

## HISTORY



Florence and Laurence Spungen Family Foundation

Dated Sept. 6, 1933, this Dachau postcard — the earliest known Nazi concentration camp inmate stationery — will be among the Holocaust-related mail on exhibit at Coe College.

# Holocaust artifacts to be exhibited at Coe

## Gazette news service

CEDAR RAPIDS — Hundreds of pieces of World War II-era mail and documents related to the Nazis' attempted extermination of Jews and others will be displayed Saturday at Coe College.

The exhibit will be shown from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. in the Perrine Gallery of Stewart Memorial Library. It is free and open to the public.

The collection is owned by the Florence and Laurence Spungen Family Foundation, based in Deerfield, Ill., which acquired the items to preserve and offer them for public use at Holocaust and genocide educational venues around the world.

"The insured value of the collection is \$1 million, but the educational value to future generations is incalculable," said Daniel Spungen, a member of the board of the Spungen Family Foundation.

"One of the most heart-breaking artifacts and historical evidence of Nazi desecration is a torn fragment of a handwritten Hebrew parchment from a Bible scroll" or Tanakh, Spungen said. "A German soldier used the holy scripture to wrap a parcel he mailed from Russia to Austria in 1942.

"The sacred parchment was pillaged from a Russian synagogue. Ironically, the portion that was used as wrapping paper has passages from the first book of Samuel about the story of David and Goliath."

This is only the third public exhibition since the acquisition of the items from a private collector was announced last September.

Steve Feller, a Coe professor of physics and co-author of the book "Silent Witness: Civilian

## Among the items ...

- Rare examples of mail sent to prisoners and mail sent between inmates at concentration camps.
- A card sent by a Dachau inmate soon after the camp opened in 1933 is the earliest known prisoner mail from any Nazi concentration camp.
- An Oct. 3, 1943, letter to his parents in Rzeszow, Poland, from Eduard Pys, a 21-year-old who arrived on the first transport at the Auschwitz concentration camp in May 1940.
- The only known surviving piece of mail sent by Rabbi Leo Baeck, the leader of German Jewry (Reichsvertretung der Deutschen Juden), while he was confined to the Theresienstadt ghetto-camp.
- A postal checking account receipt imprinted with a crude anti-Semitic caricature denoting payment for a subscription to a Nazi propaganda newspaper.
- Mail secretly carried by children through the sewers of Warsaw during the 1944 uprising.
- A December 1945 postal card addressed to Dr. Eugen von Haagen, a Nazi war criminal on trial at Nuremberg, with the only recorded example of the censor mark of the International Military Tribunal.

Camp Money of World War II," will discuss Holocaust-related money at informal gatherings during the exhibit.

Including items contributed by Spungen, the foundation is the guardian of the more than 250 envelopes, postcards, letters and specially designated postage stamps used exclusively by concentration camp inmates, Jewish ghetto residents and prisoners of war.

Many of the artifacts can be viewed at [www.SpungenFoundation.org](http://www.SpungenFoundation.org)