

Early Mail and Stampless Letter Postal Markings of Sweden

This marcopily exhibit tells the story of postal markings used in Sweden, primarily before the introduction of adhesive postage. The time period is from the 17th century to the mid-19th century, although some examples of stampless covers extending into the 1860s are included. This study explores the early types of mail including messenger mail, crown post, military mail, and general mail. Some manuscript markings are also identified. Key items have boxed text.

Messenger Mail (hand-delivered): Folded letter, Lifland (Livonia)
to Stockholm, November 12, 1611



Plan

Messenger Mail (Courier Post)

Crown Post

Manuscript and handstamp markings

Military mail

General Mail

B and F markings

General Mail (cont'd)

Straight line cancels

Arc cancel

Box cancels

Free letter cancels

Postage due

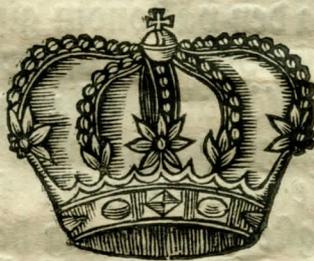
Foreign mails

“RESOLUTION of his Royal Majesty and the Chancery Board of the Realm Concerning the Filling of Proposals and Accounts of Postal Administrators / and Clearance of Funds. Stockholm 13 April 1725. By Grace and Privilege of His Royal Majesty. Stockholm, given at the Royal Printing Office by Johan Henr. Werner, Director of all Printing Plants in the Realm.”

Kongl. Maj:ts
Och Rikens Chancie-Collegii
RESOLUTION,

Angående
Post-Förmaltarnes Förslagers och
Räkenskapers insändande / samt Medlens
clarerande.

Stockholm den 13 Aprilis 1725.



Cum Gratia & Privilegio S:æ R:æ Maj:tis

STOCKHOLM/uti Kongl. Boftryckeriet uplagdt/

Hos JOHAN HENR. WERNER,
Directeur öfver alla Tryckerien i Riket.

Messenger Mail (Kurirpost)

The oldest form of mail delivery was by private messenger or relayed via agents.

Jem Zellen vndt Preussische
ten Herz Hieronymus von
Birchholtz dem ultimum
maimum großmüthigen Herrn
vndt vnlängstlichen
gms
Denn 12. Jannarij vnsfangen,
Denn 13. am dinn schauet vns
Cito cito cito.

←

Circa 1600 to Hieronymus von
Birchholtz (1570- 1618) marked

Cito. Cito. Cito. (Latin for fast,
i.e., urgent)

→

Sent from Stockholm

August 4, 1605

For Love: vnsst. Leomat,
vnsst
Agus
Bulvnsst vnsst vnsst
vnsst vnsst vnsst
Sub dato em. 4.
Augusti 1605.

Messenger Mail (Kurierpost)

De. H. E. Welborne welbördige Herrar
och gods män som den höglofliga
Kungens råden i Stockholm behåller,
minn gudsrike barmhertighet, och syn,
nackliga godbarnhet, darsadom
willigan og renuligan till
fornulor.

Præsenterat i sig till
Den 7. Octob. 1635.

Above: to the Court Martial in Stockholm, October 7, 1635

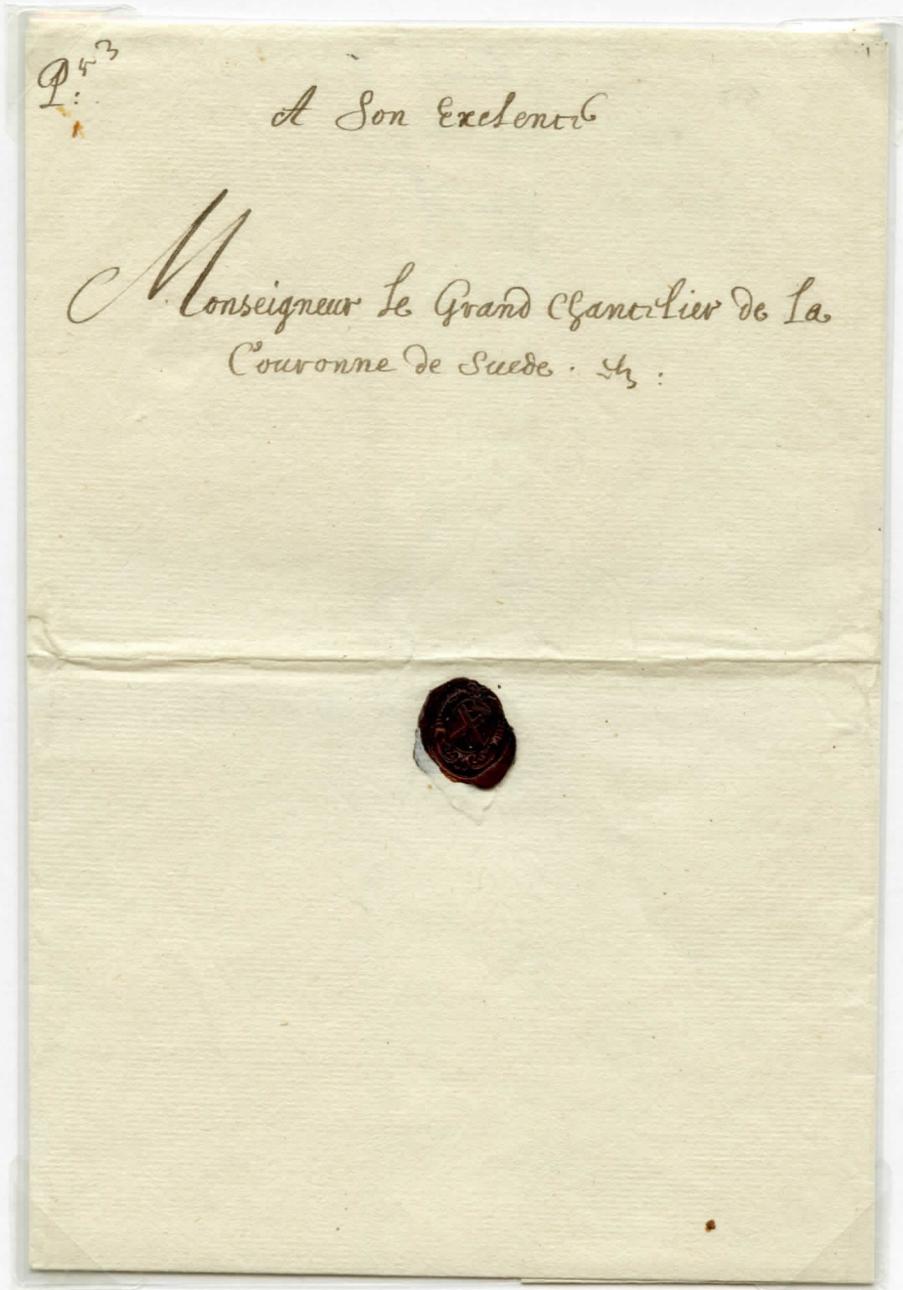
Below: to the War Council in Stockholm, June 5, 1635

Denne Kong. Majest. besed under Vindigaste och Livs.
och Gudsrike gudsrike barmhertighet och godbarnhet
Min besed og dice forordnades Kungens Råd, Minn
Vindiga og respective gudsrike barmhertighet
Einsamling

Præsenterat Den 5. Junij 1635.
Hans Gouvernören och
Ordnings, Helsing.

Utsändt till Kungens Råd.

Messenger Mail (Kurirpost)



April 25, 1634 to His Excellency the Royal Grand Chancellor Axel Oxenstierna, who was instrumental in establishing the General Post in Sweden in 1636.

Le Blanc
proposé: par Le Roi
le 25^{me} de Juin
An 1634

Messenger Mail (Kurirpost)

Från mig till Ditts Dag
Admiralens Wärd
Domingflys Admiralitet
Collegium i Stockholm
Ladestugan i Söder
Lagårdens Dyrings till
Lagmanshuset i Söder
min gärdstun i Söder
Märgården i Söder
Därmed
i Stockholm

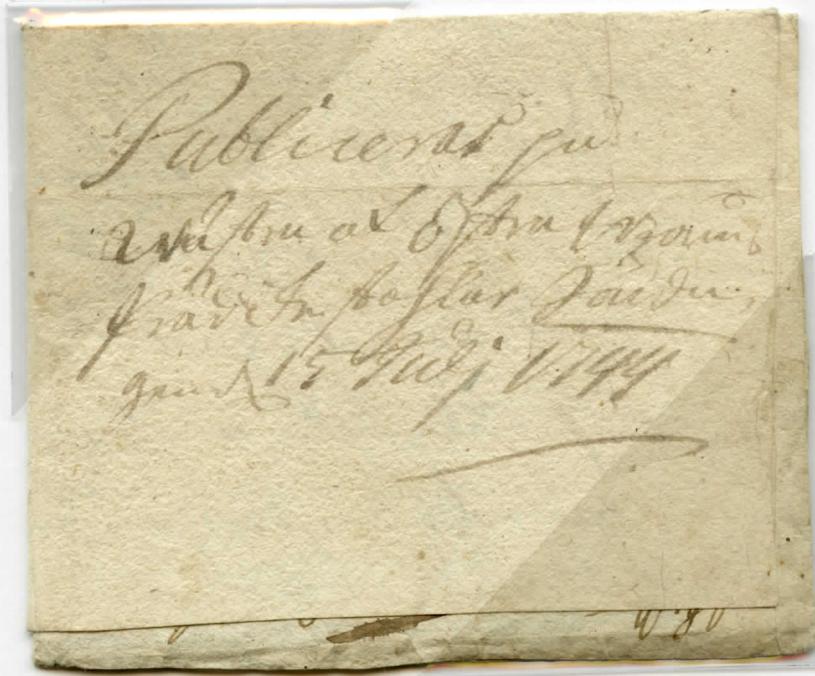
To Stockholm, April 20, 1649

To the Admiralty in Stockholm with Citto (Urgent) markings, 1664

Gott hys loffligast
liga Admiraltets
Collegio i Stockholm
Därmed
i Stockholm
Citto Citto

Crown Post or Mail (Kronopost)

The Crown Post consisted of communications sent by royalty or government officials and dates from the 17th century until 1873 when official correspondence was taken over by the General Post Office. The mail was identified with hand drawn crowns (usually three) and later with handstamp crown markings. The manuscript notation evolved into three or more curves or loops with a line drawn through, sometimes referred to as a coil or meander.



Above: complete crown post letter internally dated July 3, 1744

Below: 18th century crown post penalty letter to Kjälleberg with notation that it "shall arrive the 25th of October with 5 Riksdaler fine."





Letter from Kristianstad with crown mark of that city, August 29, 1744



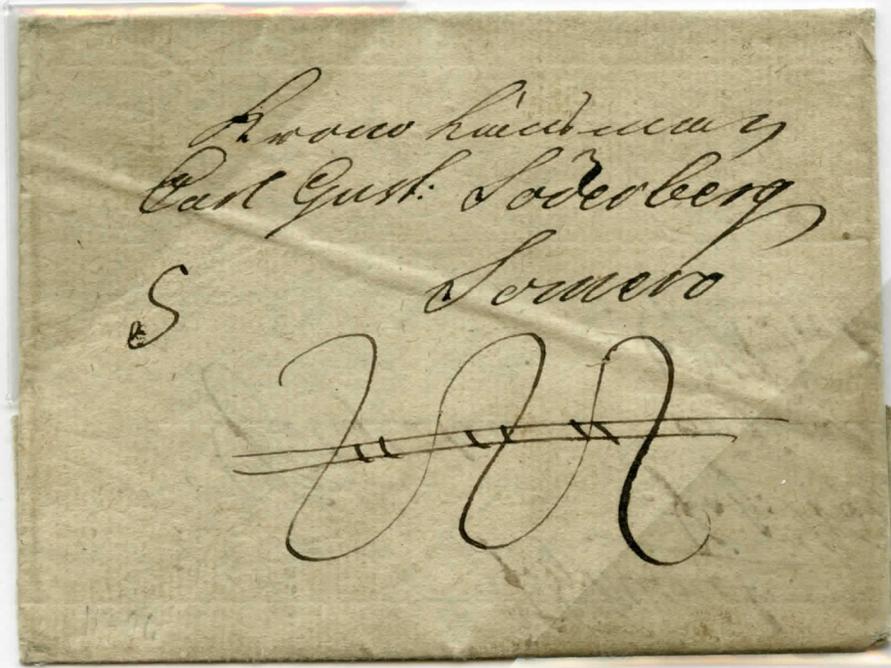
Crown marking on letter internally dated April 28, 1777



18th century marking



Crown marking on letter to Ununge Church in 1793



Manuscript crowns sent from Lund, May 24, 1796.
The letter "S" indicates to the carrier in which direction to bear the letter.



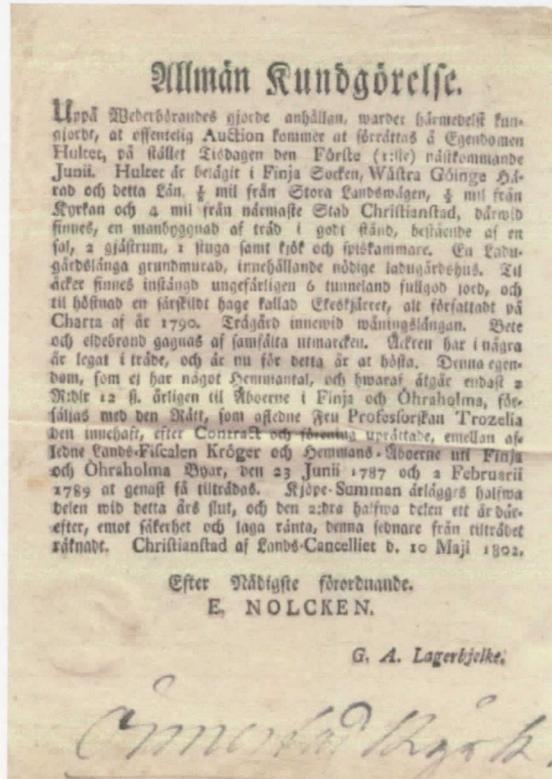
Handstamp crowns on letter from Södra Röjdåsen,
January 23, 1807 with manuscript "Em bref" (official mail)



Feathers were used on mail to denote emergency (express) delivery, in this case in addition to the manuscript crown marking. Internal notes indicate the letter transited four locations, all on the same date, December 23, 1808. 1) Brannestad, Östergötland; 2) Kumla, Örebro County; Thorlunda, Östergötland; 4) Tornby, Östergötland.



Crown Post mailing of proclamation dated May 23, 1802 with pair of crown markings. The notice as shown in the reduced first page announces the public auction of a property near Christianstad, including the main building and several outlying structures.



Allmän Kundgörelse.

Uppå Medberedandes gjorda anhållan, warden härmed till följande, at offentlig Auktion kommer at fördrättas i Egenhanden Holter, på söndagen den Förste (1:ste) nästkommande Junii. Holter är belägt i Finja Socken, Wästra Göttinge Härad och detta Län, ½ mil från Stora Landsöngen, ¼ mil från Korkon och ¼ mil från närmaste Stad Christianstad, därwid finnes, en mansbyggnad af trä och gott skänd, bestående af en sal, 2 gjästtrum, 1 kygga samt kök och tvättställe. En Ladugårdslänga grundmurad, innehållande nödige ladugårdshus. Till äcker finnes inklämd ungefärligen 6 tunnland fullgod jord, och till höfstad en särskild hage kallad Ekeshäret, all förelämnad på Charta af år 1790. Trädgård innewid wänningelängan. Vete och eldebörd gagnas af samfatta utmarken. Åckren har i några år legat i träde, och är nu för detta år at böda. Denna egendom, som ej har något Hemmantal, och hwaras åtgär endast 2 Rikdr 12 fl. årligen till Åboerne i Finja och Öhrholmna, förelämnas med den Åditt, som afledne fru Professorinnan Trozella den innehaf, efter Contract och förelämnas upprättade, emellan af ledne Lands-Fiscalen Kröger och Hemmans-Åboerne ut Finja och Öhrholmna Boar, den 23 Junii 1787 och 2 Februarii 1789 at genast så tilldröas. Köpe-Summan delägges halfta delen wid detta års slut, och den 2:des halfta delen ett år därefter, emot säkerhet och laga ränta, denna förmare från tilldröet räknadt. Christianstad af Lunds-Cancelleret d. 10 Maji 1802.

Efter Nästgiste förordnande.
E. NOLCKEN.

G. A. Lagerhjelm.

Christianstad

Crown Post

Handstamp Markings

→

Crown Post letter with initial W (Wijkman), sent from Ankarlöf to Nyboda, August 21, 1813. With manuscript note, "Högst angeläget och måste dag och natt utan fortskaffas" (Highest urgency and must be conveyed day and night without delay).



←

Crown Post marking, sometimes described as a "cat's paw," on royal proclamation concerning importing supplies by merchants and ship handlers, May 8, 1828.



Tiu Krono Fogde
 Contoret
~~Stohlan~~ Stohlan
 Post af krono Brevbarere vid Haga
 ansvaret från Sköfde den 11 April 1831.
 Sk. 7. eftermiddag - antyder. Boström

Use of manuscript serpentine coils on 1) letter from Sköfde to Stohlan, April 11, 1831, and 2) letter from Åsen to Mölnbacka December 9, 1837, both with feather fragments in wax seals on reverse.

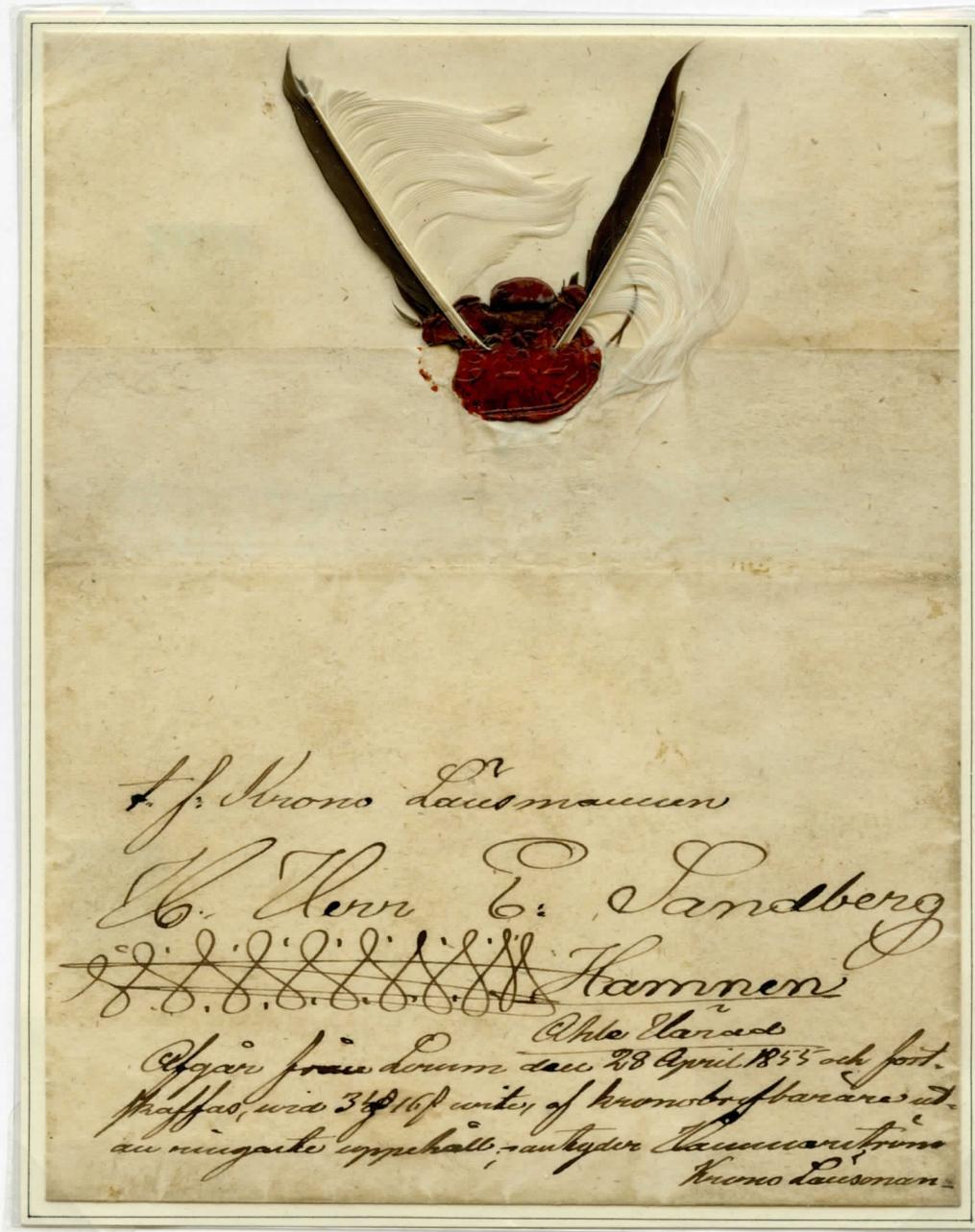
Närmedemannen
 Anders Eriksson
~~Mölnbacka~~
 af 9. des 9. December 1837
 Sk. 7. eftermiddag från Åsen
Åreberg

Crown Post

Handstamp Markings

Stampless folded letters that have one corner turned to the back indicated the mail was that of a commoner rather than royalty or the clergy. Both covers bear crown marks. The top one was sent to Räfvalofsta January 27, 1834. The bottom cover was sent December 23, 1841 to a gamekeeper in Landskrog. Its lower right corner was originally folded back as shown by the crease. Manuscript "Angeläget" or "Urgent."





Crown Post feather letter with elaborate manuscript serpentine coil, sent to Lerum, April 28, 1855. Both black and white feathers were used to indicate the highest urgency with transit both day and night.

Military Mail

Crown Post

Military letter sent from Kråk February 8, 1762 to regimental clerk in Bredared, discussing noncommissioned officer who was in debt. Crown marks contain the letters F.B. for Fri Brev (free letter).

Lievred och Högaltare Gern
Regiments Secretair

Kråk den 8 Febr.

Louff. Månst
Ero kinnare Regiments
Secretair, vidsee och
Högaltare Gern
Adolph Sandberg
Bredared
i upp hvar ad.



gintensat, att vara ofvordens
upplikt af K. Regent. Hård
gifne innehållning 2 15 sept
1761 från Sösten d. 16 1/2 / 1762

Konge Maj^{ts}
 Högst Betrodde Man Vice Ammiral
 Vice Landshöfdinge och Öfver
 Commendant samt Riddare
 af Konge Svärds Orden
 Högvalborne Baronn Herr
 Jacob Pederström
 Amb^t Göteborg

Two military letters addressed to Göteborg, c. 1780

Konge Maj^{ts}
 Högst Betrodde Man General
 Lieutenant Landshöfdinge, Öfver
 Commendant och Commendeur
 af Konge Svärds Orden
 Högvalborne Baronn Herr
 Carl Rud: DuRietz
 Amb^t Göteborg

Military feather letter with serpentine coil, dated March 20, 1828, and endorsed, "Dispatch from Ferglanda 20 March at 6 o'clock and convey by special military post to the Commander for No. 16 West Götha Dahls Regiment, Forstena" in West Tunhem.

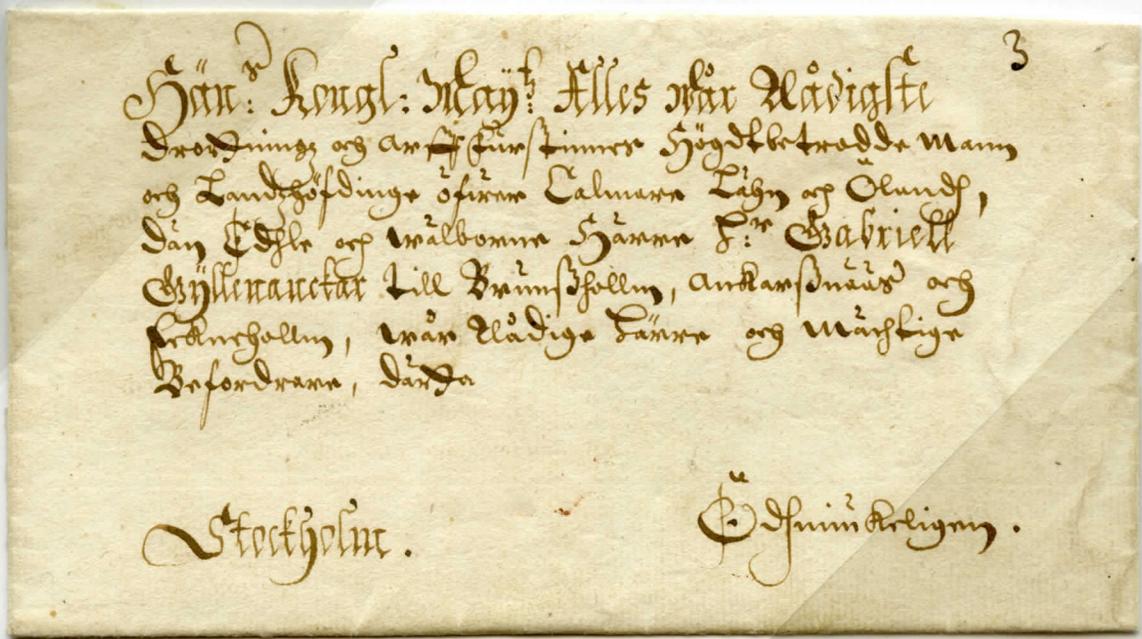
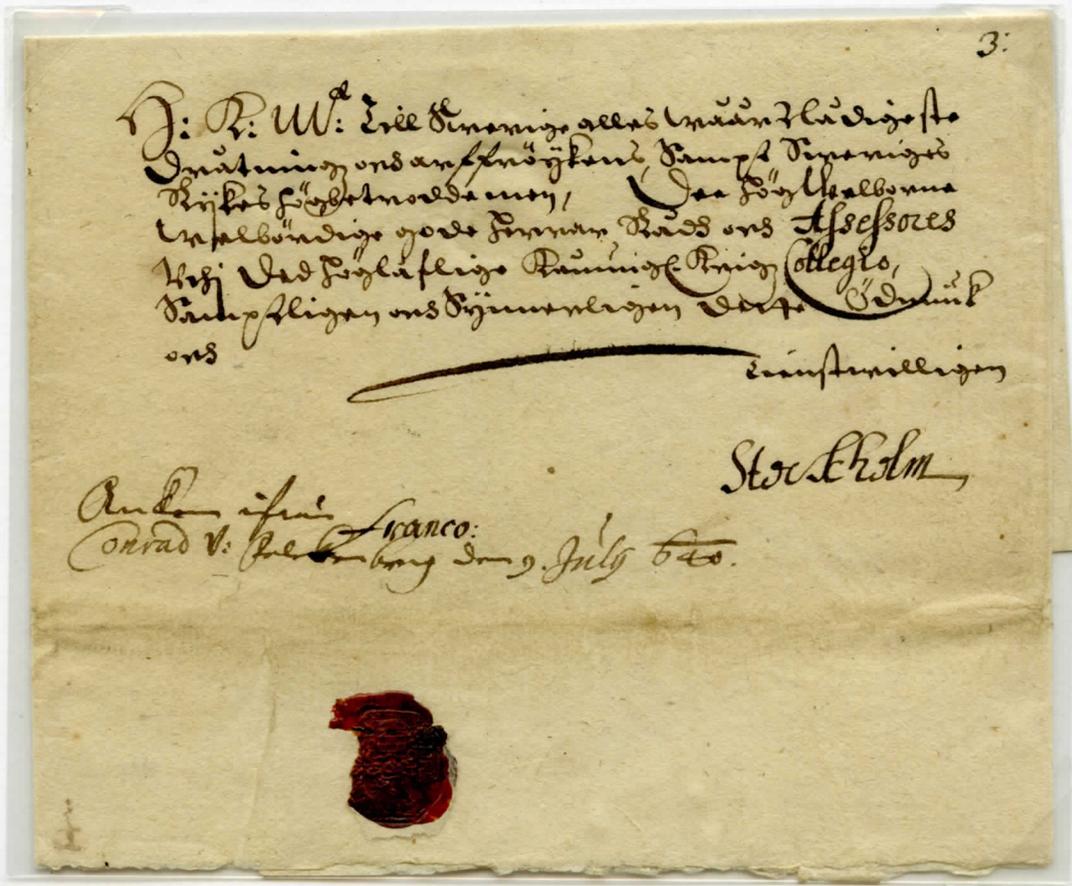


The General Mail

Sweden's General Mail was established in 1636 by Chancellor of the Realm Axel Oxenstierna during the reign of Queen Christina. The remaining sections of the exhibit are groupings by subject, generally in chronological order within each group. The general mails are usually recognized with handwritten charter numbers in the upper right corner of the cover. These numbers represent listings of the letters in the records of the postal service.



Letter to military college in Stockholm, July 9, 1640, from Conrad v. Falkenberg (1591-1654) while he was Governor of Kalmar. Early use of manuscript "Franco" (Paid).



To Governor Gabriell Gyllenanczar dated September 19, 1650.

The General Mail



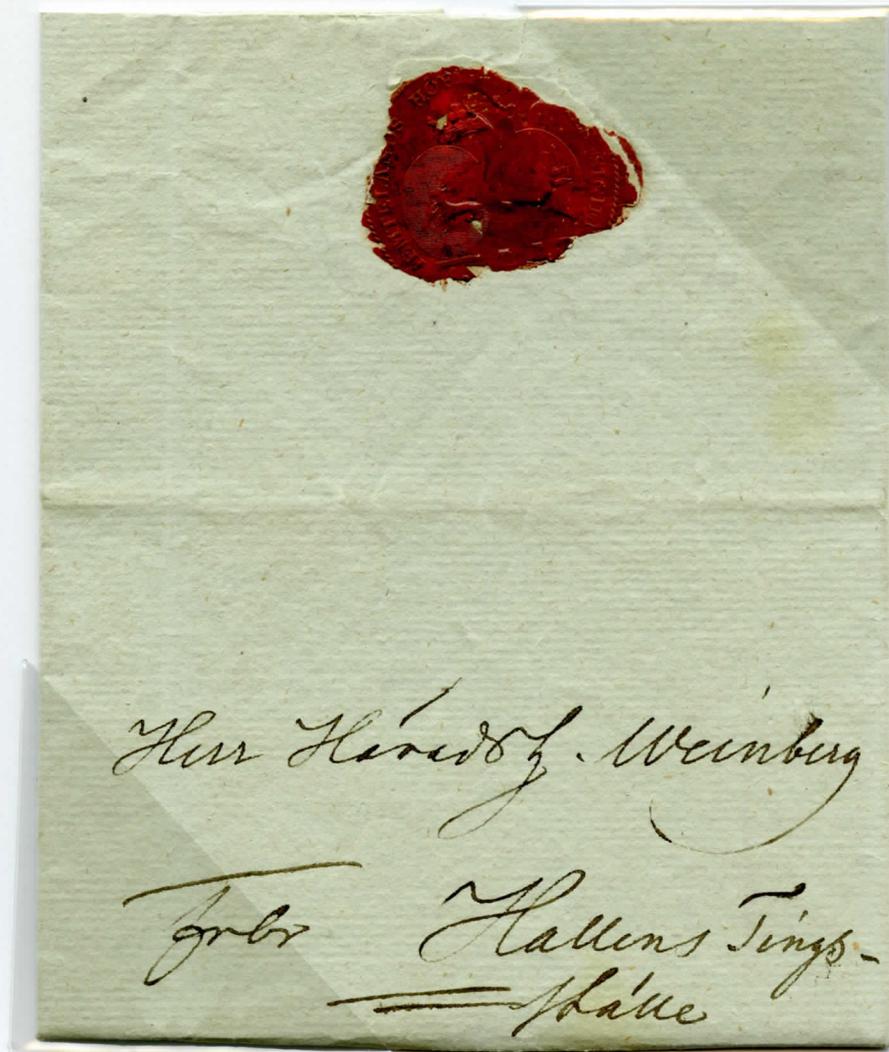
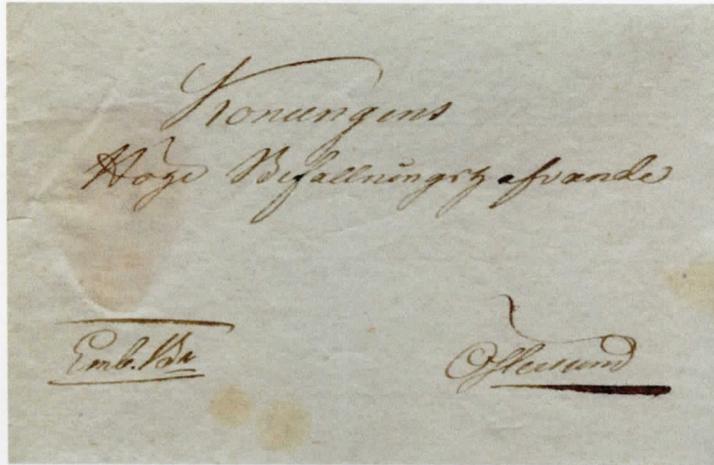
Complete letter from Malmö
to Engelholm, March 8, 1710.



Complete letter from Westerås
to Skara, October 13, 1741.



General Mail cover used twice. First it was sent from Oviken to Östersund March 19, 1832. It was then turned inside out and used to send a message to a magistrate in Hallen.



The B & F Crown Markings

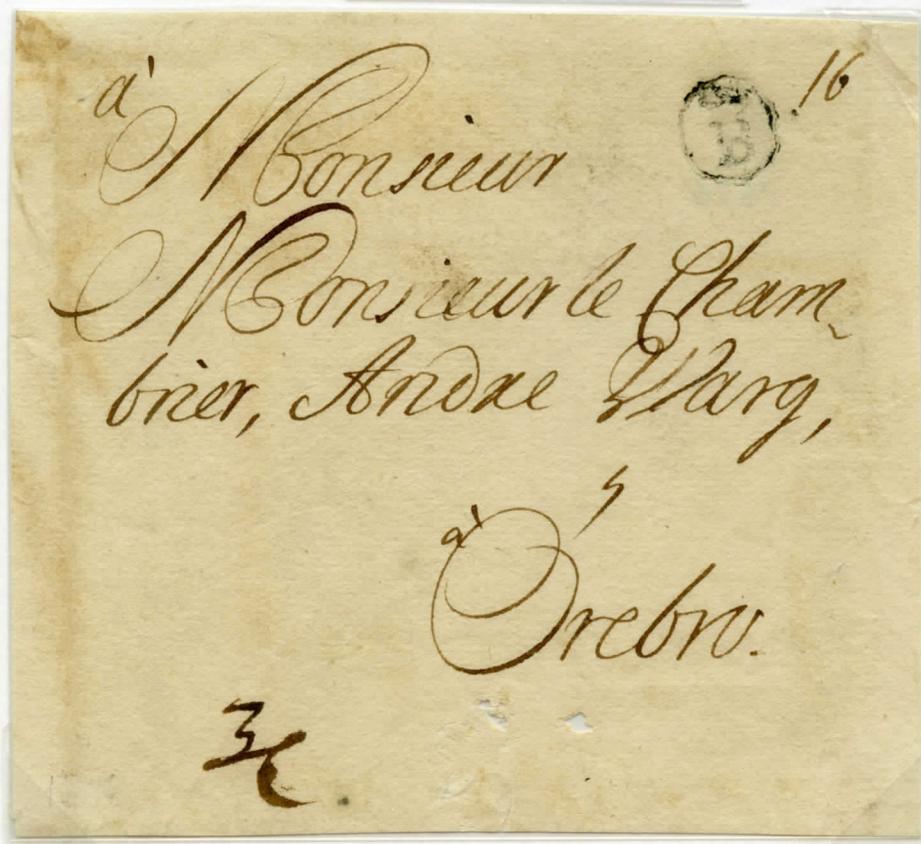
Crown B

From 1686 until 1708 the General Mail used two basic types of handstamps, consisting of a crown over a capital B (Betald or paid) or over a capital F (Fribrev or free letter). Within the types are subtypes that differ in shape (oval vs round) and in the dimensions.



1686-1691

Stockholm to Rotterdam, March 19, 1687. Paid to Hamburg, with red due markings to Amsterdam and then Rotterdam.



1694-1696

1696 cover front to Örebro



1696-1708

Two covers to Carlsrona, the bottom one dated internally 1707

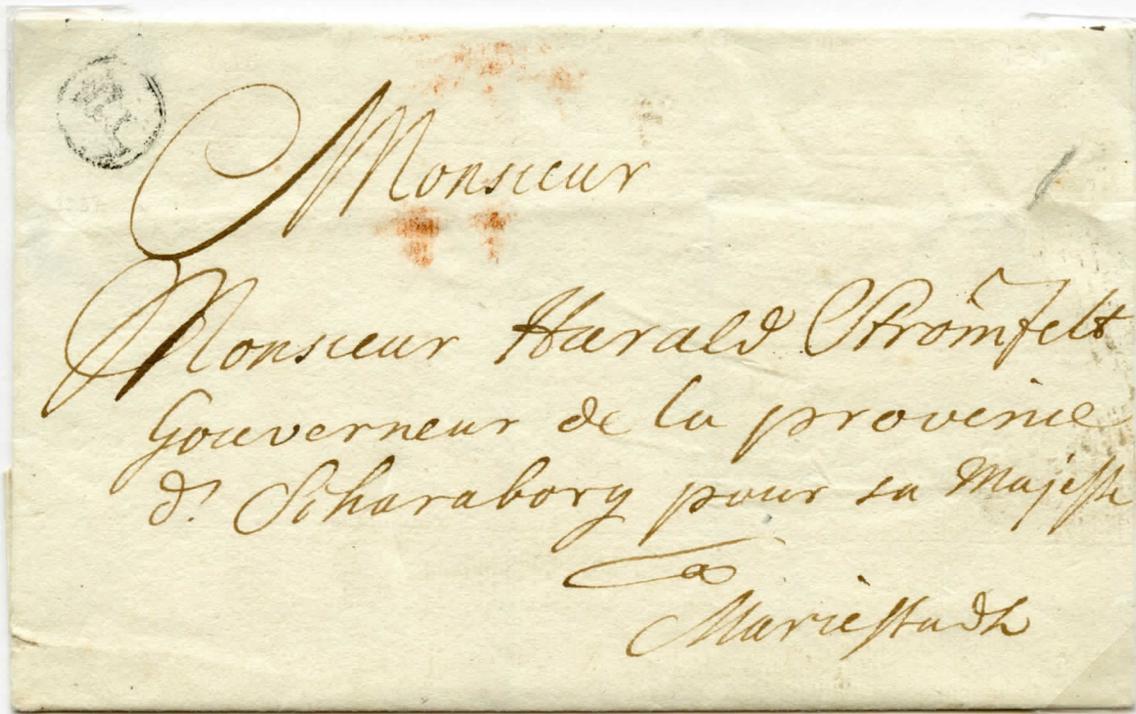
35
Monsieur
Monsieur Jean Guillardie
Leyonfelt, Maitre d'Ar.
Elyerie Kavale
Carlsrona.

21
Cill Post Jogg Loug
Ambiralibets Collegium
a Carlsrona



January-November 1686

Crown F (Fribrev or free letter) to Mariestad, 1686 above, and 1697 below (the latter to Governor Harald Strömfelt who was governor 1695-1707).



1696-1702

Straight Line Cancels

Stockholm Ribbon

Sweden introduced place name cancellations in 1708 in Stockholm. The name appears in a sort of banner with curved ends known as a "ribbon." A variety of the ribbon markings were used from 1708 to 1751. The exhibited items have the year of use where documented, followed by the known range of use.



1711 to Uppsala (1708-1718)



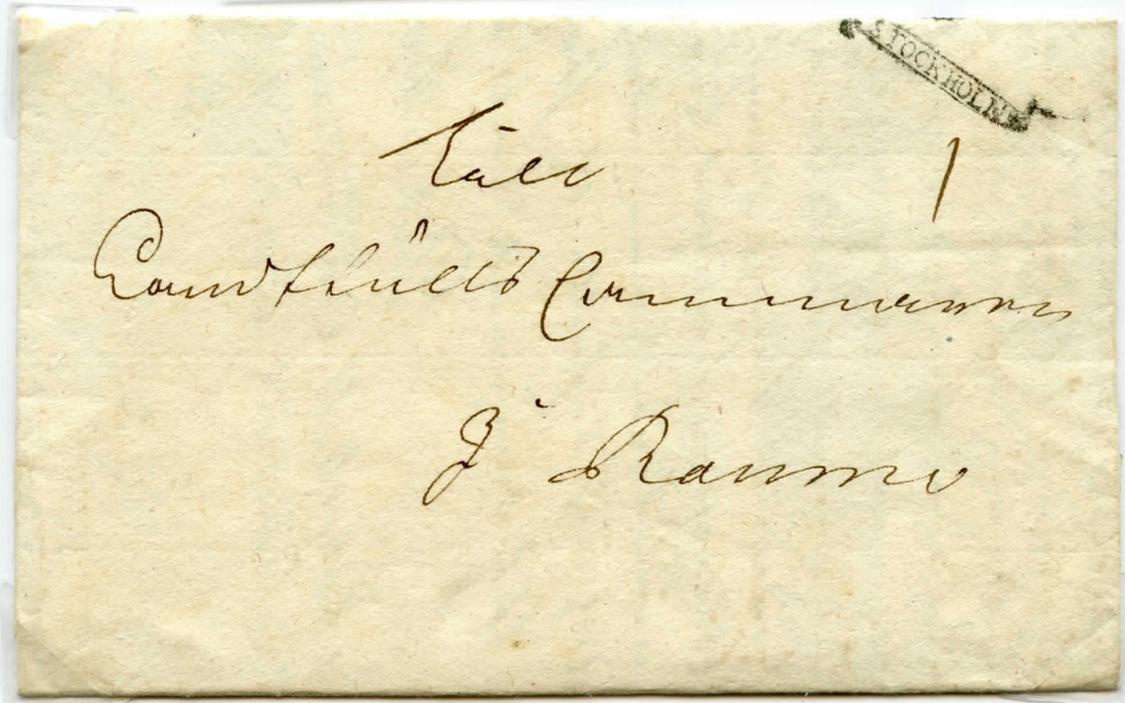
April 12, 1730 to Tavastehus, Finland (1722-1730)

Straight Line Cancels

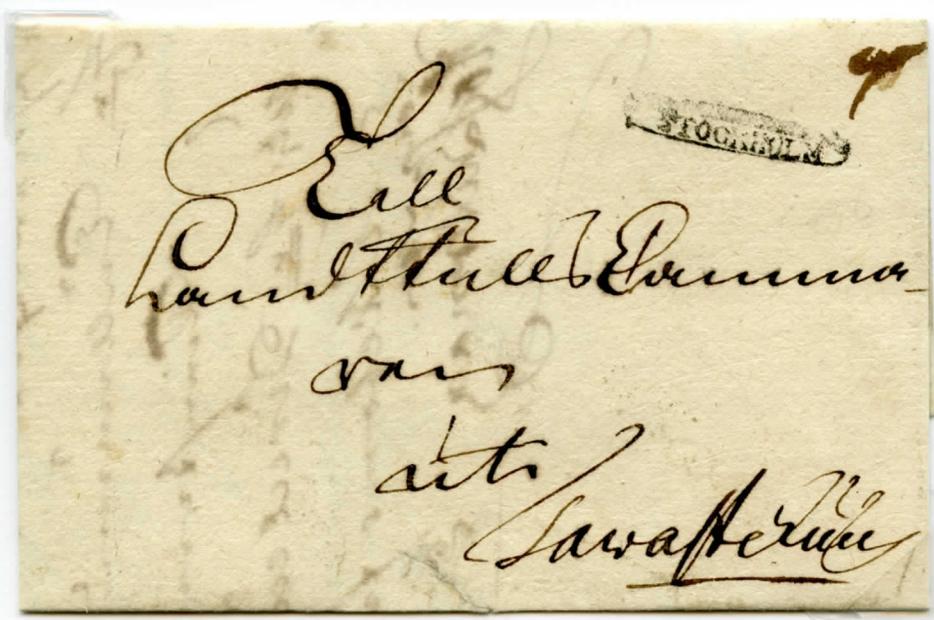
Stockholm Ribbon



←
 January 20, 1737
 (1731-1742)



→
 January 5, 1736
 (1731-1741)



←
 September 15, 1736 to
 Tavastehus, Finland
 (1733-1737)

Straight Line Cancels

Stockholm Ribbon

3
 Hice
 Kullerby
 Sviltved
 Johan Wallman
 J. Tavastehus

←
 1742 to Tavastehus
 Finland (1731-1742)

ci
 Kullerby
 J. Tavastehus

→
 September 22, 1742 to
 Tavastehus (1742-1746)

999
 à Madame
 Madame la
 Baronne, vicaria
 d'Adelstein
 e upfala.

←
 November 2, 1747
 (1747-1751)

Straight Line Cancels

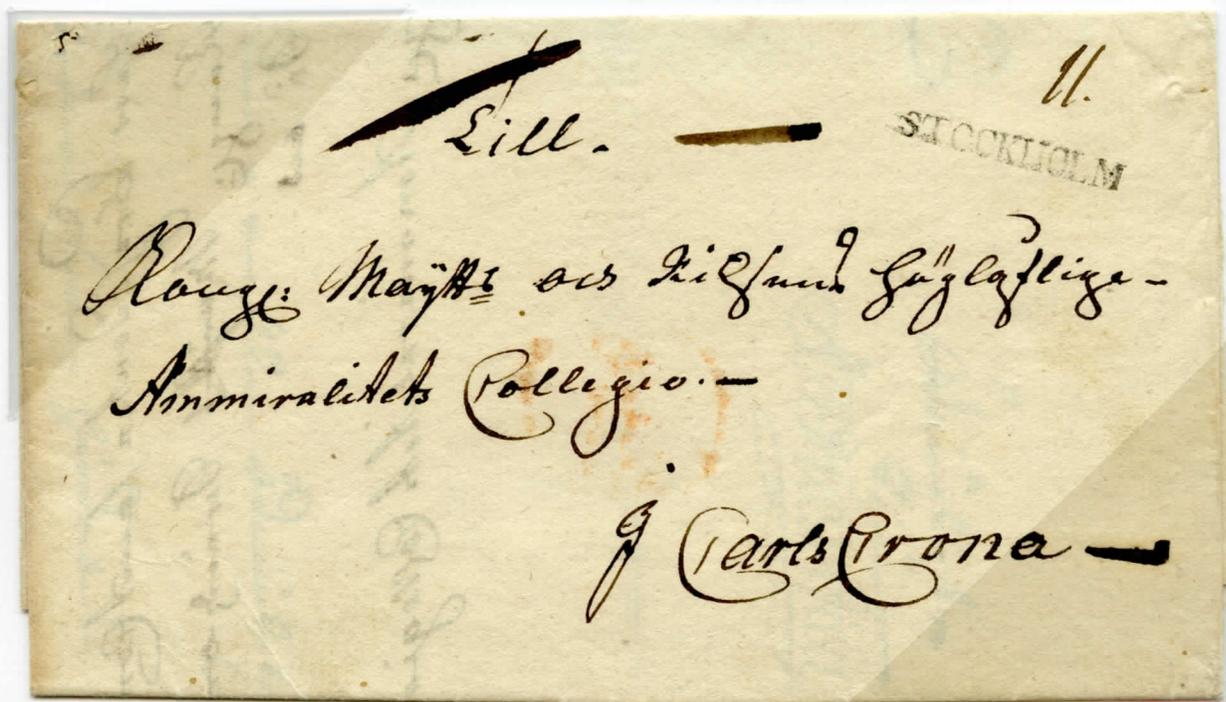
Stockholm

The cities and towns of Sweden received the new straight line cancels in capital letters beginning in 1819 (see following section). The exception was Stockholm, which began using this type of undated cancel in the 1750s. Over the years a number of varieties of the Stockholm canceller were used. Dates of use are shown in parentheses.



Above, July 15, 1755 to Tavastehus, Finland (1752-1771)

Below, letter dated August 17, 1756 (1752-1770)



11/43
STOCKHOLM

Pastorens
 Årsvörddige och Höglärde
 Herr Magister Bengt
 Neander
 Norrköping

Above, (1770-1775)
 Below, (1771-1780)

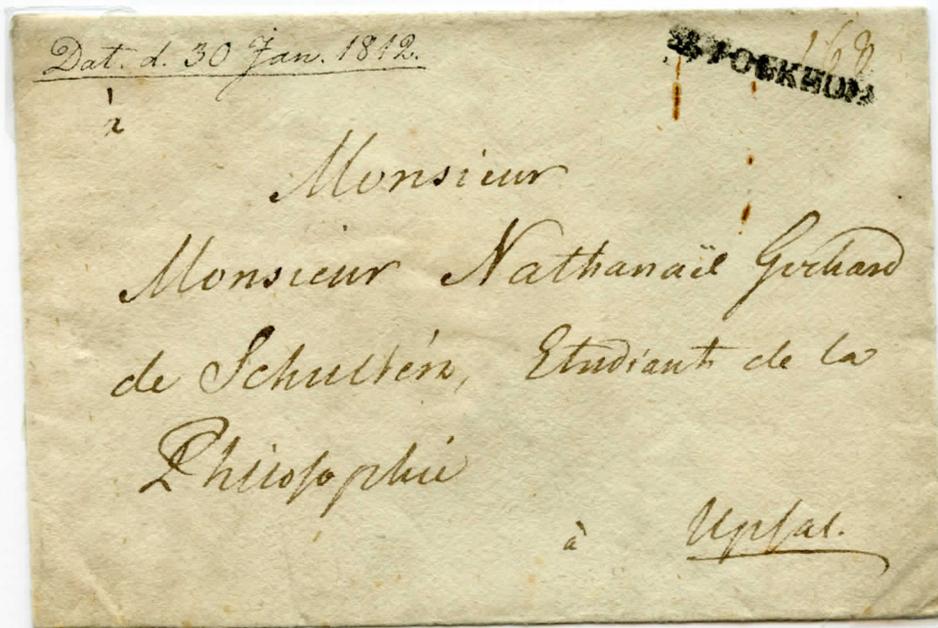
10
STOCKHOLM

Pongst Månst
 Stora Gården
 Konjely.

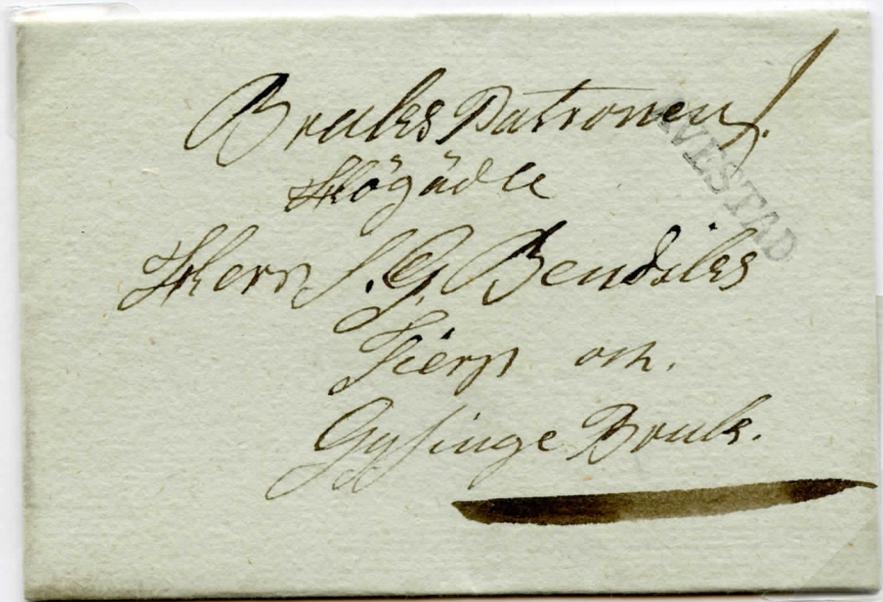


Above, November 10, 1775 (1775-1787)

Below, January 30, 1812 (1779-1819)



In 1819 Sweden introduced stronger undated straight line cancellations with the town name in capital letters. They were used until 1830 when they were replaced with the Arc cancellation. Folded letters or covers that contain actual dates are noted.



The cancel was spelled AVESTAD up until 1827 and then changed the following year to AVESTA. Cover below is dated June 27, 1830 (late use).

