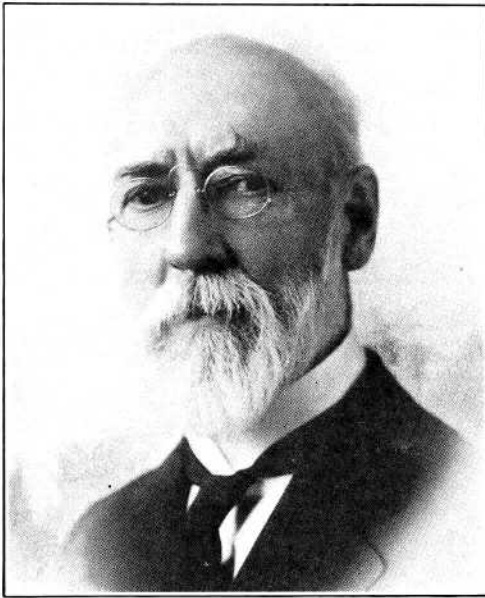


John Walter Scott

By J. B. CHITTENDEN

THERE is one department of philately that is still in its infancy. Stamps have been and are being studied with increasing care, in fact to a degree that is even astonishing to collectors themselves, but concerning the men who did and are doing this work comparatively little has been recorded. As the first century of philately draws to a close more and more the biographical and historical events associated with the lives of at least the founders of this science will be interesting and valuable. With the exception of Sir Rowland Hill our knowledge of the early philatelists is fragmentary to a degree, but signs are not lacking that this will be amended as witness the fine work accomplished by Pemberton and Sefi relating to the life and work of Edward Pemberton in "*The Philatelic Journal of Gt. Britain*," and the brightly human and powerful searchlight thrown upon the real Ferrary by Charles J. Phillips.* Unless one essays to write a biography no adequate understanding of



JOHN WALTER SCOTT
Photo taken in 1919.

the difficulties involved can be realized. The paucity of authoritative information concerning men whose names are familiar today to even the rank and file of philatelists is truly astonishing. Even personal friends and members of the family can state very little that is definite. Since possessing a journal of its own the *Collectors Club* has recognized its duty to perform this work at least for its own members. Inadequate and far from complete because of lack of time and information, with a pen charged with affection and appreciation and kindly memories, such events as are known to us concerning the life of our most celebrated founder and leader in philately, John Walter Scott, are recorded:

EARLY AND DOMESTIC LIFE

John Walter Scott was born in London, England, November 2, 1845, the son of John Scott and his wife Martha Stone. These few words

contain all the information to be secured from his family, and it is probable that little will ever be recorded concerning the first fifteen formative years of his life other than can be derived from inference. Unquestionably he received but an ordinary elementary school education, and it is equally certain that he received in his home instruction in the Bible, which throughout his long life led him to base his conduct on Christian ethics.

It is easy to picture young Scott as a tall, rather ungainly youth, very shy and very nearsighted, given much to meditation and thrown to a degree on his own resources for amusement, the very stuff out of which so many stamp collectors have evolved. In 1860 at the age of fifteen he secured his first employment in a merchant's office in London, and the foreign correspondence of this house was primarily instrumental in arousing his interest in stamps. The several Scott Companies have at times claimed this date as that of their foundation.

*C. C. P. Vol. 2, No. 1.

For stamp collectors it will not be difficult to imagine the general rating to be given young Scott's stamp business in London in 1860, two years before Mount Brown published his famous first catalogue. Unquestionably he began to trade in stamps during this year primarily to enhance his own collection.

On the 27th of July, 1863, he sailed on the *Hecla* for New York, accompanied by a school boy chum, Charles Watson, and the boys brought their small stock of stamps with them. It is hardly probable that Scott anticipated establishing a stamp trade in New York prior to this voyage. With little ready cash it is easier to perceive that he and Watson tried to raise funds by selling their stock, which they did to an outdoor dealer in Chambers street, north of the City Hall Park. Conditions must have been most encouraging as the only market representing New York's philatelic interest consisted of a board upon which stamps were tacked and displayed by Scott's predecessor in the trade in front of Trinity Church. He has stated himself that he sold his collection to a stamp and coin dealer located at Chambers street and Broadway for \$10.00. Shortly afterwards he went to this purchaser, I infer but am not certain, the veteran William P. Brown, and complaining of his failure to secure employment expressed his intention to join the Army. This dealer advised him otherwise and offered to lend him \$100 worth of stock to start with to locate next to him if he so desired. This offer was accepted and after three months of this outdoor trade he managed to save \$100.*

The writer is not familiar with other facts concerning the character of Mr. Scott's business during his first sojourn in New York in the year 1863-64. Watson continued his association with Scott for a few months and continued thereafter sufficiently interested in stamps to help found the New York Stamp Society of which he was advertised as the first secretary in 1867, but finding the stamp business too quiet for his ambitions drifted into politics.

Quoting from a letter home announcing his safe arrival in New York, Scott thanks his sister for sending copies of the "black English" and writes "I shall sell them for 12 cents each, so that is a very good profit. If you can get any more send them and I will pay you for them." He also adds "as for churches I attended Holy Trinity regularly since I have been here." That the stamp business was far from lucrative in these years of the Civil War is to be inferred from the fact that in 1865 he followed the gold rush to the West. Arriving at Council Bluffs he joined a caravan and crossed the plains. Quoting from a letter written in Idaho, April 17, 1865: "You ask how I enjoyed Christmas; for Heaven's sake do not think of my enjoying myself. If I can just keep comfortable I think I am doing well. I lost my Bible and my clothes, but I have the New Testament nearly by heart. I want you to find out for me how much money it would take to educate me, fit to become a clergyman. I suppose I could earn enough in two years." In May, 1865, the whole town of Idaho City was destroyed by fire and Scott lost everything he possessed, and in July started on foot for California. At this time his conversational talent was very interesting, especially his description of the different phases of London life were a treat to listen to, and this faculty proved a great asset in his business thereafter. When he went to California a friend obtained a promise from him that he would send him the first lump of gold he dug out himself as a memento. After several years the friend did receive a few grains of the precious metal, although Mr. Scott did not go into the mines but was employed as a teamster.*

He writes home as follows: "I am going to California on my way back to New York, and am glad I am getting back to civilization, for although I have gone on the same as usual I can feel the contaminating influence of living in such company. I have not done anything very wrong, but I can scarcely bring myself to believe that it is any crime to steal and murder. You may think that strange, but if you had lived ten months in a town where it is thought honorable to murder and a man is treated as the vilest coward who allows himself to be insulted and not kill the man you would understand it better." Finally in November he arrived in Sacramento City and found employment with a German grocer, and after working with him

*Supplement to Metropolitan Philatelist, Jan. 13, 1919. J. E. Handshaw.

for six months embarked on a sailing vessel for New York. This ship was wrecked in the vicinity of Panama, but eventually, just how no one seems to know, he arrived again in New York in 1867, where he once more engaged in the stamp trade at 34 Liberty street, which then adjoined the City Hall Post Office.

During the first fifteen months he printed and circulated monthly a price list of stamps for sale consisting of one leaf each, beginning in June, 1867. These constitute the first fifteen editions of the famous Scott's Catalog which advances to the dignity of a catalog in the 16th edition, 20 pages and one colored plate of illustration, issued in September, 1868. In this he advertises the newly founded *American Journal of Philately* as the official organ of the also newly formed New York Philatelic Society. These one page pamphlets are as rare as any publications in American philately. The Crawford library contains but four and sad to relate the *Collectors Club*, his own club, has not a single copy.

THE
AMERICAN JOURNAL
OF
PHILATELY.

In acknowledging the honor done me by the New York Philatelic Society, in giving the Editorial charge of this the first paper published on this Continent treating of the "Science" of Philately, I can only assure them that it will be the study of my life to make **THE AMERICAN JOURNAL OF PHILATELY** second to none of our European contemporaries, in regard to information. And although lamenting that some more experienced gentleman had not been selected to fill the Editorial Chair, still I trust that by employing all the available talent, both in this country and in Europe, to make the Journal equal to their most sanguine expectations.

J. W. SCOTT.

New York City, February, 1868.

OFFICERS OF THE NEW YORK PHILATELIC SOCIETY.

PRESIDENT,
REV. J. A. MORLEY, D.D., LL. D.
VICE-PRESIDENTS,
H. GRAFTON, M. D., WILLARD K. FREEMAN, Esq
TREASURER, SECRETARY,
J. W. SCOTT, CHARLES WATSON.
DIRECTORS,
GEORGE H. EARL, Esq., G. P. TEN BROECK, Esq

CONSTITUTION.

ARTICLE I.—This Society shall be denominated "The New York Philatelic Society," the objects of which shall be to promote the collection of Foreign Postage Stamps, and for obtaining more complete information in regard to the same.

Front Page of Scott's First Paper

excellent stamp journal for Boston, *The American Stamp Mercury*. The upstart Scott flashed back with the *American Journal of Philately*, New York, December, 1868, and a New York Stamp Society. Hardly anything in the history of American philately is more amusing than Trifet's *Mercury* and Scott's *Journal* at this early period. Trifet was older and more experienced and certainly put it all over Scott to a degree that might have utterly discouraged that poor young man struggling manfully in New York were it not for that western rough house foundation combined with the New Testament learned by heart.

Trifet promptly accused Scott of copying the prices in his catalog, of being absolutely void of a knowledge of stamps, and as to editorship better qualified to be an industrious student of the dictionary. Scott was credited by Trifet with being a cheerful liar, the public was advised that No. 1 of the *American Journal of Philately* was never published, and that the heralded stamp society was composed of two young boys named Scott and Wilson, and a visionary clergyman who promptly sailed for Buenos Aires according to the imaginative Scott. Scott countered by sending Trifet

Young Scott was then twenty-two years of age and must have brought back from the West a tough and vigorous constitution and courage. In one year he publishes twelve pamphlets, lays the foundation for America's most famous journal, and establishes theoretically at least the New York Stamp Society. I say theoretically at least for at once young Scott met with vigorous criticism, most of which emanated from Boston which at this time considered itself to be and to a large degree was the home of America's infant philatelists. Boston as early as 1863 had its catalog, famous among collectors as that of G. Dexter, published by Sever and Frances. The Hub rejoiced in the establishment of a journal, *Stamp Collector's Review* in 1866. Moreover, Boston found a leader in Ferdinand Marie Trifet who published his first catalogue, also one leaf and on one side only, in 1866, and a second edition in May, 1867, composed of eighteen pages. In September, 1868, Scott puts New York upon the map with a *sixteenth* edition of 20 pages.

Trifet in October, 1867, began the first successful and in many respects excellent

two copies of No. 1, one on yellow paper purporting to be the original and one on white paper the so-called reprint. Trifet proved to his own satisfaction that both came from the same press and at the same time. That our first society was truly a feeble embryo is indicated by Scott's announced formal resignation in 1868, following a first class row with Wilson.

The childish conduct of these gentlemen was incident to the dawn of philately and its counterpart, the outcome of personal and sectional jealousy, surviving long as witness the politics of the American Philatelic Association, where year after year East is East and West is West most emphatically. Be this as it may, Scott persevered. Trifet published his last catalog, the 50th edition, in 1874, and Scott's catalog claims today to be in its 79th edition. The *American Stamp Mercury* closed down with its 39th number in March, 1871. The *American Journal of Philately* ran through twenty volumes and 184 numbers under Scott's editorship until 1886, and was continued in 19 more volumes containing 228 numbers under the editorship of Henry Calman, John Luff, and the Scott Stamp & Coin Co. Scott died while president of the American Philatelic Society, a splendid example of the pioneer spirit, of the reward of persistent effort, of courage, imagination, and public service. Scott long ago ceased to represent New York, he belongs to the United States of America.

With enough to occupy the spare hours of an ordinary person Scott found time to woo and win, and was married to Minnie Peyton, daughter of William Peyton, a dry goods merchant of New York, October, 1868. Of this marriage six children were born, five of whom survive, including our own Walter Scott, Jr. There is every reason to believe that Mr. Scott was especially happy in his domestic life. His children were all strong and well educated, a part of their education occurring abroad. During many years of his life Mr. Scott was a vegetarian, abstemious always in his habits, and enjoying good health even in his later years.

The foundation of his success was well laid in the formative years 1868-1870. It was based on principles now generally accepted. First to provide albums, second to secure advertising by the publishing of catalogs and a journal, third by furthering the organization of stamp societies. These and until 1878 constituted the days when many experiments were made to keep the pot boiling for a rapidly increasing family. Cheap packets were advertised and sold from the first, the prices varying from 25 cents for fifty stamps to \$10 for 500 stamps. His first album offered was the sixth and seventh editions of Lallier's album and Appleton's album from \$3.50 to \$6.50, but in July, 1868, he was ready with his own Scott's American Album to be had for \$2.50. Long lists of stamps for two cents, others for three cents, and groups for five, eight and ten cents each were advertised monthly. In 1869 a monogram album was also prepared and packets of monograms and crests were added to the list, and a printing outfit not only adequate to his own needs but advertised to perform all sorts of printing under the title J. W. Scott & Co., Practical Job Printers, then located, 1871, at 75-77 Nassau street. Shortly after moving to the basement in Nassau street he made his first famous purchase of a fine lot of St. Louis stamps with the rampant bears for \$1.00 each, which he sold, some as low as \$5.00. By March, 1870, he issued his famous set of 50 portraits of the world's rulers at \$1.00 per set, and essayed for the second time to illustrate new issues in his journal in color. On May 20, 1870, he advertised the first auction sale of stamps to be held Saturday evening, May 28, 1870. This constituted of course a very important event in the history of philately, one destined to have a profound effect on the stamp trade and in encouraging the public in stamp collecting.

In November, 1870, he advertised and sold his Juvenile Theatricals. Quoting the advertisement: "Sheets contain each character in the play in every different position, together with scenes, side wings, etc., etc., and all the fixtures necessary to make an exact imitation of any theatre—stages, stage fronts, lamps, orchestra slides, and everything required at the lowest price. The first plays were Jacob Faithful \$1.75, Falls of Clyde \$1.50, Richard I \$0.75, and Pizzaro. These were evidently an English importation. As late as 1882 these miniature plays were advertised as Seltz's

American Boys' Theatre, and the writer can remember his own first experience therewith as a theatrical producer. The classic plays first mentioned were not in favor during my eighth year, but I distinctly recall one night productions at a very low rate of the *Boy Sailor*, or the *Pirates' Doom*; *Red Headed Jack*, *The Terror of London*, *The Pirates of the Florida Keys*, and *The Red Skeleton*, or the *Dead Avenger*. Five thousand photographs of the world's celebrities were also on sale in 1870, including Kings and Queens, Statesmen, Clergymen, Stamp Dealers, Generals, Naval Officers, Lawyers, and last but by no means least famous criminals, actors, and actresses.

About this time or early in 1871 Mr. Scott I believe visited London again, and was very ambitious to take a leading part in his old English capital, as well as in New York. His idea was to publish an English edition of the *American Journal of Philately*. At one time he proposed to Edward L. Pemberton to edit such a journal, and that Mr. Pemberton gave the proposal serious consideration is indicated by the correspondence reprinted in the *Philatelic Journal of Great Britain*, October, 1922. Pemberton was Scott's senior by one year and if Scott was born in England and learned his philately in America, Pemberton was born in America and was trained in philately in England. As a philatelic writer and expert Pemberton was Scott's superior. As editor of the *Monthly Advertiser* and contributor to other journals, and through his celebrated study of the forged stamps, Pemberton takes rank among philatelists while Scott was gathering a living for his family. Pemberton concentrated and Scott diversified his interests. Mr. Pemberton's answer to Mr. Scott's suggestion that they cooperate (reprinted *Phil. Journal of Great Britain*, Oct., 1922), is illuminating. We venture to quote as follows:

CHESTER ROAD,
BIRMINGHAM,
Dec. 3/71.

My Dear Sir,

I hasten to write you concerning the A. J. of P. and your proposals. I have advertised a new journal, and cannot for my own sake, or for the sake of Grant & Co. well go back on it now. You could not call your English Edition the *American J.* These two facts are pretty clear, but as I apprehend it you want me:—

- 1^o to edit your English Edition.
- 2^o to halve expenses on Do.
- 3^o to halve returns of Adverts on Do.
- 4^o to give you the pick of all Extra space for your own firm for nothing.
- 5^o any space not wanted by you, to go to my firm at a nominal rate.
- 6^o to abandon my proposed magazine.

If this is clearly your proposal I hardly see how it would pay me. You see I lose on three grounds.

- 1^o I give my name, time, and labour for nothing.
- 2^o I pay for my firm's adverts.
- 3^o I drop my firm's magazine.

For years I have given my time and labour to *S. C. M.* and *Philatelist*, to make myself a reputation. I consider now that I have done it, and I intended using it for my own advantage in the new firm. I am quite aware that if you open in London you cannot fail to do considerable business, especially of a cheap nature. Is it worth your while to pay me to make you a business of a better class, I mean as the Editor of The English (or London) Journal of Philately?

If I were starting a new business, were unknown, and knew nothing of my subject, why then I should jump at any offer, but, I *have* my business ready cut and dried, all I am *now* intending to do is to increase and multiply it under the name of Jas. R. Grant & Co. Devise a scheme that will suit both our interests, and I am all right. As far as I understand your present offer, the advantages appear all on your side. If we arrange, and I edit for you, you would have my Forged Stamps and other papers advertised. Just think it over. . . .

Yours faithfully,

EDW. L. PEMBERTON.

From another letter written on Christmas Day, 1871, it becomes evident that Scott met most of Pemberton's requirements for the many details of the new publication were discussed. Evidently, however, the deal failed and each proceeded to publish his own journal. Scott did not give up the idea of a London conquest by any

means, but compromised by publishing his *American Journal of Philately*, the same in every respect except for advertisements and the cover with a London edition, which last emanated from 46 Leadenhall street, London, E.C. This constitutes volume V of the *American Journal of Philately*, numbers 49 to 60. But London refused to be captured and dealt with young Mr. Scott's efforts in journalism most unkindly. The only suggestion of personal discouragement that I think can be found in all of Scott's writings occur as a last word in closing this London edition:

"During the past year our editorial labours have been lightened and rendered pleasant by the numerous letters expressive of satisfaction that we have received from every part of the kingdom; it has been but very rarely that anything but a suggestion (for which we are always grateful) has reached us, which would show that our magazine was not in all respects what our subscribers would wish. Our contemporaries have not, we must say, been very generous, very lenient, or very courteous to us; indeed, so strongly have we occasionally felt on this subject, that we had at one time almost concluded to discontinue the "exchange" copies, however, on deliberation, we abandoned the idea, trust that time (that great leveller and smoother of all differences), would bring with it more genial and friendly feelings. We can, we think, say that on but few occasions have we been the first to array ourselves for battles; it has ever been our wish to be on the best terms with our conferees, and we believe that in time to come a better understanding will exist."

That London was fiercely contemptuous and to a degree justifiably so with American journalism of this period is beautifully illustrated by the following "Philatelist," p. 91, 1872:

"Another of the mushroom amateur publications devoted to stamp-collecting and a display of the editor's lamentable ignorance. In his opening remarks, the editor, proprietor, publisher, etc., takes occasion to remark that he has been a stamp-collector since its earliest days to the present time and has continued it in the interim. What does he mean? On the second page, he alludes to the Kingdom of Natal, and the Empire of Newfoundland. On the last page, most wonderful to relate, he announces that the Confederate States stamps are now obsolete, having been used only from 1861 to 1865. We would advise the editor, proprietor, publisher, etc. a consolidation of "The American Postage Stamp Journal" with "The Stamp-Collector's Guide," a precious philatelic sheet which seems to be an unwholesome compound of arrant self-conceit, childish impudence, and hopeless ignorance erected on a superstructure of humbug, delusion, and make believe."



DESCRIPTIVE CATALOGUE

American and Foreign

Postage



Stamps,



ISSUED

FROM

1840

TO DATE.



SPLENDIDLY



WITH COLORED

ILLUSTRATED

ENGRAVINGS

AND
Containing the Current Value of each Variety.

PRICE 15 CENTS.

NEW YORK

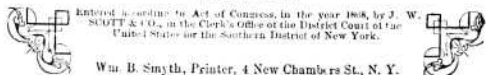
PUBLISHED BY J. W. SCOTT & CO.

WHOLESALE AND RETAIL DEALERS IN

FOREIGN POSTAGE STAMPS,

34 LIBERTY STREET.

SEPTEMBER, 1868.



Scott's First Catalog

In one respect, however, Scott triumphed by holding the first auction sale of stamps in England, March 18, 1872, at Sotheby's old house in Wellington street. Quoting again, *Philatelic Journal of Great Britain*, Oct., 1922, p. 188:

Pemberton did attend the sale which was held on March 18th, 1872, at Sotheby's old house in Wellington street; he bought a number of items and would have bought more but for the general feeling of distrust created by the owner (Scott) running up the prices himself instead of following the customary English method of placing reserves upon the lots.

Some of the items E. L. P. secured are, however, of interest. He paid £5 for a "Jefferson Market P.O. pink, unique," a rare local which exists on pink and on blue paper. According to the chronicler in the *Philatelic Journal* "here occurred something amusing, the auctioneer probably fancied that, as this was unique and exciting competition, it was a handsome stamp, so as the bidding rose, described it as 'beautifully engraved,' which created great laughter, for it was a foully hideous thing, and the engraving apparently done by a blind man with a skewer."

Most of the U. S. locals sold fell to Sir Daniel Cooper, Mr. Atlee or Mr. Pemberton, but the greater number were bought in by the owner. Pemberton secured three fine unused Sydneys and a poor 3d. unused for 63/-, which he reckoned were "decidedly the only bargain in the sale so far."

It is hard to resist the temptation to picture a result that might have happened if the Pemberton-Scott deal had eventualized. It would certainly have advanced American philately by much more rapid strides and have doubtless reacted strongly in favor of the British and have served as a valuable and constructive force leading to cooperation and mutual understanding.

Returning to America in 1873, Scott continued his rapidly growing business, moving in 1875 to 146 Fulton street, then and until the building of the Brooklyn Bridge and the elevated roads one of the most crowded streets New York has ever had. The firm name was changed to Scott & Co. He returned, however, with his attention turned strongly to coins and his successful efforts to become an expert in this field probably more than anything else militated against his development as a great philatelist.

He enjoyed a lucrative trade in coins, holding many auctions. Unquestionably for a time at least he relegated stamps to the second place and was with difficulty aroused again to any great sympathy with our modern philately. He is correctly credited with having amassed a good fortune and at the age of forty was ready to retire. In 1878, his printing office was destroyed by fire and then was lost all of his early records causing most of his earliest writings to become scarce. *The American Journal of Philately*, First Series, ceased because of this occurrence, with its 156th number and 12th volume.

After the fire, in the last number Dec. 20th, 1878, Scott writes.

In the January number of the *Journal* a great change will be noticed, first the size has been doubled while its period of publication has been changed from once a month, to four times a year, again no stamps or album pages will be given away with it, but the *Journal* itself will be sent free to some thousands of collectors monthly. Various considerations have influenced our publishers in making these changes, the principal one, we believe, being that the amount of time expended on it could be used to better advantage, for we scarcely need tell our readers that it never paid for the time given to it. It returned to its publishers more than the money actually expended for paper and printing, but this formed but a small part of the monthly expense. In its new form a gentleman has been found who could spare the little time necessary to edit it, and our publishers will gladly forego the thousand dollars received from the subscribers and send it free to their old friends. This arrangement is only for 1879 and as the *Journal* in its twelve volumes has changed its style several times from monthly to weekly and from that to monthly, then issued every fortnight, back again to monthly, it is more than probable that 1880 will see it changed again, in fact, there is only one thing certain about it, and that is that it will never be discontinued."

As a matter of fact the paper was discontinued then and there and was followed by a new journal devoted quite as much to coins as to stamps, called "*The American Journal of Philately and Coin Advertiser*," much changed in appearance and in contents. This ran for most of the time as a quarterly until Scott disposed of his right, title and interest in the business including his name to The Scott Stamp and Coin Co., Limited organized by Mr. G. B. Calman and others in 1887. It was at this date and after the fire that he was located at 721 Broadway. Mr. Scott's intention was to retire permanently although he retained the editorship for one year and five months of the new *American Journal of Philately*, second series, afterwards continued by the new firm until 1906.

The catalog America's "Standard" continues and is today referred to by his name in its 79th edition.

About 1887, negotiations were completed whereby John Walter Scott sold his right, title and interest in Scott and Co. to the Scott Stamp and Coin Co., Limited. This sale resulted in a famous law suit familiar to every student of law.

In 1887, the *American Journal of Philately* was not issued but was continued from 1888-1906 by the Scott Stamp and Coin Co., Ltd. J. W. Scott edited Vol. 1 of this so-called "Second Series" and Nos. 1-5 of Vol. 2.

It is generally understood that Mr. Scott lost most of his fortune in the course of a few months through unfortunate speculation. However this may be, it was the necessity of making a living that, according to statements in court led him to organize a new company—the J. W. Scott Co., Limited, and in 1889 he was to be found again opposite his old stand at 145 Fulton street at 40 John street, acting officially as general manager. This action on the part of Mr. Scott was vigorously and publicly opposed by the Scott Stamp & Coin Co., Ltd., who brought suit against him in an effort to restrain and dissolve this last corporation. The judgment in this case, rendered by the Supreme Court, is well known and studied annually by all law students, supported Scott, laying down as the established principle of law that no matter what the contract, no man can sign away his right to make a living by the only means available to him.

In 1890 we find Mr. Scott again located in Fulton street and busily engaged in gathering forces to his support. It was a strenuous year in the annals of New York philately marked by much display of energy and a very considerable amount of controversy, jealousy and bad blood. Those who supported Scott were more or less opposed to the Scott Stamp & Coin Co. under Mr. Calman.

In April, 1890, Scott was again editing his own journal "*The Metropolitan Philatelist*." April, 1890—Dec., 1916, Nos. 1-765, and later continued by Mr. Handshaw, 1917—.

In 1895 Scott begun his series of "*Weekly News Letters*" advertised as limited to one hundred copies. "A private and confidential communication to the one hundred leading amateurs in America." Sept. 25, 1895, to May 2, 1897, Nos. 1—84. A complete edition of these letters is very scarce. These letters are not only scarce but very valuable in illuminating the trend of Mr. Scott's mind.

Many prophecies of Mr. Scott may be found here, some fulfilled and some not fulfilled. Occasional mild digs at his contemporaries, especially the Scott Stamp and Coin Co., always referred to as the "Calman's", a steady effort to push the collection of plate numbers, valuable notes concerning auction prices, and, from an historical point of view, notes on the development of the Collectors Club by members of the New York Philatelic Society and others, and likewise illuminating insight into the foolish rivalry between East and West in the A. P. S. The following extracts are quoted:

CATALOGUE
OF AN EXCEEDINGLY
CHOICE AND SELECT COLLECTION OF

POSTAGE STAMPS,

COMPRISING THE
ENTIRE STOCK OF A BANKRUPT EUROPEAN DEALER,

SEVERAL SMALL

AMERICAN COLLECTIONS

And many exceedingly Scarce Stamps, together with a

JOB LOT OF ALBUMS.

TO BE SOLD BY AUCTION AT

The Clinton Hall Book Sale Rooms, and Art Galleries,

LEAVITT, STREBEIGH & CO.

ON SATURDAY EVENING, MAY 28,

COMMENCING AT SIX O'CLOCK.

Parties who cannot attend the Sale can have their orders to purchase carefully executed by the Auctioneers, Messrs. COLAN, SANDSON, and J. W. SCOTT & Co., of this City, and MASO and Co., Philadelphia.

Front Page of World's First Auction Catalog

Sept. 25th, 1895 (Letter No. 1)

DEAR SIR:

There are published at the present time about eight magazines supplying desirable information to collectors but if we take in the papers of a lower grade their name is legion. A well known collector like yourself probably receives about five a day. It is impossible that a gentleman occupying your position can have time to read this accumulation of matter, and yet there may be many items of news or matters of general interest of which you would like to be informed. To meet such cases we contemplate writing a weekly letter briefly giving the news of the past week and calling attention to changes in prices, new discoveries, important stamps offered, auction announcements, &c. The letter will be limited to one hundred copies and will be sent to that number of our patrons in recognition of past favors and we shall feel honored by your allowing your name to be included in the hundred.

October 9th, 1895 (No. 3)

A last word about this letter: several gentlemen have asked for a bill for yearly subscription to this sheet. Not having the honor to belong to the legal profession we cannot make any charge for writing a friendly, gossipy letter to the philatelic "one hundred" of America who have at various times favored us with their patronage. It will be confined strictly to the hundred and cannot be supplied to others at any price.

A well known city collector walked into the J. W. Scott Co.'s store the other day and announced that he was a "speculator"; for, said he, "Collectors buy by the sheet, speculators buy three or four, and dealers have none at all." This neat little apothegm tersely states a fact; every good stamp is taken up by collectors as soon as it is received, the practical result being that "dealers have none." By the way, there is another class of dealers springing up literally as well as figuratively. They travel all over the country and spring on gentlemen in the seclusion of their homes and by persuasion make sales of stamps that the buyer would never call for if left to his own good judgment; let us trust they will not develop into the class that have invaded France as described in the last M. P. The rage for U. S. plate numbers is still increasing and we hear more frequent demands for these than for more legitimate objects of the amateur's search. The J. W. Scott Co. have lately discovered a strip of three 1c U. S. 1887 imperf. used on part of the original. The plate number catalogue will be ready in a day or two and as it will probably be imperfect a revised edition will be issued during the month and sent free to purchasers of first edition. Of course the Company cannot furnish more than a quarter of the varieties listed but they will make exchanges and thus help all to complete their sets.

"I never review catalogues of other dealers with the exception of Moens, which, as a price catalogue, is of no use to any one. It is very much against my interest to let the public know the prices of all varieties like are priced in your books, and I think it is very much against your own to price them. You are giving away all your special knowledge, a thing which is most injudicious. If I priced everything in my catalogue, I should not be able to buy anything cheap, and I am very much against it or letting collectors know of catalogues where all these things are priced." (Quotation from an English dealer.)

The Calmans are kindly offering to supply "advance sheets" of their catalogue at \$5; should the sheets in question contain any matter of use to collectors we shall not fail to furnish it as soon as the "advance sheets" are written.

November 6th, 1895.

We shall have to change the old adage and make it "once a philatelist, always a philatelist," for it seems that any person of mature years who has ever seriously collected stamps will continue to do so until failing sight or the infirmities of old age compels the abandonment of the most fascinating pursuit of the present century. We are impelled to these thoughts by the return of old time faces to the auction rooms: two gentlemen who sold out their collections at a very large profit over cost have lately commenced refilling their abandoned albums and bid fair to become large buyers in the near future. The sight of these gentlemen recalls to mind a prophecy I made about 1870 when in a magazine article I stated that I should live to see stamps sell at auction for \$1,000 each. That day has long passed and I feel like saying that I shall live to see them sell at \$5,000 each, but I will say that some of the recipients of this letter will pay that amount for a single stamp before they give up collecting. Another wealthy man has started a collection; so far his purchases have been made through an agent and he prefers to remain incog., but I presume as the pleasure of accumulation increases he will commence to make purchases direct. His present intention is to secure the best collection in the world.

Dec. 4th, 1895.

"Intellect is the gift of God, but the biggest fool in the country can be punctual if he wants. Talking of brains brings to mind the 20c St. Louis; but one collector in the U. S. had the ability to reason out the genuineness of this stamp and he invested against the advice of a number of interested dealers. He knew he was right and has since been amply vindicated, while others who missed the chance to acquire a *rara avis* at a low price have since been kicking themselves. An English critic told the truth when he said that "American collectors placed too little reliance on their own judgment."

Dec. 11th, 1895.

The J. W. Scott Co., Ltd., are preparing for a new departure in the dealing line; on and after the first of January, they will issue a certificate of genuineness with every valuable stamp sold; this certificate will contain a photograph of the stamp which will be kept in duplicate on counterfoil, the stamp also will be numbered, so that a legal record can easily be established for every stamp, while the certificate will certainly be of great advantage should the buyer desire to re-sell. They will also attach a surrender value at which the stamps can be returned to them at any time.

Dec. 25th, 1895.

There has been a general complaint among large dealers of the absence of all small trade, but the trade is in the country, only it has been diverted to other channels. Every school has its boy traders and every town has one or more dealers in stamps, while nearly every bookseller in the U. S. is selling stamps on commission for one or more of the larger houses. Do not be alarmed, gentlemen, the love for stamps is not dying out. The J. W. Scott Co., Ltd., have sold enough stamp albums this season to give the "fever" to the largest city in the world.

Jan. 1st, 1896.

U. S. Locals will greatly appreciate in the near future; they certainly are the most interesting of all stamps and should strongly appeal to the specialist in U. S.; they are incomparably rarer than the rarest of the government issues: stamps of which but three or four specimens only are known, sell at from \$100 down, such stamps will be selling at many hundreds, if not thousands, inside of ten years.

Jan. 8th, 1896.

Plate numbers are booming along and will doubtless prove the best investment in sight and at present are within the means of every one.

The American Society for Suppression of Vice (I mean Speculative Stamps), acting on my suggestion in the *Metropolitan Philatelist* for September has achieved a great victory by its circular to the South American countries. The government of Ecuador having issued a decree declaring its contract with Mr. Etheridge (which was transferred to the Hamilton Bank Note Co.), void in consideration of the disrepute into which it had brought the postal administration of that country and authorized a new contract to be made with some other firm of engravers. The full particulars and translations will be published in the next number of the *Metropolitan Philatelist*. It will doubtless have the effect of inciting the Society to renewed exertions and we trust shortly to see its Portuguese letter sent out. This action of the government of Ecuador should at once start a boom in the stamps of that country if only to show that collectors appreciate the action of its officials.

January 15th, 1896.

Considerable attention is now being given to the formation of Philatelic libraries and I venture to predict that in the future enormous prices will be paid for rare works having any merit; already very large figures are realized for the better class of old magazines, two different volumes of the old series of *American Journal of Philately* are a ready sale at \$25 each and a soiled unbound volume of the *American Stamp Mercury* realized \$9 at our last sale. Priced Auction catalogues are of very great interest and should command the very highest prices, there are probably only two complete files in the world and these are owned by two gentlemen who have scarcely missed a sale since I inaugurated the auction business some quarter of a century ago. Complete libraries of all stamp publications are probably possessed by only two, Messrs. Tiffany and Deats, and future generations will be much indebted to these two gentlemen for their painstaking work. Their libraries have cost much money but they could doubtless be sold at an enormous profit.

February 12th, 1896.

To-morrow the '06 edition of the J. W. Scott Co., Ltd., catalogue will be published. The interest in this to you is somewhat remote because it does not catalogue many of the stamps in which you are interested, nevertheless I am of the opinion that it will ultimately be of great importance in adding to the value of your collection. The above firm was the first to issue a complete priced catalogue, which included watermarks and perforations. Of course this was copied by business opponents, and the rivalry this instituted has developed a catalogue which is difficult for the uninitiated to comprehend, and has had the effect of driving many collectors from the pursuit and deterring a much greater number from entering into the pleasant fields of philately. If this were to continue it is evident that stamp collecting would come to a stop and values drop, a result equally disastrous to advanced collectors and dealers. To counteract this tendency, our publishers have determined to go back to their original starting point and issue a catalogue clearly illustrating and describing all types of engraving, but taking no notice of watermarks or the sizes of perforations. As usual, all dealers were invited to share the advantages of the new departure and it is simply wonderful to note with what unanimity they availed themselves of the offer, fully eighty-five per cent. wrote congratulatory letters, expressing the pleasure it gave them to find some one bold enough to stand up against the danger which is

Dec. 11th, 1895.

The J. W. Scott Co., Ltd., are preparing for a new departure in the dealing line; on and after the first of January, they will issue a certificate of genuineness with every valuable stamp sold; this certificate will contain a photograph of the stamp which will be kept in duplicate on counterfoil, the stamp also will be numbered, so that a legal record can easily be established for every stamp, while the certificate will certainly be of great advantage should the buyer desire to re-sell. They will also attach a surrender value at which the stamps can be returned to them at any time.

Dec. 25th, 1895.

There has been a general complaint among large dealers of the absence of all small trade, but the trade is in the country, only it has been diverted to other channels. Every school has its boy traders and every town has one or more dealers in stamps, while nearly every bookseller in the U. S. is selling stamps on commission for one or more of the larger houses. Do not be alarmed, gentlemen, the love for stamps is not dying out. The J. W. Scott Co., Ltd., have sold enough stamp albums this season to give the "fever" to the largest city in the world.

Jan. 1st, 1896.

U. S. Locals will greatly appreciate in the near future; they certainly are the most interesting of all stamps and should strongly appeal to the specialist in U. S.; they are incomparably rarer than the rarest of the government issues: stamps of which but three or four specimens only are known, sell at from \$100 down, such stamps will be selling at many hundreds, if not thousands, inside of ten years.

Jan. 8th, 1896.

Plate numbers are booming along and will doubtless prove the best investment in sight and at present are within the means of every one.

The American Society for Suppression of Vice (I mean Speculative Stamps), acting on my suggestion in the *Metropolitan Philatelist* for September has achieved a great victory by its circular to the South American countries. The government of Ecuador having issued a decree declaring its contract with Mr. Etheridge (which was transferred to the Hamilton Bank Note Co.), void in consideration of the disrepute into which it had brought the postal administration of that country and authorized a new contract to be made with some other firm of engravers. The full particulars and translations will be published in the next number of the *Metropolitan Philatelist*. It will doubtless have the effect of inciting the Society to renewed exertions and we trust shortly to see its Portuguese letter sent out. This action of the government of Ecuador should at once start a boom in the stamps of that country if only to show that collectors appreciate the action of its officials.

January 15th, 1896.

Considerable attention is now being given to the formation of Philatelic libraries and I venture to predict that in the future enormous prices will be paid for rare works having any merit; already very large figures are realized for the better class of old magazines, two different volumes of the old series of *American Journal of Philately* are a ready sale at \$25 each and a soiled unbound volume of the *American Stamp Mercury* realized \$9 at our last sale. Priced Auction catalogues are of very great interest and should command the very highest prices, there are probably only two complete files in the world and these are owned by two gentlemen who have scarcely missed a sale since I inaugurated the auction business some quarter of a century ago. Complete libraries of all stamp publications are probably possessed by only two, Messrs. Tiffany and Deats, and future generations will be much indebted to these two gentlemen for their painstaking work. Their libraries have cost much money but they could doubtless be sold at an enormous profit.

February 12th, 1896.

To-morrow the '96 edition of the J. W. Scott Co., Ltd., catalogue will be published. The interest in this to you is somewhat remote because it does not catalogue many of the stamps in which you are interested, nevertheless I am of the opinion that it will ultimately be of great importance in adding to the value of your collection. The above firm was the first to issue a complete priced catalogue, which included watermarks and perforations. Of course this was copied by business opponents, and the rivalry this instituted has developed a catalogue which is difficult for the uninitiated to comprehend, and has had the effect of driving many collectors from the pursuit and deterring a much greater number from entering into the pleasant fields of philately. If this were to continue it is evident that stamp collecting would come to a stop and values drop, a result equally disastrous to advanced collectors and dealers. To counteract this tendency, our publishers have determined to go back to their original starting point and issue a catalogue clearly illustrating and describing all types of engraving, but taking no notice of watermarks or the sizes of perforations. As usual, all dealers were invited to share the advantages of the new departure and it is simply wonderful to note with what unanimity they availed themselves of the offer, fully eighty-five per cent. wrote congratulatory letters, expressing the pleasure it gave them to find some one bold enough to stand up against the danger which is

admitted by all. Fifteen thousand catalogues were sold wholesale to stamp dealers before the work was printed and other orders had to be refused or the J. W. Scott Co., Ltd., would have been left without copies to supply their own trade.

Years ago advanced collectors used to derive great pleasure in going round among the dealers and picking up rare varieties of watermarks, perforations, etc., thus stimulating trade and amusing themselves, but when every slight variety was taken advantage of to increase the price, the place of the amateur was taken by the speculator, who now in a great measure controls the field, to the detriment, if not positive danger, of all.

March 18th, 1896.

I have frequently been asked what is the best way to commence a collection. To this I invariably reply, how much do you calculate to spend? It is a pity that money considerations have to enter into every pleasure, but so it is, and we shall always do well to think of the old English proverb and "cut our coats according to our cloth." Leaving out the boy class, who will not see this letter, there remains two others: the first, with unlimited means, is easily answered. Buy every stamp possible in entire sheets; it will form an unequalled collection, will enormously appreciate in value and prove the best investment possible. I challenge capitalists, the world over, to name a better investment than high grade stamps have proved in the past. To the other class I say, first decide which you propose to collect, used or unused (and stick to it), then get one of our publisher's prepared albums, or a blank book if you prefer it, then you can take the new catalogue along for a guide and get one of every stamp, up to as high a price as you care to go. Take no heed of watermarks or varieties of perforations, but fill the book. If you can get a rare watermark as cheap as a common one, take it, but don't buy two specimens of the same engraving until the book is full, or you have reached the limit of the amount you propose to pay for a stamp. Now if your interest continues, which it certainly will if you have been guided by these rules in collecting, you will have formed preferences for certain countries. Take out the stamps of your favorite and rearrange the country in a small blank album, leaving spaces for every possible variety of perforation, watermark, shade, postmarks, together with pairs and blocks. On this country you can work for months or years, make discoveries and become the possessor of varieties owned by no other man, while you will still have a fine general collection, growing in value day by day, a constant pleasure for yourself and a delight for all your intellectual friends, collectors or otherwise. The special collection can be reserved for amateurs who can appreciate it.

Such a collection is within the means of all; five dollars per week will supply it in time and any amount of money can be spent on it, but if there is one thing more than any other that I wish to warn collectors against, it is spending more money than they can well spare on their collections. It is an investment, and, as I have said before, the best in the world, but directly a man commences to stint himself to invest money, he becomes a miser and loses the greater part of the pleasures of life.

March 25th, 1896.

As a pointer, would advise the purchase, whenever possible, of unsevered pairs, blocks, etc.; there is an ever increasing demand for such specimens and a corresponding dearth of stock to supply it with. I may add, that everything tends to show that the ultimate goal of the advanced collector will be entire sheets.

April 8th, 1896.

As an instance of the solid ground on which the highest class of stamps stand we may mention that when the 2c rose British Guiana sold in the Fred. de Coppet auction at one thousand and ten dollars (the highest price at that time ever paid at auction for a single stamp), many collectors thought that the buyer would never see his money back, yet within three months he was offered an advance of five hundred dollars for his purchase. Again, Sterling finally sold his New Haven envelope for two thousand dollars, an unheard of price at that time, but we will give three thousand dollars for it or a duplicate. The 20c St. Louis stamp, now that a number are known, will sell for half as much again as when it was unique. The newly discovered 10c Baltimore is reported to have sold for four thousand five hundred dollars. The first 5c discovered sold for ten dollars, and so with the Brattleboro; I sold the first specimen for ten, and the last for seven hundred dollars both on the original, and doubtless the last buyer can make a profit on his purchase to-day.

April 22d, 1896.

Last night also was burdened with a stamp auction conducted by the firm which was so happily termed the pseudo Scott by that erstwhile indefatigable collector C. B. Corwin. There are two sides to every question. The sale of the 14th was a joy to the seller while last night's auction was a pleasure to the buyers, however, we presume that outside of regular catalogue sales both sides cannot be suited; for human nature is still the same as when the old couplet was written

"The smartest thing for any man
Is to get from others all he can,
But the meanest thing a man can do
Is to make his gains from me or you."

April 22d, 1896.

The demand for proofs, specimens and essays is greatly on the increase, for while the large extent and great cost of a complete collection of stamps has compelled many to confine their attention to the issues of one country, it has also had the effect of inducing the true stamp lover to thoroughly exploit his chosen field, commencing with copies of all the essays submitted, proofs of the chosen design in all the different colors, with specimens of the accepted stamp in all its varieties, from die to plate and from first impressions to worn plates. The latter state, by the way, is clearly indicated by the present printers of our own stamps. Heretofore, a poor impression was hard to distinguish from a print from a poor plate. The Bureau of Engraving and Printing have a practice of making the printer stamp his initials on the plate given into his care; when, as in the case of one and two cents stamps, he prints until the plate is sufficiently worn to be discarded this is unnecessary, but when only a few thousand impressions are ordered to be worked off at a time, a plate, in the course of its period of usefulness, may have passed through the hands of a number of different printers. Take, for instance, the top row of the ten cents Special Delivery; the first print will show in the upper left margin the initials of one man, that on the strip before us being G. C. On a sheet just received from the post office, we find that it has been in the hands of thirteen different men, alternating with each other, which would indicate so many different workings, clearly showing the life of the plate. I should not be surprised to find that in the future not only will plate numbers be collected, but each different working from the same plate, as indicated by the workman's initials.

May 6th, 1896.

A refreshing incident happened to-day; a new collector sending a specimen of the Danville envelope, for which, he hoped our publishers would kindly send him the *Metropolitan* for one year. I need scarcely say that he got the M. P. and the full value of the stamp as well. This carries me back to old times, when I used to purchase Baton Rouge stamps for 25c and a Brattleboro for \$2. In the good old days, the percentage was large but the profits small. It cost just as much to run the business as it does now, and on the Brattleboro there was only \$8 profit and \$4.75 on the Baton Rouge, while at the present day 10 per cent. on the Brattleboro would be fifty or sixty dollars, and 25 per cent. on the Confederate, twelve dollars, which are about the profits sellers allow us when they have desirable stamps to dispose of.

May 13th, 1896.

Some of my friends, the enemy, are beginning to think that something must be done to keep up the interest of boy collectors and propose to issue a joint stock philatelic paper at a probable loss of several thousand dollars per year, which will enable the company to distribute the paper regularly in every school in the United States; give the paper away and give the boys a bonus in the shape of a packet of stamps for taking it. I am willing to do my share and strive to make it a success. It has been my policy for the last thirty-five years to spend large sums in miscellaneous outside advertising, which, although not bringing the slightest immediate returns, has rebounded to the welfare of philately.

THE BEGINNING OF THE COLLECTORS CLUB

May 20th, 1896.

News. The Philatelic Society, New York, held their regular monthly meeting Monday evening last, and considered the subject of new quarters. It was proposed to rent a private residence in some central locality in the city and turn it into a regular Philatelic Club House, devoting the double parlors to auctions and large meetings; the second floor front, for regular meetings of the Society; the back room for a general parlor and reception room; while the upper floors could be furnished as bed rooms for the benefit of out-of-town members desirous of spending a few days in the city; while the basement floor could be fitted up as a billiard room. It is thought that these conveniences would make it a very attractive resort for both city and country members. A committee, consisting of Messrs. Herrick, Andreini and your correspondent, was appointed to see what could be done in this line. I shall be very pleased to hear from any interested in the matter.

June 10th, 1896.

Stamp collecting had become pretty well established before it ever appeared in the daily papers; now we can scarcely fake up a leading daily without seeing some reference to Philately. New issues are chronicled and designs criticised, while the law courts cases give employment to reporters. Philatelic larceny, shoplifting and burglary have succeeded libels, piracy and infringements, then we have had births, deaths, marriages and divorces, but now alas, the whole is blighted by a murder committed to obtain possession of stamps. I am thankful to say that it did not occur in this country; but a crime is as much to be deplored if perpetrated in France as if it occurred in our own happy land; may it be long before a similar case has to be chronicled.

July 3d, 1896.

Fireworks have commenced to crack around me, bringing to mind the days of twenty years ago when I used to purchase numbers of small collections at this time of the year that the

proceeds might be sent up in smoke to demonstrate the patriotism of the vender. Collections have now become too valuable to be exchanged for fireworks but the boys sell to put the proceeds into a bicycle. Fireworks and bicycles may come and go but stamp collecting will last out the present era of civilization.

July 11th, 1896.

Twenty-five years ago I had a sign in the store reading as follows: "Stamp Collecting is a science engaged in by old and young, rich and poor, prince and peasant," with a few more lines extolling its benefits to all who devoted themselves to this elevating pastime. It has just occurred to me that the princes are driving out the peasants, the rich the poor, for prices are advancing at such a rate that a man must have a long purse to collect solely for pleasure. This accounts for the large speculative interest, as many would have to drop their collections for lack of means were it not considered in the light of a desirable investment which enables a man of moderate means to invest his savings in such a manner that he derives constant amusement and profitable employment in the management of his savings. Still I much regret the excluding of the boy from a pastime at once intellectual and better calculated to keep him away from bad company than any other pursuit I have ever seen boys engaged in. I propose to devote considerable time to showing how an interesting and profitable collection complete in the lines laid down can be amassed by a boy with a very moderate allowance of pocket money.

July 18th, 1896.

In the course of a speech at the annual dinner of the London Philatelic Society Mr. M. P. Castle stated that the stamp fraternity might be classified on zoological lines into birds, beasts, fishes and reptiles. The birds being collectors pure and simple who filled their albums for the love of the pursuit and above all sordid considerations; the fishes were the collectors who bought and sold, picked up bargains and belonged to exchange clubs, etc.; the beasts were the dealers who prey on the birds and fishes when they can catch them; while the reptiles were the speculators who neither toiled nor spun, but only held in barns waiting for a rise. The aptness of the illustration is acknowledged by all and has been widely quoted. I may add that from general appearances this must be the cretaceous age, as reptiles are very plentiful and birds seldom seen.

August 1st, 1896.

As the auction season will soon be opening a few words on the subject may not be out of place, more especially as some ugly rumors in regard to the way some of our contemporaries have conducted sales entrusted to their care have been circulated, while other dealers who have never even risen to the place where they might reasonably expect to get the sale of a collection are continually decrying auction sales as being one of the chief causes of the depression of the stamp business and fervently hoping that there will not be many sales this season. I established the custom of selling stamps at auction, not to benefit my own trade but for the security of collectors and to convince them that their property had a value, and demonstrated to their satisfaction that they could always dispose of valuable stamps without taking them to a dealer and accepting any price he might feel inclined to offer. It took many years' work to get this fact firmly established, but I succeeded at last and now stamp collecting without auctions would be like a performance of Hamlet with the part of the melancholy prince left out. The English were even slower than our own people to take to auctions although I went to considerable expense in selling a collection in London to give them ocular proof of its benefits as an adjunct to high grade collecting, however, after several years deliberation they caught on and have been running at high pressure ever since.

August 8th, 1896.

It is hot; in fact I think I might be pardoned if I repeated Mr. Beecher's opening sentence in his celebrated sermon, but I have not the ability to turn it off as cleverly as he did, so we will have to let it go at that. Another sin is in my heart. I am envying the man my Providence friend writes me of who is wandering among the coast towns of New England swept by ocean breezes), picking up rare stamps such as first Sandwich Islands, etc. One philatelic wanderer learned that a boy had one of these stamps in his possession, sought him out and (purchased, I was going to say), got it from him for 75c and then turned it over for \$125. In consideration of having made a trifle more than his usual profits he sent the boy \$3 more. That is where he made his mistake for such princely generosity caused inquiries to be instituted and now trouble is brewing. This puts me in mind of a case which occurred two years ago in Nova Scotia; a young man showed me a very good old collection containing all the British N. A. shilling stamps which he informed me had been made by a lady thirty years before. Having lost interest she had given the collection to her nephew, a boy of ten, from whom my informant had pur— got the book, but I must continue the story in his own words. "After finding out where the boy got the collection I asked him how much he would take for it. He said I could have it for half a dollar but I did not want to take advantage of the kid so I gave him a dollar." It seems a waste of a good story to tell this in a typewritten letter, for it requires italics and various points not belonging to the machine.

The A. P. A. Convention opens on Tuesday; I shall not be there. Mr. Gremmel is as far as I know the only member from the East who will attend, but I presume this is one more than was wanted or expected as the meeting was purposely put in an out-of-the-way corner; I have

turned my proxies over to him and they will be used for the best interests of the Association. I am in favor of doing away with cumulative voting but while this law is in force it would be ridiculous to vote for nine different directors. The best way to fight fire is with fire, so I turned in some hundreds of votes for Mr. Olney.

August 29th, 1896.

The New York Club project has one week more of grace. The Committee issued a circular to subscribers a week ago reporting what they had done, and stating that if the Club was to be established it must be by the individual efforts of the subscribers. It is not a question of money; if that were the only difficulty the Committee would willingly subscribe the lacking amount amongst themselves, but they recognize that to be a success it is essential that there be one hundred charter members to start with. At the dawn of civilization, many thousands of years ago, it was clearly seen that strength consisted in union, and however weak the individual fraction, if united in sufficient numbers, anything could be accomplished. The Club will undoubtedly be a pleasant place for New Yorkers but the real benefits will rest with the dwellers in far off cities who will thus procure a house in New York at small expense, and when, in the usual order of things, their collection comes to the auction room the difference in money value between having their collection sold amongst strangers, or in their city house where they are known and appreciated, can not be measured by a \$25 output. The French "noblesse oblige" can be applied with equal truth and force to the wealthy owners' princely collections.

October 10th, 1896.

Now that the value of a stamp collection is more fully known in the community it behooves gentlemen to take better care of their treasures than was formerly necessary. This is forced on us by the numerous cases of robberies which we see reported. It is also necessary for dealers to be on their guard in buying collections which may turn out to be stolen property. I had the satisfaction of purchasing a collection which it was claimed had been stolen by the owner's brother and then invited to return it to the owner which I did at a loss of \$350 and no chance to prosecute the thief. This scheme could be worked on any dealer, but as this letter is not seen by dealers it is useless to warn them here.

October 24th, 1896.

The Collectors Club will be formally opened on Wednesday evening next, a notice to that effect having been sent out by the Secretary. Refreshments will be served and members are requested to bring their friends. It is expected that every notable stamp collector in New York City and vicinity will be present and several members from a distance have signified their intention to attend.

October 31st, 1896.

I am not marching in the sound money parade or I could not be writing this letter to you, moreover there must be a few left to stand on the sidewalks or yell from the windows or the marching myriads would think they were travelling through a churchyard; by the way there was nothing of the churchyard about the opening of the Club. The collectors turned out in their might, some came in and looked round, others remained all evening, and others nearly all morning too, anyway there was no fun in remaining after daylight. The gathering was representative, collectors big and little; dealers, old and young, and by the way, several hundred dollars changed hands in a quiet way to mutual advantage of buyers and sellers, but that was not what they were there for, they came to get acquainted and they did it with a vengeance; the handshaking must have left some tired muscles, and the talking, well, they were heard. The music alcove was neglected, but the billiard room made up for it. The supper was excellent in every detail and was enjoyed by all. The liquors were good stayers for they outlasted the guests and the way they were drank should prove a good augury of the prosperity of the club, they commenced with beer and finished with Pommeroy Sec. The Club commences with one hundred members and should finish with a thousand; but the number is limited to two hundred, and at the rate applicants for membership are coming in the limit will soon be reached. Ten per week will soon fill the list. It would be useless to name the city members who were there but a list of those who travelled far to be at the opening would not be out of place. I noticed, among others, Batchelder and Brown, of Boston; Townsend, of Washington; Deats, of Flemington; Rice, of Trenton; Brown, of Keyport; Needham, of Hamilton, Canada, etc.

January 2d, 1897.

The Club meeting of the 28th was all that could be desired in the way of a Christmas or New Year celebration. A tastefully adorned Xmas tree enlivened one end of the large assembly room while holly and various other evergreens embowered the remainder; friend Luff will certainly make his mark as a decorator when the business fails. Descending to the billiard room guests were met with a motto appropriate to those who enter the lower regions. The presents were selected with great judgment, care being taken that all the leading members secured what they did not want. Those supposed to have a liking for the bottle got one—empty of course—while teetotalers' bottles were filled with brandy, and yet, we did not learn of any exchanges being made. Non-smokers got presents of cigars and tobacco while those who indulged in the weed received a box from which a choice brand of cigars had been carefully extracted. Your humble

servant secured a choice selection of vegetables. The presents that were distributed by lot were of a more useful order, consisting of ink-stands and other small objects calculated to be kept as a permanent reminder of the occasion.

January 6th, 1897.

Auction sales will prove of even greater benefit to the collector than ever before, there being a movement on foot by some dealers to agree not to purchase at auction. This is done with the hope of limiting the number of sales, which are cutting deeply into the average dealer's profits. Perhaps the truest dictum of political economy is that combinations for the restraint of commerce are futile, and certainly the combination of short sighted dealers to compel amateurs to purchase their wares, will come to naught and collectors will reap the full benefit of auction sales. This is a subject on which I may be pardoned if I think I am competent to speak, as I sold the first stamp ever put up at auction and was the first to introduce the stamp auction in England. My purpose in establishing auction sales was to give stability to the stamp business. I never calculated that it would benefit me or any other directly; quite the reverse. My object was to show collectors and the world at large that stamps had a saleable value and that after a man had accumulated a valuable collection he could place his album in the hands of the auctioneer and rely upon his fellow collectors to buy his stamps at a fair price, instead of being compelled to take his treasures to a dealer and accept whatever sum might be offered. I can truthfully say that during my thirty-five years' career as a dealer I have always acted for the best interests of my customers and what is more I have never had occasion to regret it.

February 13th, 1897.

By the way, did it ever strike you as strange that so many dealers have to be continually telling you how honest they are? Shakespeare says, "Good wine needs no bush." Perhaps they doubt your ability to find it out by yourself. I can at least testify that much for my most unscrupulous opponents that they have got too much sense to resort to this practice which is so common among small dealers.

May 1st, 1897.

Perhaps there is no question connected with stamps more difficult for the ordinary collector to understand than to determine what constitutes a bargain, and certainly more collectors are, to use a vulgar expression, "stuck" with bargains than with any other stamps they buy. Catalogues, even with the best intentions of the compilers, are not infallible, therefore it is quite possible to buy stamps at "half catalogue" and still make a bad investment, while other stamps bought at double list price may be genuine bargains. The only way to achieve a valuable collection is to fill your album with stamps that are extremely difficult to duplicate. You may buy stamps at present "no one wants" and therefore are not marked high, but you may be sure that in time they will certainly increase enormously in price. The value of a stamp is frequently no criterion of its rarity. There are plenty of \$50 or \$100 stamps which can be bought by the dozen, while other stamps quoted as low as 10 cents for which you would have to scour the entire country to secure a dozen copies.

Perhaps no living collector better understands what constitutes a bargain than Mr. F. W. Ayer. He made it a rule to let no really scarce stamp escape him; price was no object, but every rarity in the market had to go to Bangor. These things could not be had for nothing, in fact the man who got them usually secured them because the dealers knew that he would pay more than any other man. It made collecting expensive, but what is the result, when the owner concluded to sell he had the princes of the earth competing for the gems of his collection. To sell an ordinary collection the owner has to do the hustling, to sell gems it is only necessary to state that you might be inclined to receive offers and you will be besieged by buyers from far and near. The dealer who secures it does so for the credit and advertisement in the transaction. The direct profit is very small, for the seller has got all there is in it.

March 13th, 1897.

The Club is booming. Every distinguished collector from any part of the country makes a bee line for 351 Fourth avenue on arriving in the city. It is only a question of a few years when the "Collectors" will be seeking a new house and vying with the older social organizations in the splendor of its opportunities.

In November, 1916, twenty-seven years later, Mr. Scott again sold his stock and interest to J. E. Handshaw and at 36 John street the J. W. Scott Co., Limited, still progresses.

Of the many comments this retirement of Mr. Scott as a stamp dealer occasioned, we quote the following editorial from *Mekeel's Weekly Stamp News*, November 25th, 1916:

"The retirement from the stamp business of Mr. J. W. Scott after a singularly long and honorable career, has furnished the theme for many a commentator in the stamp papers from coast to coast, not to say the world. There is no discordant note in the chorus of praise bestowed upon Mr. Scott for the good influence that he has exerted on philately from the beginning. Our word of appreciation was duly recorded but what we wish to say now

is that it devolves upon Mr. Scott to write his memoirs, as they would span philately from its founding to the present day. We should say that no story could be of so engrossing interest as Mr. Scott's recital of stamp collecting from the date of its origin to its present estate. For many years Mr. Scott was the most outstanding figure in philately and so thoroughly was he a part of the pursuit that any history of philately would be incomplete without the story of his stamp life. We hope that Mr. Scott will put pen to paper for the benefit of the present generation of collectors and of those who are to come. He is the one man to whom traditions of the past are as familiar as the forms of to-day."

On March 13th, 1897, Mr. Scott began in addition his series "*John W. Scott's Junior Weekly Letter*". (Nos. 1-5), afterward continued as *John W. Scott's Weekly Bulletin* (Nos. 6-23), the last appearing November 13th, 1897. The first page of the first of these containing his own statement of his early interest in stamps is illustrated in full.

The foregoing quotations illustrate the general character of nearly all of Mr. Scott's writings and compilations. His was essentially a one-man business and his viewpoint was the result of experience rather than of profound study. He was by nature very positive in his opinions but he could change them. Personally acquainted with practically all of the leading amateurs and professionals, he learned from them to respect new ideas and ultimately adopted many of them. In his establishments he worked practically alone save for a stenographer and much of his, in the aggregate, immense correspondence was a matter of long-hand. He wrote Sundays and holidays and when the sound money procession was filing by, and firecrackers resounding in his ears. He was and meant to be the conscientious adviser of tens of thousands of collectors.

In the earliest days of philately, even as today, the demand for certain stamps far exceeded the supply and several governments, including our own, manufactured reprints. Many dealers here and abroad sold these reprints and in the case of those of the United States their true status and ultimate value was not even imagined.

The early albums were often loaded with junk of this description and in particular with the so-called Hamburg locals and reprints of the United States Locals.

These last were, I believe, manufactured by Mr. Scott and advertised as space fillers. The Bogert & Durban Co. pursued a similar policy with the Providence Postmaster Stamp. Mr. Seebeck became notorious in the Central American deal and Mekeel in the realm of Mexico. Great injury was done the cause of philately by the issue of these pot boilers. On the other hand Mr. Scott always advertised them as reprints and at an early date guaranteed any stamp or coin sold by him as genuine. His essential integrity was evidenced during the many years that he served as treasurer of the Collectors Club and he was also the treasurer of the funds raised for the exhibition of 1913.

Mr. Scott was irritated, as many dealers are to this day, at the development of the specialist. The space filler was more valuable to him professionally than the seeker after watermarks, perforations, errors and retouches. He even advised and furthered the filling of spaces with reprints to await the advent of the originals that seldom materialized. He doubtless realized that no brain is comprehensive enough to specialize everything and wisely "from his point of view at least" left the coordination, organization, and research required along these lines largely to his successors and later contemporaries. He had no intention of leaving his stock or any portion of his business to a host of clerks organized like the Scott Stamp & Coin Co. or developed as the Nassau.* It was difficult for him to organize and delegate special service to others. On the other hand, his knowledge of stamps, his intimate acquaintance with all the noted collectors of the last half century, his system of pricing stamps in his earlier catalogs solely from the evidence afforded by his stock, his service in establishing markets and establishing prices through auctions, his successful and often unique advertising, and, more than this, his kindly sympathy and readiness to further the interests of every philatelic organization: these are the elements that afford him his title, cheerfully credited even by his enemies and contemporaries, "The Father of American Philately".

(To be followed by chapters entitled: Scott in Philatelic Literature; Scott in Philatelic Organizations; Scott as an Auctioneer and Scott and Philatelic Exhibitions.)