

# HISTORY IN YOUR HAND

"This bill looks strange," the merchant said,  
"I'd somehow got it in my head  
That all my bills had seals of green,  
And so I don't believe I've seen  
A bill like this; the seal is brown,  
And here's the name- a distant town.  
It even has a different look;  
I'm wondering now if I've been took".  
"Don't worry, friend, that money's good,  
It always was, and well it should.  
Our country's bonds, then backed by gold,  
When gold was cheaper, when it sold  
An ounce for twenty bucks or so,  
And other prices too, were low,  
Backed up those notes, one hundred per,  
You couldn't lose, not ever, Sir."  
It started many years ago,  
A Civil War, with days of woe,  
Had stretched our money out of reach,  
And so our problem was to teach  
Our people and our bankers all  
To use new money, and to call  
For NATIONAL BANKS throughout the land.  
The old type bank notes then were banned  
And bright new Nationals proud with art  
Circulated through the mart.  
Each was the same, but different too.  
They all had names that even you  
Would recognize; our own bank here  
Got its own notes like others near.  
They circulated far and wide  
And spread the word of local pride.  
To fuel the commerce of the nation  
From Big Stone Gap to White House Station,  
From Ballston Spa to Tonapah,  
From Birmingham to Beaver Dam,  
From Rising Sun to Six Mile Run,  
From Callaway to Buzzards Bay,  
They coursed like blood through human veins,  
Down city streets and country lanes,  
In our pockets, purses, tills  
They settled up our peoples bills  
At Kinderhook, they bought a book;

At Newport News, they paid for shoes.  
A house in Memphis paid their Queens  
With notes from banks in New Orleans.  
An abstract fee was paid in Nampa  
With notes a drummer brought from Tampa.  
A Tulsa cowpoke locked in jail  
Used Kansas notes to pay his bail.  
They circulated up and down  
The countryside, until we found  
A better way, or so we thought,  
To stretch our money when it bought  
Too many goods in times of stress  
And put the country in duress.  
A Central Bank is what we need!  
A place to finance and to lead,  
The way to proper fiscal class!  
We salute you Carter Glass.  
You gave us money quite elastic,  
Even at a cost most drastic.  
And so, the Fed Reserve was born  
And too, in time our banks were shorn  
Of all their bonds and all their notes  
Used to finance wars and boats.  
Gone are gold seals, brown and blue,  
Soon the red seals will be too.  
Numbers now instead of names,  
Hard for some to learn new games;  
And now that green seals are the most,  
Please permit this final toast:  
Here's to metals, ores and jewels,  
Coal, and oil and other fuels  
Here's to Farmers, Merchants, Traders,  
Butchers, Drovers, Wagon laders  
Here's to Citizen, Central, City  
Atlas, Aetna, titles witty  
Here's to local names and faces,  
Mountains, streams and other places,  
Battle fields, and Forts and townsites,  
Broken dreams and other dam sites,  
Whaling ships and Shoe and Leather,  
Indian manes and changing weather,  
Here's to NAMES all o'er this land —  
Here's to history in your hand.

BY JOHN T. HICKMAN