Hamburg Passenger Lists

Germany "How to" Guide, Beginner Level: Instruction

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GOAL

This "How to" Guide will teach you the genealogical value of the Hamburg Passenger Lists, and how to access and search them.

INTRODUCTION

Passenger lists are the manifests of passenger vessels. Departure manifests carrying German emigrants are valuable for many reasons, but primarily for identifying the hometown of the emigrant or emigrant family. Arrival lists from destination ports will only occasionally provide the last residence of an immigrant. This became more common beginning around 1900, though, by and large, the departure list is the source that will most reliably provide the individual's last residence.

For the most part, German emigrants departed from Bremen, Le Havre, Rotterdam, Hamburg, Antwerp and Stettin. When considered collectively, relatively few of these records have survived. The Hamburg passenger lists are the only notable exception. These lists were preserved from about 1850.

Hamburg was an important port from 1850-1934. It is estimated that approximately one third of emigrants departing Central and Eastern Europe between 1850 and 1934 departed from Hamburg. There was no emigration from the port of Hamburg during World War I.

HOW TO

Availability and Access

The Hamburg passenger lists are available digitally via Ancestry.com in an indexed database. The Ancestry.com images and index are incredibly valuable and often an emigrant can be found using basic strategies in the search form. The records are also available on FamilySearch microfilm, but centers with access to the microfilms likely also have institutional accounts with Ancestry.com.

- **Ancestry.com**

Ancestry.com is a subscription website. If you do not have a subscription, you may find access at your local Family History Center or public library.

On the Ancestry.com home page, use the computer's mouse to point to the "Search" tab at the top of the screen. This reveals a drop-down menu. From the menu, select "Immigration and Travel." The collection, Hamburg Passenger Lists, 1850-1934, is located under "Featured data collections" on the right side of the screen. Click on that title. Records can be accessed through the database index (the search field to the left) or by browsing the scanned images in the "Browse this collection" box on the right side of the screen. Selecting a year and month opens a screen with time frame subsets of the passengers. Click on a desired time frame and it will open with navigable images for the selected passenger lists.

Supplementary Indexes

Since no index is perfect, and since the exact dates of travel are often not known; there will be instances when the old off-line indexes show their value by facilitating a search that is yielding no results.

An understanding of different list types is required to use these supplementary indexes. There are two types of lists: direct and indirect. A direct list is a manifest for a ship that left the port of Hamburg and travelled directly across the Atlantic without stopping elsewhere in Europe. An indirect list is a manifest for a vessel departing Hamburg and stopping elsewhere before continuing on to its final destination. Many Hamburg ships stopped in British ports before crossing the Atlantic. In addition to the type of manifest to look for (direct or indirect), a researcher must also know the time period during which the emigration took place.
The following are descriptions of the supplementary indexes available, what time periods they cover, how to use them, and how to access them.

- **Alphabetical Lists**

From 1850-1854, Hamburg passenger lists were alphabetical by first letter of the emigrant's surname. If an emigrant departed during these years, the lists can be searched manually for the first letter of the surname (or the first letter of a logical and predictable spelling variation of the name) to produce a result. These lists are accessible on FamilySearch microfilm and Ancestry.com. They are part of Ancestry's collection, Hamburg Passenger Lists, 1850-1934.

- *Klüber Karteien*

There are two card indexes known collectively as the *Klüber Karteien*. The card indexes are available on FamilySearch microfilm. Neither of the indexes is complete, so both should be searched for the overlapping years. *Kartei 1* is a partial index of **direct** lists for the years 1856-1871, and **indirect** lists for the years 1866-1867. *Kartei 2* is a partial index of **direct** lists for the years 1850-1871, and **indirect** lists for the years 1854-1865. The data on the card will direct you to the original list which can be located in Ancestry's Hamburg Passenger Lists, 1850-1934 or on FamilySearch microfilm. The FamilySearch catalog contains the microfilm listings for these indexes.

- **Fifteen-Year Index**

This index is available on FamilySearch microfilm and covers direct lists from 1856-1871. The FamilySearch catalog contains the microfilm listings for this index.

- **1872 Index**

A huge number of emigrants left Europe through Hamburg in 1872. A valuable index to the Hamburg passenger lists for the year 1872 was created by staff at the Family History Library and edited by Sonja Hoeke-Nishimoto and Daniel Schlyter. The alphabetical index covers **direct** and **indirect** lists from 1872. The index gives the emigrant's name, age, and a cross-reference to the appropriate passenger list FamilySearch microfilm.

- **Handwritten Indexes**

These indexes comprise the Ancestry.com collection, "Hamburg Passenger Lists, Handwritten Indexes, 1855-1934." They are a good resource for those who cannot locate an emigrant and cannot make it to a Family History Center to use the microfilm indexes. The handwritten indexes cover **direct** lists from 1855-1934 and **indirect** lists from 1855-1910.

To search the handwritten indexes, the approximate date of emigration must be known. An index is selected based on **direct/indirect** passage, date, and first letter of the last name. If the date of emigration is not known, several indexes should be searched based on your best estimation of the emigration date.

The entries are only alphabetical by first letter of the last name and, in some cases, entries for a particular letter might end and resume on the blank pages unused by another letter. Make sure that all entries for a letter are searched.

- **Germans to America and Arrival Lists**

This multi-volume series of books acts as an index to Germans in United States arrival records. If an immigrant has been identified in these books, and the ship departed from Hamburg, the voyage data can direct a researcher to the passenger list on Ancestry.com or FamilySearch microfilm. Similarly, if an immigrant is located on an arrival list, and the ship originated in Hamburg, it is a relatively simple task to use the voyage data on the arrival list to locate the departure record.

Additional Reading

- "Hamburg Passenger Lists"
  This FamilySearch wiki article explains the indexes mentioned above and provides microfilm numbers for accessing the appropriate index images. The article can be found at the following link:
  https://familysearch.org/learn/wiki/en/Hamburg_Passenger_Lists

- "Hamburg Passenger List Terminology"

This FamilySearch wiki article gives a chart with German terms you will see on the passenger lists and their English translations. The article can be found at the following link:

https://familysearch.org/learn/wiki/en/Hamburg_Passenger_List_Terminology

Online Index Search Tips

If you are having a hard time finding an ancestor using the search fields, try to get creative about how you search. Here are some ideas:

- Search without a given name. Your ancestor might be listed by an initial or a foreign version of their given name. Maybe the record was difficult to read and the indexer was mistaken. This strategy may not work for an ancestor with a common surname, but if you provide enough information (gender, country or province of origin, birth year, emigration year, occupation, etc.) you might be able to narrow down the results. Remember that these details can often be gathered from US census records. Find your ancestor on as many censuses as you can.

- Search without a surname. This may be less successful than searching without a given name, but the concept is the same. This is particularly helpful if you know the year and the ship that the immigrant arrived on.

- Search for other people who may have been related to or travelled with your ancestor. Maybe your ancestor actually left from Le Havre, but his/her older sibling left from Hamburg a few years earlier. Records for your ancestor's siblings or other family members will lead you to the hometown which is what you need in order to find records for your ancestor. Maybe your ancestor is on a Hamburg list, but the name was illegible. You can find this ancestor if you do a search for someone they travelled with.

- Research variant spellings or forms of your ancestor's name. This is particularly important for Jewish ancestors who may be listed by a Yiddish or Hebrew version of their given name. Consider possible variant spellings based on how your ancestor would have pronounced their surname, and how a record keeper might have heard it.

- Search for the ancestor in the US arrival list databases on Ancestry.com. If you find their arrival list, and the ship originated in Hamburg, you should be able to locate the departure list for that voyage in the Hamburg passenger lists collection by using the database's browse function.

- If your ancestor has a less common surname, you may be able to search the various arrival list databases for the surname and the state where the family settled (use the destination field). If you find people with the same surname that settled in the same state, you may be able to find the same people on the Hamburg lists and make a list of their last residences. Mapping these locations may give you clues about where your ancestor came from, which may lead to other records you can search.

- Be creative.

- Try some of the supplemental indexes described above.

PRACTICE

Joseph Pogrzeba

1. Go to Ancestry.com and sign in. If you don't have an account, you will need to be in a Family History Center or other library with institutional access.

2. Point to the "Search" tab at the top of the page with your mouse.

3. From the drop-down menu choose "Immigration & Travel".

4. On the right side of the screen, you should see a box with the heading "Featured data collections".

5. Select "Hamburg Passenger Lists, 1850-1934".

6. Try to find Joseph Pogrzeba. According to family information, he was born in 1870, and that he was from Silesia, but his year of immigration is unknown.

7. In the "First & Middle Name(s)" field, type Joseph.

8. In the "Last Name" field, type Pogrzeba.

9. For birth, type 1870 in the "Year" field.

10. Now click the orange "Search" button above the "First & Middle Name(s)" field.

11. The first record on the list of results is for "Josef Pogrzeba" who was born "abt 1869".

12. You can see right away that he emigrated on the ship "Lessing" which left Hamburg "20 Jun 1883".

13. In order to see where he was from, we will need to view the record. Click on "View Record" to the left of Josef's name.

14. You should now see the complete index entry for Josef Pogrzeba. The seventh item on this list is "Residence". According to the index, Josef Pogrzeba was from "Klein Döbern, Schlesien (Slaskie)". Slaskie is the Polish version of Schlesien, which was a Prussian province under the German Empire of 1871-1918. Schlesien, or Silesia in English, is now in Poland.

15. In order to make certain that we have the best information possible, we will view the record. On the left side of the screen is a thumbnail view of the original passenger list page. Click the green button on the thumbnail that says "View".

16. The first column numbers the passengers. The second column is the surname. Find Pogrzeba. Note that there are two surname columns: one on the left side of the page and one on the right side of the page.

17. If you have a hard time finding the surname, click on the "Show Index" button. This button is on the bottom center of the image viewer to the right of the page number. The button has a white silhouette of two people and some horizontal lines in the top right. If you point to the button it will say "Show Index". If you click on the button it will bring up a typed list of everyone on the page you are currently viewing.

18. Josef Pogrzeba is highlighted in yellow on this list because we accessed the image through his index entry. On the right side of the list is a scroll bar. You can click on the grey dot and move the list up or down. In this case, the grey dot is a little below half way down the scroll bar. This tells us that Josef Pogrzeba is a little more than half way through the list of passengers on this page. That must mean he is listed towards the top of the list on the right side of the page. Look at the surname list on the right side of the page and try again to find Pogrzeba. It is the first name at the top of the page. There are seven people listed together with that name.

19. Joseph is the third Pogrzeba. Let's double check to see if the indexer correctly extracted the last residence of the Pogrzeba family. There is a curly bracket next to the family next to which it says they were from Kl. Döbern in Schlesien.

20. Now we are ready to find out what parish Klein Döbern was in and look for church records. You will learn how to do this in other "How to" Guides.

Franz Etzel

1. You can either repeat steps 1-5 above. Alternatively, click on the white left facing arrow on the top left of the screen showing Josef Pogrzeba's record. Then click on "← All Results". Under the name of the database on the left side of the page, look under "Search Filters" and click on "Edit Search".

2. Now let's find Franz Etzel. He emigrated in 1880 when he was 32 years old. Type his first and last names, birth year, and departure year into the search fields and click the orange "Search" button.

3. From the results we see that Franz Etzel sailed to New York on the ship "Westphalia" which left Hamburg on 15 December 1880. Click on "View Record".

4. From the index page, we see that he was from Amorbach, Bayern (Bavaria). Click on the green "View" button.

5. Find the Etzel family. Use the index button if necessary.

6. Franz and his wife and son are on the right side list and Franz is the tenth entry counting down from the top of the page. The record says Amorbach, Baiern, an alternate spelling of Bayern.

ACTIVITY

Now, test your skills you have learned in this "How to" Guide. The Activity is a way to check your knowledge and let you know you've mastered the Guide! Click here to try out the Activity.