

Contender for Littlest Signature on a Large Size NBN

ALL OF YOU HAVE SEEN VANITY SIGNATURES that sprawl across the faces of large size National Bank Notes. Well, how about a humble signature?

The printed signature of Albert Hollander on the \$5 Series 1902 Plain Back from The Lawrence Avenue National Bank of Chicago (#12873) shown here must classify as a humility signature. I don't recall seeing one that is smaller.



THE PAPER COLUMN

by Peter Huntoon

The mess that appears in the space reserved for the president is the over-inked printed signature of Herman Elenbogen.

The Lawrence Avenue National Bank was organized in January, 1926, and Hollander served temporarily as its first cashier. By year end, Elenbogen filled both offices, a situation that persisted until 1928 when J. H. Jeffries took over as cashier.

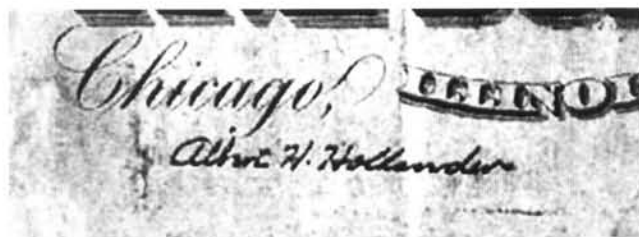
The note shown here has a low serial number for the bank, and may even have been in the initial shipment. Lyn Knight had two \$5 1902 Plain Backs from the bank in his February 19, 2000, CPMX auction, respectively serials 18562-C and 19487-D. These had a new cashier, probably J. H. Jeffries, but on both, the cashier's signature is printed but illegible. Elenbogen's signature on 18562-C is identical to the

note shown here; however, it is clear on 19487-D which was more lightly inked.

Elenbogen served as cashier of The West Side National Bank (#11009) prior to and during the time he was organizing the Lawrence Avenue bank. A \$5 1902 Plain Back from the West Side bank also appeared in the Knight auction, specifically H978110H-27024-D with the signatures of Thomas J. Healy, president, and Elenbogen, cashier. By 1928, Elenbogen was gone as cashier and Healy took over both positions as Elenbogen was already doing in The Lawrence Avenue bank.

Both the Lawrence Avenue and West Side banks had circulations of \$200,000, all in \$5s during the large note era. Both banks failed in 1931.

Returning to the tiny Hollander signature, what probably happened was that whoever made the plate photo-reduced his



signature quite a bit more than was necessary, and they didn't bother to change it. You never know though, signing small may have suited Hollander's personality. His signature is fastidiously neat. ♦

