



Passenger Departure Lists

We have only discussed a few foreign sources in this column, and most have been very broad sources that, while they may identify and name the emigrant, also include thousands of local persons who never emigrated (as are found, for example, in the *International Genealogical Index [IGI]*, or the *Vital Records Index*). Consequently, there is a great amount of research “noise” (as far as the researcher of emigrant origins is concerned) in the inclusion of non-emigrants in such general records. Because of

this situation, it may be difficult to determine if a person found in such records (civil, church, census, etc.) is really the emigrant sought, or simply someone with the right age and name.

Immigration

Sources and Strategies

by Kory L. Meyerink, MLS, AG, FUGA

There are however, for most countries of our ancestors, two broad types of records that focus specifically on emigrants. Because they identify persons who left the home country, these various records are often grouped together, under a term such as “Emigration Lists.” While they are indeed lists of emigrants, it is important to understand the differences between the two major types of such lists. These two groups include actual lists of departing residents—notably *passenger lists*, and lists of those persons requesting *permission to emigrate*.



Montage made up of photos courtesy of the New York Historical Society and the Library of Congress.

Passenger Lists

Just as many ports of arrival, especially in the United States, kept lists of newly arrived passengers, many ports of departure, especially in Europe, kept lists of emigrant passengers departing from those ports. Indeed, there may have been many other possible passenger lists created during any specific immigrant's travels. Historically, up to seven different passenger lists may have been created for some groups of passengers. These include lists made and filed with:

1. the port (city or country) of departure
2. ports of call along the route
3. the port (city or country) of arrival
4. newspapers at the port of departure
5. newspapers at cities of arrival
6. or as part of the ship's manifest, (usually by the shipping company itself)
7. notations of passengers in the ship's log

In most cases, the majority of these lists were not made in the first place, and often the lists that were made have not survived over time. However, on occasion, there may also be additional, special lists, of passengers. For example, if the group was chartered by a government agency, a specific church, or an emigrant aid society, you may find a list with the official archives of the sponsoring organization. Germans arriving in Pennsylvania (from 1727 to 1808) were required to take an oath of allegiance and an oath of abjuration when they landed in Philadelphia, which created two more "copies" of the arrival list (for a total of three lists), and sometimes only one has survived.

Some of these were official lists required by law; others were private recordings. Some would be classed as arrival lists, while others are departure lists. That difference may seem minimal, but for most persons coming to North America, departure lists, where they exist, provide the

Both pages show Ellis Island arrivals, ca. 1910. (Individual people have been colorized.)

Both of these types of lists are very important to emigrant origins research. However, researchers need to understand the fundamental differences between them. These differences include not only who is listed, but also the information recorded, and, perhaps most importantly, the manner of finding and searching such lists. Space permits only the discussion of the first group at this time. A future column will introduce and discuss the location and use of permissions to emigrate.

Photo courtesy of the New York Historical Society.



town of origin much more often than do arrival lists.

For the family historian, the fact that, sometimes, many copies were made, insures that at least one may have survived for most immigrants. The main problem is finding the lists, particularly when seeking departure lists.

Departing lists of passengers were generally kept under the jurisdiction of the port city. To use such lists, you should learn the emigrant's state or region of residence, and/or the port of departure. Often you will find this information on the passenger arrival records in the New World. This makes finding an immigrant in those records a valuable exercise, even when those records do not specifically name the hometown.

Sometimes only knowing the country of origin is sufficient to

access these records. However, you also need to know when the emigrant left that country or port, again something you can calculate from arrival lists. Steamships took two weeks or less to cross the Atlantic, while sailing vessels often took a month or much more. Generally the earlier an immigrant came, the longer the voyage lasted.

Foreign departure lists may be difficult to use, however, a growing number are indexed and/or published. Remember, only some ports made lists of passengers as they departed. Typically, such lists included age, occupation and last place of residence or birthplace. This last item is what makes such lists so valuable in determining your immigrant's place of origin.

Many of these records have not been preserved, but many others are

now on microfilm, often at the Family History Library and other research libraries which specialize in emigration records. Of particular interest are the records of the Scandinavian ports and those of Hamburg. Unfortunately, the records of Europeans who emigrated through other ports, such as Bremen, Le Havre, Amsterdam, Rotterdam, and Antwerp have either been destroyed or lost.

There are also published transcripts and indexes for some ports and countries. Significant and representative published departure lists for Europe and Great Britain are found near the end of this article.

Hamburg Passenger Lists

Because of their value, size, and scope, it is useful to single out the passenger departure lists from the

Port of Hamburg, Germany ca. 1900.

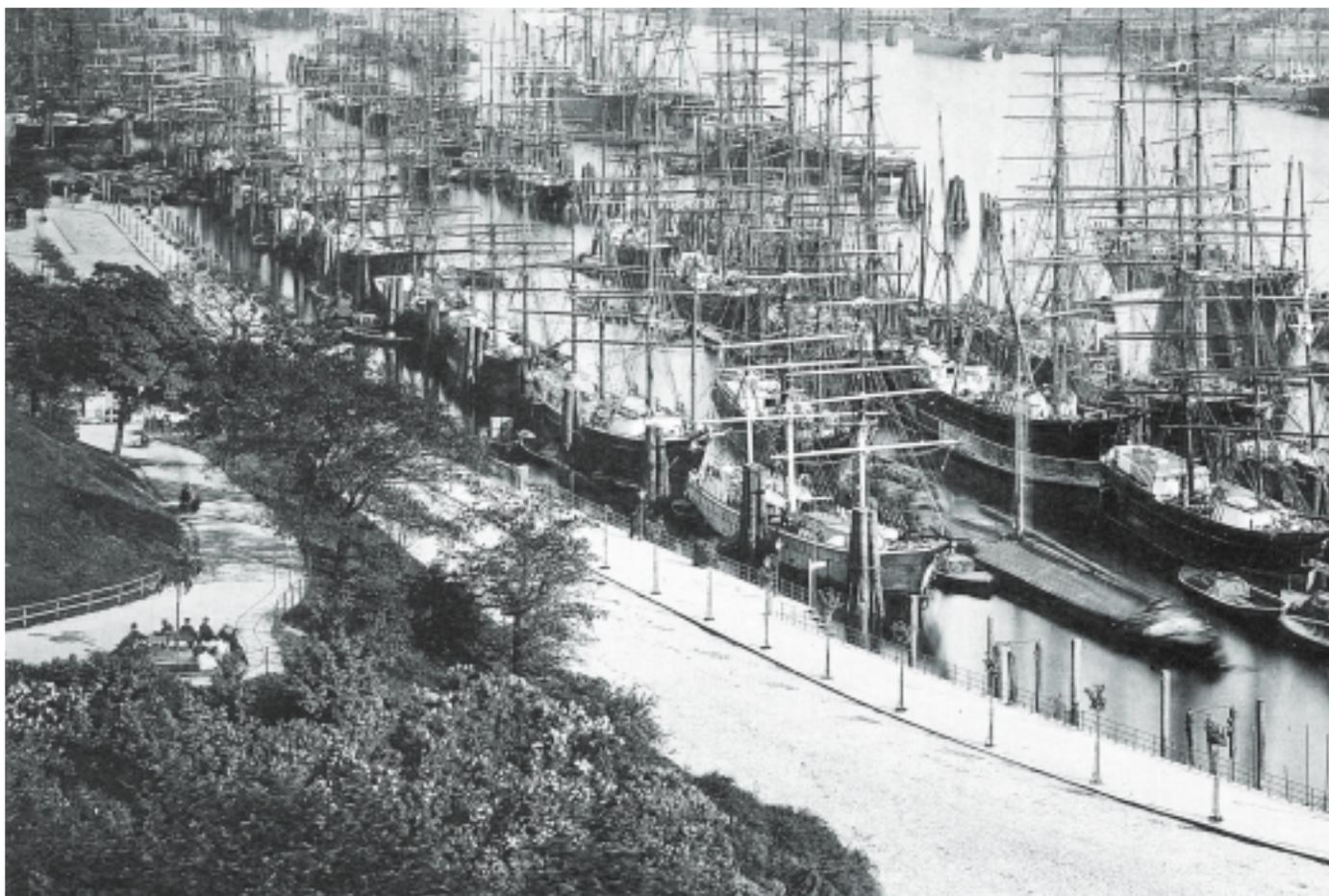


Photo courtesy of James A. Derheim, European Focus, Inc.

German port of Hamburg for special discussion. They are the largest and most significant collection of departure lists for immigration research. These lists contain the names of millions of Europeans (mostly Germans) who emigrated through Hamburg between 1850 and 1934 (except 1915 through 1919). Studies show that about 30 percent of the people who emigrated from Central and Eastern Europe during this time are on these lists. If your ancestors emigrated from these areas, the Hamburg passenger lists could provide important information about them, including their hometowns, or at least their last town of residence.

As with all foreign records, the lists are in the language native to the country where they were created, in this case, they are in German. Complicating their use is the old German handwriting (called the Gothic script) in which letters are often written much differently than in most English handwriting. However, these are really just lists, kept in columns, consisting mainly of the person's name, age, occupation, and origin. Thus, they are easier to read than most other German language records.

Extensive indexes make these records easier to use than most other passenger lists. These lists and indexes are on 486 rolls of microfilm at the Family History Library. Articles in genealogical periodicals have described a search service in Hamburg that provides information on emigrants from this port. The same records this service uses are available to any researcher at the Family History Library (FHL) in Salt Lake City, or locally at one of its Family History Centers.

The Hamburg passenger lists consist of two sections: *The Direct Lists* include passengers who left Hamburg, Germany and sailed

directly to their destination without stopping at other European ports. The *Indirect Lists* identify passengers who stopped at another European port (often in England) before sailing to their final destination. About 20 percent of the immigrants leaving from Hamburg took indirect routes, as they were less expensive.

Most of the Hamburg passenger lists have been indexed. The only ones not indexed are the lists from 1850 to 1854, which are arranged alphabetically by first letter of the surname. There are three sets of indexes: the *Fifteen-Year Index to the Direct Hamburg Passenger Lists, 1856-1871*; the *Klüber Card File*, and the regular indexes.

The Fifteen-Year Card Index arranges many of the names on the direct lists from 1856 to 1871 in one fully alphabetical index. Though it is convenient to use, this index is not complete. After checking the index, you may still need to use the regular index for the same time period. The regular indexes are more complete, but they are more difficult to use.

The *Klüber Card File* is actually two separate card indexes, on 48 microfilms, covering parts of both the direct and indirect lists from 1850 through 1871. Although not fully complete, these alphabetical indexes do include complete information from the list for each passenger indexed. However, if an immigrant does not appear in these card files, you should then search the regular indexes.

The Regular Indexes, for both the direct passenger lists and the indirect list are divided into segments that cover one year or part of a year. The direct indexes begin in 1854 and end in 1934. The indirect indexes begin in 1854 and end in 1910. To use the index, find the year

the emigrant departed and the first letter of the surname. Names are arranged by the first letter of the surname only; you may need to search the entire section to find the person for whom you're looking. This is why knowing the date of emigration (or even arrival in North America) is so helpful in this research. Sometimes the index pages for one letter were continued on blank pages under another letter. Watch for a notation referring you to the proper letter for the continuation.

Within each initial letter, the index is chronological for that time period. Each ship is listed separately in the index, with a header showing the name of the ship, the departure date, the ship's captain, and the destination port. After this information, the index lists the passengers whose surnames begin with that letter, and the page on the actual passenger lists with this information. Arranged in two columns, it is fairly easy to skim down the list of passengers seeking the name of the emigrant.

Often the index only gives the head of the family, with a notation such as "wife and three children." Again, knowing as much as possible about the emigrant(s), including the father of the family, is important to identifying the right persons in these lists. The entire family is listed, with ages, on the actual list, so you can confirm that you have the right person. Further, if you learn how your emigrant's surname looks in the Gothic handwriting, it will be easier to recognize it in the index.

For more information on the *Hamburg Passenger Lists* and how to use them, brief instructions are available online at www.familysearch.org. The lists are also being slowly indexed online, but currently most of the indexing covers just twentieth century lists.

Other Port of Departure Lists

Although the Hamburg departure lists are by far the largest and most important, there are highly useful lists for other ports, notably in Scandinavia.

Sweden

Swedish passenger lists were kept for the Swedish police authorities (Poliskammaren) and include people from other countries, as well as Sweden, who left from ports in that country. Most Swedish emigrants left from the port of Göteborg. However, emigrants from southern Sweden often left from Malmö. Only a few left from Stockholm and Norrköping.

The Family History Library has microfilm copies of both the indexes and the original passenger lists. The lists do not begin until about 1869, and end at various dates (depending on the port) in the first third of the twentieth century. Most Swedish emigration records have recently been released as abstracted information on CD-ROM, available either in Swedish, or in an English version. Covering Swedish emigration from 1869-1930, it is based on passenger lists, and comprises the approximately 1.3 million emigrants, embarking from the major Swedish ports Göteborg 1869-1930, Malmö 1874-1930, Stockholm 1869-1930, Norrköping 1859-1919, Helsingborg 1899-1930 and Kalmar 1880-1893. The abstract includes information on name, relationship, age, birthplace or place of residence, destination, date of emigration, and other information.

Norway

Passenger lists for Norwegian ports begin with 1867. Earlier, emigrant groups made private arrangements for transportation, and left from almost any of Norway's many ports.

After the beginning of official lists, most Norwegian emigrants left through the ports of Kristiania (Oslo), Bergen, Trondheim, and Stavanger. The information in these lists usually includes the emigrant's

name, age, relationship to family members traveling together, occupation, last place of residence, and destination. Passenger lists are available for most ports used by Norwegian emigrants.



Stockholm, Sweden waterfront.

The Family History Library has microfilm copies of these handwritten records for the following ports:

- Kristiania (Oslo), 1867 to 1902
- Bergen, 1874 to 1925
- Trondheim, 1867 to 1926

Denmark

Most Danish emigrants left through the port of København (Copenhagen). The departure records begin in 1869. The information in them usually includes the emigrants' names, ages, occupations, and destinations. Relationships and last residence or birthplace may also be given. The original records of Copenhagen can be found at the national archive. The Copenhagen departure lists, like those of Hamburg, are divided into direct and indirect lists. The Family History Library has microfilm copies of these records dating from 1869 to 1911.

Great Britain

Passenger departure lists are rare before 1890. After 1890 they are arranged chronologically by port of departure. These lists usually give the emigrant's name, age, occupation, address, and sometimes destination. They are kept at the Public Record Office, and are not available on microfilm.

In earlier years, England did keep some lists of passengers for brief periods of time, such as a three-year period just before the American Revolution. Generally these lists have been published, and some examples are cited below.

France

During the 1800s most French as well as south German emigrants left through the port of Le Havre. Unfortunately, there are only a few, incomplete passenger lists for this and other ports in France, and they have no indexes.

The only lists available for the port of Le Havre are very incom-

plete lists of crews and passengers on some commercial cargo vessels. Note that very few passengers sailed on cargo ships, and there are no passenger vessels among this undindexed collection. The Family

and others sailing from Le Havre from 1780 to 1840. The origin of the index is unknown, and it is surely not comprehensive. The passenger cards usually show name, maiden surname of the spouse, birth date or

European Passenger Departure Lists at the Family History Library

Listed in the FHL library catalog under the name of the port city and the topic "Emigration and Immigration"

Port	Lists	Indexes	Comments
Antwerp, Belgium	1855	Book index	by Charles Hall
Bergen, Norway	1874-1924	1874-1924	Transcripts, with given and surname indexes.
Bremen, Germany	—	1904-1914	Originals may no longer be extant.
Copenhagen, Denmark	1868-1911	1868-1940	Indirect and direct lists and indexes.
Gothenburg, Sweden	1869-1920	1869-1951	Most Swedes left from this port.
Hamburg, Germany	1850-1934	1854-1934	Card indexes cover 1850-1871.
Le Havre, France	1750-1887	1750-1775	Commercial cargo vessels only.
Liverpool, England	1697-1707, 1773-1776	In publications	Published lists
Malmö, Sweden	1874-1939	1874-1939	
Oslo (Kristiania), Norway	1867-1902	1869-1902	
Rotterdam, Netherlands	1900-1940	1900-1940	Holland-America Line only
Stockholm, Sweden	1869-1940	1869-1940	
Trondheim, Norway	1867-1926	1867-1925	Indexes to given and surnames.

Additional lists may be available for these, and other ports, in local and state archives of European countries.

History Library has filmed the Le Havre commercial cargo vessel passenger lists for the years 1750 to 1886. A few records from *Calais*, *Cherbourg*, *Brest*, *Lorient*, *La Rochelle*, and *Dieppe* are available at the French National Archives.

A French genealogical society (Groupement Généalogique du Havre et de Seine-Maritime, B.P. 80, 76050 Le Havre Cedex, France) discovered a 100-year-old card file of 45,000 passengers, 25,000 sailors,

age, birthplace, parents, date and place of embarkation and debarkation, and, for French ships, the vessel's name. Researchers may send written inquiries, but only for a specific name, and for this time period.

Published Lists

The following published copies of departure lists represent a growing aspect of immigration literature. These, and many other such lists,

are indexed in P. William Filby's *Passenger and Immigration Lists Index*. However, as with all such lists, many of the earliest lists often do not identify the town where the emigrant came from. However, all such lists should be explored, where they pertain to a possible emigrant.

Although records of passengers leaving through Antwerp, Belgium are generally destroyed, lists were found for 1855-56 and microfilmed. Those lists, including over 5,000 persons, are indexed in Charles M. Hall, *Antwerp Emigration Index* (Salt Lake City: Heritage International, 1986).

The brief, pre-Revolutionary lists kept in England, noted above, are kept in the Public Record Office and have been published more than once. The best version, including six to seven thousand persons, is Peter Wilson Coldham, *Emigrants From England to the American Colonies, 1773-1776* (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., 1988).

The first 500 or so Germans who arrived in London in 1709, of whom many later were shipped to New York, are listed in *Ulrich Simmendinger, True and Authentic Register of Persons Who in 1709 Journeyed From Germany to America* (Reprint St. Johnsville, N.Y.:The Enterprise and

News, 1934. Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., 1991).

Two important collections of nineteenth century Irish passenger lists survived in the private records of the shipping companies, rather than government agencies. Together they document about 32,000 immigrants. Both have been published by Brian Mitchell, as *Irish Passenger Lists: 1803-1806: Lists of Passengers Sailing from Ireland to America, Extracted from the Hardwicke Papers* (Baltimore, Md.: Genealogical Publishing Co., 1995) and as *Irish Passenger Lists, 1847-1871: Lists of Passengers Sailing from Londonerry to America on Ships of the J. & J. Cooke Line and the McCorkell Line* (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., 1988).

One last example serves as a bridge between this discussion of passenger departure lists and any future discussion about permissions to emigrate. It also serves to illustrate that the distinction between these two kinds of emigration records is not always easy to define.

In the Netherlands, the government kept a register of those persons who left the country between 1835 and 1880. This list is not arranged by ship line, but is a chronological listing of those who

departed. However, it focuses on the fact that they departed, not that they requested permission to leave. In that sense, it is more of a departure list, than a list of permissions.

The list has been computerized, allowing easy access to the 21,800 emigrants, including information about their former residence and intended destination. It was published by Robert P. Swierenga as *Dutch Emigrants to the United States, South Africa, South America, and Southeast Asia, 1835-1880: An Alphabetical Listing by Household Heads and Independent Persons* (Wilmington, Del.: Scholarly Resources, 1983).

Conclusion

Although tremendous record destruction of the past limits the availability of foreign departure lists, where they do exist, they are a significant tool for the emigrant-origins researcher. Remember also that although the list, carrying the emigrant you are seeking, may have been destroyed, other related emigrants may have come at earlier or later times. And these relatives may be recorded on the surviving departure lists. As always, the more you know about the immigrant and his or her family, the greater your chance for success in locating their hometown.

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