

Cinderella Time: **A Swedish Local Post**

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The city of Gävle is located on the Baltic Sea north of Stockholm, Sweden's capital. It is an old city dating back to 1446. Thanks to its strategic location, Gävle has always been an important sea port. Today it is Sweden's third-largest port. Exports include wood and industrial goods. Gävle is known as Gevalia in Latin and that is also the name of the company producing what is perhaps Sweden's most famous coffee brand (the Swedes are great coffee drinkers only beaten by the Finns).



According to the 1945 census, the city of Gävle had a population of 46.478 people and, at the time, it was home to numerous factories and other commercial enterprises. The city is also the provincial capital of Gävleborg.

Following the end of World War II, Parliament ordered the Post Office to raise the rate for local letters to 15 öre. The rate hike was not really needed but Parliament apparently wanted the Post Office to be more profitable.

In response to this rate increase, privately operated local mail services were started all over Sweden. A man called R. E. Wenngren registered his Lokalposten, Gävle company on January 8, 1945. After several weeks of preparations, the local post opened for business on March 26, 1945. Mr. Wenngren had hired three postmen who emptied the 15 blue mailboxes every morning at 08.00. After sorting the mail, distribution started soon after 09.00.

Two stamps were issued on March 26, 1945. The 4 and 8-öre stamps depicted the tower of Gävle's city hall. The stamps were sold in booklets containing small panes of ten stamps each. 100.000 complete sets were designed and printed by Johnssons Pappersindustri, a printing company located in Helsingborg in the south of the country. The 4-öre stamp was printed in dark brown and the 8-öre stamp in green. The stamps were perforated 11.

The local post delivered unsealed letters at a cost of just 8 öre which represented a considerable savings when compared with the 15 öre charged by the government postal service. Sealed letters remained a Post Office monopoly. Many local enterprises in Gävle used the local post to send out invoices, advertising circulars and similar printed items.

As the 8-öre stamp was the most needed denomination there was a second printing of 121.000 stamps issued on June 21, 1945. They were printed in blue.

Shown here is a genuine commercial cover delivered by the Gävle Lokalpost. Rather interestingly there was no need for a street address as the addressee was a very well-known local company.



Gävle local stamps in mint condition are inexpensive but more

difficult in used condition. Commercial covers generally sell for \$40-50 but they are not that easy to find.

New legislation forced all the local post companies out of business in 1947. The Gävle Local Post was closed on June 30, 1947.

For more than two years it had served its community well delivering mail at a very favorable cost for all those who made use of its services.