

German Immigration to America
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- 1. Ask questions to unlock the stories**
 - Why did our German ancestors immigrate?
 - When did they leave?
 - How did they get here?
 - Where did they settle?

- 2. Push Factors for Leaving**
 - Poverty – in the Palatinate
 - To escape the heavy taxation
 - To escape religious persecution

- 3. Pull Factors for Leaving**
 - Cheap farmland in America and Canada
 - The promise of jobs in the new lands
 - Promise of Religious freedom
 - Recruitment agents
 - Promise of Political freedom
 - The magnetic pull of “chain migration.”

- 4. Other Factors Making it Possible**
 - Indenture Process
 - Steerage Fares

- 5. Piece the Story Together from All Sources**
 - Each immigrant has a unique story
 - Dig out the details from all resources
 - Add the appropriate historical reasons to the family oral history
 - How do they relate?
 - Documents
 - Photos
 - Family stories
 - Social history

- 6. Germans Arriving in Colonial America – 1600s**
 - Jamestown – 1608
 - German Quakers – 1670

- 7. Germans Arriving in Colonial America – 1700s**
 - Palatines from England to New York – 1709
 - Palatines from Germany starting in 1720
 - Colonial America needed workers
 - Agents (neulanders) recruited emigrants who signed contracts to become Redemptioners for passage (indentured servants)
 - The German Redemptioners began arriving in in 1720

8. Germans Arriving in America – 1800s

- Political and Economic problems in Germany
- Forty-eighters

9. Needed to Leave

- Emigrant needed permission to leave
- Apply for permission to leave
- Applications required copies of the birth and marriage records, evidence of residency, occupation, supporting documents, and references from other village residents.
- In rural areas, the parish priests typically performed this administrative task.
- Most areas had district government offices to handle these tasks.
- Applicants had to sign a document that they would waive their residence right to live in the village.
- Had to pay their debts, and men had to have completed their military service.
- If they met these requirements, officials granted them an exit visa.
- However, most who could not get their exit visas still left. They usually had to sneak away at night

10. Sacrifices

- They left their comfort zone – Family, village, church
- They left with little money
- They usually left from small villages.
- They did not know what was waiting for them
- They left for the dream of a new life.
- They worked hard to make a better life for their families.
- It was a courageous decision

11. Departure Ports

- 1700 – Antwerp & Rotterdam (Access to Rhine River)
- 1800s – Bremen & Hamburg (Building of Railroads)



12. Another Sacrifice – Conditions in Steerage

- Steerage is the lower deck of a ship, where the cargo was stored and close to the gears that controlled steering the ship.
- The living conditions on the steerage deck were often horrible, with no bathroom facilities besides buckets.
- Unsanitary and cramped quarters caused many deaths

13. Rules below decks

- *Anyone caught touching one of the ship's lanterns were put on bread and water for the voyage (Why?)*
- *The water barrel will be covered, sealed and locked if any water is used for bathing when the level is below the redline (at 2/3 of capacity) (How was barrel refilled?)*
- *The ship's doctor has to be called if someone is sick, especially with fever (U.S. ports quarantined ships)*
- *Two bales of straw for sleeping will be provided at the beginning of the voyage and one each week thereafter.*
- *The straw will spread over the canvas at night and then during the day the canvas with the straw inside will be hung from the timbers and away from the lantern.*

14. Changes from Sail to Steam

- Decreased voyage length from 2-3 months to less than 2 weeks
- Switch from sail to steam meant course more predictable
- Increased physical size to allow for more cargo and passengers
- Increased size gave more space and comfort to passengers
- Improved sanitary conditions due to U.S. requirements

15. Health Requirement 1870 Changes

- The passengers had to pass a medical exam checking for disease and disability
- Officials also reviewed Passenger information to keep out “Undesirables”
- If they were refused entry by U.S. officials after the voyage, the steamship company had to pay for the return voyage.
- Shipping Lines reviewed passengers before they boarded their ship.

16. Laws Affecting Passengers arriving in U.S.

- 1822 – Ship captains had to supply passenger list to immigration officials
- 1875 - excluded “undesirables” which included Chinese, criminals and prostitutes.
- 1875 - Also required single women to have male sponsor who was a relative (Fiancé did not qualify)
- 1882 - Excluded people with certain illnesses such as cholera, insanity, tuberculosis, epilepsy, and physical disabilities
- 1882 - refused admission to immigrants who might become public charges.
- 1890s – rules for arriving ships required better sanitary conditions to reduce the number **of deaths during the voyage**

17. Where did they go?

- Georgia, Pennsylvania, and North/South Carolina
- Texas
- Wisconsin
- St Louis & Rural Missouri
- Chicago and Illinois
- Cleveland, Cincinnati, and Rural Ohio
- Iowa
- Minnesota
- North and South Dakota
- Nebraska
- Kansas

18. Occupations

- Farmer – Colonial
 - Trace their migration in America. Their children moved westward.
 - How did they buy their land?
 - Germans were known for dairy farming
 - What other skills – blacksmith, miller, butcher, sawmill, etc
- Farmer – 1800s
 - Did they have money? Did they find Homestead Land?
- Check Bureau of Land Management records
- Beer Brewing - St Louis, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Chicago, Milwaukee, Omaha, Buffalo, Philadelphia, San Antonio, and many smaller towns.
- Wineries – Missouri, Texas, Wisconsin, New York
- Factory Worker – Printing, Machine Tools, and Heavy Machinery
- Professionals - Lawyers, Doctors, Bankers
- Others - Tailors, Bakers, and Mechanics

19. Community Support

- Churches - Protestant (mostly Lutheran), Catholic
- Turner Societies
 - Began as athletic clubs (primarily gymnastics) in early 1800s in Germany..
 - First club in America in Cincinnati in 1850
 - Members also promoted German culture and liberal politics.
 - The gymnastic activities of the organization attracted new members
 - Society also organized cultural events, lectures, and ethnic celebrations.
 - Members support the antislavery movement, and many fought joined Union Army.
- Other Organizations
 - Mutual-aid societies was most important groups because they offered insurance policies
 - Singing societies
 - Dramatic societies who performed German plays.
 - Shooting clubs (*Schützenvereine*) where they held target practice and Sunday competitions.
 - Professional organizations for their doctors and lawyers.
- Taverns and Beer Gardens
 - They were an integral part of the community.
 - Accessible to the whole family, including women and children.
 - On Sundays, they featured music, dancing, and other entertainment.

20. German Language Newspapers

- Played an essential role in introducing the newly arrived German immigrants to American society and politics.
- Main benefit was to inform their readers where new land and jobs were available.
- Also told their German readers about German merchants who could furnish them items they needed and introduce them to American merchants who sought their trade.
- Formed a network to bind the diverse German communities together.

Honor your ancestors

Do not underestimate their contributions