

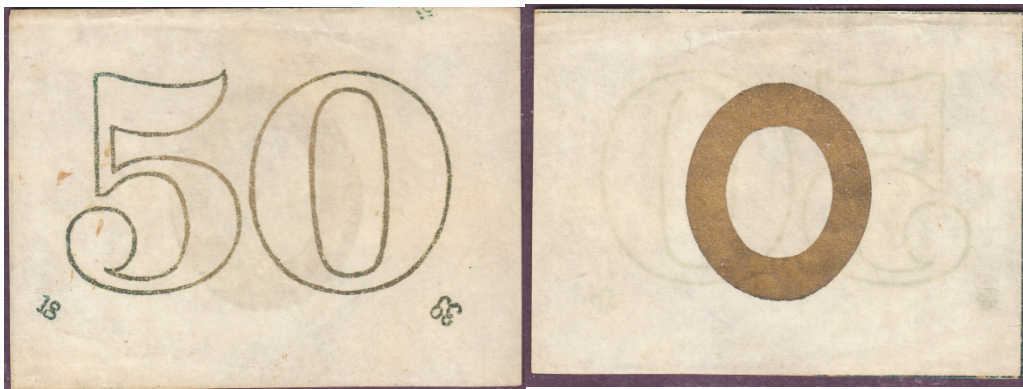
## Mea Culpa!

By Rick Melamed

While doing research one must always strive to be accurate when publishing. In this case, I presented erroneous information and I would like to set the record straight. A fellow SPMC member recently contacted me about my 2<sup>nd</sup> issue surcharge article from a previous issue of Paper Money. The following notes, which have Milton Friedberg numbers, are not Treasury issued Experimentals, but rather, counterfeits. I presented them as legitimate; they are in fact not genuine.

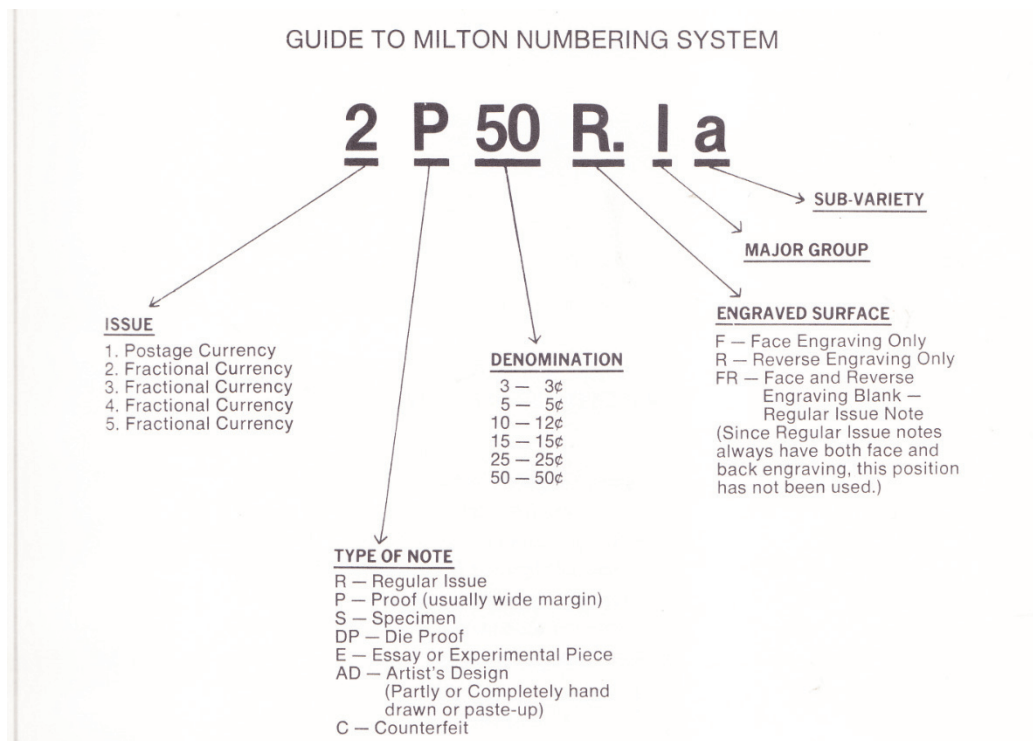
When researching the article, I observed in the John Ford sale (Part XIX – October 11, 2007), lot 331 was an Experimental fractional with just surcharges on the face and back. Nowhere in the auction description did it mention this note was a counterfeit. The cataloguer cited Milton **2C50FR.1b** with the following heading:

**ODD BOND PAPER 50 CENTS BRONZING**  
**“EXPERIMENTAL” WITH UNUSUAL SURCHARGES**



The 2<sup>nd</sup> counterfeit Experimental (Milton **2C50FR.1a**) cited in my original article as genuine (and not from the Ford sale) is a forger's progress proof. It is the same note as above, but with the crimson shield added. The verso is the same blank paper with just the bronze oval. Both contain the “18-39” and large “50” surcharges.

In hindsight I should have checked Milton's encyclopedia to verify its authenticity. Milton's cataloging, while intimidating at first, becomes clearer with more familiarity. The following, from Milton's encyclopedia explains his numbering system:



If these were Treasury issued Experimentals, Milton Friedberg may have designated this as **2E50FR.1a** and **2E50FR.1b**. I suspect that since auction companies never sell counterfeits at auction (and risk the wrath of the Secret Service); the cataloguer used the code “ODD BOND PAPER” instead of the verboten counterfeit designation. The “C” in **2C50RF.1a/b** is an obvious reference to its counterfeit nature – frankly, I just missed it.

At the Kansas City IPMS show in June 2018 former FCCB and SPMC president Benny Bolin (current SPMC Paper Money Editor) and counterfeit fractional expert Art Paradis explained to me my mistake. Just to be sure, Art previously observed the note under 40X magnification stating that the paper was not consistent with Treasury Department standards. Both Benny and Art opined that this was in actuality a Counterfeiter’s Experimental. Apparently the forgers did some test sheets of just the bronze surcharges and another with the crimson shield added. With all that effort to produce a counterfeit they messed up the usual “63” and it came out looking like an inverted “39.”

Finally, for those who might think that a note with just surcharges on both sides (with no other design) is a counterfeit, then the following should prove of interest. It is a legitimate Experimental, Milton **2E10FR.3**. The “T-1-18-63” and fiber paper is consistent to our expectations of a regular 2<sup>nd</sup> issue Fr. 1249.



Thanks to Benny Bolin and Art Paradis for their gentle and patient explanation of my mistake. Also to Heritage for the image of the 10¢ Experimental. Lastly, I’d like to offer my sincere apology to my fellow club members for my mistake.