

1918 OFFSET PRECANCELS

Jack Franz, PSS 6783

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In 1918 eight specific stamps of the Washington and Franklin issue were printed, using the offset method. In that type of printing, the raised areas of the design are inked. It is the type of printing used with rubber handstamps to imprint information, such as a date or "PAST DUE" or "PAID." Other stamps of this era were printed from engraved plates, in which the ink was held in lines recessed below the surface of the plate.

The eight offset and precanceled stamps include the 1¢ denomination, the 2¢ denomination (5 variations), and the 3¢ denomination in 2 variations. The differences in the variations have been documented in various U.S. Scott Catalogs. However, more details and illustrations are provided in the *1918 Offset Precancels, Checklist and Guide*, August 2004, with annual updates through at least 2012.

The font used on the spiral-bound, 11-inch by 8½-inch pages is large enough to read easily. The pages were printed on only one side, so there is plenty of room for a collector to insert notes and add information about newly-discovered items. The *1918 Offset Checklist* was edited by Jack Franz, who credited many other precancel collectors for their support and assistance in his research.

There are over 2,500 listings in the checklist and its updates. All states, and one Territory (Puerto Rico) used a 1918 offset in at least one town. Each of the individual listings provides specific information that enables a collector to distinguish the item from all the others listed. The editor followed the current PSS Style Chart and also provided older Hoover numbers for those who choose to dig through older catalogs.

Offsets can be found with different varieties of color and shading. It is also possible to find multiples and items on cover. Further, the offset printing process included the use of Guide Lines, horizontal or vertical colored lines between stamps. The lines extended wholly or partially across a sheet of stamps to guide the perforating machine operators or to indicate where sheets of 400 stamps were to be separated into 4 panes of 100 stamps. Because Guide Lines were not inserted between each stamp, precanceled offsets are found and can be collected both with and without the Guide Lines. Offsets sell for about 25¢ to 50¢ over catalog.