

A Floating Transfer of Charter Number

IF YOU WILL CLOSELY EXAMINE THE DETAIL OF the lower left corner of the position D \$5 from the Series of 1902 Red Seal proof for Finley, North Dakota, you will see there is a misplaced image of the charter number (7324) straddling the border.

This was created when the operator of the transfer press



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accidentally rolled on the extraneous charter number as he was placing the charter numbers in the borders of the plate. The way this works is that an engraver engraves an intaglio die containing the charter number which is a reverse image cut into a flat steel surface. The die is hardened, and a soft steel roll is rolled under considerable pressure over it so that the roll picks up the image which stands in relief on its surface.

Once hardened, the roll is used to transfer the image as many times as needed by rolling it over the plate, also under great pressure, in a transfer press. The transfer press operator in the Finley case accidentally overlaid the extra charter number as he was placing the charter numbers in the spaces left for them in the border after the border design had been laid down on the plate.

Enlargement showing the extraneous transfer of the Finley, North Dakota (7324) charter number.



The plate was approved for use on July 21, 1904. I spotted the floating transfer because it is circled on the proof. However, there is no notation on the proof as to when the error was found, or when or if it was fixed. The first shipment of sheets printed from the plate was sent to

the bank on August 11, 1904, containing, of course, the number 1 Red Seal sheet.

The next definitive item in the record for the \$5 issues from the bank is a proof of the Series of 1902 Date Back face plate approved on February 27, 1909. This is the same plate, modified by changing the security clause and changing the plate letters to E-F-G-H. The error does not appear on this proof, so it was either corrected long before, or when the plate was modified into a Date Back face in 1909.

It is remotely possible that the error was not caught until the plate was modified in 1909, in which case all the 300 Red Seal sheets issued by the bank contain the error. More likely it was fixed before any were issued. Good luck in finding an example to examine!

Correcting this type of error is not a difficult proposition. The damaged part of the plate simply needed to be reentered using the roll containing the border design. The great pressure exerted on the plate while the reentered transfer was being made would completely obliterate the problem and leave behind a perfect intaglio image.

I have never seen this type of error before on any type of currency. Transfer errors are known in U. S. stamps such as partially doubled border lines and wrong denominations in the middle of sheets, but nothing like this floating transfer.

\$5 Series of 1902 Red Seal proof for Finley, North Dakota (#7324), showing the extraneous transfer of its charter number straddling the lower left border.

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SOURCES

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