

The Russian Letters  
In The  
Voynich Papers  
Of The Grolier Club of New York<sup>1</sup>

(From [Voynichiana](#): documents, images, and  
research illuminating the lives of Wilfrid and Ethel Voynich and of  
Anne M. Nill, Wilfrid Voynich's assistant and Ethel's life-long companion after  
Voynich's death.)

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<sup>1</sup> Scans of the letters courtesy of The Grolier Club of New York.

# The Russian Letters In The The Voynich Papers Of The Grolier Club of New York

In Box Six of The Grolier Club's Voynich Collection, in a folder labeled "Voynich, W. M., Letters ca. 1891," lie three mysterious letters hand-written in Russian. Each is one sheet of paper fully covered with writing on both sides. The letters are reproduced below (pp. 3-8). According to the Italian scholar Dario Besseghini, who has [translated](#) Letter One into English, all three are written in the same hand and mention the same persons, but have different signatures.

The contents of Letter One, which is written on stationery of the Society of Friends of Russian Freedom, are bizarre and enigmatic: the letter appears to be a kind of coded message from an informant to a police official. The other letters, one written on plain paper (Letter Two) and one on graph paper (Letter Three), have not been translated from the Russian nor have their contents been studied.

What significance did the letters have for Voynich and why did he keep them to the end of his life? Why did Ethel preserve them after his death?

These questions cannot be answered at present. Now that the letters are available on the Web it is to be hoped that scholars will study these strange documents further and produce translations of all three along with explications of their contents. Such translations might shed light on the revolutionary activities of Wilfrid Voynich and the Society of Friends of Russian Freedom and suggest the reasons why Voynich kept the letters.

The letters and the rest of The Grolier Club's Voynich Collection are a donation from the rare bookdealer H.P. Kraus. According to Grolier Club records the Collection was accessioned in 1976. How Kraus acquired the materials in the Collection is not known. They may have accompanied the Voynich Manuscript when he purchased it from Anne M. Nill in the summer of 1961, shortly before she died. It is also conceivable that Emma Seilheimer, Anne's sister and executor of her will, presented them to Kraus when winding up Anne's estate ([see Anne M. Nill's Will and her Bequest to the Library of Congress of Ethel Voynich's Unpublished Music](#)).

Letter One  
Outside

active acquaintance  
 & good acquaintance with  
 him is essential,  
 & should be given every  
 opportunity with  
 the knowledge  
 upon which we lay.  
 Now, this matter  
 however, must  
 thoroughly be  
 thought of, and  
 we must, and it  
 will be to the

SOCIETY OF FRIENDS OF RUSSIAN

FREEDOM.

"FREE RUSSIA" Official Organ.

HON. SECRETARY

EDWARD R. PEASE.

2, HYDE PARK MANSIONS,

LONDON, N. W.

18/10/22

[illegible]



Letter One,  
Inside

[illegible]

1854 m. Epimania  
 Olga Klyuchnikova 11. Pr.  
 overed m. Cicon 14.  
CHICAGO STREET  
 Breuers Epimania  
 Klyuchnikova Teplov  
 Meus for Texas was  
 on omnibus brought  
 my in number 857-  
 ras. Klyuchnikova  
 for omnibus, no go that  
 trip he only he was  
 Dorcas in Epimania  
 Klyuchnikova was  
 in the same position  
 in Epimania 14.  
 Klyuchnikova in Epimania











## Letter Three, Outside

[illegible][illegible]



# Letter Three, Inside

neyora. har pepsa he kame  
 pumeu, pephora. uia eile  
 sonu a mroodoflo. he  
 har Cio eumia.  
 I tyocan ppharypne  
 Sumu o col har tinea  
 he. Wyl mrops keryp  
 kumua k kandy.  
 Eppole of. ppharypne he-  
 Almuia mclima. I pphel  
 Dodun kum pome Cudya.  
 Di! hea pphel pphel pephora  
 Mady foute uia eumua  
 a Deera ype uty.  
 Wyl he mroodoflo pphel  
 fume.

[illegible]