

Spelling Isn't My Long Suit Either

IT WASN'T HARD TO SEE THE WORD "ERROR" scrawled diagonally across all four subjects of the \$5 Series of 1882 A-B-C-D proof for The Peirce City National Bank, Missouri (4225). The proof had been approved March 7, 1890, but later someone had found something wrong with it. My mind quickly revived from the near stupor it was in from sorting many hundreds of similar proofs that day.



THE PAPER COLUMN

by Peter Huntoon

Now alert, I quickly located a proof of the corrected version approved on April 1, 1890. The problem for me was seeing what was wrong. You may be surprised that it took me a little while to see that the "e" and "i" in Peirce had been reversed in all locations, including the script versions next to "Missouri." I am a bit dyslexic, and this is exactly the type of mistake I routinely make also.

More than three weeks had elapsed between the times the error and corrected plates had been approved, so there was a chance an order had been printed and some sheets shipped to the bank. With this possibility as a prod, I got over to the National Archives as quickly as possible to see if, in fact, some of the errors had reached circulation.

The answer lay no further than the receipts ledger maintained by the Comptroller of the Currency's office showing deliveries from the Bureau of Engraving and Printing. The first shipment from the plate was logged in on March 29, 1890, consisting of sheets 1-625, H900978-H901602. Written next to this entry was "Misprinted -- cancelled." Too bad, someone in the Comptroller's office spotted the error.

A duplicate shipment dated April 11, 1890, was penned in with identical bank and treasury sheet serial numbers. Sheets from this corrected printing and subsequent printings were shipped to the bank.

Pair of \$5 Series of 1882 proofs for The Peirce City National Bank, Missouri (4225), showing the misspelled and corrected versions of the \$5 Series of 1882 5-5-5 A-B-C-D plate. None of the errors reached circulation.



At the time, it was standard practice to order duplicates complete with identical serial numbers when clerks in the Comptrollers office found errors. The procedure followed was for the Comptroller to send a letter to the Bureau stating that misprints had been found, identifying the bank, sheet combination, serials, and sometimes the nature of the error, with a request for replacements.

Years ago I found a most interesting example of such a reprint request. It was contained in correspondence received at the Bureau of Engraving and Printing that is now housed in the National Archives. The letter stated that a clerk had found a pair of consecutive sheets wherein the bank sheet serials ran counter to the treasury serials, with the request that the Bureau supply perfect copies. I marveled that anyone would notice such an occurrence. Obviously Bureau personnel had to pull the plate, print two impressions from it on two preprinted backs, and have someone add the seals, charter numbers, and serials.

The best part was that the bank and treasury serial numbers were neatly stamped and deeply embossed on a blank part of the letter. Clearly the person who had to place the serial numbers on the sheet had the letter with him and stamped the numbers on it to be certain they were correct before affixing them to the sheets. It was obvious that for such small orders, they used hand-held numbering stamps similar to those used

to print make-up replacement sheets in the 1929 series. The serial numbers on the letter were the blue numbers found on Series of 1902 Red Seals. I long ago forgot the bank for which those replacements were made.

The replacement order for Peirce City involved 625 sheets. They were numbered and sealed on regular numbering presses.

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SOURCES

Bureau of Engraving and Printing. Certified Proofs of National Bank Note Face Plates. National Numismatic Collections, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC., (1875-1929).

Bureau of Engraving and Printing. Copies of Correspondence To and From the Bureau of Engraving and Printing. U. S. National Archives, College Park, MD. (various dates).

Comptroller of the Currency. Ledgers Showing Receipts of National Currency from the Engravers. U. S. National Archives, College Park, MD. (1863-1912). ❖

Your Eyes Aren't Deceiving You

By PETER HUNTOON

YOUR EYES ARE NOT DECEIVING YOU. THE word CASHIER in the A position of this Series of 1902 face plate proof is misspelled CASIHER.

This error was produced when the officers of The First National Bank of Pullman, Washington (4699), submitted an order to have the engraved signatures of F. C. Forrest, President, and H. B. Thompson, Cashier, added to their \$5 Series of 1902 plate. The A-B-C-D plate, which was originally made in 1911 without the misspelling, was altered to accommodate the signatures. Somehow the misspelling occurred in the process.

Just when the error was spotted is unknown. It is likely that it was found when the proof was submitted for approval on December 23, 1926. Evidence to this effect is in the bottom margin of the proof where the words "approved: H. P. Dawson, Assistant Director" are stamped. There are hastily scribbled letters in front of "approved" that are now heavily blotted out. Using a bit of imagination, I can convince myself the letters "dis" are under there.

If so, the plate was corrected, and no errors were printed. No revised proof for the plate exists. The word "altered" is handwritten on the offending subject revealing that the

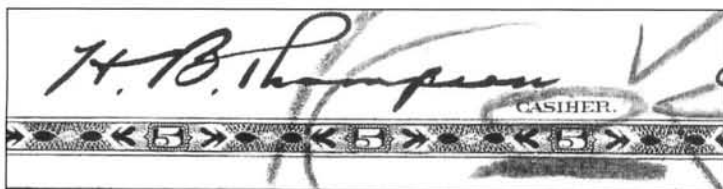
spelling was in fact corrected, and probably that is when the "dis" in front of "approved" was scratched out.

The first printing from the plate after the signatures were added was sent from the Bureau of Engraving and Printing to the Comptroller of the Currency on January 12, 1927. The first sheet from that printing carried bank serial 2301, and it along with others was sent to the bank by the Comptroller's office on January 20, 1927.

A. L. Stoner replaced H. B. Thompson as Cashier in 1928, and a new plate lettered E-F-G-H bearing the Forrest-Stoner engraved signature combination was prepared. It was approved for use March 3, 1928. The first printing from it was delivered by the Bureau on April 11, 1928, starting with sheet serial 4322. That sheet was sent to the bank on August 17, 1928. The last \$5 Series of 1902 Plain Back sheet sent to the bank was serial 5820 in 1929.

It is doubtful if any of the \$5 A-position Forrest-Thompson Series of 1902 Blue Seal Plain Backs with the misspelling actually appear on the 2021 sheets printed of that type. However, if you have a \$5 note from the bank, it is worth a second look.

This error was spotted by Mark Hotz as we were sorting



Enlargement of the misspelled word "CASIHER" on the \$5 Series of 1902 proof for The First National Bank of Pullman, Washington. It appears that the plate was corrected before any notes bearing the error reached circulation.