

# The Doctor Does Exist

I'm not really a collector of "Dear Doctor" letters, but I have around 30 from all over the world. Most of them were given to me by a friend who was raised in Meridian, Mississippi, and they are addressed to Laura O. Williams, M.D., of that city. I must admit that I never paid much attention to the cards until recently.

I immediately discovered that there is a very active group of collectors with a great website ([www.deardoctorpostcards.com](http://www.deardoctorpostcards.com)) that has a catalogue of more than 180 varieties of cards sent out by Abbott Laboratories of Illinois beginning in the 1950s. The cards, which are addressed to locations around the world, were sent first to doctors in the United States and then to others abroad. They all begin with the greeting "Dear Doctor," hence the name of the collectibles, and basically were an advertisement for the anesthetic drug produced by Abbott called Pentothal Sodium.

As I looked at my own cards, eighteen of which are addressed to Dr. Laura Williams, I realized that one of the cards I had stuck in there was from her niece, Iris Elizabeth. Suddenly, the doctor was a real person!

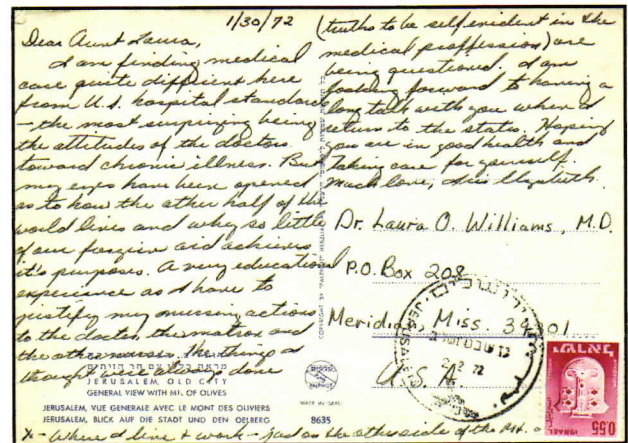
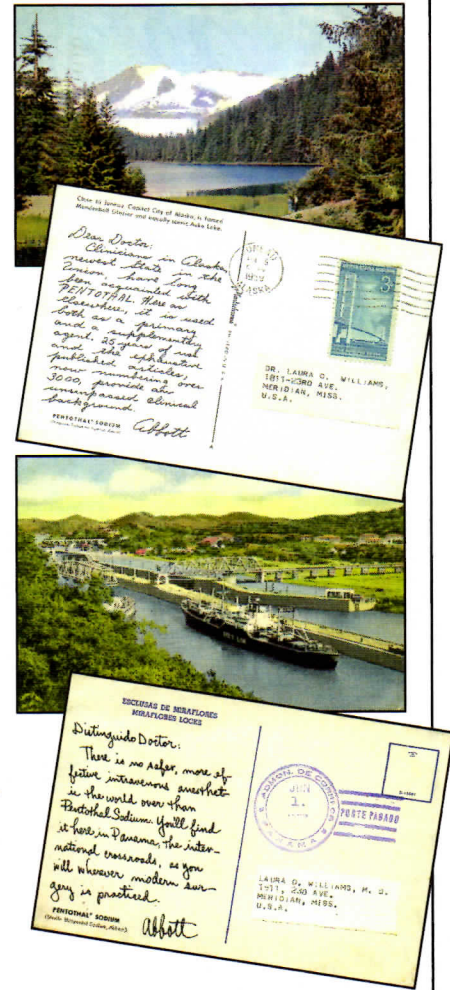
The card is from the old city of Jerusalem, written on January 30, 1972. Iris Elizabeth writes:

Dear Aunt Laura,

I am finding medical care quite different here from the U.S. hospital standards—the most surprising being the attitudes of the doctors toward chronic illness. But my eyes have been opened as to how the other half of the world lives and why so little of our foreign aid achieves its purpose. A very educational experience as I have to justify my nursing actions to the doctor, the matron and other nurses. The things I thought were always done (truths to be self-evident in the medical profession) have been questioned. I am looking forward to having a long talk with you when I return to the states. Hoping you are in good health and taking care of yourself. Much love, Iris Elizabeth

The card was mailed February 2, 1972 in Jerusalem and uses a 0.55 Israel stamp, Iris also notes at the bottom of her message that she has marked with an X where she lives and works — "just on the other side of the mountain."

Nan Burby, Worley, Idaho



Visit the AP Online at  
[www.stamps.org/American-Philatelist](http://www.stamps.org/American-Philatelist)  
 Current Issue • Bonus Content • Back Issues