

# SEEBECK:

Hero  
or  
Villain?



DANILO A. MUESES

Second Edition

*Edited, revised and enlarged by Michael Schreiber*

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**Seebeck:  
Hero or Villain?**

by Danilo A. Mueses

**Second Edition**

# SEEBECK: HERO OR VILLAIN?

DANILO A. MUESES

Second Edition

*Edited, revised and enlarged  
by Michael Schreiber*

*including a synopsis  
of the 1884-1899 Minute Books  
of the Hamilton Bank Note Engraving and Printing Company  
and a detailed chronology  
of the life of Nicholas F. Seebeck*

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Two separate digital files of the Minute Books of the Hamilton Bank Note Engraving and Printing Co., 1884-1899, accompany this book. The files, created with the permission of Nadine Kofman, include the pages in *The Seebecker* that contain the full transcriptions that Bill Welch made of the company Minute Books.

DEDICATION

for Bill Welch and Danilo Mueses

PROLOGUE TO THE FIRST EDITION

There are few people who owe their fame, or indeed notoriety, to postage stamps. Nicholas Seebeck is one of those people.

Much has been written about philately’s misfortunes as a result of commercial contracts that Seebeck realized with some Central American and South American countries for the supplying of postage stamps. But is this in fact true, or did the popularity of our hobby increase because of the ease of acquiring stamps at low cost that the contracts and Seebeck created?

Danilo Mueses proposes an interesting thesis, but even more interesting is that which results from the vast amount of information that the author offers us on the subject, leaving us, the readers, with the last word.

This book’s contribution to philately is twofold: first, published in Spanish, it is in the language of the countries with whom Seebeck realized his contracts but in which very little on this subject has been written.

Secondly it offers historical information on Seebeck, which allows us to study and interpret why the events which occurred did occur.

The Interamerican Federation of Philately – the FIAF – immediately recognized the importance of this work and from its inception gave it its unconditional support and is proud, now that it is published, to number among its patrons.

We are sure that you will enjoy the work of Señor Mueses, written as it is in such a straightforward, light and easy-to-read form. I am delighted to write these short lines of introduction to the author, an old friend and philatelist of great standing, who for many years has been one of the key figures in the Dominican Republic Philatelic Society where his work as editor of the official organ, the magazine *El Filotélico*, has not passed unacclaimed.

The concrete result of this work is that we no longer have excuses, when Seebeck is spoken of, for not expounding our views.

Dr. Roberto M. Rosende

1985

IMAGE CREDITS

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- 1 photograph of Seebeck: Ernest Schernikow, “Salvador,” *The Philatelic Gazette*, August 1916, 6:8, page 235.
- 3 Seebeck business card: Kilian E. Nathan, “Seebeckiana,” collection and exhibit.
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- 4 1877 cover from El Salvador: Kilian E. Nathan, “Seebeckiana,” collection and exhibit.
- 5 1872 notice of Seebeck move: Bill Welch, *The Seebecker*, June 1992, page 10.
- 6 Hamilton Bank Note Engraving and Printing Co. card in English: Danilo Mueses, *Seebeck: ¿Héroe o Villano?*, 1986, page 17.
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In the medium of print, to write an investigative, historical book on philately is no easy task. The main problem one encounters is the lack of good libraries and consequently the need to depend upon friends and colleagues often separated by thousands of kilometers. Inevitably correspondence can be delayed by several weeks.

The acknowledgements part of the books I have written has always terrified me. I have that fear of leaving somebody out. This section is generally the last to be written. One does not always take the precaution of noting down along the way all those who have granted favors, be they large or small. As a result, thanks are given from memory.

Let me, however, make an effort not to leave anybody out. Beginning with the people at home in the Dominican Republic, I wish to thank José E. Julia who allowed me access to all the literature that he had on the theme, especially that published in the *American Journal of Philately*, and to the engineer Gustavo A. Moré who, besides supplying me with some material and taking on the burdensome task of negotiator with the publishing house, encouraged me to continue with the project.

The other person who was of great help to me was Carlos Marcos Machado, who undertook a complete revision of the manuscript making valuable corrections of style, syntax and even grammar and spelling (especially my tendency to write the word “tarjeta” with a “g”).

He helped make the book more readable. The most difficult task was the collection of information from abroad. In the search for the facts, I called upon whichever people (the majority unknown to me) I believed might be able to provide information. The enquiry took me from one end of the continent to the other, and I must acknowledge the invaluable help given to me by Don Eugenio von Boeck of Bolivia, Don Jairo Londoño of Colombia, Ing. Gunther Wiese of Honduras, and Charles Wiley, George C. Mayer, Erwin Herschkowitz, Fred Boughner, Leo J. Harris and Henry Madden of the United States, and Ricardo Alvarez and Richard A Washburn of Costa Rica, all of whom sent me most useful information to help fill the gaps, large and small, that I had to overcome en route to the successful completion of this work.

And finally, very special thanks to Dr. Roberto M. Rosende, who, in addition to reading the manuscript and making valuable suggestions that clearly improved the work, helped to put me in touch with other studies on the theme and, above all, promoted the publication by bringing it to the attention of the board of directors of the Interamerican Federation of Philately, or the FIAF, lending his strong support to the edition.

The help that these good friends have given me was invaluable, and I want to share with them the merits this book might have, but above all, the satisfaction of having completed it. Thanks to everyone.

Danilo A. Mueses

1985

PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

The book *Seebeck: Hero or Villain?* by Danilo A. Mueses summarized most of what was known in the mid-1980s about Nicholas Seebeck and the postal paper that he provided to governments by contract.

The contracts were noteworthy and controversial in that Seebeck provided annual new postage stamps, postal stationery, and other stamps for free in exchange for the right to any remainders and for the right to reprint obsolete stamps as needed. Seebeck sold the remainders and reprints to a stamp wholesaler, who resold them to retail dealers, who sold them to collectors. Seebeck assisted the operation by running advertisements that promoted the stamps.

Mueses gathered his information from his own reading and through mail correspondence with specialist collectors of most of the countries that Seebeck provided postal paper to: the Dominican Republic, the Colombian State of Bolívar, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Ecuador. Seebeck tried but failed to sign postage stamp contracts with Costa Rica and Bolivia. He also provided some revenue stamps to Colombia and Guatemala.

A strength of the Mueses book is its many quotations of previous writers and the comments of Mueses related to those quotations. In too many instances, however, the quoted text includes what is known today to be a misinterpretation or an error.

My purpose in producing this second edition is to offer collectors an up-to-date and accurate look at Seebeck and his era. Additions or revisions that I made to the text of the book are in brackets [ ]. These additions and revisions are numerous and sometimes lengthy. In other places, I eliminated entire paragraphs from the original text.

Another strength of the book is that it provides the texts of the three contracts Seebeck

signed in 1889 with El Salvador, Honduras, and Nicaragua and the text of the contract Henry Etheridge signed with Ecuador in 1890. These contracts are the keystones for any discussion of Seebeck and his stamps and postal stationery.

The major sources not available to Mueses in the mid-1980s were the corporate Minute Books of the Hamilton Bank Note Engraving and Printing Company. Bill Welch located these historic documents and transcribed the minutes of the meetings of the company trustees and the annual meetings of the stockholders held from January 1884, when the company was founded, through early 1900. Seebeck died June 23, 1899.

Welch published those meeting minutes in *The Seebecker*, issues of June 1987 through March 1989 and January 1990 through October 1991.

Seebeck was one of the owners of the Hamilton Bank Note Engraving and Printing Company, but he was not among the founders. When he bought into the company in April 1884, he was providing needed cash to see the company through an economic crisis and the recession of 1883-1885. His fellow trustees soon hired him to be the new company’s general manager.

Mueses also provides valuable commentary on reprints, reserve stock, and originals. The chapters on Honduras and Ecuador present details of why and how those countries ended their Seebeck contracts early.

Mueses also examines what is known about the mysterious Manhattan Bank Note Company and the perhaps related Manhattan Engraving Company. Both appear to be related to engraver George W. Thurber, who was a generation older than Seebeck and a founder of both the 1884 Hamilton firm and the predecessor firm founded in 1881.

Chapter XI, titled “The Scandal and the Letter,” explains the role of the North American branch of the crusading group named the Society for the Suppression of Speculative Stamps. The branch obtained a concession from Seebeck in 1896 that changed the upcoming stamps and postal stationery of Nicaragua and El Salvador, the two countries then still under contract. Dealer J. Walter Scott was the leader of the North American branch of the SSSS.

The concession from Seebeck affected the designs of the stamps and postal stationery issued in 1897-1899. The desire of Scott and other dealers in the group was to reduce the number of speculative stamps being issued and thereby to reprimand Seebeck.

Seebeck, however, outfoxed Scott and the others. Their seeming victory over Seebeck really achieved nothing because collectible varieties of design and color continued.

For the basic stamp design of 1897 for Nicaragua, Seebeck used the 1896 design but changed the year date in it, making the 1897 stamps new collectible varieties. The 1898 and 1899 designs also were similar, but the stamp vignettes changed.

For the basic stamp designs of 1897 for El Salvador, Seebeck used the 1896 printing plates with “1896” included in the designs, but he changed the hues of the various denominations, again making new collectible varieties, on both watermarked paper and unwatermarked paper, just as with the 1896 stamps.

In late March 2018, with help from James Mazepa of the Interamerican Federation of Philately, I contacted Danilo Mueses in the Dominican Republic and told him of

my desire to update and correct this book. I was a stranger to him, but he soon kindly agreed to this second edition.

The original Spanish-language edition of this book was published in 1986 by Publicacion Emilio Obregon of the Dominican Republic.

This second edition is a major reworking of the English translation published in 1988 by the collector group The Spanish Main and its Central America Study Group and with the support of the Interamerican Federation of Philately. The Spanish Main and the Central America Study Group no longer publish journals or operate. The last issue of *The Mainsheet* was dated August 2004.

The English translation published in the United Kingdom in 1988 was typed, printed, and produced by Michael P. Birks, editor of the Central America Study Group’s *Central American Newsletter*, which ceased publication with the issue dated October 2000.

Birks kindly granted permission to base this second edition on the 1988 publication.

For insights, information, or images for this second edition, I thank Edgardo Alegria, Guillermo Federico Gallegos, Joseph D. Hahn, Nadine Kofman, Danilo Mueses, and Ross A. Towle.

The cover design is by Veronica Schreiber. The design pictures an 1890s view of the Sixth Avenue elevated railway in New York City.

Printing millions of bridge tickets and passenger tickets for the elevated railways in New York City was the major business of Nicholas Seebeck and the Hamilton Bank Note Engraving and Printing Company that also printed stamps and postal stationery for the Seebeck countries.

Michael Schreiber  
2018

Chapter I  
INTRODUCTION

In 1954 or thereabouts, I acquired a Spanish edition of the wonderful book by Alvin F. Harlow titled *Paper Chase*.

Through the author’s most entertaining stories, I began to know Nicholas F. Seebeck, a person who for more than a century has attained the status of a legend.

It was not Harlow who made Seebeck an unforgettable character, for on the contrary, author Harlow came to no definitive assessment. What caused me to have more than a passing interest was the way the author linked Seebeck to the stamps of the Dominican Republic.

Years later, while I was gathering material for a book I was writing on the stamps of the Dominican Republic, I went through masses of philatelic literature among which I found many references to Seebeck that I wisely collected and filed. A 1916 article by Ernest Schernikow includes the photograph shown as **Figure 1-1**, [ the only image of Seebeck believed ever to have been published. ]

To know and judge him by his acts, Seebeck is a character, although when he was at the center of controversies in America and Europe, his critics, preoccupied with telling of his deeds, forgot his personality. Kenneth A. Wood expresses this in his book *This Is Philately* as he sketches his biography saying, “although Nicholas Frederick Seebeck, the man, seems something of a mystery, much less mystery surrounds what he did.” It was this mystery that moved me to sift through the publications of the time, going on to complete an exhaustive revision of all that is known and had been written about him during the 20th century.

I believe that a person such as Seebeck, who for a decade was the object of intense debates, and who has become a legend, deserves to be better known.

In general, it is not easy to write with



NICHOLAS FREDERICK SEEBECK.

Figure 1-1. Photograph of Nicholas F. Seebeck circa 1880 when he was about 23 years old and an established stationer and stamp dealer in New York City.

impartiality about Seebeck, for while he was alive he provoked such hatred that almost no one dared utter a word in his favor.

He was possibly the person most often insulted in philately during the last decade of the 19th century. Those authors who have written about him in the 20th century have not given him much better treatment. I believe, however, that even a villain can be an interesting personality.

So, was Seebeck such an ill-fated character as he has been painted by most people? Was he as J. Majó-Tocabens described him in his book *The Origin of Stamps and Their Collectors*, “an ill-fated man for philately,” or was he, on the contrary, someone who “with his reprints created millions of new collectors



by putting within their reach, through ridiculous prices, an enormous quantity of pretty, new stamps?”

Often when we study a subject in depth, we realize that in addition to the black and white there exists the intermediate range – the gray area. I will study Seebeck the personality as impartially as I can, free of the passion that surrounded him in the stormy decade from 1890 through 1899, when the mere mention of his name was sufficient to

unleash the most violent reactions.

This will be an account of his stamps, those known for certain to have been issued as part of his contracts and those that are not proven to have been manufactured under contracts negotiated by Seebeck.

Finally, I will try to evaluate the effect his issues had on philately in general.

I trust that from such an account might emerge a Seebeck, less a myth, more human, less a legend, more a reality.

Chapter II  
NICHOLAS F. SEEBECK: THE MAN, THE LEGEND

To speak of Seebeck the person is not easy. He seemingly always tried to stay out of the limelight.

During the years 1889 to 1899 when his postage stamp activities were at their peak, the philatelic press dedicated rivers of disparaging ink to those stamps. Relatively little, however, was said about the man.

In later years, some authors wrote about him as a person, but mostly they repeated what was already known about him without bothering to undertake new investigations.

Nicholas Frederick Seebeck was born in Hanover, Germany, on February 19, 1857. In 1866, when he was age 9, he and his parents immigrated to the United States. <sup>1</sup>

3 Vesey Street

By the time he was 15 years old, Seebeck had established himself in New York City in the stationery business, a generic term in English-speaking countries for the sale of paper and other related articles. As a sideline to his stationery business, Seebeck sold for-

eign postage stamps to collectors.

Sometime in 1872, he set up his business in New York City at 3 Vesey Street, where he offered stationery and printing and had his retail stamp dealership. <sup>2</sup>

**Figure 2-1** shows a business card or advertising card that Seebeck used when he had his shop at 3 Vesey Street. From that address, he maintained correspondence with people around the world, including in El Salvador and the Dominican Republic.

[ The date of the business card is not certain, but it bears the manuscript notation “pr. 21 / 10 ’79 per? souv.?” that could date the card to 1879. In spring 1880, Seebeck moved his business from 3 Vesey Street to 97 Wall Street. ] <sup>3</sup>

From an early age, Seebeck was an exceptionally able individual and versatile character, “a young man with the rapacity to earn money,” according to Charles Wiley.

Thus we see that in 1876, having barely reached the age of 19, Seebeck published a *Descriptive Price Catalogue of All Known*

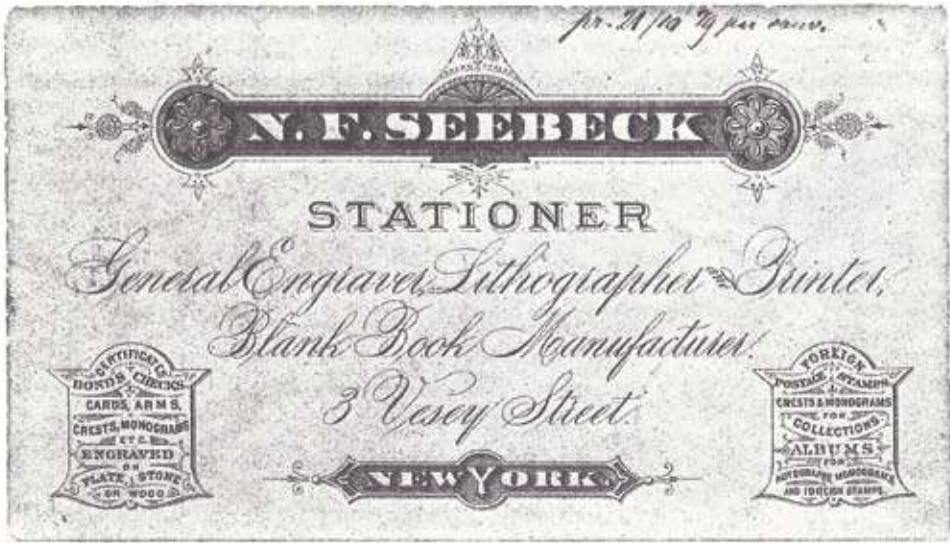
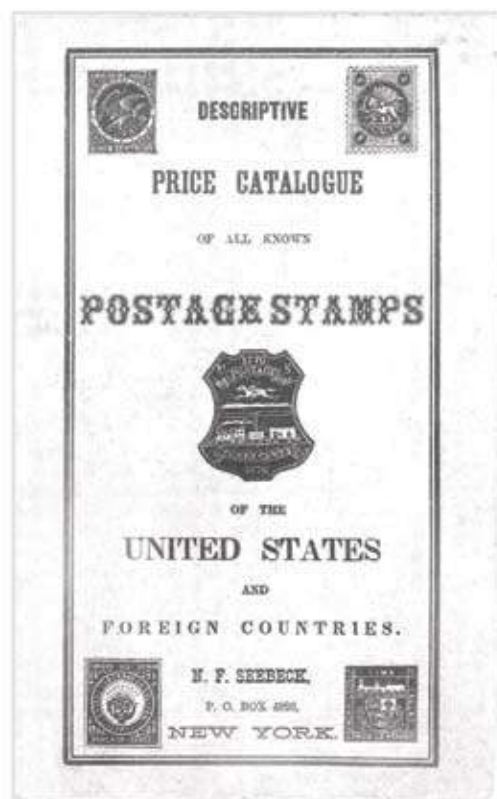


Figure 2-1. Nicholas F. Seebeck’s business card as a stationer and supplier of general engraving, lithography, printing, blank books, foreign postage stamps, and stamp albums, established at 3 Vesey Street in New York City sometime in 1872.

*Postage Stamps of the United States and Foreign Countries.* [ This 1876 catalog was a generic work of 42 pages produced so that other stamp dealers also could have their individual names and addresses printed on the front cover, as Seebeck did. The publisher of the generic catalog is not known, but it could possibly have been a creation of New York dealer William P. Brown. ] <sup>4</sup>

**Figure 2-2** pictures the front cover of the 1876 Seebeck sales catalog. By 1882, the sales catalog was in its fourth edition, with 216 pages and 1,900 illustrations. It gave quotations for stamps, new, used, and by the dozen. Little is known of Seebeck during the early 1880s apart from the stamp catalog published in 1882.

**Figure 2-3** pictures a cover addressed to Seebeck at the P.O. Box 4926 address



**Figure 2-2.** Front cover of what is believed to be Seebeck's first stamp sales catalog, published in 1876. It was a generic catalog of unknown source that was produced so that any dealer could have his name and address printed on the front cover.



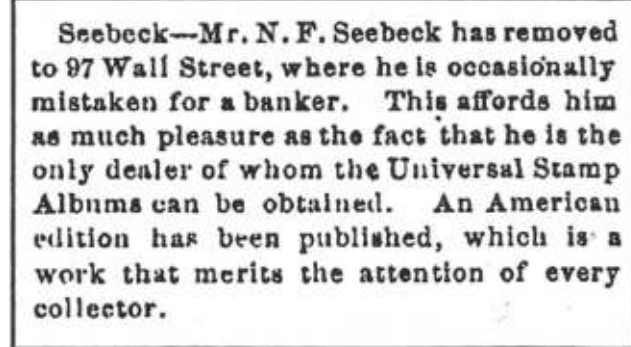
**Figure 2-3.** Cover addressed to Sr. Don N.F. Seebeck, P.O. Box 4926, New York City, from El Salvador, postmarked there January 2, 1877.

printed on the front of the 1876 catalog. The cover, from El Salvador, was postmarked at New York City on February 11, 1877, with 10 cents postage due. This cover is among the oldest documented items connected with Seebeck. [ The stamp is canceled "FRANCO." The El Salvador postmark reads "ADMINISTRACION GENERAL DE CORREOS / SALVADOR" and "2 ENERO 1877," for January 2, 1877. El Salvador did not become a member of the Universal Postal Union until April 1, 1879. The El Salvador 4-real stamp of 1874 was not valid on mail to the United States, which in 1877 had not yet issued its first postage due stamps. ]

[ Figure 10-2 in Chapter X pictures a cover sent to Seebeck from the Dominican Republic. This cover also is among the oldest documented items connected with Seebeck. It was postmarked February 18, 1880. The Dominican Republic did not join the UPU until October 1, 1880, so this cover also was charged postage due because the Dominican Republic stamp was not valid on mail to the United States. ]

### 97 Wall Street

In spring 1880, Seebeck moved his business to 97 Wall Street. [ A notice in one of the many stamp periodicals of the era announced this move. Shown in **Figure 2-4**, it is from the *Stamp Collector's Review*, June



**Figure 2-4.** Notice in the *Stamp Collector's Review*, Davenport, Iowa, June 1880, announcing that Seebeck had moved his business to 97 Wall Street from 3 Vesey Street. In the same issue, Seebeck placed a large advertisement announcing the move.

1880. ] From the 97 Wall Street address, Seebeck sent cards to postal administrators in various post offices throughout the United States offering to pay good prices for used stamps that paid for the franking of newspapers and other printed matter.

In the United States at that time, when a newspaper wanted to send a parcel or bundle of newspapers to another locality, the package would be taken to the post office where postage was calculated and paid and newspaper stamps were affixed to postal memoranda. The post office employee would cancel the stamps but keep the memoranda in the office. Seebeck would offer to purchase the stamps from the postal administrators.

Seebeck was particularly interested in acquiring used high-denomination newspaper stamps, well aware that he had a good market for them, and he offered as high as \$5 for each used stamp.

In 1884, Seebeck gave the office building at 61 Broadway as his address. At that time, this was the address of the Hamilton Bank Note Engraving and Printing Company, and it had been the address of the prior company named Hamilton Bank Note Company.

### Ernest Schernikow

One of the people who knew Seebeck best was Ernest Schernikow, a keen collector of El Salvador stamps who was furthermore

Seebeck's brother-in-law for a time. He also was the El Salvador vice consul in New York City, resident at 75 Battery Street. In an article published in the *Philatelic Gazette* in the August 1916 issue, Schernikow gives possibly the most personal information ever written about Seebeck.<sup>5</sup> Speaking of the plan to supply the countries of Central America and South America with free stamps, he wrote:

It was some time in 1888 when he first consulted [ with ] me about his plan to supply the Central and South American Republics with stamps for their use, to be supplied to them without the necessity of cash payment. The plan he proposed, was to furnish stamps in such denominations and quantities as would cover one year's needs, and in lieu of payment for the capital outlay and labor, to receive all remainders in the hands of Governments at the end of each year, prior to the one when a new issue was to be put into use, and after the former issue had been declared obsolete.

### Trip to West Indies and South America

One of the least known episodes of Seebeck's life and one also told by Schernikow was that "in 1884 or 1885" Seebeck made a journey to buy stamps in the West Indies and on the northern coast of South America for stamp dealer J. Walter Scott. Schernikow wrote: "... and it was some years after this, that the plan above referred to was matured." [ the plan to supply stamps for free with conditions ]

[ Schernikow's vague statement that Seebeck traveled in 1884 or 1885 to the West Indies and the northern coast of South America seems to be a year or two too early. The Minute Books of the Hamilton Bank Note Engraving and Printing Company, as transcribed by Bill Welch, reveal that there were no regular monthly meetings of the trustees and no special meetings from mid-January 1886 through mid-July 1886 and none from mid-January 1887 through mid-July 1887. Either period would have been enough time (six months) to make such a trip, and editor



Michael Schreiber hypothesizes that the trip likely would have occurred in early 1886 or early 1887. In 15 years, mid-1884 through May 1899, Seebeck rarely missed a trustees meeting or a stockholders meeting. In all, he missed only four meetings: March 21, 1885, January 13, 1890, January 12, 1891, and February 9, 1891. In April 1884, Seebeck had become a trustee of Hamilton Bank Note Engraving and Printing Co. as well as its new secretary and its general manager. He had recently sold his stamp business to Gustave B. Calman. Seebeck had his hands full with his new job, so it seems inconceivable that he would have made the trip between late April 1884 and early October 1884, even though there also were no official company meetings in 1884 between the meetings of April 21 and October 10. Leo John Harris (1981) wrote that Seebeck went to the West Indies and South America in 1886, but he offered no proof other than the 1946 *Congress Book* article by Irving I. Green. The Green article, however, states no sources.

Was this trip really made for Scott, or was it for Seebeck’s benefit? ]

**Hamilton Bank Note Engraving and Printing Company**

The publication in 1987-1991 of a transcription of the company Minute Books cleared up nearly all uncertainties regarding Seebeck’s relationship with the Hamilton Bank Note Engraving and Printing Company. It now is known when Seebeck began to work for the company.

[ Seebeck began to work for the Hamilton Bank Note Engraving and Printing Company in April 1884, three months after this new firm was founded. There is no evidence that Seebeck ever worked for the Hamilton Bank Note Company, the predecessor firm founded in 1881. ] Schernikow correctly wrote in 1916 that Seebeck “in 1884” became involved with the Hamilton company.

[ In the previous Spanish and English editions of *Seebeck: Hero or Villain?*, Mueses discussed a company advertising card (sales-

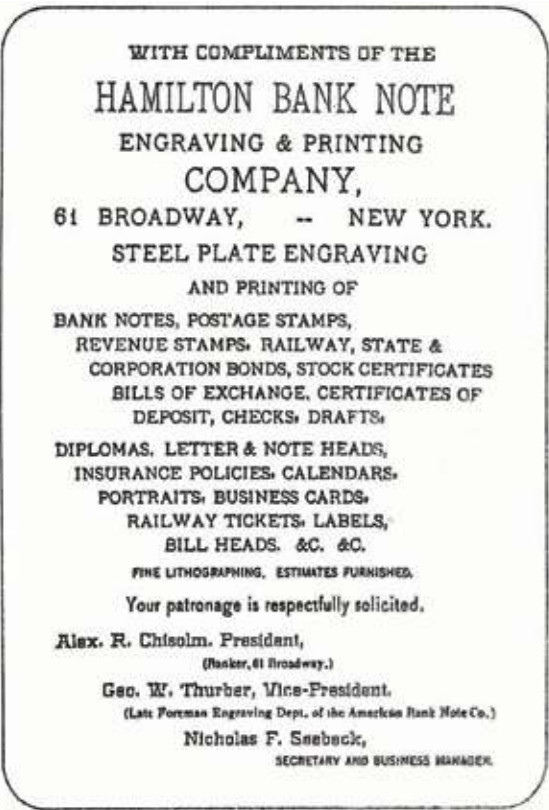


Figure 2-5. Advertising card (1884) in English: Hamilton Bank Note Engraving and Printing Co.

man’s sample card). On the back are “five stamps of the Dominican Republic series of 1880 and 1881, with and without the network.” The front side lists in English the services of the Hamilton Bank Note Engraving and Printing Co., its address, and its three officers prior to October 10, 1884: President Alex. R Chisolm, Vice President Geo. W. Thurber, and Secretary and Business Manager Nicholas F. Seebeck. **Figure 2-5** pictures the front of this card. Such cards were printed in 1884 after the new company was founded and organized. The named officers and the address “61 Broadway” date the card to April 1884 but not later than early October, when Edward P. Baker became president. Welch showed that the company had moved to 1 Broadway by April 1885. Similar cards in English exist bearing five Morazán stamps of Honduras, five 1882 stamps of the Colombian State of Bolivar, or unissued 1893 postage stamp designs



Figure 2-6. Advertising card (1884) in Spanish: Hamilton Bank Note Engraving and Printing Co.

for Ecuador. A similar advertising card (salesman’s sample card) exists printed in Spanish, with some additional text. It bears five plate proofs of 1883, 1884, and 1885 stamps of the State of Bolívar. **Figure 2-6** pictures the front of this Spanish-language card. The cards bearing stamps or designs of the 1880s seem to have been sample cards used by salesmen. The added stamps could have been ones that Thurber or Seebeck or both had created or supervised and that were added to the Hamilton Bank Note Engraving and Printing Co. advertising card as examples of the work that company could produce. It also is possible that the cards could have been manipulated or had stamps substituted or had stamps added to a card with a blank back. These cards are not advertising cards of the Hamilton Bank Note Co. founded in 1881. Chapter III discusses the two firms as well as the Manhattan Bank Note Co. ] <sup>6</sup>

[ A few pages are missing from the Minute

Books of the Hamilton Bank Note Engraving and Printing Co., but the omissions appear not to be critical to understanding the changes in personnel. The Minute Books include the minutes of the meetings of the trustees and the minutes of the annual meeting of stockholders, when the trustees were chosen. Each year the elected trustees determined who the officers would be. The Minute Books make clear the exact nature of the positions Seebeck held in the business and in what years he fulfilled each of those roles. ] <sup>7</sup>

It seems, however, that there was a public position and another private position between the Hamilton Bank Note Engraving and Printing Co. and Seebeck. Although he signed the contracts as company secretary, the company then transferred the contracts to Seebeck individually and he in his turn made a contract with the company to engrave and print the stamps. When the strongest attacks began, they were directed at Seebeck rather than at the Hamilton company, as if everyone understood that the company and Seebeck were not one and the same.

Another somewhat uncertain point in Seebeck’s life is how he negotiated stamp contracts with the Dominican Republic for 1879-1880 and with the Colombian State of Bolívar for 1879-1885.

Chapter XII will tell much of the story of the notoriety Seebeck gained because of his stamp contracts with El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Ecuador. By those contracts, he supplied stamps and postal stationery without charge to those countries, on condition that at the end of the year they returned to him the devalued remainders for him to sell to collectors and on condition that he had the right to reprint the stamps and the postal stationery.

**Advertising collars**

Seebeck was an entrepreneurial if not restless person who tried a variety of experiments related to postage stamps. In the 19th century, stamped envelopes in use in the United States usually were designed with a

vertical oval as the imprinted stamp, with the vignette within the oval. In 1864, George F. Nesbitt, a manufacturer of United States government envelopes, had the idea of overprinting the envelopes with his name and address around the vignette. This added printing is called a collar. He offered the idea to the U.S. Senate and the U.S. House of Representatives and for his own use. Although this idea did not flourish, years later Seebeck printed collars naming his business on the envelopes he used for his correspondence. Envelopes with the inscription “N.F. SEEBECK, 97 WALL STREET, NEW YORK” (or “3 VESEY STREET”) around the imprinted stamp are known.

Advertisements on stamp sheets

Another effort was to try and sell space on the back of stamps for the printing of small advertisements, but it is not known if the advertisements were added by Seebeck or by others after he died.

Blocks of nine stamps (3 by 3) of El Salvador and Ecuador are known with advertisements in English on the back for products common in the United States in the 1890s.<sup>8</sup> It has been speculated that stamps of Honduras and Nicaragua with similar advertisements ought to exist. Hahn has stated that he has seen the advertisements on the back of stamps of Nicaragua.<sup>9</sup>

Whoever added the advertisements made use of an idea already practised in New Zealand on its stamps of 1882-1891, but the purpose intended for the Seebeck stamps is not clear. It has been pointed out quite rightly that if the advertisements were distributed for the people of El Salvador or Ecuador, they should have advertised products of those countries and not Adams chewing gum or Kennedy’s crackers, and they should have been in Spanish.

Leo John Harris (1981) pointed out that the advertisements are printed over stamp remainders and that the maneuver could have been a trick to find an outlet for the stamps or to try to sell the stamps as part of a sales campaign to the makers of the prod-

ucts advertised. It has even been speculated, as Richard McP. Cabeen has put forward, that printing advertisements on the New Zealand stamps could have been Seebeck’s own idea and that by putting advertisements on the stamps of the Central American countries he would have not been copying the ideas of others but would have been trying to widen his radius of action.

Seebeck as a collector

Seebeck was a great collector of stamps. His interest centered on the stamps of the old German States. He also had a magnificent collection of the stamps of the Confederate States of America that reached a high price when sold after his death.

Death on June 23, 1899

Seebeck died on June 23, 1899, after his last contracts were fulfilled and after the wave of rejection over his stamps had dissipated. He was only 42. His former brother-in-law Ernest Schernikow was named executor of his estate.

Schernikow and other authors mistakenly have given June 23, 1900, as his date of death, but he died on June 23, 1899, according to the July 1899 obituary published in the *Philatelic Monthly and World*, Vol. 25, No. 7, page 62, and in other sources.

The records of the Hamilton Bank Note Engraving and Printing Co. show that in 1940 August C. Seebeck, a son of N.F. Seebeck, was a trustee and vice president of the company. August C. Seebeck resigned from these positions on September 11, 1944, effective October 3. 1944.

The Seebeck Chronology

[ The *Chronology of the Life of Nicholas F. Seebeck* includes more information about Seebeck’s family, his contracts, and his businesses and their locations. The chronology, written and compiled by Michael Schreiber, includes specific references for nearly all of the information it presents.

The chronology is on pages 145-158. ]

Chapter III

MANHATTAN BANK NOTE COMPANY

HAMILTON BANK NOTE COMPANY (1881)

HAMILTON BANK NOTE ENGRAVING AND PRINTING COMPANY (1884)

The Hamilton Bank Note Engraving and Printing Co. seems indissolubly bound to Seebeck, so much so that it has been pointed out that on one occasion or another he was its general manager, agent, secretary or president according to the needs of the moment. [ Seebeck was at certain times also vice president or treasurer.<sup>1</sup> This paragraph, both in the original Spanish edition published in 1986 and in the English translation published in 1988, reads incorrectly “Hamilton Bank Note Co.” ]

The two Hamilton companies

Clarence W. Hennan<sup>2</sup> in his work on the issues of the Dominican Republic studied the origin of the first Hamilton firm, pointing out: [ with one date error here corrected ]

The new series is shown to have been produced in New York by the Hamilton Bank Note Co. (referring to the series of 1880 of the Dominican Republic). With reference to the issue of 1879, in 1906 Phillips points out, ‘the authorization for this new issue was in New York and the contract was obtained by Mr. N.F. Seebeck.’ At the same time, Phillips lists the stamps of the issue of 1880 as ‘Printed in New York by the Hamilton Bank Note Co.’

However as recently as in 1922, Gibbons Catalogue lists the issue of 1880 as ‘lithographed and printed by the Manhattan Bank Note Co. New York.’

The facts are that the Hamilton Bank Note Co. began its operations in [ 1881 ] (at 61 Broadway) and therefore could not have printed the issue of 1880 or that of 1879 [ of the Dominican Republic ].

[ Barbara Mueller, in the *Essay-Proof Journal*, Second Quarter 1988, 45:2, pic-

tured the engraved advertising card shown in **Figure 3-1**, page 10, with the address “61 Broadway” and a nearly identical trade card with the address “88 and 90 Gold Street.” The 61 Broadway card is for the Hamilton Bank Note Co., the firm founded in 1881. Mueller believed that the Gold Street address followed the Broadway address, and it did. On January 16, 1884, when the old officers of the Hamilton Bank Note Co. founded the new Hamilton Bank Note Engraving and Printing Company, they met at 61 Broadway.<sup>3</sup>

In 1885, the Hamilton Bank Note Engraving and Printing Co. moved its offices to 1 Broadway. The first recorded meeting held at 1 Broadway was either the trustees meeting of April 15 or April 23, 1885, or the stockholders meeting of May 18. The Minute Books do not state an address for the trustees meetings held April 15 and April 23.

Sometime in late 1891, the firm moved to the building at the corner of Gold and Ferry streets. The lease contract was approved at the trustees meeting December 16, 1890. ]<sup>4</sup>

The Manhattan Bank Note Company

Later, Hennan wrote about Seebeck [ corrections and details added ]:<sup>5</sup>

In 1885 he was ‘secretary’ at 1 Broadway, the address which from [ April or May 1885 ] was also that of the Hamilton Bank Note [ Engraving and Printing ] Co. Between 1879 and 1883, the Manhattan Bank Note Co. does not appear [ in the records ], but in 1879 and not after 1880 in 542 Pearl Street was situated a Manhattan Photo Engraving Co.

After the stamps of 1880 in the Dominican Republic, two series of postcards [ postal cards ] were published. In [ the Scott catalogs of ] (1895 etc.) the year



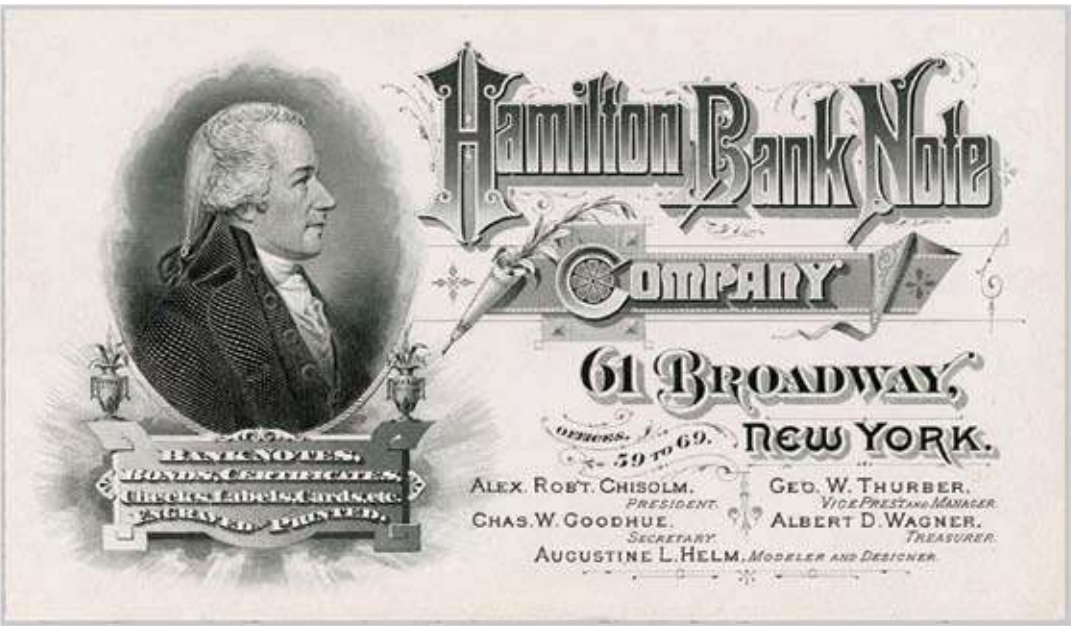


Figure 3-1. Advertising card circa 1881 of the Hamilton Bank Note Company, founded in 1881.



Figure 3-2. Dominican Republic postal card of 1881. The imprint reads "THE MANHATTAN BANK NOTE CO. NEW YORK."

1881 is given as the date of issue of these cards which also was the date of the first envelopes with the printed stamps [ postal stationery – the early Scott catalogs listed postal stationery ]. On these latter, the stamps which were printed

have the same design as the adhesive stamps; on the postcards [ postal cards ] the stamp is oval with the value at each side. One of the series of cards evidently was intended for home [ domestic ] use. The other series had inscriptions in



Figure 3-3. Engraved advertising card from 1893 of the Hamilton Bank Note Engraving and Printing Co. On April 10, 1893, company trustees elected Charles E. Gray vice president and general manager. For six months, Gray replaced Seebeck as company general manager. Seebeck then replaced him.

Spanish and French which showed that these were intended for use within the UPU [ Universal Postal Union ]. Just below the lower border at the front these UPU stamps bear an imprint which reads 'The Manhattan Bank Note Co. New York.' [ **Figure 3-2** pictures the 2-centavo card for domestic use, printed in green on white stock, and a detail of the imprint. ]

In the *Collectors Club Philatelist* of January 1946 (p. 31), Clarence W. Brazer mentions a Manhattan Engraving Co. (situated at 71 Broadway, New York, in 1867) which in 1881 produced postcards [ postal cards ] for the Dominican Republic and

certain postage stamps [ incorrect: see next paragraph ]. In 1867 its treasurer was the well-known engraver George Thurber, who was later an official of the Hamilton Bank Note Co. [ and in 1884 a founder of the Hamilton Bank Note Engraving and Printing Co. ] The only banknote companies registered in 1880 in New York were the American, the Franklin, the Homer Lee and the Kendall. If the stamps of 1880 were printed by a 'banknote' company of New York, it follows that it is one of these four unless they were made by a 'Manhattan' Bank Note or (Photo) Engraving Co. There seems no connection between the 'Manhattan' and the Hamilton Bank Note Co., were it not for the fact that Thurber was an official of the first [ Hamilton firm, 1881 ] before being a founder of the second [ Hamilton firm, 1884 ].

[ Manhattan Engraving Co. went bankrupt. Its property was sold at auction in New York City in November 1871.<sup>6</sup> ]

[ **Figure 3-3** pictures an 1893 engraved advertising card of the Hamilton Bank Note Engraving and Printing Co., founded in 1884 and the company that employed Seebeck. The design of the typography minimizes the words "ENGRAVING & PRINTING," even though they were part of the company's legal name. This card can be dated without question to 1893 because it names Charles E. Gray as vice president and general manager. Gray had been elected vice president at the trustees meeting held July 8, 1892. He was elected general manager at the trustees meeting held April 10, 1893. As general manager, he lasted only six months. At the trustees meeting held October 16, 1893, Gray resigned both of his positions, and the trustees elected Seebeck to replace him in both. ]

So much for the quotation from Hennan. Chapter IX and Chapter X will take up this subject again. [ Hennan is correct that the Hamilton Bank Note Co. (1881) could not have created the 1879 and 1880 stamps of the Dominican Republic or its 1881 postal cards. George W. Thurber (1827-1908) is a

key person in the story.<sup>7</sup> He was connected with Manhattan Engraving, the first Hamilton (1881), and the second Hamilton (1884). He and Seebeck could have known one another and worked together in the 1870s when Seebeck had his stationery business. At that time, they could have worked together to produce the 1879-1881 stamps and the 1881 postal cards of the Dominican Republic and the 1879-1880 and 1882-1885 stamps of the Colombian State of Bolívar, but there is no concrete evidence that they collaborated. ]

[ The 1981 article<sup>8</sup> by Leo John Harris titled “The Hamilton Bank Note Company of New York: Some Collateral Items” pictures 16 important artifacts and includes valuable information, but its text is marred by factual errors, mostly confusion of the two companies, one garbled company reference, and confusion of locations. The Harris article actually is about the Hamilton Bank Note Engraving and Printing Company. The names are important. The Hamilton Bank Note Engraving and Printing Company was a new corporation, albeit with founders who were the same men who served as officers in the previous firm, the Hamilton Bank Note Co. ]

**Banknote companies**

The “bank notes” were one series of businesses that flourished in the United States in the second half of the 19th century. Contrary to what their name might suggest, they were not banks but businesses devoted to the printing of banknotes, bonds, postage stamps and other security documents. The companies came into prominence by their taking over of part of the substantial market in printing stamps. Stamp printing and other security printing had become a monopoly of the American Bank Note Co., founded in 1858, and the National Bank Note Co., founded in 1860. For almost 75 years, American Bank Note Co. dominated a great part of the market in printing stamps for all Latin America and even extended into Europe.

The productions of the Hamilton Bank

Note Engraving and Printing Co., as far as the quality of the printing is concerned, were of a high standard. It was this company that printed the stamps produced under Seebeck’s famous contracts.

On the salesman’s sample cards pictured in Chapter II, the company announced itself as steel plate engravers, printers of banknotes, postage stamps, revenue stamps, railway tickets, bonds, stock exchange certificates, bills of exchange, deposit certificates, cheques, postal orders, diplomas, card headings, insurance policies, calendars, portraits, business cards, labels, bill headings, etc.

[ Working with the large banknote companies in New York City were a cadre of engravers who had offices in Lower Manhattan. Many engravers were self-employed, but some were employees of the banknote companies. George W. Thurber was employed by Manhattan Engraving, American, and both Hamilton companies. Freelance engraver Rudolph P. Laubenheimer created the dies for various Seebeck postage stamps and Seebeck postal stationery of Nicaragua, El Salvador, Honduras, and Ecuador.<sup>9</sup> ]

**20th-century stamps**

In the 20th century, I know of only four stamp sets produced by the Hamilton Bank Note Engraving and Printing Co.: two of the Dominican Republic, one of Panama, and one of Honduras.

The first stamps of the new century printed for the Dominican Republic were the Mapita designs (Scott 111-117) issued in 1901. These stamps were plagued with intentional mistakes, such as the inscriptions “Atlantic Ocean” and “Caribbean Sea” being transposed, the map of the Dominican Republic being upside down, and the inscription “cinco” instead of “cinquenta” on the 50-centavo stamp.

The other 20th-century set of the Dominican Republic printed by the Hamilton Bank Note Engraving and Printing Co. was the issue commemorating the 400th anniversary of the founding of Santo Domingo (Scott

144-150), issued February 25, 1902. In this issue, six of the seven denominations exist with the center inverted, and all denominations come imperforate. The contract for printing both sets was negotiated with the Dominican Republic by José María Giordani, who at that time was acting as consul of Guatemala in the Dominican Republic.

The contract for printing the Santo Domingo set was clear-cut Seebeckian. The government of the Dominican Republic did not pay for the stamps and undertook to deliver to Giordani at the end of validity of the issue, which was only for three months, \$5,000 face value of stamps and the balance that had not been sold by May 31, 1902.

Postal activity in the country was low enough that in 1903 through advertisements published in *L’Echo de la Timbrologie* and other European publications, as many as 22,000 complete sets of the issue were offered for sale.

Giordani was without doubt such “a bird of evil spots” that finally on January 23, 1904, the president of the Dominican Republic, C. Morales Languasco, was obliged to cancel Giordani’s tour of office as consul to Guatemala and Costa Rica.

And as for the so-called errors in these two issues, all are of a money-making kind, which shows that the people who managed the firm after the death of Seebeck had learned the lesson well.

Another set of stamps printed by the firm was one made for the government of Panama in 1906. The set comprised nine denominations, all of which appear with the center inverted and imperforate. Concerning the issue, the Scott catalog points out: “The values [ denominations ] of the issue for the most part appear with the center inverted and imperforate, but it is not known if these stamps were regularly issued.”

This set was manufactured four years after the 1902 inverted centers and imperforate stamps of the Dominican Republic. Yes, the truism holds: “A dog might lose his teeth but not his talents.”

The Hamilton Bank Note Engraving and Printing Co., however, continued producing postage stamps. I know of only one series after its 1906 venture in Panama: the 1946 Coats of Arms set printed for Honduras (Scott C155-C162), but this was in a more serious vein.

In 1951, Hamilton Bank Note Engraving and Printing Co. was acquired by the Security Bank Note Co. of Philadelphia, and the successor firm still operates today.

[ In 2018, Ross A. Towle<sup>10</sup> described the evolution since 1951:

In 1957, Security Bank Note merged with Columbian Bank Note Company to form Security-Columbian Bank Note Company.

The Security-Columbian firm changed its name in 1965 to United States Banknote Corporation, with its security printing done by a subsidiary called the Security-Columbian Division.

The company B.T. Babbitt Inc. took over a large block of ABNC stock in 1968 and acquired more stock over the years.

In 1972, B.T. Babbitt Inc. completed a tender offer for the remaining ABNC stock and changed the Babbitt company name to International Banknote Corporation.

In 1990, the United States Banknote Corporation acquired the holding company International Banknote Corporation and changed the name of the surviving entity to American Banknote Corporation.

As of October 21, 2016, it is known as ABCorp. ]

**The Minute Books**

[ A synopsis by Michael Schreiber of the corporate Minute Books of the Hamilton Bank Note Engraving and Printing Company, 1884-1899, appears on pages 129-144.

Pages 125-127 list the company officers and provide some details about them and about three others who participated in the takeover of the company in 1893.

In the late 1980s, Bill Welch located the Minute Books with successor firm United States Banknote Corp. of New York City. Welch received permission to transcribe the

Minute Books and did transcribe them.

Welch published his transcription of the company minutes in *The Seebecker*, June 1987 – March 1989 and January 1990 – October 1991, Vol. 1, No. 3, through Vol. 2, No. 3, and Vol. 3, No. 1, through Vol. 3, No. 4. A reproduction of the transcriptions of the Minute Books in *The Seebecker* was published as two PDF annex files to this book. ]

Chapter IV  
THE MISSION IN CENTRAL AMERICA

The matter seemed both simple and innocent: a group of Latin American impoverished nations, unable to produce locally issues of postage stamps of an acceptable quality. They would be offered supplies of an annual issue of beautifully printed stamps at no cost on the condition that at the end of the issue the remainders (which the promoter would take responsibility for gathering) should be returned to the printer.

These remainders would be offered for sale to collectors at low prices. For those who preferred canceled stamps, they could be supplied in that condition.

Ultimately everyone would be a winner. The countries that signed contracts would receive their stamps at no cost. The promoter, for the sole cost of manufacturing and delivery, would acquire enormous quantities of legitimate stamps. And collectors would have the opportunity of acquiring at low prices the beautiful and colorful stamps so attractive to the young.

Whose idea was it? It has been attributed to Seebeck, but before him it seems there were forerunners. W.J. Hardy and F.D. Bacon in 1896 wrote:

Guatemala in 1886 accepted the offer of a certain Mr. Charles Parker, a civil engineer, to provide, at no cost, two million stamps of a new design, on the understanding that they would hand back the remainders of all the old issues. The cost of the new issue for the entrepreneur engineer must not have been significant, and [ it ] shows that there are great benefits in this type of transaction.

The stamps to which Hardy and Bacon refer are the Quetzal National Emblem issue, Scott 31-41, designed by Dr. E. León and

printed by lithography by the American Bank Note Co. The American Bank Note Co. only fulfilled the order and had nothing to do with bringing the stamps into existence.

In 1889, a few years after his trip to the West Indies, Seebeck began his tour of Central America. For that journey, Ernest Schernikow gave him a series of letters of introduction to various officials of the governments he proposed to visit.

Seebeck set sail at the beginning of 1889, in January, and the first country he visited was Guatemala where he was unsuccessful. Then he made his way to El Salvador, where on March 27 he signed the first of his contracts for a 10-year period.

Then he went to Honduras where on April 20 he acquired another 10-year contract. From there he made his way to Costa Rica, but he was unable to sign a contract, so he set off for Nicaragua. The contract with Nicaragua was signed on May 4, 1889.

In the following chapters, I will present the contracts of the four Seebeck countries and briefly consider the stamps and postal stationery that resulted from those contracts. I will also take up the stamps of the Dominican Republic and the State of Bolívar.

With regard to the listings of the Seebeck stamps in the chapters that follow, the study of the stamps with their varieties of paper, hues, errors, different printings, and above all knowledge of the differences between the originals and the reprints, is so great that it is beyond the scope of this book.

This book is directed more toward the study of Nicholas F. Seebeck the man and the influence of the so-called Seebeck phenomenon on the philately of his era and on the stamp hobby over the long term.



Chapter V  
EL SALVADOR

Seebeck’s first contract of 1889 was signed with El Salvador. El Salvador and Nicaragua were the only two among the three Central American nations and Ecuador to let their contracts run for the agreed 10 years.

The Seebeck contract

The contract was signed on March 27, 1889, and the following is from the English version that appeared in the *Philatelic Magazine* of February 14, 1932, complemented with corrections based on a Spanish version of the contract published in the Official Gazette of El Salvador in May 1889:

1 – Nicholas F. Seebeck as representative of the above named company [ The Hamilton Bank Note Engraving and Printing Co. ] promises to supply, without any cost to the postal services of El Salvador, the quantities of stamps which may be necessary for the postal services and which will be determined accordingly from now on, for a period of 10 successive years, beginning on the date of the present contract, in accordance with the design which the General Manager will provide on 1 April each year, on the understanding that the issue for each twelve month period will be so totally different from those in the preceding period, while the type adopted for each year’s series or issues should be uniform.

2 – The stamps will be engraved on steel plates in the most artistic form and in such a way that forgery will be impossible, in the following quantities which can be increased according to the needs of the postal services if it is necessary to do so.

1,500,000 stamps of 1c, 2c, 3c, 5c, 10c, 20c, 25c, and 50 centavos and \$1.00 [ 1 peso ]

10,000 postal cards of 2c, [ 3c, ] 2c+2c, 3c+3c

25,000 envelopes with stamps of 5c, 10c, 11c, 20c and 22 centavos

10,000 newspaper wrappers of 3c, 6c, 12½c, and 25 centavos

3 – The postal issues must be handed over free of faults by the Company to the representative of El Salvador in New York, on 15 November each year which precedes that for which they are intended with the express condition that before the said delivery is effected, and immediately upon completion of the print run of the issues for which they have been used, the matrices [ plates ] of the issue sealed by the Salvadorian and Company representatives will be stored at the Safe Deposit Company, from whose safekeeping they cannot be removed except in fulfillment of the conditions stated hereafter.

4 – It is understood that the Company cannot make, of the issues which it prepares for the end of the year, greater quantities than those stated in the instructions received to such effect from the General Director with the authority of the Supreme Government, and that these quantities will conform with the nature of the said instructions in relation to the colors of each value and the design.

5 – The Government, for its part, agrees that the Director General of Posts will prepare the models and instructions necessary for the company to fulfill its commitments, committing to deliver both in the hands of the company in the month and on the day indicated in Article 1 of the year preceding that for which the new issue must be put into circulation.



6 - In compensation for the expenditure made by the company for engraving and supplying the said postal issues, the Supreme Government of El Salvador agrees to hand over to the company the stock, which at the end of each year, may be in its possession, once they have been declared null and void on the first of January whatever the quantity which remains, promising furthermore not to sell stamps or any of the other aforementioned issues, for less than their face value while in use.

7 – The stock will be handed over at no cost, by the Government of El Salvador to Mr. Seebeck’s representative in this capital on 1 February each year until the end of the present agreement.

8 - Once the representative of El Salvador has been informed by the Superior Government, that the issues of each successive year have been declared null and unacceptable for the payment of postage, and has given notice to that effect to the engraving company, the latter will be able to remove from its aforementioned safe deposit the plates for the postal issues, and break in the presence of the representative the seals mentioned in Article 3, so that the plates can be used to make the reprints it deems necessary, to sell to collectors of stamps and other postal franking values.<sup>1</sup>

9 – It is understood that the issues for each year will be placed in circulation in El Salvador 30 days after the official announcement by the Government.

10 – As an exception, the remainders left on 31 December of the present year of the 1 and 2 centavos value stamps recently ordered from the American Bank Note Company of New York will not pass into the hands of the Hamilton [ Bank Note Engraving and Printing ] Company, whatever the deliv-

ery date may be, until 31 December 1890, so that the issue that the Company will have ready by November, according to the terms of the contract, will include only for the present year a set of stamps of 3, 5, 10, 20, 25 and 50 centavos and \$1.00 [ 1 peso ], the other issues being printed in accordance with the quantity determined in Article 2 of the present agreement.

11 – In order to avoid as far as possible any differences that might arise between the contracting parties in relation to the terms of the preceding clauses, the company is obliged to interpret the same in favor of the interests of El Salvador.

12 – The agreement may be renewed by mutual consent of the Superior Government of El Salvador and the Hamilton [ Bank Note ] Engraving [ and Printing ] Company, but in the case of one or the other, if both contracting parties consider it convenient, it can be canceled one year before the end of its term, through the representative of El Salvador in New York and the Company’s representative in this city, in accordance to the instructions that the former will receive from the Superior Government of the Republic and the latter from the engraving company.

In testimony of which we sign two copies with the same content, in El Salvador on 27 March 1889.

Salvador Carazo  
Director General of Postal Services,  
El Salvador

Hamilton Bank Note Engraving [ and  
Printing ] Company  
N.F. Seebeck, Secretary

The contract was approved by Salvadorian President Francisco Menendez on May 1, 1889, and was published in the *Diario Oficial* on May 8, 1889.

Issue of 1890

The first stamps manufactured by the Hamilton Bank Note Engraving and Printing Company for El Salvador under the 1889 contract were delivered by January 1, 1890. The stamps are cataloged as Scott 38-46. The stamps employ an Allegory of El Salvador design similar to the one used for stamps printed three years previously by the American Bank Note Company, **Figure 5-1**, page 20. This first Seebeck issue for El Salvador consists of the following denominations and hues:

1c green	20c orange
2c yellowish brown	25c red
3c yellow	50c claret
5c blue	1 peso carmine
10c violet	

For the first issue, Salvador J. Carazo, the El Salvador director general of postal services, sent a letter that was published in the September issue of the *Philatelic Journal of America* that announced the quantities of each denomination to be produced. According to that letter, the quantities were to be:

3c	450,000	25c	100,000
5c	450,000	50c	85,000
10c	250,000	1p	15,000
20c	150,000		

This is one of the few issues for which the supposed quantities issued and sent to the country are known. Seebeck, for all of his stamps, whichever country was involved, almost always kept all the figures secret for the individual denominations.

According to what is manifest in the contract, the issue of 1890 should not have included 1- and 2-centavo stamps. Schernikow in his 1916 article indicated that in fact the order was not for 1.5 million stamps but for 1,635,000, and as for the 1c and 2c stamps, at the time of the signing of the contract, they had already been ordered from the American Bank Note Co. Upon their receipt, it was found that they were inadequate for use, so 500,000 stamps of each of

the two denominations were ordered from the Hamilton firm, which caused the order to rise to 2,635,000 stamps.

The stamps were printed by recess line engraving and were perforated gauge 14. The stamps are much more common mint than used. The Scott catalog lists the lower denominations at minimum value. The four high denominations carry modest premiums. This situation occurs for all the Seebeck issues of El Salvador where genuinely used stamps are scarcer and more costly than mint ones.

In relation to this issue, Harlow wrote: “At the end of the first year, 445,000 stamps of 1 centavo and 504,000 of the two centavos of the said country were returned to [ Seebeck’s ] control.” These numbers are not confirmed and not necessarily accurate.

Something here does not quite add up if it is correct, as Schernikow said, that there were only 500,000 2-centavo stamps. It is true, however, that Seebeck began to receive the remainders of previous issues much earlier, fulfilling the terms of Article 6 of the contract.

Thus we see in the April 10, 1890, issue of the *American Philatelist* the following official dispatch transcribed:

GOVERNMENT PALACE  
San Salvador, December 3, 1889  
As a result of the new issue of stamps, envelopes, postcards [ postal cards ] and newspaper bands which are now ready, the Executive Authority orders:

1 – From 1 January 1890, the postal offices in the Republic will not accept for franking of letters and newspapers, any other stamp different from the ones of the new issue contracted on 27 March 1889.

2 – The stamps now in use will be declared null and void from 1 January.

3 – People who possess these stamps must exchange them before the 31st of this month.

4 – The Director General of Postal Services will give the necessary orders for the completion of the present order.

5 – All the stock of stamps of the invalid previous issues, and those that are in the treasury offices, will be sent to N.F. Seebeck, Secretary of the Hamilton company of New York, in fulfillment of Articles VI and VII of the previous contract.

Validated by the President  
(Signed) LARREYNAGA  
Secretario

In effect, the stamps on hand in the country were collected and returned to Seebeck through his agent. The *American Philatelist* of July 10, 1890, included the following notice: “A correspondent writes to tell us that a house in San Salvador sent two boxes of stamps of El Salvador, newly obsolete, to N.F. Seebeck; the face value of the shipment amounted to \$20,605.35.” [ The returned stamps would have been the American Bank Note Co. stamps issued in 1889 and perhaps earlier. ]

Issue of 1891

By January 1, 1891, as established in the contract, all the stamps of the previous issue were withdrawn from circulation and were sent later to the United States, and the Hamilton company made delivery of the new second Seebeck issue for El Salvador. The new stamps were of a smaller format than

those of the previous issue. They picture the San Miguel volcano, a ship, and a locomotive, **Figure 5-2**. The central vignette is the same on the 10 denominations, but the borders are different. The stamps were printed by recess engraving and were perforated gauge 12.

The issue consists of the following denominations and hues.

1c vermilion orange	11c pale violet
2c yellow green	20c pale green
3c violet	25c dark green
5c carmine	50c dark blue
10c blue	1p yellow brown

This issue includes several types of reprints on thicker paper and darker gum. The reprints of the 1-peso stamp carry on the back control numbers printed in a pale greenish blue. According to Joseph B. Leavy, the control numbers were added because some dealers were refusing to maintain the 50¢ per set price that Seebeck had established. In an attempt to find out who was selling below the fixed price, Seebeck ordered the printing of the control numbers with the idea of discovering the guilty ones and then not accepting their subsequent orders.

By mid-1891, the 1c and 5c stamps were used up, and El Salvador postal authorities overprinted locally a supply of 2c and 3c stamps as, respectively, 1c and 5c stamps.



Figure 5-1. Issue of 1890.  
10-centavo violet  
Allegory of El Salvador



Figure 5-2. Issue of 1891.  
1-peso yellow brown  
San Miguel Volcano,  
Ship, and Locomotive



Figure 5-3. Issue of 1892.  
20-centavo orange  
Landing of Columbus

Issue of 1892

By January 1, 1892, the third Seebeck issue for El Salvador was delivered. The design marked the 400th anniversary of the discovery of America by Christopher Columbus. The stamps show Columbus landing on the island of San Salvador, **Figure 5-3**. The stamps were printed by recess line engraving and were perforated gauge 12, The issue consists of the following denominations and hues:

1c dark green	11c brown
2c orange brown	20c orange
3c ultramarine	25c brown
5c gray	50c yellow
10c vermilion	1p carmine lake

In October 1892, stamps of this issue denominated 5c, 20c, and 25c were overprinted “UN CENTAVO” when supplies of the 1c stamp of the issue were exhausted. About the 1c-on-5c stamps, the *Philatelic Journal of America* of November 1892 commented that 50,000 stamps denominated 5c had been overprinted because the 1c stamps had been used up, and then it said:

This [ need to issue overprints ] is a comment on Seebeck, who supplies this country’s stamps and who did not send sufficient stamps for postal needs. Although El Salvador has exhausted supplies of 1c stamps in the latter part of the year in which they were issued (1892), there is little doubt that Seebeck will have sufficient remainders to supply ‘sets’ to collectors and dealers who may require them.

Issue of 1893

During 1893, Seebeck made two deliveries of stamps. They are the fourth Seebeck issue for El Salvador. The first delivery, completed by January 1, 1893, consisted of 10 stamps of small format showing in their vignette Gen. Carlos Ezeta, **Figure 5-4**.

The January 1893 issue of the *Philatelic Journal of America*, commented: “The new issue carries the portrait of the New York



Figure 5-4. Issue of 1893.  
1-centavo blue Gen. Carlos Ezeta

policeman whose beat is from Gold Street to the Brooklyn Bridge.” [ This comment was a backhanded slap at Seebeck and the Hamilton Bank Note Engraving and Printing Co., which then had its offices at 88 and 90 Gold Street in Manhattan. ]

The portrait of General Ezeta shown nearby demonstrates that the stamps bear a realistic likeness, meaning that the comment by the *Philatelic Journal of America* was one of those cruel jokes so common in the philatelic press of those times, alluding to the helmet resembling a police helmet that the general wore in the portrait.

The second delivery comprised three additional denominations of 2 pesos, 5p, and 10p, **Figure 5-5**, page 22. They supposedly were issued July 1, but no official record has been found to confirm it. These three large stamps picture scenes related to the life of Christopher Columbus.

The three stamps were printed on paper quite different from that used for the low denominations of the issue.

The stamps were printed by recess line engraving and were perforated gauge 12. The denominations and hues are:

1c blue	25c dark olive grey
2c brown red	50c orange red
3c purple	1p black
5c dark brown	2p green
10c orange brown	5p violet
11c vermilion	10p orange
20c green	





Figure 5-5. Issue of 1893.  
2-peso green  
Founding of City of Isabela

The Scott catalog notes that the 2-peso stamp is known on cover but that the 5-peso and 10-peso stamps are not known to have been used as postage. The Scott catalog does not value the stamps in used condition. Hahn and Sousa wrote that all covers they had seen bearing 2-peso stamps did not have arrival markings on the envelopes.

In an article in *Stamp Collector* in 1978, Clyde Gentle wrote: “The issue of stamps with a face value of up to 10 pesos for Nicaragua and in certain measure for El Salvador and Ecuador was justly criticized. This value represents a sum which far exceeds the postal needs of those countries.” His unsubstantiated argument, however, does not carry much weight, as Chapter XII will reveal.

A supply of 2c stamps was issued with the local overprint “UN CENTAVO.” No official record confirms an issue date in December.

Issue of 1894

By January 1, 1894, the stamps of the fifth Seebeck issue for El Salvador, consisting of 13 denominations, were delivered and soon went into use.

The stamps are denominated 1 centavo through 1 peso and picture an allegory of Liberty, **Figure 5-6**. The three high denomi-



Figure 5-6. Issue of 1894.  
5-centavo orange brown  
Allegory of Liberty

nations have vignettes with the theme of the seemingly inexhaustible Columbus.

For the high denominations, the format is larger than that of the low denominations. Seebeck sent to the country two shipments on different papers, one of which has been confused with a reprint.

The stamps were printed by recess line engraving and were perforated gauge 12. The issue consists of the following denominations and hues:

1c brown	25c orange
2c blue	50c black
3c brown	1p slate blue
5c orange brown	2p dark blue
10c violet	5p carmine
20c dark blue	10p dark brown

The three high denominations of this issue are not known used for postal purposes, and the Scott catalog does not value them in used condition.

Also issued was a supply of 10c stamps overprinted locally with “1 Centavo.” No official record confirms it as a December issue.

First issue of 1895

By January 1, 1895, a new issue of 12 denominations was delivered, the sixth Seebeck issue for El Salvador. The stamp



Figure 5-7. Issue of 1895.  
Arms in green on 1-centavo  
olive Gen. Antonio Ezeta

vignette shows Gen. Antonio Ezeta, brother of President Carlos Ezeta.

It happened, however, that after the stamps had been printed, the president was unseated by a revolution headed by Rafael Gutiérrez. The new authorities refused to accept the stamps picturing the brother of the deposed president.

There was no time to prepare new stamps, but as a compromise solution, it was ordered that the stamps be printed with the national coat of arms to obliterate the portrait, **Figure 5-7**. The coat of arms was printed in various hues: green, blue, brown, or vermillion. The stamps were printed by recess line engraving and perforated gauge 12. The issue consists of the following denominations and hues. The second hue is that of the Coat of Arms obliteration:

- 1c olive and green
- 2c olive green and blue
- 3c brown and brown
- 5c blue and brown
- 10c orange and brown
- 12c magenta and brown
- 15c vermillion and vermillion
- 20c yellow and brown
- 24c violet and brown
- 30c dark blue and blue
- 50c carmine and brown
- 1p black and brown

The 3c, 10c, and 30c stamps are known without the obliteration, but these belong to the reprints. The 2c stamp was reprinted in a dark yellow green on a thick paper.

Second issue of 1895

On a date unknown, a second series was issued picturing the national coat of arms within different frames, the seventh Seebeck issue for El Salvador, **Figure 5-8**. No official record confirms an issue date of January 15 or any issue date.<sup>2</sup> The stamps were printed by recess line engraving and were perforated gauge 12.

This issue consists of the following denominations and hues.



Figure 5-8. Issue of 1895.  
15-centavo red  
Coat of Arms

1c olive	15c red
2c dark blue green	20c dark green
3c brown	24c violet
5c blue	30c dark blue
10c orange	50c carmine
12c claret	1p grey black

Reprints are known of all denominations of this issue. They are printed on paper thicker than the originals.

In December 1895, as the 1c, 2c, and 3c stamps of this issue were running short, the government overprinted locally the 12c, 20c, and 24c stamps with “UN CENTAVO,” the 20c stamp with “DOS centavos,” and the 30c stamp with “TRES centavos.”

First issue of 1896

By January 1, 1896, Seebeck delivered the eighth issue for El Salvador. The vignette shows an allegory of Peace, **Figure 5-9**.

The stamps were printed by recess line engraving and were perforated gauge 12.

The issue consists of the following denominations and hues:

1c blue	15c violet blue
2c dark brown	20c magenta
3c blue green	24c vermillion
5c olive brown	30c orange
10c yellow	50c brownish black
12c dark blue	1p rose lake



A 2c stamp was issued on watermarked paper. All denominations of this issue were reprinted in slightly different hues and on thicker paper.

The 2c stamp was reprinted on watermarked paper. On the originals, the Liberty Cap watermark is upright (vertical). On the reprints it is sideways (horizontal). Sketches of watermarks are pictured on page 45.

Second issue of 1896

The ninth Seebeck issue for El Salvador, whose exact date of issue is not known, was issued in 1896 and consists of 24 stamps: 12 denominations printed on unwatermarked paper and the same 12 denominations printed on watermarked paper.

There are 12 different Pictorial designs, **Figure 5-10**. The stamps were printed by recess line engraving and were perforated gauge 12.

The 12 stamps have different vignettes. The denominations and hues are as follows:

1c emerald	15c blue green
2c lake	20c carmine pink
3c yellow brown	24c violet
5c dark blue	30c dark green
10c brown	50c orange
12c slate	100c dark blue



Figure 5-9. Issue of 1896.  
2-centavo dark brown  
Allegory of Peace



Figure 5-10. Issue of 1896.  
100-centavo dark blue  
Christopher Columbus



Figure 5-11. Issue of 1897.  
100-centavo brown lake  
Christopher Columbus  
inscribed "1896"

There are two sets of reprints. All denominations on watermarked paper were reprinted, and all denominations on unwatermarked paper were reprinted. The papers used for the reprints are thicker, and the reprint hues are slightly different.

The government overprinted locally "Quince centavos" on a supply of 24c stamps, some with watermark and some without watermark. There is no official record confirming this stamp was issued in November.

The 12 stamps picture three different coats of arms, Casa Blanca, San Miguel Volcano, a locomotive, an ocean steamship within two different frames, the post office, Lake Ilopango, Atehausillas Falls, and Christopher Columbus.

First issue of 1897

By January 1, 1897, a new series was delivered, the 10th Seebeck issue for El Salvador. The designs were the same as with the previous issue, with "1896" in the designs, but the stamps were printed in different hues, **Figure 5-11**. This minor change for the issue could be a result of austerity measures imposed in an attempt to reduce costs to the minimum, believed imposed after August 1893, when Wall Street financiers took control of Hamilton during the financial



Figure 5-12. Issue of 1897.  
1-centavo Coat of Arms of the  
Greater Republic of Central America  
in blue, gold, rose, and green

Panic of 1893. [ The minor change of only the hues also can be traced to the agreement that Seebeck signed in June 1896 with the North American branch of the Society for the Suppression of Speculative Stamps. See Chapter XI. ]

As with the second issue of 1896, the 1897 stamps were printed on paper with watermark and on paper without watermark. The stamps were printed by recess line engraving and were perforated gauge 12.

The denominations and hues are:

1c red	15c black
2c yellow green	20c slate
3c yellow brown	24c yellow
5c orange	30c pink
10c green	50c violet
12c blue	100c lake brown

There are two sets of reprints. All denominations on watermarked paper were reprinted, and all denominations on unwatermarked paper were reprinted. For both, the paper used for the reprints is thicker than that of the originals.

In May 1897, the basic letter rate was reduced from 15c per 15 grams to 13c per 15 grams. There were no stamps denominated 13c, so the 24c, 30c, 50c, and 100c watermarked and the 24c, 30c, and 50c without watermark were overprinted locally

with "TRECE centavos," the new 13c denomination. The overprinting was in red for the 13c yellow stamp and in black for the others.

Second issue of 1897

Two multicolor Coat of Arms stamps were issued March 9 to commemorate the Central American Exhibition held in Guatemala during March, the 11th Seebeck issue for El Salvador, **Figure 5-12**. The stamps were valid only that month. The legend on the stamps reads "REPUBLICA MAYOR DE CENTRO AMERICA," or "Greater Republic of Central America." This was a union of El Salvador, Honduras, and Nicaragua, and it attempted to include Guatemala and Costa Rica. The republic had been ratified in September 1896. Its constitution came into effect November 1, 1898, and renamed the union as the United States of Central America. A coup d'état November 21, 1898, in El Salvador ended the union. The vignette shows the union Coat of Arms.

The multicolor stamps were printed by lithography and were perforated gauge 12. The denominations and hues are as follows:

1c blue, gold, rose, and green
2c rose, gold, blue, and green

Both stamps also were reprinted in different hues on thicker paper.

Issue of 1898

The 12th Seebeck issue for El Salvador went into circulation on February 1, 1898.

It consists of 12 denominations of the 1897 design of an allegory of the unity of Central America but in single hues and engraved, **Figure 5-13**. The stamps were printed by recess line engraving on a thin watermarked paper and were perforated gauge 12. The denominations and hues are:

1c orange red	13c lake brown
2c pink	20c dark blue
3c pale green	24c ultramarine
5c bluish green	26c yellow brown
10c gray blue	50c orange
12c violet	1p yellow



Figure 5-13. Issue of 1898.  
12-centavo violet  
Allegory of the  
Greater Republic of Central America

All denominations were reprinted on paper without watermark. A second group of reprints comprising all denominations except the 12c and the 20c are on watermarked paper. The hues of the reprints are different from the original stamps. The paper is thicker in both groups of reprints.

Issue of 1899

The 13th Seebeck issue for El Salvador was delivered supposedly by January 1, 1899. Hahn and Sousa recognized that this issue, Scott 199-209, was printed by Seebeck. They noted that the records of the destruction of the plates (See Chapter XI) say that these stamps were printed with so-called double plates, on one side the half plate for an 1899 stamp of Nicaragua (Scott 110-120) and on the other side a half plate for an 1899 stamp of El Salvador.

In their study, Hahn and Sousa noted that the 1899 stamps of the two countries are identical in paper, gum, and hues.

The issue, **Figure 5-14**, consists of the following denominations and hues:

- |                  |                     |
|------------------|---------------------|
| 1c brown         | 13c dark pink       |
| 2c greenish gray | 24c pale blue       |
| 3c blue          | 26c pinkish carmine |
| 5c orange brown  | 50c orange red      |
| 10c chocolate    | 100c violet         |
| 12c dark green   |                     |



Figure 5-14. Issue of 1899.  
2-centavo greenish gray  
Allegory of Agriculture

The stamps picture the goddess Ceres. They were printed by lithography and were perforated gauge 12. The Scott catalog states that these stamps “probably were not placed in use,” and it does not value them used.

But the stamps of this issue were overprinted locally with a so-called wheel design, Scott 210-223, and it was these stamps that were issued and used.

The stamps of 1898 also were overprinted locally with the so-called wheel design and were issued in 1899 and used.

The 5c blue green stamp of 1898 was overprinted locally with “Tránsito Territorial” in black, violet, red, magenta, or yellow and was issued in 1899 and used.

Other stamps supplied by Seebeck

In addition to the stamps described in previous paragraphs, Seebeck printed for the government of El Salvador a series of Official stamps, postal cards, envelopes with imprinted stamps, wrapper bands for printed matter, parcel post stamps, and postage due stamps.

Some comments on these issues follow. Chapter XI summarizes the various issues produced by Seebeck for the Central American countries and Ecuador.



Figure 5-15. Issue of 1896.  
30-centavo magenta and black  
first Official issue

Official stamps

Seebeck also supplied El Salvador with Official stamps that were prepared by overprinting the ordinary stamps with two different designs. **Figure 5-15** and **Figure 5-17** picture stamps bearing the two types of overprints. **Figure 5-16** pictures a stamp bearing a bogus handstamp.

The first overprint is a small oval with the inscription “FRANQUEO OFICIAL.”

The bogus handstamp includes the inscription “CORREOS DE EL SALVADOR / DE OFICIO” (Scott O37-O72, O103-O126, and O75-O76 of 1900).

The rather ornate second overprint reads “FRANQUEO OFICIAL.”

First Official stamps of 1896

The first Official stamps of 1896 were printed only for the collector market. They are found only on the known reprint papers. The printing is believed to have occurred after 1896, when the reprints of the ordinary issue were made. The set consists of 12 denominations of the 1896 Allegory of Liberty ordinary stamps with the oval overprint added by letterpress, **Figure 5-15**. Scott O1-O12.

Bogus second Official stamps of 1896

This supposed issue consists of the same denominations as the previous issue with the “CORREOS DE EL SALVADOR / DE OFICIO”



Figure 5-16. Bogus issue of 1896.  
1-centavo emerald  
bogus second Official issue

handstamp added. The stamps are listed as Scott O37-O48, **Figure 5-16**.

Experts consider them to be bogus.

Leavy noted in an article that this handstamp was used to differentiate mail between that carried by officials and that transported regularly by the government. This is contradicted, however, in an article by Hermann Focke published in the July 3, 1909, issue of *Mekeel’s Weekly Stamp News*. Focke wrote:

This very day have I received the following letter from an official of the El Salvador Post Office.

“The stamps of El Salvador with the [ handstamp ] in question, made with a rubber stamp which is still in existence, are the work of a subordinate employee of this office. These provisional stamps were never authorized by this Post Office as there has always been a plentiful supply of the regular Official stamps since 1896 and these are simply spurious stamps. I have not been able to identify the employee who has been circulating these stamps of this country with the said [ handstamp ], for had I been able to he would have been dismissed from this office.”

Focke here in 1909 established the spurious character of these stamps, but they continue to be listed in the catalogs. The listings note that the 1c reprint of the first Official issue and 1c and 2c reprints of the second Official issue exist on thick paper.





Figure 5-17. Issue of 1897. 30-centavo rose and black first Official issue of 1897 inscribed “1896”

Third official stamps of 1896

This issue comprises the 12 denominations of the 1896 Pictorial ordinary stamps, on paper with watermark and on paper without watermark, with the letterpress oval overprint (24 stamps). There are two sets of reprints. All denominations on watermarked paper were reprinted, and all denominations on unwatermarked paper were reprinted. Scott O13-O36.

Bogus fourth official stamps of 1896

These are the 1896 Pictorial stamps, on paper with watermark and on paper without watermark, with the handstamp. Experts consider them to be bogus. Scott O49-O72.

First Official stamps of 1897

This issue comprises the Pictorial stamps in new hues, on paper with watermark and on paper without watermark, with letterpress oval overprint (24 stamps), **Figure 5-17**. There are two sets of reprints. All denominations on watermarked paper were reprinted, and all denominations on unwatermarked paper were reprinted. Scott O79-O102.

Bogus second Official stamps of 1897

This set comprises the Pictorial stamps in new hues, on paper with watermark and on paper without watermark, with the hand-



Figure 5-18. Issue of 1899. 5-centavo brown orange and black Official stamp

stamp. Experts consider them to be bogus. Watermarked 1c and 15c stamps and unwatermarked 12c, 30c, 50c, and 100c were reprinted on thick paper. Scott O103-O126.

Third Official stamps of 1897

This set includes the 5c dark green Numeral acknowledgement of receipt stamps on paper with watermark and on paper without watermark, with the letterpress oval overprint. The third Official stamps of 1897 were printed only for the collector market. They are found only on the known reprint papers.

Fourth Official stamps of 1897

The two 10c dark blue Gen. Rafael Antonio Gutiérrez registration stamps on paper with watermark and on paper without watermark were issued with letterpress oval overprint in February 1897. They were reprinted on thick paper. Scott O127-O128 and note. The 10c stamp in brown lake with overprint is known only on reprint papers.

Bogus fifth Official stamps of 1897

This set includes the two 1897 multi-color Coat of Arms of the Republica Mayor de Centro America stamps with the “CORREOS DE EL SALVADOR / DE OFICIO” handstamp, Scott O73-O74.

Experts consider the fifth Official stamps of 1897 to be bogus.



Figure 5-19. Issue of 1897. 5-centavo green advice of receipt stamp

First Official stamps of 1898

This issue comprises the single-hue Arms of the Republica de Centro America stamps with the letterpress oval overprint (12 denominations). Reprints were made of all stamps, both with watermark and without watermark, on thick paper. Scott O129-O140.

Bogus second Official stamps of 1898

This set comprises the 1c and 3c single-hue Arms of the Republica de Centro America stamps with the handstamp. Experts consider them bogus. Scott O141 and unlisted.

Official stamps of 1899

This group consists of the 1c, 2c, 3c, 5c, 10c, 13c, 26c, 50c, and 100c Allegory of Agriculture stamps of 1899 with the ornate lithographed overprint in blue, **Figure 5-18**. The stamps were not issued, and the catalogs value them only in mint condition. Scott O149-O157.

The 3c, 12c, and 24c stamps are known overprinted in black, Scott O158-O160.

In the same year, the 11 denominations were overprinted with a so-called wheel design, and it was in that form that the stamps were issued. Scott O161-O171.

The Scott catalog does not value the 12c dark green stamp overprinted with the wheel.

Advice of receipt stamps

El Salvador supposedly issued two advice or acknowledgement of receipt stamps. No official records confirm February 1897 as the issue period or that the stamps were actually issued. The vignette consists of a numeral matching the denomination, with a background of fine engine turning, **Figure 5-19**. The stamps were printed by recess line engraving on thin paper and were perforated gauge 12. Both stamps are green and are denominated 5c. One is on watermarked paper, and the other is on unwatermarked paper. Reprints of the stamps were made on thick paper without watermark.

Postage due stamps of 1895

El Salvador issued eight postage due stamps with Numeral designs corresponding to the denominations. A supposed issue date of October 1 is not confirmed by official records. The stamps were printed in olive brown (olive green) by recess line engraving and were perforated gauge 12. The eight denominations are 1c, 2c, 3c, 5c, 10c, 15c, 25c, and 50c. All denominations were reprinted on thicker paper in hues that vary from the originals.

Postage due stamps of 1896

Seebeck delivered a new postage due issue for 1896, date not confirmed. The issue consists of 16 Numeral stamps, eight stamps on paper without watermark and eight on paper with watermark, the same denominations as 1895. Both have the same designs and hues and differ only in the watermark.

The stamps were printed in red by recess line engraving and were perforated gauge 12. All stamps, with or without watermark, were reprinted on thicker paper and in a different shade of red.

Postage due stamps of 1897

Seebeck delivered new dark blue postage due stamps for 1897, date not confirmed. They differ from the previous issues only in



Figure 5-20. Issue of 1898.  
15-centavo violet  
postage due stamp

hue. The stamps were printed only on paper without watermark. Reprints were made of all denominations in blue on thicker paper.

Postage due stamps of 1898

Seebeck supposedly delivered a fourth issue of postage due stamps for 1898, date not confirmed. The stamps have the same characteristics as the previous issues (denominations, engraving, perforations), except that the hue was changed to dark lavender (violet), **Figure 5-20**. The stamps are not believed to have been issued. Reprints on thicker paper were made of all denominations.

Postage due stamps of 1899

In 1899, El Salvador received new postage due stamps using the same vignette as previously but again with a change of hue, this time to orange.

The same eight denominations prepared in the four previous years were manufactured again on watermarked paper and on unwatermarked paper.

The stamps, however, were not issued, and the catalogs value them only mint.

Also in 1899, the orange stamps were overprinted with a so-called wheel design that had been used on the ordinary and Official stamps issued earlier in the year. The Scott catalog lists them as an issue of 1900.



Figure 5-21. Issue of 1897.  
10-centavo brown lake  
Gen. Rafael Antonio Gutiérrez

Registration stamps

Supposedly in February 1897, four 10c registration stamps were issued for use in payment of the fee on registered mail, **Figure 5-21**. The stamps are:

- 10c brown lake on watermarked paper
- 10c dark blue on watermarked paper
- 10c brown lake without watermark
- 10c dark blue without watermark

Reprints of all four are on thicker paper. Only the brown lake is known on original papers. The dark blue is known only on reprint papers.



Figure 5-22. Issue of 1895.  
50-centavo green Hermes  
parcel post stamp

Parcel post stamps

In 1895, El Salvador supposedly issued five stamps for use on parcels. The stamps, in the shape of a rhombus, picture Hermes, messenger to the gods, **Figure 5-22**. The stamps were printed by recess line engraving.

The set consists of the following denominations and hues:

- |                 |            |
|-----------------|------------|
| 5c orange brown | 20c orange |
| 10c slate blue  | 50c green  |
| 15c red         |            |

The Scott catalog does not value the stamps in used condition.

Money order stamps

In 1895, the El Salvador contract produced nine Numeral stamps for use on money orders, **Figure 5-23**.

The issue consists of the following denominations and hues:

- |                |              |
|----------------|--------------|
| 1c green       | 25c brown    |
| 2c olive brown | 50c gray     |
| 3c red         | 100c emerald |
| 7c dark blue   | 200c violet  |
| 10c orange     |              |



Figure 5-23. Issue of 1895.  
100-centavo emerald  
money order stamp

Envelopes, Wrappers, Postal Cards

As part of his contract, Seebeck manufactured and handed over to the government of El Salvador envelopes with imprinted stamps, wrappers for printed matter, letter cards, and postal cards. The delivery of this postal paper is recorded in the publications of the time.

From 1890 through 1899, the following major varieties of postal stationery were issued, as listed in the Higgins & Gage *World Postal Stationery Catalog* (1978):



Figure 5-24. Issue of 1891. 3-centavo black and green on pink  
San Miguel Volcano postal card



- 55 postal cards (major varieties)
- 61 envelopes (major varieties)
- 28 wrappers (major varieties)
- 6 letter cards

Postal cards issued in 1890 are denominated 2c, 3c, 2c+2c, 3c+3c. Single cards denominated 1c were issued each year, 1891-1899, along with 2c, 3c, 2c+2c, 3c+3c. **Figure 5-24** pictures an 1891 postal card.

Message-reply cards denominated 1c+1c were issued in 1896 and 1897.

The postal cards of 1894 were reprinted. The 1891 postal cards on stock of a hue lighter than the hue of the originals possibly are reprints.

The postal card total above includes two Official cards not listed by Higgins & Gage.

Envelopes were issued in denominations of 1c, 2c, 3c, 5c, 10c, 11c, 12c, 15c, 20c, and 22c, but not every denomination was issued each year, 1890-1898. Some years had more than one issue. **Figure 5-25** pictures an 1892 envelope.

Wrappers were issued for seven years: 1890-1895 and 1897. The denominations are 2c, 3c, 4c, 6c, 10c, 11c, 12½c, and 25c. Not every denomination was issued each year.

Six letter cards were issued in 1895 denominated 2c, 3c, 5c, and 2c+2c, 3c+3c, and 5c+5c (message-reply letter cards).

The postal cards of 1890, 1891, 1892, and 1895 are imprinted “HAMILTON BANK NOTE COMPANY, NEW YORK,,” but they were manufactured by the firm legally named the Hamilton Bank Note Engraving and Printing Co. The 1892 imprints have no punctuation. Those of 1893 read “CO.,” and have no end stop. The postal cards of 1894 have no imprint. The 1896, 1897, 1898, and 1899 imprints have the full legal name in upper-case-lowercase with “Co.” and no end stop.

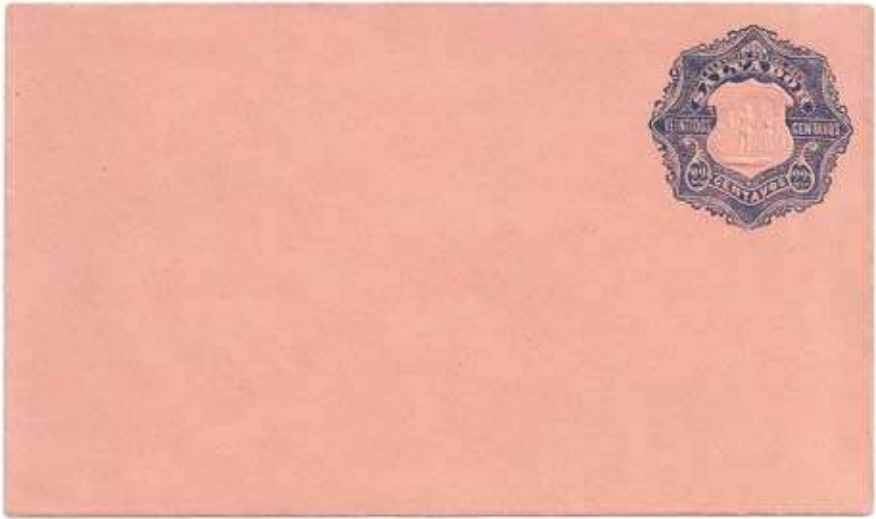
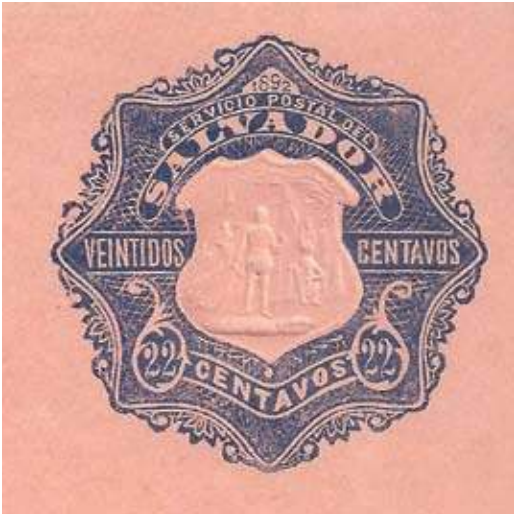


Figure 5-25. Issue of 1892. 22-centavo dark blue on salmon with embossing Landing of Columbus envelope

## Chapter VI HONDURAS

After signing the contract with El Salvador on March 27, 1889, Seebeck went to Honduras where he and the government there signed a contract on April 20, 1889.

### The Seebeck contract

The text of the contract was published in *La Gaceta* on April 29, 1889. It reads as follows:

Secretary of State in the Home Office  
Tegucigalpa, 20th April 1889

The Government AGREES:

To approve the contract agreed between the Director General of Taxes and Sr. Nicholas F. Seebeck which says:

Roque Jacinto Muñoz, Director General of Republic Taxes, and Sr. Nicholas F. Seebeck as secretary of the Hamilton Bank Note Engraving and Printing Co. of New York, agree to the following contract:

1 – Sr. Seebeck, as representative of the above named company, promises to provide, at no cost to the Government of Honduras, the necessary kinds of stamps for the postal service for the franking of correspondence dispatched within or outside of the Republic. This agreement will last for ten consecutive years from this date. The quantities, classes, and denominations of the types will be determined by the Government and executed by the Company in accordance with the designs the former will deliver to the offices of the Company no later than April 1st each year.

2 – The Government of Honduras agrees to circulate during the ten year term, only those stamps supplied by the Company, undertaking to modify annually the designs so that the issues cor-

responding to each twelve month period are completely different to previous and successive ones, but the type to be adopted for each annual series must be uniform for the twelve month term.

3 – The stamps will be engraved by the Company on steel plates, with the necessary artistic attention, so that they cannot be forged. The quantities and types of each annual issue will be the following:

- Two million adhesive stamps,
- Twenty five thousand sealable envelopes,
- Ten thousand postcards [ postal cards ],
- Ten thousand stamped bands for newspapers.

4 – The examples must be handed over by the Company to the representative of the Honduras Government in New York, no later than November 15th of the year previous to their circulation. It is a required condition that before verifying the delivery of the stamps, the moulds or engraving plates must be deposited in the offices of the Safe Deposit Company of New York, under seal of the Consul of Honduras in New York, from whence the aforementioned plates may not be removed except under the conditions expressed hereafter.

5 – The Company is obliged not to issue a greater quantity of the types agreed with the Honduras Government than those which the instructions express which in effect free the Government from the specific, allowing the nature of the order to specify values, colors and distinguishing features of each of the issues.



6 – The Government for its part is obliged to send the necessary instructions, models, portraits, forms and photographs in order that the New York Company may fulfill its contract, arriving in New York on the month and day indicated, according to Article 1.

7 – To compensate the expenditure made by the Company in the printing and issuing of the postage stamps referred to in this contract, the Government of Honduras agrees to surrender to the named Company the stock of the same stamps that they have at the end of each of the years of this contract previous to the declaration nullifying the value of the said stocks by the Honduras Treasury at the beginning of the new tax year. The transfer stipulated here must take effect whatever the excess quantity of stamps justified by this contract less their nominal value during their time in legal circulation.

8 – The stocks will be handed over, without any cost to the Company, to the agent named in this principal to represent it to the Government. The said surrender will take place exactly thirty days after the end of the fiscal year for the ten year duration of the contract.

9 – It is the obligation of the Honduran Government to notify to its representative and to the printing Company the decree which nullifies the value and circulation of stamps used during the previous year, so that the said Company may withdraw from deposit the plates and break the seals referred to in Section 4 of this contract, and the said Company may make the reprints it deems necessary to sell the issues and various franked items to collectors.

10 – The Government is obliged to declare the legal use and necessary circulation of the stamps hereby con-

tracted, thirty days before they come into use in the postal service.

11 – The printing Company is obliged, first of all, to hand over on December 1st of each year, at the latest, to the Government representative in New York a complete issue of all the new stamps, postal cards, stamped envelopes, newspaper wrappers, in the quantities expressed in Section 3, of the various values indicated by the Government. The Government in exchange and without other expense, will hand over to the Company the stocks it still holds thirty days after the date of receipt of the new issue. If the quantity and value of the stock of actual postage stamps is not sufficient to reimburse the Company through the sales made to collectors, the Government will allow the printing of the necessary quantity for which the Consul to Honduras in New York will have the work done, at the expense of the printing Company in the case where the plates exist for the issue actually in use.

12 – The stamps, cards, envelopes and newspaper wrappers will carry the date of issue and will have a central design which will vary annually according to the instructions issued by the Government, and their color will vary according to the allotted denominations.

13 – This contract must be presented to the Honduran Consul in New York so that, as his Government’s representative, he may ensure the exact fulfillment of the obligations stipulated herein. As proof it is signed in Tegucigalpa, on April 20th 1889.

Roque J. Muñoz. Under Seal “Republic of Honduras – Office of the Director General of Taxes – Tegucigalpa.”

Hamilton Bank Note Engraving & Printing Co.

Nicholas F. Seebeck, Secretary

TO BE SENT AND REGISTERED:  
Stamped by the President – MARTINEZ

**Reprinting of stamps of 1878**

As part of the contract, Section 11 established that Seebeck should receive the remainders of the previous stamps, the 1878 issue picturing an image of President Francisco Morazán, Scott 30-36.

When Seebeck signed his contract, he was aware that the remainders of the Morazán issue, in circulation for 11 years, were depleted and consequently the available quantities would be minimal. Consequently when Seebeck returned to New York, he convinced the Honduran consul that it had already been decided to reprint the 1878 stamps. The original series had been printed by the National Bank Note Co. The reprinting of the stamps, however, was assigned to the American Bank Note Co., and the cost of the work of reprinting was charged to Seebeck. The reprints were made on soft paper with a yellowish gum different from that used for the original issue.

In relation to this reprinting, and to other similar operations realized within the limits of the Seebeck contracts, some suspicious minds have insinuated that, because the American Bank Note Co. did this work for the Hamilton firm, it implies that there could have been arrangements behind the scenes between the two firms. Some have even suggested that this could have been a way of collecting debts when the Latin American nations were short of resources to pay for stamps already delivered to them.

At the end of 1889, the reprints were sent to Tegucigalpa where they were received by George Bernhard, Seebeck’s representative in Honduras, and he in turn undertook to return them to New York City together with the remainders available in Honduras.

According to information published in *La Gaceta* of April 16, 1890, 778,638 stamps were sent to Seebeck of which the majority corresponded to the reprints recently produced by the American Bank Note Co. The

remainders of the original stamps of 1878 in existence then might not have amounted to 200,000 stamps.

There is evidence, however, that the American Bank Note Co. did not send to Tegucigalpa all the reprints, for in the Decree of January 6, 1890, which put into circulation the first series of Seebeck, it is noted that “the Consul General of Honduras in New York will place at the inspection of Sr. Seebeck the stocks of the annulled issue still in the possession of the American Bank Note Co., the said Consul having to supply proof that the plates of the canceled issue have been destroyed.”

Seebeck printed fewer stamps for Honduras than for any of the four countries that signed contracts in 1889 or 1890.

Honduras was the first country to rescind its contract. The Hamilton firm manufactured for Honduras only five ordinary stamp issues, some Official stamps, postal stationery, and some related material.

**Issue of 1890**

The first Seebeck stamps for Honduras were issued January 6, 1890. This issue and all Seebeck stamps printed for Honduras were printed by recess line engraving. All stamps were perforated gauge 12.

The 1890 stamps depict in their vignette the coat of arms of Honduras, **Figure 6-1**, page 36, but the frames are different for each denomination. The issue consists of the following denominations and hues:

1c yellowish green	30c purple
2c red	40c dark blue
5c blue	50c brown
10c orange	75c blue green
20c ochre	1 peso carmine
25c pinkish red	

No reprints were made of these first stamps, but in fact there was no need to make them as, according to *La Gaceta*, No. 792, August 12, 1891, when the second issue was circulated, there remained of the first issue of 2 million stamps 1,611,771



Figure 6-1. Issue of 1890.  
75-centavo blue green  
Coat of Arms



Figure 6-2. Issue of 1891.  
30-centavo slate  
President Louis Bográn



Figure 6-3. Issue of 1892.  
50-centavo brown  
Columbus Sighting Land  
inscribed "1892 1893"

stamps, meaning that the number of stamps used during the year was only 388,229.

To study the legal aspects of the Honduran issues, I will refer to the article by Irving I. Green and the translation by Gunther Wiese B.

Equally in both the English and Spanish versions transcribing Article 4 of a Decree of August 12, 1891, on stating that the Honduran consul would hand over to Seebeck the remainders (the same stated in relation to the reprints of 1889), it says that there would be handed over to Seebeck "the part of the stock of the canceled issue in possession of the printing company (American Bank Note Company)."

This must be an error by Green or by *La Gaceta*, for it should have said in possession of the Hamilton Bank Note Engraving and Printing Co., which at that time was in possession of the remainders as printer of the stamps of the 1890 issue.

The remainders were handed over to George Bernhard who, as previously noted, was Seebeck's representative in Tegucigalpa.

Issue of 1891

Unlike the stamps of El Salvador, Nicaragua, and Ecuador, which were delivered by January 1 each year and which are

believed to have been issued on the next business day, the stamps of Honduras were generally issued in the middle of the year.

The second Seebeck issue for Honduras was issued July 1, 1891, or approximately one and a half years after the 1890 issue.

The vignette of the stamps picture Gen. Luis Bográn, who at that time was president of Honduras, **Figure 6-2**. The stamps were printed in two different formats, the 2p, 5p, and 10-peso denominations being in a large size, with different designs, and in two hues.

The issue consists of the following denominations and hues:

1c dark blue	40c blue green
2c yellowish brown	50c blackish brown
5c blue green	75c purple
10c vermilion	1 peso brown
20c brownish red	2 peso sepia and black
25c magenta	5 peso purple and black
30c slate	10 peso green and black

The 2-peso and 10-peso stamps are known to be printed on paper with the watermark of Crane & Co., Dalton, Mass.

The remainders of this issue returned to Seebeck were greater than those corresponding to the first issue. According to *La Gaceta* of February 7, 1893, 1,771,943 of the 2 million stamps originally sent to Honduras were

handed over to representative Bernhard.

Why were the remainders were so great? Green alludes to this in his interesting article. In those years, the majority of the population was illiterate, and the few who knew how to write had little confidence in the government. In general, the population made little use of the postal system.

Private companies preferred to use local private postal systems that carried their correspondence from one part of the country to another. This also explains why genuinely used covers are hard to find.

Possibly the greatest user of Seebeck stamps on mail sent to the United States was the New York and Honduras Rosario Mining Co. At that time, it was exploiting deposits of gold and silver found at San Juancito, 40 kilometers northeast of Tegucigalpa.

Issue of 1892

On or about August 1, 1892, the third Seebeck stamps for Honduras were issued. Their theme was the 400th anniversary of the discovery of America by Christopher Columbus, the same theme that year for the stamps of El Salvador and Nicaragua.

The vignette of the stamps shows the supposed images of Christopher Columbus and Martín Alonso Pinzón at the prow of their ship, looking toward the coast of Honduras, **Figure 6-3**. The design is merely a liberty taken by the artist, for Columbus did not sight the coast of what is now Honduras until August 14, 1502. This was during the fourth voyage when Columbus was not accompanied by Pinzón. The issue consists of the following denominations and hues:

1c slate	30c ultramarine
2c dark blue	40c orange
5c yellow green	50c brown
10c bluish green	75c lake
20c red	1 peso purple
25c orange brown	

There is no decree authorizing this issue, unlike the two previous issues, although *La Gaceta* of July 23, 1892, includes an

official notice authorizing circulation from August 1 of a "new issue," but it does not specify clearly what stamps it means.

Issue of 1893

It is believed that the 1893 Seebeck stamps, the fourth Seebeck issue for Honduras, were issued in August 1893. The vignette pictures Gen. Trinidad Cabañas, **Figure 6-4**. For all denominations, the central vignette is the same, but the frames are



Figure 6-4. Issue of 1893.  
40-centavo black  
Gen. Trinidad Cabañas

different. The issue consists of the following denominations and hues:

1c green	30c reddish orange
2c scarlet	40c black
5c dark blue	50c olive brown
10c orange brown	75c purple
20c brownish red	1 peso dark orange
25c dark blue	

No decree in known authorizing this issue. This seems to indicate that at the time both the Honduran government and Seebeck probably were proceeding automatically, with Seebeck delivering his usual annual series and the government circulating it in August.

Honduras rescinds its contract

Shortly after receiving the 1893 issue, Honduras decided to install a new government printing press and to take charge of all government printing, including stamps.



The printing press operated under the name Litografia Nacional. To operate it, Honduras employed Don Italo Ghizzoni of Italy. He was a lithographic expert who came to Honduras to direct the printing of stamps and to instruct personnel in the art of design, lithography, and engraving.

Ghizzoni urged vehemently the canceling of the contract with Seebeck, arguing that he would produce stamps of quality in Honduras in the new printing works.

The Seebeck issue delivered in August 1893 was supposed to last until mid-1894, so at the end of 1893 Ghizzoni gave assurances to the government that the issue picturing President Celio Arias, the first to be made at the new printing works and then in preparation, would be ready for August 1894.

In light of that notice, on October 26, 1893, President Domingo Vázquez issued the following decree:

The President of the Republic of Honduras to his citizens  
Gives notice that the National Congress resolved the following:  
DECREE No. 46

The National Congress Decrees:  
Sole article: It disapproves the resolution of executive power of 20th April 1889 approving the contract between the Director General of Finance, Sr. Roque J. Muñoz, and Sr. Nicholas F. Seebeck as Secretary of the Hamilton Bank Note Engraving & Printing Co. of New York with the objective of supplying stamps necessary for the postal service of the correspondence (national and international) of the Republic.

Given in Tegucigalpa October 19th 1893  
P V Williams, D.P.  
Joaquín Soto, D.S.  
Sotero Barahona, D.S.

To the Executive power: – Therefore it must be executed.  
Tegucigalpa, October 26th 1893

This decree was published in *La Gaceta*, the official organ of the government of the Republic of Honduras.

The news was received with displays of satisfaction by the philatelic press of the time. For example, the *Philatelic Journal of America* in its issue of December 1893 commented:

Finally one of Seebeck’s Central American Republics is to free itself from the yoke. Carlos Ferrari de La Ceiba writes that in the *Official Gazette* a decree has been published indicating that the Hamilton Bank Note [ Engraving and Printing ] Co. has been prohibited from printing Honduras stamps.

From now on they will be printed in Honduras, according to our correspondent.

It seems, however, that Ghizzoni, the government, or both, overestimated the capacity of the human team charged with managing the new printing works. The printing of the stamps began to fall behind, for Ghizzoni was a perfectionist, extremely impatient, and intolerant of errors by his operators. As a result, the first stamps printed in Honduras could not be issued until January 1896. This forced Honduras to have to turn to Seebeck for a new issue, the fifth and last Seebeck issue for Honduras.

Issue of 1895

Seebeck was annoyed and angered by the news that his contract had been rescinded.

He also was annoyed that he had not received the remainders of the 1893 Cabañas issue and that he was being left with the Allegory of Justice stamps already prepared.

When Ghizzoni admitted that he could not deliver the Celio Arias stamps until the beginning of 1896, by means of the Decree of January 28, 1895, the government authorized the issuance of the Allegory of Justice stamps printed by Seebeck, **Figure 6–5**. The matter of the handing over of the remainders was resolved in July 1895.

In February 1895, Honduras issued its last Seebeck stamps. Although the central Justice vignette is the same for all denominations, the stamps have different frames. The



Figure 6–5. Issue of 1895.  
30-centavo dark violet  
Allegory of Justice

issue, inscribed “1894 1895,” consists of the following denominations and hues:

1c vermilion	20c violet
2c dark blue	30c dark violet
5c slate	50c olive brown
10c brownish pink	1p dark green

Nothing is known about the reprints. It has been noted that Honduras, in violation of the terms of its contract, did not hand over to Seebeck the remainders.

J.B. Moëns hypothesized that the Hamilton firm destroyed the plates, which could explain why no reprints exist.

Official stamps

In addition to ordinary stamps, Seebeck printed for Honduras two series of Official stamps, a total of 22 stamps. None of the Official stamps was ever used. Irving I. Green, a specialist collector and student of the stamps, indicated that he never saw or heard of a genuine cover franked with an Official stamp for postage. One would suppose that they could be a private product of Seebeck, for the printing orders for the stamps of 1890 and 1891 say nothing about them.

*La Gaceta* of July 11, 1891, published a resolution of the postal administration of Tegucigalpa to recognize the sum of \$58.34 that had been spent on ordinary stamps to frank Official external correspondence. This



Figure 6–6. Issue of 1891.  
75-centavo yellow and red  
Official stamp

appears to prove that Official stamps did not exist in Honduras during the Seebeck years.

Official stamps for 1890

The 1890 Official stamps carry the same Arms design as the ordinary stamps of 1890.

The set consists of the same denominations as the ordinary issue, but all stamps are pale yellow in hue and bear the added inscription “OFICIAL” printed by letterpress in red. They were printed as bicolours.

The stamps denominated 2c 5c, 10c, 20c, 25c, 30c, 50c, and 1p are known without the inscription, and the stamps denominated 10c, 20c, 40c, and 50c are known with the inscription inverted.

Official stamps for 1891

The 1891 Official stamps use the same Bográn design as the ordinary stamps of 1891, but they are printed in yellow and bear the inscription “OFICIAL” printed by letterpress in red, **Figure 6–6**. The Official stamps were printed as bicolours. The 20c stamp is known without the overprint.

Envelopes, wrappers, postal cards

In addition to ordinary stamps and Official stamps, Hamilton and Seebeck supplied to Honduras the following major varieties of postal stationery: 18 envelopes, 16 wrappers, and 20 postal cards.

There were four envelopes (major varieties) each year for 1890, 1891, 1892, and 1893, denominated 5c, 10c, 20c, and 25c, but only two envelopes for 1895: 5c and 10c. **Figure 6–7** pictures an envelope of 1893.

The four wrappers issued in each year, 1890, 1891, 1892, 1893, were denominated 1c, 2c, 5c, and 10c.

There were four postal cards (major varieties) each year, 1890, 1891, 1892, 1893, and 1895, denominated 2c, 3c, 2c+2c, and 3c+3c. **Figure 6–8** pictures a card of 1890. The imprints read “HAMILTON BANK NOTE COMPANY, NEW YORK.,” an incorrect name for the manufacturer. The 1892 cards omit the comma and period. The 1895 cards are lowercase and read “Co.”

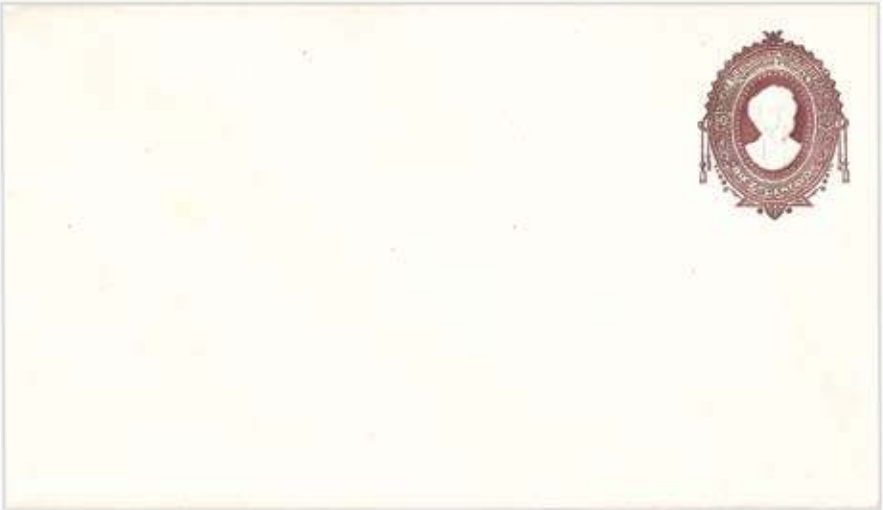


Figure 6-7. Issue of 1893. 10-centavo brown on white with embossing Gen. Trinidad Cabañas envelope



Figure 6-8. Issue of 1890. 3-centavo dark blue on white Coat of Arms postal card

Chapter VII  
NICARAGUA

After visiting Honduras, Seebeck went to Costa Rica, where he failed to sign a contract. Then he went to Nicaragua, where on May 4, 1889, he signed a contract with the director of postal affairs. The contract was published in the government gazette on June 22, 1889.

The Seebeck contract

The contract reads as follows:

Art. 1 – Sr. Seebeck assumes the responsibility as representative of the Hamilton Bank Note [ Engraving and Printing ] Co. to supply to the Government of Nicaragua, at no cost to the said Government, all the stamps required for the usages of the postal correspondence and telegraphs up to a total of 2,000,000 stamps, also 75,000 post cards [ postal cards ], 125,000 stamped envelopes, and 25,000 wrappers, for each year or each two years.

Art. 2 – The Government may, at its discretion, change the stamps each year or every two years, on the 1st January, and at the same time will invalidate those of the previous period. The design will be the same for all denominations of an issue, the only difference being in color. With each new issue, the design will be substantially different from the previous ones.

Art. 3 – Simultaneously with the signing of the contract, the Government orders from Sr. Seebeck, all the stamps necessary for the year 1890, submitting designs, size of the issue, color and quantity of each individual denomination. The Hamilton company must deliver the complete order at the latest by 15th November 1889 to a Government representative in New York.

In the future, the Government will order by May 1 every one or two years,

from the Hamilton Bank Note [ Engraving and Printing ] Co., in the same way, a new emission which will be delivered at the latest by the 15th November of the corresponding year.

Art. 4 – The stamps must be engraved on steel by the highest quality artistic workmanship.

Art. 5 – As compensation for the free delivery of the first issue for 1890, the Government should deliver to the Hamilton Bank Note [ Engraving and Printing ] Co. all the stamps, envelopes and postcards of the present current issue of 1882, and of any previous issue of which there exists a stock on 31st December 1889.

In the same way the Government will hand over to the Hamilton company every year or biennial following all the stocks left over from the previous period that have been withdrawn in accordance with Art. 2 of the contract, handing over of which shall be effected in Managua at the latest during February of the following year.

Art. 6 – The Government shall permit the Hamilton Bank Note [ Engraving and Printing ] Co. to sell to collectors the stamps that have been received from the Government and authorizes the Hamilton company to reprint any denomination when the items received have been disposed of, in order to satisfy the demands of the collectors.

Art. 7 – The Government may not, under any consideration, sell the stamps of the current issue by giving a discount of more than 10 percent of the face value. The stamps used to furnish telegrams shall be destroyed along with the original ones [ telegram forms and affixed stamps – author’s note ].



Art. 8 – In the event the Hamilton [ Bank Note Engraving and Printing ] Co. fails per Art. 3 to deliver on time, it loses the rights to the final balances that remain and the Government has the right to cancel the Contract.

Art. 9 – In the event that the quantities ordered by the Government and supplied by the Hamilton company do not cover the demand, the Company is obliged, at the request of the Government, to supply up to one million additional items over and above the numbers stipulated in Art. 1.

Art. 10 – This Contract shall be valid for a period of ten years and can be canceled by mutual consent.<sup>1</sup>

The contract with Nicaragua was the third to be signed and was honored by the government for 10 years, as was the contract Seebeck signed with El Salvador.

Seebeck made the first delivery by January 1, 1890, this being the same date as that for the delivery of the first El Salvador stamps. What follows are comments on the individual issues.

Issue of 1890

The Seebeck stamps of the 1890 issue were delivered by January 1, 1890. The



Figure 7-1. Issue of 1890.  
10-peso orange  
Locomotive and Telegraph Key

design pictures a locomotive and Morse telegraph equipment, **Figure 7-1**. The design carries the inscription “CORREOS Y TELEGRAFOS,” indicating that the stamps were valid equally for postage on letters and cards, as well as for receipting payment of telegraph charges. The issue comprises the following denominations and hues:

1c brownish yellow	50c purple
2c vermilion	1p brown
5c dark blue	2p dark green
10c slate	5p carmine
20c red	10p orange

All ordinary stamps for Nicaragua supplied by Seebeck for 1890-1898 were printed by recess line engraving. The 1899 ordinary issue, manufactured in tandem half plates with the 1899 stamps of El Salvador, were lithographed. All stamps 1890-1899 were perforated gauge 12.

No reprints were made of the 1890 issue.

Issue of 1891

By January 1, 1891, the second Seebeck issue for Nicaragua was issued and put into circulation. The vignette pictures a Goddess of Plenty allegory, **Figure 7-2**.

The stamps consist of the following denominations and hues:



Figure 7-2. Issue of 1891.  
5-peso brown red  
Goddess of Plenty



Figure 7-3. Issue of 1892.  
50-centavo purple  
Columbus Sighting Land



Figure 7-4. Issue of 1893.  
50-centavo violet  
Volcanos



Figure 7-5. Issue of 1894.  
2-peso green  
Allegory of Victory

1c brownish yellow	50c purple
2c red	1p brownish black
5c dark blue	2p dark green
10c slate	5p carmine
20c plum	10p orange

No reprints were made of the 1891 issue.

Issue of 1892

By January 1, 1892, the third Seebeck issue for Nicaragua was delivered. It consists of 10 denominations. The design shows Columbus sighting land, **Figure 7-3**. This issue commemorated the 400th anniversary of the discovery of America by Columbus.

The issue comprises the following denominations and hues:

1c brownish yellow	50c purple
2c red	1p brown
5c dark blue	2p greenish blue
10c slate	5p carmine
20c plum	10p orange

The stamps of this issue also were printed in different hues and then the word “TELEGRAFOS” was added in black.

The 1c blue, 10c orange, 20c slate, 50c plum, and 2p vermilion are telegraph stamps that by accident or design do not have the TELEGRAFOS inscription. The Stanley

Gibbons stamp catalog indicates that these stamps were used postally.

No reprints were made of the 1892 issue.

In general, the stamps of Nicaragua tended to maintain the same denominations and range of hues from year to year.

Issue of 1893

By January 1, 1893, the fourth Seebeck issue for Nicaragua was delivered. The design, **Figure 7-4**, depicts volcanos in a shield, the coat of arms. The denominations and hues of the stamps are as follows:

1c brownish yellow	50c violet
2c vermilion	1p dark brown
5c dark blue	2p greenish blue
10c slate	5p rose red
20c dark red	10p orange

No reprints were made of the 1893 issue.

The 1c blue and 2c dark brown stamps correspond to stamps intended for telegraph use but that did not receive the black TELEGRAFOS inscription.

Issue of 1894

By January 1, 1894, the fifth Seebeck issue for Nicaragua was delivered. The design is an allegory of Victory, **Figure 7-5**.



[ In 1893, Gen. José Santos Zelaya revolted against President Roberto Sacasa. Zelaya won a military victory over the conservatives and took over governance of Nicaragua. ]  
The issue consists of the following denominations and hues:

1c brownish yellow	50c purple
2c vermilion	1p brown
5c dark blue	2p green
10c slate	5p red brown
20c lake red	10p orange

The Scott catalog notes that there were two printings in addition to the original printing. Scott values for mint stamp are for the third printing.

Stamps of the same design and denominations but of different hues are telegraph stamps lacking the telegraph inscription.  
A 25c greenish yellow stamp also is recorded. It is believed to have been intended as a telegraph stamp but was not also printed in black with TELEGRAFOS.

The majority of the original stamps of this issue with the exception of the 1c, 2c, and 50c are scarce.

The stamps of this issue (except the 25c) are known handstamped with the word “DIRECCION” in violet. They are specimen stamps that were affixed to cards sent by the director of posts as New Year messages. The same word was added to Official stamps.

“Mosquito Provisional.” stamps

The Miskito peoples inhabited the greater part of the Atlantic Coast of Nicaragua. They had been granted autonomy, in accordance with the 1860 Treaty of Managua and with an 1881 arbitration ruling.

In 1893, General José Santos Zelaya led a revolt against the government of President Roberto Sacasa. When pursued by government forces, Sacasa attempted to seek refuge in the Mosquito Reserve, but Miskito Chief Robert Clarence would not allow him in.

In February 1894, Zelaya’s forces occupied the reserve. Clarence retreated for a time to Pearl Lagoon and after a brief coun-

ter-revolt went into exile in Jamaica.  
In July 1894, two stamps were hand-stamped locally in black or red and were used on mail, mostly to the United States. Rolando Kuehn, the port surgeon at Bluefields, prepared all documented envelopes. The stamps are handstamped “Mosquito / Provisional.” in two lines on 1c and 2c stamps of the 1894 issue. Stamps handstamped in red are rare. Those handstamped in black are scarce.  
[ See the article “Nicaragua: The ‘Mosquito / Provisional.’ Stamps of 1894,” by Michael Schreiber, in *Nicarao*, January 2016, Vol. 25, No. 1, pages 2-13 and 14. ]

Issue of 1895

By January 1, 1895, the sixth Seebeck issue for Nicaragua was delivered. The stamps picture the national coat of arms, **Figure 7-6**, but each denomination has a different border. The denominations and hues of the issue are as follows:

1c brownish yellow	50c dark violet
2c vermilion	1p dark brown
5c dark blue	2p dark green
10c slate	5p brownish red
20c claret	10p orange

A 50c stamp is known in greyish blue, but its purpose is not clear. Some say it is a reprint, but others think it is a proof.  
No reprints of this issue were made.



Figure 7-6. Issue of 1895.  
1-peso dark brown  
Coat of Arms



Figure 7-7. Issue of 1896.  
50-centavo grayish blue  
Map of Nicaragua “1896”

Issue of 1896

By January 1, 1896, the seventh Seebeck issue for Nicaragua was delivered. The design pictures a map of Nicaragua, the national coat of arms, and the year “1896.”

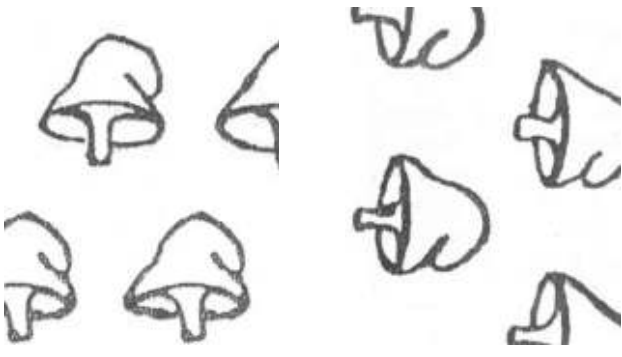
Beginning with this issue, the ordinary stamps were printed on paper with watermark and on paper without watermark. For the watermarked stamps, Hamilton Bank Note Engraving and Printing Co. used the same paper with the Cap of Liberty watermark it used for El Salvador and Ecuador.

The issue included no 10p stamp, probably at the request of the government. The issue, **Figure 7-7**, comprises the following denominations and hues:

1c violet	50c grayish blue
2c greenish blue	1p black
5c bright rose	2p claret
10c blue	5p light blue
20c brown bister	

Used stamps of this issue denominated 20c or higher, both with watermark and without watermark, are scarce and some even rare. The stamps were not available to the philatelic market until 1900. Most watermarked stamps are scarce.

All denominations of this issue, both with and without watermark, were reprinted on a thick paper. For the reprints, the watermark



original printing vertical watermark      reprint horizontal watermark

Figure 7-8. Liberty Cap watermark.

is sideways, **Figure 7-8**, and the hues differ slightly from those of the originals.

Issue of 1897

By January 1, 1897, the eighth Seebeck issue for Nicaragua was delivered. The issue employed the same design used in 1896, but the year in the design was changed to “1897,” **Figure 7-9**. As with the 1896 issue, the stamps were printed both on paper with watermark and on paper without watermark.

Used unwatermarked stamps of this issue denominated 10c or higher are scarce and some even rare. All denominations of used watermarked stamps are scarce to rare.



Figure 7-9. Issue of 1897.  
1-centavo violet  
Map of Nicaragua “1897”

Stamps of both watermarks were liberally reprinted. Collectors have identified five different reprints. The stamps of this issue were not supplied to collectors until 1899.

Once again, the issue included no 10p stamp. The issue comprises the following denominations and hues:

1c violet	50c grayish blue
2c greenish blue	1p black
5c bright rose	2p claret
10c blue	5p light blue
20c brown bister	

Issue of 1898

By January 1, 1898, the ninth Seebeck issue for Nicaragua was delivered. The design of the stamps highlighted the new political entity known as the Greater Republic of Central America and Nicaragua’s membership in it, **Figure 7-10**.

The stamps employ a design quite similar to that used for the second 1897 issue of El Salvador, which also promoted the new Greater Republic of Central America.

The stamps of 1898 were printed on paper with watermark and on paper without watermark.

The issue consists of the following denominations and hues:

1c brown	20c blue
2c slate	50c yellow
4c brown	1p dark ultramarine
5c olive green	2p olive brown
10c violet	5p orange
15c ultramarine	

This issue introduced two new denominations, 4c and 15c. On the 4c stamp, the denomination tablet reads incorrectly “CUARTRO” instead of “CUATRO.”

The paper used for the stamps without watermark is slightly thicker and more opaque than the paper used in previous printings, but the 5c and 10c denominations are known also on thin, semi-transparent paper.

Unused 5c, 10c, 20c, and higher denominations on watermarked paper are scarce. Similar used 50c and higher are scarce.

The 5c and higher denominations on unwatermarked paper are scarce.

The stamps of this issue were reprinted on thick, porous paper, both with watermark and without watermark.

Issue of 1899

By January 1, 1899, the tenth Seebeck issue for Nicaragua was delivered. The design pictures an allegory of Justice, **Figure 7-11**. The stamps were lithographed.



Figure 7-10. Issue of 1898.  
20-centavo blue  
Coat of Arms



Figure 7-11. Issue of 1899.  
4-centavo dark red  
Allegory of Justice

The reason the stamps were printed by lithography is not clear. If Article 4 meant that the plate used to print the stamps had to be in recess, then the use of lithography was a violation of the contractual terms.

Some observers believe that by this time Seebeck was no longer interested in renewing the contract, so he printed the stamps by lithography, which was less costly than the recess method. The postal administration accepted the lithographed stamps for 1899.

The stamps were printed, one plate per denomination, with so-called double plates: on one side a half plate for an 1899 stamp of Nicaragua (Scott 110-120) and on the other side a half plate for an 1899 stamp of El Salvador.

It is believed that the government of Nicaragua, possibly in reprisal, did not return to Seebeck the remaining balances of the 1898 issue, or perhaps it might have returned only part of the issue.

The 1898 stamps and postal stationery continued to be valid and were used throughout 1899 and into May 1900.

The 1899 stamps consist of the following denominations and hues:

1c grayish green	20c dark green
2c brown	50c carmine rose
4c dark red	1p red
5c dark blue	2p violet
10c orange	5p bright blue
15c chocolate	

Stamps of this issue are known imperforate and in pairs imperforate between. They are not known to have been reprinted.

Other stamps

In addition to manufacturing ordinary stamps for Nicaragua, Seebeck provided Official stamps, postal envelopes and wrappers, postal cards, postage due stamps, and telegraph stamps.

Official stamps

Seebeck supplied Nicaragua with a total of 129 Official stamps for the years 1890-

1899, with two sets each for 1895, 1896, and 1897, although the second 1895 set is believed to exist only as a reprint. Ten other Official stamps were made locally.

The Official stamps bear the added inscription “FRANQUEO OFICIAL” in various styles of lettering and in a contrasting hue.

The Seebeck-manufactured Official stamps were issued as bicolours: the inscriptions are not overprints that were added to previously issued stamps.

Official stamps of 1890

The first Seebeck Official stamps were delivered by January 1, 1890.

The stamps were printed in ultramarine from the same recess plates used to print the ordinary stamps. Then the “FRANQUEO OFICIAL” inscription was printed diagonally in red by letterpress on the 10 denominations, **Figure 7-12**.

All denominations of this issue are known without the red Official inscription or with it doubled or inverted. The stamps also are known imperforate. All such varieties are considered to be spurious.



Figure 7-12. Issue of 1890.  
1-peso ultramarine and red  
Official stamp

Official stamps of 1891

The second Seebeck Official issue for Nicaragua was delivered by January 1, 1891. The stamps are the same denominations and





Figure 7-13. Issue of 1891.  
20-centavo green and red  
Official stamp

the same design as the ordinary stamps of 1891, but the green of the Official stamps was printed by lithography, **Figure 7-13**.

The red “FRANQUEO OFICIAL” inscription also was printed by lithography. It is oriented vertically and reads up.

The Scott catalog notes that many of the denominations exist as se-tenant pairs, **Figure 7-14**. The stamps were printed from two plates of 130 stamps each. One plate had 30 stamps of 1c and 25 each of the 20c, 50c, 2p, and 10p. The other plate had 30 stamps of 2c and 25 each of the 5c, 10c, 1p, and 5p. Each plate included five different denominations, which allowed for liberal varieties of se-tenant possibilities, vertically or horizontally.

The Scott catalog records that all denominations except 2c and 5p are known without the red Official inscription. Some double inscriptions are known.

**Official stamps of 1892**

The third Seebeck Official stamps for Nicaragua were part of the issue delivered by January 1, 1892. The stamps were printed in recess in brownish yellow from the same plates used for the ordinary stamps, with the added inscription “FRANQUEO OFICIAL” printed in dark blue by letterpress. The words are arranged in a stylized arch, **Figure 7-15**.



Figure 7-14. Issue of 1891.  
se-tenant pair of 50-centavo and 20-centavo  
green and red Official stamps  
reinforced with hinge



Figure 7-15. Issue of 1892.  
50-centavo yellow brown and  
dark blue Official stamp

The denominations are the same as those for the 1892 ordinary stamps. The 2c and 1p stamps are known without inscription, but they are considered to be spurious.

**Official stamps of 1893**

The fourth Seebeck Official stamps were supplied by January 1, 1893. The stamps were printed in recess in slate gray from the same plates used for the ordinary stamps, **Figure 7-16**, with the added inscription “FRANQUEO OFICIAL” printed in red by let-



Figure 7-16. Issue of 1893.  
2-peso slate and red  
Official stamp

terpress. The inscription reads horizontally and is smaller than the inscription added to the Official stamps of 1890 and 1891. The 2c, 5c, 10c, 20c, 25c, 50c, and 5p stamps are known without the red inscription. Also a 25c stamp in black exists, and there are various double or inverted inscriptions. It is believed that all of these varieties are of dubious origin and that none were authorized.

**Official stamps of 1894**

The fifth Seebeck Official stamps for Nicaragua were part of the issue delivered by January 1, 1894. The stamps were printed in orange yellow, with the added arched “FRANQUEO OFICIAL” inscription printed in black by lithography.

The stamps were printed from the same recess plates used to print the ordinary stamps. The denominations are the same as the 1894 ordinary stamps. The Scott catalog notes that reprints were printed in yellow instead of orange yellow or orange, with added black inscription.

**Official stamps of 1895**

The sixth Seebeck Official stamps were part of the issue delivered by January 1, 1895. The stamps were printed from the same recess plates used to print the 1895

ordinary stamps, but the Official stamps were printed in green, with the added arched “FRANQUEO OFICIAL” inscription printed in blue by lithography.

The stamps were issued on both unwatermarked paper and on watermarked paper. The Scott catalog notes that the watermarked stamps likely exist only as reprints.

The stamps first distributed in 1895 were on unwatermarked paper.

At the end of the year, a new supply was printed on paper watermarked with the multiple Liberty Cap design. This was the first issue to use this watermarked paper that was commonly employed during the rest of the Seebeck contract for stamps of Nicaragua, El Salvador, and Ecuador.

For this issue, the only stamps considered to be genuine are those printed on unwatermarked paper and issued. It is believed that the stamps on watermarked paper printed near the end of 1895 probably were never sent to Nicaragua.

**Official stamps of 1896**

The seventh Seebeck Official stamps were part of the issue delivered by January 1, 1896, **Figure 7-17**. The stamps were printed from the same recess plates used to print the 1896 ordinary stamps, but the Official



Figure 7-17. Issue of 1896.  
1-peso light red and red  
Official stamp “1896”



stamps were printed in light red, with added red “FRANQUEO OFICIAL” in an oval and printed by letterpress.

The stamps were printed on watermarked paper and on unwatermarked paper. The Scott catalog notes that postally used examples of the peso denominations are not documented.

Handstamped Officials of 1896

This issue was locally handstamped “Franqueo Oficial” in violet on 1c, 2c, 5c, 10c, and 20c orange postage due stamps of the 1896 Seebeck issue, **Figure 7-18**. The Scott catalog notes that the handstamps were applied as rows of five, with different handstamps being used. One included



Figure 7-18. Issue of 1896. 2-centavo violet on orange handstamped Official on postage due stamp

the variety misspelled “Ofcial.” The stamps are on both watermarked paper and unwatermarked paper. The Scott catalog lists the 1896 handstamps, Scott O72-O81, before the Officials with printed inscription, O82-O99, but it is likely that the stamps with printed inscription were issued first.

Official stamps of 1897

The eighth Seebeck Official stamps were part of the issue delivered by January 1, 1897. The stamps were printed from the same recess plates used to print the 1897

ordinary stamps, but the Official stamps were printed in light red, with the added red “FRANQUEO OFICIAL” in an oval and printed by letterpress.

The stamps were printed on watermarked paper and on unwatermarked paper.

The Scott catalog describes the reprints as being on thick, porous paper, with watermark and without watermark. The watermark is sideways.

Official stamps of 1898

The ninth Seebeck Official stamps were part of the issue delivered by January 1, 1898. The stamps were printed from the same recess plates used to print the 1898 ordinary stamps, but the Official stamps were printed in carmine, with the added “FRANQUEO OFICIAL” in an oval and printed in blue by letterpress.

Reprints were made on watermarked paper and on unwatermarked paper. The paper of the unwatermarked reprints is thicker and the gum more yellow.

The Scott catalog notes that stamps with sideways watermark or with the inscription in black are reprints.

Official stamps of 1899

The 10th Seebeck Official stamps were part of the issue delivered by January 1, 1899, **Figure 7-19**. They are the same litho-



Figure 7-19. Issue of 1899. 50-centavo carmine rose and dark blue Official stamp

graphed stamps as the 1899 ordinary issue and are in the same hues, but they have an added fancy “FRANQUEO OFICIAL” inscription printed in dark blue by lithography.

Postage due stamps

For 1896-1899, Seebeck supplied 41 stamps to be used in accounting for money received in payment for postage due. The 1896 and 1897 issues were on paper without watermark and on paper with watermark.

The hue changed each year. The 1896 and 1897 designs read “REPUBLICA DE NICARAGUA.” The 1898 and 1899 designs read “ESTADO DE NICARAGUA.”

Postage due stamps of 1896

These stamps were part of the issue of delivered by January 1, 1896. The design consists of a large numeral on an engine-turned background with the inscription “REPUBLICA DE NICARAGUA.” The issue comprises seven denominations on unwatermarked paper and the same denominations on watermarked paper. All stamps are printed in **orange**. The denominations are 1c, 2c, 5c, 10c, 20c, 30c, and 50c.

Stamps denominated 1c, 2c, 5c, 10c, and 20c were handstamped locally with “Franqueo Oficial” in violet in 1896 to create provisional Official stamps.



Figure 7-20. Issue of 1897. 10-centavo violet postage due stamp

Postage due stamps of 1897

These stamps were part of the issue delivered by January 1, 1897. The stamps, **Figure 7-20**, were printed in **violet** on watermarked paper and on unwatermarked paper. The inscription reads “REPUBLICA DE NICARAGUA.” The denominations are 1c, 2c, 5c, 10c, 20c, 30c, and 50c.

Postage due stamps of 1898

These stamps were delivered by January 1, 1898, **Figure 7-21**. The stamps were printed in **blue green** on unwatermarked paper. The design is similar to that of the two previous issues, but the inscription reads “ESTADO DE NICARAGUA.” The denominations are 1c, 2c, 5c, 10c, 20c, 30c, and 50c.

Postage due stamps of 1899

These stamps were part of the issue delivered by January 1, 1899. This issue uses the same design as the previous one with the inscription “ESTADO DE NICARAGUA.” The hue was changed to **carmine**, and for this issue the 30c denomination was omitted.

Telegraph stamps

For 1891 through 1895 and for 1898 and 1899, Seebeck supplied to Nicaragua distinct stamps for the telegraph service. **Figure 7-22** pictures a TELEGRAFOS stamp of 1892.



Figure 7-21. Issue of 1898. 2-centavo blue green postage due stamp





Figure 7-22. Issue of 1892. 10-peso magenta and black telegraph stamp

The 1890 stamps served as both postage stamps and telegraph stamps. They are inscribed “CORREOS Y / TELEGRAFOS.”

Beginning with 1891, the stamps use the same designs and denominations as the ordinary stamps but vary in their hues. A 25c denomination also was included each year, 1892-1895. The stamps bear an added inscription reading “TELEGRAFO,” “Telegrafo,” “TELEGRAFOS,” or “Telegrafos” printed in a contrasting hue (black, violet,

blue, magenta, or red) and in different type styles. Three different type styles were used for the 1891 issue.

[ The 1894 issue includes 15c or 30c denominations on the 25c green stamps and a 20c denomination on the 2c red.

The 1898 telegraph stamps sometimes were used as postage at Bluefields.

The October 1994 issue of *Nicarao*, Vol. 5, No. 1, added pages 1-8, includes a listing of telegraph stamps of the Seebeck era, compiled by John Evaerts, Donald L. Duston, and Clyde R. Maxwell. ]

Envelopes, wrappers, postal cards

[ For 1890-1899, Seebeck supplied to Nicaragua an annual issue of postal stationery comprising, through 1898, envelopes, postal cards, and wrappers for newspapers and circulars. **Figure 7-23** pictures an envelope of 1891. **Figure 7-24** pictures a postal card of 1891. Seebeck supplied no new envelopes or wrappers for 1899, and the two denominations of wrappers inscribed “1898” are not documented used and are not believed to have been issued.

New postal cards with modified designs were supplied to Nicaragua for 1897 and 1898 and were used, respectively, in 1897 and 1898-1900. Pages 89-91 show some of



Figure 7-23. Issue of 1891. 5-centavo blue on yellow Goddess of Plenty envelope



Figure 7-24. Issue of 1891. 2-centavo green and light green on pink Goddess of Plenty postal card

the modifications to the designs.

The major varieties of postal stationery delivered by Seebeck to Nicaragua are the following, as listed in the Higgins & Gage *World Postal Stationery Catalog* (1978):

- 41 envelopes (major varieties)
- 26 wrappers (major varieties)
- 40 postal cards (major varieties)

So-called reprints of postal cards (actually new designs) that are not believed to have been sent to Nicaragua include those for the issues of 1891 (modified designs), 1894 (revised imprints), 1896 (modified designs), and 1897 (modified designs). Pages 86-88 discuss these designs.

Reprints of envelopes not believed to have been sent to Nicaragua are 1891 (5c white), 1895, 1896, and 1897. Page 87 pictures the 5c white so-called reprint of 1891.

Some wrappers are believed to have been reprinted, but this needs further study.

The postal cards are discussed in articles by Michael Schreiber in *Nicarao*, the issues for October 2011, 20:4 (1890 and 1891), January 2012, 21:1 (1892), April 2012, 21:2 (1893), October 2012, 21:4 (1894), January 2013, 22:1 (1895), April 2013, 22:2 (1896 and 1897), July 2013, 22:3 (1898), and October 2013 22:4 (1899).

The postal cards have a variety of imprints based on differences in capitalization, punctuation, or use of abbreviations. The cards of 1890, 1891, 1892, 1895, 1896, 1897, and the 1894 new design are imprinted with “Hamilton Bank Note Co. New York” or “HAMILTON BANK NOTE COMPANY NEW YORK.” Punctuation varies. Cards of 1894, 1898, and 1899 use “Hamilton Bank Note Engraving & Printing Co.” The 1894 issued cards are abbreviated “ENG. & PTG.” The 1893 cards have no imprints. Imprints in all capital letters are 1892, 1894, 1895, and the 2-centavo and 2c+2c cards of 1896 and 1897, including the issued new designs and other new designs not documented used.

The envelopes are discussed in articles by Michael Schreiber in *Nicarao*, the issues for January 2010, 19:1 (high-denomination envelopes, plus later updates in *Nicarao*), July 2014, 23:3 (1890 envelopes), October 2014, 23:4 (1891), January 2015, 24:1 (1892), April 2015, 24:2 (1893), October 2015, 24:4 (1894), July 2016, 25:3 (1895), April 2017, 26:2 (1896), October 2017, 26:4 (1897), and October 2018, 27:4 (1898).

An inventory of used wrappers begins with the article by Michael Schreiber in *Nicarao* in the issue for April 2011, 20:2, and continues with later updates. ]

Reprints and paper varieties

In recent years [ circa 1985 and through the present ], there has been a resurgence of interest in the Seebeck issues. In part, this interest originates with studies made of the various printings, of the reprints, and of the varieties of paper. These are, however, specialized studies that mostly fall beyond the scope of this book. I will, however, return to this subject in more detail in Chapter XI.

For those interested in the many details of paper, printings, reprints and more, I recommend the article “Nicaragua: The Seebeck Issues,” by Albert Quast and Robert Willer, published in the *Collectors Club Philatelist*, November 1967, Vol. 46, No. 6, through July 1968, Vol. 47, No. 4. This is the most complete study made on the subject of Seebeck stamps and Nicaragua. Much of the information in the article about papers, reprints, and more remains valid in the study of the Seebeck stamps of other countries.

The Seebeck contract ends

Nicaragua and El Salvador, differing from Honduras and Ecuador, respected their contracts and did not terminate them before the agreed 10 years. Seebeck died June 23, 1899, probably of tuberculosis. The Nicaragua and El Salvador contracts simply ran out after 10 years and were not renewed.

[ By not supplying envelopes and wrappers for 1899, Seebeck violated the contract with Nicaragua.

In April and August 1893, Seebeck deliberately stepped aside from his responsi-

bilities, respectively, as general manager and president of the Hamilton Bank Note Engraving and Printing Co., only to be pulled back in six months later as both general manager and vice president. It is known that 1893 was the year when Seebeck began to suffer noticeably from his illness. ]<sup>2</sup>

The Asenjo contract

Even though its Seebeck stamp contract was viewed as discredited, Nicaragua took advantage of another offer to obtain its stamps for free, once the contract with Seebeck ended. The new contract was signed May 11, 1899, with Maximo Asenjo, who soon sold it to a party who has never been named.

[ Authorized orders for stamps and postal stationery were placed by Rodolfo G. Barthold of New York City and later by George F. Nordenholt of Smithers, Nordenholt and Company of New York City. \*

American Bank Note Company was the contractor for the adhesive stamps and for the imperforate squares (Scott 133A-G) that are similar to the envelope and wrapper imprints. For the entire envelopes and wrappers, George F. Nesbitt and Co. was subcontractor to the American Bank Note Co. The first new stamps under the contract were issued in early 1900. \*

The 1898 and 1899 Seebeck postage stamps and postal stationery continued to be used into May 1900. ]

\* Ross A. Towle, manuscript in publication

Chapter VIII  
ECUADOR

More than a year passed between the signing of the contract by Seebeck with the government of Nicaragua and the signing of the contract by Henry N. Etheridge with the government of Ecuador. Why were the contracts with El Salvador, Nicaragua, and Honduras signed at short intervals of a few weeks of each other, and yet more than a year transpired before the signing of a new contract?

Why were the first contracts signed by Seebeck and the Ecuador contract signed by Etheridge? Who was Etheridge?

Henry N. Etheridge

Henry N. Etheridge, who arrived in Quito in 1890, was an English agent who worked for security printer Waterlow & Sons. He was, however, more of a carpetbagger, a kind of adventurer or freelancer. As we shall see from the text of the contract, he apparently appears to have personally negotiated with Ecuador based on his relationship with Waterlow & Sons. It is not clear, Etheridge being an agent for Waterlow & Sons, why the contract should have come into the hands of Seebeck.

John Fosbery, echoing Fred J. Melville, maintained in the *Mainsheet*, No. 7, March 1974, that Etheridge might only have offered the contract to Seebeck after Waterlow & Sons and the American Bank Note Co. had not shown any interest in it. Several publications of the period, however, affirm that Etheridge was a representative of Seebeck and that he negotiated the contract on behalf of Seebeck.

The Etheridge contract

The contract was signed on October 16, 1890, and was approved by the president of Ecuador on October 27, 1890. It reads:

CONTRACT WITH Mr. H.N. ETHERIDGE  
FOR THE PRINTING OF STAMPS

The Director General of Postal Affairs, who is specifically commissioned to represent the Government of Ecuador on the one hand, and for the other party Henry N. Etheridge, being a person of age and an English subject, having convened the following:

1 - The above mentioned Mr. Etheridge undertakes to supply, without cost whatever to the Government, all the items required for the postage of correspondence and telegraphs of the nation to the following amounts:

Adhesive stamps of every denomination and value (two million); stamped envelopes (125,000); postcards (75,000); stamped wrappers (25,000).

2 - The Government will change on 1st January 1892 and therefrom every year or half-year, as it shall deem necessary, the series of postage stamps and telegraph stamps, declaring without use or value the items of the previous year or semester, and they will put into circulation the new issue for the corresponding year or semester, as provided for in the contract.

3 - The items of each year or semester shall all be equal insofar as the engraving and inscriptions are concerned, but they shall be different in color according to value [ denomination ], and they shall differ in some essential detail from the previous issues besides the year or semester.

4 - The stamps shall be engraved on steel plates. The artistic work and the materials used shall be of first-class quality.

5 - On signing the contract, the Government will deliver to Mr. Etheridge an order for all the items that will be required for the 1892 issue, indicating the numbers and colors of each, and the sizes, forms, designs, photographs, inscriptions or engravings that they shall have, at the Government's wishes.

6 - On 1st November of the following year, at the latest, Mr. Etheridge will deliver to the Agent whom the Government will nominate abroad, the items indicated in the order, perfectly finished and ready for circulation, well packed and ready for shipment. Furthermore he will receive, on the Government's behalf, who will guarantee its perfect conservation, the plates that have been used for the printing of the new issues, and the same agent will be allowed to inspect the issues during the course of the proceedings.

7 - In the succeeding years or semesters, the Government will send, before the 1st April to Mr. Etheridge, or his representative in Guayaquil, an order similar to that mentioned in Article 5 for the items required for the next period; and Mr. Etheridge will deliver them, as outlined in Article 6 before 1st November following; Mr. Etheridge should acknowledge receipt of this order before 1st August and in the event that the Government does not receive a reply, or that this is in the negative, the contract will be considered null and void.

8 - In exchange for the new issues that will be supplied by Mr. Etheridge, the issue for 1892, the Government will hand over to him all the stamps, stamped envelopes and postcards of the present issues old and new that remain in existence on the last day of

December of the next coming year, and in the same way on each of the following periods, they will deliver to him the items that remain from the previous issues, and which in accord with Article 2 should have been taken out of circulation, and the issue canceled. The delivery will be made in Guayaquil to Mr. Etheridge or his representative without cost to him, at the end of February.

9 - The Government concedes to Mr. Etheridge the right to sell to collectors of stamps, the issues that will be delivered to him in accordance with Article 8, and if the case may be that during the current year they should have been terminated, in part or in total any of them, they shall concede to him the right to reprint the items required for the collectors and for this purpose they will return to him the printing plates of the canceled issues as required.

10 - The Government will not in any event sell the items mentioned in this contract, at a discount of more than four percent (4%) of its face value, and those that serve for the charges on Telegrams shall be destroyed together with the forms.

11 - If Mr. Etheridge should not fulfill the effects of this contract at any time in the supply of the items indicated in same, he shall *ipso facto* [ by the fact itself ] forfeit the rights of annulment that he had during the period previously indicated and the Government may declare void and without value this contract and Mr. Etheridge shall not have the right to claim costs of the items nor any indemnity thereto.

12 - Mr. Etheridge shall have the right to transfer the rights and obligations that appertain to him, and that

are indicated in this contract, to some other person, society or company, but the engraving and printing of the issues shall be affected by a firm of distinction such as the American Bank Note Co.; Waterlow Ltd.; Homer Lee Bank Note Co.; Perkins, Bacon & Co.; Hamilton Bank Note Co. [ Hamilton Bank Note Engraving and Printing Co. ]; Bradbury, Wilkinson & Co.; and other similar responsible companies.

13 - If, during the year or semester of validity of each issue, any of the stamps should become out of stock, the Government will advise Mr. Etheridge, who will proceed with the provision of the items required even though the request exceeds up to the 50% of the limit of the two millions (2,000,000) fixed in accord with Article 1.

14 - The present contract shall be valid for ten years from the date, indicating however that if the Government wishes to rescind it previously, it may do so after two years and three months, counting from 1st January 1892, this being the date on which the first issue is circulated, but the Government is obliged to confirm, during this period, at least two issues or changes of items.

Signed in good faith by the  
Contractors, in duplicate in Quito, on the 16th October 1890.  
Jose Maria Arteta y A  
Henry N. Etheridge  
The Treasury, Quito, 17th October 1890  
Approved by His Excellency The  
President of the Republic  
Gabriel Jesús Nuñez

Was the contract pre-arranged?

As I see it, this contract is similar to the three Seebeck contracts signed in 1889, although as indicated in Article 12, the

stamps could be manufactured by any of a list of prestigious printing houses of the time.

The listing of security printers by name would appear to indicate that Mr. Etheridge obtained this contract with the idea of later negotiating its execution by the best offer. It is also possible, however, that the listing could have been a smokescreen, and that the contract could have already been negotiated on behalf of Hamilton and Seebeck. This is something that probably will never be known.

In any case, even though Etheridge negotiated the contract personally, and perhaps could have endeavored to obtain a better offer, he did submit it to the Hamilton firm or to Seebeck, and the printing ended up in the hands of Hamilton and Seebeck, with all the clauses in the other Seebeck contracts that were signed a little more than a year before.

The first issue of Ecuador, as established in the contract, was delivered in 1892, or 14 months after the signing.

Issue of 1892

By January 1, 1892, as detailed in the contract, the Hamilton Bank Note Engraving and Printing Co. delivered the first Seebeck stamps to Ecuador.

The stamps picture a portrait of President Juan José Flores that is based on a photograph, **Figure 8-1**. Flores was, at age 30 in



Figure 8-1. Issue of 1892.  
50-centavo brown  
President Juan José Flores stamp



1830, the first president of Ecuador. He also was the father of Antonio Flores Jijón, who was the president of Ecuador at the time the 1892 stamps were issued.

The stamps were printed in sheets of 100 by recess line engraving and were perforated gauge 12. In this manner, Seebeck and the Hamilton company printed and finished all subsequent stamps for Ecuador, except for the 5c stamp of 1894 perforated gauge 14.

The 1892 issue consists of the following denominations and hues:

1c orange	20c reddish brown
2c dark brown	50c brown
5c vermillion	1 sucre blue
10c green	5 sucre violet

A 5-sucre stamp is known in bluish green instead of purple (violet), and various authorities have not been able to agree about it. The stamp catalogs indicate that the bluish green is a color trial, but some students, such as J.F. McGee, consider it to be an error. Some sheets of the 5-sucre denomination were printed incorrectly in the brown hue of the 50-centavo stamp.

The contract stipulated that new issues would be delivered each year or each semester. Article 13 stated that if during the year or semester any items should become exhausted, Etheridge was obliged to provide additional stamps up to a limit of 50 percent over and above the 2,000,0000 established in Article 1.

The actual quantities of stamps supplied to Ecuador, and to the other Seebeck countries, will probably never be known.

McGee indicated that Seebeck actually did supply the 50 percent extra indicated in the contract under Article 13, which would bring the total issue up to 3 million stamps for the 1892 issue.

The 1893 phantom issue

The ordinary-issue stamps that Seebeck was supposed to deliver for 1893 were never printed for some unknown reason. This is even stranger than it seems because during

1893 the Hamilton Bank Note Engraving and Printing Co. supplied Ecuador with telegraph stamps and Official stamps. It also prepared proofs for an ordinary postage issue.

McGee stated that in 1893 there was a new printing of the 1892 stamps, without a change to either the year date in the design or to the hues, although his statement is not supported by any documentary proof. McGee indicated as circumstantial evidence the large number of stamps returned to Seebeck at the end of 1893, and he pointed out that it had not been necessary to reprint the 1892 issue.

If a second delivery actually had been made, at what stage were the stamps produced? I ask this question because halfway through 1893 the supply of the 5c stamp was exhausted. It was the denomination used for an inland letter weighing 15 grams or less. As a result, the 50c, 1-sucre, and 2-sucre stamps, which saw little use, were over-printed locally with “5 CENTAVOS” in two styles of type.

Such was the scarcity of stamps at this time that during 1893 postal authorities supplied the public with Official stamps and telegraph stamps for ordinary postal use.

My hypothesis is, therefore, that if a second delivery of the 1892 stamps were made as indicated by McGee, it would have been done in the last third of 1893.

Issue of 1894

Seebeck supplied the second issue for Ecuador in early 1894, but the shipment arrived late. The first stamps entered the country at Guayaquil, a large city on the coast, and postal authorities appropriated the first deliveries and commenced to use them beginning January 19, 1894.

Quito, in the Andean foothills, received only certain denominations, and it was not until the end of March that all denominations were on sale there.

The new stamps featured President Vicente Rocafuerte (1783-1847), **Figure 8-2**, the political antagonist of Juan José Flores (1800-1864).



Figure 8-2. Issue of 1894.  
5-sucre dark blue  
President Vicente Rocafuerte stamp  
with “1894”

The stamps were engraved and perforated gauge 12, but the 5c stamp is known perforated gauge 14.

The issue consists of the same denominations as the previous issue but in different hues:

1c blue	20c black
2c yellowish brown	50c orange
5c green	1 sucre carmine
10c vermillion	5 sucre dark blue

Joseph Kroeger, in his interesting studies about Seebeck, indicated that three different printings of this issue were made, and he gave complete details of the particular characteristics of each. An exception is the 5-centavo stamp: no reprint of it is known.

Issue of 1895

Article 3 of the contract indicated that the stamps of each year or semester shall differ from the previous issue in some essential detail. It seems, however, that in the interpretation of this by Seebeck and his associates in the Hamilton Bank Note Engraving and Printing Co., the word “essential” was conveniently vague. For the new series for 1895, the essential change was limited to a change of the year to “1895” and the engraving of additional diagonal lines in the upper part of the frame, **Figure 8-3**.



Figure 8-3. Issue of 1895.  
5-sucre dark blue  
President Vicente Rocafuerte stamp  
with “1895”

There are slight differences in the shades of some of the denominations, but they are so slight that the catalogs do not list them, and in all other respects the stamps are the same as the previous issue. This minimal change of design was used again for the issues of 1896 and 1897 of El Salvador and Nicaragua. See also pages 88-90.

Three types of reprints of this issue are known. The first is on thick paper. The 20c stamp and the 5s stamp were reprinted on thin paper. A third reprint of the 20c stamp and the 5s stamp are in slightly different hues. The 5-centavo denomination of the 1895 issue was not reprinted.

This issue saw very limited use.

Ecuador rescinds its contract

On November 8, 1895, the president of the republic, José Eloy Alfaro, in Guayaquil, signed a decree rescinding the contract with Etheridge. The decree alludes to the reason.

The campaign opposing the Seebeck stamps mounted by the North American branch of the Society for the Suppression of Speculative Stamps could have been a catalyst, or been the reason or a reason.

It also is possible that Seebeck might not have been sufficiently attentive to the wishes of the president of the republic insofar as the delivery of stamps was concerned.

The decree rescinding the contract stated:

First. – It is not in the Government’s interest to continue with the contract entered into in Quito of October 27th 1890, between the Postal Director and Mr. Henry L. Etheridge for the supply of postage stamps.

Second. – The Government cannot maintain active a contract for stamps that would discredit it as a speculator in the issue of postage stamps.

Third. – In accord with Clause 14 of the mentioned contract, circumstances have been fulfilled whereby the Government may cancel the said contract.

The Decree

First.– It is declared rescinded and in consequence the contract is canceled.

Second. – It is absolutely forbidden to sell the excess postage stamps and telegraph stamps outside of normal circulation, [ and ] any such excesses are to be destroyed when the Government shall decide on some change in design or other detail.

Third. – The Government will contract the engraving and printing of postage and telegraph stamps and other items with firms of known honorability and that can offer bona fide guarantees.

One of the immediate consequences of the breakdown of the contract was that Ecuador did not return to Seebeck the remainders of the issues for 1894 and 1895.

The remainders were overprinted locally with “1897 1898” or “1897 y 1898” in various styles and were issued beginning in January 1897.

The decree rescinding the contract was an insult to Seebeck, but he apparently paid little attention to it.

The government, notwithstanding its decree, accepted what was the fourth and last issue from Seebeck.

Based on the date of the decree, November 8, 1895, the stamps for 1896 would already have been printed and even possibly been en route to Ecuador.

Issue of 1896

The new stamps were issued in February 1896. The design, showing the national coat of arms, **Figure 8–4**, was a flagrant copy of the design used for the stamps Ecuador issued in 1881 that were manufactured by the American Bank Note Co. For each denomination, the frame is different.



Figure 8–4. Issue of 1896.  
2-centavo red  
Coat of Arms stamp

The stamps were printed by recess line engraving and were perforated gauge 12. The stamps were issued on watermarked paper and on unwatermarked paper. The watermarked paper is similar to that used for the stamps of Honduras, Nicaragua, and El Salvador: the multiple Liberty Cap.

The issue consists of the following denominations and hues:

1c dark green	20c orange
2c red	50c dark blue
5c blue	1s yellow brown
10c bistre brown	5s violet

Both the watermarked and the unwatermarked stamps were reprinted.

Ecuador did not return to Seebeck the remaining balances of this issue because the contract had been rescinded. The government paid Hamilton for the stamps of this issue.

Once the 1896 issue was exhausted, Ecuador signed stamp contracts with

German and English printers. When Ecuador later decided to return to using a manufacturer in the United States, it returned to the American Bank Note Co., which had been supplying stamps to Ecuador in the pre-Seebeck period.

On May 6, 1898, Ecuador issued a decree ordering that all outstanding Seebeck issues be burned, together with any plates used to overprint the stamps and the overprinted stamps. This was carried out in public on May 9, 1898. The ceremony included drums and cymbals and was more like a public execution of a criminal rather than a simple incineration of stamps and plates.

Other stamps

In addition to ordinary postage stamps, Seebeck supplied postage due stamps and postal stationery to Ecuador, as specified in the contract. It also supplied postal paper that was not specified in the contract: Official stamps, fiscal stamps, seals, and telegraph stamps. It should be assumed that the quantities delivered would have come within the 2 million stamps indicated in Article 1.

Official stamps of 1892

The first Seebeck Official stamps for Ecuador employed the Flores design of the first ordinary stamps, **Figure 8–5**. The Official stamps were delivered possibly by



Figure 8–5. Issue of 1892.  
1-sucres ultramarine and carmine  
Official stamp

January 1, 1892. The seven stamps were printed in ultramarine, from the same plates used to print the ordinary stamps.

The denominations are 1c, 2c, 5c, 10c, 20c, 50c, and 1 sucre. The “FRANQUEO OFICIAL” inscription was printed by letterpress in carmine, the same inscription used on the Official stamps of Nicaragua, There was no 5-sucres Official stamp.

In 1893, Seebeck delivered a second supply of the same Official stamps.

Official stamps of 1894

Delivered for use in 1894, the second Seebeck Official stamps for Ecuador carry the same “FRANQUEO OFICIAL” inscription as the 1892 issue, but the design is a portrait of Pres. Vicente Rocafuerte, with “1894.”



Figure 8–6. Issue of 1894.  
10-centavo gray black and carmine  
Official stamp with “1894”

The stamps were printed in gray black from the same plates used to print the ordinary stamps, with the inscription printed by letterpress in carmine, **Figure 8–6**.

The issue consists of the same denominations as in the previous Official set: 1c, 2c, 5c, 10c, 20c, 50c, and 1s.

Official stamps of 1895

The third Seebeck Official issue for Ecuador was delivered for use in 1895. The design pictures the portrait of President





Figure 8-7. Issue of 1895.  
50-centavo gray black and carmine  
Official stamp with “1895”



Figure 8-8. Issue of 1896.  
50-centavo olive brown  
and carmine Official stamp



Figure 8-9. Issue of 1896.  
2-centavo blue green  
Numeral postage due stamp

Rocafuerte with “1895,” printed in gray black, from the same plates used to print the ordinary stamps, with the added “FRANQUEO OFICIAL” inscription printed by letterpress in carmine, **Figure 8-7**. The denominations are 1c, 2c, 5c, 10c, 20c, 50c, and 1s. All denominations were reprinted.

**Official stamps of 1896**

The fourth Seebeck Official stamps for Ecuador were issued in 1896. The 1896 Coat of Arms design was printed in olive brown, using the same plates used to print the ordinary stamps, with the added oval “FRANQUEO OFICIAL” inscription printed by letterpress in carmine, **Figure 8-8**.

It is believed that there were equal quantities on watermarked paper and on unwatermarked paper. The issue consists of eight denominations: 1c, 2c, 5c, 10c, 20c, 50c, 1 sucre, and 2s.

Reprints of all denominations are on thick, porous paper.

**Postage due stamps**

For 1896, Seebeck supplied his only issue of postage due stamps for Ecuador. The Numeral vignette is surrounded by an engine-turned background, **Figure 8-9**.

The stamps were printed in blue green by recess line engraving and were perforated

gauge 12. They were printed on watermarked paper and on unwatermarked paper. The seven denominations are 1c, 2c, 5c, 10c, 20c, 50c, and 100c. Reprints are on thick paper with distinct watermark and vertical grain (stamps will curl side to side).

**Fiscal stamps**

Seebeck supplied Ecuador with two issues of fiscal stamps. The first are inscribed with the years “1893 1894,” and it is assumed that they were delivered and issued in 1893. The others are inscribed with the years “1895 1896.” The fiscal catalogs list them as being delivered and issued in 1895.

The stamps are known bearing postal cancels, but it is believed that such examples are invalidated remainders or fakes.

**Usage, varieties of paper, and reprints**

McGee wrote that the Seebeck stamps of Ecuador apparently were never demonetized, or if they were, that fact was forgotten or ignored by postal employees.

McGee makes this assertion because thousands of reprints were sent to Ecuador and were freely circulated on correspondence. These reprints appear today with genuine cancellations and postmarks.

The reprints were used for more than four years. McGee reported that he had in his col-

lection the cover wrapping of a package, registered and sent to the United States, franked with four 5-sucre stamps of the 1896 issue. He wrote that the cover was canceled with the words “30th October 1935.”

A great variety of papers was used for the Seebeck stamps of Ecuador, for both the originals and the reprints. For example, the 1895 and 1896 issues used six different papers for the originals and five papers for the reprints.

The different types of paper and their characteristics, and the earmarks used to distinguish the originals from the reprints, form the basis of a specialized study that examines thickness of paper, texture, gum, shades, and more. These details are outside the scope of this work.

Anyone interested in studying the stamps in detail should start by reading the article by John W. Funkhouser, “Ecuador – the 1894, 1895 and 1896 Seebeck Issues,” published in the *Collectors Club Philatelist*, November 1960, Vol. 39, No. 6.

**Official seals**

Seebeck and the Hamilton Bank Note Engraving and Printing Co. supplied in 1896 an adhesive printed in violet with the arms of Ecuador at one side. This adhesive was to be

used as an envelope seal. It has no denomination.

**Wrappers**

The contract indicated that Etheridge or another person would deliver each year some 25,000 postal wrappers for newspapers. The literature for Ecuador records delivery of imprinted wrappers only for 1892, when Seebeck provided 1c yellowish brown and 2c dark brown Numeral imprints on blue paper.

Cutouts from the wrappers are reported to have been used on correspondence as adhesive stamps.

**Envelopes**

The Etheridge contract stipulated that the holder would deliver each year 125,000 stamped envelopes, and Seebeck supplied issues for 1892, 1894, and 1896.

In 1892, two envelopes were issued: denominated 5c, printed in carmine, and 10c, printed in deep green. They picture President Juan José Flores.

In 1893, when the 5c envelopes were exhausted, a supply of 10c envelopes was overprinted locally with the inscriptions “5 CENTAVOS,” “5 Centavos,” or “CINCO CENTAVOS” in various colors.

Envelopes denominated 5c in dark green



Figure 8-10. Issue of 1894. 5-centavo dark green on white with embossing  
President Vicente Rocafuerte envelope





log also provide little information, nor does the Leo Temprano specialized catalog of Colombia. The only catalog where something is said about the printer is that of Stanley Gibbons. There is, however, something confusing about the way the old Gibbons catalog presents the information.

Manhattan Bank Note Company

In the old Gibbons catalog, the usual system is to illustrate the stamps and immediately below the illustration to put the name of the printer, if it is known.

For the stamps of the State of Bolívar, the name of the printer is placed, not below the illustration of the stamps, but in the middle of the listing of stamps of 1882, between the denominations of 5 pesos and 10 pesos, printed by engraving, and the low denominations of the issue, printed by lithography (see 1882 issue, page 67).

In that confusing location, Gibbons said that the stamps were printed by the Manhattan Bank Note Co. The confusion is: Which stamps? Those printed by engraving, those printed by lithography, or the entire issue of 1882? Or perhaps was it all of the stamps issued from 1879 through 1885.

The Manhattan Bank Note Co. is the firm named in the imprint at the bottom of the 1881 postal cards of the Dominican Republic.

Could the Manhattan Bank Note Co. simply have been an address or a name manufactured by Seebeck, if Hennan is correct in saying that between 1879 and 1883 there was no Manhattan Bank Note Co. in New York? This seems to be a question without an answer.

Issue of 1879

The stamps in the issue of 1879 picture a portrait of Simón Bolívar below the inscribed year “1879,” **Figure 9–1**.

The issue consists of six stamps: three denominations printed on white, wove paper and the same three denominations on bluish, laid paper. All were printed by lithography and were perforated gauge 12½.



Figure 9–1. Bolívar stamp of 1879.  
5-centavo blue  
Simón Bolívar

The issue includes the following denominations and hues:

White, wove paper	Bluish, laid paper
5c blue	5c blue
10c violet	10c violet
20c red	20c red

Two other stamps were printed, one 80c and one 1 peso, but they were not issued.

Issue of 1880

For 1880, Seebeck provided a second issue for the State of Bolívar, adding 80c and 1-peso stamps. The design is the same Simón Bolívar portrait used for the 1879 issue, but the year tablet was changed to “1880.”

Again the stamps are on two distinct papers: white, wove paper and bluish, laid paper. The stamps were printed by lithography and were perforated gauge 12½.

The issue consists of the following denominations and hues:

White, wove paper	Bluish, laid paper
5c blue	5c blue
10c violet	10c violet
20c red	20c red
80c green	1p orange
1p orange	



Figure 9–2. Bolívar stamp of 1882.  
20-centavo red  
Simón Bolívar

Issue of 1882

No new stamps were issued in 1881. For the vignette for new stamps for 1882, Seebeck again used the same Simón Bolívar portrait for the five low denominations: 5c, 10c, 20c, 80c, and 1p, perforated gauge 12 or gauge 12 by 16. Each denomination, however, had a new frame and “1882” in the year tablet, **Figure 9–2**.

New recess-engraved 5-peso and 10-peso denominations in a larger format also were issued with gauge 12 perforations. The 5p and 10p stamps picture Bolívar in a three-quarter stylized view. They are bicolors.

The issue consists of the following denominations and hues:

5c blue	80c green
10c lilac	1p orange
20c red	
5p blue and rose	
10p brown and blue	

Issue of 1883

The 1883 issue supplied by Seebeck included the same five low denominations and designs used for 1882 but with “1883” in the year tablet. The vignette is the same portrait of Bolívar used in the 1882 series.

The stamps were printed by lithography and perforated gauge 12 or gauge 16 by 12.

The issue consists of the following denominations and hues:

5c blue	80c green
10c lilac	1p orange
20c red	

Issue of 1884

The 1884 Seebeck issue comprises the same denominations, designs, and hues as the 1883 issue, but the year tablet was changed to “1884.”

As before, the stamps were printed by lithography and perforated gauge 12 or gauge 16 by 12.

Issue of 1885

The 1885 Seebeck issue comprises the same denominations, designs, and hues as the 1883 and 1884 issues, but the year tab-



Figure 9–3. Bolívar stamp of 1885.  
10-centavo violet  
Simón Bolívar

let was changed to “1885,” **Figure 9–3**.

As before, the stamps were printed by lithography and perforated gauge 12 or gauge 16 by 12.

Stamps for registered mail

In addition to the stamps for ordinary mail, in the years 1879, 1880, 1882, 1883, 1884, and 1885, special 40-centavo stamps were issued for registered mail.

For 1879 and 1880, two stamps were



issued each year, one on white, wove paper and one on bluish, laid paper. For the last four years, Seebeck supplied one stamp for each year, with the year tablet changed to 1882, 1883, 1884, or 1885, but with two perforations: gauge 12 or gauge 16 by 12.

For all registrations stamps, the same portrait of Simón Bolívar was used that had been used for the ordinary stamps.

**Bogus cancels**

It has been roughly calculated that 99 percent of all used stamps of the State of Bolívar in the marketplace bear bogus cancels or fraudulent markings.

The most common of these markings is a circle 21 millimeters in diameter, with the word “CARTAJENA” in an arch above and in the center in condensed letters the straight-line word “FRANCA.” Nothing is in the bottom of the circle. **Figure 9-4**, **Figure 9-5**, and **Figure 9-6** picture three such stamps.

This marking appears in various hues, including purple, red violet, and black.

The CARTAJENA cancel intrigued both Clarence Hennen and Luis Guzman when they found it on a Dominican Republic stamp of 1880. The explanation is simple:

When in 1888 Seebeck sold his stock of the Dominican Republic and the State of Bolívar to Gustave Calman, he gave Calman

the canceling devices that were used fraudulently to mark the stamps of both countries. The stamps of the Dominican Republic that Seebeck gave to Calman were those of 1880 and 1882, and apparently while the stamps of Bolivar were being canceled, some stamps of the Dominican Republic also seem to have been slipped through and were canceled.



**Figure 9-5. Bolívar stamp of 1882.**  
10-peso brown and blue  
bogus CARTAJENA marking



**Figure 9-4. Bolívar stamp of 1879.**  
20-centavo red  
bogus CARTAJENA marking



**Figure 9-6. Bolívar stamp of 1885.**  
10-centavo violet  
bogus CARTAJENA marking

**Bolivia**

The role of Nicholas Seebeck in relation to the stamps of Bolivia is obscure. My investigations found that there was not much to discover. The information presented here is based on a 1972 article by Álvaro Bonilla Lara and on the dates that E. Herschkowitz and E. von Boeck gave to me.

**Gainsborg proposal**

From 1892 to 1896, the president of Bolivia was conservative Mariano Baptista Caserta (1832-1907).

In 1892, the Gainsborgs, father Antonio and son Simón, presented to the government of Bolivia a proposal to provide at no charge every year the stamps the country would require for franking mail, provided that the plates used for the printing stayed in their control and that they would be allowed to make as many reprints as they wanted. The proposal was evidently inspired by the contracts of Seebeck, which in 1892 were at their peak.

The response of the postmaster general was unfavorable, and on the basis of his report, the treasury of Bolivia turned down the Gainsborg proposal.

**Seebeck proposal and die proofs**

Also in circa 1892, judging by the year dates that known essays bear, Seebeck presented a series of attractive sample stamps to the government of Bolivia.

The collection of E. Herschkowitz included four types of essays, all prepared by the Hamilton Bank Note Engraving and Printing Co. and proposed by Seebeck.

The types are:

No. 1 – An essay die proof, **Figure 9-7**, that pictures the coat of arms of Bolivia, not a complete stamp, and that is an imitation of the vignette used for the 1868 stamps the American Bank Note Co. manufactured for Bolivia. The proof is not dated, but Herschkowitz described it as from 1892.

No. 2 – An essay die proof of a complete stamp design showing in the vignette an



**Figure 9-7. Essay circa 1892.**  
Coat of Arms of Bolivia  
die proof in black



**Figure 9-8. Essays circa 1892 for Bolivia.**  
Allegory of Justice  
die proof in violet dated “1892”  
die proof in dark green dated “1893”

allegorical figure of Justice. The denomination is 5c, and the design includes the year “1892,” **Figure 9-8, left**. This proof is found in orange, carmine, sepia, lilac, violet, blue, light green, dark green, yellow, light brown, dark brown, and coffee. Seebeck used the vignette of this essay for the 1899 stamps of Nicaragua, but the frame design for that issue was modified.

No. 3 – An essay die proof of a complete stamp design the same as No. 2 but with the year “1893,” **Figure 9-8, right**. It is found in light green, dark green, yellow, orange, carmine, light blue, and black.

No. 4 – The same essay die proof in light brown dated 1892 but mounted on a sales card next to eight more stamps of seven countries (Haiti, El Salvador, Bolivia, Honduras, Ecuador, Nicaragua, and

Guatemala). Herschkowitz dated the sales card as circa 1895.

In his published work, Bonilla Lara also showed a model for a vignette that is said to have been presented together with the die proof of 1892 and that represents an allegorical figure of Liberty. This vignette was used for the 1894 issue of El Salvador.

Another illustration in the work of Bonilla Lara showed, mounted one beside the other, two models of vignettes. One is the same allegorical figure of Liberty, and the other is the goddess Ceres (allegorical figure for agriculture). The Ceres design is known in new hues: grey, blue, green blue, light sepia, sepia, green, orange red, red, and violet red.

It is a curious fact that this figure of Ceres, which was offered to Nicaragua, is an essay not adopted in 1895. The design, however, shows an astonishing vitality, finally reappearing as the vignette of the El Salvador stamps of 1899 that were manufactured by Seebeck and the Hamilton Bank Note Engraving and Printing Co. These are the stamps printed in dual plates along with the 1899 stamps of Nicaragua.

**Seebeck proposal rejected**

Seebeck was not successful in securing a stamp contract with the government of Bolivia. It is not known how many proposals Seebeck made, but in 1895 the government of Bolivia rejected one proposal in the following terms.

La Paz, 24th September 1895

Regarding the proposal presented by Mr. N.F. Seebeck in the name of the Hamilton Bank Note Engraving and Printing Co. for the issue of stamps, postcards and stamped envelopes for the postal service or the Republic, having considered the explanation of the same proposal made by Sr. Severino Campuzano, and the report of the Postmaster General;

Considering: The Government cannot, without loss of official dignity, authorize the speculation that forms

the basis of this proposal, granting to one particular printer the right of National Sovereignty over the issuing of these values; the power of selling all the remaining stamps and the unlimited reprinting of the same, obliging the Government also to make annual variations, in order to increase and safeguard that particular exploitation on a grand scale, would not bring any benefit to the state since the advantages offered to the state income are reduced to the free issue of the aforementioned stamps, postcards and stamped envelopes, the inconveniences that it would bring with it not compensated by that small profit, it is resolved: not to accept the aforementioned proposal.

Register and return.  
Signed  
BAPTISTA M.D. Medina

One point is obscure: In what year did Seebeck present this proposal? According to what I see in Herschkowitz’s notes, the date of the first two samples is 1892, a third group is dated 1893, and finally there is the sales card of circa 1895, according to Herschkowitz.

The rebuff by the government of Bolivia is dated September 24, 1895. Were some designs presented over many years? Did the government’s reply come late? Or does the date have no significance and was there only one proposal made in 1895? The first paragraph of the resolution of rejection, beginning “Regarding the proposal . . . ,” implies that there might have been only one proposal.

Bonilla Lara in his article does not specify dates, but my hypothesis is that Seebeck made only one request. Seebeck in fact used the allegorical figure of Liberty for the design of the 1894 stamps of El Salvador. This indicates that by then he would have given up the idea of selling the design to Bolivia.

I am going to reach even further and speculate as follows. It is possible that the slow reaction of Bolivia could be the echo of

the scandal that boiled up in the mid-1890s with all its virulence in both Europe and the United States, as a consequence of the Seebeck reprints.

An article by P.V. Maltes published in the *Pan American Philatelist*, July 1956, suggests and implies that Bolivia refused the stamps proposed by Seebeck because up to that time all stamps of Bolivia had borne the coat of arms of the country and it would have been a difficult tradition to change.

I believe this idea does not have a solid basis. First, one of the samples submitted by Seebeck pictures the Bolivian national coat of arms. Second, the custom of picturing the coat of arms does not seem to have been a tradition so deep-rooted that it could not be changed, as in fact it was in 1897. Third, if the government of Bolivia had wanted a different design, it could have asked Seebeck and he certainly would have complied.

The matter apparently did not go further, but according to an article in the *Philatelic Journal of India*, May 1897, Seebeck again might have contacted the government of Bolivia offering to supply stamps free. As described in the article, the offer in no way differed from the contracts Seebeck had signed eight years before.

According to the 1897 article, the offer was not accepted, but the article does not report the reaction of the Bolivian government, if the supposed offer actually had been made. It is possible that the news had traveled slowly and that the gentleman of the *Philatelic Journal of India* might have been reporting events that had taken place two years earlier.

Chapter X  
THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

The previous chapters concentrated on studying the stamps that in the last decade of the 19th century the Hamilton Bank Note Engraving and Printing Co. printed for three Central American countries and for Ecuador.

It is not known if Seebeck had a contract with the Dominican Republic. It is possible that there never was a contract in the sense that he had them with other countries, but it is evident that Seebeck had dealings with the country. The overriding question asked over many years is: What was the exact nature of his dealings with the Dominican Republic?

There is no definitive reply to this question. In this chapter, I am going to study this in view of what has been written about the dealings of Seebeck, and I will set about forming conclusions, my working hypothesis.

1879, 1880, 1881

The first comments about Seebeck in relation to the Dominican Republic were in the *American Philatelist* of July 1889:

Mr. Seebeck must be mentioned, he was the man who had charge of the [ 1879-1880 and 1882-1885 ] series made for Bolivar [ a sovereign state and later a department of Colombia ] and the sets of the Dominican Republic with [ 1881 ] and without [ 1879 and 1880 ] network and the surcharges [ 1883 ] with all the “errors” [ so-called errors ] that accompany them.

The September issue of the same publication, however, pointed out:

In our commentary on the new contract (of El Salvador) we inadvertently attributed to Mr. Seebeck the surcharges [ 1883 ] of the Dominican Republic. He had nothing to do with them and we regret the error.

The *Philatelic Gazette* of October 1889, apparently copying the *American Philatelist* (such journalism was common in those times), said:

It cannot fail to be interesting to stress the fact that Mr. Seebeck is the same person who made the dated series of Bolivar and the Dominican Republic with and without network.

And still within the year 1889 (month not recorded), the *Philatelic Journal of America* said of Seebeck and the Dominican Republic:

N.F. Seebeck, a dealer in stamps of olden times, is secretary of the Hamilton Bank Note Co. [ Hamilton Bank Note Engraving and Printing Co. ] and must know his business perfectly, prints all the stamps for the Dominican Republic and Bolivar. He is such an expert in postmarks as the numerous examples of stamps fraudulently canceled show, which today are encountered in the market and in the albums of incautious collectors.

It appears that by 1889 the philatelic press had established that there was a close relationship between Seebeck and the Dominican Republic stamps of 1879-1881. During the following decade, however, philatelic writers were so occupied with writing about his famous contracts that essentially no writers mentioned Seebeck again in connection with the Dominican Republic.

Errors by Charles J. Phillips

For any detailed study of the stamps of the Dominican Republic, an obligatory point of departure is the work titled “Notes on the Postage Stamps of the Dominican Republic,” by Charles J. Phillips, published in the July, August, October, and November 1906 numbers of *Stanley Gibbons Monthly Journal*. Speaking of the Dominican Republic series issued in 1879, Phillips wrote, beginning with an unfounded speculation about printing:

Probably the difficulties of rapid production and the uniformity of paper and color were too much for the local printer, therefore the authorities sent to New York



and the contract was carried out by Mr. N.F. Seebeck.

Later on, speaking about the issue of 1880, Phillips returned to the theme and wrote incorrectly:

In October 1880 a new series of stamps was issued, printed by the Hamilton Bank Note Co., of New York; this well-known firm, seems to have been organized by Mr. N.F. Seebeck and I believe that up to his death he was their president.

[ Phillips had the facts wrong. Hamilton Bank Note Company was founded in 1881. It did not produce the 1880 issue of the Dominican Republic. Hamilton Bank Note Engraving and Printing Company, a reorganization of the old firm but a new legal entity, was founded in January 1884. Seebeck was not a founder of either firm. On April 8, 1884, Seebeck invested \$5,000 in the new Hamilton company, buying control of 5,000 shares of a new total of 30,000 shares of capital stock. On April 21, the trustees elected Seebeck as a trustee of the company and as its secretary and business manager. Details are in the Minute Books of the Hamilton Bank Note Engraving and Printing Company, published in *The Seebecker*, 1987-1991 and summarized on pages 125-144. ]

The problems, as pointed out in Chapter III, which still remain to be resolved, are: What company printed the Dominican Republic stamps of 1879 and 1880, and Did Seebeck participate in these issues? His connections have not been established by any documentary proof but by circumstantial evidence that seems probable.

Phillips, however, confirmed as accurate what is said for the year 1879 about Seebeck and the stamps of the Dominican Republic.

**What facts are correct?**

It is fitting to point out that for at least a century it has been a common practice among philatelic writers to pass on from one to another items of information without much worrying about investigating whether

what has been affirmed is correct or not, as for example Chapter III explained what Hennan had done.

When later over time a story is repeated, the reader does not know if the statement of what is being repeated is a confirmation of what is right, or if the writers all are only repeating the same story that could be false from the start. I say that this is the case about Seebeck and the stamps of the Dominican Republic.

Let us see what some writers have said after what Phillips said in 1906.

*Stamp Review*, October 1938: “At the beginning of 1879 (Seebeck) carried out an order for an issue of the Dominican Republic; this appeared in July 1879 and they were the first stamps of the Dominican Republic which bore the name of the country. Seebeck negotiated the contract with the representative of the Dominican Republic in New York.”

J. Majó-Tocabens, *Origen de los Sellos y de sus Coleccionistas* (Origin of Stamps and Their Collectors), Barcelona, 1950: “He (Seebeck) formed a friendship with a representative of the Dominican Republic, and in July 1879 he signed the first contract when he was only 22 years old, and a little more than a year later there appears for the first time on the scene precisely in the month of October 1880, the name of the printing company called the Hamilton Bank Note Co. of which he was the representative.” [ Majó-Tocabens misstated when the 1881 company began, and he erred in saying that Seebeck was its representative. ]

Paper of Dr. Luis F. Thomén to the Ing. Enrique J. Alfau, of November 3, 1955: “I would like to answer the question which Dr. Clarence Hennan raises. In reality, even now all the world accepts that the stamps of 1879 and 1880 were printed by Nicholas F. Seebeck. This ‘tiger’ of the early days of philately was associated with the Hamilton Bank Note and Engraving Co. [ Engraving and Printing Co.], of which enterprise he has



Figure 10-1. United States postal card dated February 11, 1879, from Seebeck’s father Frederick in New York City to one of Seebeck’s customers. The message in German says, “Because my son N.F. Seebeck has traveled to St. Domingo [ Dominican Republic ], I am unable to send out your order and ask you wait until March when he is expected to be back. Yours truly, F. Seebeck.”

come to be president. Hennan doubts whether these stamps were printed by Seebeck since the Hamilton Bank Note Co. began its business in 1880 [ it began in 1881 ] and also according to Hennan, Seebeck appeared in New York in 1880 [ Seebeck was in business there in 1872 at age 15 as a stationer, offering engraving, lithography, printing, and blank book manufacturing. He also then was beginning his stamp business. ] I believe that these conjectures of Hennan are unfounded. I do not favor one side or another, but I believe that there are grounds for denying that Seebeck made the stamps. It is possible to record that Seebeck started as a lively person with his own sort of initiative. He could have obtained the Dominican government’s contract and have printed the stamps as his own venture, beginning thus his career as a producer of stamps gratis for the government with the right to reproduce them for philatelic purposes.”

[ In late 1878 or early 1879, Seebeck traveled to the Dominican Republic. A U.S. 1-cent Liberty postal card with added 1-cent Franklin stamp, addressed to “Mr. Hillman,” postmarked New York City, February 11, 1879, and signed by F. Seebeck (Seebeck’s father), transmitted the message: “Because my son N.F. Seebeck has traveled to St. Domingo, I am unable to send out your order and ask you wait until March, when he is expected to be back.” **Figure 10-1** pictures

this card. The image is from Bill Welch, *The Seebecker*, January 1987, pages 2-3, with pictures of both sides of the card. ]

As for the principal stamp catalogs, the Minkus catalog and the Stanley Gibbons catalog attribute the 1879 and 1880 issues to Seebeck, although the old editions of Gibbons up to 1922 attribute them to the Manhattan Bank Note Co. Neither the Scott catalog nor the Yvert catalog say what company printed the 1879 or 1880 stamps.

The point that persists, however, is that it seems that the only one who did any research to solve the problem was Hennan, and his conclusions tend to disjoin Seebeck from the printing of the issues of 1879 and 1880 of the Dominican Republic.

I share somewhat the opinion of Hennan, but one part must be considered.

It is documented by Welch that N.F. Seebeck established himself as a bona fide merchant about 1872. By that time, he was established in 3 Vesey Street in New York City. There he set up as a stationer and began a stamp dealing business, and at this address he published in 1876 his first catalog of stamps, a generic catalog of unknown source with a specific cover for each dealer who offered the catalog.

Welch confirmed that in spring 1880 Seebeck had moved to 97 Wall Street, as discussed on pages 2-3. Charles Wiley pointed out that cards exist mailed by Seebeck from

97 Wall Street to postmasters throughout the United States, offering to pay good prices for stamps that were used to pay postage for newspapers and other publications for which postage was paid in full. For these years, special stamps for periodicals up to denominations of \$60 were fixed to postal memoranda, canceled on those documents, which then were kept by the post office. Seebeck was interested in obtaining the used high-denomination stamps, fully aware that he had a market for them. He offered to pay up to \$5 for each used stamp.

So it is clear that from 1872 through fall 1883 and beyond that Seebeck was a stamp merchant just like hundreds who were established throughout the United States.

Two covers to Seebeck: 1880, 1884

The cover shown in **Figure 10-2** is stamped with a Dominican Republic 1-real carmine Arms stamp of 1879, Scott 34, and is directed to Seebeck at 3 Vesey Street, New York, N.Y. The cover arrived in New York City on February 18, 1880.

At that time, the Dominican Republic was not a member of the Universal Postal Union. The Dominican Republic stamp was not allowed, and postage due was charged and paid, as signified by the affixed United States postage due stamp.

An offer of stamps that I received in June 1978 included a cover described thus:

“A very good cover of 1884 to New York (addressed to N.F. Seebeck) with a stamp [ Scott 59 or 60 ] of 25 centimes on 5 cents of 1883 blue, without network, with a small oval without date ‘SANTO DOMINGO / FRANCA’ with a circular datestamp.”

The 1880 cover does not seem to have an official character or to be sent, as might be said, by some correspondent who might be trading to acquire stamps of the Dominican Republic as his business. As for the 1884 cover, I do not know, because its price in 1978 (about U.S. \$120) prevented me from acquiring it, but it could have been from the same correspondent. Unfortunately the sender or senders are not known.

As pointed out in a previous paragraph, Hennan disassociated Seebeck from the printing of the stamps of 1879 and 1880, and I agree partly with his opinion though for different reasons. There is no evidence that an order to print stamps would have given Seebeck the right to reprint the same.

Bogus cancels and postmarks

Alvin Harlow wrote, speaking of Seebeck: “The joke against the Dominican Republic refers to the fact that the issues of 1879-80-82 [ 79-80-81 ] of that country were produced and canceled in the thousands in the state of New York without the stamps having ever been in their native land.”

Harlow is referring to the great quantity of

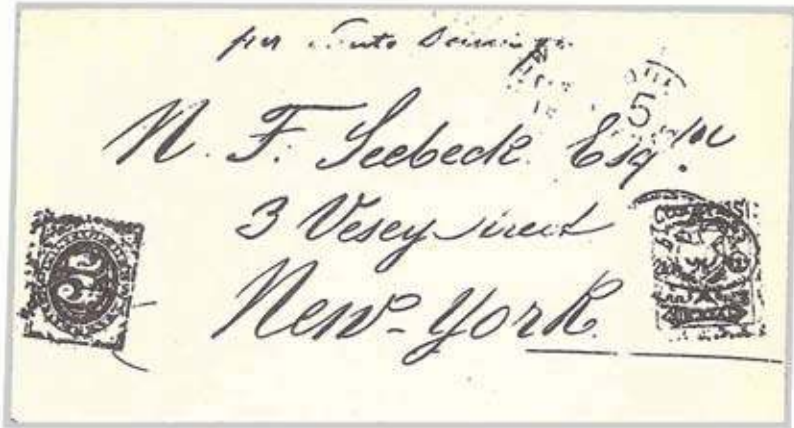


Figure 10-2. A cover from the Dominican Republic addressed to N.F. Seebeck, Esquire. It arrived in New York City on February 18, 1880.

stamps that exist with bogus cancels.

On this theme, the *American Philatelist* of June 1962 published an interesting article by Capt. H.F. Rommel. In it, he points out that the majority of the stamps of the Dominican Republic of the issues of 1880 and 1881, which seem canceled, are falsely canceled.

In this article, he cites three types of false or bogus cancellations and postmarks:

- a – circular postmarks with the month appearing above the day instead of day–month–year, which was usual pattern for the Dominican Republic;
- b – a grill cancel of seven thick lines and a similar one of nine fine lines;
- c – the cancel “SANTO DOMINGO-FRANCA” in an oval 19 mm in diameter instead of the 18 mm of the genuine ones.

The 1879 printing plates

It also is possible that someone in the 1880s obtained stamps of the Dominican Republic, and possibly the printing plates for the stamps, and produced material for collectors. I have reasons sufficiently well-founded to suspect that it was Seebeck.

On this subject, I am going to transcribe a paragraph of an article by W. Ward (unfortunately I do not know where it was published or when) about the Portuguese financier known as Baron de Almeida (Hermano José Braamcamp de Almeida Castelo Branco, 1775-1846).

Ward said: “Just at that time (1889) N.F. Seebeck of New York had completed his agreements for issuing various stamps during a certain period of time, with some Central American republics and with one South American one, **and he kept in his control the plates of the stamps of Santo Domingo of 1879.**” [ boldface added by Mueses ]

The Seebeck hypothesis

In consequence, my conclusion about the participation of Seebeck in the issues of the Dominican Republic is as follows:

A New York City printing house or houses

somehow connected with Nicholas Seebeck manufactured according to a contract negotiated by the agency of Mr. Bear <sup>1</sup> the Dominican Republic stamps of 1879, 1880, and 1881, and the postal cards and envelopes of 1881. This was a contract or contracts for common, ordinary printing that in no way differed from those that other countries were signing in those years with other printing houses. Seebeck as the probable sales agent in New York City could have been involved in the negotiations.

In the years after early 1884, Seebeck from his position in the Hamilton Bank Note Engraving and Printing Co. (this was the year he began to work for it) used the plates for the 1879, 1880, and 1881 stamps to make reprints to sell to collectors. Used stamps being in fashion at that time (collectors believed that a canceled stamp would be a guarantee against forgery), Seebeck produced great quantities of postmarked or canceled stamps. This operation did not rely in any way on the approval of the government of the Dominican Republic.

It is possible that from the success achieved from the sale of the Dominican Republic stamps could have arisen the new idea for the contracts Seebeck signed in 1889 with El Salvador, Honduras, and Nicaragua, and the contract that Henry Etheridge signed in 1890 with Ecuador.

Well then, the stamps of the Dominican Republic were evidently reprinted (many more of the stamps of 1880 and 1881 than of 1879) because they are relatively abundant. Material still exists that has been made to pass at sales and auctions as proofs but that is evidently later than the issue and has been evaluated, according to Poole, as being “post-humous printings” of a more or less capricious nature.

The ghost of Seebeck continues therefore to prowl around the issues of the Dominican Republic of 1879, 1880, and 1881 and to affect their value. This applies especially to the issue of 1879, which in spite of being relatively scarce has been permanently under-



valued to the point that it has risen between 1952 and 1984 from \$1.60 to \$10.00, an annual increase of scarcely 5.9 percent. But it can be pointed out unequivocally that Seebeck did not produce stamps for [ the Dominican Republic ] in the sense that he produced stamps for other countries.

It may be said again, at the time when the Hamilton firm and Seebeck were capturing the contracts of Ecuador, Honduras, Nicaragua, and El Salvador, taking them from the American Bank Note Co., that the American Bank Note Co. ironically was fulfilling the contract for printing the Dominican Republic stamps of 1890 and before that the contract for the stamps of 1885.

The Dominican Republic stamps printed in New York City and attributed to Seebeck are the following:

Issue of 1879

The 1879 stamps were ordered by a decree published in the Official Gazette, No. 279, September 3, 1879. In total, 100,000 stamps were ordered, **Figure 10-3**.

The issue consists of the following denominations and hues:

- ½ real blue gray
- 1 real red or carmine
- ½ real blue gray on blue paper
- 1 real carmine on salmon paper



Figure 10-3. Issue of 1879.  
1-real carmine Coat of Arms

The stamps were perforated gauge 12½ by 13 and were printed by letterpress (typography) in sheets of 50 stamps.

Although the decree that ordered the printing mentioned that there would be 100,000, it did not indicate the quantities of the specific denominations.

The stamps on colored paper are somewhat scarcer than those printed on white paper.

The following are considered to be important varieties:

- a – all the stamps are found imperforate,
- b – the ½-real blue-gray stamp is known in imperforate pairs, and
- c – the 1-real carmine stamp is known perforated gauges 13 by 13 and 12 by 12.

Other interesting varieties are uncataloged, and proofs and samples also are known.

In the stamp design is a shield with the inscriptions “DIOS, PATRIA, LIBERTAD” and “REPUBLICA DOMINICANA.”

Although there are different views about the reasons why the stamps are found on white paper as often as on colored papers, none has been properly documented.

One dubious explanation, suggested by J. Walter Scott, pointed out that stamps on colored paper were for internal use and those printed on white paper were for foreign use. If that were the intention, however, it was not complied with in practice because the stamps were used indiscriminately.

The stamps, although the order for their issue had not been published until September 1879, were issued about July 1879. The stamps were reported in the European press in September 1879.

Even though the 1879 stamps have low catalog values and market values, they have been largely forged. At least three forgeries are known, one of them by Fournier.

The stamps of this issue are common, and their catalog values have been adversely affected by the suspicion that Seebeck was involved in handing them.

Issue of 1880

On November 9, 1880, the Dominican Republic joined the Universal Postal Union. To comply with UPU regulations, the government ordered the new Coat of Arms stamps for 1880, **Figure 10-4**, page 80, but without the red security network shown in the figure.

The issue consists of the following denominations and hues:

- |           |                 |
|-----------|-----------------|
| 1c green  | 25c violet      |
| 2c red    | 50c orange      |
| 5c blue   | 75c ultramarine |
| 10c pink  | 1p gold         |
| 20c brown |                 |

The Official Gazette, No. 336, November 20, 1880, published a warning pointing out that from that date the stamps of the issue of 1879 would be allowed only for internal post, while for correspondence abroad, the stamps of the recently issued series were to be used.

The warning pointed out that the new stamps would be put into circulation on November 14, 1880.

The stamps were printed by typography and were color-rouletted. They were printed in sheets of 50 stamps composed of two panels of 25 stamps separated by a distance of between 12 mm and 25 mm.

The stamps are found in an ample variety of shades, and the catalogs as early as the beginning of the 20th century report them as such. More recently the catalogs have ignored these differences.

As important errors, the Scott catalog recognizes the 1c, 2c, 75c, and 1 peso stamps on laid paper, the 2c stamp on pelure paper, and the 1 peso stamp with a double impression. Other varieties and errors are listed in other catalogs or are not cataloged.

As for the quantities issued, though both Genaro Martínez and Clarence Hennan have stated numbers, these lack any real basis, and it is not worthwhile to list them.

It is evident that the stamps were abundantly reprinted, and on this subject James W. Smith wrote:

Some people have said that there were different printings of this series which

were delivered to the government at different times. There may have been different printings but it is less likely that more than one batch was delivered to the government. It is possible that there was a second printing and that the stamps did not reach the Dominican Republic. We say so because of the numerous new stamps which exist and the numerous forged cancellations.

This matter of the forged cancellations had already been pointed out by Phillips in 1906 when he wrote:

The stamps of this issue authentically used have never been very common, but it is difficult to distinguish those authentically used from those postmarked in New York by a firm which ought to know better.

For many years, the stamps of this issue fetched low prices, but by the mid-1980s they had risen in value. It is clear, however, that there is no reason why they should increase much more in value because the stamps are plentiful and it is impossible to distinguish between the originals and the reprints.

Both J. Dorm and J. Smith reported that the 1-peso stamp of 1879 was forged.

Issue of 1881

The 1881 new issue employs the same Arms design but with a security network.

On the Hamilton Bank Note Engraving and Printing Co. advertising card discussed in Chapter III appears a mixture of Dominican Republic stamps with and without network. [ These stamps could have been added to the card at any later date. Or the printed side could have been printed on a blank side at any later date. A similar card exists bearing five 1882 stamps of the Colombian State of Bolívar. ]

On the advertising card, the juxtaposition of the network and non-network stamps could indicate that the printing house might have processed them at the same time. This would mean that articles written in the belief that the government ordered the network be



Figure 10-4. Issue of 1881.  
5-centavo blue Coat of Arms  
with red network

applied to the stamps to show which stamps were coming from the United States and being used to defraud the treasury would be no more than a mistaken belief.

More likely is the story published in *Weltpost* in Vienna in 1881. This article noted that the security network was not listed when the first stamps were delivered.

Whatever might have been the reason, the fact is that one or two months after issuing the stamps without network, or it might have been at the beginning of 1881, a second series was issued that had the same hues and denominations as the former, differing only in that a security network in red ink was applied to the stamps, as shown in **Figure 10-4**. The network covered the whole sheet – all of the stamps and the space between the two blocks of 25 stamps.

As for the variations and errors, the Scott catalog cites the 1c stamp with the “T” of

“CENTAVO” broken. The 20c stamp is known lacking the frame, but this variation is not cataloged.

Independently of the stamps with and without network that reached the country, the reprints balanced the matter, and both series are equally abundant. The 1985 Scott catalog valued the series without network at \$26.50 and with network at \$25, which implies that there is no perceptible difference with regard to the availability of either. The 2018 catalog values for used are lower.

The 1881 issue with network circulated concurrently with the 1880 issue.

**The 1883 surcharges**

Seebeck denied ever making any over-printed stamps. In 1883, the stamps with and without the security network were over-printed in black with new denominations in céntimos and francos. No one has ever been able to provide a satisfactory explanation for this measure, but it has been pointed out that unscrupulous people could have devoted themselves to the task of taking to the Dominican Republic from the United States great quantities of these overprinted stamps, which would have adversely affected postal income. Although such a statement cannot be proven, the hypothesis is plausible. The overprints also might have been made in the Dominican Republic.

When the Dominican Republic required new stamps and postal cards for 1885, it gave the order for their manufacture to the American Bank Note Co.

**Chapter XI**  
**THE SEEBECK STAMPS AND POSTAL STATIONERY**

In the 1880s, the American Bank Note Co. held the stamp printing contracts for Ecuador, Honduras, Nicaragua, and El Salvador. It could not be said that the stamps the company produced were unusual. They were always of a classic, traditional design, as was typical of that period, and generally they were bright and well-produced.

A Seebeck offer, although it did not signify great improvements in design, for those poor countries who accepted a contract, the stamps came to them as a gift from heaven. It was an opportunity to obtain stamps of a high quality without having to disburse a single centavo. But it is clear that the governments did not consider any effect on the philatelic world and collectors. The governments were interested only in obtaining the stamps they required for postal services, an action they could not turn away from but that, in the eyes of some, proved later to be a disaster for stamp collecting.

On the other hand, it is obvious that the governments, apart from having received the

Seebeck stamps and postal stationery gratis, did not benefit directly by being able to sell many stamps to collectors and dealers, as they had previously done.

**Quantities and designs**

According to the table on this page, Seebeck provided to the four traditional countries some 1,195 items of postal paper during the period of their Seebeck contracts. This summary does not include fiscal stamps, provisionals, and other items, so the collectable totals are higher for each country.

Comparing the numbers in the table with the stamps outlined in the contracts, it is clear that Seebeck supplied a great number of stamps and other items that were not included in the contracts.

Among these extras are the postage due stamps for El Salvador, the Official stamps for Honduras, the Official seals for Ecuador, and many fiscal stamps.

The Seebeck stamps fall within four basic design types that were maintained during

**Number of Stamps Printed by the Hamilton Bank Note Engraving and Printing Co.  
for El Salvador, Nicaragua, Honduras, and Ecuador (major varieties only)**

Type of stamp	El Salvador	Nicaragua	Honduras	Ecuador	Total
ordinary	165	129	55	40	389
Official	88	139	22	37	286
postage due	56	41	–	14	111
parcel post	5	–	–	–	5
advice of receipt	2	–	–	–	2
registered	3	–	–	–	3
telegraph <sup>1</sup>	–	62	–	14	76
envelope	61	41	16	6	124
wrapper	28	26	16	2	72
postal card	55	40	20	6	121
letter card	6	–	–	–	6
Total	469	478	129	119	1,195



the period of validity or the period of the contracts. They are coats of arms, allegories, the discovery of America by Christopher Columbus, and presidents.

The engraved designs, with one or two exceptions, were in general well done, and the printing was usually by the secure method with the plate images in recess.

The designs had elaborate frames, vignettes, and a variety of inscriptions or tablets for text and numerals. The obvious exceptions to the pattern were the three high denominations in the El Salvador series for 1893 that picture Columbus. Those stamps, were, however, a precursor for later years.

All of the Seebeck designs fall within the philatelic style known as end-of-century pictorial, a style characterized by vignettes in frames covered with ornamentation and by stylized letters and numerals.

For many stamps, Hamilton or Seebeck had no objection to copying barefaced the designs of the American Bank Note Co. This was the case for the 1896 Coat of Arms issue of Ecuador. It is a copy of the American design used for the 1881 issue of Ecuador. For the stamps of El Salvador for 1890, Seebeck made slight changes to the design that the American Bank Note Co. had prepared for El Salvador for 1888.

For other stamps, although sometimes not obvious, it is possible to see the influence of the American Bank Note Co. on designs. The three high denominations of the El Salvador issue of 1894 in honor of Columbus are notable for their similarity with the 1893 Colombian stamps of the United States.

For the Columbus stamps, designers gave rein to imagination. For example, the Honduras stamps of 1892 picture Columbus and Martin Alonso Pinzón viewing the Honduran coast. The fact is that Columbus sighted and explored the Honduran coast in 1502 during his fourth voyage. He was not then accompanied by Pinzón, who was his companion during the first voyage.

On the 5-peso stamp of El Salvador issued in 1894, Columbus appears to be

defending hostage Indians against the mutinous crew, an event that never took place.

Catalog values of stamps

As I observed when presenting the various issues of individual countries, not all issues were reprinted. The reason was that in some instances the number of stamps was so great, or usage in the country was so minimal, that it was not necessary to reprint.

In the listing on the following page, I summarize 1978 Scott catalog values for used and unused Seebeck stamps by country and by year. Catalog values are for original stamps, not reprints.

[ The listing pictured is the original Mueses chart, with one typo corrected. The Scott minimum catalog value in the 1978 edition was \$0.05 for a single stamp or a set. In the 2018 catalog, minimum catalog value was \$0.25. Readers are encouraged to make their own comparisons of values by consulting a current catalog and by reviewing items that sold in online auctions. ]

It is essentially impossible to establish a standard value for a Seebeck set or for many individual stamps. A common denominator for almost all issues [ in the 1970s ] is that used stamps carry a higher catalog value than unused ones. [ The 2018 Scott catalog included numerous exceptions to this general statement among the stamps of Nicaragua, 1896-1899, and some exceptions to it among the catalog values for other countries. ]

In examining the totals, country by country, I note that of the stamps of Ecuador, for the five series listed, three are worth more mint than used, but overall mint stamps are valued more than used ones. This is the only Seebeck country where this occurs.

For the stamps of El Salvador, with 14 issues, only two are worth more mint than used. In the case when used stamps are valued higher than mint ones, the ratio of difference is between 3-to-1 and 4-to-1.

With Honduran stamps, used is valued more than mint, the ration being 4-to-1, or in general, used stamps are valued at four

VALUE OF SEEBECK ISSUES FOR THE COUNTRIES INDIVIDUALLY  
MINT (NUEVOS) AND USED (USADOS)  
Scott Catalogue 1978

ECUADOR				HONDURAS			
Scott No.	Año	Nuevos	Usados	Scott No.	Año	Nuevos	Usados
23/30	1892	\$1.30	\$3.40	40/50	1890	\$1.65	\$6.39
39/46	1894	14.15	9.25	51/64	1891	2.40	18.75
47/64	1895	19.65	8.75	65/75	1892	1.65	5.85
55/62	1896	11.35	10.85	76/86	1893	1.65	8.10
62A/62H	1896	13.80	17.60	87/94	1895	1.20	5.35
				95/102	1896	3.80	4.30

EL SALVADOR				NICARAGUA			
Scott No.	Año	Nuevos	Usados	Scott No.	Año	Nuevos	Usados
38/46	1890	\$1.62	\$6.19	20/29	1890	\$1.08	\$69.40
47/56	1891	1.80	7.72	30/39	1891	1.00	48.92
60/69	1892	1.80	7.59	40/49	1892	1.00	60.22
76/85	1893	1.50	5.23	51/60	1893	1.00	46.42
91/103	1894	3.75	—	61/70	1894	1.00	60.92
105/116	1895	1.80	8.20	71/80	1895	1.00	44.37
117/128	1895	9.80	12.30	81/89	1896	3.65	55.30
134/145	1896	4.43	8.60	89A/89I <sup>1</sup>	1896	106.00	71.25
146/157	1896	1.80	6.22	90/98	1897	43.25	74.75
157B/157-0	1896	3.41	9.05	98A/98I	1897	212.50	85.20
159/170	1897	12.46	11.73	99/109	1898	96.60	85.20
170A/170L	1897	26.03	25.35	109A/109M	1898	195.50	2.35
175/176	1897	1.80	4.50	110/120 <sup>2</sup>	1899	1.35	59.55
177/188	1898	1.91	5.54				

<sup>1</sup>The catalogue does not quote the 2 and 5 pesos in this issue  
<sup>2</sup>The catalogue only quotes the 1c and 10c used in this issue

times the value of mint stamps.

Among the stamps of Nicaragua, the value differences can range so widely that the value of a set in used condition can be nearly 70 times the value of the same set mint.

For the second series for 1896, the value of mint stamps is greater than the values for all years of used stamps, except the first series for 1897 and those for 1899. In some cases, the catalog does not state a catalog value, which highlights the vague nature of the respective stamp as mint or used.

Reprints and reserves

The contracts authorized Seebeck to retain the printing plates and, if the remainders returned to him at the end of each

period did not cover the demand from the philatelic market, he could make as many reprints as necessary.

A great deal has been written about the famous reprints. Some say Seebeck ordered the reprints. Some say Gustave Calman ordered them. Others maintain that while Seebeck held the contracts he printed a sufficient number of stamps to satisfy requirements and that the reprints were printed only after his death in 1899.

Leo John Harris (1981) stated that Gustave Calman in his advertisements offering Seebeck stamps indicated that the stamps offered were guaranteed as originals except those marked with an “R,” which were reprints. Harris added, however, that he had

never seen a stamp marked with an “R” and that he had not seen a stamp marked “R” in 14 of Calman’s pricelists.<sup>2</sup>

Joseph Kroeger advanced a third hypothesis that maintains there are originals, reserves, and reprints.

“Originals,” according to Kroeger, are those stamps that were issued during the year (or half year) of validity of the issue and that were delivered as remainders to Seebeck at the end of the period of validity.

“Reserves” are the stamps that have not been definitely identified as “originals “ or as “reprints” and which could be:

- 1 - reprints made during the period of validity of the issue to cover supplementary orders received from the government,
- 2 - reprints to replace reserves, or
- 3 - reprints made immediately after the government returned remainders, to cover stock shortages.

[ “Reserves” also could refer to a supply of stamps from the original production that was held back and never delivered to the country representative in New York City. ]

It has been pointed out that Seebeck, to cover himself for any remainder shortages that could result as a consequence of an issue or denominations running out after the full issue had been delivered, retained the right to have a reserve of 200,000 short sets (low denominations only) and 100,000 complete sets. These reserve stamps differ from the original issue in their hues and the quality of their papers, and they never came into the hands of collectors during the period of validity of the issue.

Most specialists who have studied in depth the Seebeck issues accept as valid the theory of the reserves, although not all agree on a definition of what stamps are reserves.

“Reprints” are stamps made from the original plates, usually after the stamps had ceased to have postal validity.

Various writers are in accord with the idea that the Seebeck reprints were made after the death of Seebeck in 1899, but of course no one really knows.

In previous chapters covering the stamps of the specific countries, I indicated in each case those issues for which reprints had been made, although it is impossible to determine, using the language of Kroeger’s hypothesis, whether the reprints fall into the category of “reserves” or “reprints.”

When German dealers Richard Senf and Louis Senf were investigating Seebeck, the reprints were one of the points of concern. Through correspondence, they attempted to elucidate which stamps had been reprinted during the period of validity of the contracts and which were reprinted after the death of Seebeck, and by whom.

There are some confusing points about this correspondence, which appears as a transcript in the *Philatelic Journal of America*. The investigation was made during 1908 and 1909. In the articles, the Senf correspondence appears to be directed to Gustave Calman, who appears to be replying.

Gustave Calman died January 25, 1898, in New York City at the age of 38. It is possible that Henry Calman, Gustave’s brother, could have signed the replies with the name “G.B. Calman,” as a business name.<sup>3</sup>

In the transcript, Calman admitted the possibility that reprints existed during Seebeck’s life and that they would have been what Kroeger called “reserves.”

Those who maintain that Seebeck ordered and directed the reprinting acknowledge that he, even with his experience as a stamp dealer, did not follow an intelligent system of selection of papers and hues for the reprints. If he had planned carefully, Seebeck would have retained supplies of the original paper to use for any needed reprinting. In any case, the question remains whether the differences in paper were the result of a lack of foresight, were made deliberately, or were simply because he did not care.

Ernest Schernikow noted that the stamp contracts include no clauses stipulating the type of paper to be used. As a result, Hamilton made no contract with a stamp paper supplier over a long term but rather

purchased on the open market the quantities of paper required for immediate needs. In consequence, according to Schernikow, collectors will find different types of paper even in the original stamp issues.

Kroeger, in his previously mentioned work on Seebeck, attempted to demonstrate that none of the reprints on thick, porous paper were made before 1899, and he indicated that the Hamilton firm did not begin to use this type of paper until 1899.

The question of reprints has been one of the most debated and studied subjects in philately. The first reference to the existence of reprints of Seebeck stamps is credited to Joseph B. Leavy. Leavy based his studies on the studies of the Senfs. Leavy began to study the matter of reprints in an attempt to establish clearly the difference between the original stamps and the reprints. Leavy, however, sinned on the side of simplicity when he considered as reprints only those printings on thick, porous papers, which were used the first time by Hamilton for the postage due stamps of El Salvador for 1899.

The Leavy study was published originally in *Gibbons Stamp Weekly* from July 1909 to April 1910. Despite its errors, it has been the focal point from which subsequent writings on reprints have been made.

Possibly the best study made on the subject of reprints was the work of Joseph D. Hahn and Joseph M. Sousa, titled “El Salvador: The Seebeck Stamps,” published in the 1977 *Congress Book* and 1978 *Congress Book*. In the articles, although they deal exclusively with the stamps of El Salvador, the authors analyze the subject deeply and arrive at conclusive and interesting findings.

During the period 1893-1898, control of the Hamilton Bank Note Engraving and Printing Co. passed to New York financiers William Grace, Russell Sage, and others. Hahn and Sousa indicate that in these years the company sent to the respective countries only minimal stamps over and above what had been decided upon as necessary for the particular countries. This was done with the

view of fulfilling the contract at the lowest possible cost. [ The United States then was in a prolonged depression, which followed the financial crisis known as the Panic of 1893. Costs would have been cut no matter who was running the company. ]

Hahn and Sousa hypothesize that on the termination of the period of validity of each issue, Seebeck, on command from Gustave Calman, would have made the reprints Calman required. This practice, which would have been effected at the time when the respective countries were juggling with the remainders, would have ensured that Calman obtained his stamps under optimum conditions. He would not have been subject to the dangers entailed by two long sea voyages and land journeys coupled with the stamps sitting for a year in tropical countries that were politically unstable and were poorly organized administratively.

Hahn and Sousa believe that all reprints were made before the death of Seebeck and at the insistence of Calman. If this hypothesis is correct, it would explain why there are so few originals from the later years of the contracts with El Salvador and Nicaragua in contrast to the early years of those contracts.

It is outside the scope of this book to attempt to study the various papers and gums used for the originals and the reprints, but it can be noted in general terms that the reprints were made on thicker and more porous papers.

The majority of writers indicate that the variations in the hues of any particular issue are attributable to poor quality control of the papers and the inks.

Generally speaking, if a collector has only one example of a stamp, it is difficult to know if it is an original or a reprint. Stamps exist that even the experts have problems in identifying conclusively.

One of the most effective ways of identifying originals and reprints is by the grain of the paper (horizontal or vertical), but in some issues even this is not definite because in certain cases the grain in the paper is so



weak that it is difficult to determine its direction. The paper, however, was not always run through the press in the same grain direction, and a distinct issue can include both stamps with vertical grain and stamps with horizontal grain. [ When exposed to the heat of a strong lamp, a stamp will usually curl toward the gum side, the turned-in edges being parallel to the grain of the paper. ]

For those interested in pursuing this matter further, I suggest the articles by Hahn and Sousa and those by Quast and Willer.

In 1896, Seebeck began to supply stamps printed on paper watermarked with the Liberty Cap design. For the original issues, the watermark is vertical. In the reprints it is horizontal. This difference of watermark is so simple that it indicates that it was never intended to pass off the reprints as originals.

Another notable difference with the reprints is the gum. A dark, sticky gum was used on the reprints. It had a great tendency to absorb humidity and at the least opportunity to stick fast to anything nearby. In such cases, the only remedy is to soak the stamps in water to separate them.

Among all the reprints arranged by Seebeck, two were totally out of context.

One group of reprints corresponds to the stamps of 1869-71 and 1878-80 for Nicaragua, the stamps originally printed by the American Bank Note Co. In 1891, the Nicaraguan government ordered the American Bank Note Co. to reprint 350,000 of these stamps and to deliver them to Seebeck.<sup>4</sup> The hues of these reprints differ from the original stamps, and they are on white, wove paper with thick, yellowish gum. The gum of the original stamps is thin and white.

The second group of reprints are the Morazán stamps of Honduras that were mentioned in Chapter VI.

**Nicaragua: printing from new plates**

[ Seebeck supplied to Nicaragua during the respective year of validity new postal cards in 1897 and 1898 that were issued and used and a new 5-centavo envelope in 1897

that was issued and used. The new postal cards are not reprints. They are new designs printed from new lithographic bases (probably metal rather than stone).

The new carmine 5-centavo Numeral envelope of 1897 that was sent to Nicaragua and was used is on a paper different from that of the original envelope and is cut with a knife different from that used to cut the original envelope.

None of the new postal cards are reprints because their designs and plates were new. For the carmine 5-centavo envelope of 1897, the paper and knife were new, but it is not known if the plate used to print the new envelope was the original plate or a new plate. In general, the new envelope in carmine can be called a reprint, but by its knife and paper it is a new envelope.

The following six sections, added by the editor, illustrate and explain the new printings of modified designs of Nicaragua postal cards and envelopes, or of new envelope knives, for the issues of 1891, 1894, 1895, 1896, 1897, and 1898.

As previously stated, the new printings of modified designs of the 1897 and 1898 postal cards and of the 1897 5c envelope in carmine were manufactured in their years of validity and were sent to Nicaragua and were used there. The 1891, 1894, 1895, and 1896 new printings are believed to have been created for the collector market and are not believed to have been sent to Nicaragua. ]

**New plates: issue of 1891**

[ For Nicaragua, the 2c single postal card of 1891 and the 2c+2c message-reply postal card of 1891 were printed as new designs that were not sent to the country. No used examples are documented.

Since circa 1988, the editor had documented six 2c new cards and four 2c+2c new half cards. In spring 2018, a hoard of hundreds of such cards came onto the market on eBay as one lot, and the editor bought it.

The hoard included enough examples that the new-design cards could be plated by their



Figure 11-1. Nicaragua issue of 1891.  
2-centavo postal card, upper-right corner  
left: original card with two pearls  
right: new design with one pearl

small and minute flaws. The cards could be sorted as 16 plate positions for the new-design 2c single card and 14 plate positions for the new-design 2c+2c half card. The new design 2c+2c card is documented only as a half card, and the editor believes that is how it would have been manufactured.

The new-design cards are engraved. They were printed by lithography, however, as were the original cards sent to Nicaragua. **Figure 11-1** pictures the key details of the original card and the new card.

When the new printings were made is not known, but it likely would have been circa 1891 or 1892. The card stock and hues of the new cards closely match those of the original cards. It could be that the stock and inks essentially were the same as those of the original cards sent to Nicaragua.

The new printings of the 2c card and the 2c+2c half card require additional study – including a comparison with the design of the issued 3c and 3c+3c cards.

See the articles by Michael Schreiber, “New Discovery: Reply Card of 1891 With Changed Design,” *Nicarao*, October 2011, No. 78, 20:4, pages 7-13, and “Mystery: 1891 2-centavo Postal Card, It’s Not Like the Others, But What Is It?,” *Nicarao*, April 2006, No. 56, 15:2, pages 4-6.

The 5-centavo envelope of 1891 on white paper was printed as a modified design that

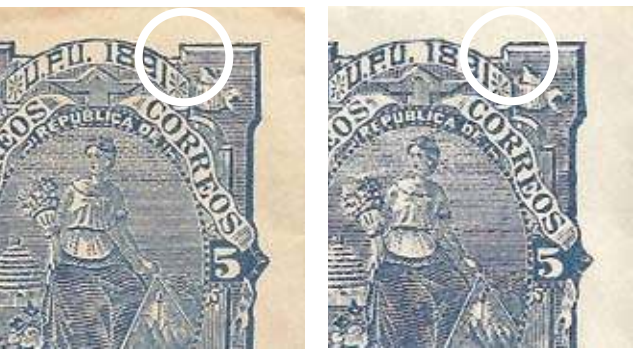


Figure 11-2. Nicaragua issue of 1891.  
5-centavo envelope, upper-right corner  
left: original with sharp corner  
right: new design with chamfered corner

appears not to have been sent to the country. No use is documented. On the new printing, the imprinted stamp has a chamfered inside corner on its upper right decorative panel, next to the year “1891.”

**Figure 11-2** shows details of the original envelope and the new envelope.

The editor believes that the chamfer was made deliberately to earmark the envelope so it could be distinguished easily from the original. This new-design envelope is on a distinctly white paper.

See the article by Michael Schreiber, “Nicaragua: Envelopes of 1891 Feature Goddess of Plenty Design,” in *Nicarao*, October 2014, No. 91, 23:4, pages 9-14. ]

**New plates: issue of 1894**

[ For Nicaragua, the 2c and 3c single postal cards and the 2c+2c and 3c+3c message-reply postal cards of 1894 were printed by lithography as new designs from new printing bases. When this occurred is not known. Because the printing bases or plates were new and because the designs were new, these cards are not reprints, even though for at least 50 years, perhaps a century, that is what they have been wrongly called.

The distinguishing characteristics of the new designs are their imprints, which read “HAMILTON BANK NOTE CO. NEW YORK,” an incorrect name for the company founded





Figure 11-3. Nicaragua issue of 1894.  
imprints of 3-centavo postal cards  
top: original card sent to country  
bottom: new design, not documented used

in 1884 but, it seems, a shorthand name that continued in use. It is difficult to examine the 2c and 2c+2c cards for other differences because of their unbelievably dark blue stock and vermilion (red orange) ink. The 3c and 3c+3c cards, however, easily show the imprints and modifications to letters of the word “CENTAVOS” in the imprinted stamps. The slug for “CENTAVOS” likely was a new element in the working die or in the locked-up forme of the elements for the printed image of a card. One other difference is that the imprinted stamps of all new-design cards are in slightly different positions relative to the borders compared to the imprinted stamps of the original cards.

The imprints of the original single cards and double cards read “HAMILTON BANK NOTE ENG. & PTG. CO. NEW YORK,” which is a partially abbreviated version of the correct and legal name of the company. Examples of both imprints are shown in **Figure 11-3**. See the article by Michael Schreiber, “Postal Cards of 1894 Begin Period of Inferior Production Values,” *Nicarao*, October 2012, No. 82, 21:4, pages 12-17. ]

**New envelopes: 1895, 1896, 1897**

[ New quantities of the 5c, 10c, 20c, 30c, and 50c Arms envelopes of 1895 were manufactured with two distinct new envelope knives. These envelopes are believed to have been made for the collector market. They are not documented used, and it is believed that they were never sent to Nicaragua.

It is not known if the new envelopes were printed with new plates or with the same

plates used to print the original envelopes, but by tradition they are considered to be reprints, meaning from the original plates. The three high denominations can be distinguished from the originals by the shape of their knife and by their slightly larger size (about 2 mm wider and 2 mm taller than the original envelopes). The editor believes that they were manufactured in late 1897 or in 1898, at the time similar envelopes of 1896 and 1897 are believed to have been made.

See the article by Michael Schreiber, “Nicaragua: Envelopes of 1895 Picture Embossed Coat of Arms,” *Nicarao*, July 2016, No. 99, 25:3, pages 2-7. ]



Figure 11-4. Issue of 1896.  
2-centavo postal card  
original design, used as of probably January



Figure 11-5. Issue of 1896.  
2-centavo postal card  
new design, not documented used

**New plates: issue of 1896**

[ The 2c, 3c, 2c+2c, and 3c+3c postal cards of 1896 were manufactured with new plates to create supplies for the collector market. The new cards are not documented used and are believed not to have been sent to Nicaragua. **Figure 11-4** shows a detail of the inner frameline of the 2c original card. A detail of the inner frameline of the 2c new design is pictured in **Figure 11-5**.

See the article by Michael Schreiber, “New Discovery: Three Designs for Postal Cards of 1897,” in *Nicarao*, April 2013, No. 85, pages 6-20. This article also discusses and illustrates the 1896 postal cards in detail.

Quantities of new 5c, 10c, and 20c envelopes of 1896 were manufactured, each cut with one of two distinct knives. These envelopes are not documented used and are believed not to have been sent to Nicaragua. It is not known if the new envelopes were printed with new plates or with the same plates used to print the original envelopes,

See the article by Michael Schreiber, “Nicaragua: Reprint for Each Denomination in 1896 Envelope Issue,” *Nicarao*, April 2017, No. 102, 26:2, pages 2-6. ]

**New plates: issue of 1897**

[ The 2-centavo postal card of 1897 was resupplied to Nicaragua as a new design

(modified design printed from a new plate) that was issued and used. The new card, with many distinguishing characteristics, is documented used only in the latter months of 1897. The earliest documented use is postmarked September 22, 1897, at Corinto. **Figure 11-6** pictures a detail of the inner frameline of the original 2c card sent to Nicaragua and used there. See the article by Michael Schreiber, “New Discovery: Three Designs for Postal Cards of 1897,” in *Nicarao*, April 2013, No. 85, pages 6-20.

The third design mentioned in the title of the article refers to the cards (2c and 3c and 2c+2c and 3c+3c) that by tradition have been called “reprints” but that are not reprints. They are not reprints because they have modified designs that were printed with new plates. These cards also can be distinguished from the original cards and from the resupply with the new design.

**Figure 11-7** shows the inner frameline of the 2c new-design card of 1897 that is not documented used and not believed to have been sent to Nicaragua. Its inner frameline matches that of the similar 1896 card, pictured in Figure 11-5.

**Figure 11-8** pictures a detail of the inner frameline of the other new-design 2c card that was supplied to Nicaragua and was used.

The 3-centavo postal card of 1897 also



Figure 11-6. Issue of 1897.  
2-centavo postal card  
original design  
used as of January



Figure 11-7. Issue of 1897.  
2-centavo postal card  
new design  
not documented used



Figure 11-8. Issue of 1897.  
2-centavo postal card  
different new design  
used as of September



was resupplied to Nicaragua as a new design printed from a new plate. Differences in the borders distinguish the new design. Two uses are documented, postmarked November 1, 1897, at Managua, and December 18, 1897, at Granada.

The 2c+2c message-reply postal card of 1897 also was resupplied to Nicaragua as a new design printed from a new plate. Only one use of a half card is documented, postmarked October 18, 1897, at Granada.

The editor believes that 3c+3c message-reply postal card of 1897 also would have been resupplied to Nicaragua as a new design printed from a new plate. No unused or used examples are recorded. Differences in the outer decorative borders would distinguish the new 3c+3c design.

Few examples of the 1897 new-design cards have been recognized because their existence was not documented until April 2013, when more collectors could begin looking for them after publication of the article on the 1897 cards in *Nicarao*.

The 5-centavo carmine Numeral envelope of 1897 was resupplied to Nicaragua as a new envelope, again in carmine but on a grayish paper that is slightly bluish and brighter than the paper of the original envelope. Its knife is different from that of the original envelope, and this knife is the distinguishing characteristic. It is not known if its imprinted stamp was printed with the same plate as the original envelope, so in general, it can be called a reprint, even though by its paper and knife it is a new envelope. The article cited in a paragraph that follows called it a reprint. At least seven uses are documented, the earliest documented being July 27, 1897, at Corinto.

Another 1897 5c envelope exists with the imprinted stamp in a distinct rose hue. It is not documented used and is believed never to have been sent to Nicaragua. It is on the same paper used for the 5c resupply envelope and has the same knife as that envelope. Because it has the same paper and the same knife, it is believed to have been manu-

factured sometime in 1897 or in 1898. It is not known if its imprinted stamp was printed with the same plate as the original envelope, so in general, it can be called a reprint, even though by its knife and imprint hue it is a new envelope. The article cited in the following paragraph calls it a reprint.

Quantities of new 10c and 20c envelopes of 1897 also were manufactured, each with a distinct knife. These envelopes are not documented used and are believed not to have been sent to Nicaragua. It is not known if the new envelopes were printed with new plates or with the same plates used to print the original envelopes. See the article by Michael Schreiber, “Nicaragua: Reprints for Each Denomination in 1897 Numeral Issue” (the 1897 envelopes), *Nicarao*, October 2017, No. 104, 26:4, pages 6-11. ]

New plates: issue of 1898

[ The 2-centavo postal card of 1898 was resupplied to Nicaragua as a new design (modified design) printed from a new plate, **Figure 11-9**. The new card, with a few distinguishing characteristics, is documented used as early as December 1898. It was used throughout 1899 and into the early months of 1900. The earliest documented use is postmarked December 15, 1898, at Managua. The latest documented use is postmarked May 13, 1900, at Granada.

The 3-centavo postal card of 1898 also was resupplied to Nicaragua as a new design (modified design) printed from a new plate. **Figure 11-10** and **Figure 11-11** show the differences. Documented uses compiled by the editor are all in 1899, the earliest documented being April 15, 1899, at Corinto.

The 2c+2c message-reply postal card of 1898 also is believed to have been resupplied to Nicaragua as a new design (modified design) printed from a new plate. The editor is aware of only unused cards, but used cards should exist as half cards or double cards, probably postmarked in 1899.

The 3c+3c message-reply postal card of 1898 also was resupplied to Nicaragua as a

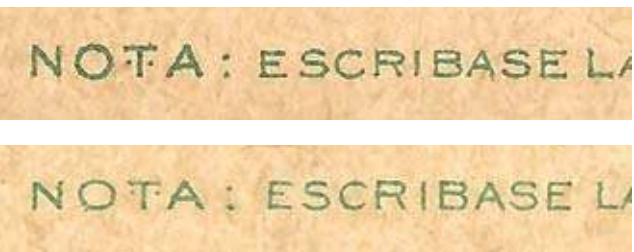


Figure 11-9. Issue of 1898.  
2-centavo postal card  
top: original card, tall NOTA, round O  
bottom: new design, short NOTA, flat O

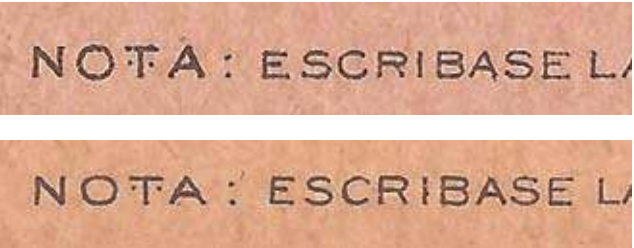


Figure 11-10. Issue of 1898.  
3-centavo postal card  
top: original card, tall NOTA, round O  
bottom: new design, short NOTA, flat O



Figure 11-11. Issue of 1898.  
3-centavo postal card  
top: original card, no dentils to left of TRES  
bottom: new design, dentils to left of TRES

new design (modified design) printed from a new plate. The editor has one used example, postmarked December 6, 1899, at Managua.

For 1899, Seebeck provided a supply of new Allegory of Justice postal cards inscribed

“1899,” but the quantities supplied seem to have been low. It is believed that the Allegory of Justice cards were delivered on time, by January 1, 1899. It seems nearly certain that Nicaragua did not return remainders of the 1898 cards but continued to use them in 1899 and early 1900. More remainders of 1898 postal cards were remonetized in 1904 at Managua by handstamping them.

The original 3c and 3c+3c postal cards of 1898 are the cards on so-called pink stock, cataloged by Higgins and Gage as B41 and B43. The new-design cards are on brownish stock, Higgins and Gage B41a and B43a. The characteristic that determines which is which is the design, not the color of the stock, because many, if not most, of the original pink cards over time have turned brownish. At a first glance, a formerly pink original 3c or 3c+3c card or half card can resemble a brownish new-design card, as if they were identical. Checking the design differences will reveal if a card is the original pinkish or the new brownish. See the article by Michael Schreiber, “Nicaragua: Postal Cards of 1898 Were Valid Through Early 1900,” *Nicarao*, July 2013, No. 86, 22:3, pages 6-12. ]

Postmarks and cancels

Although this book does not cover in depth the Seebeck stamps and their use, this section will briefly examine the postmarks and cancels used to invalidate them.

During the period of validity of the Seebeck stamps, the principal users of the post in the four republics were foreign firms established in those countries or local firms that had commercial relations with outside concerns. Many of the firms, abroad and within Nicaragua, had the custom of keeping their correspondence. This has facilitated collectors and students being able study the correspondence and the markings used on it.

The study of postmarks and cancels, especially on covers, has been useful in determining which stamps are originals and which are reprints. Such study unfortunately is not always conclusive because many legit-



Figure 11-12. Postmark of the village La Paz Vieja used to postmark Seebeck reprints.

imate postmarking devices and canceling devices were applied apparently by amenable employees. Other genuine devices seem to have gotten into private hands.

**Figure 11-12** pictures a genuine La Paz Vieja postmark made by a device that is understood to have been used to mark Seebeck stamp reprints. It is dated April 27, 1914. La Paz Vieja is a village west of the town La Paz Centro. Both are located on the main road between León and Managua.

There are two essential references on postmarks and cancels of Nicaragua. One is titled “Die Poststempel auf den alten Ausgaben Nicaraguas (1862-1905),” by Eduard Heinze. This 1935 German monograph has been translated into English. The other reference is titled “Cancellations Used on the Original Nicaraguan Seebeck Issues of 1890-1899,” by Joseph Sousa.<sup>5</sup>

[ Because this book is not a postmark study, the editor eliminated the section picturing a few images of postmarks of Nicaragua or sketches of postmarks. Also eliminated were the images of single covers of Honduras and Ecuador. ]

Spurious cancels

In Chapter X, about the stamps of the Dominican Republic, I indicated that during the 1880s a great number of stamps of the Dominican Republic were canceled in New York City with spurious markings. The same also applies to stamps of the Colombian State of Bolívar.

The practice of false cancellations was quite common and was used as much on original stamps as on reprints. For each country, the stamps most frequently found with false cancels or postmarks are the higher denominations. One should especially view with suspicion any postal markings on 1-peso, 2p, 5p, and 10p stamps.

An oval postmark of Rivas, Nicaragua, that appears to be genuine is known on 2p and 5p stamps. Some collectors insist that the markings were applied by favor. Others maintain that they were used as a form of adjustment of interdepartmental accounts.

Another group of cancellations were roughly executed for various merchants who dealt with Seebeck. These false markings should not prove to be a problem for anyone who has passed the first stages of studying this period.

The values listed in stamp catalogs for used stamps apply to stamps struck with legitimate postal markings. For the stamps of El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Ecuador, the Scott catalog says that used values “are for stamps with genuine cancellations applied while the stamps were valid.”

It has been indicated that Seebeck canceled whole sheets of stamps quite willingly for various countries and for anybody who requested him to do so. He always had a large stock of stamps available.

Selling the stamps

To stimulate the sales of his stamps, Seebeck attempted to maintain good relations with the philatelic press. He kept the press well informed about his new issues, and he bought advertisements to promote them.

Seebeck published advertisements in the philatelic press as sales promotions for his stamps, although his advertisements were an invitation to purchase the stamps from stamp dealers, not directly from Seebeck.

**Figure 11-13** pictures a Seebeck advertisement that appeared in 1892 in the *Post Office*, a New York City publication, and in the *Philatelic Chronicle and Advertiser*, pub-

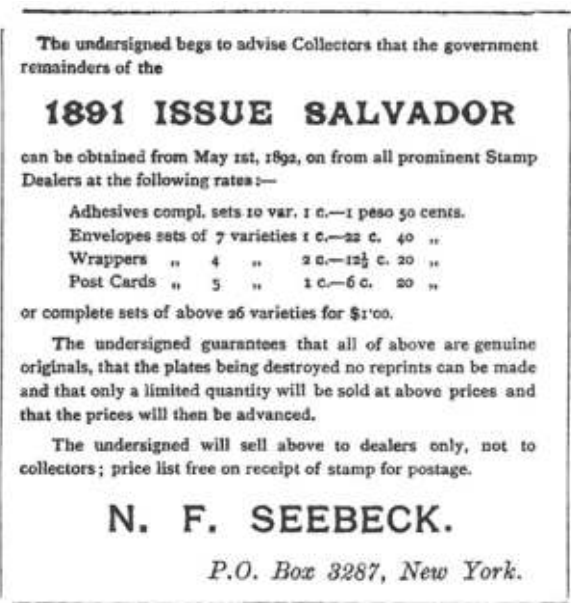


Figure 11-13. Seebeck advertisement of early 1892 offering the 1891 stamps and postal stationery of El Salvador to “dealers only, not to collectors.”

lished in Birmingham, England. The text offered the 1891 stamps and postal stationery of El Salvador and noted that the offer was for “dealers only, not to collectors.”

[ When this advertisement ran in early 1892, his fellow trustees recently (February 4) had chosen Seebeck to be the third president of the Hamilton Bank Note Engraving and Printing Co., a role he filled until August 23, 1893. At the same time, he continued as general manager and treasurer through April 10, 1893. He began in those two offices on April 21, 1884. Seebeck sold his contract stamp remainders, reprints, and new printings as a business separate from Hamilton. He continued to own the contracts, and he paid the Hamilton firm to manufacture the stamps and postal stationery. ]

For several years, Seebeck stamps sold well, and they were amply advertised in the philatelic press. **Figure 11-14** shows an advertisement of the Scott Stamp & Coin Co. and an advertisement of C.H. Mekeel Stamp & Publishing Co. of St. Louis. Scott Stamp & Coin Co. was the renamed first J.W. Scott company owned by the Calman brothers



Figure 11-14. Advertisements of Scott Stamp & Coin Co. and Charles H. Mekeel from 1893, offering to collectors the 1892 stamps, envelopes, postal cards, and wrappers of El Salvador and Nicaragua.

and others since December 1885, when they agreed to purchase J.W. Scott and Co. from J. Walter Scott. Both advertisements offer the 1892 issues of Nicaragua and El Salvador.

Even Charles H. Mekeel, who through his periodical the *Philatelic Journal of America* helped promote the campaign against Seebeck, was selling the stamps in 1893.

The Scott Stamp & Coin Co., C.H. Mekeel Stamp & Publishing Co., and other dealers sold the Seebeck stamp sets at the retail prices set by Seebeck. Based on different advertisements for the 1891 issue and the 1892 issue, it appears that Seebeck raised prices somewhat for postal card sets, wrapper sets, and envelope sets from 1891 to



1892, at least for El Salvador. In the 1890s, annual stamp sets of 10 retailed at 50 cents. Dealers paid \$25 for 100 sets. By about 1912 to 1915, demand slackened, and wholesale prices had been reduced to \$15 per 100 sets. Retail prices then were 15 cents to 25 cents per set.

From the beginning in his advertisements, Seebeck undertook to wholesale directly himself the stamps he acquired through his contracts. Sometime during 1890 or 1891, however, he signed a contract with Gustave Calman covering the sale of all stamps that Seebeck possessed of Ecuador, Honduras, Nicaragua and El Salvador.

The contract stipulated that Calman would pay Seebeck \$5,000 per year plus \$1,000 extra for each additional issue [ additional to the issues of the four countries ]. The contract placed Calman in control of all rights that Seebeck held over the stamps and postal stationery issued by or manufactured in the names of the four contract countries.

Gustave B. Calman

Gus Calman, as he was universally known, was a wholesale dealer in stamps. **Figure 11-15** pictures one of his advertisements from the early 1890s when he was located at 299 Pearl Street in New York City. [ As noted, Gustave (1860-1898) and brother Henry L. Calman and others in December 1885 agreed to purchase from John Walter Scott the company named J.W. Scott and Co., the first formal stamp com-



Figure 11-15. Advertisement of Gustave B. Calman from the early 1890s. Calman maintained this wholesale business while he was an owner of Scott Stamp & Coin Co. and an officer in a glue and varnish business.

pany of John Walter Scott that the Calmans renamed Scott Stamp & Coin Co. Ltd. Gustave was vice president. Henry ran it. When Gustave Calman died on January 25, 1898, at age 37, he “was known among stamp collectors the world over as the greatest wholesale dealer in postage stamps” (*North Adams Transcript*, North Adams, Mass., March 26, 1898). He had begun stamp collecting as a boy.

In addition to his stamp businesses, Gustave Calman was a principal in a glue, paint, and varnish business named S. Isaacs & Co., along with Solomon Isaacs and Emil Calman (father of Gustave and Henry). ]

There is a basic history between Calman, Seebeck, and J.W. Scott that is interesting because it is a precursor to the scandal that developed in 1895 as a consequence of the Seebeck contracts and the Seebeck stamps.

In December 1885, when John Walter Scott sold to the Calmans his retail stamp company, Scott thought of dedicating himself to other commercial activities. Unfortunately he very soon lost his capital in several operations. Not having any other way to support himself, Scott returned to the philatelic field, and in spring 1889 he founded the firm named J.W. Scott Co. Ltd.

As a condition of its sale in December 1885, the previous firm named J.W. Scott and Co. had been renamed by the Calmans as Scott Stamp & Coin Co., retaining use of the Scott name. Because of the new company that J.W. Scott established in 1889, Scott Stamp & Coin Co. (the Calmans) sued J.W. Scott Co. Ltd. that year, attempting to enjoin Scott from using the name Scott.

The lengthy judicial action between the Calmans and Scott ended in favor of J.W. Scott Co. Ltd. on November 5, 1890, in the Supreme Court of the City of New York.

The decision asserted that no one was entitled to take another person’s name and thereby his means to earn a living if he had no other way to work.

In the early 1890s after Gustave Calman had purchased the rights to the Seebeck

stamps, J.W. Scott, still aggrieved over the Calman lawsuit against him, saw an opportunity to attack Gustave Calman through Seebeck. Scott joined the campaign against Seebeck that was being waged in the United States through the *Philatelic Journal of America*, the periodical of Charles Mekeel. In 1895, Scott became the leader of the North American branch of the Society for the Suppression of Speculative Stamps, and through the branch Scott joined in on the attacks against countries that issued too many stamps, unneeded high denominations, and unneeded surcharges or overprints.

In the United States, Scott specifically attacked Seebeck and the Seebeck stamps. In Europe, the SSSS attacked speculative stamps in a general sense.

The *Stamp Collectors’ Fortnightly*, the prestigious publication of English philately, said of Calman: “He and his brother Henry L. Calman, are the soul of the Scott Stamp & Coin Co., the Gibbons of America.” It noted that he had commercial interests dealing in lacquers, oils, resins, and varnishes.

Even though he had his commercial interests, Calman’s great weakness was stamps. It was said that the profits he made in his other interests and commercial activities he invested in his stamps until he became the biggest purchaser of stamp remainders in the United States.

It was Gustave Calman who bought from Charles Parker, the engineer mentioned in Chapter IV, all the Quetzal stamps of Guatemala for the years 1871 to 1881 and the Barrios stamps of Guatemala of 1886.

In general, Gus Calman bought everything that was offered to him in the way of stamp remainders.

Dispersal of the Calman stock

After Gustave Calman died on January 25, 1898, Henry Calman, manager of Scott Stamp & Coin Co., purchased Gustave Calman’s wholesale stock from his estate. According to Charles J. Phillips, the Seebeck inventory consisted of 90 million stamps.

[ In 1901, Henry Calman sold Scott Stamp & Coin Company to a stock company that included George L. Tappan and Joseph S. Rich. In 1914, Charles E. Hatfield bought Scott Stamp & Coin Company.

In 1938, Hugh Clark bought the company but sold the Scott retail business to Norman Serphos. The separate Scott stamp catalog and stamp album business became Scott Publications under Clark.

It is not known if Henry Calman sold any of the Seebeck stock of adhesive stamps in 1901 when he sold Scott Stamp & Coin Co. It is not known if the 1901 buyer of that company or any subsequent buyer also bought any stock of Seebeck adhesive stamps.

Henry Calman, who was born in 1863, lived until 1937. After purchasing the wholesale stamp stock of his deceased brother, he began to sell off the stamps over an uncertain period. Henry Calman did sell the Seebeck postal stationery stock in 1902. ]

By 1904, the inventory of Seebeck stamp remainders had been reduced to 60 million, but by then demand had dwindled to small orders. It had become difficult to find an outlet for the stamps, although many fields were explored. An example was the firm S.H. Bixby Co., a manufacturer of shoe polish, which for a time used Seebeck stamps as a sales promotion in the form of prizes for its customers. Another who secured a good quantity was F.H. Pinkham, editor of the *Eastern Philatelist*, who gave away stamp sets to subscribers to his publication.

[ In 1902, J.E. Handshaw, a New York City stamp dealer, had purchased from Henry Calman the remaining stock of Seebeck postal stationery. Handshaw used some of it as a substitute for blank stationery by printing return addresses on it for himself and for others. Handshaw still had much of the large stock of the Seebeck postal stationery in spring 1921, when he sold all of it to collector Siegfried Schachne of Ohio, some 20 cartons, according to Handshaw. ]

About 1910, the publication *L’Annonce Timbrologique* advertised that the stock of

Seebeck Central American stamps was for sale. The price being asked was £12,000, or about 10c per 100 stamps. Even at this price no buyer could be found.

Shortly before the end of World War I, the stock had been reduced to 55 million stamps. It was purchased circa 1917 by Bela Sekula (Béla Székula), a dealer then in Lucerne, Switzerland, for a sum that was not revealed. The seller was Henry Calman.<sup>6</sup>

As the decades passed, the Seebeck stamps demonstrated astonishing vitality, for in 1943, Victor Kneitschel, an Argentine dealer, was offering to sell 7 million Seebeck stamps for about 20 Argentine pesos per 1,000 stamps (approximately \$5 per 1,000 stamps, or a total of \$35,000 for all of them).

**Printing plates destroyed: 1911**

Leaving aside the question of whether the adhesive stamp reprints were made during the lifetime of Seebeck or after his death, the fact remains that for most of the 1890s the ever-evolving stock was in the possession of Gustave Calman, as a result of his dealings with Seebeck, and later in the possession of Henry Calman. As noted, the estimate was that the stock eventually amounted to some 90 million Seebeck stamps.

Who would have decided to reprint the stamps? Was it Seebeck, Gustave Calman, or perhaps even the Hamilton Bank Note Engraving and Printing Co.? If we accept the hypothesis that the stamp reprints were made after Seebeck’s death, then who in the Hamilton company would have decided to reprint the stamps and later to commercialize the stocks? Who would have had the authority to use the printing plates?

By 1910, rumors had begun to circulate that there was a possibility that new reprints of the Seebeck stamps were to be made, meaning stamps from the original plates.

As a result, the Hamilton firm decided to destroy the plates. The reason was stated by Ernest Schernikow, one of the protagonists for destruction. At that time, Schernikow was the president of the Hamilton Bank Note

Engraving and Printing Co. He wrote:

There was so much outcry against the existence of the plates with which the 1890-1899 issues were made, that in order to silence it and make it impossible for them to be used again, Mr. Henry Calman suggested to me that it would be advisable to destroy all the existing plates. It is not the custom to do this, however, thinking carefully over the arguments in favor of doing so in this case, in order that all the world should stop complaining and so to quiet the outcries of those who did not understand the facts, I ordered the destruction of all the existing plates.

Destruction occurred on November 9, 1911, before a committee that included John N. Luff, John A. Klemann, and P.F. Brunner. In their report to Henry Calman, the committee declared the following, as told by Schernikow in his 1916 article:

At your request, the undersigned Committee have this day visited the Hamilton Bank Note [ Engraving and Printing ] Co. in Brooklyn, N.Y., and have examined certain plates of the so-called Seebeck issues of Ecuador, Honduras, Nicaragua and Salvador. These plates were engraved in ‘Taille douce’ [ ‘cut finely’: the design was cut with a burin into a soft metal die ]. We certify that all the plates mentioned in the following list have been defaced by cuts made with a file, across each row of designs (usually both vertically and horizontally) that they could not be used for further printings.

A list of the plates followed, with the names of the four countries whose plates were examined. Some plates of El Salvador were not present. According to Schernikow, the committee stated:

We did not find the following plates for Nicaragua and Salvador: 1899 – 2c and 1c, 5c and 24c. We assume that these four missing values were on two small plates in conformity with the arrangement adopted for other values of the 1899 issue of the two countries.

El Salvador 1896, Type A-51 – 12c

The above-referred-to plates were also destroyed and in the large number examined were either mislaid or overlooked.

Those [ stamps ] of the 1899 issue were lithographed and after the issue was printed, the stone to which the steel plate impressions were transferred, was cleaned off to be used for other work.

[ Schernikow misstated the last sentence. Lithographic stones (fine, hard limestone) were reused. He would have meant that the surface of a stone, possibly used to transfer impressions to a metal plate, was cleaned and slightly reduced and smoothed to be used for other work, if in fact the 1899 stamps were printed from metal plates. They could have been printed directly from lithographic stones. ]

Quast and Willer do not agree with Schernikow over the identification of the missing plates. In their article, they stated:

Plates of the Nicaragua and Honduras issues of 1890-91-92 were not found. The commission, therefore, concluded that the plates of the three Nicaragua issues had already been destroyed at the time of demonetization. They did not, however, rule out the possibility that the plates of the three missing Honduras issues were delivered with the remaining Honduras postal supplies to the buyer, Bogert & Company, a stamp dealer in New York.

In these two accounts, while Schernikow wrote of plates for Nicaragua and El Salvador, Quast and Willer wrote of plates for Nicaragua and Honduras. The two accounts also differed in the years mentioned.

It is possible, however, that plates, whether they be of Nicaragua and Honduras or of Nicaragua and El Salvador, might have been stolen. In *Stamps* magazine of March 13, 1938, George van den Berg (pen name of dealer Lowell Ragatz) wrote that, when he was in Paris in recent years, a person approached him and offered to sell him printing plates for Seebeck stamps. This person indicated that he had two plates of Nicaragua, Ecuador, and El Salvador. The

seller finished by stating, “ . . . this in spite of the fact that these plates were destroyed some 25 years ago in the presence of the principal dealers of New York.” Van den Berg wrote that the plates were so corroded as to be almost unrecognizable. Whether this story is true or not likely will never be known.

**Dies, transfer rolls destroyed: 1949**

The Hamilton Bank Note Engraving and Printing Co. continued to hold master dies, working dies, and the hardened transfer rolls used to pressure-roll a design into a soft plate.

An article by journalist Ernest A. Kehr published in various periodicals, including the *London Philatelist*, February 1952, explained that in November and December 1928, Kehr and George Field, who had been Hamilton president since 1918, inspected such dies and transfer rolls at 149 Adams Street in Brooklyn, N.Y., where the Hamilton firm had moved.<sup>7</sup> Kehr then was working at the firm temporarily to learn about the security printing business.

In 1951, the Hamilton Bank Note Engraving and Printing Co. was acquired by the Security Bank Note Co., a Philadelphia firm. Agustín Vanegas P., director of the philatelic agency of the Nicaragua post office, had been working for three years to have the Nicaragua dies and rolls destroyed.

Working with Vanegas, Security Bank Note Co. eventually ordered the destruction of the Nicaragua dies and transfer rolls used by Hamilton and Seebeck. This occurred December 11, 1951, at the Security Bank Note Co. plant in Philadelphia in the presence of various witnesses, including Vanegas and other functionaries from Nicaragua. The witnesses signed certificates attesting to the destruction and to a list the items destroyed.

Kehr’s article lists as destroyed 156 dies and rolls: 36 dies (most with multiple stamp designs of different denominations), 88 type cuts used for postal stationery, 10 designs of only numerals, and 22 transfer rolls (all with multiple stamp designs).<sup>8</sup>



Chapter XII  
THE SCANDAL AND THE LETTER

In the 1870s, the philatelic activities of Nicholas F. Seebeck as a stamp dealer blended in with those of other stamp dealers in New York City. Late in the decade, he continued to dedicate his time and activity to stamps, but by late 1878 or early 1879, when he traveled to the Dominican Republic, Seebeck broadened his involvement from selling stamps to include creating them.

Seebeck’s later reprints of some stamps of the Dominican Republic and the Colombian State of Bolívar did not alarm the established philatelic circles of the time. But the contracts he signed in 1889, and the 1890 contract with Ecuador, provoked some large stamp clubs of the metropolitan New York City area formally to condemn Seebeck.

From 1889 on, the stamp dealing establishment had Seebeck under observation. Some of his antagonists were more than observers. They attacked. It was a scandal, a calumny, a personal defamation.

When it became known that Seebeck had signed a stamp contract with El Salvador, the *Philatelic Journal of America* wrote with obvious sarcasm:

N.F. Seebeck, a dealer in stamps of olden times, is a secretary of the Hamilton Bank Note [ Engraving and Printing ] Co., and he should know his business in that he printed the stamps for the republics of Dominica [ sic ] and Bolivar. He is an expert in the cancellation of stamps, as he has proved on several occasions with the cancellations, fraudulently, of stamps which today appear on the market and in the albums of less cautious collectors.

History repeats itself and so collectors will be awaiting the beautiful and grand series of stamps of El Salvador, in colors, with and without watermark, without perforations, perforated and rouletted, and even a good number of surcharges of the latest types . . . It is also possible that there are one or various ‘errors.’

The *American Philatelist* of July 1889 stated:

Mr. Seebeck should be recorded as being the gentleman who printed the dated series for Bolivar and the Dominican Republic both with and without the network or the surcharges, and their corresponding ‘errors.’ The printing company expected evidently to dispose of large quantities to dealers and collectors seeing that now the cost of the printing was not to be charged to the government. Our advice to collectors is to leave these matters alone, in other words boycott them and do not mention them at all either in catalogs or reviews. These [ stamps ] will not be reported in these columns.

After various other similar published remarks and some formal condemnations initially, the Seebeck stamps and Seebeck himself were criticized somewhat during the years 1890 to 1894, but it was a cold war. Philatelic journalists stated that the Seebeck stamps and postal stationery were speculative, but any orchestrated activity then against Seebeck unfolded at a slower tempo and a lower pitch. Then came 1895.

What did Seebeck do in 1895 that unleashed a torrent on both sides of the Atlantic and that resulted in all the world saying horrible things about him and everything connected with him?

He wrote a long letter, but first I must set the stage before taking up the letter.

In several prominent publications of the period 1890-1894, there is barely a mention of Seebeck. The *Stamp Collectors’ Fortnightly*, for example, one of the publications that eventually attacked Seebeck most fiercely, commenced publication with its October 6, 1894, issue, but it mentioned Seebeck for the first time not until the issue of June 29, 1895. This was nine months after the periodical began publishing in London, England. During the following year, I found in it 14

reports on Seebeck, all attacking him. Seebeck had been manufacturing stamps for six consecutive years. At the same time during the early 1890s, some of the more popularly collected countries had embarked on the issuing of large and expensive stamp sets. Other entities were issuing many over-printed or surcharged stamps.

Such was the case of the United States, which issued in 1893 the Columbian series with a face value of \$16.34. In 1894, the next year, the United States issued the new ordinary or regular issue, including dollar denominations, printed by the U.S. Bureau of Engraving and Printing. This was at a time when a middle-class family purchased a week’s food supply for about \$5.

Other stamp issuers, including Liberia, some French colonies, and others, were adopting a similar policy of issuing lengthy series, some with high denominations, or of issuing overprinted stamps.

It is possible therefore that the reaction against Seebeck was no more than a consequence of the saying “The strap always breaks at the thinnest part.” I am speculating somewhat here, but Seebeck was a convenient and handy target.

Society for the Suppression of Speculative Stamps

The facts reduced to their simplest terms are that at the beginning of the 1890s there was, at world level, a wave of commemorative stamp issues. Those years began the deluge. Many other stamps being issued clearly were speculative.

It bears emphasizing that the world then was living during the latter years of Queen Victoria’s reign, and all that that era signified with its influence on the customs of the time: thrift, steadfastness, family, conservatism, tradition.

It was within this influence that the Society for the Suppression of Speculative Stamps was founded, better known by the initials “SSSS.”

The society began informally as the Anti-

Gumpap League, “gumpap” being an abbreviation of “gummed papers,” the derogatory name by which the stamp speculators would become known. At the meeting of the London Philatelic Society on May 6, 1895, the Society for the Suppression of Speculative Stamps was founded.

Its statutes of are long and are not transcribed here in full. What follows is an outline of some of the salient points.

Society for the Suppression of Speculative Stamps  
STATUTES

- Law No. 1 – The Society has been formed to:
- a ) Discount and forewarn the dealers and collectors of postage stamps and other postal items, created for either total or partially speculative reasons, of unnecessary legitimate postal issues.
  - b ) Decide and declare that stamps or other postal materials should be classified as speculative or unnecessary as has already been indicated.
  - c ) Ensure the exclusion from all catalogs, albums, periodicals, price lists or other philatelic publications of all these stamps or postal items such as have been mentioned before.
  - d ) Take the necessary measures to prevent the issue of stamps and other postal items as have already been mentioned.
  - e ) Publish and cause to be published every so often, all the decisions, acts and other information, in such form that assures the maximum publicity among the people and societies in the collection of stamps in all the world.
  - f ) Take whatever measures considered necessary, desirable and opportune for the realization of the objectives previously mentioned, or for whatever purpose in the interests of members of this society.

MEMBERS

Law No. 2 – All persons over 21 years of age are eligible for membership, if they are stamp collectors, dealers or importers, owners and editors of catalogs, albums or

publications and the journalists or philatelic writers.

Law No. 3 – The candidates for membership shall be proposed and seconded by members of the Society and balloted in Committee session, immediately following on the one when the proposal was received. A 25 percent black ball result is sufficient to exclude an applicant. If a candidate cannot find a member to propose him or a seconder, then it will be sufficient to furnish satisfactory references in lieu of same.

Law No. 4 – When an accusation against the character or conduct of a member reaches the bosom of a session, he shall be interrogated and shall be given the opportunity to explain the charge or charges being made against him. If, in the opinion of the Committee the conduct or character of the member accused is inconsistent with or injurious to the interests of the Society or its members, the Committee may, having the majority of members present, expel the member, but he shall be allowed to appeal to the General Council of the Society, in which a majority of three quarters of those present will be necessary to overturn the expulsion.

The remaining laws are better described as articles. There were 14 in total. The others deal with the formation of the directorate, attributes of each member, quorums, and frequency of meetings.

Among the directorate appeared some illustrious names of that particular period, including stamp dealers and stamp writers E. Stanley Gibbons, J.B. Moens, Charles J. Phillips, E.B. Evans, R.B. Earee, and Whitfield King, to name a few.

This was indeed a serious group with high-minded goals.

So much has been written about the SSSS and the Seebeck stamps that many wrongly believed, and I have read articles written indicating it, that the SSSS was formed to do away with the Seebeck stamps. The connection, however, was not so direct.

According to what was in the SSSS stat-

utes, never were the Seebeck stamps mentioned or alluded to. Moreover, in a series of circulars published by the *Stamp Collectors’ Fortnightly* that denounced issues of speculative stamps, no Seebeck stamps were named. One set of Ecuador was named, but ironically it was the first set issued by that country after it had canceled its Seebeck contract.

Even though the SSSS did not specifically denounce the Seebeck stamps, they were in part what determined the movement and helped give the society its origins.

With this in mind, the English publication the *Philatelic Record*, February 1896, wrote:

Although the Seebecks have not been condemned by the SSSS, everyone knows that these stamps are, among all the speculative stamps, those which hold the least value, the indirect condemnation and the satisfied outcry against the speculative issues is resulting in the gradual end to their sales, A correspondent of *Mekeel’s [ Weekly Stamp News ]* in Boston states: ‘The Seebecks are practically dead in Boston, as well they should be. I only know one dealer who is purchasing all that they will sell to him of this type of rubbish. The majority of dealers have very little stock on hand, and when they are asked, they will sell it of course, but they do not advertise nor do they endeavor to promote its sale.’

Anti-Seebeck Society

The attitude of the *Philatelic Record* formed a widely held opinion, but the strident crusaders believed that the condemnation of the Seebecks should go much further. In England, the Anti-Seebeck Society was founded [ in spring or summer 1894 ], with a Mr. E.L. Shove as president. This group did not last long, and by October 1895 it announced its termination, in that the SSSS was fulfilling the same purpose.

Although the public continued pressing for action, it is evident that the SSSS did not appear inclined to condemn Seebeck. I note the following in an article published in the



*Philatelic Record*, January 1896, titled “How to Manage the Seebecks”:

For me, one of the questions most pressing now in philatelic circles is, How to manage Seebecks? They are evidently the worst of all the speculative issues and they have not yet been vetoed by the SSSS. I am not sure that the good work done by the SSSS has not been neutralized by the specific silence of the Society with regards to the Seebecks. Before the establishment of the Society, collectors had started to separate themselves from the Seebecks, but now they are confused by the fact that a Society which was founded to indicate rubbish to collectors, maintains an absolute silence in the case of Seebeck, and in this respect the silence is equivalent to consent. Therefore, the SSSS is really reinforcing the Seebeck situation.

I do not say that the SSSS can reasonably condemn stamps which were genuinely put into circulation, but I think that a Committee of practical men should be capable of dealing with the avalanche of Seebecks. Their condemnation should be announced on these stamps in some form or another.

I admit that I am not able to suggest a way out of this difficulty; however it is certain that some solution should be found; and it is equally true that the position of the SSSS is greatly weakened by its lack of instruction to collectors against these stamps, which are the worst of the annual products. Maybe there is a degree of contradiction in the criticism of the Society in that they have not had the courage in placing Seebeck on their list, but all this criticism is indicative of the thinking of the collectors who have not got problems to consider when thinking of the difficulties of the situation.

**Attacks on Gustave B. Calman**  
In general, the reaction against Seebeck was stronger in Europe than in the United States. In the United States, the weight of the campaign was waged in the *Philatelic Journal of America* in the person of J. Walter Scott.



Gustave B. Calman 1860-1898

Scott organized in the United States a society similar in its objectives to those of the SSSS, although Scott was orientated specifically against Seebeck and Gustave Calman. The *Philatelic Journal of America* was the publication of Charles H. Mekeel of St. Louis.

During the early 1890s, as previously noted, the matter of what were called speculative stamps was dealt with moderately. Most dealers offered for sale the new Seebeck stamps on a regular basis.

When the furious storm erupted in 1895, the floods of insults and indignities overflowed, and after dragging down Seebeck, the attackers turned on Gustave Calman and against anyone who was suspected of deriving any benefit from the Seebeck issues.

The prestigious philatelic house of Stanley Gibbons, whose proprietor, Charles J. Phillips, was the president of the SSSS, was strongly criticized for adopting an ambivalent attitude and hypocritical posture. On the one hand, Phillips through his position in the SSSS attacked Seebeck, and yet at the same time he offered to sell the stamps of El

Salvador of 1894 at £6 per 100 sets.

The major gunfire was reserved, however, for Gustave Calman. When in the middle of 1895 he arrived in London, he was immediately interviewed by the philatelic press. In his declarations, Calman indicated that among other things, contrary to what people thought, the Seebecks represented less than 10 percent of his business in stamps.

And regarding the stamps themselves, Calman said that they were legitimate issues circulated during the period of validity covered by the postal requirements with regard to the respective countries and that they were used in the hundreds of thousands, and nobody could condemn them merely because, subsequently, somebody was making undue use of them.

Calman said that Seebeck had refused more than one offer from other South American countries, in view of their postal requirements that were too stringent and too costly. Printing costs would have swallowed up any benefits that stamp sales to collectors would have produced.

Calman said, however, that if Seebeckism was bad, it would not be prolonged, and he promised that when the contracts expired in 1899, they would not be renewed.

He indicated that the alarm raised had been unjustified. When the Seebeck stamps were being issued, all the Seebecks issued during one year would have cost a collector only 10 shillings. What would be the cost of stamps issued by other countries, countries that did not have contracts to limit their issues to one per year? That would have been worse for collectors.

Calman finally said that he would be willing to pay £1,000 if the Seebeck contracts with the various South American and Central American countries could be terminated immediately.

The despicable attacks endured by Gustave Calman were almost comical. When he died on January 25, 1898, the *Stamp Collectors' Fortnightly*, one of the publications that had attacked him most fiercely, loudly

acclaimed him for his inexhaustible energy referring to him as “a good sort.” It indicated that his favorite stamps were the Cape of Good Hope triangulars, and stated that he had made a good deal with T.H. Thompson when he purchased his balances of Leeward Islands stamps. It did not mention his deals with Seebeck.

Despite the ardent defense of the Seebeck stamps by Gustave Calman, the attacks, far from relaxing, intensified.

**Criticisms**

The main criticisms of the Seebeck issues centered around the following:

a ) The issues regularly included high denominations, such as the 2-peso, 5p, and 10p stamps of Honduras, Nicaragua, and El Salvador. At that time, these denominations values were equivalent to \$1.80, \$4.50, and \$9.00, amounts said to be far above the postal needs of the countries. Quast and Willer in an article in the *Collectors Club Philatelist* indicated that these high denominations might have been used to balance interdepartmental accounts and were subsequently destroyed, but this has not been confirmed.

It was also suggested as a possibility that most of the high-denomination stamps were used for postage on parcels. What is obvious is that the necessity for these stamps in most of countries was low. When the Seebeck contract with Nicaragua ended with the 1899 issue, the country signed a similar one with Maximo Asenjo. In this contract, the high denominations were limited to the following denominations and quantities:

20c: 25,000	1 peso 5,000
50c: 15,000	5 peso 2,000

These numbers indicate that the major demand was for the lower denominations of an issue. The so-called problem of the high denominations, however, is not valid. From a collector's point of view, according to my observations of the advertisements, the stamps sold at 50 cents or perhaps \$1 per set (and even cheaper later). Retail prices did

not bear any relation to the equivalent face values. The countries did not benefit from the high denominations because they were returned to Seebeck at no cost. It took only the time to collect them and send them to postal headquarters.

b ) Seebeck sold the stamps at prices below the equivalent face values.

c ) The countries granted to Seebeck the right to reprint stamps and to produce canceled stamps with the cancels applied in New York City. This was the most serious criticism against the stamps.

It was suggested by some observers that the contracts might have been granted to Seebeck because of supposed bribes paid to government representatives. There is no evidence this happened.

The majority of stamp societies at the time discussed the matter. Some arrived at the extreme conclusion of excluding Seebeck stamps from their exchange packet circuits. Some dealers declared that they would not handle stamps of the Seebeck type. The majority of collectors bought the stamps or were silent about them, but almost no one bothered to defend them.

One of the few articles published in defense of the Seebecks appeared in the *American Journal of Philately* [ issue not stated ]. The writer indicated that if the criticisms were of the annual series, then they should also include the annual series of Cuba, Puerto Rico, Spain, and Colombia. It was argued, however, that the remainders would be cheaper than the value of the stamps while they were valid for postage. Collectors could obtain them more cheaply and easily than if they had to buy them at face-value equivalents.

Another of those in favor of the Seebeck issues wrote that if all stamps with tainted production and suspect usage (those that were the subject of objections) were excluded from collections, collectors would have little left on their album pages. Furthermore it was coming to light at that time that many reprints of stamps of several other countries

were being made, and nobody was recommending that they be excluded from collections.

Regarding long stamp series that included high denominations, defenders in later years pointed out that other countries were doing the same, namely Spanish Guinea, Liberia, various Portuguese colonies, and even the United States.

Enthusiasm against the Seebecks and similar stamps remained so high that the campaign continued. Even at official levels, reactions were so strident that during the convening of the Universal Postal Union Congress in Washington, D.C., in 1897, Heinrich von Stephan, at that time director general of postal affairs of imperial Germany, pressed by the SSSS, proposed that a resolution be approved whereby “postal items emitted with the special and specific objectives by the issuing country, as are postage stamps, postcards, and the so-called commemoratives of a limited issue, should not be admitted for the International service.”

Seebeck’s public letter: 1895

In the middle of all the shaming, Seebeck had maintained an absolute silence. In late summer 1895, however, as a result of the pressures to which he had been subjected, he sent a circular letter dated August 29 to the principal philatelic publications in the United States and Europe.

In the letter, Seebeck did not say much in defense of his stamps, but he rather vigorously defended his personal character from the attacks some philatelic writers had made. He finished by offering an olive branch.

The letter, one of the major documents in the whole of the Seebeck affair, stated:

New York, August 29, 1895

Dear Sir

I am not callous to the attacks made upon me as a manufacturer of what my over-zealous critics have chosen to call ‘Seebeckized’ stamp issues. As a mere manufacturer, I could afford to disregard these attacks; I would simply adapt

my methods in the future as I have adapted them in the past, to the needs and demands of my market. But I am not merely a manufacturer; I am, and for years have been, a loyal and ardent philatelist. Long before the grey hairs began to crop out on the top of my devoted cranium I became, and have ever since remained, an enthusiastic devotee of the science of philately, and it is as one of your fraternity, and because I want to retain the respect of my fellow philatelists, that I feel most keenly the injustice which has been done to me.

I do not think that the false imputations are inspired by malice. They are rather the result of misdirected and exaggerated zeal in a crusade, the main end and purpose of which is laudable – a crusade against official abuse of postal administrative powers. With this crusade, as far as it attacks vicious administrative systems, I heartily sympathize, but I protest against the personal animus injected into it, and which singles out a mere individual engraver<sup>1</sup> as its victim and scapegoat. I protest especially against the unfair, not to say libelous, abuse of my name as a trademark of everything that is unholy, and as if I were personally responsible for the acts of every government that chooses to employ me. Is it not plain that such a rule of responsibility is false, unfair and overstrained?

For years I have dealt with these various governments whose conduct seems recently to have aroused hostile criticism. During all these years my dealings have been known and sustained by the philatelic world; no one seems to have thought that my acceptance of payment in kind for my services as an engraver was anything but prudent and fair. Suddenly the current of opinion seems to have changed. Well and good. No one disputes that a man, or even a whole set of men, can honestly undergo a change of opinion. Gladstone in England, Bismarck in Germany, Gambetta in France, and our Webster and Clay and ‘honest old Abe Lincoln’ are brilliant examples of courage and honesty in confessing that wider experience had convinced them of former

error and induced them to modify their previous opinions. And as I honor them, so I respect those members of our fraternity who now claim that their previous sanction of my business methods was a mistake. But why am I not entitled to the same consideration which I am willing to extend to them?

Why should they not recognize that, if I was or am mistaken, in believing my methods to be right, I am not at least honestly mistaken?

I have said that, as a business man, I necessarily adapt my methods to the changing demands of a market. In this case, as a philatelist, [ I ] do so most cheerfully. I shall bow to the consensus of opinion in my fraternity. Not that I am convinced that, as a manufacturer, I am responsible for governmental abuses, nor because any combination of dealers will, in my opinion, ever be strong enough to force the hands of administrative officers. Indeed, I may go further and say that, personally, I believe the charges of maladministration to be grossly exaggerated. But in principle I agree with the spirit of the crusade against the indiscriminate issue of speculative stamps, and wholly irrespective of the merits involved. I rejoice in the manly stand our fraternity is taking for what it honestly deems to be fair and square. I trust that the time will come when governments will realize that they owe something to the philatelic world. I believe the present crusade will help bring nearer that philatelic millennium, although, as a practical man, I feel that the millennium is still a good way off. But each of us can help, and I, among others, am willing to become an ally in the movement by discontinuing the contracts which my fellow philatelists find so obnoxious, provided that I can do so with honor and without prejudice to vested rights.

It must, however, be evident to every reasonable person that my withdrawal from or attempt to cancel my present contracts with the various South and Central American republics would, for the purpose of our crusade, be futile, unless some adequate protection is guaranteed



against the making of similar contracts with my competitors. But if my fellow philatelists, in furtherance of their high ends, can secure from each one of the countries concerned a guarantee that no contract similar in spirit to those found objectionable will hereafter be made with any other bank note company, or other person, I am prepared to cancel every objectionable contract which I now hold, provided of course that the respective governments will join in such cancellation, and release me from obligations assumed. I do not know how I can more effectively evidence my sympathy with the demand for fair play.

And in the meantime I wish Godspeed to the crusade of honesty and integrity in philatelic affairs. Only let the crusade be one of principle and not one of personal animosity.

Yours respectfully

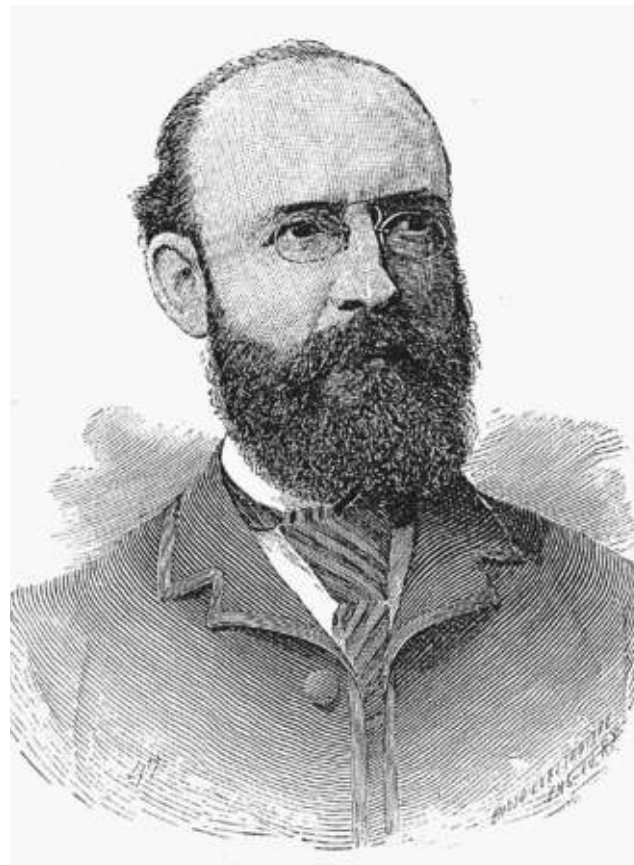
N.F. Seebeck

The letter was received in Europe with certain reservations, and several publications accepted the comments made by Seebeck. For example the *Philatelic Record* commented, "What Mr. Seebeck states is probably quite true, but when collectors see series of stamps with values of 5 and 10 pesos, which values could scarcely have been issued for postal purposes, and which, at the end of the year they could secure them at a lower price, it is not strange that they should stand aside and shout against the system and blame Mr. Seebeck, who is the only body involved whom they can kick, seeing that the other bodies are parts of collective corporations whom they cannot reach."

### J. Walter Scott's letter: 1895

In the United States, the reaction to the letter was cold. J. Walter Scott, then 49, maintained the campaign against Seebeck in all its virulence and continued to agitate.

In September 1895, the North American branch of the SSSS sent a circular letter to the governments of Ecuador, Honduras,



J. Walter Scott 1845-1919

Nicaragua, and El Salvador requesting them to cancel their contracts with Seebeck and the Hamilton Bank Note Engraving and Printing Co. Here is a transcript of this interesting document:

In the name of a group of Stamp Dealers and Collectors, the undersigned, representatives of philatelists of all nationalities, respectfully present the following request for the discontinuance of the prevalent practice of frequent and unnecessary changes in the issue of postage stamps.

We have been informed that the governments who have adopted this practice have been under the belief that it was justified because it saved them money, resulting from their being able to make arrangements with the engravers or printers of the series whereby they would receive all the balances or surpluses as payment for their services as printers. We respectfully suggest that this conviction

is in error. On the contrary, the governments would most certainly lose by this practice, and for two reasons:

(1) because, if the governments retained in their hands the total control of their postal issues and kept the sale of them, the collectors would purchase large quantities directly from them at face value instead of going to the printers, and the profits gained on the government sales to the dealers in stamps would greatly exceed any compensation which the printers could charge.

(2) because the proliferation of this practice, which has converted the producer of the stamps into a speculator in them and has placed the governments in a false position as confederates and accomplices in the speculation, has provoked worldwide discontent and indignation among philatelists; so much so that hundreds of philatelic societies have decided to reject the speculative market in these stamps and have given these stamps a bad name as philatelic bastards. The results are, or soon will be, that the practice will defeat its own objects in wishing to make the postage stamp into a saleable commodity. But purely from the commercial point or side of the matter, we appeal to the governments that they discontinue the practice for the most elevated motives; for moral political reasons, or, in what we would for practical purposes call political convenience. There can be no doubt that the continuance of this practice can only lower the credit of the governments who uphold it.

The common conclusion derived from it is that the governments continue this practice solely because they are too poor to make payment in cash for the services of the producers.

If, in reply to this statement, it is stated that those who deal with and purchase stamps are of an insignificant group too small to affect public opinion, we would respectfully indicate that this is not so, relating to the estimate of the number, character and influence of the philatelic fraternity. The dealers in stamps and the collectors are counted not in hundreds or thousands but in millions.

The devotees of philately are not confined to any one particular country but can be found in every civilized part of the globe. They are not insignificant in respect to character or influence; they are found naturally among the area of society which represent the educated and intelligent, because those who do not have education cannot be intelligent collectors.

Not only the crowned heads, members of royalty and princes are numbered among the enthusiasts, but also the financial princes notably among whom are the Rothschilds.

Is it therefore a matter of indifference for the government what this class of philatelists, grand and influential, think of their financial situation? Can a nation be indifferent as to be considered so poor that they cannot pay the ordinary costs of their postal services?

The philatelic societies have declared war on what are known as Speculative Issues. They have declared these issues as being unworthy of a place in a stamp collection. They are inclined to refuse to allow a market for these issues and they have considered them as practically unsalable except by direct sales by the governments. They have declared the practice of issuing them as irregular, illegitimate and immoral.

In view of this frank charge and this open declaration of war, what is the policy of the governments? Is it not a discontinuation once and for all of this objectionable practice?

One of the most prominent producers – we refer to Sr. N.F. Seebeck, of the Hamilton Bank Note [ Engraving and Printing ] Co. – has already publicly proclaimed himself to be averse to the speculative issues, although he is probably the principal victim of their discontinuance. The tide of public opinion has been flowing too strongly against the practice for its resistance to continue. The philatelists have persuaded him to declare publicly, that if he could, with honor, cancel his obligations with the several governments, and receive assurances that they would not sign other contracts with other producers, he would willingly cancel any

valid contracts which are objectionable in line with the above details. Naturally however, such cancellation on his part should be preceded by an application by the governments who form the other party to such contracts.

We therefore respectfully and sincerely request your honorable government to give this matter serious and immediate attention, and not only take the necessary steps to cancel the existing contracts for the issue of speculative stamps, that is to say, stamps for which payment is made by means of the handing over of balances to the printer, as compensation for the printing of the issue, and also to establish laws and regulations (postal) such as will render it impossible for a repetition of the practice to print stamps for the express purposes other than legitimate postal usages.

In any case, we assure you, in the name of the philatelic societies and the great philatelic world that they represent, of our most respectful and sincere respects, and we are confident that you will appreciate our friendly and cordial wishes which have engendered this request.

The circular letter had almost immediate effect, and at least the government of Ecuador, as related in Chapter IX, on November 8, 1895, rescinded the contract with Seebeck. Honduras had terminated its contract on November 26, 1893 (although for different reasons), leaving the Seebeck contracts reduced to those with Nicaragua and El Salvador.

Another letter from Seebeck

Interested parties continued to be anxious, and the campaign continued. In December 1895, Seebeck addressed a letter to the *London Philatelist*. Among other topics, it addressed his honor:

I have discovered that my circular letter which I sent out and in which I expressed my willingness to cancel certain contracts which I had with various governments, if I could do so honorably, instead of being appreciated by collectors

as a sample of my goodwill and desire to help in the campaign against Speculative Issues, has not been accepted in the spirit in which it was made, and I feel therefore, more or less dispirited after trying to do the best I could to further a good cause.

You undoubtedly understand very well the nature of my contracts and know that the stamps which I supply to the various governments are not really speculative issues, but that they are genuinely used to cover the needs of the respective governments, and that I never, in the six years that I have had these contracts with the different governments, permitted an error or surcharge or in fact anything but stamps, etc. which have been genuinely required for the needs of the governments, to be shipped to these countries. In a few cases, employees of the governments in some countries to which I have supplied stamps have surcharged the issues with various values, creating rarities etc. None of these have been created with my cognizance or consent.

In relation to this letter from Seebeck, the *Philatelic Record* commented in the January 1896 issue as follows:

Mr. Seebeck feels very aggrieved by the criticisms of the last letter which he wrote. He is hurt that the olive branch which he extended has not been accepted as the genuine article. Whatever the case may be, we think that we can say herewith that with Mr. Seebeck personally we have no dispute, on the contrary, we are happy to know that he is a collector and therefore one of us. As an engraver he has fallen on a path which has led him to bad results for philately and the consensus or opinion is undoubtedly against his system of help to the countries plagued by poverty, supplying them gratuitously with the means to obtain money in payment for their permission to traffic in their balances. If Mr. Seebeck could free himself from these remainders, part of his contract, his exquisite designs could raise him to a pinnacle of popularity for his engravings. But we cannot separate his beautiful stamps from the pernicious system which has enveloped him, as a dry root, into philately. Only time can achieve this.

The above statement, as I see it, smacks of the impossible, for in Seebeck’s plan the engraver, or manufacturer, was inseparable from that of seller of the remainders. The countries of Central America and the one of South America had given him their contracts only because he would supply them with stamps, gratis, otherwise they would have continued dealings with the American Bank Note Co., a firm capable of producing designs of an equal or perhaps better quality and that had been supplying stamps for years to all of the Americas.

The 1896 agreement with Seebeck

Even though by the middle of 1896 Seebeck held contracts only with Nicaragua and El Salvador, the North American branch of the SSSS continued to pressure Seebeck. After long negotiations, in June the group arrived at an agreement with him, whereby, although not terminating the contracts, the parties compromised over regulating the issues for the remaining three years of the contract, 1897-1899. This agreement essentially ended matters with Seebeck.

The agreement stated:

In consideration that Mr. Seebeck agrees to use his influence with certain Central and South American governments (with which he has contracts for the furnishing of postage stamps for the years 1897, 1898 and 1899), to induce them to accept, in lieu of a special issue for each year, a three years’ supply of the stamps for 1897, also to place this issue in circulation on 1 January 1897, and use it exclusively for the prepayment of postal matter for the term of at least three years.

We the undersigned, dealers in foreign postage stamps, hereby agree that, in any of the governments above referred to should enter into any contract similar to those entered into with Mr. Seebeck, we will not purchase or sell the stamps issued under such contracts, either directly or indirectly, after they have become obsolete and are rendered useless for the prepayment of postage in the countries in which they have been issued.

The agreement was signed by the principal dealers in North America, including G.B. Calman, J.W. Scott Co. Ltd., the Scott Stamp & Coin Co. Ltd., W.F. Gregory, Geo. R. Tuttle, Bogart & Durbin Co., the Walter S. Scott Co. Ltd., Perrin & Co., Mr. Mead, J.B. Brevoort, L.M. Homburger, C.H. Mekeel Stamp & Publishing Co., Nassau Stamp Co., Geo. F. Crane, Henry Gremmel, Burger & Co., A. Krassa, E.T. Parker, and N. Dieschbourg.

In the eyes of some observers, the agreement was a great success, but for others it was an empty victory in that it did not say anything about the sale of remainders. For many, the sale of remainders was the most objectionable part of the Seebeck contracts. The critics also stated that the agreement did nothing more than ensure that in the future there would be no new contracts that would compete with Seebeck and that there was no way to protect collectors.

Others indicated that the agreement ensured for Seebeck a certain monopoly in his trafficking in remainders, in that the dealers compromised themselves not to buy remainders that might be offered in the marketplace in competition with those Seebeck might have. They asked, “What are collectors going to gain from this agreement?” They even stated that it was a single-sided agreement to whitewash the Seebeckized countries and to make them collectible.

These reactions, however, came belatedly. Neither El Salvador nor Nicaragua nor Seebeck respected the provision of only a single issue for the three years.

By 1897, the SSSS had lost interest, and little by little the vexing Seebeck problem was fading away.

In 1898, it seemed that few appeared to remember Seebeck or the SSSS, or if they remembered, it was of no importance. When Seebeck died June 23, 1899, the announcement of his death passed almost unnoticed by the world’s philatelic press.<sup>2</sup>



Chapter XIII  
HERO OR VILLAIN?

Great Spirit, help me never to judge another  
until I have walked in his moccasins.  
– prayer attributed to the Sioux and to others  
– used in the 1895 poem “Judge Softly”  
by Mary Torrens Lathrap

To be able to judge Nicholas F. Seebeck and his postage stamps and postal stationery dispassionately, we have to transport ourselves to the era when the stamps and stationery were issued.

Collector demand for stamps

By the 1870s, stamp collecting or philately was established as a pastime with many thousands of followers throughout the world. To give service to these legions of collectors was a system of dealers who sold stamps, stamp albums, and all kinds of philatelic accessories. There were competing dealer stamp catalogs and hundreds of small stamp magazines or hobby magazines. Stamp clubs and stamp societies flourished, and there was an active exchange of stamps. Stamps were in demand.

Specialist collectors were few. Nearly all were embarked on the impossible task of forming a complete collection of all the countries of the world. There were not as now so-called popular countries and non-popular countries. The demand for stamps of Africa or Asia was almost as great as demand for stamps of the United States and the nations of Europe.

Stamp dealers then found themselves in many cases with the problem of satisfying an ever-increasing demand for stamps. For many countries or colonies, especially the smallest and underdeveloped, the need for stamps to cover the demands of collectors was much greater than the demand for stamps to cover postal requirements. In some countries, the need for stamps for mail was

almost non-existent. Some traditions and cultures were oral and not literate, and their people did not use post offices to send mail. W.F. Moore, in an 1889 article in the *New York Philatelist*, wrote of the first stamps of the Dominican Republic:

These stamps, although it may seem strange to say it, were always easier to obtain abroad than in the country, a fact easily explained when we consider that the majority of the population only used the postal system when sending letters to foreign countries, without ever considering sending letters by post within the country, instead simply handing them over to any passerby who might undertake to take them.

The situation in the so-called Seebeck republics, as they sometimes were called, was no different. Irving I. Green described the situation in Honduras, pointing out that, for the second issue prepared by Seebeck for Honduras, of two million stamps delivered to the country, 1,771,943 were returned to Seebeck. In other words, total consumption of stamps in the whole year was hardly 228,000 stamps. The quantity of those used stamps that could have reached stamp dealers and from them to stamp collectors would have been negligible.

It was a certainty then that for each legitimately used stamp that reached the hands of a stamp dealer having completed its postal function, thousands of stamps of the same stamp were needed to fill the albums of the stamp collectors throughout the world.

The idea of the postage stamp, wrote Elias Silverstein, had reached the point where, in the small countries at least, the philatelic end-products were much more important financially than the legitimate postal reasons for the stamps.

It must be remembered that the coun-

tries that accepted Seebeck’s contracts were mostly impoverished. Even small sums payable for the printing of stamps were important to them. The damage that might be caused to philately did not matter a great deal to them, if at all. Thus, when the Seebeck contract with Nicaragua lapsed in 1899, even though that contract brought criticism, Nicaragua embarked upon a similar contract with Maximo Asenjo.

None of the Seebeck countries acted to defraud collectors, because no collector in the United States or elsewhere, knowing that after year’s end the stamps could be bought at a fraction of their face value, was going to buy them at a post office counter in country.

Collecting norms

As for the contracts themselves, it must be remembered that Seebeck signed them in a world ruled by rigid Victorian moral values and norms. Those norms established that a postage stamp served to frank correspondence. If having fulfilled its postal function and anyone wanted to collect it, that was allowed, but anything apart from this was heresy.

And the British, the inventors of the adhesive postage stamp, elected themselves as guardians of the good customs and practices. Anyone who might dare to stray at all from that narrow line that the British had traced risked thunder and lightning raining down. It also must be remembered that the British philatelic press at the time was implacable and even merciless.

Seebeck’s greatest crime was that he signed his contracts with small countries. In the midst of the storm unleashed by his stamps, other large countries such as the United States, Canada, and Spain were issuing long and expensive series of a speculative nature without causing the avalanche of criticism that fell upon Seebeck’s issues. Even the idea of manufacturing reprints to satisfy the demands of collectors was not Seebeck’s idea, and in those years other countries, including Austria, were reprinting to meet the

growing demand from the collector market and from dealers.

In the Seebeck years and in the following decades, his stamps were subject to wide debate. It was argued whether they should be reported in magazines, be cataloged, be commercialized, or be collected.

H.A. Slade in a commentary in the *Stamp Collectors’ Fortnightly* wrote that Seebeck’s stamps were collectable but only on a cover. He maintained that only in that form were they still a good investment.

V. Suppantshitsch wrote [ source not stated ] :

If philately is not to be reduced to a child’s game, it is necessary that the collection of stamps be placed chronologically and that it contain all postage stamps without excluding any. As the majority of Seebeck stamps have been issued legally in fact, and have served postal needs, they cannot be excluded from the collections without destroying integrity, even though they may have served incidentally to exploit collectors.

Seebeck’s practices

The negative character of some of Seebeck’s practices is undeniable. Along these lines, I cite his manufacturing of stamps on paper with watermark and on paper without watermark. Two types of paper could not be justified from any standpoint. The same can be said of Official stamps, postage dues stamps and other stamps that were not authorized by contract and never were issued postally and put into circulation in country.

One of the strongest objections made against the Seebeck contracts was using the original plates to make as many reprints as might be required to meet the demands of collectors [ or using new plates ]. The matter of the reprints, which notably was hardly raised in Seebeck’s lifetime, has been the subject most debated, principally in the first quarter of the 20th century.

It is undeniable that the existence of reprints, by definition stamps made from the original plates, introduced for many nonspecialist collectors an element of confusion in the sense that unlike the majority of forgeries, the reprints affected common stamps and generally could not easily be recognized for the most part.

Writers Joseph B. Leavy, Richard and Louis Senf, Joseph Kroeger, and others have studied the reprints deeply. Ultimately Seebeck has been absolved, with their reaching conclusions that, although Seebeck had the right to make reprints, he made very limited use of that right and that the majority of stamps identified undoubtedly as reprints were printed after his death. But Hahn and Sousa, who also studied the reprints carefully, believe that they were printed before Seebeck’s death, whenever Gustave Calman requested more stamps.

It also has been pointed out that it is very probable that stamps of the Seebeck issues reached the market equally from the printing house or from Seebeck as from the very countries that were contractually obliged to return the remainders to Seebeck. Schernikow noted that when he was in El Salvador in 1896 he investigated the remnants of the previous issue that had not been returned to Seebeck. After various investigations, he was allowed to begin a search in the post office. He found such a quantity of stamps that he required about 30 boxes to send the stamps to Seebeck.

Seebeck the businessman

Seebeck must be recognized as an intelligent businessman, extremely able, whose ideas were brilliant. He showed himself to be an honorable man who always fulfilled scrupulously the conditions of his stamp contracts, even when the Hamilton Bank Note Engraving and Printing Co. and nearly all companies experienced financial problems in the recession of 1894-1898, following the financial Panic of 1893.

It was reported that one day Seebeck

saw in the window of a shop a series of his stamps that had not yet been issued. Realizing that one of his employees had dealt in the stamps, he went into the shop, asked how many sets were available and bought them in order to maintain inviolate the terms of his contract.

It can be said that as a stamp collector himself Seebeck was respectful of the philatelic family, and his letter of 1895 to the various organs of the press shined with sincerity. When he was called to order, Seebeck recognized that his stamps could cause real harm to philately, and he seems to have submitted to the wishes of the philatelic community.

Seebeck felt proud of his work and the quality of his stamps. Regarding their design, engraving and printing, they can be compared with the best made before or after.

The campaign against Seebeck

As for the campaign launched against Seebeck and his stamps, although it sometimes had a character of collective hysteria, it is evident that its efforts were beneficial. In the 1890s, new issues were moving at such a fast pace that a brake was needed. The scandal and the boycott unleashed against Seebeck stamps and against other stamps caused other stamp projects of a speculative nature for other countries, either begun or in preparation, to be suspended.

Had the scandal not broken, no one knows how far the promoters would have gone, for the Seebeck issues showed that stamp collecting was an economic factor capable of generating a flow of money and that collectors were beginning to spend significant money on stamps.

Amid the bitter, interminable arguments unleashed in 1895-1896 in the campaign against Seebeck, J. Walter Scott was the standard bearer, as has been noted. Among the arguments of Scott was that the practice of issuing large annual series was a deathblow for philately.

Was it really harmful?  
The reply, which Harlow quotes from



Gustave Calman, seems to summarize the whole flow of opinion: “You are the ones who really kill philately. If you flee from the young collectors, what will become of the hobby?”

An assessment

Today there rises a more humane Seebeck. Was he a hero or a villain? Perhaps neither one nor the other.

My opinion is that, in general terms, everyone came out a winner in Seebeck’s business. The impoverished nations that signed his contracts received free stamps. The engraving and manufacturing company made a profit. Seebeck gained the remainders and the right to reprint stamps. Collectors were able to fill the spaces in their albums at an insignificant cost. It can be said that if certain abuses had not occurred everything would have been perfect.

There remains finally the matter of whether the effect of Seebeck stamps was beneficial or not. It is not easy to evaluate the effect that an act might have had, had it not happened. In general terms, time has acted like a cloak of oil on the waves of a wild sea, lessening its fury.

In recent decades, there has been renewed interest in collecting and studying the Seebeck issues. There are observers who defend Seebeck, affirming that with his delightful stamps, carefully manufactured with excellent colors, that could be acquired for a few cents, he attracted millions of new collectors to philately.

Perhaps, as Chauncey Hackett wrote, Seebeck will share the destiny of the pioneers in other fields who at first were violently attacked only to be recognized later as benefactors of mankind.

Undoubtedly he was a man who added a new dimension to philately. Although his methods were not always orthodox, by making his beautiful stamps accessible to young people not only of his era but also of several generations to come, he more than any other person took stamp collecting to the masses.

It is impossible to deny, however, that the countries involved in one way or another with Seebeck are among the least collected in the world. After nearly 120 years since the Seebeck era ended, they still have not been able to rid themselves totally of the stigma that the Seebeck association created.

NOTES TO CHAPTERS

Chapter II  
NICHOLAS F. SEEBECK: THE MAN, THE LEGEND

<sup>1</sup> Page 3. The 1870 United States Census places the Seebeck family at Crown Point, Centre Township, Lake County, Indiana, on the date of enumeration, June 2, 1870. The census lists Seebeck’s father, Frederick Seebeck, as a “Book Binder.” Young Seebeck would have moved to New York City sometime between the census date and early 1872, and at least his father also could have been living in New York City by February 1879 at the latest, based on a surviving postal card sent by the father.

<sup>2</sup> Page 3. This address was located in the Astor House. It was a basement-level storefront below the hotel’s elevated first floor. The Vesey location faced St. Paul’s Chapel, near the corner of Vesey and Broadway.

<sup>3</sup> Page 3. Bill Welch found notice of the move to 97 Wall Street in the *Stamp Collector’s Review*, Davenport, Iowa, June 1880. Seebeck’s advertisement announcing the move was in the same issue. *The Seebecker*, June 1992, page 10, reproduced the advertisement and the notice in a column of the magazine.

<sup>4</sup> Page 4. Stanley M. Bierman wrote that New York City stamp dealer William P. Brown (1841-1929) published three editions (1868, 1871, 1872) of his *Descriptive Price Catalogue of Government Postage Stamps For Sale*, the third edition of which was generic (Stanley M. Bierman, *Collectors Club Philatelist*, July-August 1995, page 229). The generic third edition could be the catalog that other dealers bought the rights to and had their own cover pages added, including Seebeck.

John Bailey, James Brennan, William Hussey, William P. Brown (New York City), and William Cogan (Philadelphia) are considered to be the first stamp dealers in the United States.

<sup>5</sup> Page 5. Ernest Schernikow, “Salvador,” the *Philatelic Gazette*, August 1916, pages 234-239. This article is believed to be the source of the photograph of young Nicholas Seebeck that has been republished many times. Schernikow was vice counsel of El

Salvador in New York. For less than three months in 1891, Schernikow was appointed consul of El Salvador in New York. On a date unknown, Seebeck married Anna (Annie) Aline Schernikow (born 1857, same year as Seebeck). The editor can find no record of this marriage or of a divorce, dissolution, or annulment. The marriage almost certainly did end because on September 27, 1887, in New York City, Nicholas F. Seebeck married, per FamilySearch .org, Therese Rosalie Petigny-Meurisse, age 18 (born April 19, 1869). Their son August C. Seebeck was born October 26, 1888.

<sup>6</sup> Page 7. Bill Welch, “With Compliments of . . .,” *The Seebecker*, September 1990, pages 1-4, pictures two advertising cards in English bearing 1878 Morazán stamps of Honduras or 1885 stamps of the Colombian State of Bolivar and the one advertising card in Spanish bearing plate proofs of 1883, 1884, and 1885 of the Colombian State of Bolivar.

<sup>7</sup> Page 7. Seebeck was general manager of Hamilton Bank Note Engraving and Printing Co. from April 21, 1884, until April 10, 1893, and from October 16, 1893, until his death on June 23, 1899. He was treasurer from April 21, 1884, until April 10, 1893. He was secretary from April 21, 1884, until February 4, 1892. He was vice president from October 16, 1893, until probably January 10, 1899 (The pages for 1898 are missing from the company Minute Books). He was president from February 4, 1892, until August 23, 1893, and from January 10, 1899, until June 23, 1899. He held none of these offices from August 23, 1893, until October 16, 1893. All dates noted here are dates of election, as recorded in the company Minute Books.

<sup>8</sup> Page 8. Note to the editor in May 2018 from collector and author Guillermo Federico Gallegos: “The advertisements printed on the back of El Salvador stamps are known on stamps that usually have the defacing line over-printed on the face of the stamps on each row, indicating that the stamps were defaced samples. My interpretation is that the advertisements were added sometime in the 1890s, most probably by Hamilton Bank Note Engraving and Printing Co. or by someone connected to

Seebeck, hence the ads are in English. The idea never took off. Considering the scarcity of these sheets, especially compared to other Seebeck material, I do not believe they were made to find an outlet for selling stamp remainders.”

<sup>9</sup> Page 8. Note to the editor in May 2018 from collector and author Joseph D. Hahn: “When I had my major collection of El Salvador, I had 12 or more sheets of the stamps with advertising. The advertisements were mostly on the 1895 issues, both on India paper proofs and on the stamp paper types. Remember that the contract for free stamps was transferred to Seebeck as an individual – one reason for small quantities of original 1896 issues – and so I posit that these advertising backprints might have been an attempt to sell advertising to companies to reduce the expense of producing the stamps. This was the case with the advertising backprints on New Zealand stamps.”

Chapter III  
MANHATTAN BANK NOTE CO.  
HAMILTON BANK NOTE CO.  
HAMILTON BANK NOTE  
ENGRAVING AND PRINTING CO.

<sup>1</sup> Page 9. See footnote No. 7 of Chapter II for the positions Seebeck held in the Hamilton Bank Note Engraving and Printing Co. and when he held them. See also page 125.

<sup>2</sup> Page 9. Hennan, Clarence W., “Postage Stamps of the Dominican Republic, 19th Century,” *Collectors Club Philatelist*, Vol. 25, No. 4, October 1946, pages 135 / 151. The excerpt from Hennan refers to and quotes from the articles on the stamps of the Dominican Republic by Charles J. Phillips in *Stanley Gibbons Monthly Journal*, July 1906 and August 1906.

<sup>3</sup> Page 9. Mueller, Barbara, “Hamilton Bank Note Co. Memorabilia,” *The Essay-Proof Journal*, Second Quarter, 1988, Vol. 45, No. 2, Whole No. 178, reprinted in the *Souvenir Card Journal*, Fourth Quarter, 2004, Vol. 24, No. 4, pages 22-25. This important article pictures the advertising cards shown here in Figure 3-2 and Figure 3-3. In some of her discussion, Mueller wrongly treats the Hamilton Bank Note Co. (1881) and the Hamilton Bank Note Engraving and Printing Co. (1884) as the same company. They were distinct and separate incorporated businesses. The one followed the other and had many of the

same investors, but the events and locations of each need to be kept separate and not be conflated. Mueller gives incorrect possible dates of birth and death for George W. Thurber, a letter and ornamental engraver and in some years the vice president of each Hamilton company.

Michael Schreiber believes that the card Mueller pictured with address “88 and 90 Gold Street” and that the name “H.G. Thomas general manager” are from the 20th century.

<sup>4</sup> Page 9. Sometime in 1891, Hamilton Bank Note Engraving and Printing Co. moved to the building at the corner of Gold and Ferry streets in Manhattan. The lease contract was approved at the trustees meeting December 16, 1890. Ferry Street then was located where pedestrian Spruce Court is located today. The minutes of January 12, 1891, record 1 Broadway as the location for that meeting. The June 26, 1891, minutes and those of September 18, 1891, do not record their locations. Beginning with the stockholders meeting held January 12, 1892, the minutes record 88-90 Gold Street as the location, which was the office building at the southeast corner of Gold and Ferry streets.

<sup>5</sup> Page 9. Hennan, “Dominican Republic,” op. cit.

<sup>6</sup> Page 11. Conant, Charles A., *The Commercial and Financial Chronicle*, 97:2514, August 30, 1913, page 568.

<sup>7</sup> Page 11. Elizabeth Hill, a researcher at the web site FamilySearch.org of The Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter-Day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah, in April 2018 confirmed for the editor that the birth and death years of George W. Thurber are 1827-1908. She also found that the 1880 U.S. Census lists his occupation as “bank note eng.” Thurber and Seebeck could have met in the early 1870s, when Seebeck was establishing his stationery business and Thurber was an established engraver. Thurber was 30 years older than Seebeck.

<sup>8</sup> Page 12. Harris, Leo John, “The Hamilton Bank Note [ Engraving and Printing ] Company of New York: Some Collateral Collectibles,” *Collectors Club Philatelist*, September 1981, pages 289-302. For the sake of simplicity, Harris wrote, he used the 1881 company name throughout the article, but he also conflates locations and events that apply to one firm but

not to the other. This article pictures important Seebeck artifacts: the back of a block of nine El Salvador stamps with advertisements, an 1895 cover from Nicaragua franked with Official stamps addressed to Seebeck at 88 and 90 Gold Street in New York, an 1884 cover to Danzig bearing a label with Seebeck’s printed 3 Vesey St. address and the handstamped 97 Wall St. address, a salesman’s sample card bearing unadopted essays for stamps, and other items.

<sup>9</sup> Page 12. Towle, Ross A., and Glen Stafford, “Rudolph P. Laubenheimer, the Hamilton company, and Nicaragua,” *Nicarao*, April 2018, Vol. 27, No. 2, pages 2-7. This article pictures 21 die proofs sold at auction in 2014 for Nicaragua envelopes or wrappers of 1890-1893 and 1895. Laubenhiermer also worked on die proofs for the Seebeck contracts signed with El Salvador and Honduras, on the contract signed by Henry Etheridge with Ecuador, on U.S. envelope dies, and others.

<sup>10</sup> Page 13. Ibid., page 3.

Chapter V  
EL SALVADOR

<sup>1</sup> Page 18. In the Spanish-language version, Article 8 of the contract mentions specifically that the Hamilton firm could make reprints “for sale to collectors of stamps and other postal franking values.” The Spanish text reads, “para vender a los coleccionistas de estampillas y otros valores de franqueo.” Collector and author Guillermo Federico Gallegos believes that “other postal franking values” refers to postal stationery and other items that also are collected. The editor agrees.

<sup>2</sup> Page 23. Note to the editor in May 2018 from Guillermo Federico Gallegos: “There is no official record to confirm that the Coat of Arms issue was placed in circulation on 15 January 1895. If this were the case, then it would contradict the argument that there was no time to prepare new stamps when the Ezetas were overthrown. My opinion is that the designs for the Ezeta issue had already been made by June 1894, when the government was deposed. Seebeck simply convinced the new government to take the Ezeta stamps, but he prepared another issue so he could have additional different stamps to offer to collectors.”

Chapter VII  
NICARAGUA

<sup>1</sup> Page 42. The contract begins –  
The undersigned Director of Posts and Telegraphs, specially commissioned to represent the Government, as party of the first part, and Mr. Nicholas F. Seebeck, as secretary and representative of the Hamilton Bank Note Engraving and Printing Company of New York, as party of the second part, have agreed as follows.

The contract ends –  
Managua, May 4 1889  
(s) Alejo. Cantón  
(s) Hamilton Bank Note Engraving and Printing Co. By N.F. Seebeck Sec.

The government viewed and approved this contract, Managua, May 7, 1889 – CARAZO – El Ministro de Gobernación – OSORNO

YEAR XXVII – Nicaragua Centro America – No. 48, GACETA OFICIAL, Managua, Saturday, 22 June 1889

In 1957, collector Salvador Castellon Morales transcribed the contract from the official gazette.

The decree of December 21, 1889, specified denominations and quantities and assigned the peso denominations for use on cablegrams. This decree had 14 articles. See the article by Erick Rodriguez, “Beyond the Seebeck Contract,” *Nicarao*, July 2005, pages 15-18.

<sup>2</sup> Page 54. In the lawsuit brought by New York Bank Note Company, Seebeck testified in 1896 as follows: “I was president of the [ Hamilton Bank Note Engraving and Printing Co. ] in the year 1892, and during the early part of 1893 up to July. Charles E. Gray was connected with that company [ Hamilton ] in the year 1892. [ Gray was elected vice president at the meeting held July 8, 1892. ]

“He was an employee of the company and also an officer. He was vice-president in the latter part of [ 1892 ]. The work he did was generally soliciting for business and helping me. I was in poor health; taking my place there, in soliciting orders, etc. He helped me in the business when I was out of the business, receiving customers. I was the active executive head of the company through the whole of the year 1892, and up to July, 1893. Mr. Gray became active in the management of the company in an

executive capacity.

“What I mean by active is that he took an active part in the general business — well, in an independent way, more or less; previous to that he had been under my direction constantly. I conducted the negotiations for the purchase of the press in the latter part of 1892 from the Kidder Press Manufacturing Company.”

Chapter X  
THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

<sup>1</sup> Page 77. Mueses recalled in 2018 that he found the name “Mr. Baer” in the government archives in the Dominican Republic.

Chapter XI  
THE SEEBECK STAMPS AND  
POSTAL STATIONERY

<sup>1</sup> Page 81, chart. For information on telegraph stamps, see the web site <http://gb-precancels.org/Telegraphs/site-map.html>

<sup>2</sup> Page 84. The printed booklet titled “Ecuador Honduras Nicaragua Salvador. Central America. A Collection of 60 Seebeck Sets,” date unknown, is filled with stamps that are hinged in place. About one-third of the page headings are marked with an “R,” signifying that the stamps on that page are reprints.

<sup>3</sup> Page 84. The G.B. Calman stamp company continued to operate at least until 1903.

<sup>4</sup> Page 86. Researcher Ross A. Towle located the handwritten letter ordering the reprints of the 1869-71 and 1878-80 stamp issues. The letter is at the American Philatelic Research Library in Bellefonte, Pa., in the American Bank Note Co. correspondence files: Nicaragua Stamps (1861-1907). The letter, dated September 28, 1891, is in the hand of Nicholas F. Seebeck and is signed by him. Its letterhead reads “N.F. SEEBECK / 18 BROADWAY / NEW YORK.” The street address is crossed out in pencil and “90 Gold St” is written in.

The letter reads as follows:

“Herewith enclosed please find an order from the Government of Nicaragua for printing the following Postage Stamps from plates in your hands

250,000 each	1. 2. 5¢ [ centavo ]
100,000 each	10 & 25¢ [ centavo ]

“of above quantity please perforate with round hole perforation

125,000 each	1. 2. 5¢ [ Scott 3-5 ]
50,000 each	10 & 25¢ [ Scott 6-7 ]

“and roulette perforation

125,000 each	1. 2. 5¢ [ Scott 8-10 ]
50,000 each	10 & 25¢ [ Scott 11-12 ]

“Please match colors exactly. if [ sic ] there should be difference in shade would prefer to see proofs

“Need not be packed with wax paper but merely in one package for each value”

“Respectfully  
N.F. Seebeck”

Penciled next to the closing of the letter and Seebeck’s signature is “Also Gum” and “Krack.” This was a note from Charles E. Krack, who on February 9, 1891, had been appointed as acting secretary of the Hamilton Bank Note Engraving and Printing Company to help Seebeck, who was in ill health. Seebeck then was company secretary, treasurer, and general manager. Krack also was a company trustee.

<sup>5</sup> Page 92. The 1935 Heinze monograph on postmarks has been translated into English at least twice. A PDF version is available from the Nicaragua Study Group. The monograph also includes important commentary on the Nicaragua stamps of 1900-1905.

<sup>6</sup> Page 96. Phillips, Charles J., *Collectors Club Philatelist*, October 1940, page 275.

<sup>7</sup> Page 97. Some time after 1900, the Hamilton Bank Note Engraving and Printing Company moved its offices from 88 and 90 Gold Street in New York City to 142 Adams Street in Brooklyn. Mueller stated that this happened in 1910. She pictured an engraved business card of George A. Field, manager of sales, with the address “142 Adams Street, Brooklyn, New York City.”

The card uses the name “Hamilton Bank Note Company,” the short version occasionally used since 1884 by the Hamilton Bank Note Engraving and Printing Co., that company’s legal name since it was founded in 1884.

<sup>8</sup> Page 97. The articles titled “Nicaragua: the Seebeck Issues,” by Albert Quast and Robert Willer, were published in the *Collectors Club Philatelist*, 1967-1968, 46:6, 47:1, 47:2, 47:3, 47:4. Willer died before the articles were

published. Within the first article, in issue 46:6, Quast included a long section written by Henry M. Goodkind titled “The 1951 Destruction of Nicaragua’s Plates, Dies and Rolls.” Agustin Vanegas P. had corresponded with Goodkind as a representative of organized philately in the United States, seeking Goodkind’s help in finding the Seebeck dies and transfer rolls and in getting them destroyed. Goodkind was a trustee of the Philatelic Foundation. At the request of Vanegas, Goodkind recommended names of philatelists who would witness the destruction, and he also became one of the witnesses. The Goodkind article shows a photograph of the group at work in Philadelphia, Pa., on December 11, 1951.

The Goodkind article also pictures the signed certification document for the destruction of two transfer rolls, six dies, and one type cut used in the manufacture of the 1893 issues. In all, Goodkind said that 296 pieces of metal were defaced that day and certified as defaced. The group began work around 11 a.m. with breaks for lunch and dinner. Goodkind did not say how long the group worked.

Goodkind referred to “plates,” including in the title of his article, but there is no documentation that any plates were defaced in 1951 or that any plates even existed then.

It is possible to come close to reconciling the 296 pieces stated by Goodkind with the 156 items listed by Kehr if the items with multiple stamp designs are counted as those multiples, but the reconciliation would not be exact.

The title of Kehr’s article in the *London Philatelist* uses the word “cliches,” referring in this case to type cuts for postal stationery.

Chapter XII  
THE SCANDAL AND THE LETTER

<sup>1</sup> Page 105. Seebeck often referred to himself as an engraver, but there is no record that he himself might have engraved in metal. He meant that his company provided engraving services. The Seebeck business card pictured on page 3 names him as “Stationer” and “General Engraver, Lithographer and Printer, Blank Book Manufacturer.”

<sup>2</sup> Page 109. Welch noted in *The Seebecker*, April 1988, that the *American Journal of Philately*, then edited by Henry L. Calman, published a favorable and forgiving obituary in the issue of July 1, 1899.



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OFFICERS OF THE HAMILTON BANK NOTE ENGRAVING AND PRINTING COMPANY 1884-1900					
date of election	president	vice president	secretary	treasurer	general manager
1884 Jan 16	Chisolm		Wagner	Thurber	
1884 Apr 21		Thurber	Seebeck	Seebeck <small>pro tem</small>	Seebeck
1884 Oct 10	Baker				
1885 Feb 06	Baker	Thurber	Seebeck	Seebeck	Seebeck
1886 Aug 30	Baker		Seebeck	Seebeck	
1887 Jul 20		Valentine			
1887 Jul 27	Chisolm		Seebeck	Seebeck	Seebeck
1888 *	Chisolm	Valentine	Seebeck	Seebeck	Seebeck
1889 Sep 19	Chisolm	Valentine	Seebeck	Seebeck	Seebeck
1890 Jan 13	Chisolm		Seebeck	Seebeck	Seebeck
1890 Jun 24			Krack <small>appointed pro tem</small>		
1890 Dec 16		Johnston	Krack <small>appointed pro tem</small>		
1891 Feb 09	Chisolm	Johnston	Seebeck	Seebeck	Seebeck
			Krack <small>appointed pro tem</small>		
1892 Feb 04	Seebeck	Johnston	Schernikow	Seebeck	Seebeck
1892 Jul 08		Gray			
1893 Apr 10	Seebeck	Gray	Schernikow	Seebeck	
			Osborn	Denman	Gray
1893 Aug 23	Grace			Schaefer	
1893 Oct 16		Seebeck			Seebeck
1894 Jan 17	Grace	Seebeck	Osborn	Schaefer	Seebeck
1895 Jan 31	Grace	Seebeck	Osborn	Schaefer	Seebeck
1896 Jan 16	Grace	Seebeck	Osborn	Schaefer	Seebeck
1897 Jan 14	Grace	Seebeck	Osborn	Schaefer	Seebeck
1898 **	Grace	Seebeck	Osborn	Schaefer	Seebeck
1899 Jan 10	Seebeck		Schernikow	Schernikow	Seebeck
1899 Jun 26	Tonjes				Krack <small>appointed pro tem through Dec 30 1899</small>

\* pages glued together in Minute Books      \*\* pages missing



**Baker, Edward P.** – Baker formerly was vice president of Franklin Bank Note Company, according the Hamilton minutes of January 12, 1885. Baker previously was the agent for the Continental Bank Note Company in at least 1874, according to a court document; 1876, according to Mueller; and 1878, according to the *Commercial and Financial Chronicle*.

**Chisolm, Alexander Robert** (1834-1910) – Chisolm was a Southerner from South Carolina who was raised in New York City by an aunt and uncle. At age 18, he returned to his family’s Coosaw Plantation in Beaufort, called Chisolm’s Island, which he and his sister had inherited, as well as inheriting 250 slaves. He served as aide-de-camp to Gen. Pierre G.T. Beauregard. He became a Charleston shipping merchant after selling his plantation but moved to New York City in 1870. Airy Hall was his country residence in Morristown, N.J. His papers, 1861-1908, are held at the New-York Historical Society.

**Denman, Charles H.** – Denman served as Hamilton treasurer for only a few months in 1893. He left to become cashier at Standard Rope and Twine Co. He was a director of Hamilton and held 100 shares, according to his testimony in the lawsuit that began with the summons served August 9, 1894, plaintiff New York Bank Note Company, defendants Hamilton Bank Note Engraving and Printing Company of New York and Kidder Press Manufacturing Company of Boston. The case went to trial June 19, 1896. A Denman connection to Grace or Sage is not documented.

**Grace, William R.** (1832-1904) – Irishman Grace went to Peru in 1851 to develop agricultural sources for Ireland. The firm he worked for eventually became W.R. Grace and Company. Grace was mayor of New York City during 1880-1888.

**Gray, Charles E.** – Gray was treasurer of the New York Bank Note Company before joining Hamilton Bank Note Engraving and Printing Company in 1892 as vice president, replacing James W. Johnson. Gray became a trustee and vice president at the meeting of July 8, 1892. He became general manger at the meeting of April 10, 1893. Gray resigned both positions at the meeting of October 16, 1893, effective immediately. Chairman Grace, according to the minutes, described the resignation as “a businesslike act for which Mr. Gray should be commended, it being in furtherance of what was believed to be for the interests of the company.” The minutes refer to a new contract for Gray that does not appear to have gone into effect. The last trustees meeting that Gray attended was November 11, 1893.

**Johnston, James W.** – Johnson resigned as Hamilton vice president at the meeting of July 8, 1892. He resigned as a trustee at the meeting of April 10, 1893. His death was reported at the January 9, 1894, stockholders meeting.

**Krack, Charles E.** (died 1902) – Krack’s resignation as a trustee was accepted at the meeting held June 26, 1891. It was read and accepted again at the meeting held July 8, 1892. Krack worked as manager of his family’s Knickerbocker Bathing Company, an operator of floating baths in the harbor of New York City. On June 26, 1899, three days after Seebeck died, the trustees appointed Krack to be general manager of Hamilton. The trustees discharged him effective December 30, 1899, “to the best interest of the company,” words the minutes attribute to President Tonjes.

**Osborn, Edward C.** – Osborn became Hamilton secretary April 10, 1893. Osborn also testified in 1896 in the lawsuit brought in August 1894 by the New York Bank Note Co. against the Hamilton and Kidder firms. In his testimony, he said he owned 100 shares of Hamilton stock and that he worked as a clerk in the office of Russell Sage. Sage called him his “cashier.” Two questions asked during his cross-examination imply that Osborn could have been an agent of another shareholder, a puppet who could provide influence and cast another vote while he was trustee. Objections to the questions were sustained. Osborn became a Hamilton trustee April 10, 1893. He resigned as a trustee August 23, 1893, the day William R. Grace and cronies formally took over, but Osborn continued as Hamilton secretary through the entire Grace presidency.

**Schaefer, J. Louis** (1867-1927) – Schaefer was part of the takeover of Hamilton by W.R. Grace and cronies. Schaefer was elected treasurer at the meeting held August 23, 1893. He was not elected to be a trustee until the meeting of October 13, 1893. Schaefer served as treasurer un-

til the meeting held January 10, 1899. The 1910 Trow directory listed Schaefer as the secretary of W.R. Grace & Co. of New York. According to the Wikipedia entry for “Michael P. Grace,” who was one of three Grace brothers, Schaefer joined the Grace company as a boy. He eventually also became president of Grace National Bank. In 1920, Schaefer was a co-executor of the Estate of Michael P. Grace with Joseph P. Grace, W.P. Grace’s son and corporate successor.

**Schernikow, Ernest** (1860-1933) – Schernikow came to the United States in 1863 with his family. He became a naturalized U.S. citizen on October 21, 1884. As an adult, he worked in New York City as vice consul of the Republic of El Salvador (a few months as consul), as a trustee of the Hamilton Bank Note Engraving and Printing Co. beginning in 1891 and its secretary for a short time beginning February 1892 and again in January 1899, and as an officer of the New York & Honduras Rosario Mining Co. He was a delegate to the Pan-American Congress, the president of the New York Mineralogical Club, a life member of the American Museum of Natural History, and a member of the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

**Seebeck, Nicholas F.** (1857-1899).

**Thurber, George W.** (1827-1908) – A lettering engraver and ornamental engraver, Thurber in 1867 became treasurer of the new Manhattan Engraving Co., according to Barbara Mueller. Thurber’s affairs appear to have been closely woven with those of Seebeck. Thurber was vice president of Hamilton Bank Note Company, founded 1881. He was the founding treasurer of the Hamilton Bank Note Engraving and Printing Company in January 1884, and he became its vice president in April 1884, serving through July 20, 1887. He served as a trustee until August 30, 1886, his resignation letter having been read at the meeting of July 22. It was not acted on until the meeting of August 30. He was elected a trustee again at the stockholders meeting held January 9, 1899, along with other Seebeck allies.

**Tonjes, John** – Tonjes served as president of Hamilton Bank Note Engraving and Printing Company from 1899 until 1905. The March 1909 Trow directory listed Tonjes as treasurer, with Schernikow president and Edward C. Osborn secretary, plus other directors (trustees) A.R. Chisolm, Louis J. [ J.L. ] Schaefer, and Harmon Graves.

**Valentine, F.C.** – Valentine served as Hamilton vice president beginning July 20, 1887. The minutes are not clear about how long he served. J.W. Johnston replaced him as of December 16, 1890. The March 1901 Trow directory listed him as one of the directors of the Hamilton Bank Note Engraving and Printing Co.

**Wagner, Albert D.** – Wagner was the first secretary of the Hamilton Bank Note Engraving and Printing Company (1884) but only for three months. He was secretary of the Mining Record Printing and Publishing Co. (Chisolm was its president), according to the March 1889 Trow directory.

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**Depew, Chauncey M.** (1834-1928) – A Hamilton trustee as of August 23, 1893. Depew was a lawyer for Cornelius Vanderbilt, working for the New York & Harlem Railroad (1866) and the New York Central and Hudson River Railroad (1869). Beginning in 1876, he was responsible for the entire Vanderbilt rail system. He eventually became New York Central president and chairman of the board. He was elected to two terms in U.S. Senate, serving 1899-1911.

**Sage, Russell** (1816-1906) – Sage was from Oneida County. He eventually moved to New York City where he was a seller of puts and calls. In 1874, he bought a seat on the New York Stock Exchange. He later made a fortune buying and selling railroads. Sage was elected a Hamilton trustee at the trustees meeting August 23, 1893, when Grace formally took over Hamilton. Sage also was elected a trustee at the stockholders meeting January 8, 1894. Sage, Jay Gould, and Cyrus W. Field in 1881 had gained control of the Manhattan Railway Company. Sage served two terms in the U.S. House of Representatives during 1853-1855 (Whig) and 1855-1857 (Oppositionist).

**Webb, H. Walter** (1852-1900) – A Hamilton trustee, Webb studied mining engineering and law but became a financier and railroad man through his brother William S. Webb, who married Eliza Vanderbilt. Webb was elected a Hamilton trustee at the trustees meeting August 23, 1893.

SYNOPSIS OF THE MINUTE BOOKS OF THE  
HAMILTON BANK NOTE ENGRAVING AND PRINTING COMPANY  
1884-1899

1884

**1884 Jan 16** at 61 Broadway 1:3 pages 1-2 \*  
founders: Chisolm Thurber Wagner  
elected Chisolm as president  
elected Thurber as treasurer  
elected Wagner as secretary  
approved purchase of presses, tools, dies, and more  
from Thomas Jordan [ 25,000 shares issued to  
Jordan, according to minutes of January 10, 1885,  
5,000 of which Jordan transferred to Chisolm ]

**1884 Feb 11** at 61 Broadway 1:3 2  
trustees: Chisolm Thurber Wagner  
set stockholders meeting for March 5 to increase  
increased capital stock to \$100,000 and to advertise  
the note in *Mining Record* and notify stockholders

**1884 Mar 4** Tuesday at 61 Broadway 1:3 2-4, 6  
trustees: Chisolm Thurber Wagner  
minutes of Feb 11 approved  
bylaws read by Wagner [ and approved 1:4 6 ]  
authorized Chisolm to vote at any stockholders meet-  
ing on 5,000 shares

**1884 Mar 5** Wednesday at 61 Broadway 1:4 6-7  
stockholders: Chisolm Thurber Wagner, Van Alst,  
Oliver  
increased capital stock to \$100,000 and officers to  
take necessary steps therefor  
appointed Thurber, Wagner, and Johnston to solicit  
subscriptions to stock [ Minutes of January 12, 1885,  
said company was “without a dollar of working capi-  
tal.” And: “It was found impossible at that time to get  
any subscriptions to the increased stock. ]  
adjourned to March 31

**1884 Mar 31** Monday at 61 Broadway 1:4 8  
stockholders: Chisolm Thurber Girsch Wagner  
adjourned to May 12 [ no such minutes recorded ]

**1884 Apr 8** Tuesday at 61 Broadway 1:4 8-11  
trustees: Chisolm Thurber Wagner  
read and approved lengthy contract of 14 sections  
between the firm and Seebeck: Hamilton bought  
Seebeck’s engraving, lithographing, and stationery  
business at 95 Wall Street for 5,000 shares of Hamil-  
ton; Seebeck agreed to lease the Hamilton equipment  
and to pay rent [ Minutes of January 12, 1885, date  
the contract arrangement with Seebeck to May 1 ]

**1884 Apr 21** Monday at 61 Broadway 1:4 12  
trustees: Chisolm Thurber Wagner  
approved minutes of March 4 and April 8  
approved stockholders minutes of March 5 and 31  
increased board of trustees from 3 to 5  
elected Seebeck as trustee  
accepted resignation of Wagner as secretary  
elected Seebeck as secretary and business manager  
accepted resignation of Thurber as treasurer  
elected Thurber as vice president  
appointed Seebeck as treasurer pro tem

**1884 Oct 10** [ at 61 Broadway ] 2:1 1-2  
trustees: Chisolm Thurber Wagner Seebeck  
minutes of April 21 approved  
approved resignation of Chisolm as president  
elected Edward P. Baker as trustee and president

**1884 Dec 29** Monday [ at 61 Broadway ] 2:1 2-3  
trustees: Thurber Chisolm Wagner Seebeck  
Thurber acted as chairman pro tem  
approved minutes of October 10  
approved immediate efforts to obtain subscriptions  
to capital stock of not less than \$25,000 [ company  
badly needs cash to operate ]  
approved installment share certificates  
approved bill presented by Thurber for expenses prior  
to May 1, 1884  
ordered president to create paperwork to make the  
issue of 70,000 shares legal

1885

**1885 Jan 8** Thursday [ at 61 Broadway ] 2:1 3  
trustees: Baker Thurber Wagner Seebeck  
approved minutes of “previous meeting”  
increased board of trustees from 5 to 7 and attorney  
to file the necessary papers  
reconsidered and laid over installment certificates

**1885 Jan 9** Friday [ at 61 Broadway ] 2:1 3  
trustees: Baker Thurber Wagner Seebeck  
minutes of “previous meeting” approved  
installment certificates removed from table for action

**1885 Jan 10** Saturday [ at 61 Broadway ] 2:1 3-4  
trustees: Baker Thurber Wagner Seebeck

\* *The Seebecker*, volume, number, pages.

approved minutes of “previous meeting”  
elected Thos. Jordan as trustee  
elected John R. Price as trustee

**1885 Jan 12** at 61 Broadway 2:1 4, 6-7  
stockholders  
read long letter on transactions of past year: it refers to 1884 being a depressing year (the Panic of 1884 during the depression of 1882-1885), to a contract to print banknotes for Bolivar, and to the willingness of the holder of the assignment of the chattel mortgage and notes to accept 5,000 Hamilton shares in settle-ment once 25,000 shares are subscribed for  
elected seven trustees: Baker, Chisolm, Thurber, W.C. Findlay, Wagner, Jordan, Seebeck

**1885 Feb 6** Friday at 61 Broadway 2:1 7-8  
trustees: Baker Thurber Chisolm Wagner Seebeck  
dispensed with reading of previous minutes  
cast one ballot for officers for 1885: Baker president, Thurber vice president, Seebeck secretary, manager, and treasurer  
appointed Thurber Baker Seebeck as committee to examine advisability of purchasing from Chas. W. Girsch plates, dies, rolls, and bedpieces of vignettes and titles in exchange for Hamilton stock  
renewed agreement with Seebeck of April 8, 1884, for one year as of April 1, 1885

**1885 Mar 21** at 61 Broadway 2:1 8  
trustees: Baker Thurber Chisolm Wagner [ Findlay ]  
Findlay served as secretary pro tem (Seebeck absent)  
empowered Seebeck in the name of the company to buy “new machinery necessary to execute Elevated RR contract” and to make arrangements with Adams Express for Hamilton to vacate its offices at 61 Broadway

**1885 Mar 23** at 61 Broadway 2:1 8, 10  
trustees: Thurber Findlay Chisolm Wagner Seebeck  
Thurber chaired the meeting until Baker arrived  
discussion only, no business transacted

**1885 Mar 24** at 61 Broadway 2:1 10  
trustees: Baker Thurber Chisolm Wagner Seebeck  
authorized the leasing of suitable rooms for the use of the company in the Washington Building, No. 1 Broadway, for three years

**1885 Apr 15** Tuesday [ place not recorded ] 2:1 10  
trustees: Baker Seebeck Thurber Chisolm Findlay  
approved minutes of January 10, February 6, March 21, March 23, and March 24  
approved purchase dated February 10 from Girsch and issued to him 1,500 shares

accepted resignation of Jordan as trustee  
elected John E. Bugbee as trustee  
[ There is no record of approval of the minutes for April 15, 1885. ]

**1885 Apr 23** [ place not recorded ] 2:1 11  
trustees: Thurber Wagner Seebeck Baker  
Thurber chaired meeting  
called for stockholders meeting on May 18 to reduce company capital stock to \$75,000  
called for publication of meeting notice for three weeks in *Mining Record* and for notices to be sent to shareholders of record  
[ There is no record of approval of the minutes for April 23, 1885. ]

**1885 May 18** Monday at No. 1 Broadway 2:1 12-13  
stockholders: Baker, Thurber, A.R. Chisolm, Wagner, Seebeck, Jordan, and Chas. Skinner, T.A. Bradley, C.W. Girsch, A.L. Helm, A. Chisolm [ duplicate name? ], W, Goodman, J.R. Price, G.E. Gibbons by proxy to Chisolm, J.W. Johnston by proxy to Thurber, and H. Osborn  
reduced capital stock to \$75,000 by vote of stock-holders according to number of shares – of the 25,176 shares voted, Seebeck cast 9,000 and A.R. Chisolm 5,000; Price, Girsch, and Thurber had the next highest numbers of shares  
changed by vote of shares the par value of a share to \$25 from \$1  
[ There is no record of approval of the minutes for May 18, 1885. ]

**1885 June 29** Monday at No. 1 Broadway 2:1 13-14  
trustees: Baker Thurber Seebeck Chisolm Wagner and later Findlay  
read and approved by resolution Seebeck’s letter of June 25 – in the letter he offered to cancel his agree-ment of April 8, 1884, and the renewal of March 19, 1885, and to turn over to Hamilton all contracts obtained during the agreement, plates, rolls, dies, machinery, paper, and the plant in general, and all outstanding assets, for the sum of \$28,500  
approved three-year lease for company offices for premises at No. 1 Broadway [ the Washington Build-ing, constructed 1882-1885 ]  
approved with conditions new certificate for 55 shares for T.M. Worthington for lost No. 43

**1885 Sep 10** Tuesday at No. 1 Broadway 2:1 14-15  
trustees: Baker Thurber Findlay Seebeck  
approved minutes of “previous meeting”  
fixed salary for E.P. Baker as president at \$3,000 per year as of May 1, 1885  
fixed salary of N.F. Seebeck as secretary, treasurer, and manager at \$3,000 per year as of May 1, 1885

fixed salary of George W. Thurber \$30 per week from May 1, 1885, to November 1, 1885, for services as superintendent of engraving, transferring, and plate printing departments and as engraver, not as vice president  
appointed committee of Baker and Thurber to negoti-ate with Girsch over his desired release from agree-ment with Hamilton

**1885 Sep 21** Monday at office of company 2:1 15-16  
trustees: Baker Chisolm Findlay Th [ urber ] Seebeck  
designated Third National Bank as company deposi-tory  
appointed a committee of three (sic, Chisolm, See-beck, Findlay, Baker) to look into assets (plates, rolls, dies, paper, inks, furniture) of the Hamilton Bank Note Company or of any individual that “it is desir-able shall become the property of this company and if so what are the best means to obtain possession of such articles.” This refers to the Hamilton company founded in 1881.  
approved cancellation and settlement of contract with Girsch made February 10, 1885

**1885 Oct 16** Friday [ at No. 1 Broadway ] 2:1 16-17  
trustees: Baker Thurber Findlay Seebeck  
authorized the purchase of plates, dies, etc. of the Hamilton Bank Note Company [ 1881 company ] but not to exceed \$800, the amount of indebtedness “now represented to this company to be about \$800.”

**1885 Nov 10** Tuesday at No. 1 Broadway 2:1 17  
trustees: Chisolm Baker Thurber Wagner Findlay Seebeck  
approved minutes of June 29, September 11 [ sic, 10 ], September 21, October 16  
approved committee of Baker, Findlay and Seebeck to look into “the matter of the El. R.R. [ Elevated Rail Road ] contract”  
heard committee report of settlement with Girsch  
heard report of officers of consummation of purchase of old plates, etc. from Hamilton Bank Note Co.  
[ The minutes are not signed. ]

**1886**

**1886 Jan 11** “at the office of the company” 2:2 8  
trustees: Baker Thurber Chisolm Wagner Seebeck  
heard and approved reports of president and trea-surer to shareholders

**1886 Jan 11** Monday at No. 1 Broadway 2:2 9-10  
shareholders  
rescinded the authorization to change par value of Hamilton stock from \$1 to \$25  
read and approved reports of president and treasurer  
elected as trustees Baker Seebeck Chisolm Tonyes

[ sic, Tonjes ] Findlay C.B. Thurston Thurber: also receiving votes was Geo. W. Robertson

**1886 July 22** [ at No. 1 Broadway ] 2:2 10  
trustees: Baker Thurber Chisolm Seebeck  
general discussion  
heard resignations of Thurber and Findlay  
[ The minutes are not signed. ]

**1886 Aug 30** at No. 1 Broadway 2:2 10  
trustees: Thurston Chisolm Baker Seebeck  
approved minutes of November 10, 1885, January 11, 1886, and July 22, 1886  
elected Baker as president at salary of \$3,000 per year  
elected Seebeck as secretary and treasurer at salary of \$3,000 per year  
accepted resignations of Thurber and Findlay as trustees  
elected A. Reasoner as trustee  
approved because of an “increase in business” the or-dering of an additional ticket printing press at about \$2,500  
approved bonus of \$100 for employee Thomas White  
approved transfer by treasurer of company funds to U.S. National Bank from Third National Bank

**1886 Nov 9** Tuesday at No. 1 Broadway 2:2 11  
trustees: Baker Seebeck Chisolm Thurston Reasoner  
approved minutes of August 30, 1886  
general discussion

**1886 Dec 14** Tuesday at No. 1 Broadway  
trustees: Thurston Reasoner Baker Seebeck  
approved minutes of November 9, 1886

1887

**1887 Jan 10** Monday at No. 1 Broadway 2:2 11-12  
stockholders  
read and accepted treasurer’s report  
elected as trustees were Baker Seebeck Chisolm, and S. Jacoby, F.C. Valentine, H.F.W. Poggenburg, and C.B. Thurston

**1887 Jan 11** Tuesday at No. 1 Broadway 2:2 12  
trustees: no quorum present

**1887 Feb 8** Tuesday at No. 1 Broadway 2:2 12  
trustees: no quorum present

**1887 Mar 8** Tuesday at No. 1 Broadway 2:2 13  
trustees: no quorum present

**1887 Apr 12** Tuesday at No. 1 Broadway 2:2 13  
trustees: no quorum present



**1887 May 10** Tuesday at No. 1 Broadway 2:2 13 trustees: no quorum present

**1887 June 14** Tuesday at No. 1 Broadway 2:2 13 trustees: no quorum present

**1887 July 12** Tuesday at No. 1 Broadway 2:2 13 trustees: no quorum present

**1887 July 20** Wednesday at No. 1 Broadway 2:2 13 trustees: Chisolm Baker Valentine Seebeck approved minutes of December 14, 1886 laid over until next meeting the matter of procuring new bondsman on Elevated RR contract authorized treasurer to raise money to pay demand notes falling due on debt, but no money to be paid for procuring new bond until Baldwin debt is paid approved request to Baldwin to allow his name to continue on the bond of the company to the Elevated RR contract elected F.C. Valentine as vice president without salary

**1887 July 27** Wednesday [ at No. 1 Broadway ] 2:2 13-14 trustees: Thurston Chisolm Valentine Seebeck Valentine chaired meeting approved minutes of July 20, 1887 elected Chisolm as president without salary elected Seebeck as secretary, treasurer, and manager

**1887 Aug 31** Wednesday at No. 1 Broadway 2:2 14 trustees: Chisolm Valentine Thurston Seebeck approved salary of \$3,000 per year for Seebeck as secretary, treasurer, and manager approved no salaries for those holding offices of president and vice president

1888

**1888 Jan 9** Monday at No. 1 Broadway 2:3 4 stockholders approved minutes of “last meeting” referred treasurer’s report to committee of three including Robertson [ here the transcription breaks off because, Welch recollected, pages 77-78 were glued together. Are those back-to-back pages? ]

**1888. The date of the following actions is not certain**, but they all occurred in 1888 at the same meeting: 2:3, pages 4-5

elected Valentine as vice president without salary elected Seebeck as secretary, treasurer, and manager at an annual salary of \$3,000

approved issuing of 200 shares of stock to R.M. Jordan, 250 shares of stock to D. Calman. 200 shares of stock to W.H. English for value received and services rendered, said shares now in name of Seebeck

[ Calman is believed to be David Calman, born 1858, a lawyer and older brother of Gustave and Henry ]

made various changes to bylaws adopted annual report and ordered it published ordered that report of stock fully paid be recorded and filed

[ The undated minutes are not signed. ]

1889

**1889 Jan 14** Monday at No. 1 Broadway 2:3 5-6 stockholders approved minutes of “last meeting” referred treasurer’s report to committee of Thurber and Hermann Cohen [ Thurber’s resignation as trustee was accepted at the meeting of August 30, 1886, but he remained a shareholder. ] accepted treasurer’s report for 1887 filed unstated communication from Baker elected as trustees Chisolm Reasoner Cohen Valentine Johnston Krack Seebeck

**1889 Sep 19** Thursday at No. 1 Broadway 2:3 6 trustees: Chisolm Cohen Krack Seebeck approved minutes of “last meeting” elected Chisolm as president without salary elected Valentine as vice president without salary elected Seebeck as secretary, treasurer, and manager at \$3,000 per year heard and filed report of treasurer

1890

**1890 Jan 13** Monday at No. 1 Broadway 2:3 6-8 stockholders approved minutes of “last annual meeting” approved committee of two to audit treasurer’s report and president so appointed Cohen and Skinner approved treasurer’s report for 1888 elected as trustees Chisolm Cohen Johnston Krack English Calman Seebeck approved payment of cash dividend of 2½ percent for six months “as soon as the cash on hand warrants” approved the taking of steps to have company’s stock accepted on the Stock Exchange approved payment of \$5 per meeting for each trustee and that meetings be held at least once in three months and that the directors so amend the bylaws

**1890 Jan 13** Monday at No. 1 Broadway 2:3 9 trustees: Chisolm English Krack Calman Cohen elected Chisolm as president without salary elected Seebeck as treasurer, secretary, and manager at \$3,000 per year

deferred election of vice president for 30 days [ election occurred December 16, 1890. ] elected Krack as secretary [ pro tem ] of directors [ trustees ] meeting (Seebeck absent)

**1890 May 8** Thursday at No. 1 Broadway 2:3 9 trustees: Johnston Chisolm Cohen English Krack Seebeck approved minutes of “last meeting” filed approximate account of treasurer for April appointed committee of three to look into leasing new premises

**1890 June 24** Tuesday [ at No. 1 Broadway ] 2:3 9-10 trustees: Chisolm Cohen Johnston Krack Seebeck and later English appointed Krack secretary pro tem even though Seebeck was present approved committee of two to examine treasurer’s report for 1889 and Johnston and Cohen appointed approved accepting of letter from Seebeck about his payment to the Hamilton firm for “engraving bills etc.” for San Salvador [ sic ], Nicaragua, and Honduras for the term of 10 years for his contract with Hamilton dated June 20, 1890 accepted approximate account of treasurer for May authorized treasurer to transfer bank account from U.S. National Bank to “Seventh National and Washington National Bank”

**1890 Dec 16** Tuesday [ at No. 1 Broadway ] 2:3 10 trustees: Johnston Cohen English Krack Seebeck appointed Krack secretary pro tem even though Seebeck was present approved minutes of “last meeting” elected Johnston as vice president authorized five-year lease at Gold and Ferry streets at \$5,000 per year

1891

**1891 Jan 12** Monday at No. 1 Broadway 3:1 6-8 stockholders: Schernikow Chisolm Johnston Cohen Thurber Thurston Krack Kendall approved minutes of “last annual meeting” approved treasurer’s report elected as trustees Chisolm Johnston Jacoby Seebeck Krack Schernikow Cohen – also receiving votes was F.G. Taylor filed president’s report filed treasurer’s report for 1890 approved a committee to appraise value of plant and material before their removal to new quarters, but committee not appointed approved resolution of thanks to Chisolm

appointed committee of Chisolm, Johnston, and Krack to inquire into advisability of increasing insurance on plant and material entered into the minutes the statement of Thurston that the stock ledger should show that he owns 750 shares, not 4,250, and that he declined to give proxy to E.P. Baker on 3,500 shares that he never owned.

**1891 Jan 12** Monday at No. 1 Broadway 3:1 8 trustees: Krack Chisolm Schernikow Johnston Cohen Krack served as secretary pro tem (Seebeck absent) deferred annual election of officers until “next quarterly meeting”

**1891 Feb 9** at No. 1 Broadway 3:1 9-10 trustees: Chisolm Johnston Schernikow Cohen Jacoby Krack appointed Krack secretary of meeting (Seebeck absent) elected Chisolm as president elected Johnston as vice president elected Seebeck as secretary, treasurer, and general manager at a salary of \$3,000 per year appointed Krack acting secretary [ of company ] “in addition to the duties he now performs but without any additional increase of salary” tabled a resolution to pay the president a salary until next board meeting

resolved that “the company should be in actual possession of all its contracts, papers and other property referring to the business of this operation and that a copy of this resolution be sent to Mr. N.F. Seebeck with request to speedily carry out its intent” pasted in here is the company annual report, a few paragraphs dated January 7, 1891, noting: \$75,000 of capital stock all paid and issued for cash or property, and indebtedness not exceeding \$8,000

**1891 June 26** [ probably at No. 1 Broadway ] 3:1 10 trustees: Chisolm Jacoby Johnston Seebeck Schernikow approved minutes of “previous meetings” resolved to keep company’s papers in Safe Deposit Co. in name of secretary and treasurer canceled certificate No. 55 and reimbursed Chisolm \$10 for buying up the certificate referred a bill against A.R. Chisolm & Co. to a committee of Jacoby, Cohen, and Seebeck accepted the resignation of Krack as trustee elected F.G. Taylor as trustee

**1891 Sep 18** [ probably at No. 1 Broadway ] 3:1 11 trustees: Seebeck Taylor Chisolm Jacoby Schernikow Johnston Cohen approved minutes of “previous meeting”

authorized the president and treasurer to borrow an amount not exceeding \$5,000 and to issue promissory notes therefor

1892

**1892 Jan 11** Monday at 88-90 Gold Street 3:1 11-12 stockholders: Chisolm Thurber Johnston Taylor Jacoby Cohen Schernikow Seebeck, and L. Delnoce approved minutes of “last meeting” ratified treasurer’s report for 1890

treasurer’s report filed and committee of Thurber and Johnston to examine it and audit it

elected as trustees were Chisolm Johnston Taylor Schernikow Seebeck Jacoby Krack

resolved “to request the board of trustees to look into the advisability of consolidating the Hamilton Bank Note Co. with some other bank note company.” [ This almost certainly refers to the Hamilton Bank Note Company, the company founded in 1881 ]

**1892 Feb 4** Thursday at 88-90 Gold Street 3:1 12-13 trustees: Jacoby Chisolm Taylor Johnston Schernikow Seebeck Krack

Seebeck acted as secretary pro tem of meeting approved minutes of “previous meeting”

elected Seebeck as president, treasurer, and manager at an annual salary of \$3,000 for all offices or either

elected Johnston as vice president without salary elected Schernikow as secretary without salary

referred to committee of Johnston and Taylor a bill and specifications of engraving and printing done by the company for the governments of Nicaragua, Honduras, El Salvador, and Ecuador, the bill to be assumed by and paid by N.F. Seebeck

**1892 June 28** Tuesday at 88-90 Gold Street 3:1 13 trustees: Seebeck Taylor Johnston Schernikow (Krack present in office)

approved minutes of meeting held February 4, 1892 referred to the executive officers the proposition of C.E. Gray to enter the employ of the company at an annual salary of \$2,000 and 25 percent of net profits

**1892 July 8** at 88-90 Gold Street 3:1 13-14 trustees: Johnston Chisolm Taylor Schernikow Seebeck

approved minutes of meeting held June 28, 1892 accepted and filed the report of president that the contract with Gray was concluded but modified to exclude profit on work being fulfilled or already contracted for and to leave to the board the determination of his entitlement for 25 percent of such profits [ Seebeck was ill, probably with tuberculosis, and Gray was being brought in from New York Bank Note Co. to help Seebeck and possibly to replace him as manager, which did happen on April 10, 1893. ]

accepted resignation of Krack as trustee elected Gray as trustee accepted resignation of Johnston as vice president elected Gray as vice president without salary

**1892 Dec 8** Thursday at 88-90 Gold Street 3:1 14-15 trustees: Jacoby Seebeck Taylor Gray Schernikow Gray presided, not Seebeck

approved minutes of meeting held July 8, 1892 approved the signing of a 5-year contract with the Manhattan Railway Company for supplying it with passenger rail tickets per terms in contract [ see the sidebar below ]

authorized the treasurer to borrow an amount of

Manhattan Railway Company

The Manhattan Railway Company of financiers Jay Gould, Cyrus Field, and Russell Sage dominated ground transportation in pre-subway Manhattan and the Bronx in the 1880s and 1890s. The company needed millions of passenger tickets, buying them from New York Bank Note Co. for five years beginning in April 1888 and from Hamilton Bank Note Engraving and Printing Co. for 10 years beginning in April 1893.

Manhattan Railway Co. was founded in 1875. Beginning in May 1879, it leased the Metropolitan Elevated Railway (Sixth Avenue line and eventually the Second Avenue line) and the New York Elevated Railroad (Third Avenue and Ninth Avenue lines). In July 1891, it added a lease of the Suburban Rapid Transit Company line in the Bronx.

The company was known as the Elevated, Manhattan Elevated, and the El. In 1886, Gould gained control of both Metropolitan Elevated and New York Elevated. By 1887, Gould and Sage forced Field to sell his interests in both companies. Gould died December 2, 1892, leaving to his son his many companies, many of them under the direction of Russell Sage.

money not exceeding \$12,000 and to issue the promissory notes of the company therefor

1893

**1893 Jan 9** Monday at 88-90 Gold Street 3:1 15-16 stockholders

approved minutes of “last annual meeting” filed treasurer’s report, copy to shareholders as desired elected as trustees Chisolm Jacoby Johnston Taylor Schernikow Gray Seebeck

**1893 Apr 10** Monday at 88-90 Gold Street 3:1 16-20 trustees: Seebeck Gray Taylor Johnston Schernikow Gray presided, not Seebeck

approved minutes of meeting held December 8, 1892 elected Seebeck as president and treasurer elected Schernikow as secretary elected Gray as vice president recorded statement by Seebeck showing financial condition of the company: assets of \$35,312.90, liabilities of \$29,782.82 [sic], balance of \$5,531.08, and “addition to plant for El. tickets,” \$3,898.93

approved and ratified report on and payments made by Seebeck for bills for engraving and printing for the governments of Honduras, Nicaragua, and El Salvador in conformity with agreement made June 20 [ approved June 24 ], 1890: 1889, \$6,196.27; 1890, \$6,190.86; 1891, \$8,300.57; 1892, \$5,818.54

approved treasurer’s report for 1891 and 1892 approved payment of \$730.39 to Krack for his commission on orders obtained from September 1891 to April 1, 1893

canceled amount of \$366.06 charged against A.R. Chisolm & Co. because of special services rendered by A.R. Chisolm to the company “in the matter of reduction of taxes, etc.”

approved \$3,000 annual salary for Seebeck for the months of January, February, and March 1893 authorized treasurer to issue one or more promissory notes of the company not to exceed a total of \$5,768.02 for money loaned to the company by Seebeck, total loan being \$9,768.02, of which \$4,000 was paid by notes under authority of board passed December 8, 1892, “making the total indebtedness of this company for money borrowed to carry out the business of this company in buying new machinery for printing the tickets for the Manhattan Railway Company and printing 100,000,000 tickets for reserve and other work \$17,762.02.”

passed unanimous resolution thanking Seebeck for his more than eight years of service to the company, noting that he “is about to retire from the active management of its affairs” [ secret agreement April 4 between Seebeck and W.R. Grace and Russell Sage ]

[ See the sidebar on page 136. ] [ Here begins the gradual takeover of the company by tycoons W.R. Grace and Russell Sage. ]

accepted resignation of Johnston as trustee (letter dated April 3, 1893) elected Wm. L. Saunders as trustee [ William Lawrence Saunders was a mining engineer and a crony of W.R. Grace. After Grace died in 1904, Saunders became president of the Ingersoll Sergeant Drill Company, on March 24, 1904. Ingersoll-Sergeant Drill Company and Rand Drill Company merged in May 1905 to become Ingersoll Rand. Saunders became its first president in 1906. ]

accepted resignation of Jacoby as trustee (letter dated April 4, 1893) elected Chas. H. Denman as trustee [ see below ] accepted resignation of Schernikow as company secretary and trustee (letter dated April 4, 1893) The minutes continue in a new hand.

elected E.C. Osborn as trustee [ see following ] elected E.C. Osborn as company secretary [ Osborn worked in New York as a clerk in the office of Russell Sage – Osborn resigned as trustee on August 23, but he continued as secretary throughout the period when Grace was president of the Hamilton firm. ] accepted resignation of Seebeck as treasurer elected Chas. H. Denman as treasurer [ Denman resigned as trustee and treasurer on August 23 – he probably was an agent of Grace and Sage ] elected Gray as manager (he also was vice president)

Gray resigned the meeting chair in favor of Seebeck resolved that company signatures regarding checks, notes, orders and evidence of debt hereafter be “both the treasurer and the vice president [ Denman and Gray ] and manager [ Gray ]” and that the bank be so notified

Saunders took the meeting chair and Seebeck retired from the room authorized the executive officer to sign a contract with Seebeck “to act as the representative of this company for the next five years in such countries as he may deem best for the interests of the company, at a salary of six thousand dollars (\$6,000.00) per annum payable annually in advance.”

**1893 May 25** Thursday at 88-90 Gold Street 3:2 5 trustees: Seebeck Saunders Denman Osborn [ As noted, Saunders was a crony of W.R. Grace, Osborn worked for Sage, Denman uncertain. ] dispensed with reading of minutes of previous meeting amended bylaws in two sections to read “general manager” instead of only “manager” sanctioned action of the vice president and treasurer

[ continued on page 137 ]

SECRET AGREEMENT MADE APRIL 4, 1893, BY NICHOLAS F. SEEBECK  
WITH W.R. GRACE AND RUSSELL SAGE

Does the following 1896 court testimony explain the nature of the secret agreement?  
The company minutes of January 9, 1899, mention the secret agreement.

Edward P. Lyon, attorney for plaintiff New York Bank Note Company

William L. Turner, attorney for defendant Hamilton Bank Note Engraving and Printing Company

George H. Kendall, president of plaintiff New York Bank Note Company of West Virginia and previously treasurer, general manager or president of New York Bank Note Company of New Jersey

GEORGE H. KENDALL, recalled, in answer to MR. LYON[,] testified:

“I remember having a conversation with Mr. Seebeck at the Brevoort House in or about August, 1893, wherein reference was made to the use of the Kidder Perfecting Press by the Hamilton Bank Note Engraving and Printing Company.”

Q. “I want you to state briefly and simply as you can that conversation, using the exact language when you can.”

Objected to by Mr. Turner as incompetent, immaterial and irrelevant. Objection overruled. Exception.

A. “I can use the exact language very closely. I was at the Brevoort House in August, 1893, in New York City, with Mr. Seebeck, and Mr. Seebeck said that Mr. Gray had consented to get out; that he would probably not want to buy the stock of the company because all the money they had got out of him was all gone. And I said to Mr. Seebeck: ‘that will not prevent sometime my getting my redress in this matter.’ He said: ‘It doesn’t make any difference to me; I have a contract with Sage and Grace; the contract provides that my stock shall be turned back to me at the end of five years; that the company shall have no more debts at that time than it had at the time when I made the contract with them, and if you get a judgment against this company they will be obliged to make the loss good to me.’ ”

“Under the contract between Seebeck and

Sage and Grace; that Grace and Sage ‘will be obliged to make good any loss that I sustain through a judgment of yours against the Hamilton Bank Note Engraving and Printing Company, and I don’t care.’ Because of this, he said further: ‘I had this contract drawn by the best lawyers in this city, and not content with that I have taken it to my lawyers, and I have had it reviewed by another law firm, and it binds Sage and Grace firmly, and it is by me deposited in the safe deposit vault, and no harm can ever come to me or my interest in the Hamilton Bank Note Engraving and Printing Company on account of anything that you do by reason of our getting hold of this press through Gray.’ ”

COURT:

Q. “Have you stated all the whole conversation?”

(Witness:) “No; he said, ‘Gray has made the biggest fool of himself that ever was; that he has lost all this money in the bank note end of the business, and now Gray has not got it; Sage and Grace are down on him, and as a matter of fact his — the friends that were his — are now mine, and the friends that were yours are now mine; Sage and Grace who used to be our directors you have lost; I have got them, and I have got your press, and I have got the Manhattan contract, and, further than that. I have got it back with Sage and Grace’s agreement, and, if I am not on top, I don’t know.’ ”

NICHOLAS F. SEEBECK recalled.

By Mr. Turner:

Q. “You have heard Mr. Kendall’s testimony as to conversations which he said he had with you at the Brevoort House, did you have any such conversation?”

A. “I did not.”

This testimony comprises Section Nos. 1463-1470 of the New York Bank Note Co. case documents, pages 367-369.

in giving collateral security for borrowing of \$15,000 regarding orders on Manhattan Railway Company for “all tickets delivered to date as per contract” set next meeting for “one week from today”

**1893 June 1** Thursday [ at 88-90 Gold Street ] 3:2 5 trustees: Seebeck Denman Osborn  
no quorum, adjourned until June 3

**1893 June 1** Thursday [ at 88-90 Gold Street ] 3:2 5 special meeting of trustees: Seebeck Denman Osborn  
no quorum, also adjourned until June 3

**1893 June 3** Saturday [ at 88-90 Gold Street ] 3:2 6 trustees: Seebeck Gray Denman Osborn  
adjourned without transacting business

**1893 June 7** Wednesday at 88-90 Gold Street 3:2 6-7 trustees: Seebeck Gray Denman Osborn  
Gray presided  
approved minutes of meetings held April 10, May 25, June 1, and June 3

noticed that certain facts have come to the board regarding the past accounts and duties of C.E. Krack and resolved that the final settlement of any discrepancy be placed in the hands of the vice president and manager [ Gray ]

resolved that over all contracts in force with customers the vice president and manager have absolute and sole authority  
rescinded the resolution of April 10, 1893, to pay Krack and that the treasurer make a new report

**1893 June 15** [ at 88-90 Gold Street ] 3:2 7-8 trustees special meeting: Seebeck Gray Denman Osborn  
Gray presided

approved minutes of meeting held June 7, 1893  
authorized vice president and manager to sign a contract with Reynolds Card Mfg. Co. of New York for purchase of paper for strip tickets of the Manhattan Railway Company for the term of five years, at 3 cents per pound

authorized “the proper officials” of the company to sign a contract with the Kidder Press Mfg. Co. of Boston for “the purchase of a strip ticket printing press for the sum of forty-five hundred dollars (\$4,500), similar to the press now in use by the New York Bank Note Company [ where Gray previously worked ]  
approved a contract signed by the vice president with G.F.C. Smiley [sic, Smillie] for exclusive use of his services as engraver

approved that the \$5 fee per trustee for attending meetings be limited to \$5 for three months  
modified resolution passed April 10 so that on all evidences of debt, checks, notes, etc, in the absence or

incapacity of the treasurer, the signature of secretary shall have the same authority as that of the treasurer and the vice president shall so notify the bank

**1893 June 15** [ at 88-90 Gold Street ] 3:2 8 trustees special meeting: Seebeck Gray Denman Osborn  
Gray presided, adjourned without transacting business

**1893 June 22** [ at 88-90 Gold Street ] 3:2 8-9 trustees: Seebeck Gray Denman Osborn  
Gray presided

after reading of minutes of meeting held June 15, 1893, Gray resigned chair in favor of Denman to dispute minutes: resolution authorizing contract with Reynolds was not for five years unconditionally but only for the term of the Hamilton contract with Manhattan Railway Company; Seebeck went on record opposing the Reynolds contract because of the clause related to the personal opinion of Gray regarding quality of paper stock; Gray moved to rescind resolution but withdrew motion; approved minutes without approving section related to contract; Gray resumed chair and after discussion the paper quality clause was not changed; further action postponed until contract was at hand

**1893 June 22** Thursday [ at 88-90 Gold Street ] 3:2 9 trustees special meeting: Seebeck Gray Chisolm Taylor Denman Osborn

approved minutes of special meeting held June 15  
approved insertion of the word “general” before the word “manager” throughout the bylaws  
approved bylaws change to allow the combination of office of general manager in one person with any other office  
approved bylaws changes related to countersigning another proposed change discussed was withdrawn

**1893 Aug 23** Wednesday [ at office of Russell Sage, 71 Broadway, New York ] 3:2 10-11 trustees: Gray Seebeck Saunders Denman Osborn  
[ This meeting completed the takeover of the company by tycoons W.R. Grace and Russell Sage. ]

Gray presided  
accepted resignation of Denman as trustee  
elected Wm. R. Grace as trustee  
accepted resignation of Saunders as trustee  
accepted resignation of Chisolm as trustee  
elected Chauncey M. Depew as trustee  
elected Russell Sage as trustee [ Sage, born in 1816, was the senior magnate in the new regime ]  
accepted resignation of Osborn as trustee [ he continued to serve as secretary ]



elected H. Walter Webb as trustee  
accepted resignation of Seebeck as president with thanks for his faithfulness – Sage added that the Manhattan Railway Company would not object  
elected Grace as president of the company  
Gray resigned the chair in favor of Grace  
accepted resolution of Gray that he receive 10 per-cent of net profits of pending and future business over and above his salary and that this replace the contract made with him June 30, 1892  
authorized the assignment to Sage and Grace the company claim upon Manhattan Railway Company as collateral to Sage and Grace for money advanced to Hamilton (which at the end of the month would be approximately \$7,000 for 50 million strip tickets)  
accepted the resignation of Denman as treasurer  
elected J. Louis Schaefer as treasurer [ he was not made a trustee until October 13, 1893 ]

**1893 Aug 30** [ location unknown ] 3:2 11  
trustees: Seebeck Gray Taylor  
no quorum, adjourned to September 6

**1893 Sep 6** Wednesday at office of Russell Sage, 71 Broadway 3:2 11-12  
trustees: Sage Grace Seebeck Gray Taylor  
approved minutes of meetings held June 22 and August 23 and the special meeting of June 22  
increased number of trustees from seven to nine, on motion of Grace  
elected Gen. Louis Fitzgerald as trustee  
approved that no expenditure be contracted for except with approval of treasurer and general manager, after discussion of “prevailing business depression”  
heard Seebeck on contract he had to offer for printing postage stamps of Ecuador, but no action taken

**1893 Oct 12** Thursday [ location unknown ] 3:2 12  
trustees: Grace Sage Seebeck  
no quorum, adjourned

**1893 Oct 13** Friday at office of Russell Sage, 71 Broadway 3:2 12-13  
trustees: Grace Sage Gray Seebeck Taylor  
elected J. Louis Schaefer as trustee  
approved minutes of meeting held September 6  
referred report of treasurer to Seebeck, Gray, and Schaefer to report on Monday  
authorized change of signature authorization to president and treasurer  
rescinded resolution of June 7, 1893, giving vice president and manager absolute and sole authority over contracts with customers

**1893 Oct 13** Friday at office of Russell Sage, 71

Broadway 3:2 13-14  
trustees special meeting: Grace Sage Gray Seebeck Taylor Schaefer  
restored original countersigning language to bylaws, Article 4, Section 1 and Section 4, that was changed June 22, 1893

**1893 Oct 16** Monday at office of Russell Sage, 71 Broadway 3:2 14-15  
trustees: Grace Sage Gray Seebeck Taylor Schaefer  
dispensed with reading of minutes  
read and filed report of committee on treasurer’s report  
filed with thanks report prepared by Seebeck on the accounts of the company  
accepted resignation of Gray immediately as vice president and general manager, and the chairman thanked Gray for his “business-like act for which Mr. Gray should be commended, it being in furtherance of what was believed to be for the interests of the company”  
elected Seebeck as vice president  
elected Seebeck as general manager  
discussed financial status of company and heard Seebeck announce he “is willing to allow the amounts due him from the company to stand” and willing to do his part “to carry the financial burdens of the company”  
stated that it was understood that management of company was in the hands of the general manager  
planned for special meeting to amend bylaws to create office of second vice president

**1893 Oct 23** Monday at office of Russell Sage, 71 Broadway 3:2 15-16  
trustees: Grace Seebeck Sage Taylor Gray Schaefer  
approved minutes of meetings held October 12, October 13, and October 16, and the trustees special meeting held October 13  
authorized vice president to sign checks along with the treasurer, the same as the president  
referred suit of E.B. Camacho against the company to the company’s attorney, Mr. Turner  
referred suit of Edgar Fray against the company for \$10,000 to the company’s attorney  
referred proposed contract of Gray, resolution of August 23, to vice president and treasurer  
heard of proposed railroad ticket order from Webb  
approved that settlement of F.G. Miller’s claim be left to president  
referred claim of A.H. Ward to vice president, treasurer, and Gray for settlement  
referred claim of C.W. Dickinson & Sons to vice president and treasurer for more information

**1893 Nov 11** Saturday at Lincoln National Bank 3:2 16-17  
trustees: Grace Sage Seebeck Taylor Gray  
dispensed with reading of minutes  
Grace announced that no new contract was made with Gray  
discussed with Seebeck and Sage a restricted commission-only contract with Gray for only four months, with decision left open until November 13  
agreed to have president and vice president write agreement as proposed by Seebeck for him to keep company solvent and out of debt, as long as he remains manager and with other conditions as proposed by Seebeck  
agreed that the matter of bidding for the U.S. Government postage stamp contract be left with the president and vice president

**1893 Nov 13** Monday at Lincoln National Bank 3:2 17-18  
trustees: Grace Sage Seebeck Webb Taylor  
heard of receipt of letter from Gray accepting notice that his contract with company was terminated  
discussed another possible restricted commission contract for Gray  
the agreement with Seebeck was not ready, and Seebeck repeated his guarantee to keep the company from a loss contingent on loan from trustees  
selected Sage and Webb as bondsmen on the preliminary bond that must accompany the bid for the U.S. postage stamp contract  
left to officers the matter of bidding for the Brooklyn Bridge ticket contract, advocated by Seebeck

**1894**

**1894 Jan 8** Monday at 88-90 Gold Street 3:3 5-6  
stockholders  
approved minutes of meeting held January 9, 1893  
expressed regrets over death of James W. Johnston  
read report of vice president and general manager  
referred treasurer’s report to committee of Cohen, Schaefer, and Osborn  
elected as trustees Grace Sage Depew Webb Jacoby Fitzgerald Taylor Schaefer Seebeck [ Cohen also received votes ]

**1894 Jan 17** Wednesday at office of Russell Sage, 71 Broadway 3:3 6-7  
trustees: Grace Sage Seebeck Taylor Jacoby Schaefer  
Grace presided by motion  
heard report of stockholders meeting of January 8  
elected Grace as president  
elected Seebeck as vice president  
elected J. Louis Schaefer as treasurer

elected Seebeck as general manager  
elected Osborn as secretary  
heard from Seebeck on annual projections for earnings and expenses  
heard from Seebeck that Gray refused to cancel the 25 percent commission clause in his original contract  
heard from Seebeck that the old hydraulic press could not be used profitably

**1894 July 25** Wednesday at office of Russell Sage, 71 Broadway 3:3 7-8  
trustees: Grace Sage Seebeck Taylor Schaefer  
approved minutes of meetings held Oct 23, 1893, Nov 11, 1893, Nov 13, 1893, Jan 17, 1894  
heard statement from George W. Dodd concerning claim against company by C.W. Dickinson & Sons  
referred claim of F.G. Miller to the vice president and treasurer for settlement at a reasonable sum  
discussed converting debt of trustees to stock in connection with desired listing on Stock Exchange  
heard report of vice president and general manager on condition of company  
authorized contract for paper for Manhattan Railway Company tickets for one year with option to renew for two years at 2½¢ per pound, 30 days less 4 percent  
set salary of vice president and general manager at \$6,000 per year beginning April 1, 1894

[ On August 9, 1894, the original summons and complaint by New York Bank Note Company were filed against Hamilton Bank Note Engraving and Printing Company and against Kidder Press Manufacturing Company. The issue was the violation of an 1891 contract between New York Bank Note Company and Kidder Press Manufacturing Company. The available pages of the Hamilton Minute Books mention Kidder only in the minutes of June 15 1893, and October 6, 1897. They mention New York Bank Note only in the same minutes and in those for July 13, 1899. It is interesting, but not necessarily relevant, that the missing pages in the Minute Books cover the five months after the lawsuit began. The sidebar on page 140 explains the highlights of the lawsuit. ]

**1895**

[ Pages 150-151 are missing from Minute Books ]  
[ The following meeting is by extrapolation from a fragment of minutes on page 152 ]

[ **1895 Jan 14** Monday location unknown but probably company offices ] 3:3 8  
[ stockholders ]  
[ elected as trustees: Grace Sage Seebeck Taylor Schaefer – others elected are not named in minutes of the following meeting – see January 31, 1895 ]

New York Bank Note Company sues the Hamilton and Kidder companies

The lawsuit concerned the contract New York Bank Note Company signed October 12, 1891, with Kidder Press Manufacturing Company to purchase a second Kidder strip-ticket perfecting press for \$4,500. This type of press, in one operation for multiple rolls of tickets, printed two colors on one side, printed one color on the reverse, numbered the tickets, and perforated them. As part of the contract to purchase the press from Kidder, New York Bank Note negotiated a 20-year monopoly with Kidder over what companies also might purchase such a press. New York Bank Note had a five-year contract to furnish tickets to the Manhattan Railway Company, signed August 18, 1887, and effective April 1, 1888. In 1892, Hamilton acquired the next five-year contract for strip tickets with Manhattan Railway Company, the Hamilton trustees approving it at the meeting held December 8, 1892. On June 15, 1893, the Hamilton trustees in attendance (Seebeck, Gray, Denman, Osborn) approved the purchase of a strip-ticket printing press “similar to the press now in use by the New York Bank Note Company.” Kidder built and delivered this press to the Hamilton firm. Hamilton previously had purchased a Kidder strip-ticket press, but it required two runs to print both sides. Hamilton had Kidder modify this press so it also would perform all printing and finishing operations in one press run. New York Bank Note brought suit on August 9, 1894. An interlocutory judgment in favor of New York Bank Note was made on November 17, 1894. All three companies appealed the terms, with various amended complaints and supplements. The trial before Appellate Judge Frederick Smyth of the New York Supreme Court began June 19, 1896. Seebeck was among those deposed. Decisions in favor of New York Bank Note were made September 13, 1897, and October 4, 1897. The interlocutory judgment was entered June 8, 1898. The three companies filed appeals in May 1904 over a perpetual injunction granted to New York Bank Note and over the amount of damages awarded to New York Bank Note, \$60,546.95, a reduction from a refereed amount of \$105,248.38, and over the computation of interest. Among the arguments for defendants Hamilton and Kidder was that New York Bank Note had been chartered in New Jersey but on or about January 1, 1893, had been reorganized in West Virginia and that the terms of the 1891 contract with Kidder would not transfer to the company chartered in 1893 in West Virginia. The court did not agree with the defendants.

**1895 Jan 31** Thursday at office of Russell Sage, 71 Broadway 3:3 8-9  
trustees: Grace Sage Seebeck Taylor Schaefer [ and probably Jacoby and Schernikow, plus two others, according to minutes of January 16, 1896 ]  
Grace presided by motion  
elected Grace as president  
elected Seebeck as vice president  
elected J. Louis Schaefer as treasurer  
elected Seebeck as general manager  
elected Osborn as secretary  
heard report dated Jan 31 handed in by Seebeck  
heard report of Seebeck on progress on contract for paper for Manhattan Railway Company tickets  
heard report of Schaefer that board would not enter-tain the claim of Dickinson & Sons and that claims of Miller and Ward were settled

1896

**1896 Jan 9** Thursday at office of Russell Sage, 71 Broadway 3:3 9-10

trustees: Grace Sage Seebeck Taylor Schaefer  
approved minutes of meeting held January 31, 1895  
heard report of Seebeck that contract for purchase of paper for Manhattan Railway Company tickets had been placed with Reynolds Card Co. for two years with option to terminate on three-month notice  
heard report by vice president and general manager on operations for the past year  
report by Seebeck on assets and liabilities held over for comment by treasurer  
left open the ratification of payments of salary to vice president and general manager since April 1, 1895  
requested Seebeck to renegotiate lease of premises for one year with options for additional years and for floor below, or lease for two years plus conditions  
[ Notice of stockholders meeting January 13, 1896, is pasted over part of minutes of that meeting. ]  
[ Page 156 is missing from the Minute Books ]  
[ The following heading is by extrapolation from notice and meeting held January 16 ]

[ **1896 Jan 13** Monday at 88-90 Gold Street 3:3 10 stockholders  
elected as trustees: not known – minutes of the fol-lowing meeting on January 16 name the old board but do not name the new board that immediately convened after the old board adjourned ]

**1896 Jan 16** Thursday at office of Russell Sage, 71 Broadway 3:3 10-11  
trustees: Grace Sage Jacoby Seebeck Schaefer Schernikow  
approved minutes of meeting held January 9, 1896  
assigned to vice president and general manager the power to renew lease for one year or two years  
voted \$500 as compensation to treasurer for services during year  
voted \$100 as compensation to secretary for services during year  
confirmed that Seebeck accepted a reduced salary of \$5,000 per year as of April 1, 1896  
confirmed that payment of salary to Seebeck up to April 1, 1896, was at rate of \$6,000 per year  
[ The new board of trustees then immediately con-vened to elect officers. ]  
Jacoby presided  
elected Grace as president  
elected Seebeck as vice president and general man-ager  
elected J. Louis Schaefer as treasurer  
elected Osborn as secretary  
referred bill from W.L. Turner to vice president and treasurer, with opinion that it was excessive  
authorized general manager to accept from Mr. Sprague a bond order at a cost of \$1,000, bonds to be listed on Stock Exchange – \$1,000 cost a concern  
approved \$5 fee for trustees and secretary for each meeting attended

1897

**1897 Jan 11** Monday at 88-90 Gold Street 3:3 12-13 stockholders  
pasted notice of meeting obscures a few lines of text of the minutes  
elected as trustees Grace Sage Depew Webb Fitzgerald Seebeck Schernikow Jacoby Schaefer  
in the voting, Seebeck delegated authority to Grace to vote 38,000 shares by proxy for Seebeck  
heard report of vice president and general manager the minutes note that the total capital stock of the company was 75,000 shares and that each elected trustee received 57,337 shares voted  
notarized statements of election inspectors pasted in

**1897 Jan 14** Thursday at office of Russell Sage, 71 Broadway 3:3 13  
trustees: Grace Sage Jacoby Seebeck Schaefer Schernikow  
approved minutes of meeting held January 16, 1896  
heard from Seebeck that lease for offices was re-newed for two years  
filed report of vice president and general manager  
filed report of treasurer  
old board adjourned, and the new board of trustees then immediately convened to elect officers  
Grace presided  
elected Grace as president  
elected Seebeck as vice president and general man-ager  
elected J. Louis Schaefer as treasurer  
elected Osborn as secretary  
authorized that interest on company debt be paid to January 1, 1897  
referred to vice president and treasurer power to act on reduction of book value of company plant, part of which was not being used, by charging off a percent-age to profit and loss  
approved the discharging of the watchman  
confirmed the salary of Seebeck at \$5,000 per year beginning April 1, 1896  
voted \$500 as compensation to treasurer for services during year and \$100 as compensation to secretary for services during year  
requested president to confer with W.L. Turner about his bill and report to the board

**1897 March 8** Monday at office of Russell Sage, 71 Broadway 3:3 14  
trustees: Grace Sage Seebeck Schaefer Jacoby Schernikow  
received new contract for supplying tickets to the Manhattan Railway Company for two years from April 1, 1897  
authorized executing and signing contract by vice president and secretary “in case the proposed con-tract be modified by omitting the clause in regard to Mr. Seebeck”  
**1897 March 10** Wednesday at office of Russell Sage, 71 Broadway 3:3 14-17  
trustees: Sage Jacoby Schernikow Schaefer Seebeck Seebeck presided  
approved minutes of meetings held January 14, 1897, and March 8, 1897  
approved a bond to indemnify Sage, Seebeck, and Grace regarding the Hamilton contract to supply tickets to the Manhattan Railway Company, contract guaranteed by the three, with \$25,000 liquidated



During 1885-1891, the Hamilton Bank Note Engraving and Printing Co. leased offices in the Washington Building at No. 1 Broadway in New York City. This circa 1890 view looking northwest from the Washington Building shows the junction of the Ninth Avenue and Sixth Avenue elevated railways of the Manhattan Railway Co. and a sign of rival American Bank Note Co. The Hamilton company fulfilled contracts to supply passenger strip tickets to the Manhattan Railway Co. during 1885-1888, 1893-1897, 1897-1899, and 1899-1902.

damages if there is a default  
authorized vice president to sign bond of indemnity and secretary to affix company seal  
approved bond to hold and firmly bind Hamilton firm unto Sage, Seebeck, and Grace in the sum of \$50,000 – the text of the signed, sealed, and notarized bonding instrument regarding Sage, Seebeck, and Grace for the Manhattan Railway Company contract is part of the minutes

**1897 Oct 6** Wednesday at office of Russell Sage, 31 Nassau Street 3:3 17-20  
trustees: Sage Seebeck Jacoby Schaefer Schernikow Seebeck presided  
approved minutes of meeting held March 10, 1897  
approved the vice president and secretary to execute a bond of indemnity to Russell Sage and W.R. Grace for any sum they may be compelled to pay, pending an appeal from the decision of the Supreme Court [ of the State of New York ], Special Term, Part 6, in the case of New York Bank Note Company against the Hamilton firm and the Kidder Press Manufacturing Company – \$50,000 entered as marginal note  
text of signed, sealed, and notarized bonding instrument is in the minutes – signed on October 6, 1897, by Seebeck and Osborn

text of signed, sealed, and notarized bonding instrument in sum of \$50,000 for stay granted pending appeal in the Supreme Court of the State of New York, First Judicial Department, Appellate Division, regarding judgement in suit brought by New York Bank Note Company against the Hamilton and Kidder companies is in the minutes – signed on October 6, 1897, by Schaefer, Osborn, Grace, and Sage  
notice of stockholders Jan 10 meeting pasted in here

1898

**1898 Jan 10** Monday at 88-90 Gold Street 3:3 20-21 (notice) and 3:4 6  
stockholders  
[ Transcriber Bill Welch wrote that he did not have pages 178 through 181 of the Minute Books. ]

**1898 date unknown**  
approved, on an unknown date, that an unnamed person “temporarily act as manager of the company without compensation,” as Seebeck proposed

**1898 June 1** Wednesday at 88-90 Gold Street 3:4 6-7  
trustees: Grace Sage Seebeck Jacoby Schaefer Osborn [ It appears that Osborn was elected as trustee at the January 10 meeting or a following meeting. ]

omitted the reading of the minutes  
approved a bill submitted against Seebeck for \$2,743.04 [ probably for engraving and printing ]  
referred bill of Turner amounting to \$3,010 for legal services to vice president and treasurer with instructions to negotiate a reduction

1899

**1899 Jan 9** Monday at 88-90 Gold Street 3:4 7-8  
stockholders: Chisolm Thurber Seebeck Schernikow Osborn Schaefer  
Seebeck called meeting to order  
Chisolm chosen to preside  
approved minutes of meeting held January 10, 1898  
heard protest of Seebeck concerning 19,000 shares that he said he endorsed and delivered to Grace and Sage subject to an agreement he made with them dated April 4, 1893  
heard report of vice president and general manager  
heard report of treasurer  
elected as trustees Jacoby Chisolm Seebeck Schernikow Thurber Cohen Valentine Reasoner and J.G. Steenken – Grace Sage Depew Osborn and Schaefer also received votes but were not elected

**1899 Jan 10** Tuesday at 18 Broadway 3:4 8-9  
trustees: Seebeck Jacoby Cohen Thurber Schernikow  
read minutes of meeting held June 1, 1898  
heard secretary read names of trustees elected the day before, January 9  
heard letter of resignation of Steenken as trustee  
Jacoby chaired election of officers  
elected Seebeck as president and general manager  
elected Schernikow as secretary and treasurer  
Seebeck took the chair  
heard notice of Schernikow that he would propose an amendment at the next meeting  
referred renewal of lease on present premises to president and treasurer  
approved \$5 for trustees for attendance at every meeting

**1899 Feb 10** Friday at 18 Broadway 3:4 9-10  
trustees: Seebeck Chisolm Jacoby Reasoner Thurber Schernikow  
approved minutes of meeting held Jan 10, 1899  
accepted resignation of Steenken as trustee  
referred to the officers the bill of Turner as counsel  
authorized the officers to enter into a contract with the Manhattan Railway Company, or any other railroad company, for the printing of tickets, etc.  
referred to the president and to Jacoby the matter of the Notes of the company and all other matters relat-

ing to Grace and Sage  
approved contract that Seebeck entered into with Crocker & Company of San Francisco to print banknotes  
authorized president and officers to order all machinery necessary for Crocker contract  
elected John Tonjes as trustee  
referred to Thurber the bill against Seebeck for printing done for Seebeck in 1898 amounting to about \$3,000, charged to him at 50 percent above actual cost of engraving and printing  
confirmed salary of vice president and general manager [ Seebeck ] for 1898 at rate of \$5,000 per year  
set salary of president and general manager, Mr. Seebeck, for 1899 at rate of \$5,000 per year

**1899 Apr 11** Tuesday at 18 Broadway 3:4 10-11  
trustees: Seebeck Cohen Thurber Schernikow [ not a quorum – there still are nine trustees ]  
approved minutes of meeting held February 10, 1899  
approved contract with Manhattan Railway Company to supply it with tickets for three years and approved required bond of \$25,000 at a cost of \$125  
approved note for \$14,000 that Hamilton borrowed from Manhattan Railway Company according to the contract signed April 1, 1899, at 6 percent annual interest [ changed to \$18,000 at next meeting ]  
authorized secretary to attach seal to all necessary papers and documents  
accepted resignation of Thurber as trustee

**1899 May 8** Monday at 18 Broadway 3:4 11-12  
trustees: Seebeck Chisolm Cohen Jacoby Tonjes Reasoner Schernikow  
approved minutes of meeting held April 11, 1899  
heard report of Seebeck that Manhattan Railway Company had agreed to lend Hamilton \$18,000 instead of \$14,000 and deemed best to accept  
approved note for \$18,000 that Hamilton borrowed from Manhattan Railway Company according to the contract signed April 1, 1899, at 6 percent interest payable semiannually – text of note is in minutes

[ Seebeck died June 23, 1899. ]

**1899 June 26** Tuesday at 18 Broadway 3:4 12  
trustees special meeting: Cohen Chisolm Jacoby Tonjes Schernikow  
Chisolm chosen to preside  
elected Tonjes as president, without salary  
instructed secretary to notify N.Y. Produce Exchange Bank of the change  
appointed Krack as general manager without an increase in salary and subject to further orders



**1899 July 13** Thursday at 18 Broadway 3:4 12-13 trustees: Tonjes Chisolm Cohen Jacoby Schernikow approved minutes of meetings held May 8, 1899, and June 26, 1899  
approved paying bill of stenographer T.F. Daniels for services in New York Bank Note Co. lawsuit  
approved bill of W.L. Turner for \$409.85 for legal services rendered in Camacho suit  
approved president and treasurer to settle bill of W.L. Turner for \$3,100 for legal services rendered in New York Bank Note Co. suit

**1899 Sep 19** Thursday at 18 Broadway 3:4 13-14 trustees: Tonjes Chisolm Cohen Jacoby Schernikow approved minutes of meeting held July 13, 1899  
heard that W.L. Turner’s bill for \$3,100 was settled for monthly payments of \$500  
authorized the president to contract for a one-year supply of paper for Manhattan Railway Company tickets at a price not to exceed present one  
heard report of secretary about supplying H.S. Crocker & Company of San Francisco with Guatemala banknotes at cost of \$6.06 per thousand  
authorized officers to enter into contract with Col. Porter for period not to exceed six months, renewable at the company’s option, at a salary of \$20 per week and 10 percent of net profits on all work he might bring into the company [ revised at next meeting ]  
heard treasurer on financial condition of company  
increased salary of Krack as manager to \$40 per week as of October 1, 1899, on condition that he releases company from all claims he might have against it  
set the salary of president at a rate of \$1,200 per year beginning October 1, 1899

set the salary of secretary and treasurer at a rate of \$1,000 per year from January 9 to October 1, 1899, and at a rate of \$1,200 per year from October 1, 1899  
expressed thanks to Tonjes for services rendered to company since death of Seebeck

1900

**1900 Jan 8** Monday at 88-90 Gold Street 3:4 14 \* trustees: Tonjes Chisolm Cohen Schernikow approved minutes of meeting held September 19, 1899, with change of “net profits” to “gross profits” regarding contract with Col. Porter  
discharged Krack as general manager “to the best interest of the company,” effective December 30, 1899, and authorized giving him a sum not to exceed two-week salary of \$40 per week in view of the short notice of discharge  
read and approved these minutes  
[ Page 199 of the Minute Books ends the Seebeck era. Welch also quoted from 1907 (page 299), 1909 (page 324), 1910 (page 336) and 1944 (page not stated). ]

As noted on the Table of Contents page of this book, two separate digital files of the Minute Books of the Hamilton Bank Note Engraving and Printing Co., 1884-1899, accompany this book. The files, created with the permission of Nadine Kofman, include the pages scanned from *The Seebecker* that contain the full transcriptions made by Bill Welch of the company Minute Books, 1884-1899.

\* Notations in this synopsis, such as 3:4 14 for the minutes of January 8, 1900, refer to the volume, number, and pages in *The Seebecker* where Bill Welch published the respective meeting minutes.

CHRONOLOGY OF THE LIFE OF NICHOLAS F. SEEBECK  
1857-1899

Michael Schreiber

Nicholas F. Seebeck

Nicholas Frederick Seebeck was born **February 19, 1857**, in Hanover, Germany. His father was Frederick Aug. (August) Seebeck. His mother was Henrietta D. Steffens. The 1870 U.S. Census states his birthplace. It places the Seebeck family at Crown Point, Indiana, with the father working as a bookbinder. FamilySearch.org shows the census page, dated June 2, 1870.  
On December 19, 1890, at New York City, Nicholas F. Seebeck applied for a U.S. passport for himself, his wife, and his son August (passport issued December 20). In the application, he stated that he was born February 19, 1857, in Germany and that he immigrated to the United States, sailing from Bremen **June 10, 1866**. FamilySearch.org has an image of the passport application.

Seebeck at 3 Vesey Street

Young Seebeck would have moved to New York City sometime after the U.S. Census of June 2, 1870. Sometime in the early 1870s, **in 1872** according to Bill Welch, Seebeck opened a stationery store at 3 Vesey Street in Manhattan, where he offered engraving, lithography, printing, and blank book manufacturing. This was a basement-level store with a sidewalk entrance, in the Astor House, (William L. Welch, “The Life and Works of Nicholas F. Seebeck,” *Collectors Club Philatelist*, May-June 1995, page 148).  
MS found a high-resolution photograph of the Astor House on the Internet in 2015 that shows the location circa 1900 (Shorpy Historic Picture Archive, Huntsville, Alabama). The office appears to have been located in a walk-down basement a few feet below street level and below the hotel’s elevated first floor. The Vesey location faced St. Paul’s Chapel, near the corner of Vesey and

Broadway. It is not known if 3 Vesey was Seebeck’s first business address.  
The 3 Vesey address was “a basement store in the old Astor House,” per George Sloane (*Stamps*, December 24, 1949), and *The Seebecker*, January 1991, 3:3, page 21. The Astor House was located immediately north of St. Paul’s Chapel, at the intersection of Vesey Street, Broadway, and Barclay Street. The Astor House was a five-story hotel that opened in 1836. The south section was demolished in 1913 and was replaced by the Astor House Building. The north section was demolished in 1926.  
From 3 Vesey Street, Seebeck also offered foreign postage stamps and stamp albums, according to a Seebeck business card (Leo John Harris, “The Hamilton Bank Note [Engraving and Printing] Company of New York: Some Collateral Collectibles,” *Collectors Club Philatelist*, September 1981, page 292).  
Danilo A. Mueses dated the same business card to 1876 and attributed his image of the card to the Kilian E. Nathan collection (Danilo A. Mueses, *Seebeck: Hero or Villain?*, English translation, *The Spanish Main*, 1988, page 4, original Spanish edition circa 1986). This second edition notes only that the business card bears an 1879 manuscript date.

**Circa 1872**, unsigned reprints of the 1845 New Haven, Connecticut, postmaster provisional envelope’s imprinted stamp were made for Seebeck and for others (Scott *Specialized Catalogue of United States Stamps and Covers*). Signed reprints were made in other years for other dealers.

In the article “Inside Hamilton Bank Note [ Engraving and Printing ] Co.,” *American Philatelist*, March 1989, pages 234-246, Welch pictured **“N.F. Seebeck’s / Holiday Circular / 1873,”** a one-page list of postal cards Seebeck

offered for sale, Welch noting (page 238), “He began in the stamp business the previous year.” Welch added in footnote No. 26 (page 246): “ . . . several of Seebeck’s pricelists from the 1870s proclaim ‘ Established 1872, . . . ’ ” although the earliest pricelist Welch had seen was the Holiday Circular of 1873.

The earliest documented item addressed to Seebeck is a United States 1-cent Liberty postal card postmarked **March 10, 1875**, at New Orleans, addressed to Seebeck at P.O. Box 1698 in New York City. The message concerned postage stamps, envelopes, and United States and Confederate States local stamps (Welch, *Collectors Club Philatelist*, May-June 1995, page 147, and Welch, *The Seebecker*, January 1987, pages 2-3, with pictures of both sides).

Mueses pictured a cover addressed to Seebeck at P.O. Box 4926, New York City, from El Salvador, postmarked there **January 2, 1877**, and postmarked February 11, 1877, at New York City (page 4). Mueses attributed the image of this 1877 cover to the Kilian E. Nathan collection.

The 1985 Roger Koerber sale of the Herbert J. Bloch philatelic reference library and properties of other consignors listed in lot No. 1495 the *Descriptive Price Catalogue of All Known Postage Stamps of the United States and Foreign Countries.*, with “N. F. Seebeck / P. O. Box 4926, NEW YORK.” below the title. It is described as “**1876**” and an octavo with a height of 8¾ inches and pages (2) plus 42. The lot also included a Bechtel edition of the same pricelist with appendix pages 43-46. Leo John Harris writing in *Stamp Collector*, June 10, 1996, page 12, stated that the same catalog was published under the names of other dealers, “including J.T. Handford, C.H. Bechtel, J.E. Dickert of New York City, and C.C. De Puy of Syracuse.” It is not known who created the *Descriptive Price Catalogue*. It could have been, MS believes, dealer William P. Brown, who published three editions (1868,

1871, 1872) of his *Descriptive Price Catalogue of Government Postage Stamps For Sale*, the third edition of which was generic (Stanley M. Bierman, *Collectors Club Philatelist*, July-August 1995, page 229).

Seebeck and the Dominican Republic

In **late 1878 or early 1879**, Seebeck traveled to the Dominican Republic. A U.S. 1-cent Liberty postal card with added 1-cent Franklin stamp, addressed to “Mr. Hillman,” postmarked New York City **February 11, 1879**, and signed by F. Seebeck (Seebeck’s father), transmitted the message: “Because my son has traveled to Santo Domingo, I am unable to transmit your order and I request that you wait until March, when he is expected back.” (Welch, *The Seebecker*, January 1987, pages 2-3, with pictures of both sides of card).

Seebeck printed the **1879** adhesive stamps of the Dominican Republic and the Colombian State of Bolivar (William L. Welch, *Collectors Club Philatelist*, May-June 1995, page 148). It is not known if he secured these contracts himself or if he fulfilled them for someone else. See Mueses, pages 65-68, for a discussion of the 1879-1885 stamps of the Colombian State of Bolivar. See Mueses, pages 65-66 and pages 9-12, for a discussion of the purported involvement of Seebeck in the postal paper of the Dominican Republic. Welch in “Inside Hamilton” wrote that Seebeck “printed most of the stamps of the Colombian state of Bolivar from 1879 to 1881.”

Two lots in the Kelleher auction held October 25-26, 2014, sale No. 660, included proofs of the 1880 Dominican Republic postage stamp issue from the personal archive of engraver Rudolph P. Laubenheimer: one lot of eight proofs and another of eight proofs and seven later stamps mounted on a stamp album page.

MS believes Seebeck almost certainly was responsible for the 1881 postal cards and envelopes of the Dominican Republic. The postal cards are inscribed “The Manhattan

Bank Note Company New York.” MS believes George Thurber also could have been involved. See Mueses, pages 9-12 and page 66, for a discussion of Manhattan Bank Note Company, the Manhattan Engraving Company, and Dominican Republic stamps and postal cards. Mueses quoted from the writing of Clarence W. Hennan on the stamps of the Dominican Republic (*Collectors Club Philatelist*, April 1946 and October 1946).

Barbara Mueller wrote that George Thurber “became treasurer of the new Manhattan Engraving Co.” in 1867, that he became chief of engraving under G.F.C. Smillie at American Bank Note Company, and that he “helped establish Hamilton” with the help of A.R. Chisolm of Morristown, N.J. Chisolm and Thurber were two of the founders and officers of Hamilton Bank Note Company (1881). Thurber was a lettering engraver and an ornamental engraver. See *The Essay-Proof Journal*, Second Quarter, 1988, Vol. 45, No. 2, Whole No. 178.

Mueses (page 66) noted the inclusion of the name “Manhattan Bank Note Co.” within the Stanley Gibbons catalog listing (1952) for the Colombian Department [ State ] of Bolivar issue of 1882.

Mueses (page 76) pictured a cover from the Dominican Republic to Seebeck in New York City at 3 Vesey Street bearing an arrival postmark of February 18, 1880, and a stamp of the 1879 issue.

Mueses (page 78) wrote that the 1879 stamps of the Dominican Republic were issued “about July” because the European press in September 1879 included notices of them. He wrote that the order for the issue was not published [ in the Dominican Republic ] until September 1879.

Harris pictured a memorandum written in German and dated March 28, 1880, from Seebeck to a customer (*Collectors Club Philatelist*, September 1981, page 293).

Seebeck at 97 Wall Street

In **spring 1880**, Seebeck moved his business from 3 Vesey Street to 97 Wall Street. Welch pictured (*The Seebecker*, June 1992, 4:1, page 10) a notice from the *Stamp Collector’s Review*, Davenport, Iowa, June 1880, that announced the move. Welch also pictured Seebeck’s advertisement in the same issue of the *Stamp Collector’s Review*. A related Seebeck address is 95 Wall Street.

In **1880**, Seebeck supplied two types of the brown Hussey’s Express Messenger stamp for Hussey’s Post of New York City, plus ultramarine and red stamps, perforated gauge 12, Scott 87L73, 87L73a, 87L74, and 87L75. Two gauge 16 stamps were issued in 1882, 87L76 and 87L77. The imprint at the bottom of the stamp design reads “N.F. Seebeck, 97 Wall St. N. Y.” (Scott *Specialized Catalogue of United States Stamps and Covers* and William L. Welch, “The Life and Works of Nicholas F. Seebeck,” *Collectors Club Philatelist*, May-June 1995, page 148).

Ernest Schernikow

In 1981, Leo John Harris wrote: “In **the early 1880s**, Seebeck conceived the idea of supplying postage stamps to countries free of charge . . . .” (Harris, *Collectors Club Philatelist*, September 1981, page 291). Harris appears to have it too early. Ernest Schernikow (1860-1933) writing in *The Philatelic Gazette* in 1916 said that Seebeck consulted with Schernikow on his plan “**some time in 1888.**” The 1988 English translation of Mueses had this date incorrectly as “1880.”

Seebeck apparently married Schernikow’s sister Anna Aline Schernikow (born 1857, the same year Seebeck was born). This marriage occurred sometime after the 1880 U.S. Census (June 9), which listed “Annie Schernikow” as still living at home with the two parents and three other siblings, including Ernest, then 19 years old. MS has found no record of this marriage of Seebeck to

Anna or of a divorce or a dissolution. The marriage had to have ended because records show that Seebeck married another woman on September 27, 1887.

The Schernikow family immigrated to the United States July 28, 1863, arriving at New York City from Hamburg on the *Hammonia*. Young Ernest was 3½. Brother Edward Otto was 7 or 8 (born in 1855). Sisters Franzisca Anna and Anna Aline were, respectively 11, and 5. In New York, brother Oscar was born circa 1864-1865. See “United States Germans to America Index, 1850-1897,” database, FamilySearch.org

Ernest Schernikow became a naturalized U.S. citizen on October 21, 1884. As an adult, he worked in New York City as vice consul of the Republic of El Salvador (a few months as consul), as a trustee of the Hamilton Bank Note Engraving and Printing Co. beginning in 1891 and its secretary for a short time beginning February 1892 and again in January 1899, and as an officer of the New York & Honduras Rosario Mining Co. He was a delegate to the Pan-American Congress, the president of the New York Mineralogical Club, a life member of the American Museum of Natural History, and a member of the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Welch suggested that many of the reprinting abuses with proofs (“distinctive proofs of the Seebeck issues in black, red, and blue”) be attributed to Schernikow circa 1908, when he made his reprints of U.S. stamps (William L. Welch, “The Life and Works of Nicholas F. Seebeck,” *Collectors Club Philatelist*, May-June 1995, page 151).

A U.S. 2-cent Liberty postal card postmarked New York City **March 13, 1883**, signed by N.F. Seebeck, and addressed to Carl Baron Villani in Prague, transmits the message in German that Seebeck sent a stamp catalog to Mr. Rittmeister Matzenauer and that Seebeck was sending his exchange list for stamps (valid for 10 weeks) to Villani (*The Seebecker*, January 1987, 1:2, page 3).

Seebeck sells his stamp business

In **fall 1883**, Seebeck sold his stamp business to stamp dealer Gustave B. Calman (Welch, *Collectors Club Philatelist*, May-June 1995, page 148, source unknown). This was a revision to his earlier article “Inside Hamilton Bank Note Co.” (*American Philatelist*, March 1989), in which Welch wrote that Seebeck sold his stamp business to Calman in early 1884 (*The Weekly Philatelic Era*, March 19, 1898, XII 25, cited in “Inside Hamilton Bank Note Co.,” footnote No. 1).

Leo John Harris (page 292) pictured the back of an **1884 cover** bearing a small N.F. Seebeck seal with “97 WALL ST.” stamped over the printed “3 VESEY ST.” The cover is postmarked November 2, 1884. The label adds “BOOKSELLER” to Seebeck’s business activities.

Harris connected this 1884 cover with the move to 97 Wall Street, but Welch showed that the move occurred in spring 1880.

Seebeck joins the Hamilton firm

Leo John Harris also wrote: “Seeking to have the printing facilities for his plan, Seebeck [ in April 1884 ] became secretary and general manager of the then Hamilton Bank Note [ Engraving and Printing ] Company” (page 291). This statement is correct regarding Seebeck’s initial formal connection with Hamilton. It is not certain, however, if Seebeck might have invested in Hamilton because of a plan to print stamps for free for the countries he eventually contracted with.

Hamilton Bank Note Engraving and Printing Company was a newly founded (**January 16, 1884**) New York City firm when Nicholas F. Seebeck provided it with an infusion of cash in spring 1884 and became one of its trustees. Seebeck’s one-year agreement with Hamilton was dated **April 8, 1884**. The terms: For \$5,000 in shares of Hamilton, Hamilton purchased Seebeck’s engraving and printing business at 95 Wall Street [ also 97 Wall Street ]; Hamilton leased to Seebeck

for 15 percent of net profits its equipment and premises for the fulfillment of its contracts. Welch in “Inside Hamilton Bank Note Co.” provided more details on pages 234-235. On April 21, 1884, at a special meeting, the trustees elected Seebeck trustee, secretary and general manager (*The Seebecker*, December 1987, 1:4, page 12).

The United States was then in the financial depression of 1882-1885, including the **Panic of 1884**, and the new Hamilton firm was a reorganization of a previous New York firm named Hamilton Bank Note Company. On January 16, 1884, the new firm purchased from Thomas Jordan the plant of the former company, including machinery, dies, and rolls.

The previous firm had been established in **1881**, with A.R. Chisolm as president, G.W. Thurber as vice president and manager, A.D. Wagner as treasurer, and Augustine L. Helm as designer. It was located at 61 Broadway. The information in this paragraph is from Barbara Mueller, *The Essay-Proof Journal*, Second Quarter, 1988, Vol. 45, No. 2, Whole No. 178, which was reprinted in the *Souvenir Card Journal*, Fourth Quarter, 2004, Vol. 24, No. 4, pages 22-25. Mueller implied that Hamilton Bank Note Engraving and Printing Co. was a continuation of Hamilton Bank Note Co. The new firm did buy assets of the previous firm, and Chisolm, Thurber, and Wagner were the founding trustees of the new firm, but on January 16, 1884, Hamilton Bank Note Engraving and Printing Co. was founded as a newly constituted corporation.

On **October 21, 1884**, Nicholas F. Seebeck of 556 Greenwich Street was naturalized at U.S. District Court, New York, N.Y. Henry W. Gennerich of 243 E. 84th was the witness. Family Search.org has an image of the record.

Hamilton Bank Note Engraving and Printing Co. manufactured the four Numeral stamps of the Postal Telegraph Company

issued **in 1885**, Scott 15T1–15T4 (Scott *Specialized Catalogue of United States Stamps and Covers* and William L. Welch, “The Life and Works of Nicholas F. Seebeck,” *Collectors Club Philatelist*, May-June 1995, page 148).

At their meeting **February 6, 1885**, the Hamilton trustees renewed the contract with Seebeck, with the new document effective April 1, 1885. On March 21, the trustees authorized Seebeck to purchase new equipment for the elevated railroad ticket contract and to lease new premises (Welch “Inside Hamilton Bank Note Co.,” page 236, and *The Seebecker*, April 1988, 2:1, pages 7-8). A June 25 letter from Seebeck entered into the June 29 minutes, page 14, said that his contract was renewed March 19.

In a letter dated **June 25, 1885**, Seebeck proposed to cancel his contract and to transfer all assets to Hamilton, which the trustees accepted at their meeting June 29. The assets included the contracts for tickets for the New York Elevated Rail Road and the New York and Brooklyn Bridge and other companies. Welch, “Inside Hamilton,” page 236, *The Seebecker*, April 1988, 2:1, pages 13-14.

At their meeting held **September 10, 1885**, the trustees voted to establish salaries for Seebeck and Edward P. Baker retroactive to May 1. Beginning May 1, 1885, Seebeck’s salary as secretary, treasurer, and general manager was \$3,000 per year. Baker’s salary as president also was \$3,000. George Thurber was paid \$30 per week as superintendent of the engraving, transferring, and plate printing departments and as an engraver, until he resigned in summer 1886 (Welch “Inside Hamilton,” pages 236-237, and *The Seebecker*, April 1988, 2:1, pages 14-15).

Hamilton presidents were Alexander R. Chisolm, Edward P. Baker, Chisolm again, Seebeck, William R. Grace, and Seebeck again. Baker had been general agent for Continental Bank Note Company in 1876 (Barbara Mueller, *The Essay-Proof Journal*,



Second Quarter, 1988, Vol. 45, No. 2, Whole No. 178, which was reprinted in the *Souvenir Card Journal*, Fourth Quarter, 2004, Vol. 24, No. 4, pages 22-25) and vice president of Franklin Bank Note Company.

The trustees or stockholders of the Hamilton Bank Note Engraving and Printing Company met at 61 Broadway during 1884-1885, at 1 Broadway during 1885-1891 (first meeting of shareholders there was May 18, 1885, and first meeting of trustees there was June 29, 1885), at the Lincoln National Bank during 1893, at 71 Broadway (office of Russell Sage) during 1893-1897, at 31 Nassau Street (office of Russell Sage) in 1897-1898, at 18 Broadway in 1899, at 88 and 90 Gold Street in 1892-1893 and 1898-1900 (*The Seebecker*, various issues, 1987-1991).

Trip to West Indies and South America

When did the trip really happen? -- 1884, 1885, 1886 or 1887? Was it really a buying trip for Scott? Harris: In **1886**, Seebeck went on a stamp buying trip to the West Indies and South America “to acquaint himself with his prospective Latin American customers” (Harris, *Collectors Club Philatelist*, September 1981, page 291). Schernikow wrote in April 1916 in the *Philatelic Gazette* that **in 1884 or 1885** Seebeck “made a collecting trip to the West Indies and the northern coast of South America for Mr. J.W. Scott.” The 1988 English translation of Mueses (page 6) misparaphrased the quote.

The Hamilton Minute Books record a trustees meeting and a stockholders meeting on January 11, 1886, but no other meetings until July 22, 1886. The Minute Books also record a stockholders regular meeting on January 10, 1887, but they record no trustees meetings during the **first half of 1887** (January 11 through July 12), so MS thinks it is possible that Seebeck could have made his trip to the West Indies and South America in 1886 or 1887 (*The Seebecker*, September 1988, 2:2, pages 11-13). There also were no meetings between April 21,

1884, and October 10, 1884, but Seebeck then was new to the company and to his general manager position. It is unlikely that he would have made a major trip then.

Hamilton Bank Note Engraving and Printing Co. manufactured the **1887-1888** revenue stamps of Colombia, Forbin Nos. 15-27 (William L. Welch, “The Life and Works of Nicholas F. Seebeck,” *Collectors Club Philatelist*, May-June 1995, page 148).

On September 27, 1887, in New York City, Nicholas F. Seebeck married, per FamilySearch.org, Rosalie Petigny-Meurisse, age 18 (born April 19, 1869). Another online listing gives her name as Therese R. Petigny, age 19. Their son August C. Seebeck was born October 26, 1888.

When did Seebeck make his deal or deals with Gustave Calman? In **1888**, Seebeck “arranged for Gustave B. Calman, a wholesale stamp dealer who handled stamp remainders, to be his agent for all the reprints and remainders resulting from his scheme” (Harris, *Collectors Club Philatelist*, September 1981, page 291). Mueses wrote (page 68) that in **1888** Seebeck sold his stock of Dominican Republic and the State of Bolivar to Gustave Calman and “gave him the canceling devices that were used fraudulently to mark [ post-mark ] the stamps of both countries.”

**The 1888 deal** with Gustave Calman was for the remainders of the Dominican Republic and the Colombian State of Bolívar. It was too early for the countries that signed contracts in 1889.

Gustave B. Calman (1860-1898) was the second oldest Calman brother. Brother Henry (1863-1937) worked with him. David Calman, a lawyer, was born in 1858.

Hamilton Bank Note Engraving and Printing Co. manufactured the **1889-1890** revenue stamps of Guatemala, Forbin Nos. 37-43 (William L. Welch, “The Life and Works of Nicholas F. Seebeck,” *Collectors Club Philatelist*, May-June 1995, page 148).

Trip to Central America

In **January 1889**, Seebeck sailed for Central America with letters of introduction from Ernest Schernikow, Seebeck’s former brother-in-law, who served as the Salvadoran vice consul in New York. Harris, *Collectors Club Philatelist*, September 1981, page 291.

Seebeck failed to secure postage stamp contracts from Guatemala (Schernikow, *The Philatelic Gazette*, 1916) and Costa Rica, but he was successful in signing them with El Salvador (**March 27, 1889**), Honduras (**April 20, 1889**), and Nicaragua (**May 4, 1889**). The El Salvador and Honduras contracts stipulated annual issues. The Nicaragua contract stipulated issues every year or two years. Mueses quoted the contracts.

In the June 1889 issue of the *Philatelic Journal of America*, published in St. Louis, Charles H. Mekeel broke the news of the El Salvador postage stamp and postal stationery contract with Seebeck (Welch, “Inside Hamilton,” page 235).

The stamp contracts

Not long after the contract with El Salvador became news, personal attacks on Seebeck began. Mueses (page 99) quoted one in the *Philatelic Journal of America*. The minutes of the **July 10, 1889**, meeting of the National Philatetical Society (*American Journal of Philately*, August 1889, page 319) recorded that C.B. Corwin, the society’s stamp exchange secretary, moved that the society condemn Seebeck and that the society do everything in its power “to defeat Mr. Seebeck’s unworthy object.” Seebeck, John Walter Scott, and the Calmans were among the 17 attendees recorded. A motion to table the resolution failed, and when the resolution was voted on, it failed 8 to 5.

Corwin persisted. At the **July 17, 1889**, meeting of the Staten Island Philatelic Society, with seven members recorded including J.W. Scott, Corwin introduced a similar resolution, and it passed unani-

mously (*American Journal of Philately*, August 1889, pages 322-323).

Corwin moved his resolution again at the **August 13, 1889**, meeting of the National Philatetical Society, with 26 members present. This time it passed 12 to 9. Scott and the Calmans were among the members present (*American Journal of Philately*, September 1889, page 357).

Mueses wrote (page 99) that the campaign against Seebeck continued “at a slower tempo and a lower pitch” during 1890-1894.

In **January 1890**, the Seebeck stamps and postal stationery of El Salvador, Honduras, and Nicaragua were issued. Two lots in the Kelleher auction held October 25-26, 2014, sale No. 660, included proofs of the 1892 envelope imprint of Honduras and proofs of the 1890, 1891, 1892, 1893 unadopted designs, and 1895 envelope and wrapper imprints of Nicaragua, all from the personal archive of engraver Rudolph P. Laubenheimer. Two other lots comprised envelope imprint proofs for the 1889, 1890, and 1891 issues of El Salvador.

Hamilton board minutes of **June 24, 1890**, refer to the approval of a 10-year contract dated June 20 between Seebeck and Hamilton for engraving and other work for El Salvador, Honduras, and Nicaragua that Hamilton would do for him (*The Seebecker*, March 1989, pages 9-10).

Someone in Ecuador sent an Official cover backstamped New York Paid All **July 24, 1890**, to Seebeck at Hamilton Bank Note Engraving and Printing Co. “Cable Address Mirific” is written below the mailing address (*The Seebecker*, June 1992, page 9).

On **October 16, 1890**, Henry L. Etheridge signed a contract with Ecuador for the printing of postal paper. Seebeck and Hamilton fulfilled it beginning with the 1892 issue. The president of Ecuador signed the contract on October 27. The contract stipulated an issue every year or half year.

Seebeck was not recorded as attending the Hamilton “directors meeting” of January 13, 1890. Seebeck attended the trustees meetings of May 8, June 24, and December 16, 1890, but at the latter two meetings C.E. Krack acted as secretary pro tem. Seebeck missed the stockholders and trustees meetings of January 12, 1891, and the trustees meeting of February 9, 1891, but Ernest Schernikow was at all three (*The Seebecker*, March 1989, 2:3, pages 7-10, and January 1990, 3:1, pages 6-10). Welch in “Inside Hamilton,” page 237, speculated that in this period Seebeck could have been beginning to suffer from the tuberculosis that is believed to have eventually killed him.

On **December 19, 1890**, at New York City, Nicholas F. Seebeck applied for a U.S. passport for himself, his wife, and his son (passport issued December 20). C.E. Krack, a Hamilton trustee, signed the passport application as witness. In 2017 using FamilySearch.org, MS found no other passport application records for Seebeck. Family Search.org has an image of the 1890 application. The image includes no picture.

Mueses wrote (page 94) that “ . . . during **the first years of the 1890s** [ Seebeck ] signed a contract with Gustave Bernhard Calman covering the sale of all the stamps that he possessed of Ecuador, Honduras, Nicaragua and El Salvador. The contract stipulated that Calman would pay [ Seebeck ] \$5000 per annum plus \$1000 extra for each additional issue.” Mueses gave no source for this information, but it appears that **it would have been in 1890 or 1891** that Seebeck contracted with Gustave Calman for the remainders of Ecuador, Honduras, Nicaragua and El Salvador. See on page 159 the May 1893 Gustave Calman postal card to dealer Adolph Lohmeyer referring to Calman’s offering the 1892 issue as he did the 1891 issue.

On **July 1, 1891**, Honduras issued its second-issue Seebeck stamps.

In circa 1891-1892 (MS), Seebeck added light blue control numbers to reprints of the El Salvador 1-peso stamp of 1891 to attempt to trace the dealers who were selling sets of stamps below the fixed price of 50¢ established by Seebeck (Mueses, page 20, as paraphrased from Joseph B. Leavy).

In **August 1891**, the government of Nicaragua ordered the American Bank Note Co. to reprint 175,000 sets of the 1869-71 and 1878-80 issues for delivery to Seebeck, a total of 350,000 stamps (Joseph B. Leavy, “The Stamps of Nicaragua,” *Gibbons Stamp Weekly*, 10:1, No. 235, pages 7-8, reprinted in *Nicarao*, September 1990, 1:1, pages 8-9, have an incorrect total. Leavy wrote “to a combination of speculators,” but Seebeck himself placed the order on September 28, 1891).

In **January 1892**, Ecuador issued its first Seebeck stamps and postal stationery. The stamp designs picture President Juan José Flores. The wrappers bear Numeral designs. One lot in the Kelleher auction held October 25-26, 2014, sale No. 660, included proofs of the two wrapper imprints from the personal archive of engraver Rudolph P. Laubenheimer.

At the **February 4, 1892**, meeting of the Hamilton board, on motion of Schernikow, Seebeck was elected president, treasurer, and general manager, again at \$3,000 per year. Ernest Schernikow, on motion of Seebeck, was elected secretary. At the July 8, 1892, meeting of the trustees, Charles E. Gray became vice president (*The Seebecker*, January 1990, 3:1, pages 12-14).

On or about **August 1, 1892**, it is believed, Honduras issued its third-issue Seebeck stamps (Mueses, page 37).

At their meeting **December 8, 1892**, the Hamilton trustees approved a five-year contract for passenger tickets with the Manhattan Railway Company (called Manhattan Elevated Railroad Company in

the 1894 lawsuit) (*The Seebecker*, January 1990, 3:1, pages 14-15).

The financial **Panic of 1893** began in February. The Philadelphia and Reading Railroad declared bankruptcy on February 23, 1893. National Cordage Company failed. Silver and silver-based currency dropped in value. Banks failed. The Northern Pacific Railway, the Union Pacific Railroad, and the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe Railroad failed. It is estimated that 15,000 companies and 500 banks failed. Approximately 17 percent to 19 percent of the workforce was unemployed at the panic’s peak. The ensuing recession lasted until 1898.

Summary at saylor.org/site/wp-content/uploads/2011/08/HIST312-10.1.2-Panic-of-1893.pdf

From the period of the Panic of 1893 and the recession that followed, Welch dated what he called “rare essays for Bolivia, Ecuador, Guatemala, Haiti, and the Colombian State of Magdalena.” These items were produced by Hamilton to solicit new business but were not successful (William L. Welch, “The Life and Works of Nicholas F. Seebeck,” *Collectors Club Philatelist*, May-June 1995, page 150).

Ecuador issued no new Seebeck postage stamps in **1893**. Mueses mentioned telegraph and Official stamps (pages 58 and 64) and a second delivery of 1892 Official stamps in 1893 (page 61).

William R. Grace

Seebeck made an unspecified agreement on **April 4, 1893**, with William R. Grace and Russell Sage (Minute Books, stockholders meeting of January 9, 1899) concerning 19,000 shares of stock endorsed and delivered to Grace and Sage.

At the January 9, 1899, stockholders meeting, Seebeck complained that Grace and Sage had not complied with the agreement (*The Seebecker*, October 1991, 3:4, pages 7-8).

At the **April 10, 1893**, meeting of the Hamilton board, presided over by Gray,

Seebeck again was elected president and treasurer, but a resolution was read noting that he planned to retire from active management of the firm. Three trustees also resigned and were replaced. Gray was elected vice president and became general manager. Seebeck resigned as treasurer. E.C. Osborn was elected a trustee and then secretary. The trustees also approved and ratified a paid bill to Seebeck for work Hamilton performed for him for the Honduras, Nicaragua and Salvador contracts in 1889, 1890, 1891, and 1892.

The trustees also authorized the signing of a five-year contract with Seebeck at \$6,000 per year payable annually in advance for him “to act as the representative of this company for the next five years in such countries as he may deem best for interests of the company . . . ” (*The Seebecker*, January 1990, 3:1, pages 16-20).

Gray presided over the **June 7, June 15, and June 22, 1893**, meetings that Seebeck also attended (*The Seebecker*, September 1990, 3:2, pages 6-10).

Gray also presided over **the historic August 23, 1893, trustees meeting**, held at 71 Broadway, the office of Russell Sage. Four trustees resigned and were replaced by William R. Grace, Chauncey M. Depew, Russell Sage, and H. Walter Webb. Seebeck resigned as president. On a motion by Seebeck, Grace was elected president. Special contracts were authorized for Gray and for Sage and Grace. J. Louis Schaefer was elected treasurer, but he was not made a trustee until the October 13, 1893, meeting (*The Seebecker*, September 1990, 3:2, pages 10-11).

Grace was a former mayor of New York (1880-1888) and a merchant and banker who after the War of the Pacific had assumed in 1890 the national debt of Peru in exchange for rights to oil, minerals, silver mining, and guano deposits.

Sage was a railroad speculator and money lender and a former U.S. congressman.

Depew was president of the New York Central and Hudson River Railroad and a former New York assemblyman. Webb was in finance and railroads.

Welch documented (W.R. Grace Papers, Columbia University, letters of August 7, September 7, September 15, September 18, and November 3, 1893) how Grace discussed Hamilton as a competitor for the next U.S. postage stamp contract and discussed personnel at the Bureau of Engraving and Printing, including Bureau job offers to Hamilton engravers (Welch, “Inside Hamilton,” pages 240-242).

In **August 1893**, it is believed, Honduras issued its fourth-issue Seebeck stamps (Mueses, page 37).

At the **September 6, 1893**, trustees meeting, Seebeck discussed a postage stamp contract with Ecuador that he could offer, but no action was taken (*The Seebecker*, September 1990, 3:2, pages 11-12).

At the **October 16, 1893**, trustees meeting, Gray resigned as vice president and general manager, effective immediately, but he remained a trustee. Seebeck was elected vice president and general manager. His report on the accounts of the company was received and filed (*The Seebecker*, September 1990, 3:2, pages 14-15).

Hamilton was on the verge of insolvency, and at the **November 11, 1893**, trustees meeting, Seebeck guaranteed to keep the company solvent if the trustees would provide \$21,000 for current obligations and \$5,000 more for working capital. This was not written into a contract until sometime after the **November 13, 1893**, meeting.

At the **November 11** meeting, Sage moved that the matter of bidding for the U.S. stamp contract be left to the president and vice president (Grace and Seebeck). This was repeated at the November 13 meeting, at which Sage

and Webb were selected as bondsmen for the U.S. stamp contract bid (*The Seebecker*, September 1990, 3:2, pages 16-18).

Honduras disapproves its contract

In **mid-1893**, Honduras decided to establish a government printer to print all government paper, including postage stamps. The National Congress decreed on October 19, 1893, that the 1889 resolution approving the contract with Seebeck be disapproved, and the president decreed it on **November 26, 1893**. The government printer failed to produce a stamp issue for 1894. In early 1895, however, Honduras issued the Seebeck Allegory of Justice stamps and postal stationery that Seebeck had had in preparation, the country’s fifth Seebeck issue (Mueses, January 25, page 38).

At the **January 17, 1894**, Hamilton trustees meeting, Grace, Seebeck, Schaefer, and Osborn were reelected. Seebeck was reelected general manager (*The Seebecker*, January 1991, 3:3, pages 6-7).

Three private printers submitted bids in response to the request in October 1893 by the U.S. Post Office Department for proposals to print U.S. postage stamps: American Bank Note Company, Hamilton Bank Note Engraving and Printing Company, and Charles Steele. Steele was the low bidder. Hamilton was the high bidder. After the three bids were made public, the Bureau of Engraving and Printing also submitted a bid. The private companies protested, but on **February 21, 1894**, the Post Office Department awarded the stamp contract to the Bureau. The U.S. Department of Justice had ruled that there was no legal reason to bar the Bureau from fulfilling the postage stamp contract.

On **January 19, 1894**, Ecuador began using the 1894 Seebeck stamps at Guayaquil. By the end of March, all denominations were available at Quito (Mueses, page 58). The same basic design was used in 1895.

Attacks on Seebeck and Calman

The *Philatelic Journal of America* for **July 1894** on page 6 reported that an Anti-Seebeck Society was being organized. According to Mueses (page 101), the Anti-Seebeck Society started in England, but by October 1895 its termination had been announced.

The Society for the Suppression of Speculative Stamps began in England informally as the Anti-Gumpap League. The Society for the Suppression of Speculative Stamps was founded at the **May 6, 1895**, meeting of the London Philatelic Society. Mueses attributed its founding to the worldwide wave of recent commemorative issues, expensive sets that included high-denomination stamps. Among the directorate of the SSSS, Mueses listed E. Stanley Gibbons, J.B. Moens, C.J. Phillips, E.B. Evans, R.B. Earee, and Whitfield King. There were others.

The London SSSS never specifically condemned the Seebeck stamps, but Mueses acknowledged (page 101) that “they were in part what determined the movement and helped give the [ SSSS ] its origins.”

Beginning in 1895, both in the United States and in England, Seebeck and Gustave Calman were criticized regularly (Mueses, pages 102-104). J.W. Scott, head of the North American branch of the SSSS, led the attacks on Seebeck and Calman.

Advertisements in English printed on blocks of nine stamps believed to be from the center of blocks of 25 exist on the backs of these issues: **1894** stamps of Nicaragua, **1894-1896** stamps of El Salvador, and **1895** stamps of Honduras. The advertisements are believed to have been printed by Seebeck or for him (*Central American Newsletter*, March 1983, No. 11, pages 6-7; Mueses, page 8). The idea had been used on the 1881-1892 stamps of New Zealand.

On **August 9, 1894**, New York Bank Note Company filed an action against

the Hamilton Bank Note Engraving and Printing Company and the Kidder Press Manufacturing Company of Boston over two presses that Kidder supplied to Hamilton, one later refitted with attachments for strip ticket printing and one sold with the attachments. New York Bank Note alleged that the sales were in violation of its exclusive contract with Kidder. New York Bank Note won the suit, with the New York County Supreme Court bench judgement signed October 2, 1897. Seebeck’s testimony is on pages 356-366 and 369 of *Court of Appeals of the State of New York*. New York Bank Note also won the appeal judgment entered June 8, 1898, and the Appellate Division final judgment entered March 24, 1904.

On **January 28, 1895**, Honduras authorized the acceptance of the Allegory of Justice issue (Mueses, page 38). In **February 1895**, Honduras issued the Allegory of Justice stamps and postal stationery that Seebeck had prepared.

At the **January 31, 1895**, Hamilton trustees meeting, Grace, Seebeck, Schaefer, and Osborn were reelected. Seebeck was reelected general manager (*The Seebecker*, January 1991, 3:3, pages 7-8).

Seebeck defends his character

In **September 1895**, Seebeck sent to the philatelic press a letter dated August 31 as a general circular defending his character and offering to cancel his stamp contracts if “my fellow philatelists” can secure from the countries a guarantee that no similar contract would be signed with another banknote company or with an individual and if the countries also would cancel the contracts. In his letter, Seebeck agreed “with the spirit of the crusade against the indiscriminate issue of speculative stamps.” Mueses, pages 104-106, quoted the entire letter from Seebeck.

J.W. Scott continued to attack Seebeck, and in **September 1895**, the North American branch of the SSSS sent a letter to the gov-



ernments of Ecuador, Honduras, Nicaragua, and El Salvador asking that they cancel their stamp contracts with Seebeck. Mueses, pages 106-108, quotes the entire letter.

On **September 24, 1895**, Bolivia rejected Seebeck’s proposal for Hamilton to provide stamps, postal cards, and envelopes (Mueses, pages 70-71). Bolivia previously in 1892 had rejected a stamp production proposal of father Antonio and son Simón Gainsborg [ Mueses, English translation, 1986, page 53, called them brothers ], (Álvaro Bonilla Lara, *Essay-Proof Journal*, No. 63, July 1959, page 115; Thomas G. Richards, *American Philatelist*, August 1919, page 410).

Ecuador rescinds its contract

On **November 8, 1895**, President José Eloy Alfaro of Ecuador rescinded the contract with Etheridge (Mueses, pages 59-60), but Ecuador still accepted the 1896 Seebeck issue manufactured by Hamilton.

At the **January 16, 1896**, Hamilton trustees meeting, Seebeck agreed to reduce his annual salary to \$5,000 per year effective April 1. Grace, Seebeck, Schaefer, and Osborn were reelected (*The Seebecker*, January 1991, 3:3, pages 10-11).

The 1897 Seebeck issues

In **June 1896**, the North American branch of the SSSS reached an agreement with Seebeck that stipulated that he would “use his influence” with the countries [ Nicaragua and El Salvador ] to induce each to accept a single issue for 1897 that would be used for three years. The dealer signatories to the agreement pledged not to purchase or sell any other such stamps, if the countries should enter into similar contracts, after such stamps would “become obsolete and are rendered useless” (Mueses, page 109). Among the signors were G.B. Calman and J.W. Scott Co. Ltd. Mueses listed 17 other signing dealers. The agreement failed to deal with the selling of remainders.

In **fall 1896**, Seebeck became one of the founding resident stockholders of the Collectors Club of New York. William W. Wylie’s informal history of the club, on the CCNY web site, lists the 100 founders, but it does not list the members who met October 5 and adopted a constitution and bylaws.

The **1897** issues of El Salvador and Nicaragua used the same basic designs as those of 1896 (for El Salvador, its second issue of 1896), but the designs are collectably different from those of 1896.

At the **January 14, 1897**, Hamilton trustees meeting, Grace, Seebeck, Schaefer, and Osborn were reelected. Pages in the Minute Books are missing for most of **early 1898**, but the June 1, 1898, meeting minutes indicate that the same men were named as officers (*The Seebecker*, January 1991, 3:3, pages 13-14, October 1991, 3:4, pages 6-7).

In **1898**, Hamilton prepared the 1899 issue of stamps and postal cards for El Salvador and Nicaragua, but it supplied no new envelopes or wrappers.

Gustave B. Calman died **January 25, 1898**. *American Journal of Philately*, February 1, 1898, page 85.

On **May 6, 1898**, in Ecuador, the outstanding Seebeck issues and plates used for local overprints were burned in a public ceremony (Mueses, page 61).

At their **June 1, 1898**, meeting, the Hamilton trustees approved a Hamilton bill to Seebeck dated May 21 for \$2,743.04. This was the last company meeting attended by Grace and Sage (*The Seebecker*, October 1991, 3:4, pages 6-7).

In **early 1899**, the last Seebeck stamps and postal stationery of El Salvador and Nicaragua were issued.

Seebeck regains control of Hamilton

At the **January 9, 1899**, Hamilton stockholders meeting, after a protest by Seebeck over the number of shares he was permitted to vote according to his agreement with Grace and Sage dated April 4, 1893, Grace, Sage, Depew, Osborn, and Schaefer failed to receive enough votes to remain trustees (*The Seebecker*, October 1991, 3:4, pages 7-8).

At the **January 10, 1899**, Hamilton trustees meeting, Seebeck was unanimously elected president and general manager, and Schernikow was unanimously elected secretary and treasurer (*The Seebecker*, October 1991, 3:4, pages 8-9).

At their **February 10, 1899**, meeting, the Hamilton trustees referred to George Thurber a Hamilton bill to Seebeck “for about \$3,000” for printing done for him in 1898 (*The Seebecker*, October 1991, 3:4, pages 9-10).

Seebeck died of tuberculosis, it is believed, on **June 23, 1899**, in New York City at his home, 314 West 102nd Street (Welch, “Inside Hamilton Bank Note Co.,” page 244 and footnote No. 23). One obituary noted “a complication of diseases” and memberships in the American Geographical Society, the Collectors Club, and the Liederkranz. *The Metropolitan Philatelist*, published by rival J.W. Scott, did not mention the death of Seebeck. Welch, “Inside Hamilton Bank Note Co.,” footnote Nos. 23 and 24.

Epilogue

At a special meeting June 26, 1899, the Hamilton trustees elected John Tonjes as president. C.E. Krack became manager pro tem, but he was discharged as of December 30, 1899 (*The Seebecker*, October 1991, 3:4, pages 12, 14).

Mueses noted (page 95) that Henry L. Calman took charge of brother Gustave Calman’s wholesale stock after Gustave

Calman died January 25, 1898. From Henry Calman **in 1902**, dealer J.E. Handshaw purchased the Seebeck postal stationery stock, according to Handshaw’s memoirs. Henry Calman continued to operate the G.B. Calman firm as he disposed of its assets.

Sometime before the end of World War I, dealer Bela Sekula (1881-1966), then in Switzerland, purchased from Henry Calman the stock of the Seebeck stamp remainders, said to be approximately 55 million stamps.

At the Hamilton stockholders meeting of January 11, 1909, son August C. Seebeck was appointed to be a teller for the election of company trustees (*The Seebecker*, October 1991, 3:4, page 15).

At the stockholders meeting January 10, 1910, August C. Seebeck was elected a Hamilton trustee. Also present was Hermann C. Seebeck, relationship unknown. August C. Seebeck eventually became Hamilton vice president. On September 11, 1944, he resigned as vice president (*The Seebecker*, October 1991, 3:4, pages 15-16).

In 1901, widow Therese R. Seebeck became the wife of Wilfred J. Taupier, a 1901 emigrant from Cuba and the owner of a restaurant. They were married March 14, 1901, in Manhattan. August C. Seebeck, born in 1888 and described as a partner in printing and engraving, became Taupier’s stepson. The family lived in Hempstead, Nassau County, with Grace Avery as their employed servant. According to the 1930 U.S. Census, Elizabeth Seebeck, age 8, was a daughter of August. According to the 1940 U.S. census, August was a widower. FamilySearch.org

On November 9, 1911, plates for Seebeck stamps in the vault of the Hamilton Bank Note [ Engraving and Printing ] Company, 149 Adams Street, Brooklyn, N.Y., were defaced in front of John N. Luff, John A. Klemann, and P.F. Brunner. Missing from the group defaced were those for the 1890

through 1892 issues of Honduras and Nicaragua (Ernest Kehr, *London Philatelist*, February 1952). Schernikow’s version of the story said that plates for certain 1899 denominations of El Salvador and Nicaragua were missing (Mueses, page 96).

Mueses (page 97) wrote that in the March 13, 1938, issue of *Stamps*, George van den Berg (pseudonym of dealer Lowell Ragatz) wrote that someone in Paris in circa 1936 offered to sell him two plates used to print Seebeck stamps. This story has never been confirmed.

On December 11, 1951, at Security Banknote Company, 55th and Sansom streets, Philadelphia, Pa., 156 dies, transfer rolls, and cuts for postal stationery used to manufacture Nicaragua stamps and postal

stationery were destroyed by grinding the surfaces until they were rendered unusable. (Ernest Kehr, *London Philatelist*, February 1952).

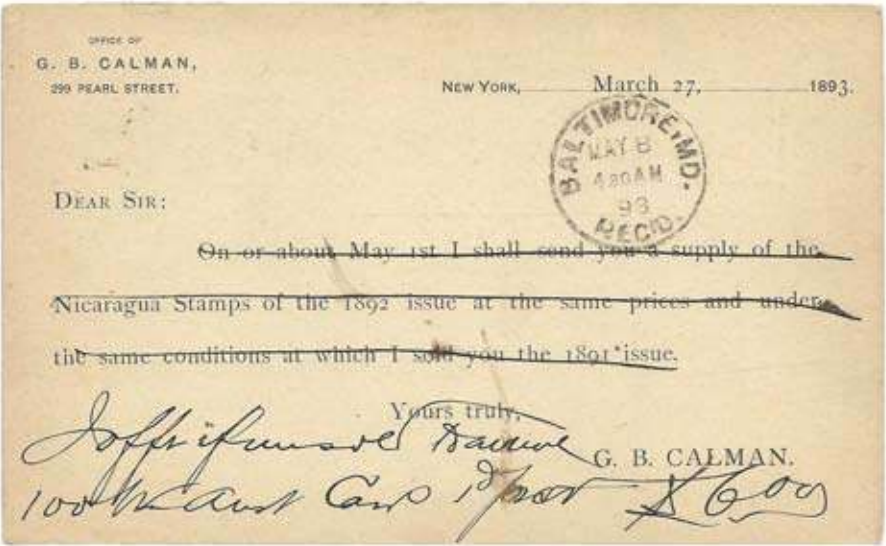
Mueses (English translation, 1988, page 74) wrote that “a total of 150 pieces of steel and copper which had been used in the printing of the stamps of Nicaragua” were destroyed.

In the *Collectors Club Philatelist*, issue of November 1967, pages 339-344, the account of Henry M. Goodkind, titled “The 1951 Destruction of Nicaragua’s Plates, Dies and Rolls,” said that 296 items were destroyed. Many of the 156 dies or transfers counted by Kehr included multiple different denominations. No plates were destroyed in 1951.

In this book, see also footnote No. 6 on page 118 in Notes to Chapters.



Cover postmarked September 1, 1877, at San Salvador to Mr. N.F. Seebeck, P.O. Box 4926, New York City. The New York post office did not allow the stamps. El Salvador did not become a member of the Universal Postal Union until April 1, 1879.



The crossed-out printed message on this 1893 postal card to Adolph Lohmeyer from Gustave B. Calman refers to the 1891 and 1892 stamps of Nicaragua. Calman was the wholesaler for the Seebeck stamps. It reads: “On or about May 1st I shall send you a supply of the Nicaragua Stamps of the 1892 issue at the same prices and under the same conditions at which I sold you the 1891 issue.”



Gustave B. Calman died in 1898. For a few years, brother Henry L. Calman operated the G.B. Calman firm while he sold off its assets. This envelope from the firm is addressed to Willard O. Wylie, the publisher of *Mekeel's Weekly Stamp News*, and is postmarked January 7, 1903.





Circa 1872 reprint of the imprint of the New Haven, Connecticut, provisional envelope, said to have been printed for Nicholas Seebeck and other dealers.



1880 Hussey's Express stamp manufactured by Nicholas F. Seebeck. His name and "97 Wall St." address are in the imprint.



Block of 25 Seebeck stamps of El Salvador printed with advertisements in English, believed to have been added in the late 1890s.

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