

Chapter 38

The Sixth Bureau Series - Liberties

In 1954, the post office announced a new regular issue to replace the Presidential series that had had a 16 year run. Collectors noticed early that this was to be an interesting and innovative series. The first stamp to appear was the 8c Statue of Liberty which was printed by the dry method using both the flat and rotary presses. This 8c stamp offered plate number combinations to plate number enthusiasts and the collectors immediately began harassing post office clerks for plate blocks. This series of stamps brought many new collectors into the game of collecting matched sets of the regular issues as they took advantage of being able to start at the beginning of what might be a long run of plates.

The BEP was charging ahead with technological changes. Many of the new stamps first appeared using the wet printing method, but were later changed to the dry print method. Some stamps, such as the 2c Jefferson were dry printed from the start. The new series had a planned 1.5c stamp depicting Mount Vernon, but it is interesting to note that the BEP continued to assign and use 1.5c Martha Washington coils which were printed as late as November, 1956. The 1.5c Mount Vernon stamp was never issued in coil form.

There was a real revolution in the production of coil stamps. Coil stamps had been printed on rotary presses using 170 subject coil plates since before 1920. The Liberty series saw the transition from the 170 subject coil plates to the interim 384 subject size, then to the 432 subject size plates. The new 432 subject coil plates caused real difficulties for the coil collector. The new coil processing equipment produced a product with far fewer production variances. When the 432 subject coil plates were found, they usually showed a very small percentage of the plate number which makes identification difficult. The 432 subject coil plates are the rarities of the Liberty series plates. Collectors later became aware of other interesting varieties in the coils such as the large and small perf holes. The wet printing method was used on some of the early Liberty series 170 subject coil plates. Only two plates produced the 4c Lincoln wet printed coil. This coil is known only precancelled and plate number copies are very scarce.

Interesting denominations appeared in this series with the 1.25c and 2.5c stamps. The 2.5c stamp had two rare plates: 27090 and 27091. The 3c Liberty stamp used 64 wet plates which are all easy to find. The difficulties began with the dry plates. Plate 25236 appears to be the most difficult to find. This plate had 192,577 impressions but perhaps many were spoiled during production. With that many copies, how could this plate escape the prying eyes of plate number fanatics?! The situation with tough 3c Liberty plates seemed to smooth out after plate 25540 and most of the rest are easy to find. The 4c Lincoln also had a rough change to dry printing with plate 25446 the

hardest to find until plates 28006 and 28007 came along. These two are available only precancelled and are more difficult than 25446.

The 8c Liberty is probably the most interesting stamp of the entire series. The rotary press run produced 10 combinations and none are terribly tough. The flat plate printing produced 54 combinations. The rarest plate is 24920 which produced 525 impressions according to BEP records. This is hard to believe since 24920 is paired with plate 24913 and all four pane positions are known. Also, this combination exists precancelled from at least three cities. 24920 is also paired with 24915 and this combination is rare with the upper left position unreported. The next scarcest plate is 24926 which is known in four combinations and these are scarce since this plate produced only 4918 impressions. This would be a great time to tackle this tough stamp since the fierce competition for the combinations has long since died out.

The higher values of the Liberty series offer no real problems. The 25c Revere stamp was issued in coil form, the highest value coil to date. This coil, along with the 2c Jefferson coil, lasted well beyond 1965 when the Prominent Americans series replaced the Liberty series. These two coils were in use until the 1980's! The 2c Jefferson coil may hold the record for longevity of any regular issue stamp since it was in use for at least 28 years!

The booklet plates of the Liberty series seem to be more difficult than the booklet plates of the Presidential series and this is probably due to better production techniques at the BEP. The coils are much more difficult than the Presidential coils due to the new 432 subject plates.

The Liberty series had 1924 plates assigned. 1784 went to press with 1769 available and 300 unreported. This large number of unreported plates prevents a collector from having a high percentage of completion. On a percentage basis, this may be the most difficult of any of the regular issues to date. The sheet plates are quite easy and 100% is possible. The Liberty series is a personal favorite of mine, perhaps since I grew up with this series. I did not start until the end of the 25000 section and I missed the 8c Liberty competition, but I had many hours of fun chasing these plates. I also find the designs and colors to be beautiful and interesting, especially after the sterile atmosphere of the Presidential series. This series can be tackled and a lot of progress made without spending a fortune. Save the fortune for the earlier regular issues.

The BEP has more surprises for the collector and the next one is huge. Details follow as we look at the 29000 section.

Chapter 38-6th Bureau

Series	Subject	6th Bureau Series Totals					Unreported	I Have
		Plate Type	Assigned	To Press	Available			
	(totals)		1924	1784	1769	300		
1954	0.5c Franklin	400R	12	12	12	0		
1954	1c Washington	400R	68	64	64	0		
1954	1c Washington coil	170R	7	6	6	0		
1954	1c Washington coil	384R	12	8	6	0		
1954	1c Washington coil	432R	6	6	6	2		
1954	1.25c Palace of Governors	400R	6	6	6	0		
1954	1.25c Palace of Governors coil	384R	2	2	2	0		
1954	1.25c Palace of Governors coil	432R	6	6	6	4		
1954	1.5c Mount Vernon	400R	5	5	5	0		
1954	2c Jefferson	400R	87	78	78	0		
1954	2c Jefferson book	360R	4	0	0			
1954	2c Jefferson coil	170R	15	14	14	0		
1954	2c Jefferson coil	384R	16	14	11	0		
1954	2c Jefferson coil	432R	27	24	24	11		
1954	2.5c Bunker Hill	400R	11	6	6	0		
1954	2.5c Bunker Hill coil	384R	2	2	2	0		
1954	2.5c Bunker Hill coil	432R	4	4	4	4		
1954	3c Liberty	400R	298	288	288	0		
1954	3c Liberty book	360R	40	36	36	0		
1954	3c Liberty coil	170R	65	64	64	0		
1954	3c Liberty coil	384R	48	46	36	2		
1954	3c Liberty coil	432R	18	16	16	6		
1954	4c Lincoln	100F	1	0	0			
1954	4c Lincoln	400R	210	203	203	0		
1954	4c Lincoln book	360R	43	43	43	0		
1954	4c Lincoln coil	170R	6	2	2	0		
1954	4c Lincoln coil	384R	44	42	42	0		
1954	4c Lincoln coil	432R	168	167	167	122		
1954	4.5c Hermitage	400R	4	4	4	0		
1954	4.5c Hermitage coil	384R	2	2	2	0		
1954	4.5c Hermitage coil	432R	4	4	4	4		
1954	5c Monroe	400R	16	16	16	0		
1954	6c Roosevelt	400R	13	10	10	0		
1954	7c Wilson	400R	8	8	8	0		
1954	8c Liberty center	400F	11	9	9	0		
1954	8c Liberty center	400R	5	2	2	0		
1954	8c Liberty frame	400F	10	9	9	0		
1954	8c Liberty frame	400R	5	5	5	0		
1954	8c Liberty	400R	18	12	12	0		
1954	8c Pershing	400R	6	4	4	0		
1954	9c Alamo	400R	6	6	6	0		
1954	10c Independence Hall	400R	16	15	15	0		
1954	11c Liberty	400R	5	4	4	0		
1954	12c Harrison	400R	4	4	4	0		
1954	15c Jay	400R	6	6	6	0		
1954	20c Monticello	400R	20	20	20	0		
1954	25c Revere	400R	6	4	4	0		

Chapter 38-6thBureau

1954	25c Revere coil	432R	6	6	6	0
1954	30c Lee	400R	12	12	12	0
1954	40c Marshall	400R	8	8	8	0
1954	50c Anthony	400R	10	10	10	0
1954	\$1 Henry	400R	8	8	8	0
1954	\$5 Hamilton	400F	1	1	1	0
1963	1c Jackson	400R	22	22	22	0
1963	1c Jackson coil	432R	14	12	12	3
1963	5c Washington	400R	92	64	64	0
1963	5c Washington book (5) slogan 1	360R	16	14	14	0
1963	5c Washington book (5) slogan 2	360R	18	18	18	0
1963	5c Washington book (5) slogan 3	360R	82	72	72	0
1963	5c Washington book (6)	360R	4	0	0	
1963	5c Washington coil	432R	235	229	229	142