

by Jean Nudd, Archivist

Introduction

The National Archives and Records Administration office in Pittsfield (NRAP) has microfilm publications where researchers can find their German ancestors. These include census lists, passenger manifests, naturalization indexes and World War I draft cards. Also available are several book series dedicated to German immigration research such as *Germans to America* and

The Wuerttemberg Emigration Index

. (These are also available on CD-ROM).

Census, Immigration and Naturalization Records

Census records begin with the 1790 schedules and currently go to 1920. Pittsfield has the microfilm for the entire United States with indexes available for most states for most years. Indexes from 1790 to 1870 are in book or CD format. For 1880, 1900 and 1920, soundex indexes are available on microfilm. The 1910 census was soundexed for 21 states. For information on using these census records, see *Archival Anecdotes*, volume 5, number 4, December, 2000.

Immigration records available at NRAP include passenger arrivals at the ports of Baltimore, Boston, New Orleans, New York, and Philadelphia, as well as Canadian border crossings. Smaller ports such as Portland, Maine; Vanceboro, Maine; New Bedford, Massachusetts; and Providence, Rhode Island, are also available. Most of these records begin in 1820. (Congress passed the law requiring them in 1819.) Philadelphia begins in 1800 and the Canadian border crossings don't begin until 1895. Most of the ports have indexes for some years. New York, for example, is indexed from 1820 to 1846 and then from 1897-1948. New Orleans, on the other hand, is indexed from 1820 to 1906.

German researchers should also be aware that the Latter Day Saints (Mormon) Family History Centers have access to the Hamburg Passenger Lists, 1850-1934. These lists include nearly one-third of all the people who emigrated from central and eastern Europe between 1850 and 1934. For information on using immigration records, see *Archival Anecdotes*, volume 2, number 2, December, 1997; volume 3, number 1, March, 1998; volume 3, number 2, June, 1998; and volume 3, number 3, September, 1998.

Finding an ancestor's naturalization papers can assist a researcher in locating his or her arrival records. Prior to the standardization of naturalization applications in 1906, some courts, such as those in Massachusetts, asked for arrival information while others, such as New York and Connecticut, required little information on arrival. Naturalization indexes for New England, 1790-1906 (longer for Connecticut) and New York Federal District Courts, beginning in 1824, can help locate the naturalization record for ancestors by giving the court information as well as certificate and application numbers. The New England index also includes date and place of birth (on some cards; the boxes are there but not always filled in). NRAP also has applications and declarations for the Federal District Court in Boston from 1906-1929 with an index to 1966. For more information on using naturalization records, see *Archival Anecdotes*, volume 4, number 4, December, 1999.

World War I Draft Cards

Draft cards for New England and New York are available in Pittsfield. The cards are arranged alphabetically by state, then numerically by draft board (which may be alphabetically by county), then by surname. The researcher needs to know the town where the person lived or the county if the town is in a rural area. For large cities, such as New York, the street address is needed at the very least. A list of the addresses of each New York City draft board is available. Information contained in the records includes name, address, date of birth, race, citizenship status, birthplace, occupation and employer, dependent relative, marital status, father's birthplace, and name and address of nearest relative. There are several good articles available on the World War I draft registration process, including some on-line. At www.jewishgen.org/infofile/wwidraft.txt, is an article by Warren Blatt which gives a good explanation of the three registrations. Ray Banks is putting together a database of birthplaces from the draft registration available at www.members.aol.com/Rayhbanks/cos.html.

Census, Immigration and Naturalization Records

The *Germans to America* series, compiled by Ira A. Glazier and P. William Filby, reproduces ship manifests for ships from the ports of Hamburg and Bremen. Volume 1 begins with January, 1850. The latest volume currently available ends with October, 1895. The CD-ROM volumes currently end in 1888. Each volume has an index in the back organized alphabetically by surname.