

Hey, Doctor this Proctorsville Plate!

THE APPROVAL DATES ON THESE TWO proofs are one day apart, June 5 and 6, 1885, yet they are from the same 10-10-10-20 Series of 1882 Brown Back A-B-C-A face plate prepared for

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THE PAPER COLUMN

by Peter Huntoon

The National Black River Bank of Proctorsville, Vermont (charter #1383).

This is a red flag!

When this pair came together while sorting the Vermont proofs recently, all work ceased while we tried to figure out what had happened. Obviously there was a problem that caused a second proof to be made.

Study the June 5th proof to see if you can see it before proceeding.

Don't see it? Hint: look for the tiny hand that someone drew on the \$20 that points to the problem!

That's it, the script version of Proctorsville is misspelled Proctersville on all four subjects! Someone had a keen eye to spot this one.

Unfortunately the error was caught just after the plate was approved, and was repaired immediately. No errors were printed from it, depriving us of a most unusual engraving error.

The repair was rather easily accomplished. A new, flat intaglio steel die was engraved with the correct script spelling and hardened by heating, from which a new soft steel roll was made using a transfer press. The roll, with the image in relief on its surface, was in turn hardened, and next used four times to press the correct spelling onto each of the subjects on the plate, again using a transfer press. The transfer process simultaneously obliterated the misspellings and left the corrected version in their place.

Sources of Data

Bureau of Engraving and Printing, 1875-1929, Certified proofs of national bank note face plates: National Numismatic Collections, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC.

