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The Palatinate – a land of emigration

by Roland Paul

After the great depopulation during the Thirty Years' War and the War of the Palatinate Succession, the Palatinate soon became a veritable immigration country, but by the 18th century it had already become a classic emigration region.

Thousands of residents had already fled the Palatinate during the Thirty Years' War.

In the church records of many remote places, one can therefore read: "fled here from the Palatinate because of the excessive hardship of war." In the second half of the 17th century, we find the first references to emigration overseas. Huguenots and Mennonites, who had only lived in the Palatinate for a few years or decades, were, in a sense, the pioneers. Abraham Hasbrouck from Deutschhof near Bergzabern settled in the Hudson Valley in the English colony of New York in 1675 with several Huguenot families. As early as 1660, his brother Jean Hasbrouck, who came from Calais, had settled in Hurley on the Hudson after a short stay in the Electoral Palatinate, together with Mathieu Planchan, a citizen of Mannheim born in Artois, and his son-in-law Louis du Bois (Dubois). In 1677, Abraham Hasbrouck and other Huguenot families purchased a large tract of land from the Native Americans and built a settlement there. In memory of their temporary home, which had offered them hospitality as refugees, they named their settlement "New Paltz."

During his missionary journeys in 1671 and 1677, the English Quaker William Penn also visited Mennonite communities in the Electoral Palatinate and promoted the settlement of his private colony in North America, which he had inherited from his father. During his visits to Germany, Penn had met Franz Daniel Pastorius, a lawyer from Sommerhausen in Franconia, who had been commissioned by a "Frankfurter Land Compagnie" to acquire 25,000 acres of land from William Penn. Before his voyage, Pastorius visited the Electoral Palatinate-Leiningen military home on the Pfimm River, which William Penn had also visited previously and where he had aroused the interest of several Mennonite families in America. Pastorius discussed the Cassel, Hendricks, and Schuhmacher families' emigration plans, then traveled via Cologne to Krefeld, where he discussed a joint settlement near Philadelphia with several Mennonite and Quaker families. In June 1683, he boarded the ship "America" in Gravesend, which arrived in the port of Philadelphia at the end of August 1683. In October 1683, the first 13 families from Krefeld followed, and soon after, the families from Kriegsheim. In the same year, they established the settlement of Germanopolis, later Germantown, near Philadelphia with Franz Daniel Pastorius. The town seal, a three-leaf clover with the inscription "Vinum, Linum, and Textrinum" ("wine, flax, and weaving"), referred to the trades of the first settlers. Germantown was granted town privileges in 1691 and elected Pastorius as mayor. In the following years, the settlement attracted further immigrants, mainly from the Palatinate region.

However, the first large-scale mass emigration from the Palatinate to North America did not begin until 1709. In his book "Emigration and Colony Founding of the Palatines in the 18th Century," Daniel Häberle compares it to the "Exodus of the Israelites from Egypt." The term "Palatine" or "Palatine" soon became a common term for all German emigrants.

Repeated marches and pillaging by French armies, but above all the economic and social situation... The extremely harsh winter of 1708/09 had a catastrophic effect on agriculture and viticulture. "The fields lay fallow, there was a lack of feed for the cattle, the fields lacked fertiliser, and what had been cultivated with great effort was destroyed by the excessively proliferating game, which was protected by cruel legislation rather than the diligence of the farmer," we read in Häberle. In 1710, the German court preacher Böhme, who was staying in London, attributed much of the blame for this emigration to the German princes: "Many persons in authority indulge in such pomp and arrogance that their subjects must give everything they can scrape together to their lord's state and therefore often have no bread left in their homes. And yet they allow themselves to be called fathers of the country, even though there is not a trace of paternal love or gentle treatment to be found among their children."

William Penn's writings, which had already spread throughout the Palatinate in the last decades of the 17th century, numerous other pamphlets, in particular the promotional writings of Franz Daniel Pastorius and Pastor Josua Kocherthal, had aroused interest in the "New World."

In 1709, thousands of Palatinate people traveled down the Rhine to Rotterdam, from where they hoped to continue on to England, where they had been promised free passage to North America. A large proportion of the more than 30,000 emigrants who had arrived in England by the fall of 1709 had to wait there for months in large camps of misery for onward transportation. Many of them were forced to return to Germany. Nearly 4,000 Palatines were settled in the Irish county of Limerick, where, according to a contemporary report, they initially had "nothing to eat or drink." Some of them returned to their homeland disappointed.

In view of the mass emigration from the Palatinate, the Palatinate Elector Johann Wilhelm feared a "depopulation" of his country and tried to stop the emigration efforts by all means. As early as April 1709, he issued a decree prohibiting emigration to the "so-called Insul Pensylvaniam." One month later, this ban was repeated. Out of a "sovereign's duty of care" towards his subjects and in view of the fact that "simple, poor people who have already emigrated from this and neighboring lands and who still intend to emigrate every day willing to go to the so-called Pensylvaniam countryside, had presumably been misled into this long, dangerous, and arduous journey" and that "several thousand of them were stuck in Rotterdam, on the so-called Dycken," and "in order to prevent these poor people ... might not drown miserably," emigration must be stopped (Heinz, p. 98).

In the following decades, various Palatinate rulers, especially the Electoral Palatinate government, repeatedly issued emigration bans, particularly during the reign of Elector Carl Theodor. However, the government occasionally took the view that

"at least those subjects who were of no use to the public or the royal treasury" should be allowed to leave (Heinz, p. 123)

Many administrative officials repeatedly complained about the secret emigration, which was quite significant in terms of numbers, especially since every legal emigration, i.e., emigration undertaken with the permission of the authorities, was subject to various fees, one for manumission, i.e., release from serfdom, for which in the 18th century in the Electoral Palatinate, as well as the so-called back tax, which was levied on all property and assets leaving the country, and the chancellery and writing fees.

The main destinations remained the English colonies in North America. By 1727, around 15,000 Palatines had landed in the port of Philadelphia. Between 1727 and 1775, another 70,000 people followed, mainly members of the Reformed and Lutheran faiths, as well as Mennonites and Amish. Entire parts of Pennsylvania and northern Maryland soon had "a thoroughly German character," as a contemporary report put it. The British soon feared a predominance of the German element, prompting Benjamin Franklin to write: "Why should we suffer the Palatine peasant rabble to crowd around our settlements and, living together in packs, consolidate their language and customs to the detriment of ours? Why should Pennsylvania, founded by Englishmen, become a colony of strangers who will soon be so numerous that they will Germanize us instead of us Anglicizing them, and who are as little inclined to adopt our language and customs as they are to acquire our skin color?"

In the relatively closed settlements of the Pennsylvania Germans, the dialect of the "Palatines" was also largely preserved. Even today, the so-called "Pennsylvanian Deutsch," mixed with many English expressions, is still alive.

In the second half of the 18th century, emigration from the Palatinate took a different course. The main destination was no longer North America, but eastern and southeastern Europe. In Prussia, Austria-Hungary, and Russia, the rulers were keen to increase the population of their lands as part of their colonization efforts. They issued special settlement patents, which also spread and gained traction in the Palatinate.

Goals of emigration

by Roland Paul

Brazil

In the 1820s, a veritable mass emigration to Brazil began in southwestern Germany, affecting primarily the Hunsrück region, the northern and western parts of what is now Saarland, and the western Palatinate.

After breaking away from Portugal, declaring independence from Brazil, and proclaiming the empire in 1822, the Brazilian government under Emperor Dom Pedro I and his wife, the Austrian Archduchess Leopoldine, pursued a systematic immigration and settlement policy. The imperial couple commissioned Major Georg Anton Schäffer, who came from Münnerstadt in the Lower Main district, to recruit colonists and mercenaries in the territory of the German Confederation. He visited the Hanseatic cities, Frankfurt am Main, and numerous German courts. His writing "Brazil as an independent empire described in historical, mercantilist, and political terms" contributed significantly to raising awareness of the South American state in Germany. Schäffer recruited not only farmers but also mercenaries for the Brazilian Foreign Legion to fight against Uruguay, which was striving for independence.

Although both the Bundestag and all German states took action against Schäffer and his subagents and banned advertising, citing reports of the unfortunate fate of some emigrants, many were nevertheless tempted to emigrate by the promised privileges.

On July 23, 1824, the Speyer government warned the district commissariats about the major who was promoting emigration to Brazil: "If this individual should come to the Rhine district, the royal district commissariat is instructed to observe him closely during his stay and to warn him if necessary. Should this warning prove fruitless and he attempts to entice the subjects of this side to emigrate in any way whatsoever, he is to be arrested and handed over to the competent judicial authority for punishment."

As early as December 1822, for example, Peter Reinheimer from Altenglan submitted a "most humble request" to the Kusel District Commission, asking for official approval of his intended emigration: "I have long realized that I can no longer support myself and my four children in this area, but that I will ultimately be reduced to begging due to the increasingly unfavorable times, and would have to take up the beggar's staff. For this reason, I have decided to emigrate with my wife and our four children to America, to Brazil."

The emigrants traveled for days to Bremen and Bremerhaven, and from there they were on the move for months, often three months, until their ship reached the port of Rio de Janeiro. From Rio, they were taken by smaller ships to the state of Rio Grande do Sul at the southern tip of Brazil.

brought and settled near Porto Alegre, in the "German Colony of Sao Leopoldo." Around 1830, emigration to Brazil initially declined, only to rise again in two further waves of emigration (especially in 1846 and 1861). Both in the Sao Leopoldo area and in numerous daughter colonies, there are still many Hunsrück-Palatinate language islands today.

Europe

Emigration to Prussia

Prussia had already pursued a targeted immigration policy at the end of the 17th century. After the revocation of the Edict of Nantes (1685), the Great Elector took in thousands of persecuted French religious refugees into his lands. During the War of the Palatinate Succession, numerous Palatinate Huguenots and Walloons fled to Brandenburg-Prussia. This led to the establishment of the Palatinate colonies of Magdeburg, Stendal, and Halle. Many Walloons and Huguenots who had previously belonged to the French Reformed communities in the Palatinate also settled in the Uckermark region at that time.

After the drainage of the Oderbruch, and later also the Warthe and Netzeniederung lowlands, and their reclamation, Frederick the Great also undertook a large-scale colonization program. Between 1740 and 1786, he issued several settlement edicts inviting "diligent and hard-working foreigners" to settle in Prussian lands. In 1747, the first 325 families arrived from the Palatinate region. They found a new home in Pomerania, the Kurmark, and the Neumark. Some of them settled in existing settlements, while others settled on new land, such as 20 families from the northern Palatinate villages of Odernheim, Duchroth, and Oberhausen, who founded the town of Müggelheim near Köpenick.

Emigration to Russia

After conquering the Baltic provinces of Estonia and Livonia in the Great Northern War (1721) and founding the new capital of St. Petersburg, Tsar Peter I brought many German skilled workers to the country. However, organized German immigration did not take place until the reign of Tsarina Catherine II (1762-1796). In two manifestos published in 1762/63, she granted immigrants generous privileges, including the transfer of land as "inviolable and hereditary property for all time," freedom of religion, exemption from taxes for a certain period, exemption from military service, and the right to municipal self-government. Among the thousands of emigrants who subsequently settled in the more than 100 colonies in the Volga region and the ten colonies near St. Petersburg in the following years were many Palatines.

At the beginning of the 19th century, Tsar Alexander I (1801-1825) issued another manifesto appealing to German settlers who "could serve as examples in rural occupations and crafts... good farmers, people skilled in viticulture, in the planting of mulberry trees and other sufficiently skilled in useful crops or experienced in livestock breeding, especially in the treatment and breeding of the best sheep breeds, who have all the necessary knowledge for rational agriculture..." Once again, thousands answered the Tsar's call. At that time, over 200 colonies were established in the Black Sea region, 92 of which were Protestant, 68 Catholic, and 44 Mennonite. A number of settlement names indicate the origin of many emigrants: Karlsruhe and Baden near Odessa, Landau, Mannheim, Worms, Speyer, Rohrbach, and Kandel. For generations, until the deportation of Germans under Stalin, the language and customs of the German homeland were preserved in the Russian-German villages.

Emigration to the southeast (Banat, Batschka, Galicia, and Bukovina)

Empress Maria Theresa (1740-1780) sought to settle German farmers in the southern part of the Hungarian Plain, which Austria-Hungary had recaptured from the Turks. She issued various immigration edicts. Her son, Emperor Joseph II (1765-1790), continued the colonization effort and worked with great dedication to settle German farmers in the Banat and Batschka regions. The settlement patent he issued in 1782 was printed in many thousands of copies and was soon distributed everywhere, not least thanks to the activities of the Palatinate "advertising center" in the Austrian county of Falkenstein (Winnweiler).

During the crisis years of 1783/84, thousands left the Palatinate, traveling via Regensburg on the Danube to Vienna, where they were issued with a settlement pass and travel money at the court chancellery. Between 1784 and 1787, around 3,500 families were settled in 20 villages in the Batschka County. Some of these settlements, such as Neu Siwatz, Torschau, Neu Werbaß, and Tscherwenka, were predominantly populated by Palatines.

The same period also saw emigration to Galicia, the region east of the upper Vistula River that had belonged to Poland for centuries but was annexed by Austria during the first partition of Poland (1772). Around 25,000 people, including many Palatines, immigrated to Galicia between 1782 and 1787 and in a second wave after 1800. Some of the settlers destined for Galicia were redirected to Bukovina from 1787 onwards. Here too, for example in the settlements of Radautz, Fratautz, and Illischestie, a flourishing German folk culture was preserved until the Second World War.

Palatinate settlements on the Lower Rhine, near Braunschweig, in Denmark, Spain, and Cayenne

In 1741, a group of Palatinates who were on their way to Rotterdam to emigrate to North America were denied entry to Holland. After negotiations with the Prussian government, they were able to build a new home on the Gocher Heide near Kleve. They founded the settlements of Pfalzdorf and Louisendorf. Palatines from the Lower Rhine later established a new Palatinate village near Aurich in East Frisia.

After the Danish government failed to reclaim the "Alheide" in the northern part of the Jutland peninsula with Danish farmers, it called in German farmers in 1759/60

to the country. Around 1,000 people, mainly from the Palatinate region, accepted the invitation. Today, a monument erected in Frederiks in 1984 commemorates the "Potato Germans."

In 1747, Duke Carl I of Brunswick-Lüneburg encouraged Protestant Reformed families to settle in Brunswick in his letter of grace. In 1749/50, several families from the Palatinate arrived in the Duchy of Brunswick and found a new home in Veltenhof.

In 1767, King Charles III of Spain commissioned the former French and Prussian lieutenant colonel Johann Caspar von Thürriegel (1722-1795) to bring 6,000 Catholic Germans and Flemings to settle the southern slopes of the Sierra Morena, which had been lying fallow since the expulsion of the Moors. Although Elector Carl Theodor issued strict regulations against emigration to Spain, several hundred Palatinate families moved to Andalusia.

Cayenne (Guyana) is one example of a failed settlement of Palatinate emigrants. Since the 1760s, the French government had been promoting the colonization of its colony on the north coast of South America through its commissioner in Landau, promising tempting privileges.

Emigration "to the new French islands" became a "general epidemic," as a contemporary report puts it, especially in the villages belonging to the Prince-Bishopric of Speyer. The Catholic priest Henrici from Niederkirchen reported that some of the people from his parish, whom he had given his priestly blessing before they emigrated to Cayenne in 1764, had returned after a few years. They told of the sad fate of their compatriots who had succumbed to the murderous climate, "that of the many thousands of people who had left Germany, a quarter were no longer alive."

Emigration to North America only increased again after the "French period," at the beginning of the Bavarian era. Following a climate catastrophe and the resulting crop failure (1816/17), which caused great hardship, the authorities received an increasing number of emigration applications. Poland in particular was initially cited as the destination of choice for many would-be emigrants. Some of them probably moved to Galicia as "latecomers," while others settled near Warsaw. However, the majority of emigrants once again turned to North America.

In the 1830s, the United States of America

After the Hambach Festival (1832) and the subsequent persecution and oppression by the German Confederation and the Bavarian government, we find the first large number of political refugees emigrating to the USA.

Immediately after the Hambach Festival, a "Society of Rhenish Bavarian Emigrants to the United States of North America" was formed in the Palatinate, whose statutes advocated the establishment of a closed settlement of German emigrants and the founding of a German colony in North America.

However, before the first group of the emigration society left Germany, some members visited Gottfried Duden in Bonn, whose book "Report on a Journey to the Western States of North America," published a few years earlier, they had read and from which they hoped to gain important advice. Duden's sobering information ultimately prompted the society to abandon its plan to establish a colony. Nevertheless, in the following years, numerous members of the society set out for North America in closed groups via Le Havre.

On September 2, 1832, the Palatinate district president von Stengel reported to King Ludwig I of Bavaria: "Requests to emigrate to America are increasing. Given the current state of the population, it is very doubtful whether this should be considered detrimental or beneficial. It is curious, however, that a large number of wealthy ultra-liberals in the district also intend to emigrate to North America and have already chosen and sent an agent there to purchase property."

Stengel probably had the Engelmann and Hilgard families in mind, whose members had been preparing for emigration since 1831. As early as 1831, the Imsbach forest ranger Friedrich Theodor Engelmann had written to his son in Munich: "It is suggested that you leave your homeland, over which aristocracy and clergy are once again wielding their terrible power, and join a large group of people who are moving to America in 1 1/2 years..." The entire family and many friends finally boarded the ship "Logan" in Le Havre in April 1833. They settled on the east bank of the Mississippi, in and around Belleville in the US state of Illinois, and laid the foundation for one of the most flourishing German communities in the USA.

The encounter with a group of emigrants from America on their way to Le Havre in the 1830s is described quite impressively by the Protestant pastor Friedrich Blaul (1809-1863). He remarked: "The hope of greater comfort drives these people to a distant part of the world from which they cannot hope to return, or only in deepest poverty. They are not deterred by any danger, or rather, they are unaware of the dangers. All the bad news from that country is like lies to them, and only the letter tells the truth, which says that a poor European, a man from their village, perhaps even a cousin, has become a rich American..." Indeed, such letters had a great influence on emigration to America.

Among the Palatinate emigrants of that time, most of whom initially emigrated to Switzerland and from there via France to North America.

For example, Adolf Ernst Berkmann, the Protestant pastor from Einselethum who had already attracted attention during the Hambach Festival "for his inflammatory sermons and seditious speeches," Joseph Martin Reichard from Speyer, president of the Provisional Government of the Palatinate, and his interior minister, Nikolaus Schmitt from Kaiserslautern. Like many other refugees, they settled in Philadelphia. Others remained in New York, while some – such as the well-known Baden revolutionary Friedrich Hecker – settled not far from Belleville, the "German Athens in America," or in nearby St. Louis. Many of them achieved high standing in the United States, became involved in politics, particularly in the founding of the Republican Party, published liberal-democratic newspapers, and fought in the Civil War on the side of the Northern states against slavery.

At the beginning of the 1850s, Wilhelm Heinrich Riehl noticed an emigrant box set up next to the agricultural equipment at the district agricultural fair in Landau, bearing the inscription "Stay in the country and earn your living honestly!" "This was," he wrote, "not just a good joke, but in fact a significant symbol of the conditions in the Palatinate... The mass emigration from the Palatinate is almost proverbial."

In the 1850s, the authorities were concerned about the rise in clandestine emigration and urged local councilors to take stricter action. The district commissioner of Kirchheimbolanden, for example, doubted "that the sale of real estate and equipment, combined with the travel preparations of entire families, could remain hidden from the local councilors..." However, clandestine emigration continued unabated. For example, in the northern Palatinate municipality of Göllheim, a total of 250 people were registered between 1844 and 1851 who had emigrated to the USA without official permission. Of the 134 residents of the municipality of Göllheim who emigrated between 1852 and 1862, only 34 had official emigration permits! In total, at least 400 people emigrated from Göllheim to the USA between 1844 and 1862, i.e. within 18 years. This was an exceptionally high percentage, measured against the population at that time. Between 1825 and 1900, more than 900 people emigrated from the small municipality of Höheinöd in the district of Pirmasens, almost without exception to the United States. Similar figures could be cited from other Palatinate municipalities.

In addition to the "push" factors in the home country, "pull" factors in the immigration country also played a role, such as the publication of favorable settlement conditions, the optimistic description of American conditions in private letters, and, to a large extent, the desire to escape the war. Factors in the country of immigration, such as the publication of favorable settlement conditions, the optimistic description of American conditions in private letters, and, to a large extent, the news of gold discoveries in California after 1848, also contributed to an increase in the number of emigrants.

The main destinations for emigrants in the 19th century were, in addition to the eastern states of New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania - and here again, especially the cities of New York and Philadelphia - the states of the so-called "Midwest," such as Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Missouri, Kentucky, Wisconsin, and Iowa.

But traces of Palatinate emigrants can also be found in Louisiana (New Orleans) and Texas, where the "German Noble Association" founded in Mainz had been promoting German settlement since 1844 (Neubraunfels), and in Colorado (Denver). The "gold rush" attracted thousands of Palatinate people to the northern part of California. Here, Carl David (Charles Maria) Weber, born in Steinwenden in western Palatinate in 1814 and emigrated from Homburg in 1836, founded the city of Stockton, which, like San Francisco and Sacramento, was to become the new home for a whole series of Palatinate emigrants.

A large proportion of emigrants became involved in the countless German singing, gymnastics, and shooting clubs that formed in many American cities. Emigrants from the Palatinate joined regional associations, especially in New York, Philadelphia, and Chicago, such as the "Pfälzer Volksfest-Verein" (Palatinate Folk Festival Association), the "Rheinpfälzischer Unterstützungsverein" (Rhenish-Palatinate Support Association), and the "Donnersberg-Club New York."

Founded in New York in 1884 by the Völcker brothers, who came from Edenkoben, the weekly newspaper "Der Pfälzer in Amerika" (The Palatine in America) was an important medium for thousands of Palatine emigrants for over thirty years. It reported, for example, on Palatinate-Bavarian club life in the USA, brought news about "Palatinates who had died in America," published historical and literary essays, and provided detailed information about events in Palatinate villages and towns. The paper shared the fate of many other German-language newspapers and had to be discontinued shortly after the USA entered World War I.

Due to industrialization, emigration to America declined in the 1860s. It was replaced by internal migration to the emerging industrial cities (Ludwigshafen, Mannheim, Kaiserslautern) and to the mining companies and ironworks on the Saar. Nevertheless, emigration from the Palatinate – in line with emigration from Germany as a whole at that time – took on earlier forms in the 1880s, but declined again in the 1890s.

In the period of hardship after the First World War, emigration to America rose considerably again. Among the emigrants at that time were many itinerant musicians from western Palatinate ("Mackebacher"), some of whom had got to know America on previous trips. The "Club der Mackenbacher" and the "Club der Jettenbacher" were founded in New York at that time.

The inhumane policies of the National Socialists forced thousands to flee abroad from 1933 onwards. Among them were mainly Jewish emigrants, some of whom were able to escape the "Holocaust" that began in 1940 for most Palatinate Jews with their deportation to Gurs in southern France.

For the majority of Jewish emigrants to the USA, their connections to relatives and acquaintances who had been living there for a long time now paid off. These people helped their persecuted fellow believers by providing the necessary affidavits. The persecuted also sought asylum in neighboring European countries (England, France, Belgium, Holland, Luxembourg, Switzerland, Sweden), in Palestine, and in South America (Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Uruguay).

Among those who emigrated for political reasons were a number of Palatinate Social Democrats and Communists who, persecuted by the Nazi dictatorship, went to France, where some of them, such as Adolf Ludwig (Pirmasens), Herbert Müller (Ludwigshafen), and Friedrich Wilhelm Wagner (Ludwigshafen), became actively involved in the resistance.

Problems and abuses of emigration

The problems faced by emigrants began as soon as they arrived at overseas ports and continued during the long crossing in the steerage of an emigrant ship. Emigration was therefore associated with enormous hardships. The following is a list of the difficulties emigrants had to contend with.

- Poor accommodation for emigrants in port cities
- Shipwrecks
- Ruthless exploitation of emigrants
- Dubious "advisors" were sold
- Profiteering by agents who concluded passenger contracts
- Emigrants were treated as cargo, as they did not appear on passenger lists
- Tween decks were built into ships for the sole purpose of transporting as many passengers as possible
- Inadequate ventilation in the tween decks
- Poor hygienic conditions
- Inadequate food
- Disease and deaths on board
- Epidemics on board and in port cities
- Ruthless exploitation of emigrants

All these abuses and the ever-increasing number of emigrants brought the emigration problem to the forefront of public awareness, and measures were gradually taken to remedy these abuses.

The beginnings of state protection for emigrants

1832 Emigrant Protection Ordinance in the State of Bremen

1837 Emigrant Protection Ordinance in the State of Hamburg

1848 Draft constitution of the National Assembly, in which emigration was declared a fundamental right.

Draft law for "the protection and care of the empire for German emigration"

- Measures against agents
- Provisions for the transport of emigrants
- Provisions on health care
- Minimum size of steerage (However, this law was not implemented.)

The 1850 draft law of the German Union was also not implemented. In the constitution of the North German Confederation and in the Reich Constitution of 1871, emigration to countries outside Germany is placed under the jurisdiction and supervision of the Confederation.

1869 Captain Heinrich Ludwig Fürchtegott Weickhmann becomes the first federal commissioner, later imperial commissioner, for emigration.

Public relations

Creation of counseling centers

Enactment of laws and regulations to protect emigrants Attempt to control emigration flows

Famous Palatinate figures in America

Compiled by Roland Paul

Quite a few Palatinates found happiness in America, although it should not be forgotten that there were also some who failed in the New World and even returned to their old homeland.

- **Nikolaus Herchheimer (1728–1777)**
the "Farmer General" of Mohawk in the American War of Independence
- **Johann Peter Saling (* ? - ... 1755)**
the "white Indian" from Kaiserslautern American pioneer in the 18th century
- **Friedrich Ludwig Henop (1740–1784) and Johann Schley (1712–1787)**
two pioneers of American independence
- **Johann Adam Hartmann (*1748 - 1788)**
The "Leatherstocking" of the Mohawk Valley – model for the character of James Fenimore Cooper's Leatherstocking
- **Henry Harbaugh (1817–1867)**
The first Pennsylvania German dialect poet
- **Ludwig Aust Wollenweber (1807–1888) and Theodor Erasmus Hilgard (1790–1873)**
A "Hambacher" and "Latin farmer"
- **Carl David Weber (1814–1881)**
Pioneer of the West
- **Aron (August) Belmont (1816–1890)**
A man of "big business" (Jewish banker)
- **Thomas Nast (1840–1902)**
Cartoonist, moralist, "president maker"
- **The Strauss brothers from Otterberg**
Millionaires and diplomats
- **Nikolaus Schmitt (1806–1860)**
Minister of the Interior of the Provisional Government of the Palatinate
- **Konrad Krez (1828–1897)**
A German freedom fighter and poet
- **Daniel Hertel (1821–1875)**
a revolutionary from the Southern Palatinate
- **Heinrich Hilgard-Villard (1835–1900)**
the American railroad king
- **Georg Michael Hahn (1830–1886)**
Governor of Louisiana
- **Georg Drumm (1874–1959)**
From traveling musician to celebrated artist and composer

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The history of emigration

- A Brief Historical Overview

Thousands of Palatinate residents left their homeland in the 18th century, but especially in the 19th century, to make a new start in a foreign country. There were three main reasons for emigration:

- Economic reasons
- Religious reasons
- Political reasons

Emigration in the 19th century

There were three major waves of emigration in the 19th century:

- Wave: 1846-1857
- Wave: 1864-1873
- Wave: 1880-1893

The reasons for the first major wave of emigration were crop failures, overpopulation, and the failure of the 1848 revolution. This development was interrupted by the American Civil War, but then continued and was interrupted again by the first phase of the Great Depression. The third wave of emigration was probably the largest. Between 1880 and 1895, around 850,000 Germans traveled overseas. The number of emigrants from southern, southeastern, and eastern Europe who emigrated to the US via Bremen and Hamburg also increased.

Emigration in the 20th century

As a result of positive industrial development, particularly in West Germany, and the third depression in the USA, emigration declined steadily from 1893 onwards. The First World War did the rest. It was not until the 1920s that emigration increased again, reaching its peak in 1923 with 100,000 emigrants.

At the time of the Great Depression, emigration declined again, as the USA was also affected by the global economic crisis.

An increase in emigration was not recorded again until 1933, particularly among Jewish emigrants. From 1940 onwards, emigration was no longer possible, and even after World War II, it remained prohibited by the Allies until mid-1950.

In the 1950s, there was a renewed increase in the number of emigrants as a result of the Second World War. These were primarily:

- Destruction
- Hunger
- Refugee flows
- Overpopulation
- Unemployment

At the end of the 1950s, the number began to decline again.

The situation of emigrants in the 19th century

- Economic hardship
- Rural exodus
- Failure of the freedom movement in 1848
- Social upheaval
- Real division (division of property among heirs, leading to fragmentation of ownership) brought about by the French occupation
- Crop failures and famine
- Overstaffing of craft guilds
- Structural change in the skilled trades due to mechanization and industrialization; worth mentioning here is the decline of the linen weaving profession due to industrialization and the emergence of cotton, which was significantly cheaper due to slave labor.

The emigration process

From the decision to emigrate to arrival in a foreign country, those wishing to emigrate had a long and arduous journey ahead of them:

- Applying for and obtaining permission from the relevant authorities, or resorting to illegal emigration, which was also common.
- arrival of an emigrant ship in Le Havre in France or in the Rhine estuary ports of Antwerp, Rotterdam, Amsterdam, and, after the expansion of the railway network, Bremen, Bremerhaven, and Hamburg
- Bremen and Hamburg only gained importance from 1890 onwards, as more and more Eastern Europeans began to emigrate from that point on

Problems and abuses of emigration

The problems faced by emigrants began as soon as they arrived at the overseas ports and continued during the long crossing in the steerage of an emigrant ship. Emigration was therefore associated with enormous hardships. The following is a list of the difficulties emigrants had to contend with.

- Poor accommodation for emigrants in port cities
- Shipwrecks
- Ruthless exploitation of emigrants
- Dubious "advisors" were sold
- Profiteering by agents who concluded passenger contracts
- Emigrants were treated as cargo, as they did not appear on passenger lists
- Tween decks were built into ships for the sole purpose of transporting as many passengers as possible
- Inadequate ventilation in the tween decks
- Poor hygienic conditions
- Inadequate food
- Disease and deaths on board
- Epidemics on board and in port cities
- Ruthless exploitation of emigrants

All these abuses and the ever-increasing number of emigrants brought the emigration problem to the forefront of public awareness, and measures were gradually taken to remedy these abuses.

The beginnings of state protection for emigrants

1832 Emigrant Protection Ordinance in the State of Bremen

1837 Emigrant Protection Ordinance in the State of Hamburg

1848 Draft constitution of the National Assembly, in which emigration was declared a fundamental right.

Draft law for "the protection and welfare of the empire with regard to German emigration":

- Measures against agents
- Provisions for the transport of emigrants
- Provisions on health care
- Minimum size of steerage (However, this law was not implemented.)

1850 Draft law of the German Union was also not implemented.

In the Constitution of the North German Confederation and in the Imperial Constitution of 1871, emigration to countries outside Germany is placed under the jurisdiction and supervision of the Confederation 1869.

Captain Heinrich Ludwig Fürchtegott Weickhmann, first Federal Commissioner and later Imperial Commissioner for Emigration.

Public relations

- Creation of advice centers
- Enactment of laws and regulations to protect emigrants
- Attempt to control emigration flows

Situation of emigrants at the beginning of the 20th century

- Steamships replace sailing ships
- Shorter crossings
- Improvement in accommodation conditions
- Improved hygiene
- Improved facilities in washrooms and dining rooms
- Improved catering
- Cabins instead of tween decks
- Medical examinations of emigrants (Poles and Russians already at emigration control stations at the borders)

In America:

- Medical examinations
- Questions about name, place of origin, destination, qualifications...
- From 1882, emigration laws were tightened, i.e., entry was denied to certain groups (convicts, illiterate persons, etc.).
- Quota system introduced in 1921

Emigration destinations

The preferred country of emigration was America or the USA. However, other countries were also chosen, such as

- Canada
- South America (southern Brazil, Paraguay, southern Chile)
- Australia
- Southeastern European countries, especially in the 18th century

Emigration during the Third Reich

The foreign organization of the NSDAP aimed to control Germans living abroad and export National Socialist ideology.

Laws were enacted to deliberately disadvantage and discriminate against Jews, causing many Jews to decide to emigrate from Germany.

The emigration of Jews was initially "encouraged" in order to "de-Judaize" Germany. Until 1941, when a general ban on emigration was imposed on Jews.

In the early years, Jewish emigration was organized by the Reich, with Jews having to leave a significant portion of their assets in Germany.

The Reich Office for Emigration advised Jews on possible destination countries to which they could emigrate.

The Palatines in America

The Palatines in America always kept their origins and attachment to their homeland alive. As a rule, they remained in contact with relatives in their old homeland and often encouraged those who had stayed behind to follow them to their new home. The Palatine immigrants even published their own newspaper, "Der Pfälzer in Amerika" (The Palatine in America). They even developed their own language in their new homeland: Pennsylvania German, a mixture of Palatinate German with American influences. Famous Palatinate figures in America: Quite a few Palatinate people found happiness in America, although it should be noted that there were also some who failed in the New World and even returned to their old homeland. Those who had Palatinate ancestors and achieved world fame should also be mentioned. Examples include Clark Gable and Elvis Presley, whose ancestors came from the Palatinate.

Emigrants from Oberalben

from: Heidrun Werner: Village History of Oberalben, 1987

The number of emigrants from the Palatinate was so enormous that all farmers and craftsmen who came from the southern German-speaking region and emigrated to America were referred to as "Palatines" or "Pfälzer" (Palatinate people). Emigration began as early as the 17th century, with waves of emigration particularly prevalent in the 18th and 19th centuries. Even in the first decades of our century, there were still a number of people willing to emigrate. If one asks why people leave their homeland, their familiar surroundings, their families and acquaintances to head into a very uncertain future, the following reasons can be identified:

1. religious reasons (those persecuted for their beliefs)
2. Political reasons (those persecuted for political reasons)
3. economic and social reasons (extreme poverty, crop failures, lack of career prospects, etc.)
4. economic and speculative reasons (adventurers who want to "seek their fortune").

It is very difficult to determine the motives of emigrants today. Those who emigrated for religious or political reasons are relatively few in number compared to the group that emigrated for economic and social reasons. The largest group consisted of emigrants who wanted to overcome their economic difficulties and hoped to find wealth and success in their new homeland.

In the 19th century, the Palatinate had the most poor people and the highest number of emigrants.

When it comes to emigrants, we need to distinguish between two groups. One group wanted to go overseas or to other distant countries. The second group only wanted to move to another place. If this place was in another territory, i.e., in another domain, the move was considered emigration and the persons concerned were listed as emigrants. Like "real" emigrants, they had to apply for emigration permits. If a resident of Oberalben wanted to move to Thallichtenberg, he "emigrated" to Prussia. In the following list of emigrants, we find such a group "emigrating abroad" to Birkenfeld, Ruschberg, and Schmitthachenbach. The most popular destination for emigration was North America. Of the emigrants from Oberalben, only one group of three people emigrated to another foreign country.

Those who decided to emigrate first had to fulfill the official requirements. An application had to be submitted to the state commissariat, later to the district office, and a certificate had to be issued by the mayor confirming that the person in question was debt-free. A description of the person was also required. Minors needed parental consent, and men liable for military service first had to complete their service or name a substitute.

Secret emigration was prohibited, but occurred very frequently. Once the bureaucratic side of emigration had been completed, the real hardship began. At the ports of departure, emigrants often had to wait weeks for departure, and the journey across the Atlantic Ocean took

Rule 2 months. The crossing of the cramped people was an ordeal. Many died during the journey. The preferred states in the USA were: New York, Illinois, Ohio, and Pennsylvania. The following list of emigrants from Oberalben does not claim to be complete, especially as the emigrants of the 20th century are probably not all registered. It is also no longer possible to determine whether all of the names listed actually emigrated, as the registration refers to the applications of legal emigrants.

EMIGRANTS OF THE 18TH CENTURY

to another territory:

- 1730 Hedrich, Abraham from Oberalben to Germersheim
- 1746 Barthin, Anna Caecilia from Oberalben to Lohnweiler
- 1746 Gülcher, Peter von Oberalben into serfdom in Günderod
- 1751 Becker, Johann von Alben to Pomerania
- 1773 Neu, Abraham zu Alben is in Dutch service (probably not an emigrant).

To America:

- 1738 Heydrich, Peter von Oberalben to Pennsylvania
- 1738 Mack Jakobs Wittib (widow) and her son-in-law, Jakob von Oberalben to America
- 1739 Doll, Bast from Oberalben to America.

EMIGRANTS OF THE 19TH CENTURY

to another territory:

- 1817 Later, Christian, a shepherd by profession, and Hess, Maria Saara with child, to Poland
- 1820 Barth, Stephan, a miller by profession, to Birkenfeld
- 1827 Barth, Nickel, a miller, to Ruschberg
- 1827 Werner, Peter, a miller, to Schmitthachenbach.

To North America:

- 1844 Klein, Nikolaus ± wife + child
- 1849 Speyer, Jacob with wife and 8 children between 1/2 year and 11 years old
- 1852 Alt, Friedrich, married in the USA to Ursula Koch from Patersbach, 2 sons. 7 daughters in Liberty Township (Friedrich Alt was born in Oberalben in 1822)
- 1852/53 Theobald, Adam
- 1852/53 Schneider, Adam
- 1852/53 Redenbach, Johannes, tailor by profession
- 1853 Brech, Katharina, married name Barth, widow with three children
- 1864 Blaß, Johannes, occupation farmer (born 1837)
- 1871 Mayer, Johannes
- 1872 Blaß, Ludwig
- 1872/73 Blaß, Karl
- 1877 Alt, Peter (born January 1, 1854, in Oberalben) to Celina, Ohio, remained in contact with Johanna Göres until 1939; descendants are still in contact today.

EMIGRANTS OF THE 20TH CENTURY

- 1928 Blaß, Adolf, born 1905, Mayweilerhof, occupation: wheelwright, then technical draftsman Married Frieda Schmidt from Patersbach in Dayton, Ohio, in 1931, emigrated via Hamburg on the steamship "Deutschland," wife emigrated in 1930
- 1930 Blaß, Robert, born 1907, Mayweilerhof, shoemaker, married to Johanna Schmidt, Patersbach, to Ohio.

RESEARCH ON EMIGRANTS FROM RECENT TIMES

- Hammel, Berta, née Gilcher, was married in Munich. Due to economic difficulties, her husband emigrated several years earlier and had his wife follow him in 1926. Until her emigration, Berta Hammel, née Gilcher, lived with her brother Gustav Gilcher (Gilcher Petersch) in Oberalben.
The card from New York was intended to let the relatives in the Palatinate know that Berta Hammel had arrived safely in America. Today, there is still correspondence between the cousins Liesel Schmitt and the daughter of the emigrant, who lives in New York State.

- Peter Alt, who emigrated in 1877, traveled with several family members. Research has revealed that his brother Ludwig (Louis) and his parents Elisabetha and Adam Alt emigrated with him. The departure was very

A hasty decision. The third brother, Adam Alt, was supposed to follow later to America, but he married here and remained in his parents' home. The Alt family initially settled in the state of Ohio, where they wanted to cultivate the land they had been allocated. However, the climate there was so harsh on the emigrants that they moved to the state of New York. Here, the Alt family bought and operated a sawmill. A relative of Peter and Louis Alt still lives in New York State today and maintains contact with her Palatinate relatives. Lazetta Bragelli, now 85, was a German teacher and is married to an Italian emigrant. A few years ago, she visited Oberalben.

Until the 1950s, the Leyser family still had ties to their relatives in America. The Leyser family, related to the Blaß family, received a visit from the descendants of the emigrated Blasse family. The aunt from America was mainly interested in two things that her father had told her were truly miraculous in his new home: the large sauerkraut stone, which could hold 30 baskets of chopped cabbage, and the broken stones, known as Leien, which the ancestors had broken themselves and laid in the hallway. Contact has since been lost.

- Friedrich Werner, Oberalben, the brother of Liesel Weingarth's great-grandfather, emigrated to America in the 1880s under cover of night and fog. Contacts with America continued until recently.

The emigrants soon realized that happiness did not come easily in their new home; nothing was given to them for free, and it took years of hard work to achieve economic success, if at all.

DIED IN AMERICA

- In 1890, the Protestant pastor Jakob Blaß died in Erie, Pennsylvania, America. He was born in Oberalben in 1835 and
In 1855, he emigrated with his parents to Oberarnbach near Landstuhl, from where Blaß went to America with his parents. Blaß attended Latin school in Kusel, high school in Zweibrücken, and studied in Heidelberg and Utrecht. Due to unfavorable employment conditions in the Palatinate, he left his homeland in 1859 and first became a pastor in Erie, from where he later returned after temporary assignments in Canada and Baltimore, dying of a heart attack. Blaß was the editor of the church magazine "Union" and was a talented, cheerful, and lovable person. This was written about Jakob Blaß when he was remembered in the emigrant newspaper. Jakob Blaß was the son of the farmer and later miller Jakob Blaß, who operated the old Kuralbtalmühle mill without permission, probably got into trouble with the Bavarian government, "emigrated" to Oberarnbach, and from there went to America. In addition to his wife and son Jakob Blaß (a pastor), another son, Louis, also emigrated to America. Louis Blaß died in Erie in 1899.

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