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Emigration from Hesse-Darmstadt in the Mid-Nineteenth Century

On a single day, 8 June 1852, 457 citizens of Viernheim, a village of four thousand citizens, in Heppenheim County, in the Grand Duchy of Hesse-Darmstadt, left their homes for North America.¹ They were part of the second largest exodus of Germans to North America in modern times. In all, 145,918 human souls sought to improve their lives by emigration from Germany to the New World in 1852. More than twelve thousand of these came from Hesse-Darmstadt.²

The emigration explosion of the 1850s was a continuation and spread of a movement of discontent well under way by 1848. Deeply structured social problems and economic hardships that arose from bureaucratic inflexibility and centuries-old laws coupled with contemporary agrarian crises and industrial impotence caused more than 140,000 men and women to emigrate from Hesse-Darmstadt to the United States between 1848 and 1861.

Most of these emigrants were responding to economic uncertainties and social injustice. Subjective factors also contributed to widespread unrest felt not only by those wishing to leave, but also by those left behind. A feeling of impending catastrophe pervaded Hesse-Darmstadt. It joined with undeterminable personal expressions of unhappiness to form an invisible dynamic discontent. By the 1840s concern for conditions spread to every area of Hesse-Darmstadt. The increase in emigration demonstrated the breakdown of social and economic patterns that spilled over into every phase of life. The economic threat was all-pervasive, and emigration was the only alternative left for the poor and hungry. They saw no hope and anticipated no cure.

Social injustice and material hardship were the principal causes of dissatisfaction and unrest had steadily grown to major proportions. Although political decisions by the ducal government were contributing factors, allowing the underemployed to leave might be seen as a politically wise decision to relieve dangerous pressure, yet the thousands of applications for mass and individual emigration by villagers bear witness to general desperation and suffering. The volume of emigration also began to rise in Southwest Germany

between 1851 and 1855. The populations of Baden and Württemberg "each suffered absolute declines of about 4 per cent" during the early fifties.³ The situation in Hesse-Darmstadt thus reflected a national trend.⁴

Viernheim, a small town in the southwest corner of the province of Starkenburg, does not present a unique chapter in Hessian emigration history nor is the availability of official documents for this town extraordinary. There are hundreds of towns and villages with similar experiences and documentation. What is striking is the sheer number of emigrants leaving on one day to seek a better life in North America.

The following concentration on Viernheim is intended to serve as an example of how prospective emigrants proceeded to receive official permission to depart legally. The Hessian laws were clear, and rarely were exceptions granted by officials. Thus Viernheim may be considered a model illustrating general practices, demographic composition, and reasons for departure. This essay examines briefly the social, economic, demographic, and climatic conditions which generated political actions and reactions, and considers at length the emigration process itself between 1848 and 1861. The traditional reasons for emigration do not apply for this period. Religion, politics, and the desire to establish a business in North America did not constitute major reasons for emigration, as Peter Marschalk also found true for German states during the 1850s.⁵ Those few who did flee political persecution after 1849 or 1850 should be considered refugees and not emigrants in the traditional sense.

The two years—1848 and 1861—represent major events in the history of the two nations: the former witnessed the explosion of an unsuccessful revolution in Hesse-Darmstadt and the latter the beginning of the Civil War in North America. The advent of industrialization left a distinct impact on the citizens of Viernheim. In Hesse the importation of manufactured goods eliminated cottage industry and forced thousands of women and men to seek employment in other states, or to emigrate to North America or other foreign countries. Industrialization, however, did not develop in Hesse during the middle of the nineteenth century. The Hessian ducal government, supported by both legislative chambers, did not encourage industrialization, possibly because of the available importation of cheap textiles and other goods.⁶ One of the results of the introduction of cheap goods in Hesse was the unprecedented unemployment in the cottage industries in the Odenwald and the Vogelsberg. The fear of a proletarian uprising with its social consequences convinced leaders to discourage economic changes in the three provinces of Hesse-Darmstadt. Ingomar Bog succinctly stated: "Hessen erlebte keine industrielle Revolution."⁷

In Hesse-Darmstadt inequalities in land tenure and short harvests caused food shortages and inflation. Similar processes occurred in neighboring Baden and Kurhessen in the 1850s. No decade before 1850 experienced similar mass emigration from Hesse-Darmstadt, Nassau, and Kurhessen as did the 1850s.⁸ Neither Viernheim nor Hesse-Darmstadt represents a unique chapter in

German emigration during this decade. In neighboring Nassau, Kurhessen, and Baden similar reasons for an unprecedented exodus existed and the inhabitants' willingness to take chances on emigration was shared by most Germans.

Associated with the severe political process was the inflexible and harsh economic system. Guild regulations and the restriction of commercialism impeded the free flow of commerce and changes in occupations. Young men trained in one occupation could not change their professions at a later point. Equally important, citizens did not enjoy the right to move to other towns within Hesse without the express permission to leave and an invitation by the new town.

Hereditary laws contributed to the fragmentation of land. Many peasants owned as little as six acres of land and could no longer support their families. The cost of land increased steadily, making its purchase impossible for the poor.

Fragmentation of land in all of Hesse-Darmstadt had decreased the yield of crops. Small plots were simply too inefficient. Among the small farmers and households with gardens the dependency on homegrown food became acute as unemployment grew in the rural areas. Furthermore, the communal land for grazing had either been returned to or bought by the local lords. The removal of these lands from the community reduced either the number of grazing animals for individual farmers or the amount of firewood available.⁹

The emigration laws underwent drastic changes between 1848 and 1850 in most German states, and even after the return of conservative governments there were few willing to revoke those liberal laws.¹⁰ On the contrary, governments acted to protect the interests and welfare of their departing citizens. Stricter laws passed after 1850 curtailed questionable activities of shipping agents, and pressure was extended to the ports of Bremen and Hamburg to make travel more humane.¹¹ Shipping agents were instructed to submit to emigrants contracts stipulating fare, amount of food available, and size of berth. The latter two were determined by the amount the emigrant was willing to pay.¹² Similar policies emerged in Wiesbaden and Kassel and other German capitals. These laws were intended to ease the process of emigration. Despite this the deterioration of living conditions had become too acute in Baden, Württemberg, the Palatinate, Nassau, and Kurhessen to impede the flow of emigrants. Still there were those who saw the process as too slow and who therefore departed secretly.¹³

The conditions causing emigration from Hesse were not unique in the history of German emigration. While particulars differed from state to state in the southwest region, the overall conditions and motivations were similar. It is these home circumstances that caused emigration rather than the conditions in North America itself. Emigrants did not learn of a recession, for example, until much later, and recessions in the United States during the 1850s were usually localized. The Hessians did not respond to the North American

economy in terms of its ebbs and flows. Rather these mostly agrarian workers were reacting to their own social and economic conditions. When the availability of food improved and inflation decreased during the late 1850s, emigration dropped considerably. The fluctuating conditions of the North American economy did not have an impact on the highs and lows of Hessian emigration, an observation also made by Walter Kamphoefner in his study on emigration from Westphalia. Hessian emigrants responded to their own plight caused by climatic and economic changes. Hessians were rarely disturbed by the uncertainties of the American economy and politics, and as Kamphoefner succinctly observed, the "pull-effect" remained constant for most of the nineteenth century.¹⁴ Only where industrialization was encouraged to develop, such as in Saxony and Prussia, did different conditions and policies prevail.

The economic conditions fostering emigration should not be treated as the sole reasons for people leaving Hesse-Darmstadt. There were also the blandishments of the shipping agents and propagandists whose roles have not yet been thoroughly examined in detail. While emigration clubs played a dominant part in Braunschweig and Nassau, for example, such organizations were short-lived and of no consequence in Hesse-Darmstadt.¹⁵ There were also the letters written by immigrants to friends and relatives at home, new protection laws for voyagers passed by the United States and German states, and the decrease in transatlantic fares. All these factors may have influenced the prospective emigrant.¹⁶

A clear correlation between economic crisis and emigration existed between 1848 and 1861. The early 1850s witnessed rainy summers and severe winters causing short harvests and inflation, and at the same time emigration rose to its highest peak. The heaviest rainfall between 1848 and 1861 occurred during the summer of 1854; the second heaviest in 1852. December 1853 and February 1854 were the coldest and the third-coldest months in the fifties.¹⁷ These two years produced the highest number of emigrants from Hesse and from Germany, suggesting a direct relationship between bad weather and increased emigration.¹⁸

Analyzing the total crop per year for rye, potatoes, and turnips reveals startling shortages among these three crops for the years 1850 to 1854, using 1849 as the best harvest year. Devastating reduction in crops harvested plagued the inhabitants of Hesse. In 1849 almost one million *Malter* of rye were harvested. Two years later the intake dropped by 24 percent. Only once during the fifties, in 1857, the rye harvest exceeded the 1849 production. A similar drastic decrease occurred for potatoes. By 1854, at the peak of emigration, the potato harvest had dropped by 46 percent, or slightly over three million *Malter*. The potato harvest exceeded the 1849 production in 1857 and 1858, but not by much. Turnips also experienced a decline and never regained their 1849 yield in the 1850s. By 1855 the harvest was still about 900,000 *Malter* short of 1849. For all three crops, 1854 was the worst year. It

was also the wettest and coldest year in the 1850s, with emigration then reaching its highest peak in Hesse's history.¹⁹

Between 1849 and 1861 more than 140,000 men, women and children joined an exodus never experienced for any other twelve-year period in Hesse's history. Officially, slightly more than 100,000 Hessians left the principality.²⁰ Between 1846 and 1861, Hesse-Darmstadt experienced a net growth of only 5,797 inhabitants, or less than a single percentage point for any given three-year period.²¹ The only decrease in population (-155) during the forties occurred between 3 December 1846 and 3 December 1849, caused by economic misfortunes and political uncertainties. The largest reduction of all occurred between 1852 and 1855, when the census listed 17,900 fewer inhabitants. Each province listed a net loss for this period.²² Thirteen of the nineteen communities located in today's Odenwaldkreis east of Darmstadt registered a decrease in population between 1846 and 1858. The increase for the other six towns was minimal.²³

The relationship among emigration, population density, and marriage and birth ratios is complex. Generally, emigration came from those counties with high population densities, such as Lindenfels. Throughout the 1850s a rise in emigration coincided with a decline in marriages and births and an increase in death rates. The changes were greatest in the rural counties.²⁴

The departures of so many people within a relatively short period had, as already mentioned, definite effects on every aspect of life in Hesse-Darmstadt. It also affected basic demographics. No county was spared the embarrassment of the massive outflow. When there were more men than women leaving, the number of marriages and births shifted. Yet these fluctuations did not correspond to emigration between 1846 and 1861. During the 1849-52 period, over three thousand more men and women left Hesse than in the preceding three-year time span. At the same time there was also, strangely, a gain in marriages and births—approximately 500 and 2,400, respectively. The following period, however, mirrored the expected changes. About 8,400 more people emigrated and marriages dropped by slightly over 1,000 and births by 3,500. After 3 December 1855, marriage and birth figures increased and reflected a feeling that the worst was over and stability might again return. Marriages jumped dramatically, while births gained at a lesser pace.²⁵

The ratio of men to women indicated the greater number of single men departing. Viernheim in 1852 reflected this ratio. Among the single persons between 16 and 30 years old, 36 men and 24 women left the town. That same year the local government reported 18 single men and 3 single women having illegally left Viernheim. (They had not sought official exit visas permitting them to emigrate.²⁶) Almost every local register, which listed the emigrants by family status, showed a greater number of single men than women. The ratio of men to women remaining in Hesse therefore changed accordingly.²⁷ The largest change occurred during the period of greatest hardship and when illegal emigration by single men was heaviest. It is impossible to determine

whether men traveling alone were actually married. Statistics did not differentiate between married and unmarried. Most married men who emigrated without their families did so not because of marital differences, but because of bureaucratic delays and to accumulate money in North America to bring their families over later. Between 1856 and 1861 about 150 former Hessians had returned with United States passports to pick up their families.²⁸

Viernheim is one of many towns and villages that granted financial aid to its citizens. The amount varied depending on the town's fiscal condition. Most communities, however, did not provide monetary incentive; they were too insolvent to allocate any funds. Viernheim's population was approximately four thousand inhabitants. It was a rural community, yet it maintained a school with six teachers and two apartments, a church, and a morgue (seventy-two persons died in 1849). There was no hospital. A doctor lived outside of town where he worked also on his farm. Viernheim, like most towns and villages in Hesse-Darmstadt, depended on its agriculture for survival. There were no industries, except for two brickyards which employed two workers each. Seventy-seven craftsmen (*Handwerker*) and thirty-three merchants including a pharmacist were registered in the town hall. Numerous inns, many with their own distilleries, also engaged local laborers. Still a large percentage of men were day laborers working for farmers. The workers' economic conditions were tenuous at best. Thievery and begging increased at such an alarming rate that the community hired eight policemen in 1851. Each year the community purchased bread and potatoes to be disbursed to the poor. The community even purchased shoes for its needy inhabitants. Although some workers might have small gardens to supplement their incomes, most of them were living below or barely at the level of subsistence in the late 1840s and early 1850s.

When the 457 emigrants left Viernheim on 8 June 1852, they followed emigration procedures that involved the town council, the county government in Heppenheim, and the Department of Justice in Darmstadt, as well as shipping agents in Mainz and various local businesses. More than one hundred citizens of Viernheim petitioned the town council in 1851 for permission to emigrate and for financial assistance. Gradually the list grew to 457 citizens. The petitioners approached Mayor Minnig, who sent letters to Heppenheim stating the citizens' wish to emigrate and to receive financial support. The communiqué also included biographical information including the names and ages of all members of their families and a character evaluation of the petitioners. Since the request for emigration was amended over the two-year period and because of the unusual nature of this petition, the communication between Viernheim, Heppenheim, and Darmstadt was extensive. For the ducal government the payment of debts, fulfilling military obligations, and family responsibilities became primary concerns. After receiving a preliminary approval from Darmstadt in April 1852, the petitioners

advertised their intention to emigrate in the *Darmstädter Zeitung* and requested creditors to submit claims within four weeks.²⁹

The ducal government agreed to the request after receiving assurances that the town could pay the financial obligations, that all debts had been paid, and that the military had not objected to any young man's departure without having served in the army. Passports were issued when the county government or, in this case, the ducal government was convinced that every requirement was fulfilled by the petitioners.³⁰

The council approved this mass petition primarily because the community's welfare costs were rising at a staggering rate. There were too many poor and starving citizens. Officially the town council wanted to get rid of "derelicts and lazy workers." The mayor, in order to receive a positive response from Heppenheim and Darmstadt, needed to paint a picture of hopelessness and desperation. A few of these petitioners had been convicted of vagrancy, of the theft of two turnips or of a wheelbarrow of grass. Most of the violations reflect a destitute citizenry stealing food to survive the misery and hunger plaguing the entire province. Three petitioners were serving prison sentences at the time of the application. No personal records exist stating the reasons for emigration, but the public documents speak for themselves.

Not all of the applicants were poor. Twenty-five emigrants owned houses and land. However, they had to sell their properties in order to pay their debts before departing. Several of these homeowners were able to take money to North America, and they bought land within a short period after their arrival. In order to receive exit visas and financial aid, the petitioners had to renounce their rights and privileges in communal properties such as grazing land and forests. In return, the town paid the debts and the passage of those who were unable to do so themselves. It clothed them, provided them with cooking utensils, and gave each emigrant a cash payment upon arrival in New York.

Once the permission was granted, the town also assumed responsibility for negotiating with a shipping agency the passenger contract, which specified the route to be taken, the available food, the sleeping area for each passenger on the transatlantic ship and the cost. On 12 June, four days after leaving Viernheim, the emigrants boarded two ships in Antwerp. Upon arrival in New York in August, they received their allowance and sent letters of thanks to the agent and to the mayor. They praised the crew's friendly service and the good food on board. (Unfortunately, no official records exist indicating the destination of these emigrants from Viernheim. However, according to letters written by the emigrants and reports by some of their relatives, at least seventeen families settled in New York or New Jersey. The town allocated 34,150 guildens for this emigration. The Strecker Agency in Mainz received most of the money. A few interesting expenses were recorded: unidentified expenses for council members, making boxes for the emigrants' belongings, moving them to Mannheim, and transporting three prisoners to Viernheim.

A comical aspect of this financial statement is an entry for payment for clothing a prisoner had borrowed from a fellow male inmate and never returned.

The group consisted of seventy-nine families, six widows, three widowers, five single men and three single women. The average family size consisted of four to five persons. Sixteen occupations were represented of which farm laborer was the largest category. Among the craftsmen there were masons, shoemakers, weavers, and one carpenter, a barber, a blacksmith, a butcher, a barrelmaker, and one merchant. The number of single men is surprising considering it was difficult for young men to emigrate legally. The age range of the five single men was from 20 to 31; four were farm laborers and one did not list an occupation. The ages of the three single women were 15, 26, and 29. There were thirty-one young men of draft age from 16 to 26. Of course, some might have already served in the military, but not those under eighteen. This age group was usually denied emigration. This high number contrasts with the practices of other Hessian towns and villages. An exemption must have been granted, but the reason is not listed in the official records.

Emigration had become a matter concerning all. No longer was it restricted to individuals. Mass emigration of groups of citizens or even entire villages was not uncommon in the late 1840s and early 1850s. Three villages, Pferdsbach, Grosszimmern, and Wernings, petitioned the ducal government to sell communal and private properties with the intent that the citizens emigrate en masse to North America. All three received approval. Mass emigration and public financial support continued into the 1850s. Local government were cognizant of the long-range savings of letting the poor leave. Only one more town, Seehof, received ducal permission to emigrate en masse during the 1850s. In neighboring Nassau, three villages received permission to emigrate as groups in the early 1850s. Their reasons reflected those of their neighbors in Hesse-Darmstadt.³¹ Many towns granted financial assistance ("auf Kosten der Gemeinde") to emigrants after 1852. The process of receiving permission to emigrate as a group was cumbersome and slow. For example, over thirty residents of Haingrundau, Kreis Büdingen, petitioned their council for financial support and permission to emigrate in 1852. The final papers were signed in 1854 after the list of emigrants had swollen to thirty-five families and single men and women totaling 114 persons. At the end the mayor included himself and his family in the list.³²

The movement drew from all counties and the approximately 1,200 villages and towns of Hesse-Darmstadt, most heavily in the eastern regions. Between 1846 and 1861, twenty-five villages in the Vogelsberg region lost more than 20 percent of their populations. The Vogelsberg and eastern Odenwald lost more residents than any other area in Hesse-Darmstadt. The transport of hundreds of emigrants from different parts of Hesse to the Rhine River ports could not go unnoticed by those through whose villages the emigrants traveled. Something must be wrong to force them to leave their homeland.

Illegal emigration became a major concern by 1851. The county government of Worms warned the secretary of justice of an increase in secret emigration based on that year's census figures. More than one thousand men, women and children were listed in the report. At the same time it was admitted that not all illegal emigrants had been included in that report. Secret emigration must have increased sharply in 1852, creating worries among officials. In November 1852, the Department of Justice instructed each county government, regiment, and the port of Mainz to submit lists of illegal emigrants who had left Hesse-Darmstadt since May.³³ At the same time German states were working closely together to prevent illegal emigration, and treaties were signed to allow governments to return such men and women to their homelands.

Most of the illegal emigrants did not leave secretly in order to avoid military or financial obligations, rather they were avoiding delays in receiving the exit visas. The decision to emigrate involved also the liquidation of assets, assuming there were any. When the application process became too lengthy, the petitioners had to live from their savings and often did not receive any welfare. The best way to circumvent this capital-consuming delay was simply to leave, a decision especially easy for those with little or no money.

Although some food was imported, there was no way to make up for the extreme crop deficiencies. Statistics, newspaper articles, appeals from charities, town council minutes, pamphlets, and the emigrants' own accounts reveal not only severe shortages of food but express these deficiencies in terms of greater human suffering and misery. Hunger reached every village in Hesse-Darmstadt in the early 1850s. The misery was clearly documented. Government reaction was limited, but private charities appealed in the winter of 1851-52 for financial support for these freezing and starving men and women in the Odenwald and Vogelsberg regions. Newspaper articles spoke of failed harvests, terrible misery, and cries for help. In June 1852 the Offenbach committee announced the distribution of 945 florins to the starving in the Odenwald and 728 florins to the destitute in the Vogelsberg region. Similar actions were taking place in other parts of the grand duchy.³⁴

Unemployment and hunger were not the only reasons for leaving Hesse-Darmstadt. Legal offenses, whether criminal or political, also caused men and women to flee Hesse. On several occasions, even the government freed prisoners with the stipulation that they emigrate. Viernheim serves as an example. Direct political discontent was not the prime reason for emigrating. Instead Hessians spoke of the unjust and hopeless political climate in Hesse. Dissatisfaction with arbitrary dealings by police and civil servants was a greater factor for emigration than the absence of civil liberties and a democratic government. Those who emigrated for political reasons usually had participated in the revolution. They saw North America as a land without revolution and war, providing stability and liberty. For the Hessian government their departure meant the removal of possible future unrest.

The social structure kept the citizens within their classes, allowing barely any upward movement. The economic restrictions prevented material improvement for the poor and undereducated. There was very little hope, if any, for most Hessians to improve their conditions. Letters from friends and relatives in North America encouraged the hungry and destitute to seek their fortunes—or at least improve their present conditions—in the New World. There, conscription and taxes did not exist, and freedom of movement and commerce provided new opportunities. Not all the emigrants experienced material improvement. Many worked hard and never enjoyed affluence. Even some of their children did not achieve material success. However, no stiffly structured social environment or rigid economic system existed in North America. This absence of limitation gave those men and women the opportunities to improve their lives and realize the freedom they thought did exist for them and their children.

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Notes

¹ Hans Knapp, ed., *Viernheimer Auswandererbuch* (Viernheim, 1975), 115ff. Encouraged by Knapp to expand the research of Viernheim emigrants, I examined the existing records in the Stadtarchiv. All discussions about Viernheim are based on the documents in the Stadtarchiv Viernheim, Abteilung XI, 4, Fasz. 1-9. Hereafter VSA.

² *Statistical Review of Immigration: 1820-1910* (Washington, DC, 1911), 24. There are different numbers for this year, but all statistics for 1852 fluctuate between 140,000 and 150,000 German immigrants, making it the second-highest year for German immigration to the United States.

³ Mack Walker, *Germany and the Emigration 1816-1885* (Cambridge, MA, 1964), 157.

⁴ Wilhelm Monckmeier, *Die deutsche überseeische Auswanderung* (Jena, 1912), 74-75; and Peter Marschalk, *Deutsche Überseewanderung im 19. Jahrhundert* (Stuttgart, 1973), 38.

⁵ Marschalk, 83.

⁶ Ingomar Bog, "Die Industrialisierung Hessens," in *Hessisches Auswandererbuch*, ed. Hans Herder (Frankfurt, 1984), 190ff. A similar argument is made by Robert Müller, *Die industrielle Entwicklung Offenbachs* (Offenbach, 1932), 59ff. Several writers try to establish industrial development in Hesse-Darmstadt. However, when comparing economic indicators such as railroads with those of other German states, it is clear that Hesse-Darmstadt did not progress in the same manner as Saxony and Prussia.

⁷ Bog, 192; see also Walker, 112.

⁸ Inge Auerbach, "Auswanderung aus Kurhessen 1832-1866," in *Der grosse Aufbruch*, ed. Peter Assion (Marburg, 1985), 30-33.

⁹ Walker, 47ff.

¹⁰ Wolf-Heina Struck, *Die Auswanderung aus dem Herzogtum Nassau 1886-1866* (Wiesbaden, 1966), 72-75.

¹¹ There are many memoranda by the ducal government instructing the counties and towns to observe carefully the Hessian laws protecting emigrants from unscrupulous shipping agents. For example, no. 28, 26 October 1852, reference: "... insbesondere den Transport und die Proviantierung der über englische Seehafen reisenden Auswanderer." Hessisches Staatsarchiv für Hessen-Darmstadt, G 15 Büdingen J 5. Hereafter HSA.

¹² "Postschiff-Überfahrts-Vertrag," HSA G 15 Heppenheim J 12.

¹³ Monckmeier, 235-41; Walker, 168-69; Auerbach, 21; Struck, 72-75.

¹⁴ Walter D. Kamphoefner, *Westfalen in der Neuen Welt* (Münster, 1982), 19.

¹⁵ Kamphoefner, 90.

¹⁶ Peter Winkel, "Skepticism Turns to Enthusiasm: Seventeen Letters Written by a German Immigrant in New Jersey to his Father in Hesse-Darmstadt between 1852-1859," *Yearbook of German-American Studies* 24 (1990), 47-48. Similar enthusiasm even during economic uncertainties can be found in some letters published by Wolfgang Helbich, *"Amerika ist ein freies Land..."* (Darmstadt, 1985).

¹⁷ *Beiträge zur Statistik des Großherzogthums Hessen* (Darmstadt, 1862), 112ff.

¹⁸ *Statistisches Handbuch für das Großherzogtum Hessen* (Darmstadt, 1909), 6.

¹⁹ *Mittheilungen der Großherzoglich Hessischen Centralstelle für die Landesstatistik* (Darmstadt, 1871), 314ff.

²⁰ The Hessian government published two different emigration numbers for this period: in 1864, the official figure was 108,277 persons; in 1909, the number was 102,393. Either number is too low, since they do not include illegal emigrants and emigrants who were not reported to the county governments. Evaluating the existing records ("heimliche Auswanderung" reports, desertion lists, unreported individuals and others), this writer believes an increase of 33 percent seems appropriate.

²¹ The Hessian census was taken every three years on 3 December. The time periods were 1846 to 1849, etc.

²² *Statistisches Handbuch*, 5-6.

²³ Ella Gieg, *Auswanderung aus dem Odenwaldkreis* (Lützelbach, 1988), 14.

²⁴ *Beiträge* (1864), 26. For the year 1853 HSA, Abt. G 1 136/2.

²⁵ *Statistisches Handbuch*, 16.

²⁶ HSA, Verz. 11, Konv. 54, I, 372-73.

²⁷ *Statistisches Handbuch*, 17.

²⁸ Stadtarchiv Mainz, "Auswanderungsmappe." Hereafter MSA. The "Mappe" contains numerous lists of more than 60,000 German emigrants in the 1850s. Bavarians, for example, began their journey to North America from here. Unfortunately, these lists are not complete.

²⁹ *Darmstädter Zeitung*, 3 April 1852 (no. 94), 532. Before 1848 the waiting period had been four months. This had caused severe hardship for those who had sold their belongings and saw their profits disappear while waiting. Many of them joined the welfare rolls.

³⁰ VSA, Abt. XI, 4, Fasz. 1-9.

³¹ There are numerous references to these four towns. Otto Hübner, ed., *Jahrbuch für Volkswirtschaft und Statistik* (Leipzig, 1855), 303ff; Struck, 86; Walker, 76-77; Hans Richter, "Hessen und die Auswanderung 1815-1855," in *Mittheilungen des Oberhessischen Geschichtsvereins* 32 (1934), 117ff. U.S. authorities were also concerned about these mass immigration waves. They were partially responsible for stricter immigration laws passed by Congress and the emergence of societies dedicated to the protection of immigrants.

³² HSA, Abt. G 28. F 16a-173: Hain-Gründau, 1716-1903. There are different spellings for this town in Kreis Büdingen.

³³ The numerous lists from the port of Mainz, the regiments and county governments can be found in HSA, Verz. 11, Konv. 54, 55 and 56. The Mainz lists are also in MSA.

³⁴ The *Offenbacher Intelligenz-Blatt* during this period contains many articles describing the misery, appealing for help, and listing donations and distributions.