



Gustaf Erikson

PHOTO: THE ÅLAND MARITIME MUSEUM

The King of Canvas

Gustaf Erikson's sailing ships Björn Senneby's watercolors

SJÖHISTORISKA

en del av STATENS MARITIMA MUSEER



Pamir. Watercolor by Björn Senneby.

GUSTAF ERIKSON

The ship's owner, Gustaf Erikson, was born on 24 October, 1872 in Lemland in southern Åland. Both his father and grandfather had worked at sea. Gustafsson started his life at sea as a 10-year-old, when he served as a cabin boy on the bark *Neptun* over the summer. When he reached 13, he worked as a cook on the same vessel. He advanced through the ranks and in 1891, at 19 years old, was the master's assistant on the barque *Southern Belle*. In 1900 he took his captain's exam and between 1906 and 1913 he was an executive officer on different oceangoing voyages.

Over the years he had bought shares in various ships and began to buy up several large yachts. By 1919 he owned 9 vessels, both barques and schooners. While most owners turned to steam and motor powered vessels Gustaf invested in sailing ships for long distance cargo transportation, taking grain from Australia to

Europe. The shipping company was at its largest in 1935, when Gustav was 58 years old. At the time, the company had 29 vessels 15 of which were large sailing ships without alternative means of propulsion. Gustaf Adolf Mauritz Erikson died on August 15th, 1947 in Mariehamn.

Gustaf Erikson was also part owner of several steamers and motor vessels, but it was as the owner of the great sailing ships that he was best known. Four of his large sailing vessels, all four-masted steel barques, are preserved to this day: *Moshulu*, which won the last grain race 1939, is now a restaurant in Philadelphia, USA. She was sold by Erikson in 1946. After Gustaf Erikson's death in 1951, his family gave the barque, *Pommern*, to the town of Mariehamns, where she is now a museum ship.

Passat was sold the same year to a German owner, who kept the ship in use until 1957.



Pamir. Photo from the Maritime museum's archives.

Today it is a hostel and museum in Travemünde. The barque, *Viking*, was sold in 1951 and delivered her last cargo to Gothenburg. Today she operates as a hotel and restaurant. *Viking* is

the largest sailing ship built in Scandinavia. Of the ships that are preserved, *Pommern* is unique because she still shows her hold, crew quarters and captain's cabin.

BJÖRN SENNEBY

The artist Björn Senneby (born in 1946) spent a long time documenting the sailing ships of the Navy. His paintings are different from traditional ship paintings because of the attention to realism. The vessels are depicted not only straight from the side, the sails are also set differently based on the wind and the course or while at anchor. Additionally, paintings of seagoing vessels can be seen with rust marks on the ships' hulls, normally rarely shown. The collection of 41 watercolors, depicting all of Gustav Erikson's sailing ships, was

commissioned by Fartygsmagasinet in Stockholm. Thanks to the magazine owner Freddie Braun, Sjöhistoriska museet has the unique opportunity to show all of Gustav Erikson's works at the same time. Even the large oil painting with port motif of Björn Senneby is out of the Fartygsmagasinet.

The model of *Pamir* is built by and belongs to Björn Senneby. The model of *Archibald Russel* belongs to Fartygsmagasinet. Other objects are taken from the collections of Sjöhistoriska museet.

PORTRAYED SHIPS

Painting/Ship	Type, place and time of building	Years in G. Erikson's fleet
1 <i>Tjerimaj</i>	3 mast bark, Amsterdam 1883	1913 – 1925
2 <i>Åland</i>	4 mast bark, Glasgow 1887	1913 – 1914
3 <i>Fredenborg</i>	3 mast bark, Åland 1881	1914 – 1916
4 <i>Borrowdale</i>	3 mast bark, Liverpool 1868	1916 – 1917
5 <i>Grace Harwar</i>	3 mast fullriggare, Glasgow 1889	1916 – 1935
6 <i>Professor Koch</i>	3 mast bark, Glasgow 1891	1916 – 1923
7 <i>Ingrid</i>	3 mast skonert, Åland 1906	1917 – 1919
8 <i>Southern Belle</i>	3 mast bark, Nova Scotia 1871	1917 – 1919
9 <i>Lawhill</i>	4 mast bark, Dundee 1892	1917 – 1943
10 <i>Margareta</i>	4 mast bark, Glasgow 1889	1917 – 1917
11 <i>Woodburn</i>	3 mast bark, Glasgow 1896	1919 – 1924
12 <i>Herzogin Cecilie</i>	4 mast bark, Bremerhaven 1902	1921 – 1936
13 <i>Loch Linnhe</i>	3 mast bark, Glasgow 1876	1922 – 1933
14 <i>Pommern</i>	4 mast bark, Glasgow 1903	1922 – 1952
15 <i>Carradale</i>	4 mast bark, Glasgow 1889	1923 – 1923
16 <i>Penang</i>	3 mast bark, Bremerhaven 1905	1923 – 1941
17 <i>Olivebank</i>	4 mast bark, Glasgow 1892	1924 – 1939
18 <i>Killoran</i>	3 mast bark, Troon 1900	1924 – 1940
19 <i>Carmen</i>	3 mast bark, Åland 1921	1924 – 1934
20 <i>Polstjärnan</i>	4 mast skonare, Åland 1920	1924 – 1924
21 <i>Baltic</i>	4 mast skonertskepp, Jakobstad 1919	1924 – 1939
22 <i>Archibald Russel</i>	4 mast bark, Greenoch 1905	1924 – 1949
23 <i>Hougomont</i>	4 mast bark, Greenoch 1897	1925 – 1932
24 <i>Ostrobotnia</i>	3 mast skonare, Jakobstad 1919	1925 – 1934
25 <i>Winterhude</i>	3 mast bark, Bremerhaven 1905	1925 – 1944
26 <i>Lingard</i>	3 mast bark, Arendal 1893	1925 – 1937
27 <i>Lalla Rookh</i>	3 mast bark, Liverpool 1876	1926 – 1928
28 <i>Estonia</i>	3 mast skonertskepp, Estonia 1921	1927 – 1936
29 <i>Melbourne</i>	4 mast bark, Glasgow 1892	1929 – 1932
30 <i>Viking</i>	4 mast bark, Copenhagen 1907	1929 – 1936
31 <i>Ponape</i>	4 mast bark, Genua 1903	1929 – 1936
32 <i>Pamir</i>	4 mast bark, Hamburg 1905	1931 – 1951
33 <i>Parma</i>	4 mast bark, Glasgow 1902	1931 – 1936
34 <i>L'Avenir</i>	4 mast bark, Bremerhaven 1908	1932 – 1936
35 <i>Passat</i>	4 mast bark, Hamburg 1911	1932 – 1951
36 <i>Varma</i>	3 mast bark, Nystad 1922	1933 – 1937
37 <i>Eläköön</i>	3 mast bark, Nystad 1920	1934 – 1937
38 <i>Kylemore</i>	3 mast bark, Glasgow 1880	1934 – 1937
39 <i>Pestalozzi</i>	3 mast bark, Hamburg 1884	1934 – 1937
40 <i>Dione</i>	4 mast skonertskepp, Åland 1923	1934 – 1939
41 <i>Moshulu</i>	4 mast bark, Glasgow 1904	1935 – 1946