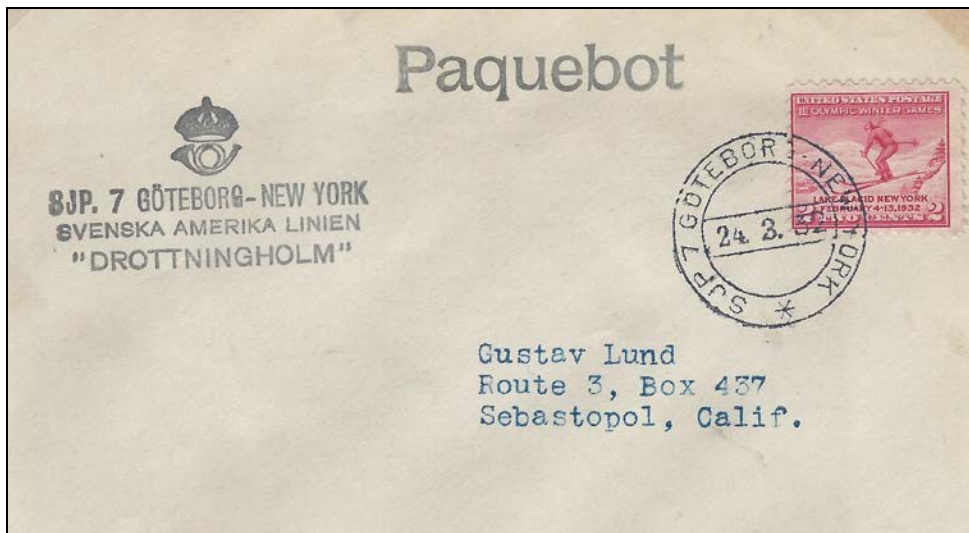


SWEDISH AMERIKA LINE

By Mike Dovey

The Swedish Amerika Line was formed in 1914 to run passenger services between Goteborg (Gothenburg) and New York and also cargo services worldwide. It was greatly assisted by Sweden's neutrality during both of the World Wars when vessels belonging to most other European countries and North America became casualties of the German U-Boats. Passenger services were upheld on the main route but gradually fell away mainly due to the advent of air travel in the 1960s. By the 1970s the company was concentrating mostly on cruising and it was during this time that most of the main passenger shipping companies belonging to Swedish operators were amalgamated into one big company as Brostroms although they still retained their individual titles. In 1975 under the new management the last two ships, the Gripsholm and Kungsholm, were sold and Swedish Amerika Line disappeared as a shipping line.



Cover clearly showing the "SJP.7" "Goteborg – New York" cancellation.

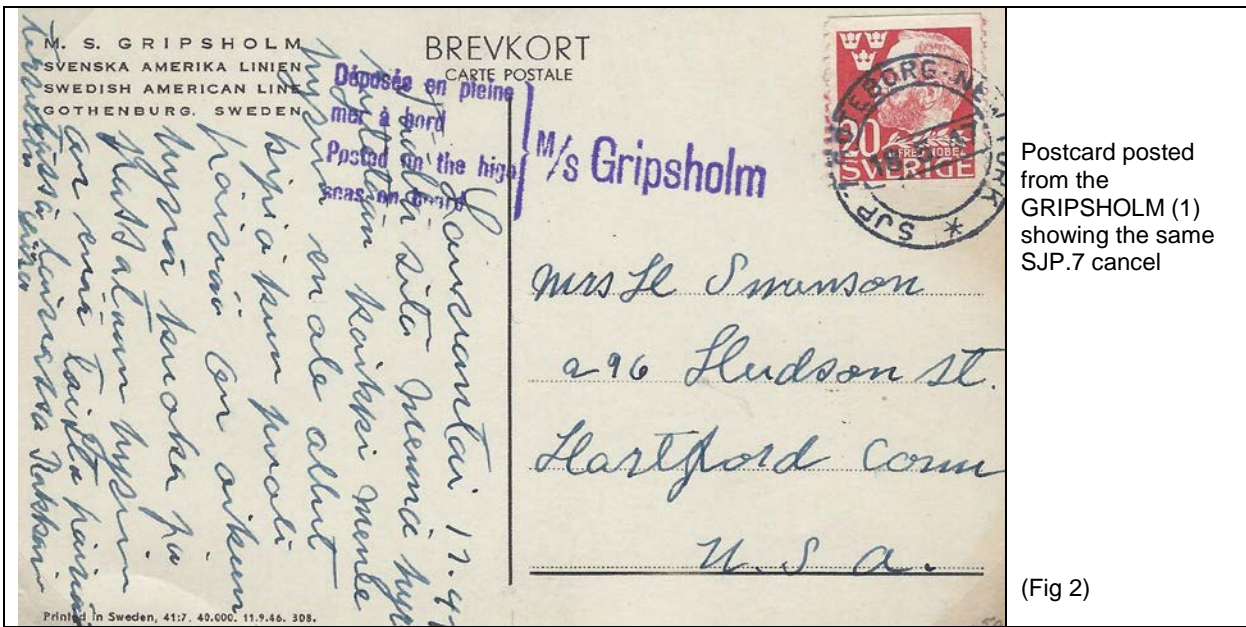
Posted on board the DROTNINGHOLM

(Fig 1)



Swedish Amerika Line basically only operated one route from Goteborg to New York and back and the ship cachets bear this out as they appear as "Goteborg – New York" although there are no envelopes, postcards or covers known with the vica versa cachet. Although this was the main route it is known that at various times calls were made at other European ports including Bremen, Cherbourg, Copenhagen, Le Havre, Liverpool, Oslo, Southampton and also at Halifax in Canada.

Note 1. While the table below is listed as alphabetical the actual covers shown are done in a chronological date order and while the table is listed as such so that the reader can understand the various use of the same names then the layout for the covers gives a true reflection of the movement from a double ring cancel to a single ring cancel.



Postcard posted from the GRIPSHOLM (1) showing the same SJP.7 cancel

(Fig 2)

Swedish Amerika Line vessels were easily recognised as the funnels were buff in colour with a blue circle containing three gold crowns. Also all of their vessels had the suffix "holm" at the end of each title.



Postcard posted from the KUNGSBOLM (2) showing the same SJP.7 cancel

(Fig 3)

Name	Built	Service record	
Drottningholm	1904	Ex Virginian (Allan Line, was sold to CPS) 1920 purchased from Canadian Pacific Steamship and renamed Drottningholm. 1948 sold to Home Line renamed Brasil.	Fig 1
Gripsholm (1)	1925	1954 sold to Bremen-Amerika Line, 1955 renamed Berlin.	Fig 2
Gripsholm (2)	1957	1974 sold to Karageorgis Lines, Greece, renamed Navarino.	Fig 5
<i>Kungsholm (1)</i>	<i>1901</i>	<i>Chartered for 3 years (1923-1926) from Holland America Line and reverted to original name of Noordam when charter ended</i>	
Kungsholm (2)	1928	1941 sold to US Government as troopship John Ericsson, 1947 repurchased by Swedish American Line, 1948 sold to Home Line and renamed Italia.	Fig 3
Kungsholm (3)	1952	1965 sold to North German Lloyd and renamed Europa	Fig 6
Kungsholm (4)	1966	1975 sold to Flagship Cruises, 1978 sold to P&O Line renamed Sea Princess	Fig 7
<i>Stockholm (1)</i>	<i>1899</i>	<i>ex- Potsdam, 1915 purchased from Holland America Line renamed Stockholm, 1929 sold to Norway and became whale factory ship.</i>	
<i>Stockholm (2)</i>	<i>1938</i>	<i>1938 launched but destroyed by fire before completion at Monfalcone.</i>	
<i>Stockholm (3)</i>	<i>1940</i>	<i>never sailed for Swedish American Line but taken over by Italy as troopship, renamed Sabaudia and bombed and sunk 1944 by British planes at Trieste.</i>	
Stockholm (4)	1948	1956 collided with and sank Andrea Doria, 1960 sold to East Germany, renamed Volkerfreundschaft (cruising liner).	Fig 4

(Entries shown in blue italics are assumed to have never had a post office or a facility to cancel mail on board)



Cover clearly showing the "SJP.7" "Goteborg – New York" cancellation.

The return voyage would have the same cachet as it seems there was no cachet for the other direction.

Posted on board the STOCKHOLM (4)

(Fig 4)



In 1960 the STOCKHOLM was sold to East Germany, renamed Volkerfreundschaft as a cruising liner.



Posted with a paquebot mark at Alexandrie in Egypt.

By this time the SJP.7 cancels had ceased.

Posted on board the GRIPSHOLM (2)

(Fig 5)



A pair of covers posted on board the GRIPSHOLM (2).

The top cover is for the actual MAIDEN VOYAGE.

The bottom cover is for the return voyage.

(Fig 5)

With the advent of the Universal Postal Union in the very late 1800s a number of shipping lines began to use some form of postal usage on board ships on various routes especially across the Atlantic including lines from France, Germany, Great Britain and the USA. A late newcomer to this method of on board postal duties was the Swedish Amerika Line using the three vessels they had at sea at the time (Drottningholm, Gripsholm and Kungsholm) and as can be seen from the illustrations their SJP.7 cancels were very prevalent in the 1930s.

After WW2 the Stockholm used the same sort of cancels but by the time the new Gripsholm and Kungholm came into service the cancels changed and reflected where the ships were sailing and so the Atlantic pair of each way cancels developed into cancels for wherever the ships sailed and so as can be seen from Fig 5 the description extended to the West Indies, South America, the Pacific and the South Seas all done mainly for the use of the passengers on board the ships and a way maybe of advertising the whereabouts of the ships and the services they offered.

