

Synopsis: “**FDR and the 1932 Washington Bicentennial Series, Parts I & II**”

Paul M. Holland

The United States Specialist, September & October 1924, pages 388-404, 458-472.

The Washington Bicentennial Commission was formed in December 1924 making seven years available for planning. This lengthy period resulted in many different essays and trial combinations being explored for a new stamp series.

Initially, a long series of pictorial stamps was envisioned, modeled on the lengthy sets issued for 1893 Columbian Exposition or 1898 Trans-Mississippi stamps. However, by the beginning of the Great Depression cost became a factor and there were also concerns about the historical accuracy of some of the proposed vignettes.

As a result, it was decided instead to employ portraits for the stamps, and numerous portraits essays for Washington Bicentennial Series stamps were prepared at the BEP. These present an unusually complex situation, since many different trial combinations of the same portraits and frame styles were explored for various denomination stamps in the series. Because of this, *I've dealt with design development of Washington Bicentennial Series stamp series as a whole*, using cropped George Washington portrait artwork for comparison with each of the final stamps.

Of special interest, a mid-1932 rate change resulted in the release of a new regular issue 3¢ stamp with the identical Gilbert Stuart portrait of Washington used on the 2¢ Washington Bicentennial Series stamp. This new 3¢ stamp became a workhorse postage stamp of the 1930s (including booklet panes and coil stamps) and thus might be viewed an extended part of the Washington Bicentennial Series.

Although the first day of issue for Washington Bicentennial Series stamps was January 1, 1932 much of the celebration was centered on the 200th anniversary of George Washington's birth on February 22, 1932 for which an official cachet was prepared. I show examples of both first day covers (FDCs) and Washington's birthday covers on official White House stationery for these stamps.

Also shown is usage on cover from the New York George Washington Bicentennial Commission's "Federal Hall" commemorations. Other examples of usage on cover include items directly sent to **Franklin D. Roosevelt (FDR)** then Governor of New York and the Democratic front runner in the 1932 President Campaign, and covers related to the presidential campaign and FDR's time as both president-elect and in the White House.