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Lost Immigrant Baggage

Old Swedish American newspaper files often may yield clues to one's search for immigrant ancestors. We already know that these old files contain obituaries, descriptions of court cases, accidents, family holidays like weddings, birthdays and anniversaries, as well as funerals. Personal inquiries are often listed as well as references to any event which affected the everyday life of the immigrant.

Thanks to the sharp eyes of one of our *SAG* subscribers, Dr. Karl A. Olsson of Columbia, MD, the editor has learned of yet another source—the listing of lost immigrant baggage—for which the shipping line, in this case the Cunard Line, was attempting to locate the owners.

This particular news item appeared in *Chicago-Bladet*¹ in January or February 1881 and deals with baggage items left behind by passengers, who apparently entered the ports of Boston and New York in the summer and fall of 1880. The list is given here in translation:

“Lost Immigrant Baggage”

We (i.e. the editors of the newspaper) have been asked by the agent of the Cunard Line to alert the public concerning immigrant baggage left behind by the owners. These people have been contacted, but they have not responded. These items are now located in Chicago and will be forwarded free of charge to the rightful owners.

Persons, who believe themselves to be the owners, are asked to furnish the Line with a complete list of items contained in the bags, trunks or chests. Keys should be furnished so that the baggage may be opened for inspection and the contents checked against the furnished inventory list. Address all inquiries to the Cunard Line, Chicago, Illinois.

One black square trunk, marked N.A. Olson, Chicago.

One black trunk, bound in iron, with a half-rounded lid, marked A.P.C. Anderson, both on the lid and on one of the sides.

One large black chest, quite heavy, with a half-rounded lid, marked John Anderson, North America.

One square blue chest or trunk, marked T.O. Houkjew, Clinton Junction, Rock Co., Wisconsin, U.S.

One duffel bag, marked M.A.S.L.H., Samaria, Sept. 19 1880.

One small duffel bag, tied together with an old necktie.

One seaman's chest, blue, marked G.W. Johanson, Göteborg.

One small red chest, marked Thore Knutsen, Glencoe, Renville Co., Minnesota, North America.

One small duffel bag, marked Marathon (probably Wisconsin) Aug. 29 1880.

One square chest with iron bands, marked Anna Johansdotter, De Kalb (probably Illinois).

One black chest or trunk, marked Thore Knudsen, Glencoe, Renville Co., Minnesota.

One large blue chest, marked S.N.D., Sharon (probably Wisconsin), A.M.K.

One duffel bag, marked G.O.D.L.

One seaman's duffel bag, marked J. Sandberg, Marathon (Wisconsin), July 24 1880.

One duffel bag marked Samaria, Sept. 19.

One large duffel bag, marked C. Mikkelsen, Davenport (probably Iowa).

One duffel bag, marked Parthia, left behind on the ship's dock Aug. 1.

One brown square chest or trunk without any markings.

The names of Samaria and Parthia probably refer to the vessels on which the immigrants traveled. Since the names of the Cunard ships usually ended in *-ia*, this seems to be a reasonable assumption. A check of the ships' manifests for 1880 for the ports of Boston and New York might yield further clues as to the owners of the lost baggage.

¹*Chicago-Bladet*, founded in 1877 by the Free Mission Church, merged in 1879 with *Zions Banér*, was a weekly religious and political newspaper, edited by John Mårtenson. — Bernhard Lundstedt, *Svenska tidningar och tidskrifter utgifna inom Nord—Amerikas förenta stater* (Stockholm, 1886), p. 17.