

## MISMATCHED PLATE LETTERS

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I've looked at a lot of proofs over the years and have found a couple of large size national bank note plates that were accidentally mis-lettered and repaired before sheets were printed, and even one where the siderographer failed to enter one of the letters. Then Lee Lofthus sent a scan of the Fredericksburg note shown here with mismatched plate letters. This really got me going.



Figure 1. Notice the mismatched plate letters: C/A. Heritage Auction Archives photo.

I was heading to DC so put digging out the proof of the Series of 1875 version of this plate on the top of my to-do list. I found nothing wrong though. Well, it was obvious. The people at the BEP had caught and fixed the mistake when they altered the plate into its Series of 1875 form. Great story. Never saw a mismatch like this before and the fact that it had been fixed added icing to the cake.

I needed a better photo of it in order to write it up so I logged onto the Heritage Archives website and found the image from a September 2014 Long Beach sale. It was in a PCGS holder. Uh oh. "Fine, Apparent, Restorations; LR corner replaced." Never even saw that one coming!

The Series of 1899 \$1s always have beckoned because almost 3.5 billion were printed between December 1898 and January 1925 from 21,743 face plates assigned to them. Look what turned up!

Figure 2. Mismatched plate letters: C/D! National Numismatic Collection photos.



When BEP personnel were certifying this Vernon-Treat 4-subject \$1 SC Series of 1899 plate bearing Treasury plate number 30692, plate serial number 5500, on July 21, 1909, someone noticed that

siderographer Charles A. Hall had accidentally rolled in the plate letter C instead of D in the left position on the bottom subject. The discovery was made after BEP Director Joseph E. Ralph had signed off on the proof so the certification was canceled and the plate sent for repairs. The correct letter was rolled in and the plate re-certified before sheets were printed from it.

Figure 3. The siderographer rolled in a D for the upper right plate letter on this \$20 as if he was working on a 10-10-10-10 plate. National Numismatic Collection photo.



Doug Murray got interested in looking through the certified proofs for the early national bank notes on the National Numismatic Collection website. He carefully read the notations written in the margins in order to find oddities or problems, which led him to the discovery of the mismatched plate letters on the Series of 1875 10-10-10-20 proof from The Annville National Bank, PA, charter 2384. The proof carries a certification date of May 27, 1878. The margin note indicates that the mistake was repaired October 20, 1878. However, a printing with the error was received at the Comptroller of the Currency's office June 21, 1878 bearing sheet serials 1-600, B839553-B840152. All were issued.

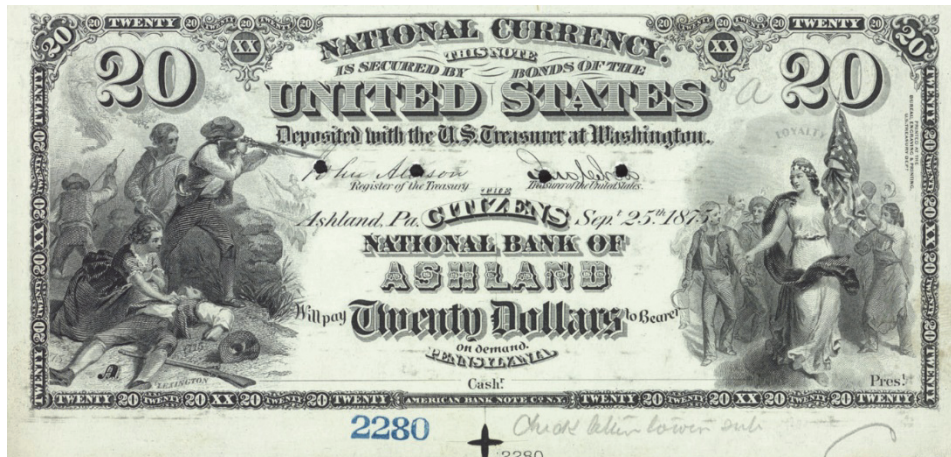


Figure 4. This is the proof with a missing upper right plate letter, easily spotted because an inspector wrote it in. National Numismatic Collection photo.

The Series of 1875 proof from Ashland with the missing plate letter in the upper right position is interesting in that the plate was one of the first national bank note face plates made at the Bureau of Engraving and Printing. The distinctive boxy-looking script was used for the postal location and plate date on those first plates. Presumably the missing plate letter was added before the plate was sent to press.

There have to more mismatched plate letters or other plate lettering problems out there.