure that they had control over all the aspects involved in the printing of the 10 million dollars worth of spurious notes, the conspirators planned to purchase machinery for producing their own paper and ink.

While Kendig and Jacobs were busy preparing things in Lancaster for their latest counterfeiting scheme, Bredell and Taylor were at work in their Philadelphia office making the plates to be used in printing the bogus bills. It was while they were engaged in this pursuit that they became desperately in need of money. Unable to secure any financial aid from Jacobs or Kendig they decided to print some bogus bills from their completed \$100 "Monroe Head" silver certificate plate.

Unfortunately for them and their confederates, Jacobs and Kendig, one of their spurious notes was discovered shortly after it was put into circulation in June, 1897. Credited with this discovery was George Cremer, an official in the Sub-Treasury located in Philadelphia. Cremer first noticed that the seal on the counterfeit bill was discolored, being salmon pink instead of carmine. He also thought that the bill was thicker than that of an ordinary silver certificate. In every other respect the bill was perfect. To verify his suspicions, Cremer forwarded the bill to the Treasury Department in Washington, D. C., to be examined by experts there.

Upon closer examination by Captain William P. Hazen, Chief of the United States Secret Service, it was disclosed that the bill was made in two parts. After subjecting the bill to a steaming process it separated, therefore leaving no doubt that it was a bogus bill.

Alarmed by the quality of this superior counterfeit bill, the Government immediately called in the entire issue of \$100 "Monroe Head" silver certificates, which amounted to 23 million dollars.

Although the Treasury Department officials were perplexed as to who was producing these bogus notes, they were certain that the workmanship was well above any counterfeiter known to them.

By January 1898, the Secret Service had been working on the case for approximately six months but was not any closer to finding the manufacturer of these spurious notes than they had been when the case began. Also by this

time they had uncovered eighteen counterfeit bills from various sections of the country.

The latest innovation used by the counterfeiters was the changing of the first three digits on the bill. Whereas they had previously used the numbers 346 for the first three digits of the serial number, the latest bills forwarded to the Treasury Department began with 325.

Jacobs and Kendig, unaware that their engravers had printed and passed some counterfeit bills, were stunned when the Government publicly disclosed the fact that they had discovered the bogus bills, in mid January 1898.

John E. Wilkie, a Chicago newspaperman, replaced Captain Hazen as Chief of the United States Secret Service in February 1898. Wilkie, renowned for solving mysterious crimes and publishing exposes, began his career as a police reporter and eventually became editor for the *Chicago Tribune*, one of the city's largest daily newspapers.

Shortly after assuming command Wilkie appointed William J. Burns to investigate any engraver in the United States that he thought would be capable of producing this superior counterfeit. Burns, who had worked as a detective in the Columbus, Ohio Police Department before joining the Secret Service in 1889, had a reputation for solving counterfeit cases. Approximately eleven years later, he was destined to form the internationally renowned William J. Burns Detective Agency. Burns was also to serve as the director of the Bureau of Investigation, predecessor to the F. B. I., between the years 1921–24.

Early in March 1898, Wilkie decided that since the first counterfeit bill was discovered in Philadelphia that this city offered the best opportunity for securing a clue. Leaving Burns in command in Philadelphia, he departed for New York City to take charge of the investigation there. On March 12, he received a telegram from Burns informing him that the parties had been located. He immediately returned to Philadelphia to aid Burns in the surveillance of Bredell and Taylor.

Surveillance

During Burns' initial investigation in Philadelphia, he discovered that Bredell and Taylor possessed the qualifications that were necessary to produce the superior "Monroe Head" silver certificate counterfeit bill. He also learned that shortly after the counterfeit bill was discovered in June, 1897, that the engravers displayed unusual signs of wealth. It was after learning these facts that Burns telegraphed Wilkie to return to Philadelphia.

To aid in this investigation, Wilkie called in Captain John E. Murphy of the St. Louis District; Mathew F. Griffin and Thomas R. McManus from the Pittsburgh Division and Charles E. Stanley, a Chicago operative.

With the assistance of the above mentioned men Bredell and Taylor were under surveillance 24 hours a day. In addition, all the mail and packages that the engravers received or sent were examined by the Secret Service agents. While probing the engraver's mail, the Secret Service agents found that their suspects were receiving shipments of alum, glue, bleaching chemicals and skeins of red and blue silk, all of which could be used by counterfeiters.

In December 1898, Bredell and Taylor relocated their engraving business in Philadelphia to Ninth and Filbert Streets. Situated on the top floor of a Grand Army Hall and free from being observed from neighboring buildings, it was the perfect location for anyone engaged in unlawful activities.

Shortly after relocating their business to the Filbert Street address, Bredell and Taylor, either individually or together, began making trips to Lancaster, Pa. Unknown to them was the fact that Wilkie's men, in various disguises, were following them. It was at this time that the Secret Service agents first became aware that Jacobs and Kendig were also implicated in the counterfeiting conspiracy.

Although this was the first indication that Jacobs and Kendig were involved in the "Monroe Head" \$100 silver certificate conspiracy, they had been under suspicion by the Secret Service in connection with their bogus stamp operation since February, 1898.

Nine months later, in November, 1898, Lancaster's Revenue Collector, Henry L. Hershey, learned that Jacobs was using bogus revenue stamps on his products. This information was related to him by Aldus Herr, a co-worker of Hershey, who was formerly employed as a clerk in Jacobs' cigar factory. Herr, told Collector Hershey that he had reason to believe that Jacobs was using counterfeit revenue stamps. The reason he believed this to be true was that prior to leaving Jacobs' factory for his present job, Jacobs had taken charge of the revenue books and stamps. Prior to that time only authorized personnel were able to dispense revenue stamps and have access to the books.

After listening to Herr's story, Collector Hershey secured a warrant to search Jacobs' and Kendig's business establishments. Before searching these buildings, Hershey disclosed his intentions to his chief deputy, Pierce Leshner. Leshner, whom the Secret Service agents had confided in when they suspected Jacobs and Kendig of making bogus stamps in February, 1898, pleaded with Collector Hershey not to serve the warrants. He then told Hershey about the Secret Service's investigation into the revenue stamps produced by Jacobs and Kendig.

William Burns, who had charge of the investigation into Jacobs' and Kendig's activities, requested Collector Hershey not to proceed with his search because the Secret Service didn't want to do anything until they were sure that they had the engravers who made the "Monroe Head" plates. Hershey, however, didn't give up his plans to search Jacobs' and Kendig's factories until the Treas-

ury Department sent him specific instructions that he was to do nothing at this time.

A few months later, after searching Kendig's factory for evidence, the Secret Service men were almost forced to make premature arrests in the case when they found that their escape route had been blocked by a group of individuals who had congregated in the rear of the building. Finally, the subjects of their consternation departed from the scene and they were able to leave the building at approximately 5 o'clock in the morning.

The third incident that threaten to impede the investigation occurred in early February, 1899.

A few days after a visit to Lancaster by Chief Wilkie, Thomas Devlin, a clerk in the Imperial Hotel (now the site of the Brunswick Motor Inn) where Wilkie and Burns usually stayed while visiting the city, noticed a picture of Wilkie in a magazine. While staying at the hotel, Wilkie signed the register as Mr. Wilson, and Burns who posed as an insurance agent selling policies to wealthy individuals outside his territory, registered as W. J. Martin. Devlin called Burn's attention to Wilkie's picture but Burns managed to persuade the hotel clerk that although Wilkie did resemble Mr. Wilson there were slight differences between the two men.

One month prior to this last incident, Jacobs and Kendig learned that the Secret Service was investigating their bogus revenue stamp operation. This information was relayed to them by Samuel B. Downey, a deputy Internal Revenue collector in Lancaster, whom they had bribed.

On January 31, 1899, in an effort to delay the inevitable, Kendig sought the aid of Ellery P. Ingham, a Philadelphia lawyer who had served as United States District Attorney during President Benjamin Harrison's administration. Kendig had selected this particular lawyer to assist the counterfeit gang in their present dilemma because he had learned from Jacobs that Ingham had been instrumental in securing an acquittal for two men in a perjury case in which he was the prosecuting attorney. Ingham allegedly received \$1,000 for his efforts in this matter. Also during this first meeting between the two men, Kendig informed Ingham that he and Jacobs had the plates that were used to produce the now famous "Monroe Head" counterfeit \$100 silver certificates. Kendig also at this time asked Ingham if he thought it would be possible to bribe William J. McManus and William Burns, the two Secret Service men investigating his and Jacobs' activities. If so, he and Jacobs would be willing to pay for this protection for as long as two years.

During a subsequent meeting with Ingham on February 15, 1899, Kendig informed his counselor that he and Jacobs would be able to pay \$3,000 a month protection money.

On February 20, 1899, Harvey K. Newitt, Ingham's law partner and for-

mer assistant United States district attorney under Ingham, offered Secret Service agent William J. McManus a bribe of \$1,000. McManus reported this overture by Newitt to Burns and United States District Attorney James M. Beck who instructed him to accept the ex-assistant United States district attorney's proposal.

Two days later, Newitt paid McManus \$500 and promised to pay this amount to the agent each month for a year if he refrained from arresting Jacobs and Kendig during this time period.

On March 11, when Kendig paid Ingham \$1,100, the latter informed Kendig that he and his confederates could resume their printing operations. On April 9, Kendig made another payment to Ingham and inquired as to the identity of No.2, who was Harvey K. Newitt, but Ingham declined to make this information available to Kendig.

Ten days later, the Secret Service agents conducted a raid on Jacobs' and Kendig's factory and tobacco warehouse in Lancaster.

Arrest and Conviction

By mid April, 1899, Chief John Wilkie and his associates decided that they had enough incriminating evidence against the members of the counterfeiting ring to effect their arrest. Therefore, on April 18, 1899, Wilkie and his 26 agents were sworn in as deputy United States marshals so that they would be able to make the arrests themselves.

Wilkie retained 12 agents in Philadelphia to help with the incarceration of Bredell and Taylor and dispatched the other 14 operatives to Lancaster.

At noontime on the above date, Wilkie and his men proceeded to the engravers' office on Filbert Street. Wilkie purposely selected this particular time because he knew that the two men would not be in their office at this time, thus enabling him to place his men in strategic positions for the arrests.

Upon their arrival at the above address, Wilkie sent Agents William Burns and John Murphy into the building to await the return of their suspects while he and the rest of his men waited in the street outside the building.

Shortly thereafter, Taylor entered the building and was greeted by Burns and Murphy. The agents then escorted Taylor inside the office and made their intentions known to the engraver. Upon being notified that he was under arrest, Taylor almost fainted but quickly regained his composure. Five minutes after this incident occurred, Bredell entered the office and was also placed under arrest.

After both men were in custody, Wilkie and his agents began a systematic search of the office. During the search, Wilkie and his men discovered a partially completed plate for a "Lincoln Head" \$100 certificate in Bredell's desk which

W. L.
KENDIG
TOBACCO
WHSE.

PENNA. RAILROAD
STATION

EAST CHESTNUT STREET

**Location
of
Counter-
feiters'
Ring
1898**

IMPERIAL
HOUSE

E. MARION STREET

U. S.
POST
OFFICE
& IRS

NORTH CHRISTIAN STREET

NORTH DUKE STREET

NORTH QUEEN STREET

EAST ORANGE STREET

W. M.
JACOBS
CIGAR
PTY

POLICE
STATION

AMERICAN
HOUSE

EAST GRANT STREET

COUNTY
COURT
HOUSE

PENN SQUARE

EAST KING STREET

was opened by a key the agents found on him. Also located during their quest for evidence was a key found hanging on a wall in the engravers' office which Wilkie believed to be a key to Kendig's factory. Wilkie's assumption about the key was vindicated later in the evening when he used it to gain entrance to Kendig's warehouse on N. Queen Street.

Upon completing their search, the Secret Service agents gave Bredell and Taylor the choice of remaining in their office under guard until morning when they were to appear at the United States marshal's office for a hearing or spending the night in prison. They choose the former option.

Later that evening, Wilkie and a few of his men departed from Philadelphia on the 10:18 train for Lancaster, arriving in the city at 12:30 a.m. Upon their arrival they were met by the 14 operatives assigned to Lancaster and the entourage immediately proceeded to Kendig's warehouse where they admitted themselves with the key found in the engravers' office.

After an all night vigil by the agents their first unsuspecting victim, Kendig's foreman, James Burns arrived at the factory at 7 o'clock and upon entering Kendig's private office was immediately placed under arrest. A half-hour later, Kendig arrived and shared his foreman's fate. To state that Kendig was somewhat surprised when he entered his office and was confronted by the Secret Service agents would be putting it mildly, because he was unable to utter a word.

After taking their prisoners into custody the agents began to probe Kendig's warehouse for evidence.

During their probe, the Secret Service agents located a printing press, a fifty cigar stamp plate and 3,000 sheets of stamps printed on paper so perfect that its bogus nature would have defied detection by an expert. Included among the counterfeiters' other assets were nine tons of revenue paper stored in 37 cases which had previously held leaf tobacco. This was more revenue paper than the Bureau of Engraving and Printing in Washington D. C. normally had in stock at any given time.

While the above search was being conducted, Wilkie sent Burns and Agent Schuyler Donella from the Omaha District to Jacobs' factory to apprehend the chief conspirator in this crime. When the agents arrived at the factory, they discovered Jacobs' bookkeeper and shipping clerk, Simon Klineordlinger and Harry Brallier respectively, were alone in the office. Burns and Donella immediately placed these two men under arrest but they were later released since the Government felt that they were not directly involved in the counterfeiting scheme. Shortly after the above episode, Jacobs entered the office and was immediately placed under arrest.

After Jacobs and Kendig were apprehended, the Government placed attachments on Jacobs' deposits at the Farmers, Fulton and Northern National banks; however, the amounts remaining in these various accounts were small.

Later that evening, United States District Attorney James M. Beck arrived in Lancaster from Philadelphia to appear at a hearing for Jacobs, Kendig and Burns. Representing Kendig and Jacobs at the hearing were their lawyers, J. Hay Brown and John E. Malone. Burns had no counsel. All the accused counterfeiters waived a hearing since the evidence against them was monumental and subsequently posted bail. The Government placed Jacobs' bail at \$45,000 since he was the chief conspirator of the counterfeiting scheme while Kendig and Burns were each adjudged \$25,000 bail. Jacobs and Burns, unable to secure a bondsman for their bail, were lodged in the county prison overnight and taken to Moyamensing prison in Philadelphia the following morning. Kendig, the only one of the three prisoners to secure a bondsman, was free on his own recognizance until his appearance in court for sentencing.

Also arrested on April 19th was Harvey Newitt, the lawyer who had attempted to bribe Secret Service Agent William J. McManus.

On the above date, McManus had sent Newitt a letter prepared by Chief Wilkie stating that arrests at Lancaster were imminent. He also requested a meeting with the lawyer immediately. During the meeting between the two men, Newitt offered McManus \$500 if he could forestall the impending arrests. At this point McManus gave a prearranged signal to the Secret Service agents who had been trailing the two men and placed the lawyer under arrest for bribery.

On April 24, five days after the initial arrests were made in the counterfeiting case, Deputy Revenue Collector Samuel B. Downey and Newitt's law partner, Ellery P. Ingham, were taken into custody by the Secret Service agents. Downey was charged with receiving bribes for withholding information relative to Jacobs' and Kendig's counterfeit revenue stamp operation. Ingham, apprehended in his Philadelphia law office, was charged with attempted bribery. Downey readily confessed that he was guilty as charged but Ingham maintained his innocence. Both men were adjudged \$10,000 bail but Downey, unable to secure a bondsman, was taken to Philadelphia and after spending the night in a hotel was committed to Moyamensing prison.

Two days later, during a hearing in the United States Circuit Court of Philadelphia, Kendig identified Ingham as the person he paid to bribe Secret Service Agent William J. McManus. However, Ingham and Newitt maintained their innocence and choose to stand trial to clear themselves of the charges lodged against them.

The trial originally scheduled for June 26, 1899, was postponed until October 9th, due to the illness of Ellery P. Ingham who was alleged to have a chronic condition of gastritis.

On October 20th, eleven days after their trial began, Ellery P. Ingham and Harvey K. Newitt were found guilty of bribery and conspiracy, as charged. They planned to appeal the verdict and consequently were not sentenced until

November 24, 1899, when they were committed to the Eastern Penitentiary for two and a half years.

Approximately eight months later, on June 5, 1900, sentences were imposed on the other principals involved in the counterfeiting plot. Jacobs and Kendig were each fined \$5,000, costs and sentenced to serve 12 years in prison. These sentences were light in comparison to the prison terms which could have been meted out to Jacobs and Kendig. If the maximum penalty would have been imposed on all the charges lodged against them they would have been imprisoned for over 100 years.

Burns, Kendig's foreman, was sentenced to a year and a half for his part in the counterfeiting scheme. Downey, the Internal Revenue collector who became a confidant of Jacobs and Kendig, was imprisoned for two years.

The engravers, Bredell and Taylor, were sentenced to serve 12 years in prison but they had seven years added to their terms when Taylor's brother, Harry, was caught passing \$20 counterfeit bills that were produced from plates made by the aforementioned engravers.

With the conviction of Jacobs and his confederates, one of the boldest counterfeiting schemes ever conceived in the United States was thwarted. To achieve this victory, the United States Secret Service utilized the services of over 100 men, women and children.

Appendix A

UNITED STATES INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE OFFICE OF 1898-1899 Ninth District

(Serving Adams, Bedford, Blair, Cumberland, Dauphin, Franklin, Fulton, Huntington, Juniata, Lancaster, Lebanon, Mifflin, Perry, Snyder and York counties)

Office in U. S. Post Office Building, 120 N. Duke St., Lancaster

U. S. Revenue Collector, Henry L. Hershey
Chief Deputy Collector, Pierce Leshner
Division Deputy Collector, Samuel B. Downey
Deputy Collectors

Lemuel S. Eisenhower	Howard B. Rhoads
Joseph Bossler, Jr.	John W. Kirk
Jacob B. Lichty	Abbie Eby
William A. Reed	Joseph Rathvon Windolph

Alexander S. Moore

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Tape by Dr. Joseph Appleyard on Lancaster Counterfeiters

Correction

Mr. Richard D. Shindle's article titled "History of the Lancaster City Police Department, 1742 - 1977" in the *Journal* Vol. 82 No. 3, page 154, reported that the local law enforcement agency was responsible for the arrest of Jacobs and Kendig counterfeit gang. This is incorrect as can be attested from the foregoing article.