



1962 - 63



To America on a passenger ship

Gothenburg, New York and Oslo, by Johan Kjellander 2020

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In September 1962 when I was 10 years old my father decided to spend a year at Harvard Medical School in Massachusetts USA. He took the family with him and we rented a house in Concord, just outside Boston and I went to school there. I don't remember why he chose to go by boat instead of taking an airplane but the prices at that time were different from now and air tickets were very expensive. A boat ticket might not have costed more, at least in second class. And it sure was a big adventure.

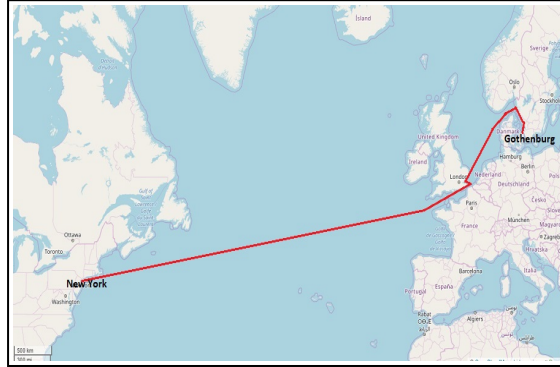


M/S Kungsholm in Hamburg 1970, Photo by Joerg Seyler © [CC BY-SA 4.0](#)

There was only one option at that time if you wanted to go by boat from Sweden to America and that was to take M/S Kungsholm from Gothenburg to New York. She was one of the last ships in regular traffic across the Atlantic, owned by the Swedish America Line (Svenska Amerikalinjen). With a displacement of 21.000 tons she took 800 passengers.



The departure from Gothenburg was a big happening. All passengers were on deck to wave goodbye to friends and relatives on the quay. It would probably take a long time before they would see each other again and many tears fell. I remember that Kungsholm heeled over because all the people standing on the same side. My father filmed the event with his 8 millimeter camera and these pictures are screenshots from that film.



The route from Gothenburg went to Copenhagen in Denmark and then to London in the UK before we set course over the north Atlantic towards New York. Kungsholm did about 20 knots and the entire trip took 10 or 11 days.



A long trip but there were plenty of activities available. Shooting clay pigeons was one.



I remember that we played a lot of table tennis and there was also a swimming pool and a cinema where we spent some time. Outside on deck we played shuffle board. Me to the left and my brother Anders to the right.

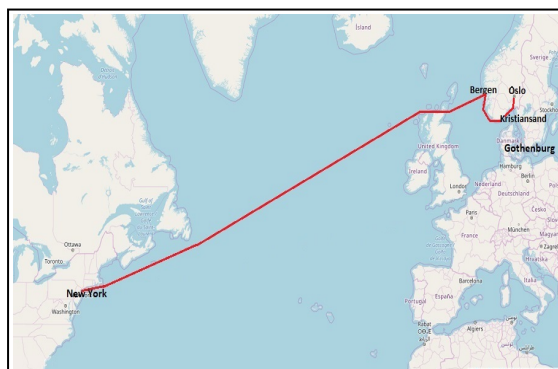


And so we arrived to New York. I remember passing the Statue of Liberty on our way in to the harbour and how people were excited about our arrival.



M/S Oslofjord in Oslo Harbour, © Public Domain

The year in America came to an end and in September 1963 it was time to return to Sweden. For some reason we did not go with the Swedish America Line this time. Instead we returned with the Norweigan ship MS Oslofjord in regular traffic between New York and Oslo, the capitol of Norway.



M/S Oslofjord used another route than M/S Kungsholm. Instead of going south of the UK, she passed north of Scotland through Pentland Firth and

then over the North Sea to Bergen on the Norwegian coast. After that she continued south along the coast to Kristiansand to finally end up in Oslo.

From this journey I remember we had bad weather for a few days. Everybody was sea sick and there were no people in the dining room for meals. I was lucky to recover quickly and I remember how exiting it was to look out forward through the windows of upper deck and see the enormous waves breaking over the bow of the ship.

I also remember how the crew disposed of trash. They threw it over board. Many times each day somebody from the kitchen came out with all sorts of garbage and left a long trail of glass, paper and plastic floating. It was other times then.

Now, almost 60 years later, it's still a wonderful memory to have crossed the North Atlantic in the last passenger ships ever in regular traffic between Sweden/Norway and New York.



The End of 1962 - 63

