



The "Ultimate" Wyoming Territorial Note



By PETER HUNTOON

ALTHOUGH it is early in the year, the Original Series \$2 Wyoming Territory note shown here will undoubtedly rank as the National Bank Note discovery of 1975. It will almost take an 1882 Alaska Territorial to beat it.

The \$2 note was issued by the Wyoming National Bank of Laramie City, which was chartered on May 17, 1873, and assigned charter number 2110. This was the second bank chartered in the Wyoming Territory; it holds the distinction of having been the only Wyoming bank to issue \$2 notes.

Comptroller of the Currency ledgers reveal that only 1,000 sheets of the 1-1-1-2 combination were delivered to the bank. All were Original Series notes. The bank did not issue \$1 or \$2 Series of 1875 notes as \$5's were used exclusively for the remaining territorial issues.

Prior to the discovery of the \$2 note, only one other note was known to leading Wyoming collectors from this particular bank—an equally rare \$1 note bearing serial 904, presently owned by Tom Mason of Cheyenne. Mr. Mason's note has an established pedigree and reputation, since it was previously owned by Amon Carter. It reached Mr. Mason via Lyn Knight a few years ago.

As a type, the Wyoming Territorial deuce appears to have eluded all previous collectors and researchers. Friedberg never saw a copy and records of past sales fail to produce evidence of one.

Tom Mason, the acknowledged expert on Wyoming National Bank Notes, reveres the deuce as "the ultimate Wyoming Territorial." His opinion is based on both the small number of these notes issued as well as the mystique of "lazy two's" among collectors. As a type note, the \$2 ranks first among First Charter Wyoming rarities.

The note itself is in rather decrepit condition. It grades generally fine but suffers from three major impairments. A tear extends up the center fold from bottom margin into the "tombstone" that contains the town name. The reverse left and right borders are skinned from the removal of tape years ago. Fortunately the design was not damaged. The Treasury seal has also faded from the note.

All of these signs of distress resulted from the very means responsible for the preservation of this rare piece. The note was obviously retrieved from circulation and taped to the underside of a glass counter where it remained for decades under harsh sunlight. This explains both the faded seal and the tape marks on the reverse. Had it not been for this crude means of preservation, the note would have long since passed into oblivion.

Considering the way in which the note was displayed, the penned signatures are remarkably bold and are a true asset to it. The Cashier was a man named Swain; the President was Edward Iverson. Both of these gentlemen were prominent Laramie citizens. Iverson was

particularly well known; his family name is attached to a street, a museum, and the local hospital. As a banker his reputation for being tightfisted lingers to this day.

The date on the note is June 10, 1873, which probably has little significance. Like many First and Second Charter territorials, the reverse contains no territorial seal. Rather, a stock vignette of an eagle takes its place in the oval to the left of the central vignette.

The Wyoming National Bank of Laramie City changed its name in 1892 by dropping the word "City" from the title. On March 7, 1895, five years after statehood, the bank was liquidated; it was succeeded by the First National Bank of Laramie. I am not aware of the existence of any state notes on the bank, although it issued them in the form of both Series of 1875 and 1882 Brown Back notes.

The "Almost" Fourth Charter Period National Banks

By MICHAEL MILLER

SPEAKING for myself, the pleasure of collecting paper money in general and National Bank Notes in particular is the endless variety to be discovered and studied. Unlike coin collectors, syngraphists are free to collect whatever they desire without the problem of someone telling them what constitutes a "complete set" by marketing albums.

National Bank Notes are particularly interesting in their sub-varieties. I have taken great delight in researching banks of issue and the sub-varieties brought about by the passage of new banking laws, printing changes, and government and bank signature changes.

Some time ago, while looking over a dealer's list of Nationals, I was both intrigued and confused by a number 1 serial note on the American National Bank of Ebensburg, Pa., Fr. 634, Charter #6209 (\$10 third charter Plainback type). If this was a third charter period bank chartered in 1902, why was there a Fr. 634 note with the signatures of Elliott-White? Although I didn't know the date on the note, I assumed it was 1902. I also knew that normal practice for third charter period banks was to issue all three types with the original bank charter date and that the change from Datebacks to Plainbacks was made without starting the bank serial number at number one for the Plainbacks. I was left with two possible answers: a.) the bank was a second charter period bank that began its third charter period in 1922, or b.) the bank had a title change in 1922, causing new plates to be engraved, as was the practice.

Further down the dealer's list I spotted another note on this bank that stopped me cold. Also a number one serial note, it was a Fr. 621 (\$10 third charter Red Seal type). Well, that eliminated the second charter period theory! I was still curious, however, so I purchased both number one notes.

After I received them, I discovered the answer. The number one Red Seal was dated Feb. 17, 1902; the number one Plainback was dated Feb. 17, 1922—and there was no title change! Although chartered during the second charter period, this bank first issued notes of the third charter period, probably because of the time required to engrave plates. From 1902 to 1922, it issued Red Seals, Datebacks and Plainbacks, all dated 1902. In 1922, its 20-year charter privilege ended and, as was the practice, new plates were prepared with the 1922



date in anticipation of the creation by law of the FOURTH CHARTER PERIOD.

Congress, in its way, decided to correct this "troublesome" problem of creating a new charter period every 20 years and passed the Act of July 1, 1922 that provided a 99-year corporate life for all National Banks then in existence and those thereafter established.

Notes printed from those plates dated 1922 are clearly notes of the "almost" fourth charter period. Since only those banks whose 20-year charters were due to expire between April 12, 1922 and July 1, 1922 were in this unique situation, their notes are extremely scarce. I estimate that only about two hundred third charter period banks (charter numbers 6100-6300) could have been affected. The illustrated number one serial notes may be unique, for although one might locate both of a bank's third charter Plainback types dated 1902 and 1922, how many banks have had their number one Red Seal and number one Plainback notes saved? Observe, too, that these notes have four different signatures.

I would welcome information about other known examples of notes from the "almost" fourth charter period.