

Origin of the 1 Dollar 1935G motto variety

The initial release of 1 dollar Silver Certificates with the national motto "In God We Trust" on their backs took place on October 01, 1957. The notes were 1 dollar Series of 1957, the first U.S. currency printed on 32-subject rotary presses. Plans were underway then to add the motto to the other classes and denominations as 32-subject plates were phased in for use on new rotary presses.

The existing 18-subject flat plates would not carry the motto because of the expense and time associated with modifying the existing inventory of these plates, or scrapping them and replacing them. The 18-subject plates would be left as was until the 4-plate flat bed presses were phased out, even if a few new plates had to be made.

The new series of 1963 brought the motto into being for the then current Legal Tender and Federal Reserve Notes. Production of Silver Certificates denominations higher than 1 dollar had been discontinued by 1963, so they were not involved.

In the meantime, the large inventory of 1 dollar Series of 1935 Silver Certificate 18-subject face and back plates were used simultaneously on the old presses to supplement production of Series of 1957 1 dollar bills from the new rotary 32-subject plates.

Of course, those 18-subject backs did not have the motto. No one in the Treasury or the Bureau of Engraving and Printing worried about this fact because the agreed upon plan between the Treasury Secretary and Congress was that the 18-subject plates would not carry the motto during the phase out of the flat bed presses.

Certainly no plans were made to prepare new 18-subject masters with the motto, even if a few back plates had to be made. The existing masters were perfectly serviceable so making new ones would involve an unnecessary expense and soak up scarce resources during the conversion to 32-plate production.

The result was that 1 dollar Silver Certificate production in the Series 1935F with the signatures of the Republican President Dwight D. Eisenhower's Anderson-Priest team rolled forward beyond 1957.

Smith and Dillon came into office January 30, 1961, with the election of Democrat John F. Kennedy, so new 1 dollar Silver Certificate overprinting plates with their signatures were prepared and sent to press as both the Series 1957A and 1935G.

The technical people simply didn't anticipate a problem, let alone a controversy, over the motto. Already, however, members of the religious right were noticing that new 1 dollar bills, which some of them were getting directly from their Banks, did not have the motto.

Slowly they began to become inflamed, their pundits began to spread the alarm, and some politicians began to stir. Rumors spread rapidly through their circles that the cause was a conspiracy on the part of godless, faceless government functionaries-probably Communists, certainly atheists-to subvert the placement of the motto on our currency.

The appearance of the Series of 1935G notes in 1961 with the new federal signatures proved beyond doubt that the atheistic notes were still being made. Those heretical notes were diluting our currency, and threatening the soul of the country. Sermons from pulpits and agitation within patriotic organizations began to mobilize their constituencies to take on the treat.

Joseph McCarthy's anti-communist crusade had ended with his Congressional censure and then death in 1957, but there remained considerable suspicion among right wingers and conspiracy buffs that subversives remained hidden within the ranks of the Governments. Surely the godless money was evidence that they were not only there, but active. The presents of the notes was spun as an atheistic conspiracy within the Government.

The 100th anniversary history of the Bureau of Engraving and Printing documents that the White House, Congress, Treasury and BEP were showered

with more than a thousand complaints, many being lengthy petitions from religious, civic and Veterans Organizations.

The BEP was directed to add the motto to the backs of the Series 1935G 1 dollar Silver Certificates to quell the unrest. Those notes began to be printed on September 15, 1961, and reached circulation shortly thereafter. The changeover was abrupt, and the motto first appeared on note D48960001J.



The chronology of the changeover within the 18-subject production plates is revealing. The certification dates for the seven back plates straddling the changeover were as follows:

<i>Check Number</i>	<i>Cert. Date</i>	<i>Variety</i>
<i>6776</i>	<i>March 17, 1958</i>	<i>no motto</i>
<i>6779</i>	<i>February 27, 1958</i>	<i>no motto</i>
<i>6780</i>	<i>February 27, 1958</i>	<i>no motto</i>
<i>6787</i>	<i>August 29, 1961</i>	<i>with motto</i>
<i>6788</i>	<i>August 29, 1961</i>	<i>with motto</i>
<i>6789</i>	<i>August 29, 1961</i>	<i>with motto</i>
<i>6790</i>	<i>August 29, 1961</i>	<i>with motto</i>

You can see clearly that the last of the no-motto plates had been made after the Series of 1957 notes were released in October 1957. Those plates were made to tide the back plate inventory over until the 18-subject presses could be phased out. Sufficient numbers of them were on hand in early 1958 to meet that objective.

The first of the motto plates came on line three and a half years later, during the first year of J. F. Kennedy's administration. They completely displaced the remaining no-motto plates, which were then relegated to scrap regardless of condition.

The last 1 dollar 18-subject back plate with the motto bore number 6876, and was certified December 01, 1961. The phase out of the 18-subject presses didn't occur until 1963, two years later. By then, Kathryn Granahan, another Kennedy appointee, had replaced Elizabeth Smith as treasurer, so the Series of 1935H with her signature was in circulation.

The Law and the Motto

Agitation for inclusion of the motto on our paper money is credited to a movement spawned in 1953 by Matt Rothert, an Arkansas Christian Scientist, furniture dealer, and prominent numismatist.

Rothert persisted with a publicity campaign and petition drive, and eventually worked with the Arkansas congressional delegation to get a bill passed that would require inclusion of the motto on currency.

As Rothert's campaign gained traction in Washington, Eisenhower's then Treasury Secretary George Humphrey pointed out that specific legislation was not required for currency design changes, because the Secretary was empowered by existing laws to issue paper money in such form as he deemed suitable.

Thus Humphrey, with approval of President Eisenhower, authorized the addition of the motto on the currency to be printed from the coming rotary presses with their 32-subject plates. It was thought that this expedient should satisfy their

religious constituency without congressional intervention, and of course, make the Republicans look good.

However, bills requiring the motto on currency were introduced into the Senate by Democrat J. William Fullbright of Arkansas, chairman of the Senate Banking Currency Committee, and into the House of Representatives by Charles T. Bennett of Florida and Oren Harris of Arkansas. Bennett introduced his bill for inclusion in the House on January 05, 1955.

After some delays caused by resistance, and a bit of tinkering, the bill was passed unanimously by the House and Senate respectively June 07 and June 29, and signed into law by Eisenhower July 11, 1955. What elected official would vote against such a bill once the public was watching?

The act contained the following language at Humphrey's recommendation: "That as such time as new dies for the printing of currency are adopted in connection with the current program of the Treasury Department to increase the capacity of presses utilized by the Bureau of Engraving and Printing, the dies shall bear, at such place or places thereon as the Secretary of the Treasury may determine to be appropriate, the inscription 'In God We Trust'."

This language was substituted by Bennett in his final bill with the additional proviso "and thereafter this inscription shall appear on all United States currency and coins". Now on the bandwagon, Congress passed a joint Resolution declaring In God We Trust to be the national motto. Eisenhower signed it into law July 30, 1956.

Humphrey resigned effective July 29, 1957. Robert Anderson was designated as his successor before Humphrey left, but Anderson's signature was placed on the notes. Secretary Humphrey and Secretary-designate Anderson visited the BEP in July to watch the first of the new currency come off the presses. The first delivery to the Treasury was September 09, 1957.

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