



Sinking of SS *Norge* depicted in a painting. (Maritime Museum of Denmark)

# DISASTER AT ROCKALL

THE SINKING OF THE EMIGRANT SHIP SS NORGE IS ONE OF MODERN HISTORY'S WORST SEA TRAGEDIES. YET, IT REMAINS FORGOTTEN TODAY. WHY?

BY NORMAN LINDQUIST

On 11 June 1881, the Alexander Stephen and Sons Shipyard of Linthouse, Glasgow, Scotland, launched a newly-completed ship. The company could trace its shipbuilding ancestry all the way back to 1750 and its latest ship was the *Pieter de Coninck* that had been constructed for the Belgian company Theodore C. Engels

& Co. of Antwerp.

The ship was of 3700-tons deadweight and her triple-expansion steam engine could produce 1400-hp for a top speed of ten-knots. As constructed, she could carry 800 passengers. She was 346.5 feet in length with a beam of 38.2 feet and a depth of 32.7 feet.

She sailed faithfully with her new owners for eight years until being sold in 1889 to *A/S Dampskibs-selskabet Thingvalla*. The Danish company renamed the vessel *Norge*. The ship would be utilized on the Copenhagen/New York route and this was an emigrant-heavy route that usually saw the company's ships quite full.