



National Archives and Records Administration

8601 Adelphi Road
College Park, Maryland 20740-6001

Supplementary User Note 2

Balch Institute June 2003 Transfer: Germans to America, 1850-1897;
Italians to America, 1855-1900; Russians to America, 1834-1897
NN3-CIR-98-001

Donated Materials of the Center for Immigration Research (Donated Materials Group CIR)

The Germans to America, Italians to America, and Russians to America Passenger Data Files came to the National Archives (NARA) together and with a minimum of introductory or explanatory documentation. In the absence of any detailed documentation, NWME staff reviewed other NARA materials about the original passenger lists, as well as the donor's publications based on the passenger lists. The bibliography lists the published volumes consulted. Below is a summary of what NWME staff has learned about the Passenger Data Files.

Background of the published volumes of passenger lists and Passenger Data Files

The published volumes of passenger lists and the Passenger Data Files consist of information extracted by the Center for Immigration Research (CIR), under the direction of Ira A. Glazier, from original ship manifests that were on deposit at Temple University Library and Balch Institute for Ethnic Studies, Philadelphia, PA. The manifests have been returned to the appropriate National Archives regional facilities. They are part of the Records of the U.S. Customs Service (Record Group 36). Prior to depositing the manifests with Temple University Library and Balch Institute in 1977, the National Archives microfilmed the passenger lists. For some of the microfilm publications, the National Archives included copies of passenger lists that were filed with other agencies, such as the Secretary of State or local government customhouses, "as substitutes for missing or illegible original documents."¹ Researchers seeking the original passenger lists (ship manifests) should consult the microfilm publications (listed below), which are available at the National Archives Building in Washington, D.C., and at various National Archives regional facilities.

According to the forewords and introductions to their published volumes, the Center for Immigration Research at the Balch Institute (also listed as the Temple-Balch Center for Immigration Research) prepared data bases with information from the original ship manifests in order to publish the passenger lists for both genealogists and historians. In his foreword to the *Germans to America*, Volume 1, *January 1850-May 1851*, editor P. William Filby notes how the lack of indices for many of the original passenger lists housed at the National Archives limited a researcher's ability to locate specific immigrants. He points out that the Temple-Balch Center for Immigration Research's publication of the passenger lists, with an index for each volume, was intended to aid genealogists in locating individual passenger records. Glazier, in *Migration from the Russian Empire*, volume 1, *January 1875-September 1882*, states that "[h]istorians and genealogists in the field of immigration

¹ National Archives, "Pamphlet Accompanying Microcopy No. 237, Passenger Lists of Vessels Arriving at New York, 1820-1897 [Microfilm Publication M237]" (Washington, DC: National Archives and Records Services, 1962), 2. See also National Archives, "Pamphlet Describing M255, Passenger Lists of Vessels Arriving at Baltimore, 1820-1891 [Microfilm Publication M255]" (Washington, DC: National Archives and Records Services, 1973).

research have relied on aggregate level data to examine the development, extent, and character of population movements. With information available in these volumes, researchers will be able to go beyond gross statistical profiles to study these movements at the level of microhistory – to follow individuals and families . . .”² The data base format, especially in electronic form, lends itself to statistical studies. The introductions in the published volumes provide a historical background on the migration of the particular nationality (Germans, Russians, or Italians) with accompanying statistical tables from various sources including from the Temple-Balch Center for Immigration Research.

How CIR compiled the published volumes of passenger lists

The introductions to the published volumes also provide some information on the criteria used in extracting data from the original ship manifests for the data bases used to reproduce the passenger lists in the published volumes. Although the donor material indicates that portions of the Passenger Data Files are directly related to their published volumes and some of documentation for the data files echoes the criteria provided in the published volumes, NARA staff do not know the extent to which the donor used the same criteria for the data bases as for the published volumes. There appear to be ship manifests included in the data files that are not included in the respective published volumes and the time periods covered differ.

Germans to America

For the *Germans to America* published volumes, Glazier explains:

In the 1850-1855 volumes, these lists contain a minimum of 80 percent German surnames and are published in their entirety. Starting in 1856 the selection criterion changes to include all ships with German passengers, regardless of the percentage. Unlike the previous volumes, only those calling themselves Germans are now listed; all other passenger names are deleted. It should be noted that after 1856 these German immigrants include those coming not only from German states or territories but also from countries such as France, Switzerland, or Luxemburg.³

Some of the passengers who called themselves Germans, and who thus were included in the publications, gave a place of last residence in the United States. The editors suggest that these passengers may have already settled in America, but traveled back to Germany and upon re-entering the United States reported their American residence, yet identified their nationality as German.⁴ The *Germans to America* published volumes include passenger lists of those arriving at the ports of New York, New York; Baltimore, Maryland; New Orleans, Louisiana; Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; and Boston, Massachusetts.

For the *Germans to America* Passenger Data File, the documentation (README.TXT printout) indicates that “France, Switzerland and Luxemburg are included in the German group but are

² Ira A. Glazier, ed, *Migration from the Russian Empire: Lists of Passengers Arriving at the Port of New York*, volume 1, *January 1875 - September 1882* (Baltimore, MD: Genealogical Publishing Co, Inc., 1995), xiii.

³ P. William Filby and Ira A. Glazier, ed. *Germans to America: Lists of Passengers Arriving at U.S. Ports* [Series I], volume 10, *January 1856 - April 1857* (Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources Inc., 1990), ix.

⁴ P. William Filby and Ira A. Glazier, ed. *Germans to America*, volume 10, *January 1856 - April 1857*, xxvii.

identified by distinct nationality codes” and “USA appears as a nationality code in the German and other groups as migrants who were returning from Germany but who already resided in the U.S. [and] reported U.S. as their country of origin.” NARA staff assume these nationality codes are the country of origin codes. According to the data in the Country of Origin field, there are also records in the Germans to America Passenger Data File for passengers from countries other than USA, Germany, France, Switzerland, and Luxemburg. For some of the records, the Country of Origin field contains a code for a specific “German” state, city, or region, such as Hessen or Saxony, instead of Germany. Some of the codes used in the Country of Origin field appear in more than one of the Passenger Data Files. The Germans to America Passenger Data File contains records of passengers arriving at the ports of New York, Boston, Baltimore, New Orleans, and Philadelphia (see NARA-prepared Supplementary user Note 1).

Italians to America

For the *Italians to America* published volumes, Italian passengers on the original ship manifests “who disembarked at New York are published in their entirety; the names of non-Italian passengers are deleted.”⁵ As in the case of the *Germans to America* published volumes, some passengers who already resided in the United States provided their American residence, but reported their nationality as Italian. Currently, the *Italians to America* published volumes cover the time period of 1880 through October 1902.

As described in the NARA-prepared Supplementary user Note 1 for the data files, the Italians to America Passenger Data File contains a few records of passengers arriving at the ports of Boston, Baltimore, New Orleans, and Philadelphia, although most of the passenger records are of those arriving at the port of New York. Also, according to the Country of Origin field, there are also some records in the Italians to America Passenger Data File for passengers from countries other than USA and Italy or specific Italian regions or states. Some of the codes used in the Country of Origin field appear in more than one of the Passenger Data Files. The Italians to America Passenger Data File contains records dating from 1855 to 1900.

Migration from the Russian Empire

For the *Migration from the Russian Empire: Lists of Passengers Arriving at the Port of New York* published volumes, “passengers of Russian nationality – Poles, Finns, and Russians – are given here in their entirety, while records of non-Russian nationals are excluded.”⁶ Although the subtitle, *Lists of Passengers Arriving at the Port of New York*, suggests that only passengers arriving at the port of New York are included in the publication, the published volumes include passenger lists from other ports such as Baltimore and Philadelphia. Currently, the *Migration from the Russian Empire* published volumes include passenger lists dating from 1875 through June 1891.

For the Russians to America Passenger Data File, the documentation (ReadMe.txt file) states that the “Russian Empire includes Poland, Finland, Lithuania, Ukraine and Armenia.” According to the

⁵ P. William Filby and Ira A. Glazier, eds., *Italians to America: Lists of Passengers Arriving at U.S. Ports*, volume 1, *Passengers Arriving at New York: January 1880 - December 1884* (Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources Inc., 1992), ix.

⁶ Ira A. Glazier, ed., *Migration from the Russian Empire: Lists of Passengers Arriving at the Port of New York*, volume 1, *January 1875 - September 1882* (Baltimore, MD: Genealogical Publishing Co, Inc., 1995), v.

codes for the Country of Origin field, there are also records for other areas or ethnic groups. Some of the codes used in the Country of Origin field appear in more than one of the Passenger Data Files. The Russians to America Passenger Data File contains records of passengers arriving at the ports of Boston, Baltimore, New Orleans, and Philadelphia, along with New York (see NARA-prepared Supplementary User Note 1).

What information is on the original passenger lists (ship manifests)

The Passenger Lists Data Files are extracts of information from the original passenger lists or ship manifests created between 1834 and 1900. In general, the original passenger lists contain information on the ship, including the name of vessel, port of embarkation, date of arrival, port of arrival, and/or name of master of the vessel, and information on the passengers, including name, age, sex, occupation, country to which he/she belongs or nationality, destination, and/or last residence. The amount of information captured and the uniformity with which it was recorded varies, along with the legibility and condition of the lists. The Federal government did not establish procedures for recording the arrival of immigrants in the United States until 1882. A passenger's destination may be recorded as a specific city or the United States in general. Some passenger lists may not include some information, such as occupation or last residence, for some or all of the passengers. And, as Glazier points out in the introduction to *Migration from the Russian Empire*:

Information in the passenger lists regarding nationality changed several times during the nineteenth century. Until 1882 passenger lists gave the name of the country to which the passengers *belonged*. This was interpreted to mean either country of citizenship, country of last residence, or country of birth. Beginning in 1882, however, immigrants were required to name their *native country*, citizenship, or country of birth. From 1898 to 1934 passenger lists recorded aliens according to race, religion, or people, in addition to country of origin.⁷

Hence, as already mentioned, passengers may have reported a place of last residence in the United States but identified their nationality as German, Italian, Russian, etc.

In addition, many passengers took an indirect route to the United States so the port of embarkation listed on the passenger lists does not necessarily correspond to or reflect the passenger's actual place of last residence. For example, German emigrants may have left from a German port and sailed to England, where they took another ship and/or left from a different port to the United States. As previously noted, the passenger lists also contain information on non-immigrants, such as U.S. citizens returning to the United States.

For more information about the original passenger lists, researchers may wish to consult the National Archives' *Guide to Genealogical Research in the National Archives of the United States*, the materials available on the National Archives website, the National Archives' pamphlets accompanying the microfilm publications of the passenger lists, or other genealogical resources.

The Passenger Lists Data Files reflect the unique characteristics of the original passenger lists. In some of the Passenger Lists Data Files records, dashes or question marks may indicate illegible

⁷ Ira A. Glazier, ed., *Migration from the Russian Empire*, volume 1, January 1875 – September 1882, v.

letters that could not be transcribed. There may be variations in spellings as recorded in the original passenger records or as a result of interpreting handwriting that was difficult to read. For some of the fields, a “U” for unknown or blank may indicate that piece of information was not captured in the original passenger record. The donors may have not transcribed or extracted all passenger lists for a given port or time period because of the unreadable condition of the passenger list or because it did not fit the donor’s criteria for extraction. The Transit and/or Travel Compartment field contains codes that account for U.S. citizens, non-citizens returning to the United States, or those traveling to countries other than the U.S., in addition to immigrants planning to stay in the United States.

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Glazier, Ira A., ed. *Germans to America – Series II: Lists of Passengers Arriving at U.S. Ports in the 1840s*, 7 volumes. Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources Inc., 2002 - .

Glazier, Ira A., ed. *Migration from the Russian Empire: Lists of Passengers Arriving at the Port of New York* [1875-1891], 6 volumes. Baltimore, MD: Genealogical Publishing Co, Inc., 1995 - .

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Tepper, Michael. *American Passenger Arrival Records*. Baltimore, MD: Genealogical Publishing Co., Inc., 1988.

Microfilm Publications of the Original Ship Manifests & Related Records

Baltimore

Passenger Lists of Vessels Arriving at Baltimore, Maryland, 1820-1891 (National Archives Microfilm Publication M255); Records of the U.S. Customs Service, Record Group 36.

Index (Soundex) Passenger Lists of Vessels Arriving at Baltimore, MD, (City Passenger Lists), 1833-1866 (National Archives Microfilm Publication M326); Records of the U.S. Customs Service, Record Group 36.

Index (Soundex) to Passenger Lists of Vessels Arriving at Baltimore, Maryland (Federal Passenger Lists), 1820-1897 (National Archives Microfilm Publication M327); Records of the U.S. Customs Service, Record Group 36.

Quarterly Abstracts of Passenger Lists of Vessels Arriving at Baltimore, Maryland, 1820-1869 (National Archives Microfilm Publication M596); Records of the U.S. Customs Service, Record Group 36.

Boston

Passenger Lists of Vessels Arriving at Boston, Massachusetts, 1820-1891 (National Archives Microfilm Publication M277); Records of the U.S. Customs Service, Record Group 36.

Index to Passenger Lists of Vessels Arriving at Boston, Massachusetts, 1848-1891 (National Archives Microfilm Publications M265); Records of the U.S. Customs Service, Record Group 36.

New Orleans

Passenger Lists of Vessels Arriving at New Orleans, Louisiana, 1820-1902 (National Archives Microfilm Publication M259); Records of the U.S. Customs Service, Record Group 36.

Index to Passenger Lists of Vessels Arriving at New Orleans, Louisiana, 1853-1899 (National Archives Microfilm Publication T527); Records of the U.S. Customs Service, Record Group 36.

New York

Quarterly Abstracts of Passenger Lists of Vessels Arriving at New Orleans, Louisiana, 1820-1875. (National Archives Microfilm Publication M272); Records of the U.S. Customs Service, Record Group 36.

Passenger Lists of Vessels Arriving at New York, New York, 1820-1897 (National Archives Microfilm Publication M237); Records of the U.S. Customs Service, Record Group 36.

Index to Passenger Lists of Vessels Arriving at New York, New York, 1820-1846 (National Archives Microfilm Publication M261); Records of the U.S. Customs Service, Record Group 36.

Philadelphia

Passenger Lists of Vessels Arriving at Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 1800-1882 (National Archives Microfilm Publication M425); Records of the U.S. Customs Service, Record Group 36.

Index to Passenger Lists of Vessels Arriving at Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 1800-1906 (National Archives Microfilm Publication M360); Records of the U.S. Customs Service, Record Group 36.

Prepared by:

Lynn Goodsell, Archivist

Electronic and Special Media Records Services Division (NWME)

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