



About Nationals Mostly

by Frank Clark



The Vice President Notes of Fairmont, West Virginia

THE NATIONAL BANK OF FAIRMONT, WEST Virginia, charter number 9462, holds the distinction of being the only national bank in the country that the Bureau of Engraving and Printing added "VICE" to its printing plates. This is just to the left of "PRESIDENT" and below the blue Treasury Seal.

This was also done only on the \$5 1902 Plain Back plates for this bank, even though this bank also issued \$10 and \$20 1902 Plain Backs.

This VP fact has been brought up before in the pages of *Paper Money*. What has not been reported before in numismatic writings is that the vice presidential signature is paired with two different cashier signatures.

The first cashier to be paired with Vice President James H. Thomas is N.E. Jamison. The second cashier to serve with Vice President Thomas is J. Ray Smoot.

All of these signatures were engraved onto the note at the BEP. The BEP did this for a fee during the large size era starting in 1919. Many banks took advantage of this program. You can always tell if signatures are engraved onto a note by the absence of two "signature" lines.

For all \$10 and \$20 notes the appropriate cashier is paired with President Brooks Fleming,

Jr. On \$5s before the "VICE" was added to the printing plates, you will find the rubber stamped signatures of Cashier James H. Thomas and President Wallin Miller.

For small size Nationals on this charter number there is the Cashier Smoot, President Fleming tandem followed by the Cashier Smoot, President James H. Thomas duo.

James H. Thomas had his signature on Nationals as cashier, as vice president, and as president. The National Bank of Fairmont went into receivership on November 13, 1933. This bank is common enough so that more than one note can be collected on it and also a closer look reveals these many interesting varieties. ❖



Cashier N.E. Jamison is paired with Vice President James H. Thomas on the note above, and Cashier J. Ray Smoot is paired with Vice President James H. Thomas on the note below.

