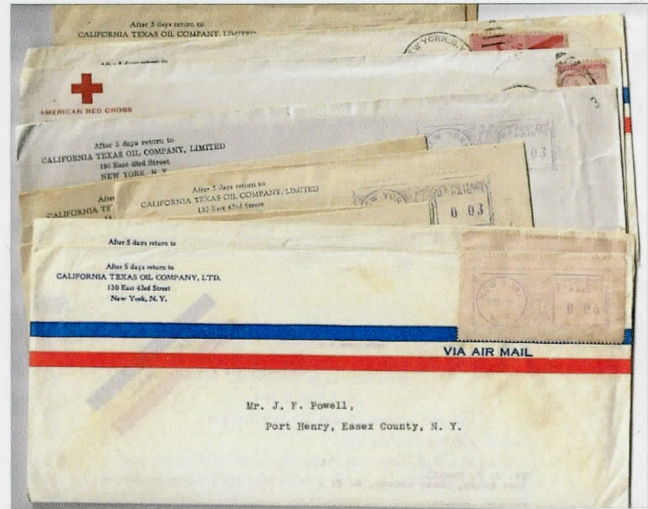


## 24. [MARITIME] [MILITARY – WORLD WAR TWO] [PETROLEUM] [PHILATELY]

**1941-1942 - A correspondence archive documenting the internment of an American oil company employee in Hong Kong by the Japanese army and his return to the United States on the MS *Gripsholm* Swedish repatriation ship.**

There are 14 pieces of correspondence (13 letters and one telegram) in this archive. All were sent to either Mr. or Mrs. J. F. Powell of Port Henry, New York between 17 December 1941 and 9 August 1942 using a mix of postage. Most were sent by the Manager of the Asiatic Division of the California Texas Oil Company (CALTEX) from New York City. One was sent by the American Red Cross, and the telegram and one letter were sent by the Powell's son, who had been interned in Hong Kong. All are in nice shape. Transcripts will be provided.



As part of its attempt to conquer all of Asia during World War II, Japan launched its attack on Hong Kong on the morning of 8 December 1941 one day after its infamous sneak attack on Pearl Harbor. Outnumbered British, Canadian, and Hong Kong Defense forces were soon overwhelmed and the Japanese army crossed the Victoria Harbor on the 18<sup>th</sup>. The city officially surrendered a week later on Christmas Day.

Excerpts include:

15 December 1941 – As the Japanese prepared to assault Hong Kong, the Powell's son was able to send a Western Union telegram that simply stated, "Everything OK Don't worry".

17 December 1941 (the day before the Japanese crossed Victoria Harbor) – "We are glad to advise that we have to-day received advice from Hong Kong, by cable, that your son and the rest of our staff in Hong Kong are well and safe. . ."

26 December 1941 (the day after Hong Kong surrendered) – "For you information, your son is located in Hong Kong and a recent cable received from Hong Kong advised that all of our staff there are well and safe. . ."

11 February 1942 – "We have not had any word lately from our people in Hong Kong . . . but we are endeavoring to communicate with them through our government at Washington, and they believe some means will be established for communications. . . It is our belief that all of our people in Hong Kong are safe and well . . . and also our other employees who are in cities that have been captured by the Japanese. . ."

14 March 1942 – "We have had a message from Mr. Sumner Welles, Assistant Secretary of State . . . advising that they have been able to get in touch with our employees in Shanghai and Tientsin, and that our staffs are free, in good health, and living in their private residences. They are endeavoring also to get in touch with our people in Hong Kong. . ."

20 March 1942 – "We are just in receipt of a cable from our Chungking representative, Mr. J. M. Hanson, which reads as follows : 'Have information Hong Kong American staff safe.' . ."

1 April 1942 – "At the present time our people are confined to the Texaco Terminal quarters. . ."



VIA AIR MAIL

ONE THIRTY EAST FORTY-THIRD STREET  
NEW YORK, N. Y.

December 17, 1942

Mr. J. F. Powell,  
Port Henry, Essex County, N. Y.

Dear Mr. Powell:

We are glad to advise that we have to-day received advice

from Hong Kong. by cable and the rest of our staff

fully informed.

CLASS OF SERVICE

This is a full-rate Telegram or Cablegram unless its deferred character is indicated by a suitable symbol above or preceding the address.

R. B. WHITE  
PRESIDENT

The filing time shown in the date line on telegrams and day letters is

EB12 11/0 VIA RCA=F HONG

NFT LC JFPOWELL=

=PORT HENRY NY=

EVERYTHING OK DONT WORR

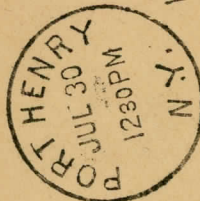
POWELL,

.303P.

WE  
U



1942



WESTERN UNION  
TELEGRAM

IF NOT DELIVERED IN 7 DAYS, RETURN TO ABOVE ADDRESS

If you wish your mail delivered  
by carrier, have it addressed to  
Street and Number.

Letter  
am  
tination



ONE THIRTY EAST FORTY-THIRD STREET  
NEW YORK, N. Y.

December 17, 1941.

VIA AIR MAIL

VIA AIR MAIL

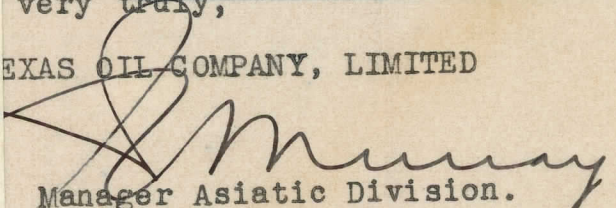
Mr. J. F. Powell,  
Port Henry, Essex County, N. Y.

that we have to-day received advice  
your son and the rest of our staff

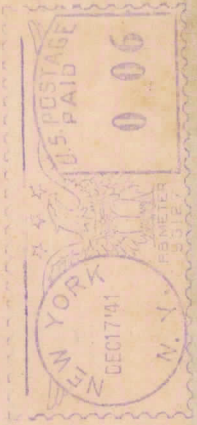
keep you fully informed.

very truly,

TEXAS OIL COMPANY, LIMITED

  
Manager Asiatic Division.

After 5 days return to  
CALIFORNIA TEXAS OIL COMPANY, LTD.  
130 East 43rd Street  
New York, N. Y.





ONE THIRTY EAST FORTY-THIRD STREET  
NEW YORK, N. Y.

December 26, 1941.

VIA AIR MAIL

VIA AIR MAIL

Mrs. J. F. Powell,  
3 Brook Street,  
Port Henry, N. Y.

er 8th addressed to Mr. L. D.  
een referred to the writer for

your son is located in Hong Kong  
m Hong Kong advised that all of  
fe.

ently informed as we receive further

s very truly,

KAS OIL COMPANY, LIMITED

Manager Asiatic Division.

After 5 days return to  
CALIFORNIA TEXAS OIL COMPANY, LTD.  
130 East 43rd Street  
New York, N. Y.



CALIFORNIA TEXAS OIL COMPANY, LIMITED

130 EAST 43RD STREET

NEW YORK

February 11, 1942.

Mrs. J. F. Powell,  
3 Brook Street,  
Port Henry, N. Y.

Dear Mrs. Powell:

Referring to your letter of February 9th, we have not had any word lately from our people in Hong Kong, either direct or indirect, but we are endeavoring to communicate with them at Washington, and they believe some means of communication, and for the purpose of sending Hong some money for their necessities. We are confident that all of our people in Hong Kong are at rest assured that our company will use the position of your son, and also our influence in cities that have been captured by the Japanese. If we get any definite word we will be sure to

Yours very truly,

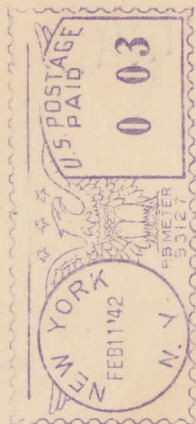
CALIFORNIA TEXAS OIL COMPANY, LIMITED

Manager Asiatic Division.

Mrs. J. F. Powell,

3 Brook Street,

Port Henry, N. Y.



After 5 days return to  
CALIFORNIA TEXAS OIL COMPANY, LIMITED  
130 East 43rd Street  
NEW YORK, N. Y.



CALIFORNIA TEXAS OIL COMPANY, LIMITED

130 EAST 43<sup>RD</sup> STREET

NEW YORK

March 14, 1942.

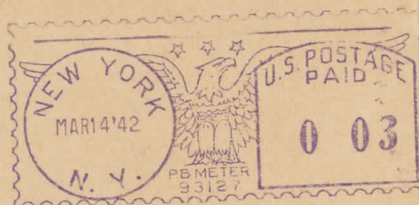
Mr. J. W. Powell,  
3 Brook Street,  
Port Henry, N. Y.

Dear Mr. Powell:

We have had a message from Mr. Sumner Welles, Assistant Secretary of State at Washington, D.C., advising that they have been able to get in touch with our employees in Shanghai and Tientsin, and that our staffs are free, in good health, and living in their private residences.

They are endeavoring also to get in touch with our people in Hong Kong, and as soon as we receive any advice in this regard

After 5 days return to  
CALIFORNIA TEXAS OIL COMPANY, LIMITED  
130 East 43rd Street  
NEW YORK, N. Y.



Mr. J. W. Powell,  
3 Brook Street,  
Port Henry, N. Y.

Mr.

ny

CALIFORNIA TEXAS OIL COMPANY, LIMITED

130 EAST 43<sup>RD</sup> STREET

NEW YORK

March 20, 1942.

Mr. J. F. Powell,  
3 Brook Street,  
Port Henry, N. Y.

Dear Mr. Powell:

We are just in receipt of a cable from our Chungking

Hanson, which reads as follows:

tion Hong Kong American staff

ing to get in touch with your son, Mr.  
ngton, and as soon as we receive further  
you informed.

Yours very truly,

NIA TEXAS OIL COMPANY, LIMITED

*[Signature]*  
Manager Asiatic Division.

*Butter  
bread  
Damage  
Sugar*



Mr. J. F. Powell,  
3 Brook Street,  
Port Henry, N. Y.

After 5 days return to  
CALIFORNIA TEXAS OIL COMPANY, LIMITED  
130 East 43rd Street  
NEW YORK, N. Y.

CALIFORNIA TEXAS OIL COMPANY, LIMITED

130 EAST 43<sup>RD</sup> STREET  
NEW YORK

April 1, 1942.

Mr. J. F. Powell,  
3 Brook Street,  
Port Henry, N. Y.

Dear Mr. Powell:

ed a message, indirectly, from Hong Kong  
ople in Hong Kong are well. There is also  
e present time our people are confiend to  
ters, where they, no doubt, would be quite

further advices we will keep you informed.

Yours very truly,

FORNIA TEXAS OIL COMPANY, LIMITED

*[Signature]*  
Manager Asiatic Division.



Mr. J. F. Powell,  
3 Brook Street,  
Port Henry, N. Y.

After 5 days return to  
CALIFORNIA TEXAS OIL COMPANY, LIMITED  
130 East 43rd Street  
NEW YORK, N. Y.



CALIFORNIA TEXAS OIL COMPANY, LIMITED

130 EAST 43<sup>RD</sup> STREET

NEW YORK

April 28, 1942.

Mrs. J. F. Powell,  
3 Brook Street,  
Port Henry, N. Y.

Dear Mrs. Powell:

With regard to your son, who is at present detained in Hong Kong because of the Japanese occupation of that city:

We have just received a telegram from Mr. Cordell Hull, Secretary of State, advising that the State Department has received information through official sources, dated April 21st, that our Hong Kong staff are in good health and request families be advised.

Yours very truly,

CALIFORNIA TEXAS OIL COMPANY, LIMITED

*[Signature]*  
Manager Asiatic Division.

After 5 days return to  
CALIFORNIA TEXAS OIL COMPANY, LIMITED  
130 East 43rd Street  
NEW YORK, N. Y.



Mrs. J. F. Powell,  
3 Brook Street,  
Port Henry, N. Y.

CALIFORNIA TEXAS OIL COMPANY, LIMITED

130 EAST 43RD STREET

1942



After 5 days return to  
CALIFORNIA TEXAS OIL COMPANY, LIMITED  
130 East 43rd Street  
NEW YORK, N. Y.

Mrs. J. F. Powell  
3 Brook Street  
Port Henry, New York

the American Red Cross has  
to transmit messages to any  
China or the Phillippines.

ssage Form should be filled  
e returned promptly to the  
ed Cross. Messages are limi-  
urely personal nature. If  
rds, so much the better.  
best of your ability.

course, that neither we nor  
arantee the delivery of any  
be made to effect delivery.

l by the Red Cross at fairly  
not consider it advisable to  
es oftener than, say, once a

fill out forms for any  
messages should merely be  
sed to the undersigned.

like to assure you that the  
o communicate with interned  
have also placed on deposit  
ubstantial sum of money to  
e opportunity presents it-

Yours very truly

J. V. Murray  
Manager, Asiatic Division

By: J. V. Murray



CALIFORNIA TEXAS OIL COMPANY, LIMITED  
130 EAST 43RD STREET  
NEW YORK

June 4, 1942.

Mrs. J. F. Powell,  
3 Brook Street,  
Port Henry, N. Y.

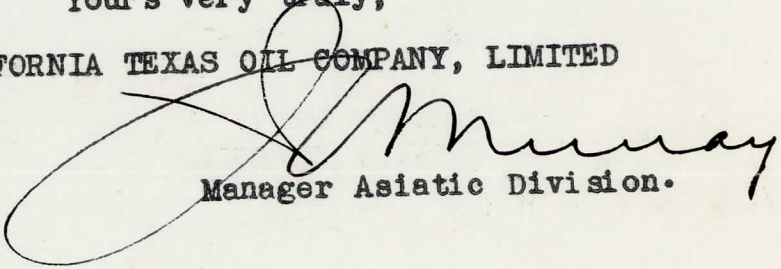
Dear Mrs. Powell:

We are very glad to advise that we have a notification from the State Department in Washington that there will be an exchange of civilian prisoners in the near future, and that your son is on the list to come out of Hong Kong on the first boat, and the indications are that there is a very good chance that a boat will be leaving Hong Kong about the middle of June with these civilian internees, and that your son will be on that boat.

If we get any further advices we will keep you informed.

Yours very truly,

CALIFORNIA TEXAS OIL COMPANY, LIMITED

  
Manager Asiatic Division.

JVM-TFF

July 7, 1942



Mrs. John Powell  
Port Henry  
N. Y.

  
AMERICAN RED CROSS  
ESSEX COUNTY CHAPTER

Port Henry  
N. Y.

Re: Powell, John Walter

Re: Powell, John F.

am #2436 received by the  
Switzerland, the following

graphs detailed list  
l and American  
on Asama Maru:

State Department that the  
ama Maru will be transferred  
sholm and proceed to the  
lval in this country is in-

ge and assure the inquirer  
which we may receive about  
forwarded to your Chapter.

Sincerely yours,

Martha V. Ellesor  
Correspondent, Inquiry Service



ONE THIRTY EAST FORTY-THIRD STREET  
NEW YORK, N. Y.

July 24, 1942.

VIA AIR MAIL

J. W. POWELL



VIA AIR MAIL

Mrs. J. F. Powell,  
3 Brook Street,  
Port Henry, N. Y.

After 5 days return to  
CALIFORNIA TEXAS OIL COMPANY, LTD.  
130 East 43rd Street  
New York, N. Y.

arranged for our South African  
renco Marques to meet the incom-  
on board from Hong Kong, and we have  
ople in Africa advising that your  
and was trans-shipping by the  
rning to the U.S.A., and the latest  
ipsholm" will arrive in New York

information regarding the arrival  
ise you.

y truly,

AS OIL COMPANY, LIMITED

*J. W. Murray*  
Manager Asiatic Division.

Gripsholm Aug 9, 1942

Dear Mother + Dad,

We are arriving in Rio. tomorrow and I hope to be able to send this by airmail so as to reach you before we arrive in U.S.A. - Don't know exactly when this will be but suppose you will know from the paper as soon as as before we do. Tried to write you from Larumco Margins but there was no out going airmail so I cabled instead.

Will telephone you as soon as I reach New York and will try to come straight on home but am not

there  
me  
I  
days.  
other  
ply



Mr. Mrs. J.F. Powell  
3 Brook Street  
Port Henry  
New York, USA

I.E./8082

AIRMAIL  
AVION.



CALIFORNIA TEXAS OIL COMPANY, LIMITED  
130 EAST 43RD STREET  
NEW YORK

August 10, 1942.

J. W. POWELL

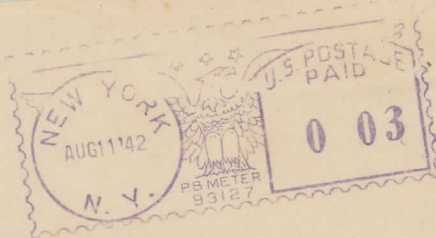
Mrs. J. F. Powell,  
3 Brook Street,  
Port Henry, N. Y.

Dear Mrs. Powell:

The latest information we have is that the S/S "Gripsholm" is now at Rio, and is expected to arrive in New York on approximately August 24th and to dock at Jersey City.

We are arranging for two of our shipping people to meet the boat to assist in getting our employees through the customs and to advance them any money they may require. Other of our officials will also endeavor to meet the boat on arrival. if the Customs

After 5 days return to  
CALIFORNIA TEXAS OIL COMPANY, LIMITED  
130 East 43rd Street  
NEW YORK, N. Y.



Mrs. J. F. Powell,  
3 Brook Street,  
Port Henry, N. Y.

Yours very truly,

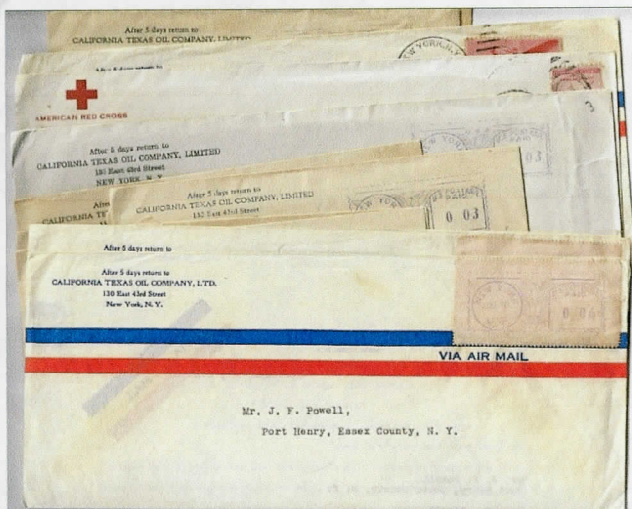
CALIFORNIA TEXAS OIL COMPANY, LIMITED

*[Handwritten Signature]*  
Manager Asiatic Division

**[MARITIME] [MILITARY – WORLD WAR TWO] [PETROLEUM] [PHILATELY]**

**1941-1942 - A correspondence archive documenting the internment of an American oil company employee in Hong Kong by the Japanese army and his return to the United States on the MS Gripsholm Swedish repatriation ship.**

There are 14 pieces of correspondence (13 letters and one telegram) in this archive. All were sent to either Mr. or Mrs. J. F. Powell of Port Henry, New York between 17 December 1941 and 9 August 1942 using a mix of postage. Most were sent by the Manager of the Asiatic Division of the California Texas Oil Company (CALTEX) from New York City. One was sent by the American Red Cross, and the telegram and one letter were sent by the Powell's son, who had been interned in Hong Kong. All are in nice shape. Transcripts will be provided.



As part of its attempt to conquer all of Asia during World War II, Japan launched its attack on Hong Kong on the morning of 8 December 1941 one day after its infamous sneak attack on Pearl Harbor. Outnumbered British, Canadian, and Hong Kong Defense forces were soon overwhelmed and the Japanese army crossed the Victoria Harbor on the 18<sup>th</sup>. The city officially surrendered a week later on Christmas Day.

As the Japanese prepared to assault Hong Kong, the Powell's son was able to send a telegram from Western Union's Hong Kong office on 15 December that simply stated, "Everything OK Don't worry".

Most of the following correspondence consists of updates from CALTEX as the company gained more information about its employees status. Its first letter was sent on 17 December 1941, the day before the Japanese crossed Victoria Harbor. The second was sent on 26 December, the day after Hong Kong surrendered. On 1 April, the Powell's were informed that their son was well and being "confined to the Texico Terminal quarters" in Hong Kong".

On 4 June, the Powell's received official word that the Japanese had agreed to "an exchange of civilian prisoners in the near future, and the your son is on the list to come out of Hong Kong on the first boat."

A month later they were informed that "American Nationals [were] to be embarked on the Asama Maru" and that their son "would be transferred at Lourenco Marques [along with the rest of passengers] to the [Swedish ship] MV Gripsholm and proceed to the United States."

When the passengers transferred in Brazil, their son was able to send a quick letter on 9 August explaining how they could reach him after he arrived in New York, and the following day, CALTEX sent the Powell's a letter with more detailed information.

The California Texas Oil Company was formed in 1936 as a joint venture between the Texas Company (TEXACO) and Standard Oil of California (now Chevron) to market Saudi Arabian oil throughout Africa, the Middle East, Asia, Australia, and New Zealand. It still exists today as part of the Chevron Corporation.

**\$1,250**

**#9894**

**Kurt A. Sanftleben LLC, ABAA**