

The First Swedish Antarctic Expedition 1901-1904

Purpose:

Postally document the full extent of the highly important and historical 1901-04 Swedish Antarctic Expedition throughout its preparation, departure, journey south, research base establishment, disaster and rescue to see how remarkable this entire endeavor was.

Background:

Based on the agreement of four countries (Germany, Sweden, England and Scotland) at the VII. International Geographic Congress in Berlin to send expeditions to unexplored parts of Antarctica. The Swedish expedition was funded and led by a geologist **Dr. Otto Nordenskjöld** (he was a participant in that congress) who would explore the Antarctic Peninsula and the Weddell Sea.

Scope:

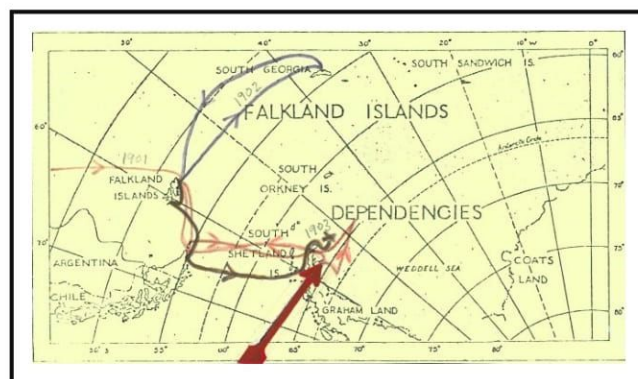
The exhibit covers the breadth of the expedition history from its departure to its voyage south through the Falklands to Antarctica, its ship's surveying, land party and base establishment, ship loss and marooning of several personnel segments. This was followed by several rescue missions and eventual deliverance to Buenos Aires and their return home aboard a commercial steamer after an expedition that also produced important scientific results.

Exceptional items of the exhibit:

The exhibit contains a large part of the existing rarities and some of these items are exceptional because they come from the "Heroic Age" period. From this expedition only **25 official postcards** with the *S.Y. Antarctic* and other **20 different postcards made in the photo lab** on this ship have been known. About 35 covers or cards to the expedition are preserved. *Some of these and other noteworthy items are highlighted with a brown-colored explanation.*

Content of Exhibit:

1. Preparation for the Expedition
2. Departure
3. Voyage South
4. Base Establishment on Snow Hill Island
5. The Expedition Divided
6. Disaster (ship sank)
7. Rescue Expeditions
8. Stay in Buenos Aires
9. Return Home
10. Stay at Home - Letters from and to Participants after their Return Home



Map of the three routes of S.Y. ANTARCTIC

The first route led from the Falkland Islands to their base on Snow Hill Island in 1902 and back including a visit to South Georgia (red and blue colour). The second voyage was heading to South Georgia and the last one to Antarctica until the sinking of *S.Y. Antarctic* in February 1903 (brown colour).

Personal research and literature:

The focus of my research is mainly to identify and confirm the date of mail sent from the individual expeditions listed on the correspondence and also to check whether the postal value corresponds to a given period and place. The information is derived mainly from foreign literature, magazines with polar themes issued by polar clubs in England, the USA, the Czech Republic, etc. Another equally important is cooperation with foreign collectors such as H. Vogel, S. Heijtz, S. Kahn, S. Nicklas, F. Goldberg († 2017) etc.

From the books I have used I would like to mention: *Antarctica-Or, Two years amongst the ice of the South Pole*-Otto Nordenskjöld, *Bílá pevnina (Hledání posledního světadílu)*-Stanislav Bártil, *A philatelic exposé of the first Swedish Antarctic Expedition led by Dr. Otto Nordenskjöld 1901-1903*-Fred Goldberg, *THE SWEDISH SOUTH POLAR EXPEDITION 1901-1903*-Stefan Heijtz, *Postcards of Antarctic Expeditions a catalogue: 1898-1958*-Margery Wharton, *Ahead of the pack*-Hal Vogel and Serge Kahn.

(NOTE: Scanned and photocopied ancillary images [maps, portraits, paintings, etc.] are from publicly sharable sources and are only for illustrative or decorative purposes).

Synopsis Jiri Kraus - Class 5: Open Philately
Specialized European Stamp Exhibition and Polar Salon LIBEREC 2022
The first Swedish Antarctic Expedition 1901-1904

This expedition was agreed by four countries (Germany, Sweden, England and Scotland) at the VII International Geographical Congress in Berlin. These countries were to send expeditions to unexplored parts of Antarctica. The Swedish expedition was financed and led by the geologist *Dr. Otto Nordenskjöld* (who was a participant in this congress) to explore the Antarctic Peninsula and the Weddell Sea.

This exhibit in its entirety contains postal and non-postal documents collected by the exhibitor over many years of his active work. Its entire scope shows the very important time and milestones of the historic Swedish Antarctic Expedition of 1901-04. It describes the preparation and the expedition to Antarctica under the leadership of *O. Nordenskjöld*.

This exhibit covers the breadth of the expedition's history from its departure to its voyage south through the Falklands to Antarctica, the exploration of the ship, the establishment of the land party and base, the loss of the ships, and the abandonment of several segments of the staff. This was followed by several rescue missions and eventual rescue to Buenos Aires and their return home aboard a commercial steamer after an expedition that also produced important scientific results. At the same time, it documents how remarkable this entire effort was.

Exceptional items of the exhibit

The exhibit contains a large number of existing rarities and some of them are exceptional in that they date from the "heroic age". Only 25 official postcards of the *S.Y. Antarctica* are known from this expedition and another 20 miscellaneous postcards produced in the photo lab on the ship. About 35 covers or cards for the expedition have survived. Some of these and other notable items are *highlighted in brown*.

The following table showing how many letters or postcards survive from each stop:

The stops from which the expedition may have sent mail and the amount of surviving correspondence.			
16.10. 1901 departure Gotenburg	6	5.-23.3. 1902 Ushuaia	1
17.-19.10. 1901 Sandefjord	13	26.3.-11.4. 1902 Port Stanley	11
26.-27.10. 1901 Falmouth	6	11.7.-9.9. 1902 Port Stanley	19
14.11. 1901 St. Vincent C. V.I.	6	15.9.-5.11. 1902 Harberton + Ushuaia	18
16.-21.12. 1901 Buenos Aires	13	2.-10.12. 1903 Buenos Aires	8
31.12. 1901-1.1. 1902 Port Stanley	9	10.12. 1903 - 6.1.1904 S.S. Tijuca	3
6.1. 1902 Staten Island	5	Mail with the official expedition cachet	44

This exhibit shows 54 items from or to 11 different expedition members, of which 16 have the expedition cachet, *S.Y. ANTARCTIC SWEDISH EXPEDITION*. One of the part are four items from the Swedish Relief Expedition - one is the official expedition cover and three were sent with the expedition cachet together with the only known incoming postcard to the *S.Y. Frithiof*. A lot of mails are from the Argentine relief expedition from 7 different expedition members. An integral part of the exhibit is the French Expedition, which includes the only known written document surviving from aboard *Le Français* when Larsen and Nordenskjöld dined with Charcot. In addition there are many covers, postcards, unused and used and few photos related to the expedition. This exhibit shows postal items from a lot of stops where they could leave or receive mail during the course of the expedition. There are chronological and schedules of the movements of the Swedish South Polar Expedition 1901-1904 on the third page of this Synopsis.

I would also like to point out that part of the exhibit is supplemented with non-philatelic material. These include menus and invitations to banquets after the expedition's return to Buenos Aires, photographs, postcards, medals and similar artefacts. I think that as a whole it will bring the visitor's eye more closely to this early period of polar expeditions. Any of this material is difficult to find because there are so few pieces left in the world.

Personal research

The focus of my research is mainly to identify and confirm the date of mail sent from the individual expedition's stops (mainly from the Antarctic region) listed on the correspondence and also to check whether the postal value corresponds to a given period and place. The information is derived mainly from foreign literature, magazines with polar themes issued by polar clubs in England, the USA, the Czech Republic, etc. Of course the cooperation with foreign collectors from all the world is equally important.

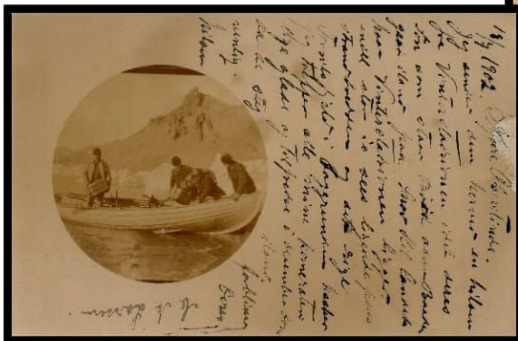
My work also includes articles in philatelic magazines about these expeditions. In them I try to pass on my experiences to other collectors in the context of describing the expeditions' journeys and the different rates for mail sent from various stops (on the way to and from Antarctica) by crew members.

Example of two interesting postcards from this expedition:

1902 (12 July) Cover from Stanley, to Sweden - a very early South Georgia related Postcard

The postcard sent by *CA Larsen*, when he arrived at Stanley on 11 July with *SY Antarctic* ex Antarctica, via South Georgia. He wrote to Anna, mother of *Dr Otto Nordenskjöld*, Expedition Leader, who was then overwintering at their Snow Hill Antarctic base. The card with *SY Antarctic* oval marking; cancelled 20 July 1902, and four Stockholm arrival strikes, 22-23.8.02

The photo-card, made on board, showing *Dr. Otto Nordenskjöld* unloading the lifeboat on the beach on 12 February.



Text on postcard: "18/7 1902 Dear Mrs Colonel, I herewith send you greetings from the winter base as your son, who is bent over the boat, goes ashore on Snow Hill Island. Here at the winter base there is some ice along the beach and rich fossil mountains in the background. I hope to see my friends as happy and satisfied in December as when they went ashore. Sincerely *CA Larsen*"

This is only known item addressed to *S.Y. Frithiof*



The front of postcard was sent to *S.Y. Frithiof* 10.9.1903, and was sent from Stockholm to *C. Nigel*, the South Polar ship *S.Y. Frithiof*, Funchal, Madeira, redirected to Buenos Aires.

The postcard has two post stamps of King Oscar II Söre (rate 10öre was international rate), postmarked by STOCKHOLM C AFG 10.9.03 and was sent to Madeira and redirected to Argentina, backstamped LISBOA 15.9.03 and BUENOS AIRES OC.?.1903.

Movements

Schedule the movements of the the Swedish South Polar Expedition 1901 – 1903

16.10. 1901 departs Gotenburg
 17. – 19.10. 1901 Sandefjord
 23..10. 1901 Dover
 26. - 27.10. 1901 Falmouth
 14.11. 1901 St. Vincent C. V.I.
 23.11. 1901 passing the equator
 16.–21.12. 1901 Buenos Aires
 31.12. 1901 – 1.1. 1902 Port Stanley

 6.1. 1902 Staten Island
 11.1. 1902 Nelson Island S. S.
 15.1. 1902 passing Hope Bay
 15.1. 1902 Paulet Island
 17.1. 1902 Seymour Island
 21.1. 1902 King King Oscar's birthday celebration
 12.–14.2. 1902 Snow Hill Island

Nordenskjöld party leaves the expedition

21.2. 1902 Snow Hill Island
 15.3. 1902 Ushuaia
 28.3. – 11.4. 1902 Port Stanley
 22.4. – 15.6. 1902 South Georgia
 4.7. – 6.9. 1902 Port Stanley
 15.9. 1902 Harberton, T. d. F.
 16. – 29.9. 1902 Ushuaia
 30.9. – 4.11. 1902 Nordenskjöld's first
 Sledge trip
 30.9. – 3.11. 1902 Harberton
 4. – 5.11. 1902 Ushuaia
 5. – 7.11. 1902 Tekenika Bay
 23.11. 1902 Deception Island
 29.12. 1902 Hope Bay, Andersson's
 party leaves expedition

10.1. 1903 Antarctic damaged in the ice – pack
 13.1. 1903 Andersson's party back at Hope Bay
 12.2. 1903 Antarctic sank
 28.2. 1903 Larsen party reaches Paulet Island
 22.3. 1903 S.Y. Frithjof depatures Stockholm
 29.9 –16.10. 1903 Nordenskjöld's second Sledge trip
 29.9. 1903 Andersson's party leaves Hope Bay
 12.10. 1903 Andersson's party meets Nordenskjöld
 on the ice
 8.10. 1903 Uruguay departed Buenos Aires
 31.10. 1903 Larsen leaved Paulet Island
 8.11. 1903 S.Y. Frithjof departed Buenos Aires
 8.11. 1903 Uruguay arrived at Snow Hill Island
 8.11. 1903 Larsen arrived at Snow Hill Island
 10.11. 1903 Uruguay departed from Snow Hill Island
 11.11. 1903 Uruguay departed from Paulet Island

 11.11. 1903 Uruguay leaved Hope Bay
 18. - 20.11. 1903 Uruguay - Staten Island
 20.11. 1903 S.Y. Frithjof arrived Ushuaia
 22.11. 1903 S.Y. Frithjof departed Ushuaia
 2.12. 1903 Uruguay arrived at Buenos Aires
 2.12 –10.12. 1903 Nordenskjöld's party at Buenos Aires
 4.12. 1903 S.Y. Frithjof arrived at Snow Hill Island
 10.12. 1903 Nordenskjöld's party departed Buenos Aires
 with ship S.S. Tijuca
 10.12. 1903 Montevideo
 29.12. 1903 Madeira Island, Portugal
 2.1. 1904 Vigo, Spain
 6.1. 1904 Hamburk, Germany
 9.1. 1904 Malmö, Sweden
 10.1. 1904 Stockholm, Sweden