

# The Five-Day Stamps

By Patrick Crosby

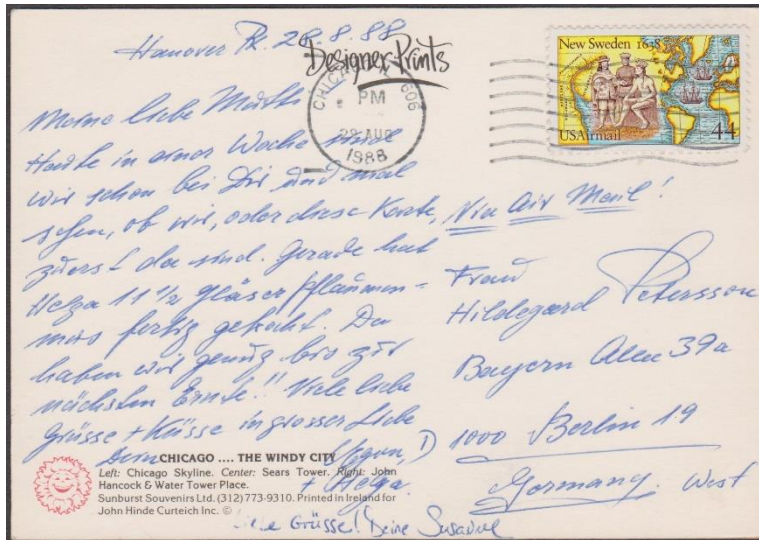
The first of eleven Swedish colonial expeditions (9 successful) to America sailed into the Hudson Bay and anchored on March 29, 1638 near the future Wilmington, DE. Fast forward 350 years, and on March 29, 1988 the United States, Sweden and Finland jointly issued similar stamps as a commemoration of the founding of New Sweden. The stamps were issued at the Universal Postal Union (UPU) international airmail letter rates. For the United States this was 44¢. However, the UPU had a major rate changes scheduled for April 3, 1988, and the U.S. rate was boosted to 45¢. This meant that the New Sweden stamps for all three countries paid the exact rate for only 5 days. The U.S. Postal Service printed only about 23 million of the 44¢ New Sweden stamps, and then printed about 201 million of the 45¢ Samuel P. Longley stamps.

At the time of landing, Sweden was a European military power wanting to secure direct access to tobacco and furs as opposed to dealing with the French or English. Finland was then part Sweden and the first to settle and colonize New Sweden were Swedes, Finns, and a few Dutch and Germans. The colony lasted until 1655 when it was captured by the Dutch and became part of Dutch New Netherland.



The three stamps issued by the United States (Scott C117), Sweden (Scott 1672), and Finland (Scott 768) were based on an 18<sup>th</sup> century illustration in a book on Swedish colonies. The U.S. issue is our typical sized commemorative, and the Swedish and Finnish stamps are longer and show more of the illustration including two settlers and three Indians. The Swedish stamp is part of a booklet pane of six different stamps (all at the soon to be defunct 3.60 krona rate) showing connections between Sweden and the United States.

Most cover collectors prefer their stamps to be on envelopes and would like examples paying the exact due amount. That means March 29 to April 2, 1988 for the New Sweden stamps. However, a new 45¢ U.S. stamp was not issued until May 14, 1988, so a 1¢ stamp added to the New Sweden stamp on envelope in this time period is also desirable.



Then there is the collector like me who like their stamps on cards. I am happy to have the stamp on a 1988 postmarked postcard to Germany even though it overpays the then 36¢ international airmail card rate by 8¢. A bonus for me were the two Chicago skyscrapers on the view side, the Sears Tower and the John Hancock Center.

A 1938 3¢ U.S. stamp (Sc.836) commemorated the 300-year anniversary of the founding with a painting by Stanley M. Arthur titled "Landing of the First Swedish and Finnish Settlers in America." What will 2038, the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary, bring? I can hardly wait to see.



*Patrick Crosby is a member of the Nevada Stamp Study Society and collects U.S. postal cards, especially used, including first days; the 1886 Grant Letter Card (or Sheet); UC16, the first U.S. aerogram; and postal history on business or picture post cards.*