

AUTHENTICATING OLD BANKNOTES

(Series 1988A and older)

Series 1928-1928D



- Has the clause: "REDEEMABLE IN GOLD ON DEMAND AT THE UNITED STATES TREASURY, OR IN GOLD OR LAWFUL MONEY AT ANY FEDERAL RESERVE BANK"
- The Branch I.D. is in numerals; there should be a number within the black circle to the left of the portrait

Series 1934-1934D



- Clause changed to: "THIS NOTE IS LEGAL TENDER FOR ALL DEBTS, PUBLIC AND PRIVATE, AND IS REDEEMABLE IN LAWFUL MONEY AT THE UNITED STATES TREASURY, OR AT ANY FEDERAL RESERVE BANK"
- The Branch I.D. is in letters; there should be a letter within the black circle to the left of the portrait

The \$2 Federal Reserve Note



- The first \$2 Federal Reserve Note was the Series 1976 \$2
- The look & feel of the \$2 bill has essentially remained the same since it was first issued as Series 1976. No additional security features were ever added to the bill.

We're not going to sugarcoat this: authenticating old banknotes isn't easy due to the lack of security features.

Here is how we recommend authenticating old banknotes:

- 1) Check for raised printing:** This is the only security feature that does exist on old banknotes. However, since it is easy to replicate and can be hard to clearly discern on worn-down banknotes, you should also:
- 2) Make sure that the lines and points on the bill are distinct and unbroken:** Depending on the sophistication of the counterfeit, lines and points may be unclear and/or blurry. However, modern printing technology has become advanced and affordable enough that a great deal of counterfeits have distinct and unbroken lines and points, which is why you should also:
- 3) Check that the paper the money is printed on does not glow under UV light:** The paper that real money is printed on absorbs light as opposed to reflecting it, which gives it a dull appearance under UV light. However, a favored method of counterfeiting money is to bleach lower denominations, such as a \$1 bill, and print higher denominations, such as a \$20 bill, onto of it; such a counterfeit would look like a real bill under UV light, which is why you should also:
- 4) Know what the denominations look like and know when major design changes occurred:** It is helpful to know when major design changes occurred so that you do not turn away a real bill; just because a design on an old bill is slightly different than what you're used to for more modern bills does not necessarily mean that it is fake. Don't alienate loyal customers who happen to have a genuine old banknote!

HELPFUL FACTS

- Federal Reserve Notes are the **only** U.S. currency still being issued, and have been since 1971

- Federal Reserve Notes did not exist prior to 1914

- No U.S. Notes were issued after 1971; the last U.S. Note issued was the \$100 Series 1966A
- No Silver Certificates were issued after 1964; the last Silver Certificates issued were the \$1 Series 1957B and the \$5 Series 1953C

- A letter after a series year - for example, Series 1963A - denotes a minor change, such as a new Secretary of the Treasury or Treasurer of the United States. Starting with Series 1974, a new Secretary of the Treasury was considered a major change; the series year is updated instead of adding a letter.

- The \$1 Federal Reserve Note did not exist until Series 1963
- The \$2 Federal Reserve Note did not exist until Series 1976

- The size of all banknotes should be **6.14 in x 2.61 in**
- Banknotes issued prior to Series 1928 are 7.375 in x 3.125 in.

- There are no Federal Reserve Notes issued as Series 1989

- No Federal Reserve Notes older than Series 1963 should have "IN GOD WE TRUST" on the back

- All Federal Reserve Notes older than Series 1963 should have "WILL PAY TO THE BEARER ON DEMAND" on the front

Series 1969



- Starting with Series 1969, the inscription within the green Treasury seal was printed in English:
- Series 1963B and older have the Latin inscription "THESAUR. AMER. SEPTENT. SIGIL."
 - Series 1969 and younger have the English inscription "THE DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY 1789"

Series 1950-1950D



- Black circle to the left of the portrait now is spiked
- Signatures are moved higher and closer to the portrait
- "SERIES OF 19XX" changed to "SERIES 19XX"
- "WASHINGTON D.C." is added above the green Treasury seal

Series 1963-1963B



- The first \$1 Federal Reserve Note is issued
- Only the \$1, \$5, \$10, and \$20 were issued as Series 1963. The \$1, \$5, \$10, \$20, \$50, and \$100 were all issued as Series 1963A, which is why Series 1963A - not Series 1963 - is shown above.
- Clause changed to: "THIS NOTE IS LEGAL TENDER FOR ALL DEBTS, PUBLIC AND PRIVATE"
- The first series to have "IN GOD WE TRUST" on the back of the bill
- "WILL PAY TO THE BEARER ON DEMAND" removed from the front of the bill

WHY THE COUNTERFEIT MONEY DETECTOR PEN DOESN'T WORK

You are probably aware of the existence of counterfeit money detector pens - those highlighter-like pens near registers that cashiers use to make marks on money. This cannot be stressed enough: these pens are incredibly ineffective.

This is due to the fact that these pens can easily be defeated with a household product: **hairspray**.

These pens react with starch, which is found on regular paper (which is manufactured using starch), but not the paper on which real money is printed (which has virtually no starch). On starch-free paper, the ink will be a yellow, amber (light golden brown), or clear and on paper with starch, the ink will be a dark down or black. When hairspray is sprayed on regular paper, it blocks the pen from reacting with the starch and so the ink remains a light color.

Don't believe us? If you have a counterfeit money detector pen handy, you should try it yourself: spray regular paper with hairspray and see what color the ink is. Perhaps, back in the day before criminals figured out this incredibly cheap and easy workaround, the pen was effective. This is no longer the case.

Another reason why these pens do not work: as mentioned above, bleached counterfeit bills actually use real money so this pen will always show that bleached bills are real money.