

# AUTOGRAPHED BANKNOTES, A NEW HOBBY

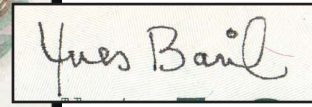
**Roland Rollins**

A new collecting interest for me was sparked by an unexpected gift. In late 2023, I penned an article for the Souvenir Card Journal about banknote engraver Yves Baril. A short time after the article appeared, a surprise package from **Greg Alexander** arrived – a half cordoba (50 centavos) banknote introduced in 1990 by Nicaragua. The note is autographed by Baril, who engraved Francisco Hernández de Córdoba, shown on the front of the note.

Most experts consider engravings of people the most difficult to achieve. I admire and appreciate the craftsmanship involved with designing and engraving banknotes. Time was, when you joined a banknote firm as an engraver, you basically became professionally incognito. Security printers did not want any part of their business known to the public. I believe it is worth taking the time to single out these craftsmen and acknowledge their work.



*The hand-signed Nicaraguan note that started a new collection.*



*Charles Gordon Yorke (who went by his middle name) signed the note below on the back vignette, which he engraved for the British American Bank Note Co. It is dated 1976.*

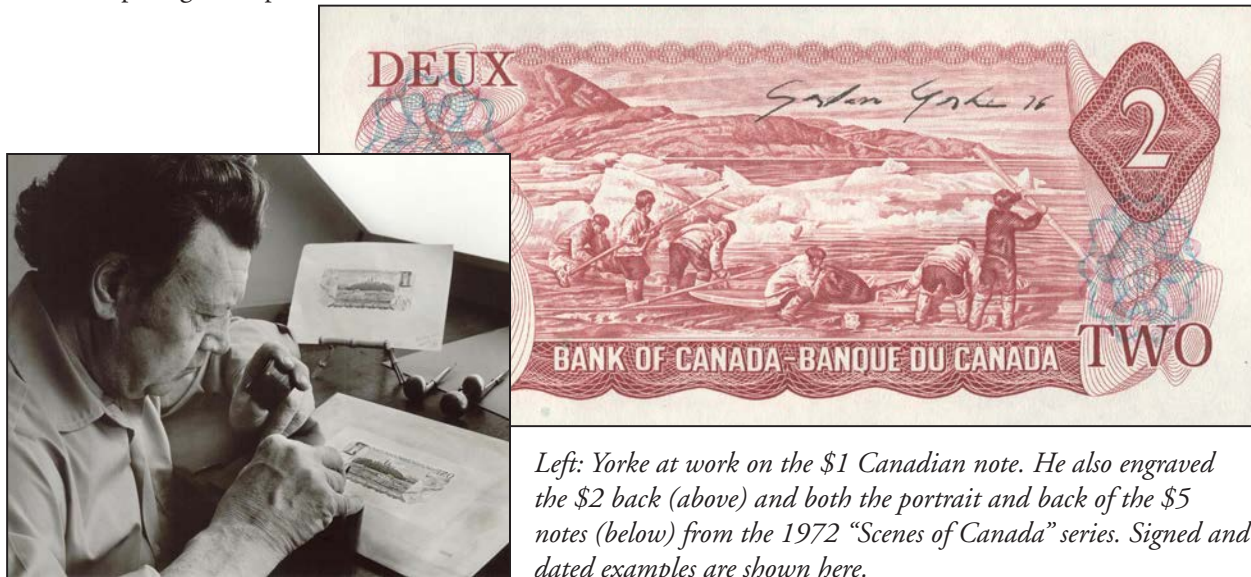


During much of 2024 I was able to acquire 17 banknotes and one test note, all autographed by their respective engraver or designer. Actually, I have two of the same banknote, one autographed by the engraver of the front and the other signed on the flip side by the engraver of the back.

I'd like to single out three banknotes engraved by Charles Gordon Yorke. He was a picture and portrait engraver for the British American Bank Note Company during his entire career of 31 years, from 1935 to 1975. His work was cut short by a degenerative neurological disease contracted the year he retired from BABNC. Baril at Canadian Bank Note and Yorke at BABNC probably engraved more subjects for modern Canadian paper money than any other engravers. Yorke also engraved multiple Canadian postage stamps.

Parts of seven Canadian banknotes were engraved by Yorke, including three from the early 1970s Scenes of Canada series. This includes vignettes of the Parliament Building and Ottawa River on the back of the \$1, the Inuit hunting scene on the \$2 reverse, and both sides of the \$5, with Sir Wilfred Laurier on the front and the salmon trawler on Johnson Strait on the back.

Mr. Yorke died in 1980, so the number of signed banknotes is definitely finite. One might guess I found the majority of my autographed banknotes on Ebay, but such was not the case. I've purchased only four on Ebay to date, including these three. They are nice additions to the nearly 3,000 other banknotes in my collection.



*Left: Yorke at work on the \$1 Canadian note. He also engraved the \$2 back (above) and both the portrait and back of the \$5 notes (below) from the 1972 "Scenes of Canada" series. Signed and dated examples are shown here.*

