Germany Emigration and Immigration

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In order to research your ancestor in German records, you need to know the exact town of origin. Most of the time this information is found in U.S. sources. Thus it is very important to search all available records in the United States first.

Most emigrants left Germany during the following periods:

1683 to 1820. Emigrants left Germany and migrated to Southeastern Europe, North America, Russia, England, Scotland, and Ireland. This wave of emigration was caused by economic hardships and religious persecutions after the Thirty Years’ War. Many of these emigrants were Protestants from Southwestern Germany, primarily the Rheinland, Westfalen, Hessen, Baden, Württemberg, and Elsaß-Lothringen. Read more about Pre-1820 Emigration from Germany.

1820 to 1871. This wave of emigration was caused chiefly by economic hardships, including unemployment and crop failures. Many Germans also left to avoid wars and military service. In some cases, government entities encouraged poor citizens to emigrate. Helpful websites for 19th Century German Emigration.

1871 to 1914. The number of emigrants increased dramatically during this time period. Emigration had become more affordable while political and economic problems continued. Emigrants came from all areas of Germany, including large numbers from the eastern provinces of Preußen [Prussia]. Emigrants included not only ethnic Germans but also Poles and Jews. Helpful websites for 19th Century German Emigration.

1914 to 1945. Even though the quota system reduced German emigration to the U.S. significantly, it did not stop entirely. Emigrants included political dissenters, Jews, and others who were uncomfortable with post World War I developments.

Emigration and immigration sources list the names of people leaving (emigrating) or arriving (immigrating) in Germany. These sources may be passenger lists, permissions to emigrate, or records of passports issued. The information in these records may include the emigrants' names, ages, occupations, destinations, and places of origin or birth places. Sometimes they also show family groups.

If you cannot find your ancestor, you may be able to find emigration information on your ancestor's neighbors. People who lived near each other in Germany often settled together in the country they immigrated to.
Records were created when individuals emigrated from Germany. Other records document their arrival in the destination country. This section discusses the following subjects:

- Finding the emigrant's town of origin
- Emigration from Germany, including the historical background of German emigration
- Records of German emigrants in their destination countries

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Finding the Emigrant's Town of Origin

Once you have traced your family back to a German immigrant, you must find the city or town your ancestor came from if you wish to find earlier generations. The records you will need to continue your research, such as birth, marriage, and death records, are kept in local areas. Germany has no nationwide index to these records.

Several sources may reveal where your ancestor came from. You may learn of your ancestor's place of origin by talking to older family members. Other relatives or a library may have documents that name the city or town, such as the following:

- Birth, marriage, and death certificates
- Obituaries
- Journals
- Photographs
- Letters
- Family Bibles
- Church certificates or records
- Naturalization applications and petitions
- Passenger lists
- Passports

The Family History Library publication Tracing Immigrant Origins gives more suggestions for finding your ancestor's place of origin.

**Emigration From Germany**

Significant numbers of German emigrants can be found on every continent and in many countries around the world. Millions of people left Germany in several waves of migration. Most emigrants left Germany during the following periods:

Records that document emigration from Germany include passenger lists, passports, permissions to emigrate, German and French emigration indexes, published emigration lists, police registration records, and other departure documents, as well as sources in the emigrant's new countries.

Links to various lists of German emigrants, passenger lists, etc. are found at:

- [http://www.roots-in-germany.de](http://www.roots-in-germany.de)

Articles explaining various aspects of German emigration are found at:

- [www.progenealogists.com/germany/articles/index.html](http://www.progenealogists.com/germany/articles/index.html)

**Passenger Departure Lists**

**Germans to America and the Hamburg Passenger Lists: Coordinated Schedules**

The earliest German emigrants went down the Rhine River and left Europe from Rotterdam in the Netherlands. As passenger traffic increased, Dutch, Belgian, French, and Danish ports were used. From 1850 to 1891, 41 percent of German and east European emigrants left via the port of Bremen (Germany), 30 percent via Hamburg (Germany), 16 percent via Le Havre (France), 8 percent via Antwerp (Belgium), and 5 percent via several ports in the Netherlands. (for further information see the following article by Raymond Wright III):

"German Ports: Gateway to America

The majority of emigrants to America from central and central-eastern Europe passed through
the ports of Bremen and Hamburg. German port records specified emigrants' birthplaces or residences, facts often missing in passenger lists filed at American ports of entry. A knowledge of German port records is essential for family historians in search of emigrant ancestors from areas that fell under the German, Austrian, and Russian empires of the past. It was not until 1830 that the trickle of emigration from Germany began to increase dramatically. Before that date, almost all German emigrants embarked for America from Rotterdam, Amsterdam, Antwerp, or Le Havre. The constitution of the German Confederation (1815) guaranteed citizens of all German states freedom of movement, including emigration to other countries. Germans could not, however, simply pack up and leave. They were required to seek release from citizenship in their homeland. This practice helped officials identify those who might be leaving with unfulfilled military or other obligations. To further assist the police in all German states in identifying those who were leaving, port authorities were required to identify all passengers departing from their ports for foreign destinations. The resulting records provide modern family historians with important facts about their immigrant ancestors. This article focuses on records created in the German ports of Hamburg and Bremen.

Hamburg
With 1.7 million inhabitants (as of 1996) and massive port facilities that handle about 11,000 ships annually (Statistisches Landesamt Hamburg Web site: http://www.hamburg.de), Hamburg is Germany's largest port. The city is not on a sea coast, but on the banks of one of Europe's major rivers, the Elbe, sixty-eight miles south of Cuxhaven, where the Elbe flows into the North Sea. Hamburg was a key city in the medieval German Hansa, a trading union that linked central and eastern European cities for their mutual protection and benefit. Hamburg played a key role in Bismarck's plan to make Germany the foremost industrial power in Europe. During the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the city's wharfs berthed ships that plied all of the oceans of the world, especially ships that carried products to and from the New World. Hamburg has a long history of independence and is today an independent city-state in the Federal Republic of Germany. Until about 1850, few emigrants traveled to new homelands via Hamburg. Rotterdam, Antwerp, Le Havre, and Bremen/Bremerhaven were the busiest emigrant embarkation points.

Prior to 1845, Hamburg city ordinances discouraged shipping companies from soliciting emigrants bound for foreign countries (J. M. Lappenberg, Sammlung der Verordnungen der freien und Hanse-Stadt Hamburg seit 1814, vol. xi, Hamburg: Johann August Meißner, 1832-, p. 104; vol. xv, p. 110; vol. xix, pp. 42-48). Legislation by the city council beginning in 1845 set up an administrative system that, by 1848, was producing passenger lists and passport registers that documented most emigrants embarking for other countries from Hamburg (Lappenberg, vol. xx, p. 253). The earliest surviving passenger lists begin in 1850 and span the years to 1934. The post-1854 lists are indexed, but the 1850-1855 lists provide an alphabetical listing of passengers for each year. After 1855, two types of passenger lists were kept: indirect lists for emigrants sailing to other European ports to board ships for their destination countries; and direct lists for those sailing aboard ships leaving Hamburg that carried passengers to their final destination in another country. ...

Many emigrants arrived in Hamburg with their ship's ticket in hand, purchased from an agent in or near their hometowns. Others arrived without a ticket, hoping to earn enough money in this
huge city to pay for their passage. Prospective emigrants planning to work in Hamburg were required to register with the police. Some of these persons may have actually applied to become citizens of Hamburg in order to enhance their ability to practice a trade. The Family History Library houses microfilm collections of residence permits and citizenship applications. Both records are indexed. Meldeprotokolle (residence registrations) can be found in the Family History Library Catalog under the locality "Hamburg" and the topic "Occupations." The applications are divided into categories based on the position of the applicant: Arbeiter und Dienstboten (Laborers and Servants) 1843-1890; Gesellen (Journeymen) 1850-1867; Gesinde (Household Servants/Employees) 1834-1843; and Handwerker und Fabrikarbeiter (Tradesmen and Factory Workers) 1837-1868. "Citizenship" is the topic in the Family History Library Catalog under which microfilmed citizenship applications from Hamburg are found. Each applicant was required to produce documents from his or her hometown documenting birth, occupation, and status before arriving in Hamburg. These are the records available on microfilm in the Family History Library and its LDS family history centers. The documents in the collection bear the title Heimatprotokolle (Records of Personal Origin) and cover the years 1826-1864.

Bremen

Bremen is similar to its rival port of Hamburg in a number of ways: it was founded in the ninth century; it was an important member of the Hansa and is an independent city-state today; it served as the embarkation point for millions of emigrants from central and eastern Europe bound for America; and it's on the banks of a large river that flows into the North Sea. The city is on the banks of the Weser river, some sixty miles southwest of Hamburg and about thirty miles south of its daughter city, the port of Bremerhaven at the mouth of the Weser. As silt on the bed of the Weser began to reduce access to Bremen's docks, the mayor and senate of Bremen purchased land near the mouth of the river from the King of Hannover in 1825 for a new port for Bremen's ships and merchants. By 1830 the newly constructed harbor, Bremerhaven ("Bremen's harbor"), was ready to receive its first customer, the American schooner Draper.

Embarkation for America

Bremerhaven soon became the embarkation point for most emigrants leaving Germany through Bremen. Although a massive re-routing of the Weser above Bremerhaven eventually solved the problem of accumulating silt, Bremerhaven remained the busiest emigrant port in Germany. The ports of Bremen and Bremerhaven today are much smaller than the port of Hamburg, with a combined population of 683,096 (as of 1993), and carry much less traffic than the port on the Elbe. In past years, however, Bremen and Bremerhaven consistently outperformed Hamburg as emigrant embarkation ports. A survey of several volumes (1, 13, 24, and 35) of Germans to America (Ira Glazier and P. William Filby, eds., Wilmington, Del.: Scholarly Resources, 1988-) for the years 1850-51, 1859-60, 1870, and 1880 shows thirty-eight percent of the emigrant ships arriving at Atlantic and Gulf Coast ports of North America were from Bremen/Bremerhaven. Hamburg accounted for only about seventeen percent of ships' arrivals, nearly the same as Liverpool (sixteen percent), and was only six percent ahead of the French port of Le Havre (eleven percent). Over eighty percent of the ships arriving with German immigrants on board during the years surveyed came from these four ports. Peter Marschalck, author of an inventory of emigration records in Bremen archives, concluded that during the past two centuries, over seven million individuals emigrated through the ports of Bremen/Bremerhaven, about ninety
percent of them to homes in the United States (Peter Marschalck, Inventar der Quellen zur
Geschichte der Wanderungen, Besonders der Auswanderung, in Bremer Archiven, Bremen:
Selbstverlag des Staatsarchivs der freien und Hansestadt Bremen, 1986, pp. 15, 49). The same
author's charts show that about fifty percent of these emigrants-3.5 million-were from German
states that in 1871 became united as the German Empire. According to the Dictionary of
American Immigration History (Francesco Cordasco, ed., Methuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow Press,
1990, p. 242), "Between 1820 and 1980 . . . nearly seven million Germans have immigrated to
the United States (fifteen percent of all U.S. immigrants during the period), more than from any
other country." Dr. Marschalck's figures cover only the period 1832-1958 (Inventar, pp. 47, 51),
and yet it is clear from these figures and Cordesco's statement that probably half of the German
emigrants to America embarked from Bremen/Bremerhaven.

Passenger Lists
The city council of Bremen passed ordinances in 1832 that required companies transporting
emigrants to file a list of all passengers with the city's emigration department. These contained
emigrants' names, ages, occupations, and places of origin. Between 1875 and 1909, the
passenger lists dating from 1832 were destroyed by city archivists for lack of storage space, and
the lists covering emigration during the years 1910-1920 were destroyed during Allied bombing
raids on Bremen during the Second World War (Inventar p. 10). Passenger lists for 1921-1939
are available at the Handelskammer Archiv in Bremen (Haus Schutting, Am Markt 13, 28195
Bremen). They are not indexed, but archives staff will search them upon request. Other records
can be used as substitutes for the missing passenger lists. Some Bremen/Bremerhaven ships
turned in copies of the detailed lists prepared for officials in Bremen to U.S. officials at the port
of debarkation. Gary Zimmerman and Marion Wolfert have indexed Bremen/Bremerhaven
passenger lists turned in at New York in their four-volume work Lists of Passengers Bound from
Bremen to New York, 1847-67, with Places of Origin (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co.,
1985-88). Germans to America also provides places of origin as they are listed in passenger lists
filed at Atlantic and Gulf Coast ports. Near the end of the nineteenth century, the number of
Germans emigrating through Bremen/Bremerhaven declined and the number of Russians, Poles,
and other Slavic groups increased. Among them were the so-called "Germans from Russia,"
descendants of German emigrants who founded ethnic German colonies along the lower Volga
and northern shores of the Black Sea, initially at the invitation of Empress Catherine the Great
(herself a German). Many of these emigrants will be found in the new series from Ira Glazier,
Migration from the Russian Empire: Lists of Passengers Arriving at the Port of New York
(Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., 1995-).

Other Record Sources
The city archives of both Bremen and Bremerhaven house records that help fill the gap created
by the loss of the passenger lists. Unfortunately, the Family History Library has few of these
records. Family historians can write to archives in Bremen and Bremerhaven to obtain copies of
records about their ancestors. If researchers have found ancestors recorded in passenger lists
registered at U.S. ports, for example, the date of arrival and the name of the ship will help them
find more facts about their ancestors and the nature of their voyages in records available in
Bremen and Bremerhaven. The Bremen State Archives—Staatsarchiv der freien Hansestadt
Bremen (Am Staatsarchiv 1, 28203 Bremen, Germany)—has duplicates of passenger lists from
several ships involved in court cases. A researcher could supply the name of the ship and the date
of its arrival to the archives' staff with the request that a search of the archives' inventory be
made to determine if a passenger list for a desired ship still exists. Providing the same
information to the Deutsches Schifffahrtsmuseum (Hans-Scharoun-Platz 1, 27568 Bremerhaven, Germany) may turn up the ship's log for the voyage that brought ancestors to America. This maritime museum depicts and preserves the history of German shipping from the Middle Ages to the present. Among its collections are ships' logs, photographs, and plans of German emigrant ships.

If ancestors were born or died on board an emigrant ship, the Bremen Seemannsamt maintained records which may be helpful—they recorded births and deaths aboard Bremen ships. These manuscripts are preserved in the Bremen State Archives; entries often list the place of origin of children's parents or of deceased persons: Archives' Register Number 4,24-D.5 contains births for the years 1868-1883 and 1903-1911; Register Number 4,24-D.6 covers certificates of birth and death received from 1875-1935 and 1936-1941 (but only for names beginning with H, K, and V); Register Number 4,24-D.7 contains deaths for 1845-1875; Register Number 4,24-D.8 has deaths for 1834-1937; after 1850 these volumes are the index to the death protocols found in 4,24-D.9 (1850-1937) and death entries from ships' logs found in 4,24-D.12 (1876-1941). If ancestors worked their way to America as crew members, the Seemannsamt should be checked as well—they also maintained copies of crew lists for Bremen ships that often include a person's place of birth. Researchers writing to the city archives for information about births, deaths, or service as crew members should provide the names of persons sought and the dates of birth or death or service, if they are known.

Another important collection of records in the city archives of Bremen is Entlassungen von Bewohnern des Landgebiets aus dem bremischen Staatsverband wegen Auswanderung 1854-1906 (Register Number 4, 17-33.D.8). These are records releasing inhabitants of the Bremen region from citizenship and granting them permission to emigrate. Among them are the actual applications for release from citizenship. These files may contain information about applicants' places of origin and the names and ages of other family members. These are only examples of the many records that recorded emigrants who passed through Bremen or lived and worked there for a time before leaving for the United States. The best means of learning about all of these records is to study Dr. Marschalck's Inventar der Quellen zur Geschichte der Wanderungen, besonders der Auswanderung, in Bremer Archiven. The book is still in print and is available from the Staatsarchiv Bremen.

The Bremerhaven City Archives—Seestadt Bremerhaven Stadtarchiv (Postfach 21 03 60, 27524 Bremerhaven, Germany)—also preserves records that may identify ancestors who emigrated from Bremen/Bremerhaven. Perhaps the most important are records listed in the archives' inventory under the heading Meldewesen. Many of them are indexed and were begun in the decade 1850-1860 and recorded persons living in the area as late as 1920-1930. These are records of persons moving into or away from Bremerhaven and its environs. If ancestors stayed in the Bremerhaven area to earn money toward their passage, or to wait an extended time for space to become available on a ship, they may have been registered. Archives' staff will search the indexes for names of ancestors who may have emigrated through Bremen/Bremerhaven. Researchers should supply the emigrant ancestor's name and approximate date of departure. If more information is known—family members, occupation, etc.—these facts should also be included in the request for a search of the archives' indexes.

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Only a few Germans emigrated from other European ports. Southern and western Germans tended to emigrate through the ports of Bremen or Le Havre. Northern and eastern Germans tended to leave through Hamburg.

The records of departures from these ports are called passenger lists. Information given in passenger lists varies but usually includes the emigrant's name, age, occupation, last residence or birthplace, and destination. The records also name the ship and the date of departure. The most significant passenger departure lists for German emigrants are from the following ports:

**Bremen.** Unfortunately, the passenger departure lists for the port of Bremen were destroyed. The lists for 1847 to 1871 have been partially reconstructed. Some 20 to 25 percent of the Bremen passengers arriving at New York during this time period are indexed with their place of origin in the source below:


An early commercial partner with Bremen was the port at Baltimore, Maryland. Many Germans going to America through Bremen landed in Baltimore. The Baltimore passenger arrival lists are indexed.

**Hamburg.** The most significant surviving passenger departure lists are from Hamburg. The original departure records for Hamburg are at the state archive [Staatsarchiv] in Hamburg. Every emigrant from every country who left from Hamburg between 1850 and 1934 should be on these passenger lists. See the [Hamburg Passenger List](http://www.germanroots.com/hamburg.html) section.

Most importantly, these lists show each passenger’s hometown, and the lists are indexed. The Hamburg Passenger List indexes are being put online. See:


For most years, the index is handwritten in gothic script and alphabetized only by the first letter of the surname. A separate index of departures was created each year. There is also a compiled fifteen-year index for 1856 to 1871. The passenger lists themselves are alphabetical from 1850 to 1855.

The Hamburg passenger list records and indexes have been microfilmed and are available at the Family History Library. They are listed in the Place Search of the catalog under:

GERMANY, HAMBURG, HAMBURG
EMIGRATION AND IMMIGRATION

Le Havre. The only lists available for the French port of Le Havre are lists of crews and passengers on commercial cargo vessels. Passenger vessels are not included. A few German emigrants are included in these records, but most Germans who sailed from Le Havre are not recorded. These lists are not indexed. The Family History Library has filmed the Le Havre commercial cargo vessel passenger lists for the years 1750 to 1886. The film numbers are listed in the Place Search of the catalog under:

FRANCE, SEINE-MARITIME, LE HAVRE BUSINESS

RECORDS AND COMMERCE

Antwerp. The library has only the passenger lists of emigrants who sailed from Antwerp in 1855. This year is only a small percentage of the total. Many German emigrants sailed from this port. The following is an index to the Antwerp passenger lists:

Hall, Charles M. *The Antwerp Emigration Index*. Salt Lake City, Utah, USA: Heritage International, 1983?. (FHL book Ref 949.3 W22h; FHL film 1,183,596.) The Library also has registers of foreign nationals residing in Antwerp prior to Emigration: Vreemdelingendossiers, 1840-1930; indexed.

Netherlands. The Family History Library has copies of passenger lists for the port of Rotterdam for the years 1900 to 1938. (FHL fiche 6,109,126,109,217) However, most German travel through Dutch ports was before 1820. Pre-1807 Philadelphia port arrivals include many Germans who left via Dutch ports (see Strassburger and Hinke's book, listed later in this section).

Copenhagen. The library has the passenger lists of emigrants from Copenhagen [København], Denmark, from 1868 to 1940. Only a few Germans appear on these lists, which are alphabetical for intervals of one to five years. The film numbers are in the Place Search of the Family History Library Catalog under:

DENMARK, KØBENHAVN, KØBENHAVN EMIGRATION AND IMMIGRATION

Passports

Passports became important in Germany during the 19th century as a control measure. Before that a passport was a form of recommendation. A letter given to the traveler made his passage within and outside of German territories easier, depending on the influence the issuer had. Passports were both status symbol for uninterrupted travel and legal documentation for members belonging to fringe groups. Mandatory passports were required only in times of crises, when there were epidemics and political or military conflicts. Such documents were restricted to time and space.
Passport guidelines were established in France in 1792 to control migrations. Citizens now needed a passport if they wanted to leave their “Département”. Such documents were limited, mostly allowing people to travel certain routes. Such guidelines did not really change until 1860. The restrictions were implemented for political and military reasons. Conscripted men could be watched better and travelers could be kept away from political and strategically important places, for instance, the capital. Thus potential danger caused by spies and other agitators could be prevented. This system was copied by other European nations.

In German territories, the influx of refugees from revolutionary France, lead to stiffer measures. The foreign office watched emigrants much more closely and placed them in designated areas. During the Napoleonic occupation identification laws were worked out and assimilated to the French model. If someone wanted to move more than 8 miles away from his home, he needed identification on his person at all times. Students who identified themselves by their matriculation papers were no longer to do so since 1820. Documents issued by guilds were only valuable in connection with an official passport until “Wanderbücher” were issued, similar to the French “livret d’ouvrier” in which travel routes and work related certificates were documented. Members of the police would overlook the identification process. After 1830 “Wanderbücher” became the norm of identification for journeymen who were part of the German Bund. People of other German territories as well as other non-Germans had no right to entry or stay. Disregard for guidelines were prosecuted. The affected could find themselves in prison or could plead their case at the next higher administration level.

The measures for issuance of identification and control had somewhat shifted from former intentions in as much that now crime and movements of fringe groups came under closer scrutiny. Beggars, vagabonds, out of work servants, quacks, peddlers etc. were not permitted entry into German territories. This law coincided with the long held convictions by officials against “das fahrende Volk” (migrants).

Before each travel which would entail departure from immediate surroundings a passport had to be issued by the local mayor or the judge of the regional administration. Such papers were valid for the length of the journey or for one year. Identification had to be shown to each official who wanted to see them. Document controls could occur in the street, the next big town or at the first overnight stay.

In Prussia a passport entailed a detailed description of a person. People of higher social standing were issued a so called “Signalement”, meaning that they did not have to be subjected to scrutinizing measures by the police. People of the upper classes even were issued identification cards which allowed them to bypass control, thus avoiding long lines for instance at the railway stations in Berlin. Such cards were also issued in the kingdom of Saxony, Anhalt –Dessau, Anhalt-Köthen and the Prussian provinces of Brandenburg, Sachsen and Silesia as well as for the district of Stettin. In 1849 this measure was adopted by the Kurfürstentum Hessen and then again by 15 other territories. Most members of the German Bund had this privilege in place by 1852.

By 1867 regular pass controls were eliminated, but it became mandatory to carry an official document while travelling. In 1865 it was determined that requirement to carry a passport between Bavaria, Hannover, Saxony and Wuerttemberg was no longer necessary.
Passport regulations between 1815 and the 1850s in German territories were in the hands of police officers. They were allowed access to guest books in inns, they could trace the exact travel route by looking at visas and remarks on the travel documents. People were sometimes willfully subjected to examinations, long periods of waiting or even corporal punishment. The execution of the passport laws was not evenly handled. Lax officials as well as stringent adhering to regulations have been reported by travelers. Another factor was that not enough officers were available to enforce emigration-immigration/migration laws which account for the many secret emigrations from German territories. Statistics say that at times 90% of the population in some areas of East Prussia emigrated without official consent. In other German territories the amount of secret emigrations sway between 30 and 50%, and that is only estimated. Secret emigration was more an issue in German territories closest to the French border. Emigrants with enough cash at hand were issued entry on the spot, thus also supporting the ship companies operating out of French harbors.

Each state or city had its own laws regarding passports. In many cases, the applications for passports and the supporting documentation have been preserved. These records often give information such as the emigrant's name, birth date or age, birthplace, occupation, last residence, verification of identity, and physical description.

**Hamburg.** Residents of Hamburg had to apply for a passport to emigrate. A few emigrants from other parts of Germany stopped in Hamburg long enough to become residents. If they were residents, they might be in the passport records. The Hamburg passport applications have been microfilmed for the years 1851 to 1929 and include indexes. They are in the Place Search of the Family History Library Catalog under:

GERMANY, HAMBURG, HAMBURG

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**Stuttgart (Württemberg).** The Family History Library has indexed the Stuttgart-area passport records for the years 1845 to 1920. This index usually gives the emigrant's hometown and destination. Names beginning with the letters A through R are on FHL film 1,125,018, and S through Z are on film 1,125,019. Many of the individuals listed were internal migrants who came from another part of Württemberg and remained in Württemberg. Most names are from the early 1900s. To find the original passport and visa record microfilm numbers, look in the Place Search of the Family History Library Catalog under:

GERMANY, WÜRTTEMBERG, STUTTGART - EMIGRATION AND IMMIGRATION

**Permission To Emigrate Records**

Germans had to apply for permission to emigrate from most areas. The Family History Library has these application records for several states and cities, including Baden, Rheinland, the Pfalz, and Zwickau. For example, the library has microfilmed the emigration application records of Württemberg. They list the emigrant’s birthplace, residence, assets, and indebtedness. Most
Württemberg records consist of applications and accompanying documents that were collected by district offices. These records begin in the mid-1700s, with most from the 1800s. Most districts also have handwritten indexes for the mid-1800s. Six published volumes of indexes are available, which so far cover 35 of the 64 districts:


For Westfalen in the Minden area there is available at the Family History Library a book called "Beiträge zur Westfälischen Familienforschung." Call number 943.56 D2b v. 38-39.

For Bayern there is a periodical entitled Blätter des Bayrischen Landesvereines für Familienkunde. The call number is 943.3 B2b. The volumes which deal with emigration are V. 1, page 19 and 48, V. 2, page 103, V. 3, pages 9, 39, 73, 87, 102 V. 6-7, V. 9 pages 157, 417.

**German Emigration Card Indexes**

Dozens of card indexes exist for German emigrants. For example, the Family History Library has microfilmed card indexes for emigrants from Hessen. The indexes are divided into five sections for various time periods or areas of Hessen, each in alphabetical order. Other card indexes at the library include the following:

- From Baden 1660s-1900s
- From the Pfalz 1500s-1900s
- To the Austro-Hungarian Empire 1750-1943
- To Russia 1750-1943

There are card indexes of World War II refugees from many parts of central and eastern Europe. These indexes are listed in the Locality Search of the Family History Library Catalog under the region from which the refugees fled.

Periodicals publish many emigration records. The following source is a card index for emigrants that have been listed in the periodical Deutsches Familienarchiv (German Families Archive):

*Emigrants to and from Germany from the 18th to the 20th Century.* Salt Lake City, Utah, USA: Genealogical Society of Utah, 1976. (FHL film 1,125,001.)

Genealogical societies often compile card indexes of emigrants from the German region they specialize in. For details on how to contact these societies (to learn if they have an emigration index), see [Germany Societies](#).
French Emigration Indexes

Many Germans either lived in Elsaß-Lothringen (Alsace-Lorraine) or passed through it to emigrate. The following sources help identify many of them.

**Alsace Emigration Index.** The Family History Library has compiled an index of persons who emigrated from or through Elsaß-Lothringen from 1817 to 1866. About half the names are from southern Germany. The alphabetical index gives the emigrant's name, age, occupation, place of origin, residence, destination, passport date, and source microfilm number. Not everyone who emigrated via Alsace is in this index. The index is easiest to find in the Author/Title Search of the Family History Library Catalog under Alsace Emigration Index. It is also listed as:


**Alsace Emigration Books.** Cornelia Schrader-Muggenthaler used the *Alsace Emigration Index*, other emigration records, passenger lists, genealogies, genealogy periodicals, and newspaper articles to compile the following index:


The following is also an excellent book on the subject:


See also: [http://wiki-en.genealogy.net/Lorraine#Emigration_Records](http://wiki-en.genealogy.net/Lorraine#Emigration_Records)

Published Emigration Records

Lists of emigrants are often published. These usually focus on the emigrants from one town, principality, or state. An example is listed below:

Gruhne, Fritz. *Auswandererlisten des ehemaligen Herzogtums Braunschweig 1846-1871 (List of emigrants from the former Duchy of Braunschweig, 1846-1871)*. Wolfenbüttel, Germany: Braunschweigischer Geschichtsverein, 1971. (FHL book 943.59 W29g; film 1,045,468 item 10.) This list does not include the city of Braunschweig and the district of Holzminden.

Links to various Lists of German emigrants, passenger lists, etc. are found at:

Dozens of other published emigrant lists are listed in the Place Search of the Family History Library Catalog under the town, state, or province from which the emigrants came. A partial bibliography of German emigration sources is in Smith's *Encyclopedia of German-American Genealogical Research*, pages 207 to 232.

Here are some published emigration lists online. Click on Auswanderer, then on Auswandererlisten.

**Police Lists or Registrations**

German police began keeping records of each person's residence in the 1840s. Citizens were required to tell the police when they moved. These records are discussed further in *Germany Population*.

**Other Records of Departure**

Several other records were usually created as emigrants left Germany.

**Church Records (Annotations).** Often the local pastor or priest noted peoples' departures in the parish registers next to birth or marriage entries. Sometimes these notes include the year of emigration and names of those who went with the person. Where family registers were kept, the departure was sometimes noted there. See *Germany Church Records* for more information.

**Probate Records of Relatives Who Stayed.** Wills or testaments of relatives who stayed in Germany occasionally mention their relatives in foreign lands. For more information, see *Germany Probate Records*.

**Newspaper Announcements.** Local newspapers often told of residents in their area moving to other lands. See *Germany Newspapers* for more information.

*The Germanic Emigrants Register* (1992 edition) indexes German emigrants listed in the *Deutscher Reichsanzeiger* newspaper from 1820 to 1914. This 277,000-name, 23-microfiche index shows name, event year, birth date, emigration date, destination, and last known residence. It does not give the place of origin, but you can get the place of origin for a fee by writing to:

**Germanic Emigrants Register**
Postfach 10 08 22
51608 Gummersbach
GERMANY

Internet: [http://www.progenealogists.com/germany/articles/bureauc.htm](http://www.progenealogists.com/germany/articles/bureauc.htm)

The Family History Library has the 1991 edition of the *Germanic Emigrants Register: Germanic Emigrants Register*. Diepholz, Germany: [s.n.], 1991. (FHL fiche 6,312,192.) This source consists of 10 microfiche and contains about 118,000 names.
Locating Emigration Records of Germany

The Family History Library has emigration records or indexes for almost every German state and various German districts or cities. These are listed in the catalog under the particular state, province, or town in Germany where the records were made. Check the Place Search of the catalog under:

GERMANY, [STATE] - EMIGRATION AND IMMIGRATION

GERMANY, [STATE], [TOWN] EMIGRATION AND IMMIGRATION

Records of German Emigrants in Their Destination Countries

Often the best sources for information about German emigrants are found in the country they immigrated to. (see http://www.loc.gov/rr/genealogy/bib_guid/german-immigration.pdf)

Records of German immigrants may list their towns of origin and other valuable information. To learn more about these records, see the research outline for the country where your ancestor settled and the research outline Tracing Immigrant Origins.

United States

Early German immigrants to the United States (1683-1820) settled mainly in Pennsylvania. Those in the second wave of migration (1820-1871) often settled in Ohio, Wisconsin, Indiana, Missouri, and Texas. During the third wave (1871-1914), many German immigrants settled in New York City, Chicago, St. Louis, or other large cities.

German immigrants from Pommern often went to Wisconsin. Large numbers also settled in Illinois, Minnesota, and other Midwest states. Immigrants from the Palatine area usually settled in Pennsylvania. The book below describes the history and process of migrating from Germany to the United States:


To trace German origins in Pennsylvania can be a daunting task. There are efforts on the US as well as the German side to work together in tracing ancestors. Helpful sites to gain information might be Deutsch-Pennsylvanischer Arbeitskreis e.V. or pdc.wikipedia.org

Immigrant records available in the United States include the following:
**Passenger Arrival Lists.** Most German immigrants to the United States arrived at New York City. The Family History Library has microfilm copies of the arrival records and indexes of this and other ports. See the United States Research Outline for more information about emigration and immigration records of the United States. Unfortunately, few United States arrival records give the immigrant's specific town of origin.


**Published Passenger Arrival Lists.** The arrival records for many German immigrants to the United States are partially indexed. By mid-1994 there were 36 volumes covering the years 1850 to 1880.

Each volume is individually indexed:


The following bibliography contains over 2,500 published lists of emigrants and immigrants:


More than 1,600 of these lists are indexed in P. William Filby, *Passenger and Immigration Lists Index*, 12+ Volumes. (Detroit, Michigan, USA: Gale Research, 1981-; FHL book Ref 973 W33p). This does not index official U.S. arrival lists. Many of the names are from post-1820 published sources. Two of the hundreds of German immigration records indexed in Filby are listed below:


**Census Records.** The 1920 United States census sometimes lists the province or city of birth for people (or their parents) born in Germany. Some state censuses, such as the 1925 New York census (which gives the date and place of naturalization), contain more information than federal censuses.
Military Records. Many German immigrants served in the United States military, especially in the American Civil War. Their military records may help identify their German hometowns. Records of German soldiers who served as British mercenaries in the American Revolution are described in Germany Military Records.

Newspapers. Arriving German immigrants are occasionally mentioned in newspapers, especially German-language newspapers. See Germany Newspapers for a bibliography of German-language newspapers.

Southeast Europe

Starting in 1722, the Austro-Hungarian monarchs encouraged Germans to settle their lands, especially along the devastated border with the Turks. Colonies developed in what later became Hungary, Romania, and Yugoslavia. Initially, twice as many Germans moved to this area as went to America. More references and research tools for locating Germans who emigrated to Southeast Europe are found on-line at:

- [http://www.genealogienetz.de/reg/ESE/russia.html](http://www.genealogienetz.de/reg/ESE/russia.html)

Following World War II, most returned to Germany or Austria, but many also moved to the United States, Canada, Australia, Brazil, and other countries.

Below are listed some indexes that can help you find Germans from Southeast Europe:

Deutsches Ausland-Institut (Stuttgart). Auswandererkartei der Deutschen nach Ungarn und Rußland, 1750-1805 (Emigration index of Germans in Hungary and Russia, 1750-1805). Salt Lake City, Utah, USA: Genealogical Society of Utah, 1988. (FHL films 1,340,060 item 5 to 1,340,061 item 2.)


Brandt, Bruce. Where to look for hard-to-find German-speaking ancestors in Eastern Europe: index to 19,720 surnames in 13 books, with historical background on each. Second Edition. Baltimore, Maryland, USA: Clearfield County, 1993. (FHL book 943 H22b.) This contains surnames only.

Russia
In 1763 Catherine the Great of Russia offered free land, no taxes for thirty years, freedom of religion, and other incentives to encourage Germans to settle her vast, sparsely populated domain. Dozens of German colonies were established and grew until World War I. Many Russian Germans moved to the United States, Canada, or South America beginning in 1874. For a more detailed discussion of this topic see the Germans from Russia Wiki page. The following is the single most valuable source for researching German families from Russia:

Stumpp, Karl. *The Emigration from Germany to Russia in the Years 1763-1862*. Tübingen, Germany: Stumpp, 1973; reprint 1978. (FHL book 943 W2sk; fiche 6000829; 1978 ed. on film 1,183,529). Text in English. For a digital version, [click here](https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/list). The most useful parts of this source for genealogists are the alphabetical lists of German immigrants, which are divided into three sections: Volga region immigrants (pp. 117-165), Mennonites in South Russia and Samara (pp. 167-204), and Black Sea region immigrants (except Mennonites) (pp. 204-497). A good web site for Germans from Russia coming to the U.S. is:

- [https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/list](https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/list)

Many online sources for Germans from Russia are found in the Odessa Digital Library:


The German Protestant church [EvangelischeKirche] of Russia was organized into consistories headquartered in St. Petersburg. The Family History Library has microfilmed the 276 volumes of the consistories' church record civil transcripts in the Russian State Historical Archives. These records are from German settlements in Ingermanland (surrounding St. Petersburg), near the Black Sea, and in Bessarabia for the years 1833 to 1900. They are in the Place Search of the Family History Library Catalog under:

RUSSIA, [PROVINCE], [TOWN] — CHURCH RECORDS

German Protestant records are also listed in the Subject Search of the catalog under:

GERMANS — RUSSIA — CHURCH RECORDS AND REGISTERS

In addition, several organizations, such as the American Historical Society of Germans from Russia and the Germans from Russia Heritage Society, will help genealogists. More information about such organizations is found in Germany Societies. Web site for AHSGR: [www.ahsgr.org](http://www.ahsgr.org)

Web site for Germans from Russia Heritage Society:

- [www.grhs.org](http://www.grhs.org)

Other Countries
Similar immigration records and indexes are available at the library for most nations and states where Germans settled. They are listed under the new nation or state in the Place Search of the Family History Library Catalog under:

[NATION or STATE] - EMIGRATION AND IMMIGRATION

You can look in the Subject Search of the catalog under:

GERMANS - [NATION or STATE]

RUSSIAN GERMANS

FamilySearch Historical Record Collections

Online collections containing these records are located in FamilySearch.org.

Wiki articles describing these collections are found at:

- Germany, Bremen Name Card Index to Passenger Lists (FamilySearch Historical Records)
- Germany, Hessen, Darmstadt City Records (FamilySearch Historical Records)

Retrieved from
"https://www.familysearch.org/learn/wiki/en/Germany_Emigration_and_Immigration"
Category: Germany