

Finmark postal history up to 1945

Introduction

The exhibit starts at the turn of the 18th century when the boatpost expresse sailed along the Norwegian coast from Trondheim to Finmark and the "Torneå post" ("Den finnmarkske vinterpost") went over land in winter from Copenhagen in Denmark, through Stockholm and Torneå in Sweden, to Finmark in Northern Norway, and ends in summer 1945, at a time when the people of Finmark had been evacuated and land burnt down by the German occupants of World War II. What fascinates the postal historian about Finmark is the great diversity of mail routes and mail conveyance throughout time in this far corner of northern of Europe. Finmark has always been the largest, but at the same time the least populated county of Norway. It is therefore no wonder the scarcity of material available for a postal history exhibit from this part of Europe. In its early period, i. e. from 1789 to 1866, Finmark was even larger than today, also comprising the municipality ("fogderi") of Senjen and Tromsø to the south. At that time the city of Tromsø was the principal town of the county. Therefore, a selection of mail to and from Tromsø is included from that period. After October 1st 1866, Senjen and Tromsø fogderi was segregated into a county of its own, e. g. Troms county.



The postal history material of the exhibit represents an extraction from a larger collection of letters and stamps dispatched from the local post offices of Finmark, supplemented with a few documents sent the opposite way to recipients in Finmark as well. **Main objectives** have been to give information on mail routes, post offices, postal regulations and postage rates; and specifically to provide notes on postmarks and manuscript markings endorsed on the exhibited stamps and letters.

Most emphasis is put on the pre-GPU period, the ship mail services from its start in 1838 throughout the period, and the ultimate period of World War II.

◀ Miniature map (original print) showing the district of Finmark, Northern Norway (arrows) 'e'
- J.U. Müller (1633-1715) Neuausgefertiger Kleiner Atlas. LXXXVII. G. W. Kühnen publ., Frankfurt 1702

Highlights of the exhibit include, but are not limited to, letters and items that are marked in bold. Unique items (one of the type registered) are marked with **red frames**. Expertizing certificates (items labelled 'e' in red) are inserted at the rear of the pages. Type identification numbers of postage stamps and handstamps follow Norgeskatalogen (1980 - 2012) and Norgeskatalogen Postal (2011).

The history of a letter or postmarked stamp is largely a result of studies of prime sources, i. e. postal conventions, original postage rate tables, official circulars etc., brought to light through research on Norway and Finmark postal histories at the Norwegian National Archives and the Post Museum at Lillehammer, Norway. To some extent the outcome of these studies has been published in national philatelic magazines.

PLAN

Sixteen main chapters of Finmark's postal history are presented. Each chapter is subdivided into sections and subsections, and the exhibited items presented in a chronological order. The 16 chapters are :

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| I. The boatpost expresse | IX. Old towns (kjøbstader) |
| II. The Torneå post | X. Class 2 post offices |
| III. The Haparanda post | XI. Class 3 post offices |
| IV. The Norwegian-Swedish mail route from Alten to Karesuando | XII. Class 4 post offices |
| V. The local overland post expresse from west to east | XIII. The regional ship mail services |
| VI. The branch mail services | XIV. The local ship mail services |
| VII. Early postmarks. Preadhesive period | XV. The local air mail services |
| VIII. Early postmarks. Adhesive period | XVI. World War II 1940-1945 |

Essential references for the study of the material are:

Aune, E.J. & Aune, K. 1997. Norske innenrikske porto-takster og gebyrer 1877 - 1995. - Brecke, L.B. 1984. Norske portosatser 1855-1865. - Danielsen, P.E. & Langangen, A. 1991. Norske skipspoststempler. - Eriksen, E. B. 1945. Utdrag av Nordnorske posthistoriske blad. Av båt-posttidens saga. - Gjelsvik, T. 2000. Norway number one. The new handbook. 2nd ed. - Gjelsvik, T. 2005. The Nordland post office at land and at sea. - Melbøe, G. 1988. Dampskipet "Prinds Gustav" og postgangen til Nord-Norge for 150 år siden. - Oslo Filatelistklubb (eds.) 1980-2012. Norgeskatalogen. 33 vols. - Oslo Filatelistklubb (ed.) 2011. Norgeskatalogen Postal. - Snarvold, H. 2003. Carrying Norwegian mail abroad up to UPU. - Sundsbø, I. 1989. Norske brev før 1855. - Tegler, J. E. 1993. Posthistorie og poststempler fra Finnmark fylke. - Tjelmeland, H. 1990. Nordnorsk posthistorie 1665-1850.

and the exhibitor's own publications (28) on Finmark postal history in national philatelic magazines