

“Grand” Discovery

by Gary Bleichner

Those of you who collect National banknotes know and understand the “fever” associated with this hobby. Alas, as we know, there is no cure. There is no greater joy to be had than in acquiring that “hard to find note” to add to a collection. This article is about that. The pictured small size note on Grand Meadow, Minnesota, is the first small size to turn up on the town. The bank issued 99 sheets of type one \$5, 41 sheets of type one \$10 and just four sheets of type one \$20s before closing early in January of 1930. The old-time collectors of Minnesota small size notes, Ed Kuether, Jim Wheeler, and others, predicted this would be the last town to turn up. They were correct.



There are other facts that mark the significance of this note. It is now possible to complete a small size city set (188 cities) for the state. In addition, it is now possible to complete a small size charter (248) and title change (5) set (253 total) on the state.

A picture (at right) appears of the note being held up in the original vault in which it was stored prior to being issued. I journeyed to the bank about twenty-five years ago to try and get a lead on a note. By then, the bank was a restaurant and you could eat lunch in the vault. I did! I returned in 2018 for the picture. The restaurant is gone but a new business is in the bank. They were kind enough to give me permission to stand in the vault for the picture. I am sure many of you may have had your picture taken in the same way I did in a bank of some significance to you.

THIS AND THAT

For the record, I now have owned all of the one hundred eighty eight small size city notes and all two hundred fifty three small size charter and titles. Many have since been sold. It took me thirty two years to achieve this. I never imagined this happening when I first started. Those people who saved the notes, the many, many, dealers, other collectors willing to sell/trade duplicates, and above all, John Hickman, made this possible. I must also thank my wife for putting up with phone calls, trips to Chicago, Memphis, etc. as I tried to quell the fever.

Last item, Track and Price shows a small \$20 note, serial number three eighty three, in the census. I checked with the auction house who is given credit for the note. The serial number was correct but not the charter or city. Just trying to set the record straight.

