

## **National Identity - The Stamps of Series 1902**

By Roger S. Brody

In the fall of 1902, the United States Post Office introduced a new definitive series of postage stamps. The Treasury Department's Bureau of Engraving and Printing (BEP) had been charged by the Post Office Department (POD) to create the stamp designs, produce engraved dies, and print the series. The stamps incorporated several features not seen before on United States postage. The purpose of this paper is to illustrate the importance of these images in the context of a nation transitioning from a rural society into an international and commercial power.

Eight years earlier the Bureau had assumed the government contract to produce the nation's postage stamps from the American Bank Note Company. Although the Bureau had been producing the nation's revenue stamps since the Civil War, when they produced their first series of postage stamps they used the American Bank Note Company dies, adding minor changes to the upper frame design. All of the subjects of the 1894 series were men who had served as presidents or figured prominently in the government, the Revolution, or the military.

The new series eventually comprised sixteen face-different designs, including a special delivery stamp. Three individuals depicted had never appeared on U.S. postage, including Martha Washington, the first American woman to appear on a U.S. stamp. The approved designs created by the BEP's chief designer, Raymond Ostrander Smith, are widely recognized for their distinctive frames, a Smith trademark. Each frame incorporated historical references to the portrait subject using allegorical figures and symbols. But it was more than Smith's artistic imagination and that of his successor, Clair Aubrey Huston, that was to define the Series of 1902.

America's "open door" policy along with two prominent figures at the turn of the twentieth century, was indirectly responsible for the important changes and the distinctive design elements of this series.

The American narrative is the story of immigration. Yet, from the landing at Jamestown in 1607 to the current migration from Central and South America, there has been no greater population surge in the nation's history than the two decades spanning the entry into the twentieth century.

Mostly emigrating from Europe and Asia, 16 million immigrants, the "homeless and tempest-tossed," as described in Emma Lazarus' sonnet, landed on both shores of the continental United States between 1890 and 1910.

Industrial magnate, aspiring politician and influential newspaper publisher William Randolph Hearst was one among many, including Senator Henry Cabot Lodge, Secretary of State John Hay, and Vice President Theodore Roosevelt, who advocated a national expansionist policy which eventually took the nation to war against Spain. After the destruction of the battleship *Maine* in Havana harbor, Hearst used his newspaper empire to create sensational anti-Spain journalism which overcame President McKinley's hopes for a peaceful outcome.

The practical result of the 1898 war with Spain was the nation's gaining Caribbean and Pacific islands as territorial possessions. In addition to acquiring a great deal of real estate, the United States saw a population increase of an additional 10 million people. It is not surprising that soon after the conflict Roosevelt supported the 1904 strategic acquisition of the Panama Canal Zone from the Republic of Panama. U.S. postage now franked new territorial mail across the Caribbean and the Pacific Ocean.

Outdoorsman, conservationist, and politician Theodore Roosevelt, who became president upon the assassination of McKinley, recognized the nation's industrial capacity and emerging influence in the international fabric dominated by European colonial empires and rising Japanese

militarism in Asia. This new identity would be reflected in the designs of the new series of postage stamps, especially the 2¢ stamp replacement design of 1903.

By 1902 one-third of the nation's population was first-generation American. Many of these new citizens spoke little or no English and were unfamiliar with United States history and the people on their stamps. Less than two percent of the nation had telephone service and international underwater cable service was limited and expensive. Thus, the mails remained the primary means of commercial and social communication both domestic and foreign.

This was the era that welcomed the Series 1902 postage stamps. The images, icons, and identity features of the series uniquely addressed the challenge.

### **United States Postage Stamps – The First Fifty Years**

From the 1847 introduction of United States postage, the subjects depicted on regular-issue stamps had been images of American presidents and men who had figured prominently in federal legislative or judicial branches, the American Revolution, or the military (Figure 1).

For over four decades, six security printers and banknote companies designed and produced U.S. postage with the approval of and under contract with the Post Office Department (POD). Though the engraved stamp dies used to produce printing plates were made by the security printers, they remained the property of the Department. The stamps were issued in sets referred to as



**Figure 1.** U.S. postage stamps 1847 – 1898

regular or definitive issues in varying denominations that paid single and multiple domestic and international postage rates and services.

In 1892 the American Bank Note Company produced a set of stamps commemorating the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Columbus's discovery of the Americas. The Columbian stamps were the first commemorative stamps issued to honor specific events or subjects. Unlike regular-issue stamps, which were intended for use over a number of years, commemorative stamps were available to the public for limited time periods, usually less than one year.

The regular-issue stamps of 1890, designed and printed by the American Bank Note Company, would be the last privately produced postage for almost three-quarters of a century. In July of 1894 the Post Office Department issued the contract for postage stamp production to the U.S. Treasury Department's security printer, the Bureau of Engraving and Printing (BEP). The BEP traces its origin back to the Civil War era, when in an August 22, 1862 letter, Secretary of the Treasury Salmon P. Chase gave instructions for "the preparation for the issue of one and two dollar Treasury Notes."<sup>1</sup> Those notes, the first federal paper money, were prepared by the Note Printing Division (later to be called the BEP) in a basement room in the Treasury Department.

The first stamps produced at the BEP were not postage stamps, but revenue stamps. Although private banknote firms printed the earliest revenue stamps, issued to finance the Civil War, by 1866 the Note Printing Division was printing beer and cigar revenue stamps. Gradually, more and more work involving currency and Government obligations, including engraving and printing, was delegated to the Treasury's engraving and printing division. In 1880 a facility was built exclusively for the BEP adjacent to the Washington Monument.

The BEP began printing postage stamps for the Post Office Department on July 1, 1894. Having been responsible for the production of the nation's currency, bonds, and revenue stamps, the Bureau had assembled a staff whose talents in the engraving and printing arts were the equal of the best in the industry. In bidding the four-year stamp contract, the chief of the Bureau wrote,

“The Government has in this Bureau the most extensive and complete establishment engaged in the work of engraving and plate printing in existence. It is installed in a substantially constructed and thoroughly fire-proof building; it has a plant of the most improved machinery and appliances for the execution of such work, and a large force of thoroughly trained employees. It executes all of the work of engraving and printing the securities of the Government and the volume of work finished by it yearly is the largest of any such establishment in the world. Its business is so systematized as to give the greatest security possible in handling of values against unauthorized issues or loss from any source.”<sup>2</sup>

The agreement entered into on June 9, 1894 called for initial delivery on and after the first of July, 1894. The Bureau faced several challenges in producing stamps in quantities



**Figure 2.** 2¢ 1890 stamp (left), 2¢ 1894 stamp

significantly greater than in their experience with revenue stamps, not the least of which was the time necessary to create new stamp designs. That particular problem was solved by using the engraved stamp dies that had been turned over to the BEP by the American Bank Note

Company. Those dies were slightly altered by adding triangles to the upper frame design (Figure 2) and new plates were made from those dies. In addition to creating new \$2 blue and \$5 green stamps, the Bureau series replaced the 30¢ black stamp with a 50¢ orange stamp and the 90¢ orange stamp with a \$1 black stamp.

The first stamp of the series, the 6-cent, was placed on sale on July 18, 1894, followed by the 4-cent denomination, issued on September 11. By the end of the first year of operation the Bureau had printed and delivered more than 21 million sheets to the POD, embracing 13

denominations of postage stamps, including special delivery, postage-due, and newspaper and periodical stamps.<sup>3</sup>

In January of 1898 two denominations were reissued in new colors to conform with the Universal Postal Union color directives for postage on international mail.<sup>4</sup> The 1¢ stamp changed from blue to green, and the 5¢ stamp from brown to blue. These changes necessitated color changes for the 10¢ stamp from dark green to brown and the 15¢ stamp from dark blue to olive green to avoid confusion.



The nation's first fifty years of postage stamps clearly were intended to honor men who had played an influential role in shaping the young nation.

**Figure 3.** Nine difficult to identify stamps

With the exception of the seven pictorial stamps of the 1869 series, 64 face-different designs were produced depicting individuals, half of whose images were illustrated in profile, and the remainder in full or three-quarter face. It would not be unreasonable to assume that the vast majority of today's college graduates would be hard pressed to identify the sampling of nine honored Americans depicted in Figure 3. In 1900 a native-born citizen with limited education, or one who had immigrated to the United States, or one who purchased U.S. postage in Manila, Havana or Colon would most likely have no clue about who was represented on the stamps.

### **Commemorative Stamps**

Two developments would play a part in addressing this situation. The first was the advent of commemorative stamps. The Bureau had demonstrated the ability to meet the challenges of engraving, transferring, plate-making and printing. The talents of the Bureau's designers were

apparent in the design work created in conjunction with geometric lathe engraving for the Treasury’s handsome banknote, revenue stamps, and related security paper. The introduction of commemorative stamps created a new challenge for the Bureau’s designers: How to create “story-telling” images on postage stamps with portrait subjects. That problem would be addressed with the arrival of Raymond Ostrander Smith.



**Figure 4.**  
Raymond Ostrander Smith

Raymond Ostrander Smith, born in New York City on November 14, 1873, attended public schools for seven and one-half years and began learning design work at the age of eleven. He was the stepson of John Quincy Adams Ward, an artist who worked for the American Bank Note Company in the 1800s. Ward persuaded his friend A. D. Shepard, a vice-president of American

Bank Note, to place Smith in his designing department.

Smith was appointed on December 11, 1887, and worked there as a modeler and designer until November 1897,

when he joined the Bureau of Engraving and Printing in Washington D.C. “Smith had a great aptitude for intricate designing and the execution of dies from his designs required the services of the most able of the Bureau’s engravers.”<sup>5</sup> Within a few years, Smith would become the Bureau’s Chief Designer.



**Figure 5.** 1898 Trans-Mississippi Issue

Smith’s first complete series design was the 1898 Trans-Mississippi Exposition issue. Through the first decade of the twentieth century, commemorative

stamps were issued in conjunction with national expositions and fairs which celebrated important events and anniversaries. This series celebrated the Trans-Mississippi and International Exposition, a world's fair held in Omaha, Nebraska, from June 1 to November 1 of 1898. The exhibition was staged for the express purpose of furthering the progress and development of the resources of the great area that lay west of the Mississippi.<sup>6</sup>

The ornate frame design of all nine stamps was identical except for the numerals and denominations (Figure 5). Like the 1892 Columbian issue, a tablet at the base of the vignette contained a description of the illustration.

Smith's artistic talent was even more apparent in the dramatic bi-colored 1901 Pan-American Exposition issue (Figure 6.). The Pan-American Exposition Corporation was established to promote and conduct an exposition to illustrate the New World's progress during the nineteenth century.<sup>7</sup> The stamps, whose theme was to be transportation, were issued in conjunction with the World's Fair event held in Buffalo, New York, from May 1 to November 2, 1901.<sup>8</sup>

Unlike the common frames of the 1898 Trans-Mississippi issue, all six frames designed by Smith were different from one another and without borders. This borderless feature, not seen on U.S. stamps since the first bi-colored 1869 issue, would also be a feature of the stamps of the Series 1902.



**Figure 6.**  
1901 Pan-American Exposition Issue

The different frame designs of the Pan-American stamps included columns, figures, numeral tablets, geometric shapes, curves, ovals, and forms (floral and marine); these concepts would also be carried into the Series 1902. Though Smith's Pan-American series designs were quite elaborate and eclectic, they maintained a sense of continuity and it was no surprise that he

was given the project to design the regular-issue Series of 1902. These would be the first definitive stamps completely designed and produced by the craftsmen of the Bureau. It was clear that Smith's frame design artistry would have a marked impact on incorporating the subject's story into regular issue stamps

### **A Visit to the Third Assistant Postmaster General**

The second event that would have an important influence on the "story-telling" aspect of regular-issue stamps began with a visit by Wilson L. Gill to the office of Edwin C. Madden, Third Assistant Postmaster General. In response to the December 17, 1900, meeting, Madden wrote Gill, "Referring to the suggestion which you made on the occasion of your recent call at the Department, I have to inform you that it has been determined by this office to cause the name of the subject portrait to appear on postage stamps of new series issued in the future. The suggestion that the dates of birth and death of subjects of portraits appear on the stamps in connection with the name will be given consideration."<sup>9</sup>

Gill (1851-1941), a graduate of Columbia, Dartmouth and Yale Law School, had been General Manager of the Columbus Car and Car Wheel Works (Ohio). He authored several books on the subject of education and citizenship and was the founder and president of the Patriotic League of America (New York) in 1897. The League promoted an educational program of school self-government designed to teach citizenship. He later simplified the program and introduced it as the "School City" into the Norfolk Street Vocation School in 1897. General Leonard Wood became interested in this plan, and as a result Gill was invited to Cuba to develop similar organizations there.<sup>10</sup>

If anyone had an understanding of the limited exposure Americans in the states, territories, and possessions had to the subjects on the nation's stamps, it was Wilson Gill. At the time of his contact with Madden, Gill was Director of Moral and Civic Training in Cuba in the

Office of the Superintendent of Schools. By the spring of 1901, Gill had chartered a “School City” in Havana to teach the rights and obligations of living in a republican democracy.

Responding to Madden’s letter, Gill wrote on December 28, “I thank you heartily for the information concerning your adoption of my suggestion to put the name of subject of portrait on postage stamps. I hope you will conclude to put the year of birth and of death on also, fixing the period of American history to which subject belongs. It will be a great help to the schools in their history work.” As it turned out, Gill’s recommendation about dates was also adopted.

### **Who’s Who in 1902**

On December 2, 1901 J.H. Reeve, Superintendent of Stamp Supplies, Office of the Third Assistant Postmaster General, wrote to Madden noting that the present contract with the BEP for the manufacture of ordinary and postage-due stamps would expire on June 30, 1902. He asked Madden for his attention to the matter of designs for stamps under the new contract. Reeve offered a number of interesting comments regarding the selection of subjects. He proposed that with the exception of Franklin, Washington, Grant, and Lincoln, new subjects should be adopted for the entire series. He advised that Washington remain on the 2¢ denomination, but he favored recently assassinated President William McKinley on the 1¢ stamp and suggested moving Franklin to the \$5 stamp. Reeve also listed the names of prominent Americans from which selections for the other denominations might be made, none of whom had ever been the subject of a postage stamp.

STATESMEN: Monroe, Penn, Robert Morris, Chase, Sumner, Seward, Hayes, Arthur, Benjamin Harrison, Hendricks, Hobart, Blaine, John Sherman.

ARMY and NAVY: Logan, Sheridan, Scott, Farragut.

LITERARY: Irving, Longfellow, Lowell, Hawthorne, Cooper, Greeley.

INVENTORS: Morse, Fulton, Whitney, Howe.

Reeve also recommended the adoption of a 13¢ stamp to replace the use of two stamps to pay the postage (5¢) and registry fee (8¢) on a single rate registered international letter, noting that a single stamp would be more economical and convenient for the public. He also recommended that the image of the new special delivery stamp be changed from the running messenger boy to a bicycle-mounted messenger boy, similar to the 1899 Cuban special delivery stamp produced by the Bureau.

Madden was clearly not eager to accommodate the radical change of subjects recommended by Reeve and replied on December 4.

“I am only just aware that the contract for postage stamps expires June 30th, 1902. It looks as though we have a very short time for getting up designs for a new series of stamps. What I wish to have is, new designs for every one of the series; that is to say, something different from what we are now using, and more artistic if possible. I think you had better get about it at once, in order to be ready for the issue in proper time.

I do not agree with your suggestion to change Franklin from the one-cent stamp. He was the first Postmaster General and it would be a very unpopular move. Keep him there, but present him in a new way, and in a new frame. The same with Washington and, so far as I see, the rest of them. But perhaps you can make some suggestions for changes that would be acceptable. So far as Washington, Jefferson and Grant are concerned, I doubt the advisability of any change.

I approve of your suggestion to have a 13 cent stamp, and you may proceed with it. We will take some statesman’s head for it; perhaps it had better be Blaine or Sherman.”<sup>11</sup>

Superintendent Reeve replied on December 5 with suggested changes (highlighted) for the subject of seven of the new stamps. Taking note of Madden's comments, Reeve did not suggest a change for the 1¢ Franklin, 2¢ Washington, and 5¢ Grant but interestingly eliminated Jefferson from his list. Though not a surprise, none of the portrait subject recommendations were women.

1-cent	Franklin	10-cent	<b>Hayes</b>
2-cent	Washington	<b>13-cent</b>	<b>Blaine</b>
3-cent	<b>McKinley</b>	Sp-delivery	<b>Boy on Wheel (Bicycle)</b>
4-cent	Lincoln	15-cent	<b>Harrison</b>
5-cent	Grant	50-cent	<b>Arthur</b>
6-cent	Garfield	1-dollar	Perry
8-cent	<b>Jackson</b>	2-dollar	<b>Gen. Sherman</b>
		5-dollar	<b>Farragut</b>

Subsequent correspondence between Madden and Reeve indicates that Madden decided against the numerous changes suggested by Reeve. By early February of 1902 the matter appeared to be settled, when Madden wrote the Secretary of the Treasury on February 2, 1902, indicating the wishes of the Postmaster General regarding the new regular issue: "First, that a new border be designed of equal artistic merit to the borders on the recent Pan-American issue." Only one portrait change was recommended, that of Admiral Farragut to be substituted for that of Perry on the \$1 stamp. The new 13¢ stamp was to be added to the series, with a portrait of the late General (and President) Benjamin Harrison. Finally Madden noted, "It is desired that special pains be taken by the Bureau of Engraving and Printing to make this series of stamps particularly attractive and distinctive in appearance, and as creditable to the Government as was the Pan-American issue."<sup>12</sup>

Thus at the direction of Madden the stamps of the new series would be as follows:

1-cent	Franklin	10-cent	Webster
2-cent	Washington	<b>13-cent</b>	<b>Harrison</b>
3-cent	Jackson	sp-delivery	<b>Boy on Wheel (Bicycle)</b>
4-cent	Lincoln	15-cent	Clay
5-cent	Grant	50-cent	Jefferson
6-cent	Garfield	1-dollar	<b>Farragut</b>

8-cent

Gen. Sherman

2-dollar  
5-dollar

Madison  
Marshall

### **“An Idea whose time has come”**

Victor Hugo’s observation, “There is one thing stronger than all the armies of the world, and that is an idea whose time has come” serendipitously entered the selection process. Up until late March, there was no indication in the correspondence of the Third Assistant Postmaster General of an interest in using a woman as a stamp subject. Then something interesting happened. An article appeared in the March 24 issue of the *Detroit Journal* suggesting the idea of including a woman in the new stamp series. This idea quickly reached the attention of Postmaster General Henry C. Payne, who had Madden inquire of J.H. Reeve of any encumbrance to the idea and for possible suggestions. On March 28 Reeve replied, “In the matter of the proposed use of the portrait of some prominent American woman as the subject for a postage stamp, there is no law which would interfere with the use of a woman’s portrait.”<sup>13</sup>

Reeve also included a list of prominent American women for consideration: Martha Washington, Dolly Madison, Betsey Ross, Pocahontas, Dorothy Dix, and Barbara Fritchie. Over the next two months, information was collected about these women, as well as about Frances E. Willard, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Abigail Adams, and Mary A. Livermore, whose names had been suggested by the public.

There is no written documentation in the Madden files indicating how the final choice was made, however, an April 16 memo noted that an engraving of Martha Washington taken from the 1796 Gilbert Stuart portrait had appeared on the one-dollar silver certificate issued in 1886, and the centennial anniversary of her death would be on May 21, 1902.<sup>14</sup> By the end of May a decision had indeed been made and the *New York Times*, on June 1, reprinted an article from the *Baltimore American* quoting, “Woman continues to break away barriers. Her Latest achievement is to induce the Post Office Department at Washington to put Martha Washington’s

face on the new series of eight-cent postage stamps, which will make their appearance next fall.” The official Post Office directive occurred on June 7, 1902, when Madden wrote to the Secretary of the Treasury: “By direction of the Postmaster General I have the honor to request that a portrait of Martha Washington be substituted for that of William T. Sherman on the 8-cent postage stamp of the new series, with the name „Martha Washington’ under the portrait, and the year of Mrs. Washington’s birth, 1732, at the left of the name, and the year of her death, 1802, at the right.”<sup>15</sup>

### **The Great Emancipator**

Before a final decision about portraying a woman on one of the stamps, another important change was made to the series. On March 29, 1902, Postmaster General Payne received a letter from William O. McDowell, President of the New York-based Cuban-American League, an advisory council to the New York City Educational Department. McDowell wrote:

“I want to urge that a change shall be made, so as to place Lincoln on the 5¢ stamp, the great stamp of the International Postal Union, in the place of Grant, and Grant, in the place of Lincoln on the 4¢. I want the face of the Great Emancipator and author of the Gettysburg oration, to carry on a stamp of the Republic of the United States, the better missionary of Freedom, from America to the utmost parts of the earth, rather than that of our great General.”<sup>16</sup>

The Universal Postal Union (UPU) foreign letter single rate was 25 centimes or 5¢. Apparently Lincoln’s image on the 5¢ stamp was deemed better for a world audience, as no documentation or correspondence opposing the change is to be found in Madden’s correspondence. Madden advised Reeve of the change, writing on April 23, “The Postmaster General wants this change made. Shift Grant to the 4-cent stamp and place Lincoln on the 5-cent. ECM.”

## Framing the Story

Following Postmaster General Payne's desire for the new ordinary postage stamps with new borders of artistic merit comparable to that of the borders on the 1901 Pan-American issue, Madden directed the Treasury, stating, "It is desired that special pains be taken by the Bureau of Engraving and Printing to make this series of stamps particularly attractive and distinctive in appearance, and as creditable to the Government as was the Pan-American issue."

The selection of portrait subjects was solely the purview of the Post Office Department, not the Bureau of Engraving and Printing. It was, however, the practice that "The designer would be given a subject and would have to find suitable "art" for the vignette, or would simply be handed the artwork to use. The art

was a photograph of an existing sculpture, bust, painting, engraving or the like; or a photograph whose subject matter was to constitute the vignette...the designer then would incorporate the subject into a postage stamp, designing the frame and other features, including lettering, value tablets and other components around the vignette...when finished, the essayed design would be



Figure 7. Designs of the Series 1902

photographically reduced to stamp-size and submitted first for approval and then to the engraver to begin the engraving process.”<sup>17</sup>

Raymond Ostrander Smith, recognized for his highly ornamental and intricate frame designs, was asked to create the stamps of the Series 1902 (Figure 7). In addition to employing the open frame concept and ornate baroque design elements used in the 1901 commemorative issue, Smith also substituted human figures as caryatids and atlantes in place of columns. Some of these figures were merely decorative but others were used to complement the subject of the stamp. Smith introduced this novel approach by incorporating, where possible, symbols that represented the background or achievements of the subject. An examination of two stamps illustrates how Smith used his talents to frame the story.

Benjamin Franklin, the subject of the 1¢ stamp, was a printer, statesman, diplomat, postmaster, inventor, and scientist recognized for his experiments and discoveries, especially regarding electricity. The stamp depicts atlantes on either side of the vignette, with the head and one arm supporting an Ionic capital with a small U.S. Shield. The opposite arm, extended upward, holds aloft an electric light bulb. While clearly anachronistic, the image presents an interesting connection between Franklin’s experiments and the incandescent lamp created a century later.

Daniel Webster, on the 10¢ stamp, was a leading American statesman during the nation's Antebellum period. During his forty years in national politics Webster served in the House of Representatives for ten years, in the Senate for nineteen years, and as Secretary of State for three presidents. The stamp’s central frame features fasces on either side of the vignette. Fasces, the ancient symbol of authority of the Roman Republic, are a component of the Seal of the United States Senate. Smith had first used this symbol in the frame for the 5¢ Pan-American stamp, but on the 10¢ stamp it is clearly more informative than decorative, and demonstrates Smith’s remarkable ability to create a frame design befitting the subject.

Another feature of the series was the choice of the subject portrait. As noted earlier, half of the subjects on nineteenth century regular-issue stamps had been portrayed in profile. However, on the stamps of the Series 1902, every individual honored was illustrated in recognizable full or three-quarter face.

### **The Departure**

Raymond Ostrander Smith resigned and left the Bureau on November 14, 1902, before designs for six stamps had been submitted to the POD. Unfortunately there is no recorded information about Smith's departure to indicate if his leaving was of his own choice or not. He subsequently returned to the American Bank Note Company, where he was continuously employed as a designer until his death at Mount Vernon, N.Y., on October 5, 1933.

Clarence Brazer, the great student of essays and proofs, speculated about the departure stating, "He was superseded because his 1902 designs became too expensive to engrave!"<sup>18</sup> However, Friday, November 14, 1902, the date Smith left the Bureau, may not have been just a random date of departure - it was Smith's birthday, his 29th birthday. If Smith had found conditions at the Bureau less than satisfactory, or if for any other reason he had contemplated leaving government service, what better day could there be to move on with one's life. Making a career or employment change before the age of 30 is quite common even today and would have been of greater importance in 1902 when the male average life expectancy was 46 years.<sup>19</sup>

Smith's replacement was Clair Aubrey Huston. Huston was a mature artist, 44 years of age, when he was appointed a designer at the Bureau on November 19, 1902. Trained as both an illustrator and engraver, he had been in Philadelphia and had graduated from the city's Academy of Fine Arts. Before joining the Bureau, he was employed by the jewelry and stationery firm of Bailey, Banks & Biddle, and for a while had been a member of the independent lithography firm of Huston, Ashmead, & Co.<sup>20</sup> From his appointment as Chief Designer in late November 1902, until his departure in June 1933, Huston designed almost all of the Bureau's postage stamps.

It is unknown if Smith had created designs for the remaining 15¢, 6¢, 50¢, \$1, \$5, and \$2 stamps submitted after November 14, 1902, as noted in Table 1. The table indicates that the order of the Bureau’s production schedule generally followed the POD’s need for stamp supplies of a particular denomination. Of interest is that the submission of the stamp models began in May and continued over the next eight months.

Huston oversaw the completion of the series in a style that appears plainer and more neo-classical, but which was harmonious with the look that Smith had given to it. Smith most likely picked source material for the vignette portraits, even if the frame designs were not begun. Both men, it seems, should therefore be given credit for the later designs.<sup>21</sup>

**Table 1.** Series 1902, Production Dates

Value	Model Subject	Initial Model Submitted	Model Approved	Issued
13¢	Harrison	05/01/02	05/05/02	11/18/02
10¢	SpecDelivery	-	10/24/02	12/09/02
4¢	Grant	06/04/02	10/17/02	02/10/03
2¢	G.Washington	09/22/02	10/04/02	01/17/03
8¢	M. Washington	10/04/02	10/10/02	12/06/02
5¢	Lincoln	10/20/02	10/23/02	01/20/03
1¢	Franklin	10/30/02	10/31/02	02/03/03
3¢	Jackson	11/01/02	-	02/11/03
10¢	Webster	11/14/02	12/03/02-	02/05/03
15¢	Clay	12/03/02	12/10/02	05/27/03
6¢	Garfield	12/10/02	12/13/02	02/20/03
50¢	Jefferson	-	- 03/23/03	
1\$	Farragut	01/03/03	01/14/03	06/05/03
5\$	Marshall	01/13/03	01/14/03	06/05/03
2\$	Madison	01/13/03	01/14/03	06/05/03
2¢	Washington Shield	-	04/15/03	11/12/03

### Beauty in the Eye of the Beholder

The new series was generally well received, especially by collectors, but critics were not far behind. Reaction ranged from displeasure with the semi-nude caryatids, to newspaper criticism castigating the series as “over decorated” and pillorying it as “inartistic and clumsy.”<sup>22</sup>

On the positive side, writing about the soon-to-be-released 2¢ Washington stamp, the *Boston Transcript* reported: "For the first time since 1869 the Post Office Department, with the issuance of the new series of stamps now in preparation, will make use of the American flag in one of its designs. This will be a part of the two-cent stamp, which by the way, will bear little resemblance to the one now current. The familiar portrait of Washington will be succeeded by a photograph taken from Gilbert Stuart's famous painting. This bust of Washington, so long known to the stamp-issuing public, was drawn from Houdon's profile cast. Stamp experts think that this new two-cent stamp, with its superb likeness of Washington, its draped flags, its wreaths of laurel leaves in the lower corners, and the general balance of the text and artistic effect, together with the remarkable excellence of the mechanical work, will make this the finest postage stamp ever produced."<sup>23</sup>

Well, as they say....not exactly. A few postal patrons felt outrage that the U.S. flags on the 2¢ stamp would be desecrated when the stamp was cancelled. Others complained that the portrait of Washington from Gilbert Stuart's painting was too small and the frame elements too crowded. Though the handsome die proof was worthy of the laudatory comments of the *Boston Transcript*, production stamps unfortunately often gave a blurred appearance that the press voraciously criticized as depicting a red-faced somewhat inebriated first president (Figure 8).



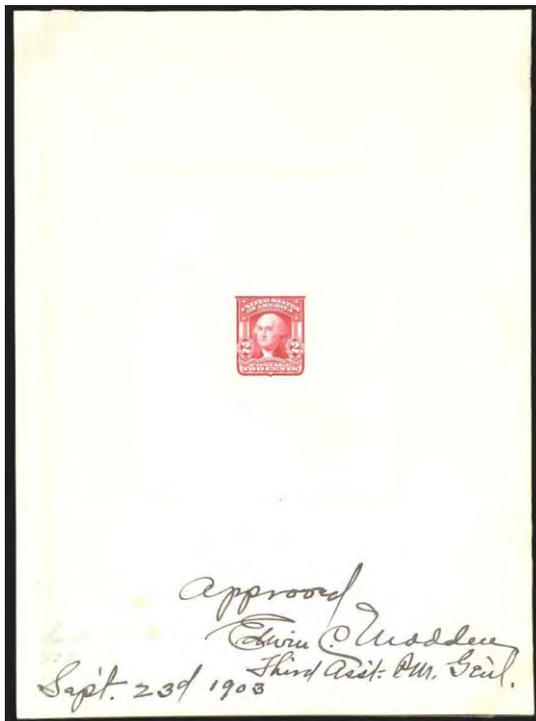
**Figure 8.** 2¢ die proof (left) & 2¢ stamp (right)

It is also possible that many people were uncomfortable with the less-than-heroic look of our first president when not presented in profile, as he had been depicted on postage for the previous 30 years. Well the criticism of the flag design did not let up, and just over a month after

the stamp was issued, the Post Office yielded. Third Assistant Postmaster General Madden, who had previously required several changes in both the original models and the die, wrote to the Bureau on February 21, 1903, “The ordinary 2-cent postage stamp, series 1902, is not altogether satisfactory. and I have to request that at your convenience a modified design for this denomination be prepared and submitted.”<sup>24</sup>

### **The Washington Shield Stamp**

Naturally, Clair Aubrey Huston was given the task of designing the replacement and the result was the “Shield” stamp, with a larger head of Washington and a much cleaner and less complicated design. Although the design model was approved on April 15, the creation of the



**Figure 9.** 2¢ Shield approval proof



**Figure 10.** 2¢ Washington Shield stamp

approved die took a considerable amount of time, with proofs being submitted and returned for alteration. Clearly Madden did not want a repeat of the previous 2¢ stamp episode. It wasn't until September 23, 1903, that the die image was approved (Figure 9).

This Shield stamp became the workhorse of the first decade of the twentieth century. It paid the domestic first class letter rate and the foreign post card rate. America was emerging as the world's leading commercial and industrial nation. This stamp with its shield of Stars and Stripes, was nothing short of an American coat of arms (Figure 10). The laurel leaves around the left numeral tablet symbolized victory and peace, and the oak leaves on the right symbolized strength and power. The Shield stamp was the embodiment of President Teddy Roosevelt's motto "Speak softly, but carry a big stick." This stamp was the perfect complement to the series that franked the mails and carried the nation's history and legacy across the continent and around the world.

#### **Notes:**

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2. Treasury Department, *Bureau of Engraving and Printing, 100 years 1862 – 1962*, U.S. Government Printing Office, 1962, 62.
3. BEP, 1962, 64.
4. Lester G. Brookman, *The United States Postage Stamps of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, Vol. III*, H.L. Lindquist Publications, Inc., 1967, 131.
5. Les Schriber Sr., *Encyclopedia of Designs, Designers, Engravers, Artists of the United States Postage Stamps 1847 – 1900*, (Reprinted from *The American Philatelist* by J.W. Stowell, Federalsburg, MD) 1963, 50,51.
6. Brookman, 161.
7. Max G. Johl, *The United States Commemorative Stamps of the Twentieth Century, Vol. I*. Lindquist Publications, Inc., 1947, 1.
8. Beverly S. King and Max G. Johl, *The United States Postage Stamps of the Twentieth Century*, H.L. Lindquist Publisher, March 1937, 25.

9. Smithsonian Institution Library “Files of the Third Assistant Postmaster General,” National Postal Museum, 1902-03
10. Bernard Cronson, *Pupil Self-government*, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1907, 5.
11. FTAPG, 1902-03
12. FTAPG, 1902-03
13. Roger S. Brody, “Martha Washington - Women’s Liberation – 1902 Style,” *The Collectors Club Philatelist*, Vol. 84, No. 1, Jan-Feb 2005, 16.
14. FTAPG, 1902-03
15. Brody, 17.
16. FTAPG, 1902-03
17. James H. Patterson, “Sources of Stamp Designs – Part 1,” *The United States Specialist*, Vol 73, No. 12, December 2002, 554.
18. Gary Griffith, “Clair Aubrey Huston, Bureau of Engraving & Printing Designer,” *The Essay-Proof Journal*, Vol.48, No.1, First Quarter 1991, 3.
19. Roger S. Brody, “Raymond Ostrander Smith Pencil Drawings – Series 1902,” *The United States Specialist*, Vol. 74, No.9, September 2003, 403.
20. Griffith, 3.
21. Griffith, 5.
22. Johl, 26-28.
23. Johl, 50.
24. FTAPG, 1902-03

**Additional Notes:** Figure 3. Nine difficult to identify stamps (Top Left to Bottom Right):

Edwin M. Stanton  
 Henry Clay  
 Daniel Webster  
 Alexander Hamilton  
 James A. Garfield  
 William T. Sherman  
 Daniel Webster  
 Henry Clay  
 Commodore Oliver Hazard Perry