



## 1902-08 ISSUE

THE 1902 ISSUE IS THE FIRST REGULAR issue designed by the Bureau of Engraving and Printing, and it was prepared during the Roosevelt administration. The 1894 Bureau stamps were an adaptation of earlier American Bank Note Co. designs, and the Trans-Mississippi and Pan-American issues were commemoratives on sale for a relatively short period of time.

The series of fourteen denominations featured for the first time a famous American woman, Martha Washington. Previously, the \$4.00 Columbian portrayed Queen Isabella, and the newspaper stamps depicted allegorical female figures and an anonymous Indian woman. The Bureau took great pains to make the new designs elaborate and artistic in an effort to draw attention to the Post Office and use of the mails. The new series was greeted enthusiastically and remained current until 1908 when it was replaced by the Washington-Franklin series.

The 1902 Issue produced some of the greatest rarities of twentieth century United States philately. Prior to the Post Office Department's experimentation with coils in 1908, it provided imperforate stamps to private vending- and affixing-machine companies who perforated the stamps to fit the mechanisms of their patented devices. The sale of imperforate stock to these companies resulted in the first non-error imperforate stamps to officially reach the public since 1856. However, the imperforates were not sold at post office windows. The 5c is scarce with an estimated 2,000 sold. The greatest rarity is the

4c, Scott 314A, which exists only with Schermack Co. Ty. III perforations. Only seven unused pairs and seven unused singles are recorded in our census (see Appendix, p. 383). The Zoellner collection contains what may be the finest recorded pair of this major rarity.

In 1908 the Post Office Department issued experimental coils of their own. The first coils, issued in rolls of either 500 or 1,000 stamps, were put together by hand from sheets of stamps. After every 20 stamps (two panes of 100), the sheets had to be pasted together in order to continue the roll. This gives us the so-called "paste-up" pairs on the earlier issues. Eventually, coils would be produced on rotary web-fed presses, eliminating the need for joining sheet stamps together.

The first government coils were assembled in a vertical format, but only small quantity of 1c, 2c and 5c vertical coils were distributed—Scott 316, 317 and 321 are three of the twentieth century's rarest stamps. Only twelve pairs and a single are recorded of the 1c Scott 316, and four pairs and two covers (one intact) are known of the 2c Scott 321 (see Appendix, pp. 384-385). The Zoellner collection contains an outstanding pair of the 1c and the only intact cover of the 2c Vertical Coil, which ranks among the most important philatelic rarities of the United States. The 1908 Horizontal Coils are also very rare.

Collectors should be aware that the 1908 coils have been extensively faked, and that all examples should have current certificates from a competent expertizing authority.



*Guide line pair of 4c 1902 Issue with Schermack Perforations, Scott 314A*

*One of two in existence*

*Realized \$400,000 hammer in our 2009 auction of the Alan B. Whitman Collection*