

Helmstadter Immigration to USA from Germany in 1882

Document Overview

This document details some information about the immigration of Germans and of our Helmstadter ancestors to the USA from Germany in May 1882.

Information in this document, beginning on page 3, was copied from the following book:

Germans to America
Lists of Passengers Arriving at U.S. Ports
Volume 42
March 1882 – May 1882

This book is only one volume in the series of 67 volumes that comprise the complete series of Germans to America books. This series of books contain passenger lists of Germans immigrants arriving in the USA. Volume 1 has passenger lists starting in January 1850 and Volume 67 has passenger lists that end in 1897.

Following are some statistics about Volume 42, which has information about our ancestors:

- Volume 42 contains passenger lists for only three months in 1882: March 28 to May 18; a total of only 52 days.
- There are 438 pages of passenger lists.
- Each page has 2 columns of passenger lists.
- Each passenger has his/her own line in a column in the list.
- Each page has about 150 passengers listed.
- The total number of passengers listed in Volume 42 is about 65,700 (150 x 438).

For people who research genealogy, the Germans to America series of books is a well known and valuable resource. If you do an Internet search for Germans to America (it helps if you add the last name of the book editor, Glazier) you will get lots of hits, including <http://home.att.net/~wee-monster/gtoa.html>. At this site you can buy your own copy of Volume 42 though Amazon.com or you can buy a searchable CD that covers the years 1875-1888 from the Germans to America series.

Finally an important note: Believe it or not, we can thank Dan Helmstadter for this published information about our ancestors: Dan was the President of the company named Scholarly Resources, which originally published the Germans to America series of books.

This document was prepared by Jim Hager, grandson of Philip Helmstadter, who, as you will see later in this document, is listed on page 294 in Volume 42. If you would like a copy of this document in Microsoft Word format or in PDF format, send me an email at jhager3940@verizon.net and I'll email you the format you request. (PDF format documents can be opened by free software named Adobe Acrobat Reader.)

Table of Contents

Title Page for Volume 42.....	3
Forward.....	3
Introduction.....	4
Historical Background of German Migration in the Nineteenth Century.....	5
Conclusion	8
Helmstaedter Family Information from Volume 42	9

Title Page for Volume 42

Germans To America

Lists of Passengers Arriving at U.S. Ports

Volume 42

March 1882 – May 1882

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Edited by
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And
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Forward

As a speaker at many major genealogical conferences, I am aware of the enormous interest in German immigration, particularly after 1840. Most of the questions at these conferences and in my correspondence concern the search for German immigrants. About four million Germans came to the United States between 1850 and 1893. Although they are recorded in the National Archives, their names remain unindexed and therefore unfindable unless the researcher knows the ship on which the person arrived and the exact date of arrival. What has been needed is a list of immigrants, arranged first by ship at the port of debarkation and then indexed by family name.

The original passenger lists for 1850 through 1893, prepared by shipping agents and ships' officers, are now deposited at the Temple-Balch Institute's Center for Immigration Research in Philadelphia and are reproduced chronologically in these volumes by date of each ship's arrival. This arrangement will greatly aid genealogical researchers as will the volume-by-volume index of passenger surnames.

Why was there such a great mass of people wishing to quit their homeland for the unknown United States? Emigration from Germany was spurred by a variety of factors, including crop failures, a lack of industrial employment, overpopulation, social discontent and political repression and upheaval, as well as the lure of cheap land and the chance to make a fresh start in a new country. The lists, starting from 1850, were chosen for publication because that year begins a period when immigration to the United States was swelling, touched off by the departure of political refugees, liberals, and intellectuals and by stories about a better life sent back by those who had emigrated previously. Most of the immigrants found the trip worthwhile, and few returned to Germany.

The two main German ports of embarkation were Bremen and Hamburg, where German officials prepared lists of emigrants. For various reasons the Bremen lists have been destroyed or otherwise made unavailable, but, since the lists reproduced here record arrivals in all U.S. ports, the loss of the Bremen lists does not present as serious a problem as it might be otherwise. The great majority of immigrants came to New York, but many went to New Orleans and Baltimore, with fewer going to Boston and Philadelphia.

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Introduction

Germans to America provides both the historian and the genealogist with an extensive data base of German immigrants who came to the United States from 1850 through 1893. This data base derives from the original ship manifest schedules, currently housed at the Temple-Balch Institute's Center for Immigration Research. These schedules were filed by all vessels entering U.S. ports in accordance with the act of Congress of 1819.

The passenger lists reproduced in these volumes are arranged in chronological order by date of arrival. In the 1850-1855 volumes, these lists contain a minimum of 80 percent German surnames and are published in their entirety. Starting in 1856 the selection criterion changes to include all ships with German passengers, regardless of the percentage. Unlike the previous volumes, only those calling themselves Germans are now listed; all other passenger names are deleted. It should be noted that after 1856 these German immigrants include those coming not only from German states or territories but also from countries such as France, Switzerland, or Luxemburg.

According to the act of 1819, lists of all passengers were to be delivered upon arrival to the local collector of customs, who made copies that were then transmitted to the secretary of state and subsequently reported to Congress.¹ The secretary of state also published quarterly and annual summaries under the title of Statement of the Number and Description of Passengers Arriving in the United States between 1820 and 1870. These reports were later published by the Bureau of

Statistics of the Treasury Department from 1867 to 1895 and by the Office of Immigration, now the Immigration and Naturalization Service, after 1895.

The passenger lists make possible a detailed reconstruction of the movement of population from the major sender countries, in the present case the German states, by including information on the age, sex, occupation, and nationality of each passenger and residence and putative destination. Analysis of this information enables the researcher to identify U.S. citizens returning to their country of origin, persons transiting the United States, and immigrants. The manifests record deaths during the voyage, although information on mortality is not reproduced in these volumes. The lists herein also indicate the name of the ship, the port of embarkation, and the date of arrival in the U.S. port.

Although the manifests provide significant information about nineteenth-century immigration, we know little about the compilation of these lists; we do not know who made the lists originally, or if there was any uniform standard applied in collecting the data at the various ports. Some evidence suggests that the lists were compiled first by shipping agents at the port of embarkation and initially contained the names of all prepaid passengers; the names of additional passengers were added on board, after which clerks copied the lists before depositing them with U.S. authorities at the port of debarkation.

Historical Background of German Migration in the Nineteenth Century

Population increased rapidly in Germany during the period of relative stability that followed the conclusion of the Napoleonic Wars. Although German-speaking immigrants had been coming to the United States since the middle of the eighteenth century, the number of German arrivals in a single year did not exceed 10,000 until 1832. The numbers increased rapidly thereafter, reaching 60,000 in 1846, 150,000 in 1852, and 196,000 in 1854². Immigration declined during the period of the Civil War but revived between 1866 and 1873, decreased slightly during the depression of the later 1870s, and rose to its high point between 1880 and 1885.

Table 1
German Immigration to the USA and
Total German Emigration, 1820-1914

Years	Total German immigration into USA (000, in thousands)	Germans as Percent of immigration into USA.	Total emigration out of Germany (000, in thousands)	Percent of emigrating Germans who immigrated to USA
1820 - 24	1.9	4.9	9.8	19.4
1825 - 29	3.8	4.3	12.7	29.9
1830 - 34	39.3	17.0	51.1	76.9
1835 - 39	85.5	27.8	94.0	91.0
1840 - 44	100.5	25.1	110.6	90.9
1845 - 49	284.9	27.7	308.2	92.4
1850 - 54	654.3	34.1	728.3	89.8
1855 - 59	321.8	35.9	372.0	86.5
1860 - 64	204.1	28.9	225.9	90.3
1865 - 69	519.6	37.8	542.7	95.2
1870 - 74	450.5	23.9	484.6	93.0
1875 - 79	120.0	14.0	143.3	83.7
1880 - 84	797.9	26.3	864.3	92.3
1885 - 89	452.6	20.5	498.2	90.8
1890 - 94	428.8	18.5	462.2	92.8
1895 - 99	120.2	8.8	142.4	84.4
1900 - 04	128.6	3.9	140.8	91.3
1905 - 09	123.5	2.5	135.7	91.0
1910 - 14	84.1	1.6	104.3	80.6

Source: P. Marschalk, Deutsche Ueberseewanderung im 19 Jahrhundert, p. 48.

(Note: Our Helmstadter ancestors arrived in May, 1882. According to the information in this table, the period 1880-1884 was the 4-year period of time with the largest number of German immigrants to the USA.)

German emigration to the United States, prior to the 1830s, had come almost exclusively from southwest Germany, Wurtemberg, Baden, Bavaria, and the Rhineland-Palatinate, which were the areas of greatest demographic increase. This was a region predominantly of small farms, in which inheritance laws resulted in the equal division of family property among the surviving children. This, combined with the effects of peasant emancipation, resulted in a steadily declining economic base for much of the increasing population. German industry had not developed sufficiently to enable urban areas to absorb the surplus population, thereby providing a stimulus to overseas migration.

In the 1840s emigration spread to northwest Germany. Although this was an area characterized by more sizable landholdings, the local textile industry was unable to compete with English

imports, and industrial and agricultural depression forced unemployed artisans, tenant farmers, and agricultural laborers to emigrate. By the 1850s peasant emancipation in the eastern and northeastern parts of Germany, Schleswig Holstein, Mecklenburg, and East Prussia led to the dispossession of former serfs from the great estates,³ and to large-scale emigration of peasants and artisans after 1865. Although the population of the German states doubled between 1840 and 1910, from 32.8 million to 64.9 million, emigration carried off approximately one third of this increase.⁵ The great exodus between 1847 and 1855 was the result of a combination of crop failures, the increase in the price of food, famine, political instability; and the general decline in the standard of living of a predominantly rural population.

Table 2
Geographic Origins of German Emigration, 1871-1910

Years	Northeast Germany	Northwest Germany	Southwest Germany	Central Germany	Southeast Germany	West Germany	Hanseatic States (Baltic Sea area)
1871-75	39.6	15.4	25.6	3.8	5.2	8.3	2.1
1876-80	35.4	15.2	25.3	4.2	7.2	9.8	3.1
1881-85	38.2	14.4	24.1	3.8	6.3	10.6	2.6
1886-90	37.7	12.0	28.9	3.2	5.1	10.1	3.0
1891-95	34.8	13.3	25.3	4.4	7.1	10.7	4.4
1896-1900	28.6	14.8	26.1	4.8	6.9	10.8	8.0
1901-05	30.7	13.8	23.6	5.0	7.8	14.1	5.0
1906-10	27.5	13.3	23.4	5.2	8.7	15.7	6.2

Source: W. Mönckmeier, *Die deutsche überseeische Auswanderung* (Jena, 1912), pp. 128 - 29, 133.

(Note: In this classification of German regions, Momart would probably be in Southwest Germany.)

(Note: Although the source document does not indicate so, the numbers in Table 2 appear to be percentages because each row adds up to about 100.)

German overseas emigration falls into two phases in the nineteenth century. Between 1815 and 1865 families of small farmers, artisans, and tradesmen from the southwest and agricultural laborers from the northwest left Germany in search of cheap land, which was abundant in the United States. Preliminary analysis of data for the period 1850-51 indicates that two thirds of the departures were male and that over 80 percent were either farmers or laborers. Between 1865 and 1895 peasants and unemployed industrial workers, largely from eastern Germany, left the country looking for employment, attracted by the demand for cheap labor during a period of rapid U.S. industrialization that followed the Civil War. The era of massive overseas migration came to an end in the mid 1890s as German industry matured and absorbed surplus agricultural and industrial population.

Bremen and Hamburg served as the primary German ports of embarkation throughout the nineteenth century, but French ports, such as Le Havre, and Antwerp and Rotterdam, in the Low Countries, were also major points of departure.

Table 3
German Arrivals at USA Ports, 1850-1890 (000)

	1850	1860	1870	1880	1890
New York	49.90	38.96	75.66	67.98	67.98
Boston	0.07	0.127	2.99	0.91	0.30
Philadelphia	0,23	0.372	0.69	3.69	3.61
Baltimore	3.30	3.47	9.18	9.08	17.98
New Orleans	5.70	5.35	1.54	1.16	0.13
Other	-	6.22	-	1.81	0.02
Total	59.20	54.49	89.45	84.67	92.42

Source: House Executive Documents. 1850 - 90.

(Note: As you will see later in this document, our Helmstadter ancestors arrived in New York.)

The most important ports of arrival in the United States were New York, from which the immigrants dispersed via Albany and Troy throughout the western part of the country, and Baltimore and New Orleans, from which they reached the Mississippi. However, the Civil War abruptly ended New Orleans's position as a leading port of entry and its predominance as a commercial center. New railroad routes from the East now ran to St. Louis and the Mississippi River, and therefore many immigrants landing in New York after the war could find direct railroad passage to the Midwest. Philadelphia and Boston, though, remained secondary ports throughout the latter half of the nineteenth century.

Conclusion

Genealogists and historians in the field of immigration have relied on aggregate-level data to examine the development, extent, and characteristics of population movements. With the information available in this volume, researchers will be able to go beyond gross statistical profiles to study these movements at the level of microhistory—to follow individuals and families from their place of origin to their destination and to focus on their personal circumstances.⁶ This, in turn, will enable scholars to assess the push-and-pull factors that contributed to the migration phenomenon and to give a more human dimension to this mass movement.

The editor would like to express his appreciation to the students and staff at the Temple-Balch Institute's Center for Immigration Research who have worked so diligently and conscientiously on this project. A special debt is owed to the systems manager, Nancy Smart.

Ira A. Glazier
Director, Temple-Balch Institute's Center for Immigration Research

NOTES

1. For material dealing with the Passenger Acts see Edith Abbot, immigration: Select Documents and Case Records, Part 1 (Chicago, 1924).
2. F. Burgdorfer, "Migration across the Frontiers of Germany," p. 333, in W. W. Wilcox, ed., International Migrations, vol. 2, Interpretations (New York, 1931); P. Marschalk, Deutsche Uberseewanderung im 19 Jahrhundert (Stuttgart, 1973), p. 10.
3. Marschalk, Deutsche Uberseewanderung, pp. 41-44.
4. W. Koliman and P. Marschalk, "German Emigration to the United States," in Perspectives in American History 7 (1973): 524 - 41.
5. Burgdorfer, "Migration," pp. 315-16.
6. W. Kamphoefner, Westfalen in der Neuen Welt, Eine Sozialgeschichte der Auswanderung im 19 Jahrhundert (Munster, 1982). Also papers of Robert Swierenga, Deirdre Mageean, and Julianna Puskas, in I. A. Glazier and L. De Rosa, Migration across Time and Nations (New York, 1986).

Helmstaedter Family Information from Volume 42

Page 289 of Volume 42 has the following information about the ship carrying the Helmstaedter family to the USA:

- Ship Name: Habsburg
- From: Bremen, Germany
- To: New York
- Arrived: May 3, 1882
- Number of passengers: about 925, which was determined by adding up the names in the list for this ship

Page 294 of Volume 42 contains the following information about our Helmstaedter ancestors:

Last Name	First Name	Age	Sex	Occupation	Province Code	Village Code	Destination Code
Helmstaedter	Jacob	28	M	Farmer	Germany	Unknown	USA
	Catharina	28	F	None	Germany	Unknown	USA
	Babette	9	F	Child	Germany	Unknown	USA
	Adam	7	M	Child	Germany	Unknown	USA
	Philipp	4	M	Child	Germany	Unknown	USA
	Johann	3	M	Child	Germany	Unknown	USA
	Jacob	.09	M	Infant	Germany	Unknown	USA

Note: This is how the names are spelled in the book. So, if you want to do an online genealogy search, search for both Helmstadter and Helmstaedter. You can also search for Helmstädter, with the German umlaut a (ä) on your Windows computer by pressing and holding down the ALT key while you press 1, then 3, then 2 in the numeric keypad on the right of your keyboard. (This does not work with the row of numbers at the top of your keyboard.)