

# Philatelic Treasures from the Dollar Box - 3

Richard Spinelli  
President, Rochester Philatelic Association  
January 2016

My definition of a “Philatelic Treasure” is a collectable postal item usually found in a dealer’s unsorted lot (a box of inexpensive items), which has an historical significance and interest.



### 1959 Cuban Airmail Letter with Fidel Castro Propaganda Message

Before assuming the presidency of the Island of Cuba, Fidel Castro stressed that **the pillars of the future administration - “the right to peace, justice and freedom” - do not communicate with Communist ideas.**

In 1959, the year Castro took power from the fallen Bastista regime, he introduced a stamp which said: **“Our Revolution is not Communist. Our revolution is Humanistic. Cubans only want the right to education, the right to work, the right to eat without fear, the right to peace, justice and freedom”.**

**The Royal Bank of Canada**, the only bank in Cuba not nationalized by Castro since he needed financial contact with the West, released this cover with Castro’s message imprinted twice on the back and once on the front. It is believed Castro’s message disappeared forever on airmail covers after it’s 1959 usage.

Lieber Cousin Weisl,

Jch erhaltey seben von Wien ein SOS, die Geschwister haben weder eine Möglichkeit fertzukommen, noch weven zu leben, so dass, wenn nicht rasch Hilfe geschafft werden kann, sie unbedingt zur Verzweiflung getrieben werden.

Uns hier ist jede Möglichkeit genommen zu helfen und flehen wir Dich an, Dein Möglichstes zu tun, falls es Dir irgendwie tunlich ist.

Du wirst von uns allen zu sehr belästigt aber es ist kein anderer Ausweg und so bitte ich Dich, nicht böse zu sein, es handelt sich um drei Menschenleben, die noch gerettet werden könnten, falls Hilfe nicht zu spät käme.

Jch danke Dir vom ganzen Herzen, für alle Deine bisherige Mühe und grüssen wir Euch alle herlzbichst.

Eure,  
Malva Fleischer,

Rychnev, n.K. 24.-I.-39.

This Slovak letter was written in German on January 24, 1939 by Malva Fleischer, resident of Rychnov Nad Kneznov, Bohemia, to cousin Edwin Weisl, New York City, requesting urgent help in emigrating three Fleisher siblings away from potential Nazi Germany atrocities.

**“Dear cousin Weisl, I received an SOS note from Vienna; the siblings have found neither a way yet to get away or in which to live, so if rapid assistance cannot be provided, they are necessarily driven to despair.**

**We have taken every possibility to help and we beseech you to do your supreme effort, if it is somehow feasible. You all may be too bothered by us but there is no way out and so I beg you not to be angry; there are three lives that could be saved if aid does not come too late.**

**I thank you with all my heart for your previous troubles and we all (unknown) greet you.**

**Yours, cousin Malva Fleischer, Rychnev, N. K., 24 - 1- 39”**

(Translated by R. Spinelli and Google Translator in 2015)

Unfortunately, help came too late for sibling Hugo Fleischer, born February 26, 1878. He was transported by the Germans in a cattle train from the Bohemian City of Hradec-Kralove to the Nazi Concentration Camp at Theresienstadt (in what is now Czechoslovakia) on December 12, 1942 and killed on April 14, 1943, one of more than 30,000 who died in Theresienstadt.

## The Nazi Germany Theresienstadt “Settlement”

- Located within Bohemia and Moravia
- A military fortress and nearby walled garrison.
- Built by Austrian Emperor Joseph II (1741-1790) during the late 18th Century
- Named after his mother, Austrian Empress Maria Theresa (1717-1780).
- During World War II, Used by the Gestapo as a ghetto / concentration camp for Jews from Czechoslovakia, Germany, Austria, the Netherlands, and Denmark and as a RED Cross showcase.
- Although not an extermination camp, about 33,000 died in the ghetto, due to the appalling conditions caused by overcrowding
- More than 150,000 Jews were sent there
- About 88,000 inhabitants were deported to Auschwitz and other extermination camps
- At the end of the war, there were a little over 17,000 survivors

The non-denominated stamp was issued in Bohemia and Moravia in July 1943 for use on parcels being sent from Theresienstadt

Design depicts a rather pleasing looking pastoral landscape -- kind of sad and ironic, considering the incredibly horrible reality of the place that it was supposed to represent.



The stamps were printed in dark green on white paper, perforate 10½ and imperforate. They were initially issued in miniature sheets of four stamps, but later on, they were printed in sheets of 25 (5x5) stamps. Only 76,000 of these stamps were printed, of which I own one. This is not a “Dollar Box” find.

Theresienstadt was liberated on May 9, 1945 by the Soviet Army.

# World War II US Soldier Letter From Japan

April 6, 1945

"..... Joe, I found some Jap stamps on one of the Japs we shot. So, I am saving them and as soon as I can, I will send them to you.

.....Oh, I also have a nice Kimono I will send you. I thought maybe your wife would like it. I picked up about 15 of them. All brand new and never been worn. They were in a store room".



You know I am OK and thinking of you and the old gang all the time.  
We are on the go again but I guess you know that by now. I hear it was planned over the radio and in the papers about the 77th Japan on the operation.  
We are now in the Kuma River - Group. I guess you know where they are, if not just look at the Map. Old Tokyo had better watch his step or we will bust him wide open.  
I guess by the time you get this letter the war in Germany will be just about over I hope so.  
Joe I found some Jap stamps on one of the Japs we shot so I am saving them and as soon as I can I will send them to you.  
Haven't the old gang I take one of these days soon I can get to see them all.  
Oh! I have also a nice Kimono & will send you I thought maybe your wife would like it. I picked up about 15 of them all brand new and never been worn, they were in a store room.  
I guess this is all for now until next a gone when I have more news.  
Write soon & give me all the home news.

This US soldier was probably on the island of Okinawa on April 6, 1945 when he captured the spoils of war and wrote this letter to a friend back home. Okinawa is 340 miles off the coast of Japan and was being prepared as an air base for the planned US invasion of Japan.

World War II Spoils of War. Soldiers were allowed to return to the US with captured items, as long as they were properly registered. This 1945 certificate allowed a soldier to return with a German p27 pistol, a Zeiss camera and a souvenir dagger. Daggers were not used in combat by Germany, but only as decoration.

**CERTIFICATE**

Oct. 8, 1945  
(Date)

1. I certify that I have personally examined the items of captured enemy equipment in the possession of J. Cappo and that the bearer is officially authorized by the Theater Commander, under the provisions of Sec VI, Cir 155, WD, 28 May 1945, to retain as his personal property the articles listed in Par 3, below.

2. I further certify that if such items are to be mailed to the US, they do not include any items prohibited by Sec VI, Cir 155, WD, 28 May 1945.

3. The items referred to are:

1 Model P 27 #32 Cal. Serial # 414436  
1 German Camera Zeiss Ikon # 120  
1 German Sheath Knife

Willard L. Miller Capt. USA  
(Signature)

551 AAA Div.  
(Rank, Branch and Organization)

(This certificate will be prepared in duplicate)

AG USFET Form N° 33



**Postal Cover from the Collection of President Franklin Roosevelt, from Galion, Ohio, April 21, 1875,**

**Auctioned by H. H. Harmer, April, 1946**

FDR started collecting stamps in 1890 at the age of 8

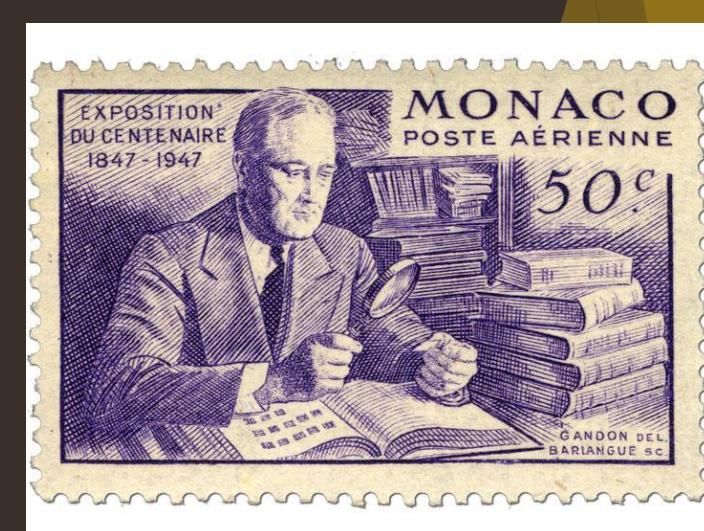
Life long philatelist

Became world's most famous stamp collector and elevated stamp collecting

Took his stamp collection to prep school, Harvard, the White House, and WWII conferences such as Casablanca and Yalta.

Credits stamp collecting with helping his recovery from Polio: “I owe my life to my hobbies, especially stamp collecting”

As president, he helped design or held influence over every stamp issued by the United States (1933 - 1945).



On the morning of April 12, 1945, FDR approved the design for the new “Toward the United Nations” commemorative stamp, then spent an hour with his stamps. Shortly thereafter, while posing for a portrait, he collapsed and died from a massive cerebral hemorrhage.



© Can Stock Photo - csp3386985

In 1946, following FDR's death, his family sold his philatelic estate through Harmer Auction. The four FDR stamp sales brought high prices and controversy.

Most philatelists wanted to own a piece of the nation's most famous stamp collection, but some argued that the U.S. government actually owned the fabulous holdings of U.S. essays and proofs.

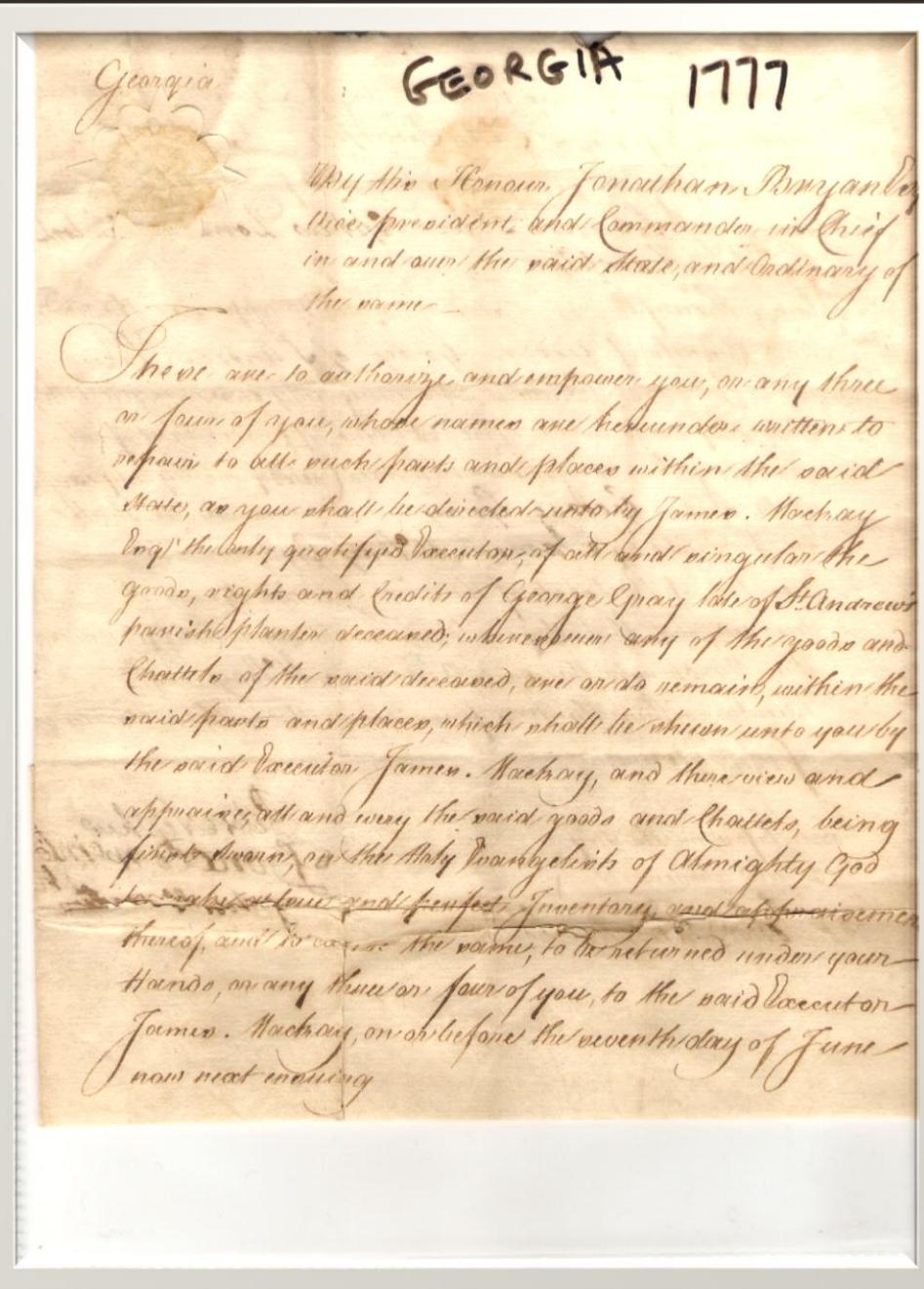
Winning bidders in Harmer's FDR auctions could have their purchases marked with a rubber stamp to verify that they came from the president's collection.

Stamp dealers bought many large lots of common stamps and mounted them on cards for sale as inexpensive souvenirs. Today, collectors still eagerly seek these ex-FDR philatelic items for their own collections.



**Hand Written December 7,  
1777 Revolutionary War Era  
“Warrant of Appraisement”  
Document (disposition of a  
deceased’s assets). Signed  
by Ten (10) Founders of the  
State of Georgia, United  
States of America**

The area of Georgia  
was inhabited by Native  
Americans before  
English Settlers arrived  
in the 1730's led by  
James Oglethorpe, a  
member of British  
Parliament.



Oglethorpe proposed that the area be colonized with the “worthy poor” of England to provide an alternative to overcrowded Debtor’s Prisons. He initially did not support slavery but capitulated since there was not a way to get enough labor

## Signers of this Document

- 1) **Jonathan Bryan:** American born, friend of Oglethorpe, supporter of independence, financier of Continental troops, captured and held prisoner for two years by British
- 2) **James McKay:** Planter, captained George Militia, pillaged and sunk British boats, killed 10-25 King's Rangers who refused to support the Patriots
- 3) **George Gray:** An original receiver of British Plantation Land grants, whose last will demanded that his “Negroes and chattels be sold to pay debts”
- 4) **Hugh Morrison:** Scottish immigrant granted Georgia lands between 1757 and 1769
- 5) **Roderick McIntosh:** British Army Officer who turned sides against the British, part of Continental garrison which attacked Savannah, received wound to face

## **Signers of this Document**

- 6) Peter Nephew:** Immigrated to Georgia by 1756, received an early 100 acre British Land Grant, ultimately received 1250 acres in 27 years in Georgia
- 7) Donald Bain McIntosh:** Land Grant recipient, rice grower and neighbor and probably relative of Roderick McIntosh
- 8) John Hampton:** First mentioned in Georgia in 1747 as selling cattle to a neighbor.
- 9) Thomas Whitefield:** Probable son of George Whitefield, noted British Preacher, co-founder of Methodism and early leader of evangelical movement in Georgia and America. Anti-slavery in 1740, but by 1770 convinced Georgia needed slaves. Co-founder with his father of the first and oldest child-caring institution in the Country
- 10) John Sandiford:** Georgia conservator of the peace, his father left him “one half of tract mentioned above, Negro girl named Beck, eleven cows and calves”

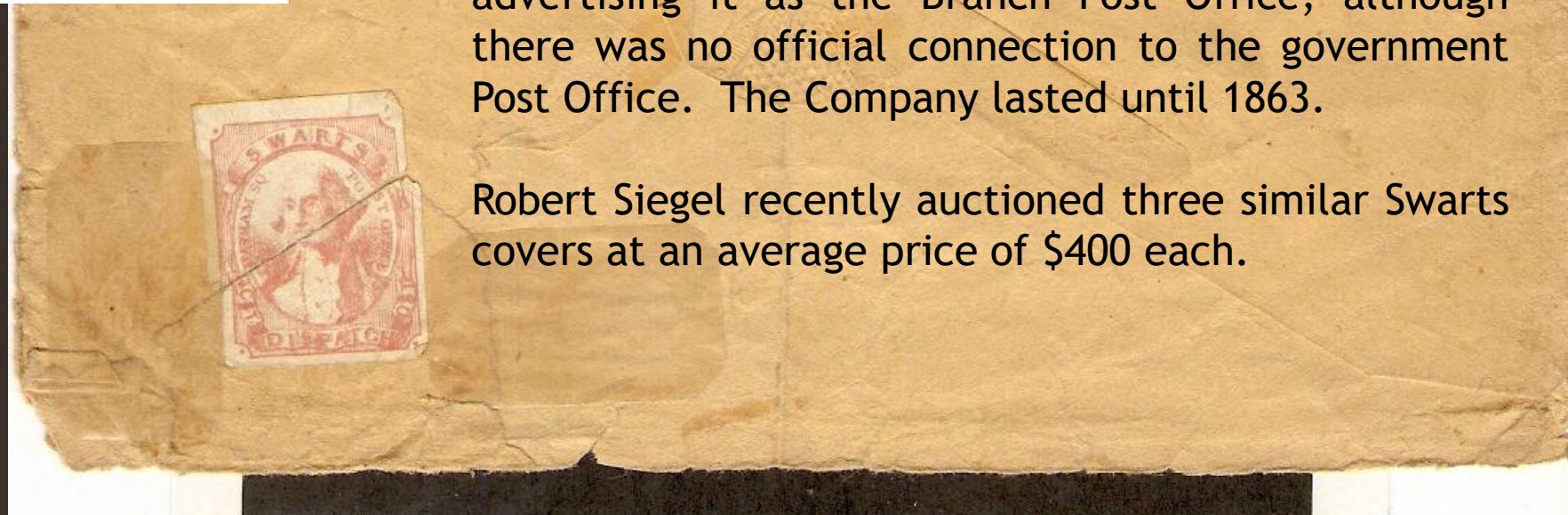
By the late 1770's, two facts are believed: (1) James McKay and the other "Worthy Poor" were slave holders, but their sentiments were anti slavery. (2) The political emotions of these men were with the Patriots.

In 1775, residents of St. Andrews Parish, including these men, met in convention and adopted six resolutions:

- 1) Approval for" the decent, but firm and manly conduct of the loyal and brave people of Boston and Massachusetts Bay to preserve their liberty".
- 2) Approved three resolutions against specific British colonial practices
- 3) ...Confirmed "our disapprobation and abhorrence of the unnatural practice of slavery in America..."
- 4) Named delegates to an upcoming provincial congress in Georgia and requested that Georgia appoint delegates to the upcoming Continental Congress

# 1853 Stampless Cover from New York City Addressed to Mrs. Laura Hawke, East Randolph, Vermont

Swarts City post Dispatch Local Stamp on Reverse



Aaron Swarts was employed by the Post Office Department at Chatham Square (NYC) in 1845 and 1846. On January 5, 1847 the Chatham Square branch was discontinued leaving area residents and businesses without a convenient nearby post office. Swarts saw an opportunity and on January 15<sup>th</sup> announced the opening of his local branch, advertising it as the Branch Post Office, although there was no official connection to the government Post Office. The Company lasted until 1863.

Robert Siegel recently auctioned three similar Swarts covers at an average price of \$400 each.

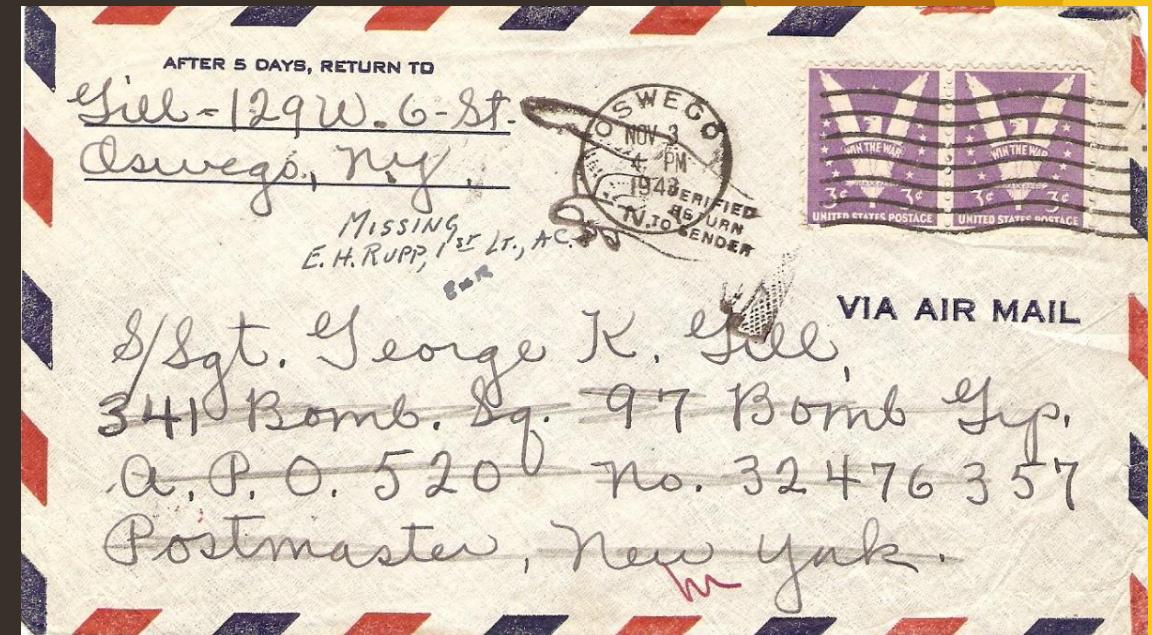
# 1943 World War II “Return to Sender” Cover Without Letter

From the John M. Gill Family , 129W. Sixth Street Oswego, New York  
To S/Sgt. George K. Gill  
341<sup>st</sup> Bomb Squadron, 97<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group  
APO 520, no. 32476357, Postmaster, New York

This envelope with letter left Oswego, New York on November 3, 1943 and was returned to sender on December 21, 1943 with a notation by 1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenant E. H. Rupp that **S/Sgt. Gill was Missing In Action.**

S/Sgt. George K. Gill was born about 1920 and enlisted in the US Army on September 16, 1942. He was assigned to the 341<sup>st</sup> Bombardment Squadron, 97<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Group, XII Air Force as a tail gunner in a B-17 Heavy Bomber.

On November 8, 1943, 81 B-17's bombed the Turin, Italy ball bearing works, marshalling yard, motor and aircraft engine works. **S/Sgt. Gill was shot down in his B-17 and declared lost on November 8, five days after the posting of his family's letter. His remains were never found. The letter was returned to the family.**



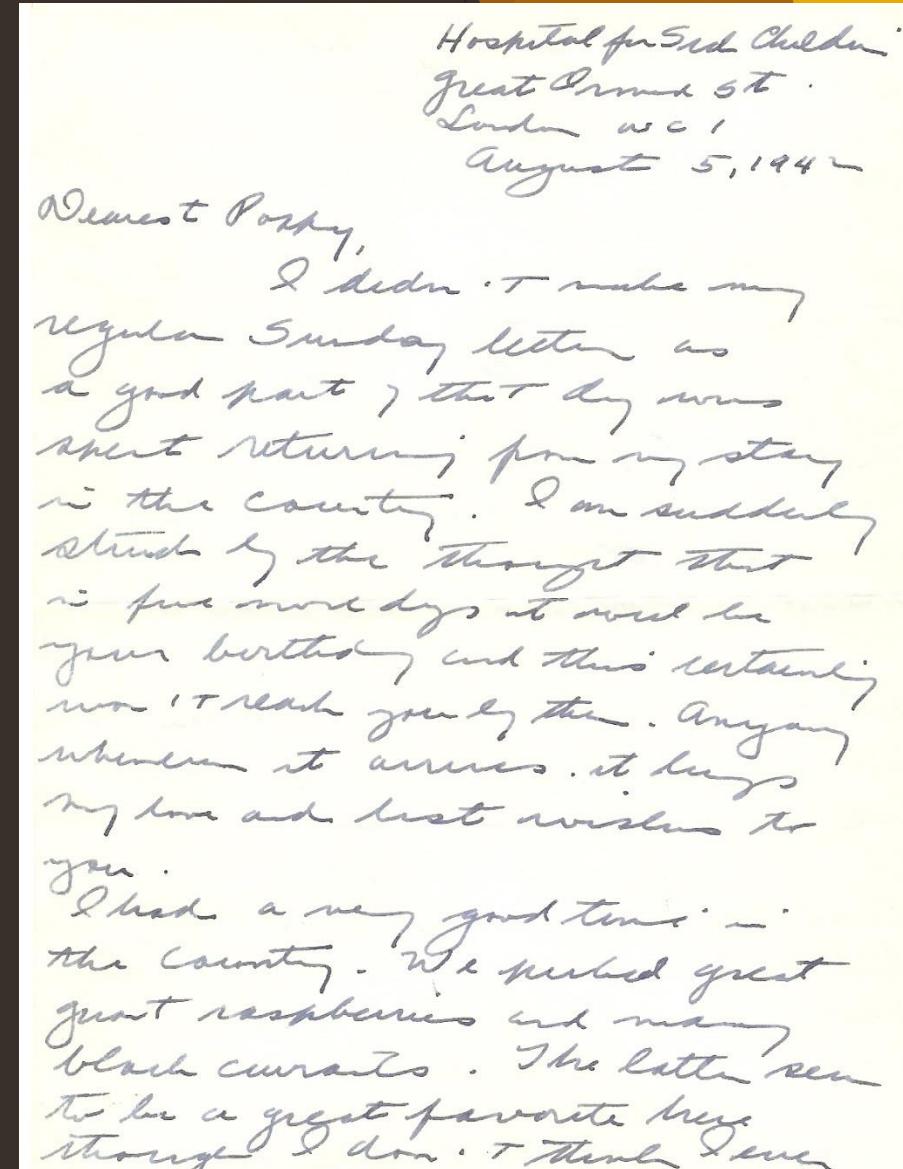
## 1942 Censored Letter From One of First Seven American Women Doctors in WWII, Eleanor K. Peck

Women doctors in the United states sought to use their medical skills in support of the American war effort during WWII. Commissions in the Army and Navy, however, did not become available to them until 1943. In the summer of 1941, the American Red Cross sought women doctors for the British Emergency Medical Services. Seven medical doctors responded to this call, including Eleanor K. Peck.

Dr. Peck served as a pediatrician in London in 1941 and 1942. In 1943, she transferred from the Red Cross to the US Army.

In her letters, Dr. Peck describes her trip overseas, air raids, the hospital, rationing, commissioning of female doctors and her reaction to the bombing of Pearl Harbor.

Fifteen of Dr. Peck's letters home to her aunt and uncle are contained in the Library of the University of North Carolina. Three of Dr. Peck's letters are contained in my personal collection.



## 1901 Cover Addressed to Paul Friedrich Wolfskehl, Industrialist and Mathematician

Wolfskehl bequeathed 100,000 Marks (1,000,000 pounds today) to the first person to prove Fermat's last theorem.

**Fermat's Last Theorem states that no three positive integers  $a$ ,  $b$ , and  $c$  satisfy the equation  $a^n + b^n = c^n$  for any integer value of  $n$  greater than two.**

The cases  $n = 1$  and  $n = 2$  were known to have infinitely many solutions, including:

$$\begin{aligned}a^2 + b^2 &= c^2 \\a = 3, b = 4, c = 5 \\3^2 + 4^2 &= 5^2 \\9 + 16 &= 25\end{aligned}$$

This theorem was first conjectured by Pierre de Fermat in 1637 in the margin of a copy of *Arithmetica* where he claimed he had a proof that was too large to fit in the margin. The first successful proof was released in 1994 by Andrew Wile, and formally published in 1995, after 358 years of effort by mathematicians.



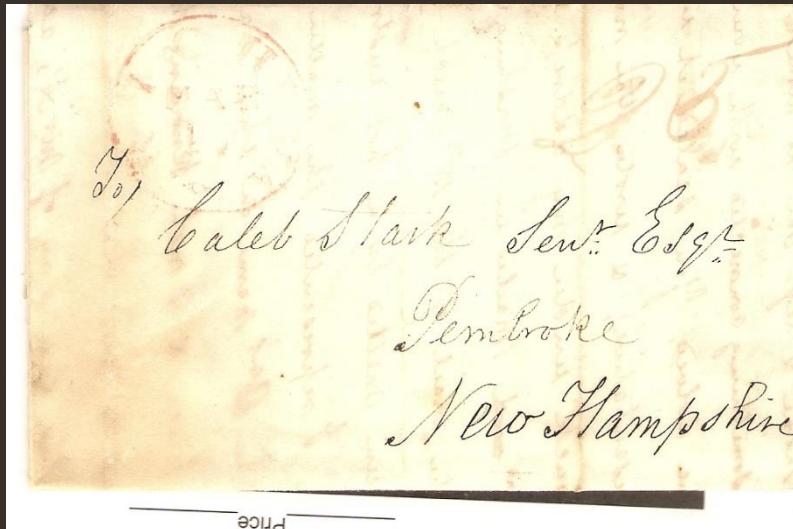
Why the prize? Theory one is that Wolfskehl was spurned by a young lady and decided to commit suicide, but was distracted by an error in a paper on Fermat's famous problem. This rekindled his will to live, and in thanks, he established his prize. Theory two is that he missed his suicide time because he was in a library studying Fermat's theorem.

## Letter to Caleb Stark (1759 - 1838), Revolutionary War Veteran and Eldest Son of Revolutionary War Hero General John Stark

During the Revolutionary War, Caleb served with his father in the 1<sup>st</sup> New Hampshire Regiment at the Battles of Bunker Hill, Trenton and Princeton. General John Stark is credited with “Live free or die: Death is not the worst of evils”, the phrase which ultimately became New Hampshire’s state motto. John was personally thanked for his War efforts by George Washington and was the last surviving General of the War.

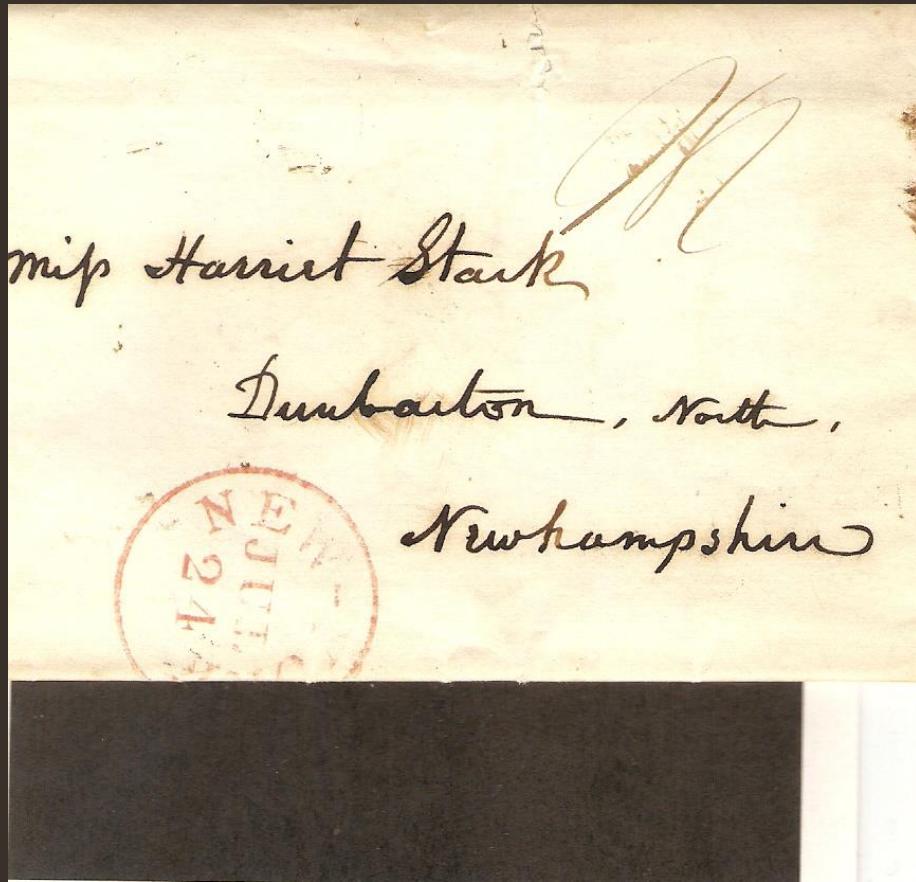
After his father resigned his commission Caleb remained in the [Continental Army](#), serving the rest of the war and rising to the rank of [major](#). He was the youngest survivor of the Battle of Bunker Hill. In 1811, Caleb Stark started the first cotton mill in [Suncook, New Hampshire](#). He also practiced law and became a historian, and a member of the [New Hampshire State Senate](#).

1829 - 25 cents  
Richmond Va. To  
Pembroke, New  
Hampshire



## Stamples Cover to Miss Harriet Stark, Dumbarton, New Hampshire

Harriet was the daughter of Caleb Stark and granddaughter of General John Stark. She lived to be 85 years old and “left a big estate”.

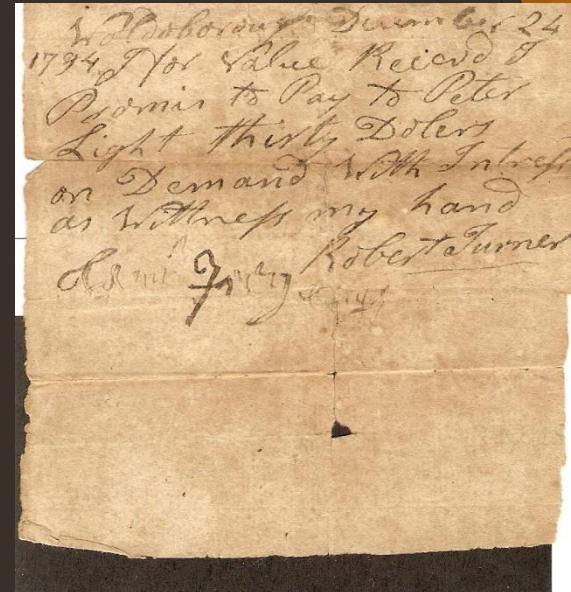


## 1794 Promissory Note from Robert Turner to Peter Light with Connection to War of 1812 Obverse Content

Waldoboro, Maine

For value received, I promise to pay Peter Light thirty dollars on demand with interest as witnessed my hand.

(Signed) Robert Turner

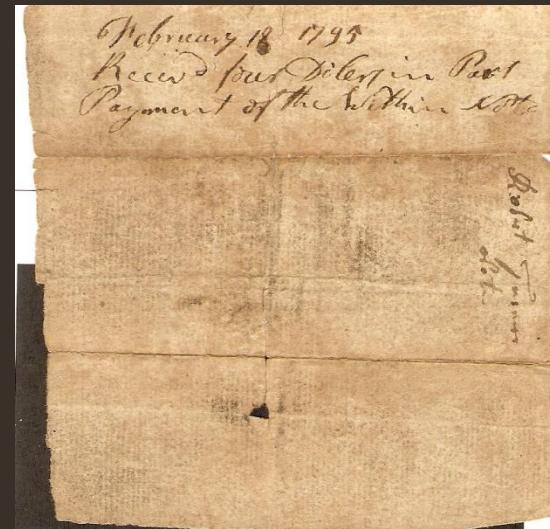


## Reverse Content

February 18, 1795

Rec'd four dollars in part payment of this note.

Peter Light



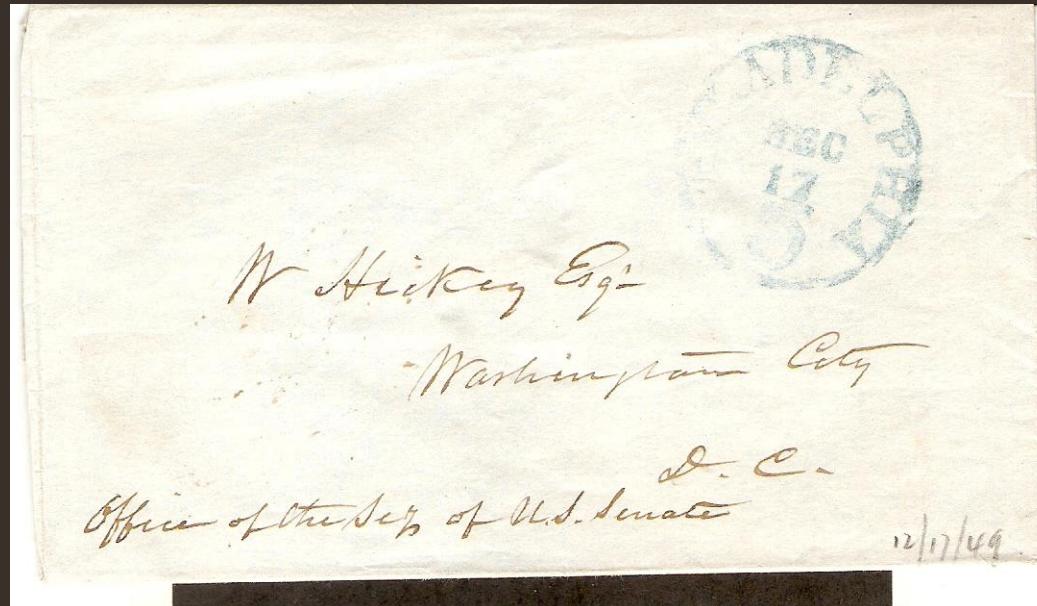
During the war of 1812, **Peter Light**, a fisherman, was captured by a British privateer and carried to Halifax, NS. The crew, having gone ashore for a holiday, left Light and the cook on-board the vessel. Light and the cook cut the cable, stole the ship and steered for the New England coast. As they sailed up the Waldoboro River, they fired several guns which alarmed the people in the vicinity.

1849 Stampless Cover to William Hickey  
Office of the Secretary of the US Senate

William Hickey - 1798 - 1866

Assistant Secretary of the United States Senate. 42 Years in Service of the Senate. Author of works on the Senate. Edited an official printed version of the Constitution used by the Government and certified by then Secretary of State James Buchanan (corrected several words and 65 punctuation errors). Ordered survey map of land tracts in Washington DC. Was involved in the creation of the official Vice Presidential Seal of the day. Only one impression - on - cover (1850 - Millard Fillmore), is known today

1849  
Philadelphia  
to Washington  
- 6 cents



## Other Friends I Have Met Through Stampless Covers

- **James Smith Bush** (1800 - 1867) - Great-Great Grandfather of President George W. Bush and a Rochester resident
- **Virgil Douglas Parris** (1807 - 1874) - US Congressional Representative from Maine
- **Jonathon Tarbell** (1830 - 1888) - US Civil War Brigadier General
- Amy Kirby Post (1818 - 1914) - 19<sup>th</sup> Century US Women's rights suffragette and her abolitionist friends Frederick Douglas, William L. Chapman, Issac Post (her husband), J. C. Hathaway, J. C. Jackson plus six run-away underground railway slaves; this is my most prized stampless cover; Amy's papers reside at U of Rochester
- **Charles P. Leverich** (1803 - 1876) - New Orleans cotton broker and business partner of Confederate President Jefferson Davis
- **Gouverneur Morris Jr.** (1813 - 1883) - Son of a US founding father and a New York railroad tycoon
- **Judge Augustus Seymour Porter** - The first white settler of what is now Niagara Falls, New York; promoter of the power of the Niagara River and a pioneer of Great Lakes transportation
- **Royal Chapin Taft** (1823 - 1912) - Member of the political Taft family (shared a great-great-great-great grandfather with President William Howard Taft), Governor of Rhode Island, banker and railroad executive. His extensive art collection resides at RI School of Design
- **Lewis Bradley** (1815 - 1900) - Noted American landscape painter, lithographer and drawing master

## Other Friends I Have Met Through Stampless Covers

- **John Savin (1820 - ?)** - White slave holder great grandfather of American writer and poetess Maya Angelou
- **Edgar Ketchum (1811 - 1882)** - Appointer by President Abraham Lincoln as Collector of Internal Revenue. Wife's grandfather delivered the welcoming speech to George Washington upon his entry to New York for his inauguration address
- **John H. Swift** - Last member of the New York State Assembly who served in the Civil War (1900 - 1901)
- **David Rittenhouse Porter** - Governor of Pennsylvania, 1838 - 1845
- **Silas Wright (1795 - 1847)** - New York Senator, Brigadier General New York State Militia, 20<sup>th</sup> US Congress (1827 - 1829), New York State Comptroller, US Senator from New York (1833 - 1844)
- **Azariah Cutting Flagg (1790 - 1873)** - New York Secretary of State, State Comptroller and NYC Comptroller. Political crony of President Martin Van Buren
- **Job Mann** - Pennsylvania State Treasurer and three term US congressman from PA
- **Albert Sands Southworth (1811 - 1894)** - Operator of Southworth and Hawes Daguerrotype studio and student of Samuel F. B. Morse.
- **Myron H. Clark (1806 - 1892)** - Governor of New York (1855 - 1857), State Senator and Ontario County Sheriff

- **George E. Paine** - New Orleans cotton broker for Southern growers, including Confederate States President Jefferson Davis. Arranged for transport and sale of black slaves and Chinese coolies as labor for cotton trade
- **David Elder** - Builder of the only Wire Suspension Bridge (1866) still standing in America (Carrabassett River, Maine)
- **Lorenzo Lorraine Langstroth** - Invented the modern Beehive in 1851 (US Patent 9,300) enabling greater production of honey

The end