



## THE PAPER COLUMN

by Peter Huntoon

### \$5 Series of 1875 Schwenksville, Pa. Black Charter Discovery

A collector who wishes to remain anonymous has just discovered the first \$5 Series of 1875 black charter note to be reported from the National Bank of Schwenksville, Pennsylvania.

Of fourteen banks, which potentially issued this variety, this is the eighth bank from which specimens have been verified. The Schwenksville occurrence was predicted by myself, Raymond and Hickman from our research of specimens held by the Smithsonian Institution. The National Bank of Schwenksville was the last bank to utilize the variety and its charter 2142 is the highest that bears the variety.

#### COINCIDENCE

**T**WO Pennsylvania banks are known to have issued the variety, Boyertown (2137) and Schwenksville (2142). A third is likely, Green Lane (2131). In what I find to be a remarkable coincidence given the size of Pennsylvania and the plethora of banks in the state, all these black charter banks are located within eleven miles of each other! Schwenksville lies about 25 miles northwest of the heart of Philadelphia on state route 73 where it intersects state route 29. You can take 29 north to Green Lane, or 73 west to Boyertown.

The National Bank of Schwenksville was organized April 14, 1874; its first officers were Jacob G. Schwenk, president and John G. Prizer, cashier. Prizer signed the discovery note as cashier although Henry W. Kratz appears as president. The bank is still in business on the corner of Main and Centennial

Streets under the title of the National Bank and Trust Company, a title change that was effected in 1931.

Schwenksville is located along Perkiomen Creek. The small town was formally named Schwenksville about 1872, and was incorporated as a borough in 1903. However, its history is far older. The Lenni-Lenape Indians ceded the land along Perkiomen Creek, which ultimately became Schwenksville, to William Penn in 1684. About 1695—before the revolution—the first copper mine in Pennsylvania was operated there. The first Schwenk known to live in the vicinity was a blacksmith named George who appeared on a 1756 census for the area.

William Morris' county map of 1849 showed only Schwenk's inn and store, the house of J. Steiner, and a blacksmith shop in what is now Schwenksville. Soon thereafter George Schwenk established a post office designated as Schwenk's Store, PA. Following the renaming of the town to Schwenksville in 1872, the population continued to grow, largely with Germans; by 1880 there were 303 inhabitants who claimed the town as home.

