

SYKES, Richard L. Hospital Steward

The National Archives files for Officers contain sixteen documents for Richard L. Sykes. Several documents are found for Sykes in the files for Citizens. There are four different files in Citizens for men named Sykes, among them a Richard L. Sykes with a very different signature who supplied grain and forage in 1863 at West Point and Columbus, Mississippi. A good signature match was found on documents in the Citizens files where the signature was different than the hand of the clerk filling out the form. The Treasury note endorsement reads "Rich^d Sykes, Sept 14th /63," and has Interest Paid stamps for Jackson, MS in 1864 and Richmond, VA in 1865. Although no documents with Sykes' signature appear in the files for Officers, a summary card noted that he signed a clothing voucher in December 1863 as "Rich. Sykes," in a manner similar to the endorsement on the Treasury note; he also signed as "R. L. Sykes" in January 1864.

The placement of a hospital steward in the Military category at first seemed unlikely until National Archives summary cards were observed which noted that he received his appointment *as a hospital steward* from the Secretary of War on October 22nd or 27th, 1862. Furthermore, Sykes appeared on a roll of those surrendered as Prisoners of War, "of Hospital Attendants and Patients of West Point Hospital, Miss., of the Confederate States Army, commanded by Surg. F. H. Evans, surrendered at Citronelle, Ala., by Lieut. Gen. R. Taylor, C. S. A., to Maj. Gen. E. R. S. Canby, U. S. A., May 4, 1865, and paroled at Meridian, Miss., May 14, 1865." It is apparent that Sykes reported to F. H. Evans for most, if not all of his career, and a detailed accounting of Evans' locations during the war may be found in the

records for F. H. Evans in the files for Officers.

Sykes' documents show the record of a man of several professions, among them hospital steward, supplier of milk to the hospital, supplier of brooms to the hospital, and most interestingly, supplier of subscriptions of well-known magazines to the hospital.

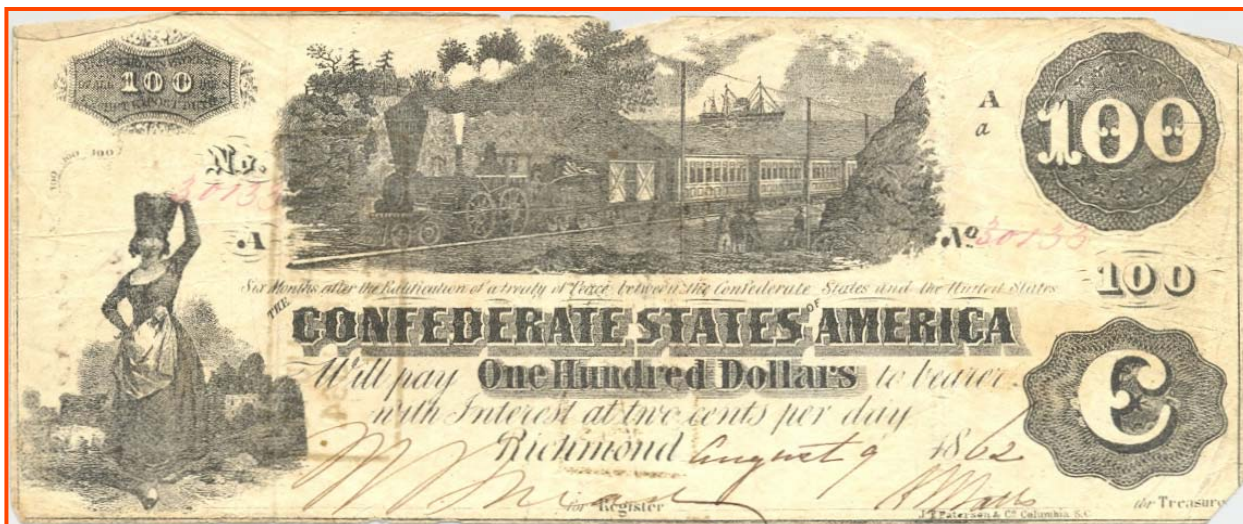
The letters in the file of F. H. Evans, Surgeon in charge of different hospitals at different times, discuss the need for the use of churches for space to treat patients. Sykes was attached as a Hospital Steward to the Oliver Hospital at Dalton Georgia, on September 15th, 1862; he received his appointment from the Secretary of War the following month. Sykes appeared on many rolls of this hospital dated January to August 1863.

No records exist for Sykes which specify his location during the time period from September 1863 to March 1864, but the records of his commanding officer, F. H. Evans may supply clues. Of interest is the date on the Treasury note of September 14th, 1863. F. H. Evans was transferred to the command of the hospital at La Grange, Georgia, in September of 1863, and it is possible that Sykes traveled to that location, too.

Evans was again transferred as Surgeon in Charge of West Point Hospital, Mississippi, where Sykes appeared on muster rolls for St. Mary's Hospital at West Point, Mississippi, from March 31st to December 31st, 1864. It was at this hospital that Sykes was surrendered as a prisoner of war on May 4th, 1865.

McNeil

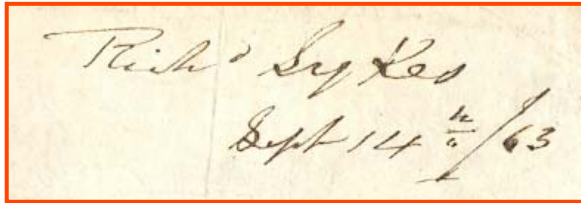
Post Script: Although Richard L. Sykes, the hospital steward, was assigned in 1864 to the West Point Hospital, Mississippi, there is no confusion with the volume grain and fodder supplier of the same name in that location. The grain supplier's signatures on documents to quartermasters are dated in 1863 at West Point, Mississippi, at the time the



Snead Watts
30133 Aa
9 Aug 1862
images: Moulton

hospital steward appeared on hospital rolls in Dalton, Georgia. The signatures are also very different in style, especially when the comparison is made on document copies where a clerk has not simply copied the signature. The two men named Richard L. Sykes appeared at different times in different locations with different occupations and different signatures.

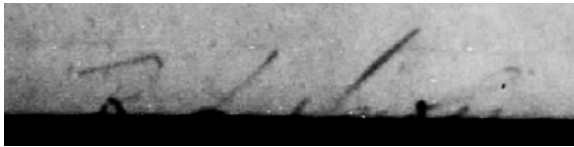
Although a date on a Treasury note usually denotes issuance of the note by an officer, in this case the date probably represents simply an endorsement, not issuance.



Rich^d Sykes
Sept 14 ^{1/2} / 63

R. L. Sykes' signatures from the National Archives.

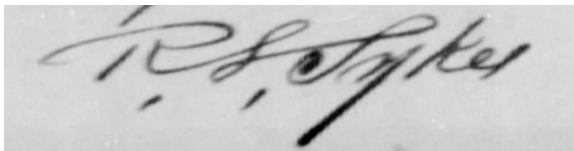
The earliest known example, signed on October 8th, 1862, at Dalton, Georgia, on a form from a Commissary. The signature is cut off at bottom, but the formation of the letter "R" is consistent with the Treasury note endorsement and different from the clerical hand in the form.



Signed on October 31st, 1862, at Dalton, Georgia, for the sale of milk to the hospital.



Signed on June 11th, 1863, at Dalton, Georgia, for the sale of 4 brooms.



(CONFEDERATE.)

S

Richard Sykes
Steward

Appears on a

Return

of Hospital Stewards serving in

Hospitals

of General Bragg's Army,

during the month of *July*, 1863.

Date of appointment *Oct 22*, 1862

By whom appointed *Deey War* 

Date of assignment *March 5*, 1863.

Post *Dalton Geo.*

Name of hospital *Oliver*

Remarks:

Check mark:

S Ham

Copyist.

National Archives summary card for Richard L. Sykes, Hospital Steward at Oliver Hospital, Dalton, Georgia, showing his appointment by the Secretary of War.. image: Fold3.com

Post Post Script:

I'm not arguing with Mike whether an endorsement by Sykes along with a date should categorize the note as military or civil; nor am I arguing whether the note was an authorized issuance or accidental. I am simply stating that the date, any subsequent date, creates an issuance that becomes a new date for interest calculation.

Here is one of several examples of what constitutes an issue that is found in a letter to John Boston, depositary at Savannah, GA from Treasury Secretary C. G. Memminger on June 16th, 1862.

"Whenever paid out at a subsequent date to the date of the note you will endorse on the back the date of the issue."

The only requirement for any issuance of a 7.30 note by the Treasury was an application of a date.

Richard L Sykes was Corporal Company K, 44th Regiment Mississippi 4 Corp Volunteers. He mustered into service at Union City, TN on May 28, 1861 and was with his Regiment at New Madrid Missouri as of August 8, 1861. He was listed as "Present" August 7th to Nov 1st, 1861. He was last paid by Captain George Dashiell (in book) at New Madrid on 31 Dec. 1861.

The Regiment reports, Dec 3rd 1861 - June 30, 1862 at Union City TN, list Sykes as "Absent". It goes on to say he was "Detailed in Hospital in Columbus MS" by Special Order of General (PGT) Beauregard, 27 May 1862.

Corporal Sykes was with his Regiment in Missouri as well as KY & TN until May 27th 1862 when his enlistment expired. The card file states that his regiment was first known as Blythe's First Infantry Battalion and says that it was merged into the 44th MS. A. K. Blythe was a Lt. Colonel and he was later promoted to Colonel. Colonel Blythe was killed on 6 April, 1862 and then replaced by Colonel J. H. Sharpe who would later become a Brigadier General on 28 Jan 1864.

Sykes' Company K, 44th Mississippi was also known as the "Tombigbee Rangers". That river runs from around Columbus MS down to the Mobile River a few miles north of Mobile, AL. The place Mike lists as where the troops were surrendered, Citronele AL, is about 30 miles 'up the Road' (RR Line) from Mobile. J. H. Sharp was a 1st Lt and then Captain of Co. K and would later be promoted to Colonel April 1862. The original Muster Roll called Co. K, Captain William L Huff's Company, MS. The Mustering Officer at that time was J. K. Ball, at Natchez Mississippi.

Co. K 44th MS Infantry, formerly Blythe's Regiment Miss Vols. was at Columbus, KY Jan-Feb 1862. They were next at Corinth MS March-April

1862 and then May-June 1862 at Tupelo MS. It was while R. L. Sykes was at Tupelo MS that he was detailed by General Beauregard to the hospital at Columbus MS. He was a Corporal until that time and when detailed, he was dropped in rank to that of Private. He was carried on the rolls of the 44th Co. K and they were required to pay him his base salary and it was better for the Regiment to pay him a lower base salary of Private instead of Corporal. All other amounts would be paid by whoever he was detailed to until he was detached to the C. S. Army.

Several record cards say he is, "Absent, and that he is at hospital Columbus MS by order Gen Beauregard from July through October 1862. At that point cards in his file showed him "Absent" and Hospital Steward Dalton, GA by Order Adjutant and Inspector General. It is here that he became part of the Regular Confederate Army and not a detailed Miss. Provisional Army CS soldier. The Special Order (SO) was No. 251/4 dated Oct 27, 1862 by A&I Gen. The exact date of his order to deploy to Dalton GA and subsequently marked "Absent" was Oct 15th 1862 and the exact date his detachment became official by S.O. No.251 was Oct 27, 1862. (Mike has Oct 22 or 27 in his book)

At that point we find that he was paid on June 30, 1862 and he is listed on card as Detailed, Hospital Steward at Dalton, GA. The records for March, April, May and June 1863 are missing. His other records are present for July and August of 1863 through April of 1864. He is listed on those record cards as "Absent" and "Detailed" to Dalton and most of them say "Last Paid ~ Unknown".

Hospital Muster Roll, Post Hospital, Dalton shows "S" (staff) Blythe's Mississippi and R. L. Sykes Private Co. A (was Co. K). He is listed as 'Present'. This was September 1862 and says that he was attached to the hospital Sept 1, ____ (year not marked but has to be 1862) and it also lists S.O. No. 251 A&I Gen. It says he was employed by F. H. Evans Post Surgeon.

The Oct 2nd card says he was "Last Paid by Major Ayre" (I found two spellings: Ayre & Ayres). A bit further down I found that he was 'Attached' to the hospital on Sept 15th 1862 and was 'Employed' as Steward. The next couple cards say employed by F. H. Evans, Post Surgeon and again they say paid by Major Ayre(s).

Descriptive List: This word is found on the back of several cards in his 44th MS roll. I also found the term "Descriptive List" in the Medical Department Regulations. It is a Record of any and all Pay due a soldier. It includes Bounty and other items such as Clothing paid and/or due to a soldier who has been detailed.

Register of Payments on Descriptive List: "as" Corporal - January 1 - May 28, 1862. - Paid: Nov 27th 1862 \$63.74 and "as" Private - May 29 - Oct 31, 1862. Paid \$143.49 (Clothing & Bounty)

One card says: R. L. Sykes, Private Co. A, Blythe's Regt, Miss, Appears on Report of Officers & Men, on detached service, from Anderson's Brigade, Wither's Division, Polk's Corp, Army of Tennessee. Another report dated: Camp on Fall Creek, May 3, 1863, was detached Oct 16, 1862 by order of Adjutant & Inspector General - what service: Hospital Steward. Yet another says: R. L. Sykes, Private Co A. Blythe's Regt Miss appears on a consolidated REPORT of absentees with leave and on detached service of Wither's Division, Polk's Corp, Army of Tennessee. Another report Dated: Shelbyville TN, March 24, 1863, Brigade: Chalmers; by authority: Secretary of War; No. & Date of Order: S.O. No.251, Oct 27, 1862. Another card says: Sykes, Richard L. - Hospital Steward; subject: Appointed; Special Order Number - 251/4, Oct 27, 1862. Further it says, Adjutant and Inspector General's Office Confederate States Contains information relative to the man named, on the Subject mentioned above.

It has been determined from his records that Sykes, R. L. was a common soldier with a voted rank of Corporal and he was in the field with his Regiment from his enlistment date of May 28, 1861 until his enlistment ended on 27 May 1862. He was most likely reported to have "certain skills" by his commanding officer and that information passed up the chain of command until it reached General P. G. T. Beauregard. With his enlistment up and possessing services so badly needed, Richard Sykes was enticed to stay in the Army with a post far from the front lines. His rank was lowered to Private and he was then detailed by order of General P. G. T. Beauregard to a local hospital at Columbus Mississippi on the 28th day of May 1862. He would remain in that location until he taken into the (official) CSA Army as Steward.

SYKES, Richard L. (CSA) was ordered to Dalton, Georgia from Columbus, Mississippi on October 15th 1862 by the Adjutant and Inspector General (A&IG) as (Acting) Steward based on Regulations. His position (rank) became official by S.O. No.251/4 of the A&I Gen. on Oct 27th 1862.

The Key term found on Sykes records is "Appointed". This was military, but at the same time it doesn't give us a connotation of forced enlistment. Someone who is "appointed" could decline the position and/or rank. Benjamin Franklin Evans of Evans & Cogswell (Printers) was "Appointed" Major & Quartermaster upon his return from England. B. F. Evans would decline his appointment and return to

run their printery which was by then relocated from Charleston to Columbia, S. C.

The 1860 Census said that the Sykes family lived in Lowndes County, City of Columbus, Mississippi where the hospital was located when he was initially detailed. His father, Richard L. Sykes, was a wealthy planter 57 years old. His mother Martha was also 57. He had two brothers 22 (lawyer) and 16 (student). The family real estate was valued at \$80K and a personal estate of \$130K was also reported on the Census. R. L Sykes, 20 years old in 1860, was listed on the census as a Medical Student born in Mississippi.

The father, Richard L. Sykes, a wealthy planter, most likely had political pull and would have been instrumental in helping his son acquire an official Confederate appointment as Steward. He is also my 'Best Guess' for the other Richard L. Sykes (farmer) who sold fodder and bushels of corn to the Confederate Quartermasters that Mike said wasn't this Richard L. Sykes.

W. Crutchfield Williams, II. (Crutch)