

## Thingvalla 1880

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**Printed on:** 01/12/2010

### Topic:

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**Topic author:** gary983

**Subject:** Thingvalla 1880

**Posted on:** 06/12/2002 15:24:22

#### Message:

My great grandparents came from Denmark aboard the Thingvalla in 1880. I have learned that they left Denmark on 9 April 1880. The ship was heading for New York, but lost her screw in the North Atlantic and had to go to Boston first. The passengers were transported to New York by train.

When did the Thingvalla arrive in Boston?

Are the passengers registered as "Boston" arrivals even though they ended up in New York as planned (via detour)?

Thanks!

Gary Jacobson

### Replies:

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**Reply author:** Borge

**Replied on:** 06/12/2002 20:09:31

#### Message:

I do not know what date the ship arrived at Boston, but the train with the passengers must have departed just prior to, or around the 11th of May, at least that is the date when the Thingvalla departed from Boston. The Thingvalla arrived at New York on the 13th of May. I do not know if the emigrants were registered in Boston or New York, please let us know if you find out.

Børge Solem

Edited by - Borge on 06/12/2002 20:10:32

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**Reply author:** gary983

**Replied on:** 07/12/2002 21:25:07

#### Message:

The 11th of May is unlikely due to the fact that the Thingvalla required repairs at Boston before she could go on to New York. I did find, on a microfilm, the report that she arrived at New York on 13 May.

There is also a site on the web which states that in 1880 "Apr 24 SS 'Thingvalla' from Shields to New York fell in with a lot of small icebergs, approximately 46o50'N 48o26'W."

([http://researchers.imd.nrc.ca/~hillb/icedb/ice/ice\\_charts/1880ap.htm](http://researchers.imd.nrc.ca/~hillb/icedb/ice/ice_charts/1880ap.htm))

If she fell in with a lot of small icebergs on 24 April just southeast of Nova Scotia, it must not have been too long after that that she arrived in Boston under sail. Perhaps the ice was the reason she lost her screw.

I'll keep you posted as I learn more.

Thanks!

Gary

Edited by - gary983 on 05/02/2003 03:28:13

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**Reply author:** Borge  
**Replied on:** 07/12/2002 23:47:09  
**Message:**

Thanks for the new info and the link to that site, it was very interesting. The Thingvalla departed from Newcastle on April 14th, and usually used about 14-18 days on the crossing. If she lost the screw when she fell in with the icebergs on the 24th, she was still 4-8 days from New York under normal conditions. After loosing the screw the voyage to Boston must have taken longer, as she probably had to depend on her sails, or possibly was towed part of the way.

Børge Solem

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**Reply author:** gary983  
**Replied on:** 31/12/2002 04:52:29  
**Message:**

I have found the arrival date of the Thingvalla in Boston. She arrived on 7 May 1880 after what must have been a very unpleasant journey! I found my great grandparents' names in the passenger index too. What a hard beginning for the Thingvalla line. It seems to be a fitting start in light of all the problems the Thingvalla Line had over the years. Thanks for the information you were able to provide.

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**Reply author:** gary983  
**Replied on:** 15/03/2005 12:28:12  
**Message:**

I just got copies from a friend of some New York Times articles that shed more light on the April/May 1880 journey of the Thingvalla. It makes for interesting reading and corrects some errors.

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"DISASTER TO VESSELS"

Boston, May 5 – The steamer Thingvalla, Molsen, Shields, for New York, which arrived here to-day in tow of the steamer Samaria, was taken in tow April 29, 9:15 A.M., latitude 43° 41', longitude 49° 09'. She has over 500 passengers. Her propeller was loose, and was lost after the first day's towing.

New York Times (1857-current); May 6, 1880; ProQuest Historical Newspapers The New York Times (1851-2001), Pg. 2

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"DISASTER TO VESSELS"

Boston, May 6 – It is stated that no agreement for the amount to be paid was made between Capt. Molson, of the Danish steamer Thingvalla, and Capt. Moulard, of the Cunard steamer Samaria, for services in towing the Thingvalla to this port. In consequence of this, the agents of the Cunard Company here have libeled the Thingvalla, claiming salvage. The amount of salvage to be asked for has not yet been determined, but will be as soon as a definite appraisal of the service performed can be arrived at.

New York Times (1857-current); May 7, 1880; ProQuest Historical Newspapers The New York Times (1851-2001), Pg. 8  
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New York, May 8 – There were 2,145 passengers landed at the Castle Garden emigrant depot yesterday. Of these, 500 were brought from Boston by the Fall River Line steamers. They were from the steamer Thingvalla, which lost her rudder and was towed into Boston by the Samaria. The Bremen steamer Main brought in 847 emigrants, and the London steamer Greece 798.

New York Times (1857-current); May 8, 1880; ProQuest Historical Newspapers The New York Times (1851-2001), Pg. 8  
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"ARRIVED"

Steam-ship Thingvalla, (Dan.,) Molsen, Shields April 14, via Boston May 11, with mdse. To Funch, Edge & Co.

New York Times (1857-current); May 14, 1880; ProQuest Historical Newspapers The New York Times (1851-2001), Pg. 8  
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"LARGE AWARD FOR SALVAGE"

Boston, July 28. – Judge Lowell, as Referee, has given a decision in the suit of the Cunard Steam-ship Company to recover salvage for towing the Danish steamer Thingvalla from the Banks of Newfoundland to this port in April, the Thingvalla being disabled. He awards \$18,000 to the Cunard Company.

New York Times (1857-current); Jul 29, 1880; ProQuest Historical Newspapers The New York Times (1851-2001), Pg. 5  
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Hope this is interesting!

Gary

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**Reply author:** Julie H

**Replied on:** 20/11/2005 10:54:17

**Message:**

I have recently found your posts regarding the 1880 sailing of the S/S Thingvalla and while my Norwegian relatives were not aboard, several of my Danish relatives were. From the *History of the West Denmark Lutheran Church 1873-1973*, Luck, Polk, WI:

*The young couple boarded the steamship Thingvalla in the summer of 1880 to sail to their new home. When the ship was no more than a couple of days at sea, it suddenly lost its propeller and began to drift northward out of the regular shipping lanes and into a sea dotted with huge icebergs.*

*Day after day, week after week, the Thingvalla drifted among the icebergs with storms and squalls buffeting the ship and its helpless passengers and crew. Other ships that had left at the same time returned to Denmark with the distressing news that the Thingvalla had not arrived in America, and there was deep despair among the families of the more than 40 immigrants who had left Denmark on the ship. After six weeks of helpless drifting, the carefully rationed food was gone, and the despairing passengers and crew existed on hardtack.*

*Hope was all but gone when the stricken ship was sighted by an English steamer, and noting its signals of distress, came to the rescue and towed the Thingvalla to a port where repairs were made, and the ship continued its journey.*

You mentioned that you found the passenger list, and I was curious as to whether that was available online somewhere? or did you obtain the microfilm? I would be very interested in confirming the related passengers that I have listed.

Thanks much, Julie

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**Reply author:** Jo Anne Sadler  
**Replied on:** 20/11/2005 18:55:50  
**Message:**

Generally, the passenger list would be surrendered as the first port of entry into the United States but in this case there could be exception(s). From these postings, some of the passengers were processed at Castle Garden.

The passenger list microfilms can be rented at a local Family History Center but this free site for Castle Garden New York may help you, it is almost complete:

<http://www.castlegarden.org/>

Ancestry.com has a paid database for various ports including New York in 1880 but their Boston lists do not include that year.

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