

VOLUME I, No. 2

OCTOBER, 1953



# THE AERO PHILATELIST ANNALS

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★ ★ A QUARTERLY MAGAZINE ON AERO-PHILATELY ★ ★

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## *This Issue Features:*

- NICARAGUA
- THE GOVERNMENT  
CLEAN UP
- ONE OF THE GREATEST  
AND MOST SENSATIONAL  
STORIES PHILATELY HAS  
EVER TOLD

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**F. W. KESSLER**

**500 Fifth Avenue**

**New York 36, N. Y.**

OCTOBER

1953



THE

AERO

# PHILATELIST ANNALS

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## Henry M. Goodkind, Editor

137 East 94th St., New York 28, N. Y.

All communications regarding publication, editorial matters, all literature for review should be sent to the Editor.

Organization matters and all communications relating to Aero Philatelists, Inc. should be mailed to:

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# NICARAGUA

## The End of a Fraud

By RICHARD N. CONE

### Editor's Preface

In our opinion, this clean-up in Nicaragua commenced back in February, 1951, when from the National Palace in Managua, Nicaragua, Senor *Agustin Vanegas P.*, Chief of the Office of Control of Stamps and Philately wrote to AERO PHILATELISTS, Inc. requesting copies of "The Aero Philatelist News" with the articles on "Dangerous Counterfeits of 1932 Nicaragua Issues" by Richard N. Cone. This letter is illustrated and marked on the top A.

From that date on, this Chief Office in Nicaragua proceeded with its investigation culminating in 1952 with raids, seizures, court trials, fines and punishments for many of the offending parties.

OFICINA DE CONTROL DE ESPECIES  
POSTALES Y FILATELIA  
República de Nicaragua, C. A.

A

PALACIO NACIONAL  
Managua, D. N., Febrero 15, 1950.-

AERO PHILATELISTS, INC.  
1860 Broadway  
New York 28, N. Y. - U.S.A. -

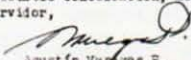
Señor Secretario:

Esta Oficina gubernativa ha iniciado investigaciones para establecer el origen de las reimpresiones y falsificaciones de las Emisiones Postales de Nicaragua registrados por el Catálogo SCOTT bajo los números 570 al 579 sellos de correo ordinario y C67 al C76 estampillas aéreas.

Sabedor de que Uds., en su publicación oficial "THE AERO PHILATELIST'S NEWS" se han ocupado de este "affair", atentamente ruego a Uds. me remitan, cobrándome el importe correspondiente, los números de ese magazine de las ediciones correspondientes a July 1, July 15 y August 1, 1947, que contienen el artículo titulado "DANGEROUS COUNTERFEITS OF 1932 NICARAGUA ISSUES".

Les quedará altamente agradecido por este servicio.

En espera de su apreciable contestación, me suscribo de Uds. su atento y seguro servidor,

  
Agustín Vanegas P.  
Jefe de la Oficina de Control de Especies Postales y Filatelia.

cc.:  
Archivo.-  
AVP/Rpr.--

## NICARAGUA

In November, 1951, Sr. Vanegas personally visited the United States in the course of his duties. In New York City, he interviewed and questioned many philatelists, both collectors and dealers. He was introduced to many of our members at the Convention Dinner of 1951. Before returning home, this Nicaraguan Official arranged for the destruction of the old Seebeck plates, rollers and dies at the plant of the Security Bank-note Co., Philadelphia, Pa. An elaborate ceremony held on December 11, 1951 was reported prominently by all the stamp press of the world.

Upon his return to Nicaragua, Sr. Vanegas kept us informed of his office's activities. Many letters (one is in the illustration marked B), newspaper clippings, photographs, documents and other data were sent to this writer care of the Collectors Club. The official decision was to make 22 East 35 Street, New York, N. Y. the repository of copies of all the data pertaining to Nicaragua philatelic activities.

Another letter contained the following quoted passages:

National Palace  
Managua, D. N. October 3, 1952

Dear Mr. Goodkind:

Just a few days ago I had the opportunity to have a long talk with our PRESIDENT SOMOZA on many philatelic matters. One of them was the destruction by burning of the big amount of false postal material seized during the tremendous philatelic trial. The President agreed with me and gave me his full authorization



B

Managua, D.N., October 30, 1952.-

Mr. Henry M. Goodkind,  
22 East 35th Street,  
New York 16, N.Y., U.S.A.

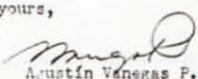
Dear Mr. Goodkind:

Finally that long waited ceremony for destruction of the forged philatelic stuff took place on October 17, 1952. I take pleasure in sending you now, for the files of the Collectors Club, the following items:

- 1.- One set of three pages showing examples of the false post marks seized to Richard Contreras C. in Granada. Each page has the signature of the witnesses present at the ceremony.
- 2.- Clippings of our local papers "Novedades", "El Gran Diario" and "Flecha" commenting the burning.
- 3.- Three copies of the official act of the ceremony. It also included the destruction of the official plates used for the printing of the stamps Scott 665/670 and the stamps Somoza-Martínez that were never recognized by Scott. Another set of plates destroyed were those prepared for an issue honoring Emanuel Mongalo a national figure that was never executed. A translation of that act will give you complete details of the whole thing.
- 4.- Two photographs of the public ceremony showing witnesses and the false stuff destroyed.

Please acknowledge receipt of this letter.

Very friendly yours,

  
Agustín Vanegas P.  
Director, Philatelic Agency of  
Nicaragua.

CC:  
F.A.B.



## NICARAGUA

to go ahead with that . . . I take pleasure in sending you for the records to be kept in the Collectors Club samples of much of this material made to trick collectors . . . You can use the examples for a BIG, good and long article."

Complying with the request from this high official of the Republic of Nicaragua, the entire dossier was turned over to Richard N. Cone because he is the pioneer and original author of these Nicaragua articles. It was fitting and proper that Mr. Cone be delegated to write the *grand finale* to this Nicaragua story. This decision met with the full approval of the Chief Philatelic Director of Nicaragua.

And now the members and friends of AERO PHILATELISTS, Inc. will read for the first time what is possibly one of the most revealing philatelic stories ever penned. (H. M. G.)

On a mid-March midnight of 1952 the fraudulent philatelic operations within Nicaragua came crashing to an abrupt and positive end.

Sr. Agustin Vanegas Pallais, young and forceful director of the Nicaragua Philatelic Agency, had seized simultaneously the stamp stock of every dealer in that country, as well as the philatelic properties of Sra. Deshon,\* widow of Roberto Deshon. Subsequent careful examination of all seized material proved conclusively the tremendous extent of the long-continuing frauds of certain stamp merchants.

Figure 1 shows the enormous assembly of fraudulent material so seized, as disposed at the feet of government officials and police. Sr. Vanegas stands at right center, with his right hand poised above the tallest stack on the pallet. Fig. 2 is a close-up of the same material, clearly showing the stacks of sheets of the fraudulent reprints of the EARTHQUAKE ISSUE of January, 1932 and the two RAILROAD ISSUES of December, 1932. Note the "cancels" on some sheets. In the center are numerous devices for faking cancellations.

The morning following the seizure, when it was made public, there began a series of vituperative attacks against the character and integrity of Sr. Vanegas P. in certain Nicaragua newspapers. "EL GRAN DIARIO", "FLECHA" and "LA PRENSA", all of Managua declared by quotation of others or by innuendo that Sr. Vanegas had dreadfully abused the laws of the land in his operations in office. Young members of his mother's family were quoted directly as denouncing him violently. To his eternal credit, Sr. Vanegas proceeded calmly and thoroughly to bring to formal trial the government case against Sres. Orlando Marin Aviles of Managua and Ricardo Contreras of Granada, on March 27, 1952, the charges being falsification, illegitimate traffic and fraud.

One of the most amazing developments was the entrance into the case of Sra. Anita, widow of Robert Harding, then recently deceased. Sr. Harding's philatelic operations have been referred to in previous studies in *Aero Philatelist's News*, but a further review is in order because of Sra. Harding's sensational revelations. Apparently she came forward with her "documents" voluntarily. There is no proof that she was prevailed upon to produce her story by the accused dealers or by the family of the aged widow Deshon.

\* On January 1, 1933, Roberto E. Deshon was named by the incoming President, Juan B. Sacasa, as under-Secretary of Public Works. Prior to September 8, 1933, Deshon was advanced to the post of Minister of Public Works.

Deshon's connections with certain postage stamp issues of 1933 are indelible. He and J. Ramon Sevilla, Director-General of Communications, were named jointly to control the commemorative Air Week issue of November 6, 1933, and their signatures are incorporated in the design of the stamps.

The signatures of "Deshon" and "Sevilla" were applied to many stamps in September of 1933, as a control overprint. Roberto E. Deshon was named as the originator of the fraudulent reprints and counterfeits, herein referred to, by one Nicaragua stamp dealer. Another dealer in Managua wrote that his source for the fraudulent reprints of the EARTHQUAKE issue of January 1932 was Sra. Deshon, widow of Roberto E. Deshon. A New Orleans dealer reported that "a Sr. Deshon" of Nicaragua had appeared in person, offering for sale Nicaraguan stamps, among them the Air Week issue of November, 1933. For these reasons the properties of the widow Deshon were also included in the seizure. The "Sr. Deshon" reported to have been offering Nicaraguan stamps for sale in the U. S. was Rafael Deshon, brother of Roberto, deceased.

## NICARAGUA



Fig. 1 Philatelic material, about to be destroyed, October 17, 1952.

For some curious reason the "counter-attack" centered on the fraudulent reprintings of the RAILROAD COMMEMORATIVES of 1932. Sra. Harding gave to the Managua press photostats of what she said were documents in her late husband's archive. Two were neatly typed bills of sale, each for 1,000 complete sets of one entire RAILROAD ISSUE. Take special note of the signature of Ignacius Roman, if it shows clearly in our reproduction. The "bills of sale" show no letterhead of any kind. See Fig. 4 for one example.

Next came an interesting montage, shown in Fig. 5. The text warrants translation:

"December 28, 1932

Sr. Don Roberto Harding  
Managua

My Esteemed Sir:

I acknowledge receipt of your valued letter of yesterday in which you ask me to sell you more stamps of the Inauguration of the Rivas-San Juan del Sur and Leon-Sauce Railroads, equal to those which were sold to Sres. Orlando Marin A. and Ricardo Contreras and to Don Ernesto Hammer.

The stamps were REPRINTED by Sres. Carmen J. and Angel Maria Perez in their shop for the reason that the stamps which the government was selling were sold out, the colors are the same, concerning the paper I cannot inform you at all, because of not having before me samples of the first order, although I can tell you that the paper which was used is called BOND SEMI-SATIN.

I enclose to you 100 series in blocks of four with a total value of \$1,680. I ask you please to sign this letter and to return the original, obtaining (first) the signature of Sr. Ignacio Roman.





Fig. 2 Close-up of the material shown in Fig. 1. Note the quantities of sheets of the fraudulent RAILROAD and EARTHQUAKE stamps.

# NICARAGUA



Fig. 3 One of three pages of actual strikes made with the cancelling devices seized by police in the home of Richard Contreras. Each sheet is notarized, signed by the chief officer, witnessed and belongs now to the Collectors Club, New York, N. Y.

Yours very truly,

(Signed) Ramon Hurtado Leal

Main Office of the Ministry of  
Public Works"

Superimposed on the lower half of that letter, so as to conflict with the signatures of Harding and his go-between, Ignacio Roman, there appears a miniature sheet of four stamps, plus two rectangular handstamps reading in reverse, "Correo Aereo INTERIOR Managua, Nic." There follows a manuscript declaration: "For the record I have cancelled today two sheets of the 15c value of the REPRINT mentioned in the present letter, the cancel is the original Air Mail (cancel). 28 Dec. 1932. REH"

Assuming that the miniature sheet shown is one of the FOUR DIFFERENT 15c sheets contained in the two RAILROAD ISSUES, and that Harding did indeed apply the



# NICARAGUA

15 de Diciembre de 1932

Sr Don Roberto Harding,  
Presente.

Muy Estimado Señor.-

Por instrucciones del Sr Sub-Secretario de Fomento,  
me es grato enviarles las siguientes estampillas.-

1,000 en 250 cuadros de 4 con valor de .01c	\$ 10.00
1,000 en 250 cuadros de 4 con valor de .02c	20.00
1,000 en 250 cuadros de 4 con valor de .05c	50.00
1,000 en 250 cuadros de 4 con valor de .10c	100.00
1,000 en 250 cuadros de 4 con valor de .15c	150.00
1,000 en 250 cuadros de 4 con valor de .15c	150.00
1,000 en 250 cuadros de 4 con valor de .20c	200.00
1,000 en 250 cuadros de 4 con valor de .25c	250.00
1,000 en 250 cuadros de 4 con valor de .50c	500.00
1,000 en 250 cuadros de 4 con valor de 1.00	1,000.00

con un valor de dos mil cuatrocientos treinta dollars. Estas  
estampillas son en conmemoración de la Inauguración de FF. Rivas-  
San Juan del Sur que llevará a cabo el Excelentísimo Señor Presi-  
dente, General Don José María Moncada el día 17 de los corrientes.

Suplicole firmar el original de esta carta y devolverla  
y si es posible conseguir la firma del Sr Ignacio Román.

Su muy atto. y s. s.,

*Ramón Hurtado Leal*  
Ramón Hurtado Leal.  
Of. Mayor del Ministerio de  
Fomento y Obras Públicas.

RHL/-  
archivo.  
Don Fernando Córdoba.

Recibi conforme.

Roberto Harding.

Recibi conforme.

Ignacio Román.

Fig. 4 "Bill of Sale," allegedly removed from her husband's archive by Sra. Harding.

handstamp illustrated in the photostat, and that he refers to this handstamp as an "original Air Mail cancel," then my conclusion is that it must have "originated" with him. It should be noted that no date is included in the "canceller." To date I have found this "cancel" only on fraudulent reprints of the EARTHQUAKE air stamps, the originals of which were issued, as were the RAILROAD air stamps, for EXTERIOR, not INTERIOR air service. No known genuine air covers, flown within Nicaragua during 1932-1933, have yet been recorded with this "cancel".

Two other photostats produced by Sra. Harding appear to be hand-written receipts given by Sr. Fernando Cordoba, under-Secretary of the Ministry of Public Works in 1932, one receipt for "fifty sets of air stamps of the Rivas series, with a value of 105 Cordobas," the other for "fifty collections of stamps with a value of 105 Cordobas." Both are dated in May of 1933, both appear on the letter head of "PADGETT TABACALEROS, Cia. Ltda.", which declares itself below the name to be "manufacturers of cigarettes and cigars". Under "Directors" is listed "R. E. Harding — Treasurer".

The final photostat produced by Mrs. Harding in March of 1952 is shown in Fig. 6. Briefly, it is an appeal to Harding from his agent in the affair of the RAILROAD RE-PRINTS to reimburse Sr. Cordoba in the amount of three thousand (\$3,000) Cordobas for the stamps which Harding had bought from Sr. Cordoba in 1932 and for which he

# NICARAGUA

28 de Diciembre de 1932

Sr Don Roberto Harding,  
Managua.

Muy Estimado Señor.-

Acuso recibo de su apreciable carta fecha de ayer en la cual me suplica que le venda más sellos de la Inauguración de los PP.CC. de Rivas-San Juan del Sur y León-Sauce, iguales a los que se le vendieron a los Sres Orlando Marin A. y Ricardo Contreras y al Sr Don Ernesto Hammer.

Los sellos fueron reimpresos por los Sres Carmen J. y Angel Maria Pérez en sus talleres por haberse agotados los sellos que tenia a la venta el Gobierno, los colores son iguales, respecto al papel no le puedo informar nada por no tener presente las muestras del primer pedido, pero si puedo decirle que el papel que se uso es el llamado Bond Semi-satinado.

Le incluyo los 100 series en cuadros de a 4 con un valor total de un mil seiscientos ochenta dollara. Suplico le firme la presente y devolver el original consiguiendo la firma del Sr Ignacio Roman.

Su muy atto. y s. s..

Ramon Martago Leal,  
Of. Mayor del Ministerio de  
Fomento y Obras Públicas.

RHL/-  
archivo.  
Don Fernando Córdoba.

Recibi conforme.

Roberto Harding.

Recibi conforme.

Ignacio Roman.

*Para la Historia se aprehendidos hoy  
2 hojas de 15 de la reimpresión de  
la cual habla la presente carta, el modo  
del es el original del Comisario  
25 Dec 1932  
RHL*

Fig. 5 Photostat of material extracted from her late husband's archive by Sra. Harding.

had never paid, at least up to January 22, 1948 the date of Sr. Roman's appeal. Noteworthy again is the signature of Ignacio Roman as it appears on this 1948 letter. It is quite different from his signatures on the 1932 "bills of sale."

Sr. Roman's letter mentions that Sr. Agustin Vanegas had joined his father-in-law, Sr. Cordoba, in petitioning Roman's help to collect Harding's delinquent obligation. This effort on Sr. Vanegas' part to help his father-in-law had been seized upon by the antagonistic press in an attempt to smear Sr. Vanegas. They overlooked the fact that there was no evidence of what stamps, originals or reprints, Harding had purchased from Sr. Cordoba back in 1932. They also passed over without mention of any kind that the same Sr. Vanegas had worked strenuously, in answer to appeals to him, to force Harding to



# NICARAGUA

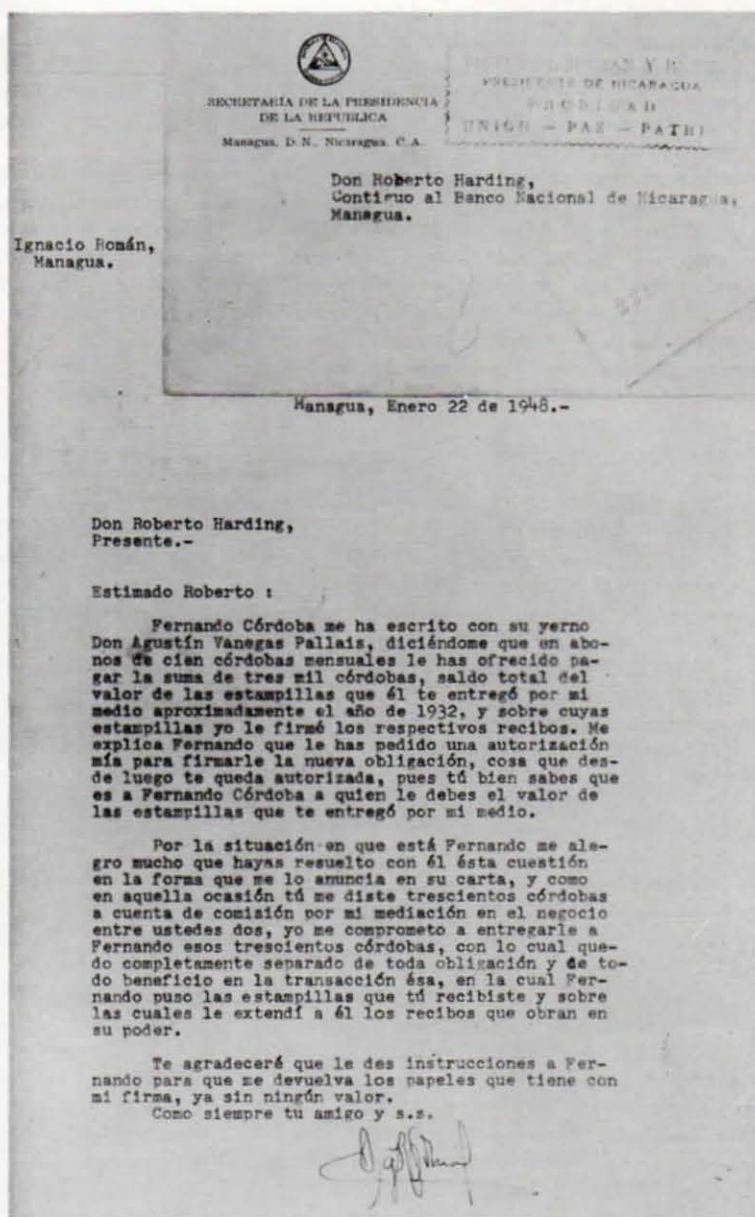


Fig. 6 Sr. Roman's appeal to Harding to pay his (Harding's) old debt.

fulfil his obligations to many foreign collectors and dealers when Harding had repeated his defaults in 1950-1951.

It is significant that Sr. Vanegas knew before the 1952 seizure that he would be implicated in such fashion, for he had made the entire story known to philatelists in the U. S. He proceeded directly to halt the entire philatelic fraud, of which the RAILROAD REPRINTS were only a small part.

## NICARAGUA

It is a matter of record that no public revelations were made by any Nicaraguan stamp dealers, nor by Sra. Harding, nor by the son or widow of Sr. Deshon, as to the origin of and responsibility for the fraudulent reprintings of the EARTHQUAKE ISSUE of 1932, of the COUNTERFEITS of the FLAG OF THE RACE air stamps and of the large unauthorized quantities of the AIR WEEK ISSUE of 1933, all closely connected with the RAILROAD FRAUDS.

One example of Harding's machinations was his imitation of a successful stock flotation of another business enterprise in Managua. He capitalized the Compania Latin Americana de Filatelica, S. A., in which he sold shares. The capital was 100,000 Cordobas. He then sold his "contacts" to the Company for about 15,000 Cordobas. In addition the Company was charged a monthly rental for the business occupancy of the Harding home. Both Harding and his wife became salaried employees of the Company. Soon the outside shareholders learned that large profits were not at all possible in such a business, limited principally to the stamps of one country. After one new issue a tiny dividend was declared, but the capital assets of the Company continued to dwindle. Finally a shareholders' committee, headed by Sr. Don Mauricio Marragou, Belgian consul in Managua, visited the Harding home, swept everything philatelic into a large sack and departed with the Company's assets. Those assets were also seized in the 1952 investigation, and they revealed a considerable quantity of fraudulent material.

If we consider all of Harding's utterances previously quoted in *Aero Philatelist's News*, Vol. IV, no. 15, August 1, 1949, and if we accept as evidence of facts all the photostatic evidence given out by Sra. Harding in 1952, it is clearly seen that Harding was unable or unwilling to relate the truth even in minor details. He wrote that he was in charge of "printing" the RAILROAD stamps, yet we later learn he had written to a government official to find out what kind of paper the originals had been printed on! He wrote in 1937 that reprints of the RAILROAD stamps were "non-existent", yet his widow produced his own hand-written statement that he had cancelled REPRINTS of the RAILROAD stamps personally! He wrote in 1937 that he had bought 700 of the Sauce stamps and had bought only 150 of the Rivas sets. Yet his widow produced from his archive some "proof" that he had bought 1,000 sets of each!

So it is that Sra. Harding completely destroyed, after her husband's death, whatever pretensions to honor he had during his life.

As for Harding's claim, and that of others, that no interval existed between the original issue of the RAILROAD stamps and the destruction of their plates, this is completely disproved by the following document, made available to AERO PHILATELISTS INC. by the Nicaraguan government. Translated it reads:

"Tribunal of Accounts, Republic of Nicaragua, National Palace, Document no. 4018—Ref. 2-A. Emilio Pereira Arce, President of the Tribunal of Accounts, certifies as true the act which says literally:

No. 19. In the city of Managua, at 10:30 A. M. of the nineteenth day of September of nineteen hundred thirty-three, gathered together the undersigned, Accountant Don Juan Manuel Aviles Porras, representing the President of the Tribunal of Accounts, don Alberto Sanchez J., representing the Minister of Finance, and General don Alejandro Cardenas and Don Octavio Eva, representing the Minister of Public Works, and Mr. A. L. Gini, Manager of the Pacific Railroad of Nicaragua and don Abraham Gonzalez, in his role of Secretary of the Tribunal of Accounts, in the foundry of the School of Arts and in an oven of said foundry, in order to fulfil instructions by the Minister of Finance, dated yesterday, that there be incinerated the clichés which served for the issue of commemorative stamps, conforming with the following detail:

18 clichés of the issue commemorating the EARTHQUAKE of March 31, 1931, each containing ten impressions of stamps, thus:

Ordinary with value of 1/2c, 1c, 2c, 3c, 4c, 5c, 6c, 10c, 15c, 20c, 25c, 50c, 1.00, Air Mails with value of 15c, 20c, 25c, 50c, 1.00.



NICARAGUA

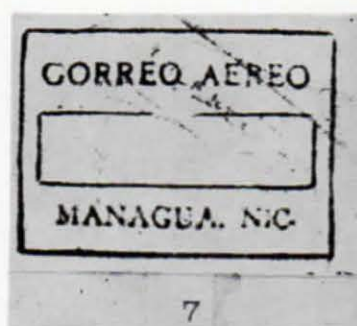


Fig. 7 The commonest rectangular fake air mail cancel.

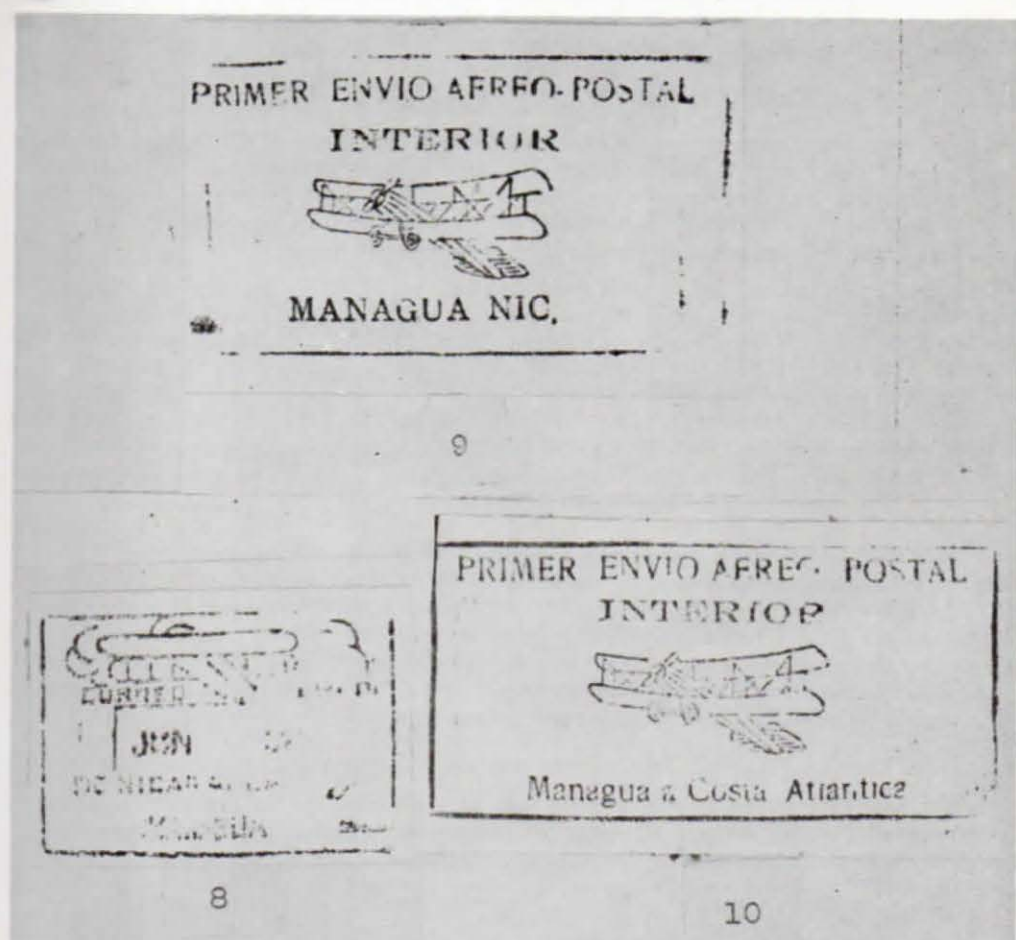


Fig. 8 Genuine 1930 cancel

Fig. 9 Genuine cachet

Fig. 10 Genuine cachet

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Plus a group of ten impressions, being clichés of the stamp issue commemorating the Inauguration of the Rivas-San Juan del Sur Railroad, each with four impressions:

Ordinary with value of 1c, 2c, 5c, 10c, 15c, Air Mails with value of 15c, 20c, 25c, 50c, 1.00.

Ten clichés of the issue of the issue commemorating the Inauguration of the Leon-El Sauce Railroad, with four impressions each:

Ordinary with value of 1c, 2c, 5c, 10c, 15c, Air Mails with value of 15c, 20c, 25c, 50c, 1.00.

Plus thirty-six clichés of the issue commemorating the 441st Anniversary of the Sailing of Christopher Columbus from the Port of Palos, of the following values and classes, and thirty-six negatives corresponding to the same:

Ordinary  $\frac{1}{2}$ c, 1c, 2c, 3c, 4c, 5c, 10c, 15c, 20c, 25c, 30c, 50c, 1.00, Air Mail 1c, 2c, 4c, 5c, 6c, 10c, 15c, 20c, 25c, 50c, 1.00, Ordinary official 1c, 2c, 3c, 4c, 5c, 6c, 10c, 15c, 20c, 25c, 50c, 1.00.

There have also been incinerated the photographic negatives belonging to this issue.

Also there were present in this act the Sres. don Roberto E. Deshon, under-Secretary of Public Works, and don J. Ramon Sevilla, Director General of Communications, both commissioned especially by the Ministry of Finance to control and organize the distribution of fiscal paper. With which this act concludes, and having been read, the present act remained approved and we all signed.

(Signed)

Juan M. Aviles Porras  
Alberto Sanchez J.  
Alej. Cardenas  
Octavio Eva  
A. L. Gini  
Roberto E. Deshon  
J. R. Sevilla  
A. Gonzales, Secretary"

It is thus proved that a considerable period of time elapsed after the production of the legitimate and authorized issues of the EARTHQUAKE set of January 1, 1932, the RIVAS RR series of December 17, 1932, the LEON-SAUCE RR series of December 30, 1932, and the FLAG series of August 3, 1933, until *all their plates were destroyed on September 19, 1933*. Only the conspirators themselves can, or could, actually know how frequently and in what manner the plates were extracted and later replaced, in order to produce the various fraudulent reprints and counterfeits.

---

For ease in referring to previous accounts of the various issues and to our subsequent cancellation descriptions, here is a list of pertinent articles as they have appeared in *Aero Philatelist's News*. Use the letter in parentheses as the reference key:

- (A)—Dangerous Counterfeits of 1932 Nicaragua Issues, Vol. II, nos. 13-15, July 1—August 1, 1947.
- (B)—Nicaragua, Flag of the Race Issue, Vol. III, no. 14, August 1, 1948.
- (C)—Nicaragua, Official Air Post Overprinted "1931", Vol. IV, no. 10, May 15, 1949.
- (D)—Nicaraguan Commemoratives, 1932-1933, Vol. IV, nos. 14-15, July 15-August 1, 1949.
- (E)—A Nicaragua Cover, Vol. V, no. 2, January 15, 1950.



## NICARAGUA



Fig. 11 Common fake cancel    Fig. 12 Fake registry cancel    Fig. 13 Fake Granada cancel

- (F)—Nicaragua-International Air Mail Week, 1933, Vol. VII, nos. 8-9, April 15-May 1, 1952.
- (G)—Nicaragua, June 7, 1931, The First Earthquake Provisionals, Vol. VIII, nos. 8-9, April 15-May 1, 1953.
- (H)—Nicaragua Inaugural Inland Air Mail, 1932, Vol. VI, no. 7, April 1, 1951.

### The Earthquake Commemoratives, January 1, 1932

All details as to dates of issue, use, cancels, fraudulent reprints, quantities, remain as previously given (A, B, D). One correction must be added as to the Managua rectangular air cancel used for this issue (A—Page 53, Fig. 3 and text). A cover has appeared, genuine in all respects, with a complete set of the EARTHQUAKE air stamps cancelled by the rectangle in VIOLET. The cover is UNREGISTERED. It is my belief, therefore, that the rectangular Managua air cancel used on January 1, 1932, was applied in RED to REGISTERED air letters and in VIOLET to UNREGISTERED letters. All single stamps of the EARTHQUAKE ISSUE bearing the proper rectangle in either color may be considered genuinely used, though they are rare on or off cover, as used stamps. Destruction of the plates has now been officially proved.

### The Rivas-San Juan Del Sur RR Commemoratives, December 17-18, 1932

All details as to dates of issue and use, cancels, paper, quantities and fraudulent reprints remain as previously given (A, D). Genuinely used they are rare. Destruction of the plates has been officially proved.

The document, Fig. 5, gave me the clue to the correct name for the paper used for the genuine RAILROAD stamps of both issues. Sr. Hurtado mentioned the name, "Bond Semi-Satin." I submitted several stamps, both genuine and fraudulent, to Milton Zucker, professional expert on papers and inks with Interchemical Corporation, New York, N. Y. His reply, in part, says:

"Bond Semi-Satin refers to a type of paper—the 'Bond' identifies it as primarily a writing paper, of a certain general structure, but which varies widely depending on the source. . . the 'Semi-Satin' refers to surface characteristics . . . Those you have marked can all be identified as on a very cheap stock, which has ground wood in it . . . The paper is characteristically different from that of the other stamps . . . The presence of ground wood indicates the paper is not a bond stock . . . The two other items are free of ground wood, but they are too hard and smooth for Bond . . . They are definitely super-calendered . . . I would say they are Machine Finished Print Paper, certainly not the same as the four identified as 'Bond Semi-Satin.'"

## NICARAGUA

This confirms the name of the paper used for the RAILROAD issues which alone are known to have performed legitimate postal duty on their authorized dates of use. The characteristics are as we described them (A), hence the only ones I consider legitimate issues of the Nicaraguan postal administration. The latter entirely agrees with this finding and has caused legislation to include all other than the type on BOND SEMI-SATIN paper with other fraudulent, illegal and otherwise counterfeit Nicaraguan stamps, the ownership of which is punishable by severe fine in Nicaragua.

### The Leon-El Sauce RR Commemoratives, December 30, 1932

All details as to date of issue and use, cancels, paper, quantities and fraudulent reprints as previously given (A, D, E). Genuinely used they are rare. Destruction of the plates officially proved.

### The Flag of the Race Commemoratives, August 3, 1933

All details as to date of issue, use, cancels, quantities, paper and counterfeits of all values of the air set, all remain as previously given (B, D). All stamps are scarcer used than unused. Destruction of the plates has been officially proved.

One point which had puzzled some for years was the fact that the counterfeits of the Flag air stamps were not merely fraudulent reprints, but actually differed noticeably from the genuine in all identical plate positions. From the account of the destruction, already given, it may be believed that an entire set of forged plates of the air stamps were made from the negatives which figured in the destruction. The counterfeits may be considered actual postal forgeries, accidental or intentional, for the Flags alone, of all the four issues listed above, remained valid for postal duty for more than one or two days.

### The International Air Week Commemoratives, November 6, 1933

All details as to dates of issue and use, cancels, quantities authorized, forgeries, remain as previously given (F). To date a search of official archives has not yet produced documentary evidence of destruction of the plates. Genuinely used they are scarce.

### The Seized Cancelling Devices

One of the most interesting aspects of Sr. Vanegas' inspiring philatelic purification in Nicaragua last year is the opportunity it affords to study in detail the "cancel" in the hands of one former stamp dealer there. All the following, as well as several others outside the scope of air stamp study, were seized in the home of Ricardo Contreras in Granada. Actual strikes of each have been given to the Collectors Club, New York, N. Y. for permanent reference through the courtesy of Sr. Vanegas and the Nicaraguan government. (Fig. 3)

Fig. 7 shows the most commonly used counterfeit rectangular air cancel (A—Fig. 12 and text), minus its date line characters, all of which are heaped in the center of the pallet, Figs. 1 and 2.

Fig. 8 appears to be the genuine air mail post mark of Managua, used in 1929-1930 and not heretofore described, although it is in poor condition at the time of taking the proof impression. Incorrect date line characters are inserted. "Managua" appears slightly swollen in both dimensions. I believe that it is the worn-out original cancel.

Fig. 9 appears to be the genuine cachet applied in violet to most of the covers of the Air Mail Interior Inaugural Flight (H). The characters of the top line are slightly distorted and distended, perhaps because of age and heat.

Fig. 10 shows the genuine original cachet applied in red at Managua to covers despatched cross country to Bluefields on the east coast on June 28, 1933. It was still in good condition at the time of the proof impression and showed distinctly the genuine characteristics.



NICARAGUA



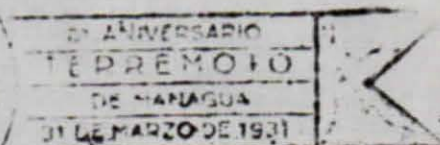
14



15



16



18



17



19



21



20



PRIMER DIA CIRCULACION

22

Figs. 14-22. Fake Cancels. For descriptions, see text.

## NICARAGUA

Fig. 11 was another favorite of Contreras and is to be found on many stamps. It is a counterfeit Managua ordinary mail type, its characteristics a slightly flattened circle above "DE" and a dash at each end of "MANAGUA".

Fig. 12 shows a fake surface mail registry cancel. It closely resembles one in use at Managua in 1934, though the imitation has the word "DE" in capitals rather than the lower case of the genuine.

Fig. 13 is a counterfeit ordinary mail cancel of Granada. The genuine one which it imitates was used from 1933 till about 1941 and had the letters of "GRANADA" much closer together.

Fig. 14 resembles a type in general use throughout Nicaragua about 1929-1930. I have never observed it on a legitimate cover from Granada and believe it to be counterfeit. It does not resemble any Granada cancel known to me to have been used from 1931 to date.

Fig. 15 is a counterfeit of a Granada surface mail registry cancel used in 1933-1934, the inscriptions reading alike. The genuine registry mark has "GRANADA" in smaller letters, without serifs.

Fig. 16 is an example of the counterfeit "JINOTEGA" previously discussed (C—Fig. 2).

Fig. 17 is a bogus BLUEFIELDS marking.

Fig. 18 is undoubtedly the genuine cancel applied to WILL ROGERS flown covers in BLUE, on March 31, 1939. It is inscribed as commemorating the eighth anniversary of the 1931 earthquake. I have frequently seen it struck in VIOLET on unsealed, or unaddressed covers purporting to be "FIRST DAY". Some of the latter bear the strike of Fig. 19, the only place I have seen this applied.

Fig. 20 is a 7 x 9 mm rectangle inscribed "SOC FIL NIC", suggestive of "Sociedad Filatelica de Nicaragua". Such a society has been in existence only since August 12, 1952, however. Ably led by Sr. Vanegas, the new Society will undoubtedly choose some quite different mark for its use, when required.

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## NICARAGUA

Fig. 21, a COW, is still a mystery to me. Perhaps some reader can explain its use.

Fig. 22 is a counterfeit first day cancel. Its worst fault is the ungrammatical Spanish, "PRIMER DIA CIRCULACION". The genuine first day cancels used in Managua are properly inscribed, "PRIMER DIA DE CIRCULATION". They are customarily destroyed immediately after "first day" service.

One item conspicuously absent was the "guarantee" mark, "C" above "Nic.", found on the reverse of many fraudulent, bogus or otherwise improper stamps of Nicaragua. This mark is almost a sure sign that the stamp is not what it is supposed to be.

The above list of bogus and genuine postal markings likely to appear on Nicaraguan air stamps, all of which were found in the possession of Contreras in March of 1952, does not include several other known counterfeit markings, of Nicaraguan and foreign origin. Contreras' possession of many genuine markings emphasizes the importance of careful examination of all stamps bearing those types as cancels.

### Summary of Facts

It is appropriate now to summarize all important established facts concerning the fraudulent reprints and counterfeits of the RAILROAD COMMEMORATIVE ISSUES, all of them, regular and air mail. This should serve to dispel the confusion and misunderstanding which had been spread so long by Sres. Harding, Contreras and their distributors. Documentation for all of the following facts has been published in the present and past issues of *Aero Philatelist's News*.

### These Are Indisputable Facts

1. Every denomination of the RAILROAD stamps was duly authorized by presidential decree in the amount of 1,000 individual stamps.

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## NICARAGUA

2. Stamps of both series exist as having legitimately paid postage on covers of their respective dates of issue.
3. All genuine postmarks used in Managua in December, 1932, have been recorded.
4. All stamps known to have done legitimate postal duty at Managua on the dates of issue are printed on one kind of paper, which is identified as BOND SEMI-SATIN.
5. Clandestine reprints exist of more than one setting, on various papers, in varying colors.
6. Bogus and counterfeit cancels were found in the possession of a Nicaraguan stamp dealer.
7. Large quantities of clandestine reprints were found in the possession of the same stamp dealer.
8. All clandestine reprints seized from all stamp stocks in 1952, together with all cancelling devices taken, have been destroyed by the Nicaraguan government.
9. All clandestine reprints have been declared fraudulent by the Nicaraguan government, and their ownership in Nicaragua has been made punishable by fine.
10. The only arguments in support of the known clandestine reprints have come from stamp dealers who were engaged, or who are engaged, in the business of selling the known clandestine reprints for money.

By omitting any confidence in hearsay and by paying strict attention to the detailed descriptions, the stamps and cancels if any, any philatelist, I am sure, can identify correctly any subject stamp of these issues.

### Reconstruction of Events

Please DO NOT confuse the following conclusion with fact. The only fact involved is that it is positively my own personal conclusion. To reach it I have used every available fact from every possible source, facts collected over a period of many years.

I believe that a private reprinting of all the Nicaraguan EARTHQUAKE commemoratives had taken place after the one-day sale and use of the genuine issue. The reprints had proved to be marketable. The similar RAILROAD issues of limited validity later the same year offered further opportunity to the operator. However, it was advisable, perhaps necessary, to "let in" certain other officials and stamp dealers. Some clandestine reprints may have been made very shortly after the genuine RAILROAD stamps, though reprints are known to have been made in various settings and colors, suggesting several reprintings. Harding may have contracted to buy from Sr. Cordoba a large percentage of the genuine stamps or the fraudulent ones. In either case, he balked at paying for such stamps, after obtaining them, when he discovered the existence of noticeably different reprints. Harding conspired to foist the fraudulent stamps on philately by arguing and lying actively to pass them off as genuine. The FLAG OF THE RACE issue of August, 1933, provided another swindling opportunity. Someone produced what are actually forgeries of all the air stamps, which were relatively scarcer, yet more popular philatelically, than the other two sets of the issue. This suggests prior arrangement by government officials.

The AIR WEEK issue of November 1933, made possible the best swindle of all. Large quantities, far in excess of the limited authorized issue, exist for philately, and they are indistinguishable from the regularly issued stamps.

It was not until September of 1933 that the plates for these five commemorative issues were officially destroyed. No conspirator has ever "told all" as to how many times the plates were stolen and replaced, nor how many fraudulent reprints and/or forgeries of any issue were made.

### End of an Era

Before me is a certified copy of a governmental document which reads, translated, as follows:



## NICARAGUA

"Ministry of Finance. National Palace. Managua, D. N., April 5, 1952.—No. 13644—Ref. 553. Sr. Administrator of Income, City.

Please receive from each one of Sres. Orlando Marin Aviles and Ricardo Contreras the sum of One Thousand (1,000) Cordobas net, as a fine for fiscal defraudation in the use of and traffic in illegal postage stamps.

Attentively,

(Signed) **RAF. A. HUEZO**, Minister of Finance".

The great mass of fraudulent philatelic material, Figs. 1 and 2, was destroyed with ceremony on October 17, 1952, at the foundry of the Pacific Railroad of Nicaragua. Attending were Sres. Jose Santos Ramirez R., Juan B. Barbieri, Capt. Adolfo Trana, Dr. Manuel-Castillo Jarquin, Agustin Vanegas P., Drs. Miguel Angel Barbosa, Octavio Arguello Varela, Hernan Perez Casco and Capt. Jose Luis Aguado, as well as members of the press.

A certified copy in the files of the Collectors Club, contains a long list of material destroyed. Among other illegal items are the following:

"Three packages seized from Sr. Ricardo Contreras Castillo of the city of Granada, one of them containing numerous false cancellers and obliterations and a great quantity of pieces of wood and cork, bearing numerals and legends of months to imitate the postal cancellations of the STATE, and the other two (containing) illegal stamps.

A large box and an envelope of illegal stamps, taken from the Latin American Stamp Company, S. A., now in process of liquidation in this city. (Harding's company).

Two envelopes containing illegal postage stamps, seized in the house of Dona Angela Boquin, widow of Deshon, of Leon".

In addition there were seven other parcels, each seized from a different stamp dealer in Managua.

Also consigned to the fire were all the plates, both in block of four and twenty-five format, for the six regular postage stamps commemorating the 75th Anniversary of Communications Service in Nicaragua, Scott's nos. 665-670, as well as one pen-and-ink drawing of each of the above stamps, and their corresponding photographic reductions to stamp size, in panes of twenty-five subjects.

Also destroyed were the corresponding air mail stamp plates belonging to the same issue, in plates of four subject, one drawing and a photographic reduction to stamp size, sixteen subjects, of the portraits of Genl. Tomas Martinez and Genl. Anastasio Somoza. These air stamps, a legitimate part of the Communications series of 1937, in constant use and on continuous sale in Nicaragua for the past sixteen years, are listed by Sanabria as nos. 278-281 and 290-293.

Lastly, there were destroyed a set of nine plates, each of fifteen subjects, bearing the effigy of Emanuel Mongals, destined for production of air mail stamps, and another set of nine plates, fifteen subjects each, also for air stamps, with the image of a torch. These eighteen plates were intended for an issue which never was authorized, thus they were never used.

## Conclusion

For me and for AERO PHILATELISTS INC. this account now ending represents a successful climax to a program initiated six years ago, with our first NICARAGUA STORY. We have kept the SPOTLIGHT OF TRUTH focused precisely on target. We can share in some part the greater success of Sr. Agustin Vanegas P., Director of Nicaragua's Philatelic Agency. It was his driving force, with the same single

## NICARAGUA

purpose as our own, that brought to a complete finish in Nicaragua the disgraceful traffic in fraudulent stamps and cancellations. We can be sure that our help has provided protection for the collectors of the future.

Control of stamp trade within our own country is a matter for us here at home. If we can do as well as Sr. Vanegas and his government we shall have equalled the best. I thank personally all directors and members of AERO PHILATELISTS INC. who have extended to me their confidence and the privilege of contributing so much to the printed record of Nicaraguan philately.

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## THE AIRMAIL BAG

*(Under this heading a regular feature will be run with correspondence from Members. Names in full will be used unless a contrary request is specified when a correspondent will be identified by initials only. Nothing unsigned will be used.)*

Aero Philatelists has produced swell publications, but I suggest writing up other countries than Nicaragua, which has caused controversy in the press, as your Cone articles are challenged.

Warren H. Triechler No. 200

Right, Richard N. Cone's Nicaragua articles have been challenged, but the rebuttals emanated almost exclusively from one source, the house organ of a stamp dealer published occasionally.

Neither Aero Philatelist's publications nor Mr. Cone has chosen to refute the challenges for a number of reasons. Perhaps the most important one is to be found in the Nicaragua article in this number of THE AERO PHILATELIST ANNALS. Should any one from now on persist in claiming that no reprints of the 1932 commemoratives exist, show him



## AIRMAIL BAG

the illustrations of the seized stamps and sheets. As for fake cancellations, you can see for yourself what the Government of Nicaragua found and then destroyed.

It is important to point out now that the challenges to our Nicaragua articles were based to a great extent upon opinions and letters of two former stamp dealers in Nicaragua, the late *R. E. Harding* of Managua and *Ricardo Contreras* of Granada. The raids, seizures and other acts by the Government of Nicaragua in 1952 disclose the activities of these two for all to know.

Without boasting, AERO PHILATELISTS can feel exceptionally proud of the role it played in the clean-up of this fraud. It has served philately well. Would that more countries follow the example of Nicaragua. Then philately's cancer, the distribution of faked material, will be removed.

I think that Aero Philatelists has issued one of the greatest philatelic magazines ever produced. Congratulations! Also I am grateful for the many timely warnings about counterfeit stamps and fake cancellations. But may I suggest that you describe how to tell the good from the bad. Otherwise how I can know them?

C. N. R. No. 210

Your suggestion brings up a matter most troublesome for philatelic writers. We admit the omission of stigmati allowing one to distinguish between the genuine and the counterfeit. But this is done deliberately and with a specific purpose.

The philatelic expert so often can spot a fake because the counterfeiter is not well versed in philatelic knowledge. The faker's ignorance is his undoing. There have been many instances when an article describing in detail a counterfeit has allowed the faker to rectify his mistakes and reissue a better job. So it is obvious that the disclosure of information on counterfeits harms the very ones to protect, the collectors, while aiding the one whose activities should be eliminated.

Any author, who enjoys sharing his knowledge with his fellow collectors, dislikes in principle to withhold any helpful information. But in the matter of counterfeits and reprints, this seems to be the best course to pursue. There are times when certain knowledge must be guarded carefully.

---

## TWO HANDBOOKS AVAILABLE

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## FAKING CANCELLATIONS

It is hoped that the disclosures about fake cancellations, as described in the Nicaragua article in this number of *THE AERO PHILATELIST ANNALS*, will come to the attention of all philatelists interested in cancels and postal markings.

The faking of postal markings of all sorts has been as old as philately itself. It is not a trickery peculiar to the stamps of Nicaragua nor to air stamps. Any competent student in philately will acknowledge that the study and detection of fake cancellations is much more difficult than of counterfeits of stamps. There are many reasons for this. First of all, governments are mainly interested in protecting their revenue by guarding against the counterfeiting of stamps. Once a stamp has performed its duty and has been obliterated against re-use, the government's interest is slight. Then a printed stamp is much easier to study than a cancel where often only a small portion appears on a stamp. And finally, the best philatelic reference collections have far more control material pertaining to the stamps than to cancels or postal markings.

Consequently, the student of cancellations proceeds usually by the deductive method. Seldom does the student have first-hand evidence of the actual devices and methods used for cancellation by either the post offices or the faker. Instead he studies the lettering, the numerals, the inks and the shape or form of a particular marking. Furthermore, he traces and records the period of use. Armed with all this data corralled only by a long and thorough search, he draws his conclusions.

Therefore, the seizures made in Nicaragua are most revealing to the student of cancellations. They "open the book" and show how the counterfeiter of cancels operated, something rarely disclosed to philately.

The most commonly-held theory about a fake postal marking is that a complete rubberstamp copied from the original cancelling device was used. But the practice was not followed in Nicaragua; no rubber handstamps were used. The method of faking employed is one that is not remembered as having been described in any previous philatelic writing. It is so practical that one must wonder if this particular method of faking cancels may not have been an old practice and much more widespread than a rubberstamp.

The illustration on page 43 shows the seized cancelling devices in the center. One should notice that they consist of *two* separate parts. One is the large wooden dies used for the outer frame portion of the cancel. The impressions made from some of these are shown in Figures 7, and 11 to 22 of the Nicaragua article. Such a wooden die no doubt deteriorates slower than one of rubber. Besides it can give longer service and clearer sharpness because a rubberstamp spreads after use. In order to supply a specific date for the center of the cancel, the faker had made small letters and numerals in *cork*. A study of this method will show that is much more practical and economical than a single rubber handstamp.

Another disclosure made in the Nicaragua raid is the finding of several genuine dies among the counterfeit devices. No doubt the faker secured the genuine ones from a postal employee by bribery or through theft. This offers a greater challenge to the philatelic student. Yet even a deception using some genuine dies is not foolproof and a philatelic expert on cancellations often can spot the illegal use of genuine die.

And now for a word of caution to the collector. Whether he studies postal markings or not, he should realize the philatelic problem he faces. Of course, a collector seeking used because they are cheaper than unused has little cause to worry. The collector who falls prey to the counterfeiter of cancels is the one who wants used copies only, and pays a higher price for them than for an unused copy. In this country, the normal supply and demand situation makes the mint stamps the more expensive. When one notices that used copies are equal and especially more than the prices of mint, this clearly indicates a very short supply of cancelled copies. To meet this demand, the faker



## EDITORIAL

of cancellations and his agents oblige collectors. Consequently, the collector of used only must realize that he is in a highly specialized field. It is almost demanded of him that he become a student of cancellations and postal rates. The ordinary space-filler is not fortified. He can be fooled time and again by fake cancels. Realizing the dangers inherent with cancellations, the average collector should take the proper precautions to protect himself. (H. M. G.)

### Scott Catalogue, 1954, Part I

Volume 1 of the 1954 Standard Postage Stamp Catalogue was distributed early in September, 1953. This covers, as usual, the Americas and the British Commonwealth of Nations. The publishers with the many new stamps have been able to keep the size of the work to 840 pages against 832 for the 1953 edition.

In reviewing this solely from the aero-philatelist's point of view, the first matter to consider is the changes, if any, in listings. The most important one is the deletion of the scarce Nicaragua Earthquake stamp formerly listed as C13. A footnote after this 1932 Issue reads now as follows:—"No. C2 with 20c surcharge was privately produced and not decreed or issued by the government." *The Aero Philatelist News* dated April 15 and May 1, 1953 had an article about this stamp. It is advised that our readers acquaint themselves with the full particulars from this study.

Also there have been two new additions, one in Nicaragua, the other in Panama. In 1938, Panama surcharged stamps to commemorate the Opening of the Aguadulce Normal School. The set of two airmails consists of a 7c on 30c (C12) and an 8c on 15c (C7). The numbers of these stamps are Scott C53A-B. The Nicaragua addition is two Miniature Sheets each containing four different stamps making a total of eight

(Continued on next Page)

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## SCOTT CATALOG

stamps in all. They commemorate the 75th Anniversary of Postal Service in Nicaragua and are listed under C221B to C221K as stamps and then as C221F and C221M as Sheets.

We believe that the inclusion of these items are a continuation of a step in the right direction, but only an indication of an encouraging trend. There are other stamps, in the opinion of this reviewer, which warrant listing to make the catalog more comprehensive and complete. More about this after we have studied and reviewed Part 2 after it has appeared.

It is very gratifying to report that *the trend of airmail prices, as shown in this new edition, is definitely up.* This advance does not occur in a few isolated instances but is found *consistently throughout the volume.* This general trend of raising prices was done with used as well as mint stamps. A few examples picked at random follow.

The U. S. Zepps (C13-15) have been increased to \$135 for the mint and \$115 used, a raise of \$7.50 and \$6.50 respectively. Ecuador C8 moves up from \$27.50 to \$35. Mexico has many increases in price. The DePinedo of Newfoundland has been raised \$50 used to \$650. The first airmail issue of New Guinea has gone from \$48 to \$60 mint and from \$55 to \$70 used. The later 1932-34 issue has been priced upwards in a similar proportion. Papua's 1938 set moves from \$6.75 to \$8.75 mint and from \$8 to \$11.25 used, while the 1939-41 issues have been increased similarly. Uruguay's 1928 Pegasus set has jumped from \$98.50 to \$124.50 both mint and used. The 1933 Pan American Conference set of two increased from \$10 to \$12 both ways. Many denominations of the 1935 issue were raised, notably the 5 pesos (C82) from \$15 to \$20 mint and used. The Oxcart issue of 1939-41, the 10 pesos (C101) has gone up from \$42.50 to \$50 mint and \$17.50 to \$22.50 used.

This signifies to us that much thought had been given to the pricing of the airmail stamps in this catalog. It is especially noticeable with the used prices. We believe that in this respect no other catalog has shown the progress nor can approach the accuracy and careful pricing. A general but inaccurate past custom of catalogs has been to price a used stamp automatically and constantly at a fraction of the unused price. But in the case of a limited or shortlived issue, it is often the reverse. Up to now we think that no catalog has taken the proper amount of care and study to really appraise the value of used stamps by themselves, not always in a lesser ratio to mint.

In conclusion, we recommend to the airmail stamp collector, especially the specialist interested in used, this new Scott catalog. It shows first of all that the publisher is pursuing a more liberal listing policy. This indicates a breakaway from the past arbitrary stand that Scott took on many issues, which deserved a listing in this important American catalog. And secondly, the upsurge in air mail prices is very heartening to the collector. We look forward with anticipation to similar trends in Volume 2. *Stanley R. Rice.*

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## What Has Happened to

## HONDURAS

### Scott C21 and C24 ?

For almost a quarter of a century, the Scott Catalogue had listed two very scarce Honduras air mail stamps of the 1930 Provisional Issue. They were:

C21 5c on 10c blue with *yellow* instead of red overprint.

C24 10c on 20c yellow brown with *violet* instead of black overprint.



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When the 1953 edition of Scott appeared, it was found that these two stamps had been demoted by a change to minor numbers as follows:

C21 became C20f

C24 became C23e

And at the end of this set's listing came this statement:

"The status of Nos. C20f and C23e is questioned".\*

The new (1954) edition continues this.

The 1953 Sanabria catalog lists and prices these two stamps as follows:

No. 28 .....\$300.00 (no used price)

No. 31 .....\$300.00 (no used price)

To our knowledge nothing has been published in the last ten years by any competent and recognized Honduras authority regarding Scott C21 and C24. As a matter of fact, we have devoted some time to the study of these two stamps. Our best source for research was the *Luff Reference Collection*. Copies of both these stamps are in this collection along with a few interesting notes in the pencilled-handwriting of that famous philatelist, the late Mr. John N. Luff. Mr. Luff happened to have been one of the greatest students of Honduras stamps. He had been in close contact with Honduras when all these scarce air mails were being issued. Being a careful student, he moved cautiously before listing any stamps in the Scott catalog of which he had been editor for many years. We feel

\* Mr. James B. Hatcher of Scott Publications informs us that this first appeared in the 1947 edition when H. C. Clark was editor, and has been continued.

(Continued on next Page)

## HONDURAS — AZERBAIJAN

certain that had Mr. Luff known of or held any reservations about the *yellow* or *violet* overprints at their time of issuance, he would never have listed them. Furthermore, Mr.

Luff instinctively would have examined closely the reasons for issuing just one sheet of 50 each with a yellow and violet overprint. He must have satisfied himself that the former C21 and C24 were legitimate issues of Honduras before he assigned them to his catalog.

In fairness to the present editor of Scott, and assuming that later information had been supplied him questioning these two stamps, we believe that he should have hesitated before making the altered listings on these two rarities. Prominent air mail stamp collections here and abroad have copies of the former C21 and C24 for which the owners had paid high prices. And in many instances, they spent additional sums to secure a Certificate of Genuineness from an expert committee.

The change made by Scott last year has seriously lowered the value of these two stamps. Making them minor numbers practically removes all demand for them by new collectors. Once a stamp loses its status as a major number, the demand for it practically ceases.

In no sense of captiousness, we speak out against such a catalog policy. When a stamp has been accepted for years because of its catalog listing, its removal or change from a major to minor number is inadvisable, unless the evidence is very strong and there are insistent demands from many collectors' circles. A long-accepted stamp, as a rule, should remain unchanged in a catalog. Such alterations hurt the very people whom a conscientious editor is striving to help.

The bulk of the stock of stamps like Honduras C21 and C24 are in collections. We are sure that very few, if any, are in dealers hands. Consequently, the present owners of these two Honduras stamps automatically suffer a severe financial loss when the Scott catalog made its changes. (H. M. G.)

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## AZERBAIJAN

The June, 1953 "Supplement to the Sanabria Air Post Catalogue" on page 20 had a *New Listing* of special interest to us. Two sets of overprints, one a set of ten, the other one of three, now have gone into the Sanabria catalog. The basic stamps used were the 1938 air mail series of Iran (Persia). Many of these Iranian air stamps were overprinted during 1946 and 1947 for use in the northern province of Azerbaijan, when that portion of Iran was an international pawn between the communist and non-communist countries.

To our knowledge, "*The Aero Philatelist News*" was the *only* publication in America that ever wrote about these provisional stamps, and that was back in 1951 (*Aero Philatelist News*, Vol. VI pp. 30-31).

Our published information, which was based upon careful research along with documentation supplied by Mr. S. Serebrakian, differs in two respects from the new Sanabria listing, as follows:

1. The Postal Directives from Azerbaijan show that the issues were made in 1946-47 and not 1950, the incorrect date assigned by the Sanabria catalog.
2. The greater portion of the stamps examined in preparation of our article for print were cancelled copies, many on pieces of cover. The Sanabria catalog prices the stamps unused only.

Mr. R. J. Lyon, editor of Sanabria, assures us that the issue would be listed correctly when it is chronicled in the forthcoming 1954 edition.



# CANAL ZONE

## Airmail Officials

### Discovery of "Type 3"

By L. W. CHARLAT

According to Scott and Sanabria listings, there are only two varieties of the Airmail Official overprints, Scott's Type 2 and 2A, viz:

Type 2 — "PANAMA CANAL" measures 19½ mm.

Type 2A — "PANAMA CANAL" measures 17 mm.

As a matter of fact, there is a *third type*. It is from an entirely different setting which shows a width of 19 mm. for "PANAMA CANAL" and some minor distinctions.

#### First Reference to "Type 3"

In the "*Aero Philatelist News*" of April 15, 1949, this writer stated:

"It is evident that a rectified or entirely new setting is currently being employed, since an examination of a sheet of the 6c denomination shows the third horizontal row identical with the rest of the pane. Also, stamp No. 45 has the "O" of "OFFICIAL" directly over the second "A" of "PANAMA" and stamp No. 50 has a 1 mm. spacing after the "N" of "PANAMA". Subject No. 50 is better described as having the first "F" of "OFFICIAL" directly over the second "A" of "PANAMA".



Type 3 "PANAMA CANAL" 19mm.  
Subjects #44, 45, 49 and 50.

## CANAL ZONE

Strangely overlooked at that time, was the 19 mm. size of "PANAMA CANAL" which so clearly differentiates this setting and suggests a "Type 3" classification.

The alignment varieties on subjects No. 45 and No. 50 are peculiar to "Type 3" alone. It will be recalled that Type 2 (19½ mm.) setting has the whole third horizontal row with the "O" of "OFFICIAL" over the "N" of "PANAMA".

I have never seen any alignment varieties of Type 2A (17 mm.) and it is very doubtful there are any.

### New Color Shades

The "Type 3" (the 19 mm. overprint) shows some striking shades of the basic stamps, such as:

- 10c reddish orange
- 20c dark violet
- 30c rose carmine
- 40c bright yellow

in contrast to the earlier colors which were orange, red violet, rose lake and yellow, respectively.

### "Type 3": When Issued ?

In my reference collection, there is a copy of the 10c stamp cancelled "1946". The 6c was first printed November 15, 1948 and this denomination comes in "Type 3" only. Definitely the last setting, "Type 3" probably appeared in 1946. By chance, I have a postally used block of the 6c showing a rather heavy worn impression. It is cancelled "Balboa Heights C. Z. Dec. 14, 1951" only a few days before the stamps became obsolete.

### "Type 3" in Mint Condition

This Type was used during a period of about five years until the discontinuance of the "Officials". Therefore it may be assumed that nothing but "Type 3" were in the mint stamps released in 1952. This Type is found postally used and in cancelled-to-order condition as well.

### Type 2 and 2A Mint ?

We are forced to fall back on postally used or the cancelled-to-order specimens of Type 2 and 2A, because mint copies were never lawfully obtainable and it is believed none were in the release of 1952.

This is the fourth and probably last report on my study of Canal Zone air mail officials but future discoveries may call for further additions to the varieties of this interesting issue.

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## NEW GUINEA SEMI-OFFICIALS

There is a set of two Zeppelin Semi-Official stamps listed in the Sanabria catalog as New Guinea Nos. 501-2. The stamps are scarce, being priced in the 1953 edition of this catalog at \$150.00 for the pair.\*



A block of four of the 1 Mark black, blue and red (Sanabria No. 502). This comes from the lower right corner of the sheet having the plate numbers in both red and blue. This is an unusual piece, multiples of these extremely scarce Semi-Officials are seldom seen. Photo by the courtesy of H. R. Harmer Inc.

The German publication "*Die Luftpost*", edited by Kurt Dahmann, in its May, 1953 number supplied some historical background about this set. Since very little information has been published, we have had this article translated into English, as follows:

### "COLLABORATION OF GERMAN AIRWAYS WITH OTHER COUNTRIES PLANNED FORTY YEARS AGO."

"In connection with the impending re-opening of German commercial air lines and the necessary collaboration with aviation companies in other countries using this method of transportation, it will be interesting to learn that such an Air-Combine had been planned before World War I. This was the English-German-Dutch Air Surveying Expedition to New Guinea.

"This is known to aerophilatelists by Germany's issue of the 2 pf. and 1 Mk. stamps which have become recently more popular and which have also been bringing high prices at auctions.

\* The pair was listed first in the 1942 Sanabria, but was unpriced. It remained like this in the seven succeeding editions through 1948.

In the 1950 edition, a price of \$150 for the pair was listed. The earlier edition had stated that "So far only three copies of the 2 Pfennig and two copies of the 1 Mark have been discovered". The 1950 and 1953 editions altered this to read that "several sets have appeared on the market".

This statement can be amended further or deleted, because more than "several sets" have appeared on the market recently. The exact amount has not been tabulated or made known. These stamps, however, still are very desirable and relatively scarce Semi-Official airmails.

## NEW GUINEA

"Before me is a rare brochure printed in Berlin at the beginning of 1914 which tells in 36 pages how the Expedition was to be planned and financed. The costs of the Airship and the Expedition were to be met by pledges and gifts. The Airship was to go to the World's Fair at San Francisco. It was expected that it would be the highlight of the 1915 Exposition. Mail and passengers were to be taken aboard; even the issuance of Air Mail post cards was planned.

"The income from mail and passengers, as also that from sightseers, was to cover the fundamental costs of the real objective of the enterprise. After the Exhibition, the Airship was to be taken and stationed at New Guinea where it was to make a survey of the unknown lands.

"The island of New Guinea, which is even larger than the German Reich in extent, then was a divided Dutch-English-German Colonial possession. With the flight surveys the economic development of the Territory was to proceed apace.

"Influential personalities in the three countries, viz.—England, Holland, Germany—formed a Committee in their respective countries for the common undertaking. The sixty names of the German Committee listed in the brochure gave a strong indication that the venture could have achieved success. The majority of the members were known to have given of their funds for the needed research and other aspects of the venture.

"At the top of the list was the great supporter of aerial communication, the Grand-duke of Hesse and bei Rhein. Other associates were Duke Friederich von Mecklenberg; Prince of Thurn and Taxis; Paul Graetz, African Explorer and leader of the Expedition; Dr. Lanz-Mannheim; Professor Berson; Professor Suehring, the holder of the World Record in a Free Balloon; Geheimrat Dr. Lingner; Arthur Bleichroeder, Otto Henkel-Wiesbade, Commerce Minister Hoesch and others.

The outbreak of World War I halted the project; but the plan should be valued as pioneer idea for collaboration in aerial activity.

*"Paul Henke, Flight Captain."*

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## AERO PHILATELIC SHOWCASE

### PHILIPPINES' MADRID-MANILA ISSUE

#### The "Broken Wing" Variety is Position No. 89

"The Aero Philatelist News" (Vol. III Nos. 23-24, Vol. IV No. 1) contained a comprehensive article on the 1926 Madrid-Manila issue of the Philippines. On page 2 of Vol. IV, a paragraph was devoted to a most interesting variety, which has been shunted in and out of the Sanabria and Scott Air Post Stamp catalogs as if it were in a revolving door. Specific reference as to what is philatelically known as the "Broken Wing" variety. This is that overprint where one blade of the propeller is missing. Perhaps a more descriptive term would be the "Broken Propeller", but since "Broken Wing" is the established philatelic term, there is no great need now for a change.

"The Aero Philatelist News" article contradicted the previous studies of Philippine philatelists, such as the late Walter Bruggmann of Manila, who had located this "Broken Wing" variety as occurring in position No. 89 in the sheet. We had plated it as position No. 88 and so recorded it.

We were wrong and a correction is necessary. *The correct position is No. 89.* Proof of this can be found on the accompanying illustration. The block of 6 shows the end of the sheet with the straight-edge margin. The "Broken Wing" can be seen next to position No. 90 on the edge of the sheet, not two away which would make it No. 88.

Our thanks of Mr. Herbert Bloch of H. R. Harmer Inc. for calling this to our attention and also to the H. R. Harmer organization for allowing us to photograph this piece for illustration.



The arrow points to the "Broken Wing" variety obviously position No. 89, not No. 88.

## HISTORY REPEATS ITSELF

Back in the spring of 1919 on the island of *Newfoundland*, there had been a few British planes ready to compete for the honor and the prize of being the first to cross the Atlantic Ocean non-stop. It was a keen competition.

The aero-philatelist, as a result of this event, has been favored with two noteworthy stamps of Newfoundland. The Sopwith Company's plane was piloted by Hawker, after whom one of the rarest air mail stamps is named. The Vickers Company plane had Alcock and Brown as its pilots. They gave us Newfoundland Sanabria No. 8, Scott C2. Of course, we know that Hawker failed just short of the goal, while Alcock and Brown won the £10,000 prize for the first non-stop Transatlantic flight.

Late in September, 1953 world news reminds us again of this Sopwith-Vickers competition of 1919. News dispatches told of the new jet fighter speed record by pilot Neville Duke. The record-breaking plane, built by the now-called "The Hawker Siddeley Group, Ltd.", but still headed by Sir T. O. M. Sopwith of 1919 fame, is called the HAWKER Hunter, named after the late great aviator, Harry G. Hawker. One reads that the newly-established speed record is to be challenged by a rival British aircraft concern, VICKERS-Armstrong, Ltd. It would be coincidental if the Vickers-Armstrong Company called one of its jet fighter planes "The Alcock".

*Hawker versus Vickers again in 1953; this is where we came in! (H. M. G.)*

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