

Chapter 21

The Third Bureau Series

The Washington-Franklin regular issue, the 3rd Bureau series, ran from 1908 through 1922. The plate numbers ranged from 4803 to 14293. There was an incredible amount of change compressed into these 16 years. Paper went from the double line watermark to the single line watermark to unwatermarked. Flat plate sheet stamp perforations start with gauge 12, then to perf 10, and finally perf 11. The rotary press began to make its presence felt as coils became a fact of stamp life. Rotary press sheet production began on the 1c value. Wartime conditions caused the use of the inferior offset method of printing on the basic use stamps. The 3rd Bureau is the colossus of the regular issues. More plates were used on these stamps than with any other regular issue series or any other category. We have so many commemoratives today it would seem that there would be more of these plates than any others, but the Washington-Franklins outdoes them all.

As a young collector, I found the Washington-Franklins to be boring since they depicted the busts of only these two individuals. And the myriad varieties were confusing and made no sense. It was the plate numbers that helped me understand the intricacies of this fascinating issue. I was able to see how each of the technological changes at the BEP resulted in new varieties. Suddenly, all of these stamps that looked the same became fascinating rather than boring. There is a lifetime of fun that can be had exploring this issue.

The 1908 issue consisted of Franklin on the 1c and Washington on the remaining values. The 1908 issue spanned the change from double line to single line watermarked paper. The 1908 3c to 6c values lasted until 1922. Most of the 1908 plates are common and a large percentage of success is possible. The main difficulties are with the 3c type II and the 3c coils.

The issue of 1911 came about when confusion among users resulted in Washington being placed on the 1c through the 7c values. Franklin was placed on the higher values. The 1c Washington flat plate had a long run of 1089 plates. Many of these are common and a good showing is possible. The 2c Washington flat plate stamps used 1664 plates and most of these are also common. The 2c Washington offsets totaled 1652 plates and these are the one of the two really rough spots for the plate number collector. Many of these are scarce to rare and collecting these is a special challenge. The coils are the other rough spot. Initially, many collectors apparently did not look for percentages of plate numbers on off-center coils. Only the BEP practice of economy by issuing remainders of coils in sheet format allowed collectors to locate examples of many of these plates. These are still scarce to rare.

Many additional varieties are available on the 3rd Bureau series besides the well known basic varieties. Many plates of the 1, 2c, 3c, 4c, and 5c values exist imperforate.

Some of the early sheet plates were made into coils before the introduction of the rotary press. Plate numbers can be found on these items where the sheets were pasted together to form coils. The famous blue papers are available with some of the early plate numbers. The Shanghai overprints exist on many values and some of these plates are hard to find. There are multiple varieties on some of the high values. The \$1 Franklin required only 1 plate number (5782) and five major varieties exist: double line watermark perf 12, double line watermark perf 10, no watermark perf 10, no watermark perf 11, and the Shanghai overprint. Multiple varieties of the same plate number add a lot of interest to a collection.

It is impossible to do any comprehensive review of any major series in just a few words. But we can recap this issue to see that 8678 plates were assigned, 7900 were sent to press and are theoretically available. But no one has all of those plates since 329 are unreported. Most of these unreported plates are coils. The offset plates have 52 unreported plates. The toughest parts of the 3rd Bureau are the coils and the offsets. A determined collector could set a reasonable goal of 80% of the 7900 plates. Then see how far beyond that you can go. Some collectors in the past have managed 90% of these fascinating plates which I feel is a remarkable achievement.

It is time to leave the 3rd Bureau series and to see where the 4th Bureau is going. With most of the high values already to press, just how tough is the 15000 section of plates? The next chapter tells the tale.

Chapter 21-3rdBureau

Series	Subject	3rd Bureau Series Totals					I Have
		Plate Type	Assigned	To Press	Available	Unreported	
	(totals)		8678	7900	7900	329	
1908	1c Franklin	400F	239	237	237	0	
1908	1c Franklin book	180F	12	12	12	0	
1908	1c Franklin book	360F	16	12	12	2	
1908	2c Washington	400F	362	360	360	0	
1908	2c Washington book	180F	36	32	32	0	
1908	2c Washington book	360F	20	19	19	1	
1908	2c Washington coil	150R	6	0	0		
1908	3c Washington type I	400F	116	114	114	0	
1908	3c Washington type I book	360F	4	4	4	0	
1908	3c Washington type II	400F	90	85	85	3	
1908	3c Washington type II book	360F	12	12	12	0	
1908	3c Washington coil type I	150R	8	4	4	4	
1908	3c Washington coil type I	170R	53	49	49	34	
1908	3c Washington coil type II	170R	35	33	33	21	
1908	4c Washington	400F	76	76	76	0	
1908	4c Washington coil	170R	6	4	4	3	
1908	5c Washington	400F	128	128	128	0	
1908	5c Washington coil	170R	6	4	4	4	
1908	6c Washington	400F	36	36	36	0	
1908	8c Washington	400F	12	8	8	0	
1908	10c Washington	400F	12	8	8	0	
1908	12c Washington	400F	4	0	0		
1908	13c Washington	400F	8	4	4	0	
1908	15c Washington	400F	8	4	4	0	
1908	50c Washington	200F	1	1	1	0	
1908	\$1 Washington	200F	1	1	1	0	
1911	1c Washington	400F	1117	1089	1089	1	
1911	1c Washington (Coil Stamps)	400F	4	4	4	0	
1911	1c Washington	400R	76	74	74	0	
1911	1c Washington book	360F	110	108	108	0	
1911	1c Washington coil	150R	14	14	14	10	
1911	1c Washington coil	170R	140	136	136	38	
1911	2c Washington	36F	1	0	0		
1911	2c Washington	400F	1671	1664	1664	0	
1911	2c Washington type Ia	400F	2	2	2	0	
1911	2c Washington (Coil Stamps)	400F	8	8	8	4	
1911	2c Washington (Electrolytic)	400F	3	1	1	0	
1911	2c Washington	400R	14	0	0		
1911	2c Washington book	153R	3	0	0		
1911	2c Washington book	360F	178	176	176	0	
1911	2c Washington coil type I	060R	1	0	0		
1911	2c Washington coil type I	150R	20	16	16	12	
1911	2c Washington coil type I	170R	18	14	14	14	
1911	2c Washington coil type II	170R	28	28	28	18	
1911	2c Washington coil type III	170R	415	392	392	106	
1911	8c Franklin	400F	28	28	28	0	
1911	10c Franklin	400F	76	76	76	0	

Chapter 21-3rdBureau

1911	10c Franklin coil	170R	4	2	2	2	
1911	15c Franklin	400F	44	44	44	0	
1911	50c Franklin	200F	5	5	5	0	
1911	50c Franklin	400F	4	4	4	0	
1911	\$1 Franklin	200F	1	1	1	0	
1914	7c Washington	400F	65	64	64	0	
1914	9c Franklin	400F	20	17	17	0	
1914	12c Franklin	400F	16	16	16	0	
1914	20c Franklin	200F	33	32	32	0	
1914	30c Franklin	200F	8	8	8	0	
1915	11c Franklin	400F	12	12	12	0	
1917	\$2 Franklin frame	100F	1	1	1	0	
1917	\$5 Franklin frame	100F	1	1	1	0	
1917	\$2, \$5 Franklin center	100F	1	1	1	0	
1918	13c Franklin	400F	12	8	8	0	
1918	1c Washington offset	400	325	260	260	7	
1918	1c Washington offset	1600	3	2	2	0	
1918	3c Washington offset type III	400	189	127	127	2	
1918	3c Washington offset type IV	400	716	566	566	4	
1918	3c Washington offset type IV	1600	4	0	0		
1920	2c Washington offset type IV	400	117	95	95	0	
1920	2c Washington offset type V	400	331	280	280	7	
1920	2c Washington offset type V	1600	32	22	22	0	
1920	2c Washington offset type Va	400	612	535	535	9	
1920	2c Washington offset type Va	1600	22	13	13	0	
1920	2c Washington offset type VI	400	83	73	73	1	
1920	2c Washington offset type VI	800	21	18	18	1	
1920	2c Washington offset type VI	1600	26	12	12	1	
1920	2c Washington offset type VII	300	1	0	0		
1920	2c Washington offset type VII	400	513	427	427	9	
1920	2c Washington offset type VII	800	176	157	157	10	
1920	2c Washington offset type VII	1600	42	20	20	1	
	book cover		4	0	0		
							0