

One of the most confusing issues produced by the Post Office was the **Washington - Franklin Issues or the Third Bureau Issue**. This series of definitive stamps depicting only George Washington and Benjamin Franklin were produced between 1908 and 1922.

The distinctive feature of this issue is that it employs only two engraved heads set in ovals—Washington and Franklin in full profile—and replicates one or another of these portraits on every stamp in the series.

In the early Washington-Franklin issues (1908–11), every design incorporated a pair of olive branches surrounding one or the other of the two profiles. From 1912 on, however, the Franklin-head issues would instead appear with oak leaves near the bottom of the oval in the image. Olive branches and oak leaves are often used as symbols for peace — olive branches and strength — oak leaves, though no official acknowledgement was made for their use.

The series were issued in denominations ranging from 1¢ to \$5.00, each value printed in different color ink. The two engravings of either Washington or Franklin are employed in five basic design themes that dealt with variations of framework, ornaments, and lettering which in turn were used to print more than 250 separate and distinct stamp issues over a fourteen-year period.

During this time, seven separate series of the Washington-Franklins appeared in succession — each series differing somewhat from its predecessor in physical characteristics such as paper type, perforation size, and watermarks, in addition to the introduction of new denominations printed with new colors. They were all produced by the Bureau of Engraving and Printing in Washington DC, these issues were generally printed by the **flat-plate** process, but several of the issues also employed other new and experimental printing methods, including use of the revolutionary **rotary printing press** and the **offset printing process** as the BEP searched for ways of cutting cost of production.

The first Washington-Franklin postage stamp to be released was a two-cent stamp issued on 16 November 1908. Other denominations soon followed and would continue to appear through the WWI years, with the last Washington-Franklin postage stamp issued in 1923. The series thus survived for almost fifteen years, longer than any previous US Postage Stamp series produced by a single printing organization.

The first set is illustrated below with the number of varieties appearing between 1908-1922 printed below:



Over the next few months we'll look at ways of distinguishing the stamps in order to figure out which stamp goes where the stamp album.



The United Kingdom is issuing a interesting set of 11 stamps honoring the 50th year since a strange old man stepped out of a Police Box in a scrapyard down Totter's Lane, and launched the television series now shown on cable TV here. Four, of which, are illustrated to the left