

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Memorandum of Conversation

RESTRICTED

DATE: April 11, 1951

xP  
9.11.14

SUBJECT: Cuban Suggestion that United States Issue a Commemorative Postage Stamp Honoring Nurse Clara Maass

PARTICIPANTS: Señor Dr. Ricardo Sarabasa - First Secretary, Cuban Embassy  
Mr. Cedric C. Philipp - MID

COPIES TO: ARA - Mr. Mann  
Amembassy, Habana (informally)

1-1403

I told Mr. Sarabasa that I was informed that President Prío of Cuba has authorized the issuance of a commemorative postage stamp honoring Nurse Clara Maass and that Dr. Ernesto Dihigo, Cuban Minister of State, was considering making a suggestion to the Department of State that it endorse the issuance of such a stamp in the United States.

Mr. Sarabasa confirmed that President Prío has issued a decree authorizing the issuance of a stamp honoring Nurse Maass and stated that Ambassador Machado had received word from Dr. Dihigo on the subject some montas ago. He said that Ambassador Machado discussed the matter then with Dr. Meyer and decided to file it in the Embassy archivos.

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I remarked that it might be desirable if the matter were to remain there with no further action being taken because it appeared unlikely that a request for Departmental endorsement of a project to honor Nurse Maass by a United States commemorative postage stamp would receive an affirmative reply. I pointed out two reasons for this: first, that the matter had been informally discussed with the Post Office Department and it was ascertained that the Post Office could not undertake to issue a special stamp honoring Nurse Maass for technical reasons; and, second, that it did not appear likely that the Army and the Office of the Surgeon General would consider Nurse Maass as the person most worthy of special commemoration.

Mr. Sarabasa

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Mr. Sarabasa said that he was glad to hear these views and that he would communicate them to Ambassador Machado upon the latter's return from New York tomorrow.

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ARA:MID:CCP~~Philipp~~:jr 4-12-51

# Lutheran Memorial Hospital Association

12th AVENUE AND NEWTON STREET

NEWARK 3, NEW JERSEY

*John*

**President:**

REV. ARTHUR HERBERT, A.M.  
Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, East Orange  
United Lutheran Church

**Office of the President:**  
REV. ARTHUR HERBERT, A.M.  
65 Watson Avenue  
East Orange, N. J.

**Vice-Presidents:**

REV. OSCAR E. BRAUNE  
St. John's Lutheran Church, Newark  
United Lutheran Church

REV. F. W. WEIDMANN  
St. John's Lutheran Church, Bloomfield  
Missouri Synod

His Excellency Harry S. Truman  
President of the United States of America  
Washington, D.C.

**Secretary:**

REV. JOHN R. WEBER  
St. Matthew's Lutheran Church, Newark  
Missouri Synod

Dear Mr. Truman:-

**Treasurer:**

MR. KARL J. OLSON  
Treasurer, N. Y. Conference  
Augustana Lutheran Church

Enclosed is the first photograph released by the Department of Posts of the Republic of Cuba of the stamp to be issued on August 24 of this year, honoring Nurse Clara Louise Maass, U.S.A. who died 50 years ago in Havana, Cuba, during the experiments to determine the cause of yellow fever conducted by our Army.

**Finance Secretary:**

REV. BORUSLAV D. TUHY  
Zion Lutheran Church, Newark  
Slovak Synod, Synodical Conference

Dr. Prio, President of Cuba, has requested our State Department to join hands with his country in issuing this stamp - the first time, as far as I know, that the head of a foreign country has asked us to honor one of our own citizens in so magnanimous and noble a way.

REV. AXIL V. BECKMAN  
First Lutheran Church, East Orange  
Augustana Lutheran Church

REV. GUYAV J. CHERNANSKY  
Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, Newark  
Slovak Synod, U.L.C.A.

MR. JOHN D. FISCHBECK  
Lester, Prudential Insurance Co., Newark  
United Lutheran Church

REV. C. DONALD HEFT  
St. Mark's Lutheran Church, Oaklyn  
Pennsylvania Ministerium, U.L.C.A.

REV. JOHN A. KAVASCH  
Calvary Lutheran Church, Verona  
Missouri Synod

MR. WALTER W. KEMPHERT  
Worthington Pump & Mach'y Corp., Harrison  
Missouri Synod

MR. JOHN W. KRESS  
Howard Savings Institution, Newark  
United Lutheran Church

REV. OVE R. NIELSEN  
St. Stephen's Lutheran Church, Perth Amboy  
Danish Lutheran Church

MR. HARRY A. TROTTER  
Firemen's Insurance Co., Newark  
Missouri Synod

MR. WALLACE J. WILCK  
Wallace J. Wilck Corp., Perth Amboy  
Evangelical Lutheran Church  
(Formerly Norwegian Synod)

Mr. President, I beg of you to join with President Prio in a similar homage to the heroic nurse, and to ask Mr. Donaldson to reconsider his plan of limiting the 1951 program of commemorative stamps to four.

The nurses of America, under the leadership of the American Nurses Association, as well as the Department of the Army, celebrating the 50th Anniversary of the establishment of the Army Nurses Corps, are on record as favoring this stamp.

Your approval of the stamp is being eagerly looked forward to throughout the Latin American countries where the movement to honor the "Heroine of the Tropics" has met with a tremendously popular reception.

Yours with kindest greetings and best wishes for God's continued blessing upon you

Sincerely

7 May 1951

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Handwritten notes and stamps in the bottom left corner, including "D/R" and "CS 14/15-1951".

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# CUBA-CORREOS

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LUTHERAN MEMORIAL  
HOSPITAL NEWARK, N.J.

CLARA LOUISE MAASS  
1876 1901

HOSPITAL LAS ANIMAS  
HABANA, CUBA

POR LA CIENCIA Y LA HUMANIDAD - EN LA PAZ Y EN LA GUERRA



His Excellency, Dr. Carlos Prío Socarras,  
President of the Republic of Cuba,  
signing the Bill "Arturito", on the  
balcony of the Presidential Palace in  
Havana, authorizing the issuance of a  
commemorative postage stamp honoring  
U.S. Army Nurse Clara Louise Maass on  
the 50th Anniversary of her death for  
Science and Humanity and the conquest  
of Yellow Fever, August 24, 1951

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**Office of the President:**

REV. ARTHUR HERBERT, A.M.  
65 Watson Avenue  
East Orange, N. J.

Hon. Edward G. Cale  
Deputy Director  
Office of Middle American Affairs  
Department of State, Washington, D.C.

Dear Mr. Cale:-

Thank you for your letter of April 6 in which you stated that the matter of a commemorative stamp for Nurse Clara Louise Maass, heroine of the yellow fever experiments conducted by our Army in Cuba in 1901, had been referred back to the Post Office Department.

I understand that the selection of the subjects for postal recognition is the function of the P.O. Department. In the matter of the stamp honoring Nurse Maass, however, another factor has entered the picture which makes this situation unprecedented and deserving of special attention on the part of the State Department and of the President. This factor is the magnanimous action of Dr. Carlos Prio Socarras, President of Cuba, who in a Presidential Decree, authorized the stamp honoring an American citizen for his country and, furthermore, in the most friendly spirit of a good neighbor, asked our country to co-operate with his country in this homage to the Pan-American Nurse, Clara Maass.

The passing of this matter to the Post Office Department, without any further recognition of the friendliness of the Cuban President and State Department by our President and State Department, will be a disappointment to our friends in Cuba, to say the least.

I wrote again to President Truman this week, pleading with him to take up this matter once more with Mr. Donaldson, our Postmaster General, and, since Dr. Prio himself has interested himself in our nurse, to join him in a similar homage to her heroic service to science and humanity by authorizing the stamp for the U.S.

Many thanks for your kindness,

Sincerely,

12 May 1951

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Cale  
RE  
Cale

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*Arthur Herbert*

NURSE CLARA MAASS STAMP FOR CUBA

The first photograph of the commemorative stamp honoring U.S. Army nurse, Clara Louise Maass, to be issued by the Republic of Cuba on August 24, 1951, has just been received by the Rev. Prof. Arthur Herbert, President of the Lutheran Memorial Hospital of Newark, N.J. President Carlos Prío Socarrás of Cuba on November 10, 1950, authorized the emission of 3,000,000 copies in red, value 2 centavos, in his Presidential Decree 4176. The size of the stamp will approximate that of U.S. commemoratives.

Nurse Maass, a graduate of Lutheran Memorial Hospital, Class of 1895, died in Las Animas Hospital, Havana, on August 24, 1901, at the age of 25 years, as a result of her voluntary submission to the bite of the Stegomyia mosquito, suspected by the great Cuban Doctor Carlos Finlay of carrying the virus of Yellow Fever. The only American to perish in the course of the experiments conducted by the U.S. Army, she, by her sacrifice, gave final proof to the truth of Dr. Finlay's thesis, providing the medical knowledge which later enabled Dr. William C. Gorgas, under whose direction she had participated in the tests, to clear the tropics of the disease and bring the building of the Panama Canal to its successful conclusion.

A similar stamp has been requested of the U.S. Post Office Department by the nurses of the United States, headed by the American Nurses' Association, honoring Nurse Maass as a symbol of "The American Nurse in Peace and War". Congressman Hugh J. Addonizio (D) 11th District of New Jersey on February 10, 1949, introduced Bill H.R. 2609 in the House of Representatives to the same end.

At the present time Hon. Ernesto Dihigo, Secretary of State of the Republic of Cuba is forwarding a request from his government, through Cuban Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Luis Machado, to U.S. Secretary of State Dean Acheson and the State Department, suggesting that the U.S. Government issue the stamp together with Cuba as a gesture of mutual esteem and friendship. Dr. Dihigo states in his letter to Ambassador Machado: "The great debt owed by humanity to this young and heroic nurse, her extraordinary abnegation and her unselfish spirit of sacrifice amply justify the proposed homage; for this reason we have deemed it proper to make an appeal to the government of that country (U.S.A.) in an attempt to win its sympathy in agreement with this sublime purpose".

Rev. Prof. Herbert, of the Newark Hospital, in a letter to Governor Alfred Driscoll of New Jersey, as well as the two State: Hendrickson and H. Alexander Smith, in letters to and in personal Secretary of State Acheson, have requested that these appeals be favorable attention.