

# A Thingvalla Line promotional pamphlet 1887

Translation 2004 by Børge Solem - Courtesy of Ole Lyngklip

This booklet was issued by the Thingvalla Line in 1887, and gives an interesting insight in the progress of emigration. This is promotional pamphlet which was forwarded to potential travelers and emigrants. The booklet is written in Danish and Swedish, and is partly translated to English here. It gives a short introduction of the company, and its fleet. It gives a short description of the conditions aboard the ships with details about the menu on the different classes. It has many details about the different matters an emigrant should be concerned with in connection with the purchase of tickets, the ocean travel, the arrival to Castle Garden and the inland voyage. There are also many interesting pictures.



(text page 1)

## [The Thingvalla Mail Steamship Company](#)

The only direct steamship connection between Scandinavia and New York, Every 14th day with comfortable equipped for passengers, 1 classed, fast going mail steamers. Further information can be obtained from the Thingvalla Line's Passenger departments:

Copenhagen - Larsens Plads

Christiania - Prinsensgade 2

Christiansand

Gothenburg - Sillgatan

Malmö - Vid Hamnen No. 3

Stockholm - Brunngränd No. 3

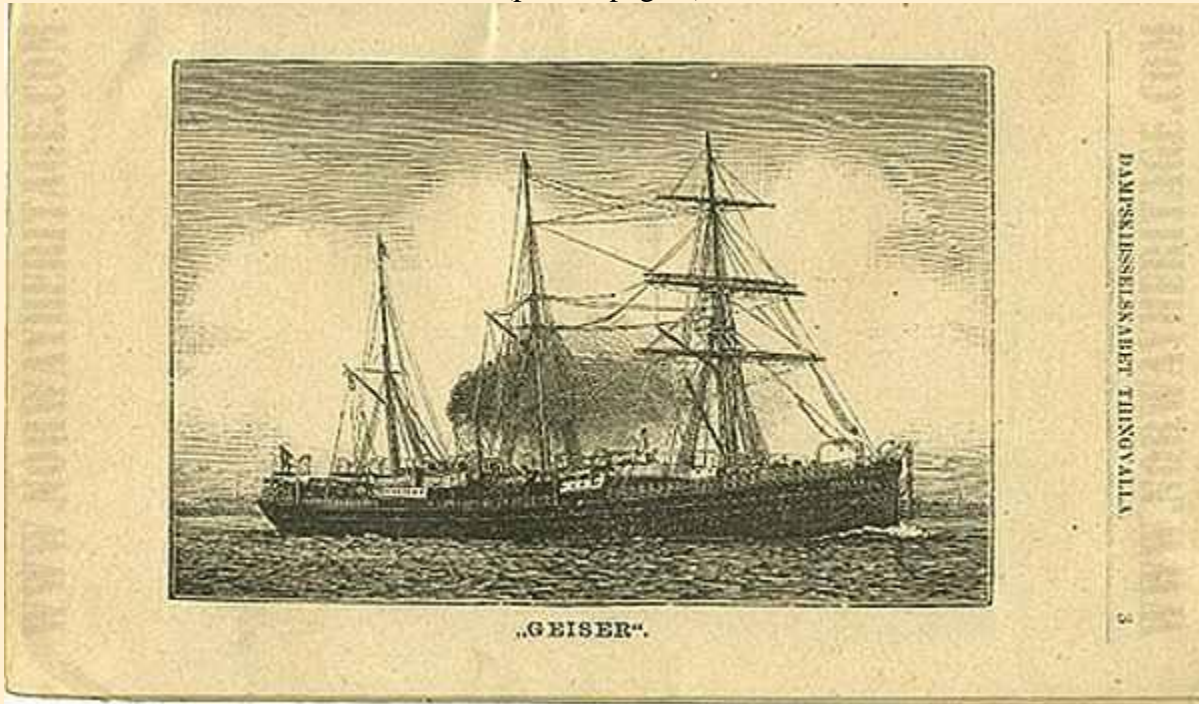
New York - 21-24 State Street

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**The Thingvalla Steamship Company's board:**

- C. F. Tietgen - foreman
- C. D. A. Hansen -
- C. Th. Koch -
- F. Stange - Ship owner
- J. Zøylner -

(picture page 3)



Page 3 has this engraving showing the s/s Geiser  
(page 4 - 5)

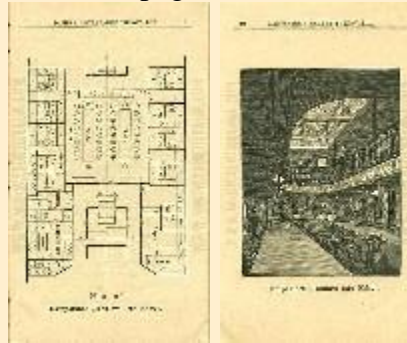
Two pages of sailing schedules for the year 1887. The left page is titled 'Prøjsen for 1887' and the right page is titled 'Tingvalla 1887'. Both pages contain tables with columns for ship names, destinations, and dates. The text is small and difficult to read, but the layout is clear with multiple columns of data.

Sailing shedules  
(page 6)



Company of Burmeister & Wain. The ships are specially equipped for passenger transportation, and departs on a regular basis every 14th day from Copenhagen, Christiania, Christiansand and New York. The ships are constructed with several and divided watertight bulkheads to reduce the risk if colliding with other ships or in case of fire.

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Cabin Plan and image of the 1st class on the S/S Hekla  
(text page 11)

### **1st Cabin:**

In every way comfortable and nicely equipped for the passengers

Meals:

06.30-08.00 Morning: Tea or coffee with biscuits and bread

10.00 Breakfast: consisting of a rich buffet with two warm dishes

14.40 Dinner: consisting of 3 warm dishes, dessert, fruit and coffee

19.00 Supper: consisting of a buffet with one warm dish and tea.

There is a library to the benefit of the passengers, separate saloon for women, Smoking room, and bathroom. To the service of the passengers there are both male and female stewards.

### **2.nd cabin (Hekla & Thingvalla) and 3rd Cabin (Island & Geiser)**

In consideration with the low prices they are comfortably equipped and the meals consists of:

06.00-07.00 Monrning: Tea or coffee with bread

08.00 Breakfast: Buffet with one warm dish

12.00 Dinner: 2 warm dishes

18.00 Supper: Buffet with tea

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### **The between deck (steerage)**

Is divided into different departments for families, for unmarried males and for unmarried females. Order and cleanliness is provided by crew specially employed for the task. The food is fresh and rich, made of first class food supplies. It is handed out in such rich portions, so it should not be necessary for the passengers to bring any additional food supplies for the voyage to New York The food is served to the passengers by stewards, thus on other steamship lines the passengers usually have to pick up their food at the galley, which of course will be unpleasant in

bad weather.

The meals consist of:

Breakfast: Coffee with sugar, bread or biscuits with butter

Dinner: Beef and soup with potatoes and bread. Fish, clipfish with souse and fruit soup, Lobescauce? and Rice soup, varying through the week days.

Evening: Tea with sugar, bread and butter

Everyone gets as much to eat as desired. To the male passengers who desires, it is served every morning one dram of liquor. There are also rich supplies of water. There are bakeries on the ships, where fresh bread is baked every day. The between deck (steerage) is high, light and spacey, and is heated in the cold part of the year. Mothers of infants will receive milk or vrilfood free of charge.

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### **Warning**

As it has often occurred that other transatlantic steamship lines through their announcements have tried to draw Scandinavian's attention towards their direct tickets to and from Scandinavia, we would like to announce that for the time being, there is only one direct connection between Scandinavia and New York, namely that of the Thingvalla Steamship Company, so anyone who intends to go by this line must make sure that their ticket states that it is by the Thingvalla Line ships they will be conveyed.

### **Complaints**

When someone thinks they have reason to make a complaint, such must be communicated to the Captain or the Senior Officer on duty. If the complaint is of such a nature that it should be forwarded to the direction of the line, it can be registered in the protocol of complaints carried aboard the ships, which will be provided by the Captain upon request.

(text page 14 and 15)

### **Aboard the S. S. "Hekla", New-York, 5. Febr. 1886**

We undersigned passengers on the S. S. "Hekla" which departed from Copenhagen January 20, 1886, feel after the voyage is ended the need to express our satisfaction with the treatment, crew and accommodation on board. The officers and crew did by their kindness and helpfulness reduce and ease the difficultness of a voyage, while most of us, the undersigned at earlier occasions have travelled on English and German steamship lines, we see it as our obligation towards our fellow countrymen to recommend the direct Thingvalla Line, on where all transfer of luggage and passengers is avoided and human treatment is provided. Finally we dear bring our recognition and thanks to Captain Thomsen for his friendliness and care, and for his intensive management as the master of the ship.

O. C. Petersen - Racine Wisc.

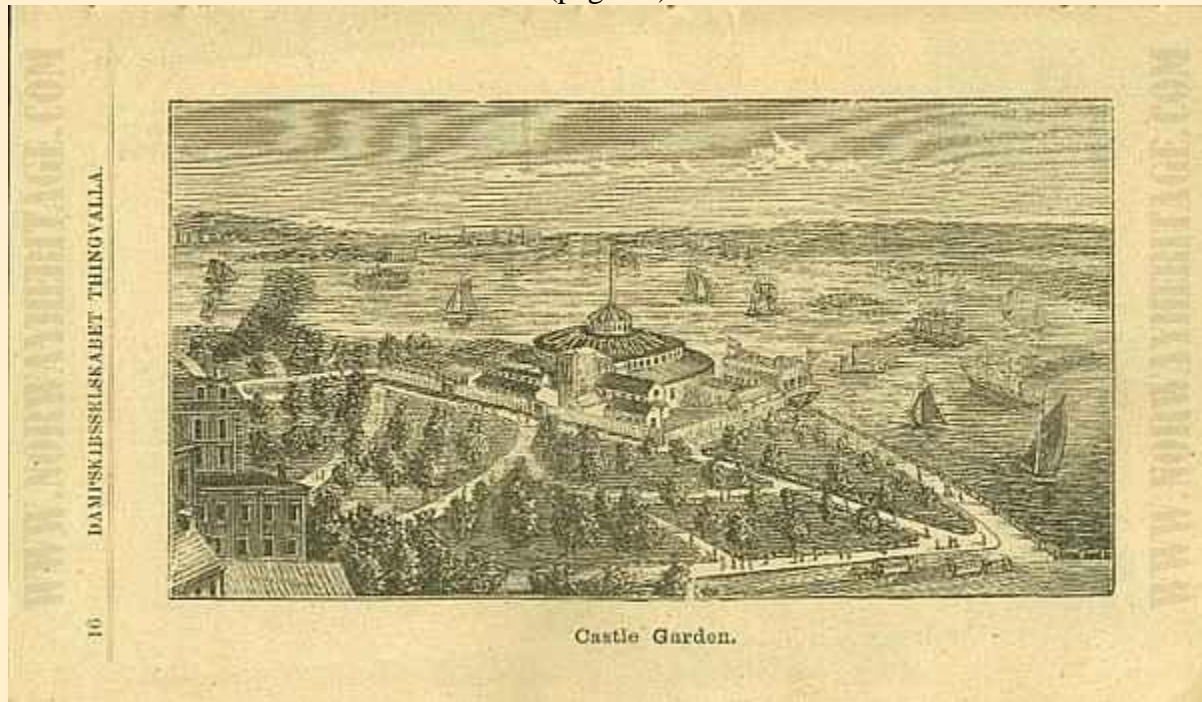
Kristian Nissen - Washington D. C.

Anna Oridi Iversen - Chicago

Elin G. Nilsson - New-York

Anna Cecilia Nilsson - New-York  
Emil Toborg - Little Falls, N. Y. S.  
Ole Christiansen - Trondhjem  
F. R. Strøm - Utah  
Caroline Hansen - Denver Col.  
Rosalia Meyer - New-York  
Peter Hansen - Black Hawk, Colorado  
Jacob Eriksen - Drager

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[Castle Garden](#)

(text page 17 - 18)

**Guide for the arrival to New York**

At arrival the ships embed at the companies dock in Hoboken, where the passengers disembarks and the luggage is brought ashore. After disembarkation there will be customs inspection, to make this quick it is required that every passenger goes to get the luggage immediately after coming ashore, and when receiving the luggage must deliver the brass checker received for the luggage when boarded to the ship's official, then open the luggage and stay by it tills it has been inspected.

After the luggage has been inspected the passengers must see to it that they get one brass checker back for every piece of luggage delivered to the Castle Garden clerks which are on the dock.

Without the brass checker it will be very difficult to find the luggage in Caste Garden. (Castle Garden is the governmental bureau where all the passengers are registered)

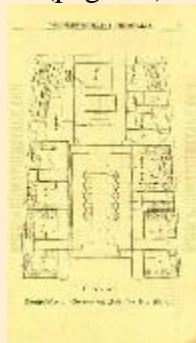
The luggage will then be brought aboard on a steamboat which will bring the luggage to Castle

Garden. Those of the passengers who intend to stay in New York can leave Castle Garden at any time after being registered, and come back for the luggage any time later with the brass checker. Passengers which have tickets also valid for the inland voyage by train, must get their travelling orders converted into railway tickets valid for the specific railway Company on which they are going to travel, before leaving Castle Garden, then go to the Castle Garden's luggage room to switch the brass checkers received on the ship to new checkers valid to the final destination, and then deliver the checkers when they get there to get the luggage. In Castle Garden the passengers can bunker food supplies sufficient for the railway voyage, which usually will take place in the evening on the day of arrival. If the contrary, those who wants to can stay the night in Castle Garden. The passengers are guided from Castle Garden to the railway station by the Thingvalla Line's Scandinavian clerks, who will assist the passengers in getting on the right train.



This tag was dredged from New York Harbor along with a lot of civil war relics. The sand that was dredged was used to fill in some beaches around New York, the image was provided by Steve Feldman

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Cabin plan, 1st class - S/S Geiser and S/S Island  
(text page 20)

### **Guaranty for the luggage**

The Thingvalla Steamship Company is the only steamship line in Scandinavia as in America, which gives the passengers a guaranty for their luggage. When checking in the luggage at the company storehouse the passenger is given a guaranty mark (Checker) which is actually a brass tag with a number and the name of the ship, a similar tag is attached to every piece of luggage, on arrival the passengers receives their luggage according to the numbers on his guaranty checkers.

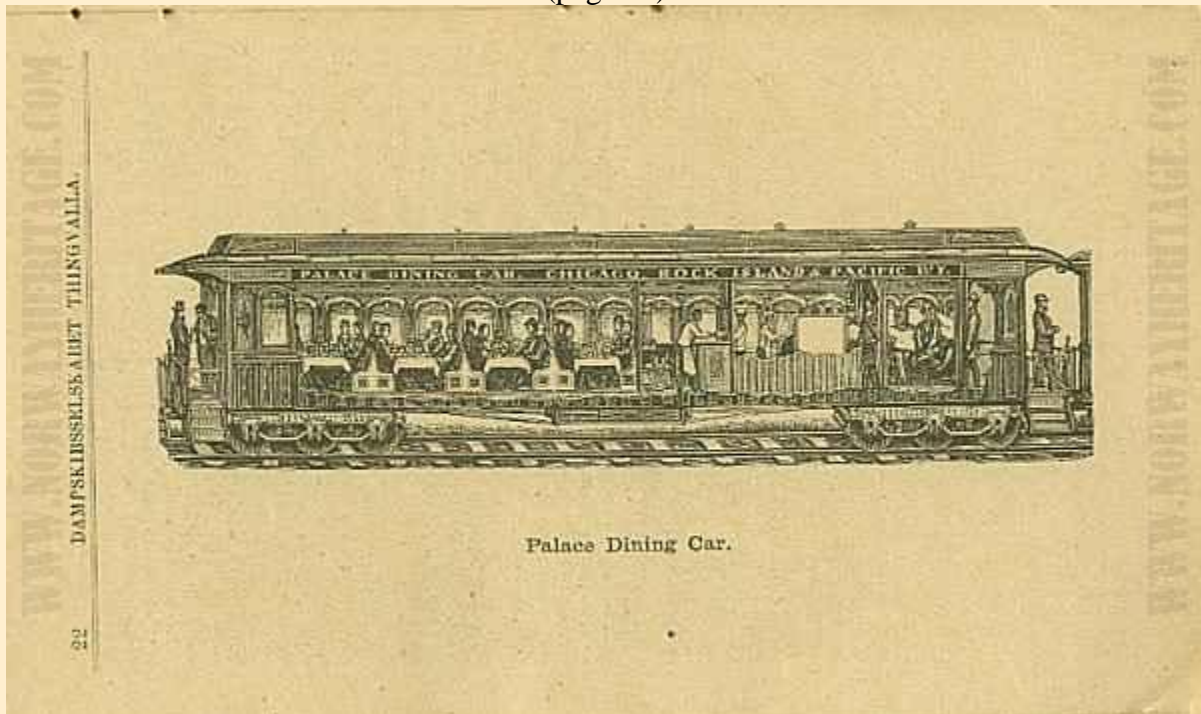
It is therefore important to notice that the passengers must not give away their guaranty tags without receiving their luggage at the same time. The company does not give any guaranty for any luggage the passenger keeps with him during the voyage (that is luggage not kept in the holds), hereunder personal bags, bedding (used for the voyage) small suitcases or the like, which is possessions which the passengers must take responsibility for, and loss off such possessions

the company be not responsible for under any circumstances. If some luggage is missing at arrival, and the passenger has a guaranty tag for it, he must immediately report to the company's office the content of the lost luggage and it's value - and give the accurate address of where he will be staying to the company, and will thence receive a receipt in return for the guaranty tag. The company will then make investigations to find the lost luggage, and if it is not

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found within 3 months, the company will compensate for the value of the luggage, though limited up to the value of 200 Korner for each collie. Complaints concerning lost luggage must be forwarded on one of the company's offices within 8 days after the ship arrival, if not they will not be considered valid. Loss or damage caused by collision with another ship, or by other accidents, is not covered by the guaranty. Luggage must be received in the company stores at the latest 12 hours before the ship departs, it must be secured (preferable winded with rope) and marked with the passengers name and destination. Adult passengers can bring 20 cubic ft. of luggage free of charge. On the railway in America adults can bring 100 £ of luggage free of charge.

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Palace Dining Car.

Palace Dining Car  
(text page 23)

### **Railway tickets**

Passengers going to America, as well as Scandinavians living in America, who is buying tickets for relatives, are advised to buy the railway ticket all the way to the final destination along with the steamship ticket, as they will then in general be conveyed inland on the same day as they arrive to New York, and in that way will avoid losing time and spending money during a stay in



New York. Also passengers will in general be able to proceed their voyage together with their acquaintances from the ship, which for women and children often will be of great convenience.

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### **Prepaid tickets**

Prepaid tickets can be purchased in America by (immigrated) Scandinavians and may be sent back home to relatives, friends or acquaintances for their voyage to America, with the Thingvalla Line ships. Such tickets can be issued in the name of the buyer, or in the name of the specific traveller, and in the latter case only the named person will be able to use the ticket. Passengers who receives such a ticket must immediately upon receipt, in person or in writing, make contact with one of the passenger offices in Scandinavia (see page 1) which will then without charging the passenger let him know on which ship he is booked. If the passenger wishes to travel at a certain time, this must be specified, and it will be arranged as long as there is still space available on the ship. Holders of prepaid tickets are strongly requested, if they intend to travel during springtime, to book their place on the ship as long time in advance as possible, and not leave their homes before they have received notice from the company regarding what ship and date they are to travel on.

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### **Tickets from America to Scandinavia**

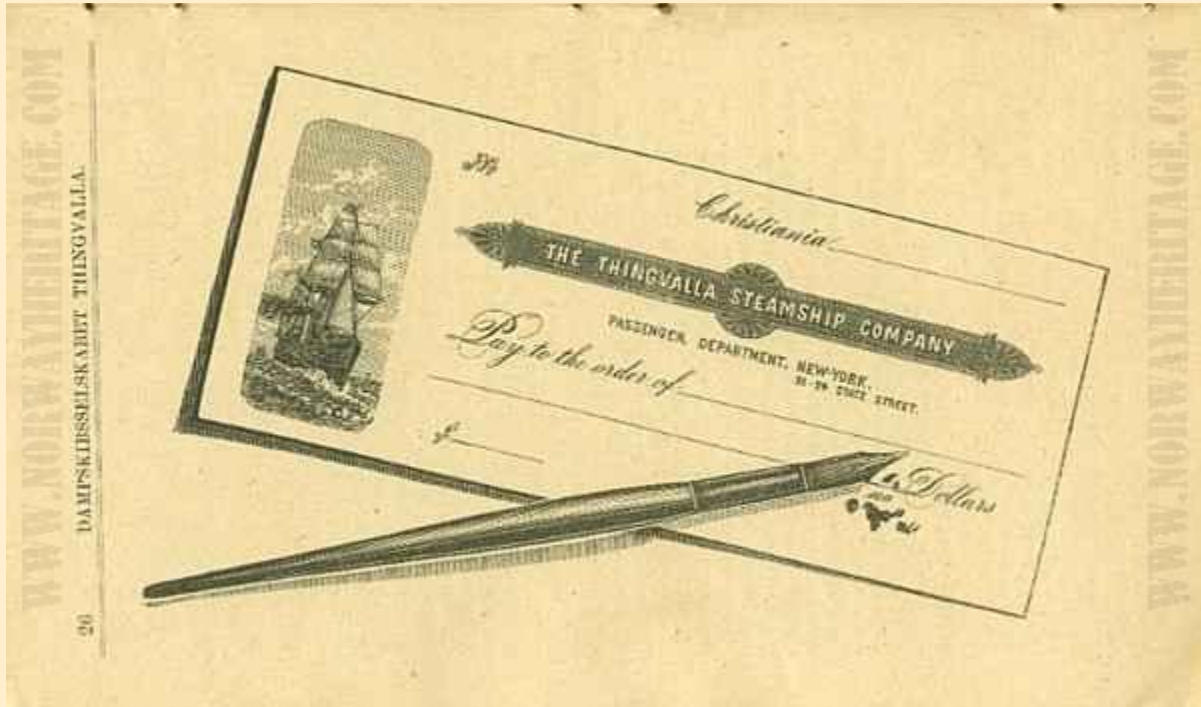
(Outward tickets)

Passengers travelling from the Western States to New York with the intention to proceed on the Thingvalla Line's ships to Europe, are advised not to swap their luggage checks on the train with the so called Express People to let them convey the luggage to the docks, but are advised to keep on to them and let the office in New York give information about how the luggage best can be brought to the ship, as in many cases the luggage has not made it to the dock before the ship has already departed.

Those who intends to go home to Europe in the summer months, May, June or July, or in the autumn months of October, November and first part of December, must secure their spaces in good time by sending the passenger fee to the office in New York, Chicago or St. Paul, where after the tickets will be mailed, if not, all the space might already be occupied at their arrival to New York.

Tour and return tickets are sold to considerably reduced prices. We will draw the Scandinavian Public's attention to the desirable "Excursions" whereto there are special arrangements with the railway companies in America.

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### **Bills of exchange**

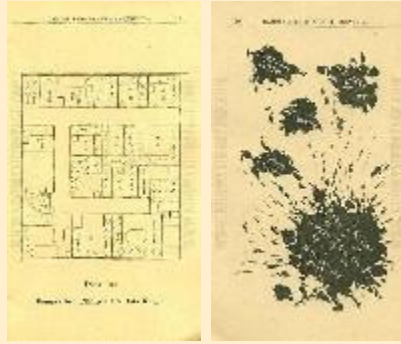
Will be issued by the Scandinavian passenger offices and on the company's office in New York, which issues bills of exchange on most of Scandinavian banks.

We specially draw to the extension

### **The Money Order system**

These orders are issued in all places of Scandinavia, and are the most convenient way to send small amounts of money, as the money are brought to the home of the recipient by the mail without any cost. The buyer of a money order pays to the office in New York the amount, and gives the exact address of the recipient, where after he receives a receipt on the amount, a so called "Money Order Receipt" which the buyer keeps until the amount is delivered to the recipient in Europe. It should be obvious to everyone, that when buying a bill of exchange or a money order, the most important thing is to buy from a reliable firm. By addressing the company's head office in New York (21-24 State Street) this will be achieved. When you want to send money back home to relatives or friends, you should therefore send them to the Thingvalla Company Office in New York on the above address. Send the money by Express Mail, or as registered mail. Write clearly the name and address of the recipient of the money, and state if you want it sent as a bill of exchange or money order, you will then have the company's guaranty that the money will be correctly processed. The rates are always as low as in any first class bank.

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Cabin plan, 1st class, S/S Thingvalla and promotion for sending packages  
(text page 31)

### **Package Expedition**

The company conveys packages between Scandinavia and America in connection with Wells Fargo & Co. Express Company in New York to low price rates For further information address:

### **Thingvalla Steamship Company**

Or to our freight agents:

Jens Meinich & Co - Christiania

F. Reinhardt & Co - Christiansand

Hans Friis - Malmö

And in America to our passenger offices.

From <http://www.norwayheritage.com/articles/templates/voyages.asp?articleid=88&zoneid=6>

### General info about steamship travel:

Most often tickets were ordered beforehand, and many received tickets from America. But every passenger had to go via the shipping company agent, whether they had received a ticket or not. The emigrants had to be in town no later than one day before departure. When the emigrants showed up, they were usually received by the agents or their assistants. These met as a group on the dock or at the railroad station, and guided the emigrants to the shipping company office. Here the baggage was marked and made ready for loading on the steamship. The ticket was paid for and the contract gotten ready. Then it was off to the police station where the contract was signed and names entered into the emigrant register. Men who were of age for military service (age 22-36) had to provide documentation that they had permission to emigrate, or discharge papers, military authorities. Male emigrants below the age of military conscription had to present a certificate signed by their local district commissioner. Both men and women had to present their certificate of baptism.

When all the formalities were completed, the emigrants had to find lodgings for the night. Many of the agents had agreements with specific hotels and boarding houses, and arranged lodgings for the emigrants. They also exchanged currency and made out foreign drafts. On the day of departure the emigrants had to gather outside the office of their respective agent. From there they

were led to the ship and assigned a place on board. There was usually a large gathering of people on the docks who had come to bid farewell to friends and relatives. The trip from Oslo to Hull normally took three days and from Trondheim about four days.

The interior of the early steamships was not very different from that of the sail ships. This was the case both for the ships to England and to America. The steerage was usually divided into two or three large sections. On board the Wilson Line steamer [S/S Angelo](#), the bunks are described as long two-story shelves. These were not deep enough for a person to stretch out completely. An inspector who carried out an [inspection during the crossing from Oslo to Hull](#) in 1881, reported that the emigrants slept in whatever clothing they were wearing. He also saw several people who slept with their hats on, and no one removed their shoes. One man even slept in his raincoat. The food the emigrants required during the crossing was included in the ticket. Toilet conditions were nothing to brag about and were often up on deck. The crossing over the North Sea could be very rough in bad weather, and many people suffered from seasickness. As a rule, passengers were not permitted on deck when it was dark or during bad weather. Reports state that even passengers accustomed to the sea would get sick, not because of the sea, but because of the terrible stench of vomit. On some of the ships there were spaces between the deck boards along the sides of the ship so the deck could be hosed down and the impure water removed with pumps. On other ships, carbolic acid was poured on the deck that was then covered with sawdust. The sawdust was removed and replaced each day. Both ventilation and illumination was generally better on the steam ships than on the sail ships.



The steerage on a North German Lloyd steamship,  
Support Norway Heritage: [Purchase a copy](#)

The menu on board the ship to England was basically the same as the menu on board the ship to America. Passengers could drink all the water they wanted. Advertisements from the [Anchor Line](#) promised that passengers would receive the following during the entire passage from Norway to New York:

". . . so much of the best food, properly prepared, as they could eat, namely: Breakfast 9 a.m.: Tea, coffee or hot chocolate, sugar, bread and butter or biscuits and butter. Dinner,

1 p.m.: Soup, beef or pork with potatoes, with plum pudding on Sundays. Supper 6 p.m. Tea, coffee or hot chocolate, sugar, bread and butter or biscuits and butter."

An emigrant who traveled with this company described the food on board in a letter he sent home in 1869:

". . . for supper there was always at sea sweet tea without milk in it and dry hard biscuits or Ship's bread, and the same for breakfast. There was butter, but it was so rancid that we could not digest it. For dinner, meat, but their was no taste to the soup or for us Norwegians it had a disgusting taste, and the meat was as salty as herring. One day we had salted fish with a dash of soup, but it was inedible for most of us and it was just to dump our portions into the sea."

Another emigrant wrote the following account about his journey to America with the [Guion Line](#) steamship [Idaho](#) from Liverpool in 1869:

". . . You can imagine what an unpleasant journey it was with over 1,100 emigrants crammed together; most of us were treated worse than wild animals. We hardly ate anything at the start of the journey since we are not pigs, but when we began to understand the situation and our own provisions were not enough, we had to accept the food that the pigs ate . . . when we walked on deck the muck went over our shoes and into the meat container; one should wash it but the Irishmen had washed their children's messes and night pots first . . ."



[Wilson Line steamship Montebello departing Christiania with emigrants](#)  
Support Norway Heritage: [Purchase a copy](#)

The Wilson Line had departures from Oslo on Fridays and arrived in Hull on Sunday evening or Monday morning. The emigrants were met in Hull by agents representing the companies where they had purchased tickets. As a rule, there were passengers on the same ship that were to travel on from England with ships belonging to various companies. Passengers were responsible for seeing to it that their baggage got on the right ship. There were organized gangs of baggage thieves in port that they had to guard against. In Hull the emigrants were taken to large waiting halls provided by the shipping companies. They usually received food and drink while they

waited for the train that was to take them further. To avoid problems, the authorities in Hull wanted the emigrants sent off as quickly as possible. From Hull there were train connections to Glasgow, Liverpool, London and Southampton. The most common route went via Liverpool, about a seven-hour train ride. The transatlantic steamers departed from England on different days, and the emigrants often had to wait several days in England. They were housed at emigrant hotels owned by the shipping companies. The stay in England was regarded by most as the greatest disadvantage of the journey since this cost money and unnecessarily lengthened the time of the trip. In large cities such as Liverpool, the emigrants could also be exposed to many dangers. From Liverpool the ships went to Ireland to pick up yet more passengers. From there the ships headed for the open seas.

A number of large steamers were always docked in the port city of Liverpool and there was always a great deal of activity. The harbor area was well suited to emigrant traffic. When the Norwegian emigrants boarded the large steamships, they were suddenly brought into contact with emigrants from other parts of Europe. Cultural differences made it difficult to live so close together, and the relationship between passengers could sometimes be strained. There are also accounts stating that passengers were sometimes treated badly by members of the crew. Language could also lead to problems, but most ships had a Scandinavian interpreter on board. It was usual that ethnic groups were kept separate from others and placed in their own quarters. Unmarried men had a section of their own, and unmarried women were either placed in their own section or together with families. It did happen that families were separated on board because passengers were divided according to sex. Passengers had to supply their own bedding. This method of transporting steerage passengers, remained more or less the same until the end of the 1890s. As competition grew between the shipping companies, conditions gradually improved for the passengers, yet strangely enough, there are few complaints from the emigrants concerning conditions on board these ships. The reason may be that they were not accustomed to much comfort. As the companies built new ships, standards were raised and conditions improved for the emigrants.

When the Danish [Thingvalla Line](#) opened for traffic in 1880, they advertised that the ships had Scandinavian crews and food, and that they sailed directly from Copenhagen to New York via Christiania (later Oslo) and Christiansand (Kristiansand). This company grew in popularity, but experienced a number of misfortunes -- which was not exactly good for business. In addition to several minor accidents, the [S/S Hekla \(1\)](#) sank near Færder in 1883, the [S/S Thingvalla](#) and the [S/S Geiser](#) collided in 1888 with a loss of 105 lives, and that same year the [S/S Danmark](#) was shipwrecked. The worst catastrophe was the loss of the [S/S Norge](#) in 1904, when 604 persons lost their lives. The ships of the Thingvalla Line were not as fast or as comfortable as were those of the competitors, with the result that the Thingvalla Line never posed a serious threat to the other transatlantic lines.