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Article Title: German and Czech Immigration to Texas: The Bremen to Galveston Route, 1880-1886

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Article Summary: This study explores mass Czech and German immigration from points of departure at Hamburg and Bremen to places of settlement in the US. It shows that American railroad systems and trans-Atlantic steamship lines not only transported immigrants but actively encouraged immigration.

Cataloging Information:

Names: Julius Kauffman, Edward Kauffman, Henry Runge, Julius Runge, Ernst Bergmann, W G Kingsbury, William W Lang

Place Names: Galveston and Indianola, Texas; Bremen and Hamburg, Germany

Keywords: Julius Kauffman, Edward Kauffman, Henry Runge, Julius Runge, W G Kingsbury, William W Lang, Kauffman and Runge, Kauffman House, North German Lloyd Line, Verein zum Schutze deutscher Einwanderer, Civil War, America, Sunset Road, Southwestern Immigration Company, Alien Contract Labor Law (Foran Act, 1885)

Photographs / Images: table I: vessels with immigrants sailing from Bremerhaven to Galveston, 1880-1886; fig 24: Czech-language land promotion booklet issued by the Burlington & Missouri River Railroad in Nebraska; fig 25: undated artwork for the cover of the Omaha agricultural journal Hospodár showing immigrants arriving in New York Harbor
Although it is well known that the immigration of German and Austrian groups to Texas in the decades following the American Civil War made a large impact on the social and economic development of the state, the precise mechanics or processes involved in the immigration have not yet received adequate study. This paper examines in detail one limited yet significant part of this phenomenon: the movement of immigrants, especially those with German and Czech surnames, to Galveston, Texas, via the German port of Bremen, 1880-86. This seven-year period, during which immigration from Germany and Austria increased sharply following the U.S. economic depression of the previous decade, represents the high point of German immigration to Texas already had become a big business by 1850. An important stimulus was the Verein zum Schutze deutscher Einwanderer (hereafter referred to as the Verein), which held its first meeting at Biebrich on the Rhine in 1842 and was formally organized in 1844. Galveston’s Kauffman House was involved in the shipment of immigrants from Bremen to Galveston from the beginning of the Verein’s first shipments in 1844 through the charter steamship era, which ended in 1886.

The immigration of Czech groups from the Austrian Empire began in the 1850s, largely as a result of the efforts of Rev. Ernst Bergmann, an Evangelical minister of Czech background, who lived among the German settlers near Cat Spring, Texas. His letters, which described Texas as a land of economic opportunity, were reproduced and circulated in the Czech lands, especially northeastern Bohemia, where the first group of immigrants was organized. This group departed in 1851 from the German port of Hamburg and landed in New Orleans before sailing on to Galveston, but later groups moving from Bohemia and Moravia to Texas before the American Civil War took the direct Bremen to Galveston route preferred by the Germans.

 Virtually all European immigration to Texas was halted during the American Civil War (1861-65), but in subsequent years, the breakup of the old plantations, the emigration of blacks to Kansas, and the demand for cotton and other agricultural products spurred the demand for German and Czech immigrants as agricultural laborers. The severe depression throughout the United States that began with the failure of the banking house Jay Cooke and Company in September 1873 was another deterrent to immigration, but a new wave of immigration to the United States came with the 1880s, and the Bremen-to-Galveston connection, although unique, was part of this new boom—at least until 1886.

The first steamship of the North German Lloyd Line that travelled from Bremen to Galveston during the 1880-86 era was the America, which arrived at its destination on September 29, 1880. Because this first arrival in many ways typifies the charters that were to come during the entire period, it is worthwhile to describe it in some detail. The America was the first of fifteen North German Lloyd steamships to arrive: the last immigrant sailing vessel to arrive would be the bark Gutenberg, on November 15, 1881 (Table 1).

Like nearly all of the post-Civil War sailing ships which had preceded it to Galveston from Bremen, the America was on consignment to the Kauffman House, agents of the North German...

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## Table 1. Vessels with immigrants sailing from Bremerhaven to Galveston 1880-86.

Voyage Number  | Vessel                      | Departed from Bremerhaven | Arrived at Galveston 2 | Captain   | Number of Pass. 3 | Pass. List 4 |
---------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|-----------|------------------|--------------|
1             | SS America 5                | Sept. 8, 1880             | Sept. 29-30, 1880      | C. Pohle  | 619              | Yes 6        |
2             | Bark George Washington 7,8  | Sept. 4, 1880             | Nov. 10, 1880          | J.D. Probst | 42               | No           |
3             | SS Braunschweig             | Nov. 24, 1880             | Dec. 20, 1880          | C. Pohle  | 446              | No           |
4             | SS Kronprinz Fredrick-William | Sept. 13, 1881         | Oct. 6-10, 1881        | A. Meyer  | 929              | No           |
5             | SS Hohenzollern             | Oct. 5, 1881              | Oct. 29, 1881          | R. Sander | 527              | No           |
6             | Bark Gutenberg 7            | Sept. 5, 1881             | Nov. 15-16, 1881       | C. Averdam | 100              | No           |
7             | SS Hohenstaufen             | Sept. 3, 1882             | Sept. 23, 1882         | Th. Juengst | 532              | No           |
8             | SS Hanover                  | Sept. 21, 1882             | Oct. 17, 1882          | P. Berdrow | 494              | No           |
9             | SS Ohio                     | Oct. 18, 1882             | Nov. 10-13, 1882       | H. Bruns  | 480              | No           |
10            | SS Weser                    | Sept. 8, 1883             | Sept. 28-30, 1883      | H. Bruns  | 1000             | Yes 9        |
11            | SS Hohenzollern             | Oct. 5, 1883              | Oct. 26-27, 1883       | A. Meyer  | 694              | No           |
12            | SS Weser                    | Nov. 17, 1883             | Dec. 10-11, 1883       | H. Bruns  | 298              | No           |
13            | SS Weser                    | Sept. 5, 1884             | Sept. 29-30, 1884      | H. Bruns  | 545              | No           |
14            | SS Ohio                     | Oct. 4, 1884              | Oct. 26, 1884          | A. Meyer  | 367              | No           |
15            | SS Weser                    | Sept. 12, 1885             | Oct. 3-4, 1885         | H. Bruns  | 335              | Yes 10       |
16            | SS Hohenzollern             | Oct. 10, 1885             | Oct. 30-31, 1885       | A. Meyer  | 181              | Yes 11       |
17            | SS Weser 12                 | Sept. 11, 1886             | Oct. 1, 1886           | H. Bruns  | 449              | No           |

### Notes to Table 1

1. Table 1 was compiled from various issues of the Galveston Daily News and the Picayune (New Orleans), the monthly reports from the Bureau for Bremen Statistics, and the Harbor Accounts Books for Bremerhaven. A complete bibliography of the voyages is available from the authors.

2. When two dates are shown, the first represents the arrival of the ship at the entrance to the harbor and the second is the day that the last passenger was lightered to shore.

3. These figures varied slightly with the different sources.

4. The first immigrant steamship of the charter era to arrive in Galveston from Bremen (Bremerhaven).

5. A passenger list of the Czech immigrants on this voyage was published in the Wisconsin Slavie, Racine, Wis. The list was discovered by Albert Blaha and republished in Náze Dějiny, Halletsville, Tex., Mar.-Apr. 1987, 12-13.

6. The total number of passengers listed in Table 1 is 8,038 as compared to the Treasury Department's 1893 study, which reports 8,108 for the same period. The U.S. Customs Department's passenger lists and the Immigration and Naturalization Service's passenger lists are not available for this period.

7. All vessels except the George Washington were consigned to Kaufmann and Runge; perhaps this is also true of the George Washington, but evidence is lacking.

8. This passenger list was published by Carl Schünemann's Buchdruckerei (print shop) in Bremen. Passenger lists of this sort were produced by North German Lloyd for the benefit of the passengers and were distributed as advertisements. Perhaps this is how the passenger list of the America found its way to Racine, Wis.

9. This passenger list was published in the Galveston Daily News three days before the vessel arrived at Galveston. These vessels were inspected by the U.S. consul at Havana, Cuba, and the information was telegraphed to Galveston. Perhaps that is why the list preceded the vessel to Galveston. See "German Immigrants," Galveston Daily News, Sept. 30, 1885, 8.

10. This passenger list was published in the Galveston Daily News three days before the vessel arrived at Galveston. These vessels were inspected by the U.S. consul at Havana, Cuba, and the information was telegraphed to Galveston. Perhaps that is why the list preceded the vessel to Galveston. See "German Immigrants," Galveston Daily News, Sept. 30, 1885, 8.

11. This passenger list was also published in the Galveston Daily News three days before the ship arrived. "More Immigrants," Galveston Daily News, Oct. 27, 1885, 8.

12. The last immigrant steamship of the charter era.
Lloyd Line in Galveston. This firm had been founded in Galveston in 1842, as Edward Kauffman and Company, by Edward and Julius Kauffman, who had begun to conduct business in the city two years earlier. In subsequent years the name of the firm was changed to Julius Kauffman and Company, Kauffman and Klainer, Kauffman and Wagner, and finally, Kauffman and Runge in 1873.

Julius Kauffman was the dominant force in the company until his death in January 1880. He had considerable skills as a merchant, importer, and shipping agent. A citizen of Bremen, he used his contacts there to develop and strengthen the Bremen-Galveston connection over the years. Through arrangements made by the Kauffman House, Germans or Czechs already living in Texas could prepay the trans-Atlantic passage for relatives and friends, either by paying in full or by taking a note on tickets at one percent per month on the unpaid balance. Also, funds for the purchase of necessary items could be made available to the immigrants at their port of embarkation or at their arrival port in Galveston before their inland journey. When the Verein was organized in the 1840s by German capitalists to promote German immigration to Texas, Edward Kauffman was appointed its fiscal agent, and it was in this capacity that he and Julius Kauffman arranged consignment of space aboard sailing vessels to immigrants. In these early years, the German immigrants were shipped from Bremen first to Galveston and then by smaller vessels to the nearby port of Indianola, Texas. It should also be noted that the Kauffmans and the Verein itself were taking advantage of laws passed by the Republic of Texas in 1841 and 1842 which sanctioned and encouraged the colonization of French, English, and German groups in Texas in order to discourage military intervention by Mexico over disputed borders.

In the meantime another native of Bremen was beginning to take on a prominent role in the German immigration scheme. Henry Runge came to the United States through Baltimore in 1836, moved to New Orleans in 1841, and in 1845 pooled his resources with the Verein to support its Texas colony. In 1848 he established a shipping business and bank in Indiana—some claim it was the first bank in Texas. Runge moved his base of operations to Galveston in 1868, and he formed a partnership with Kauffman in 1873, shortly before Runge's death. At Runge's death, the two Bremenites, both of whom had maintained political ties to Europe, held a near monopoly on the direct (Galveston as a port of entry) immigration business in Texas. As early as 1858 (possibly much earlier) Kauffman held the title of the foreign consul at Galveston for Austria, Saxony, Bremen, and the Netherlands. Similarly, Henry Runge was appointed consul (at Indianola, Texas) for the city of Hamburg in 1851. Runge died in 1873, but his nephew (and son-in-law) Julius Runge was appointed consul for the German Empire at Galveston in 1875. When Julius Kauffman died in 1880, his Austrian consul title was transferred to his son Julius Kauffman, Jr. These two heirs were the Kauffman and Runge of the Galveston shipping firm as it was constituted when the America landed in 1880 to initiate the new era of steamship charters.

Other figures in the immigration process can be identified: many of the charters or special consignments of the steamships during our seven-year period of study apparently were arranged by either Dr. W. G. Kingsbury of the Galveston, Harrisburg, and San Antonio Railroad (the Sunset Road) or by William W. Lang, who represented the Southwestern Immigration Company, which was incorporated in the state of Texas.

By the 1880s railroad lines had been extended well into the great farm belts of Texas, and several railroad agents were actively engaged in the immigration business (fig. 24). Kingsbury, acting as an agent for the Sunset Road, seems to have been primarily responsible for the America charter. He travelled to Bremen in April 1880 and signed a contract with the North German Lloyd Line which provided for an appropriate steamship if Kingsbury could guarantee at least 500 passengers. In his own words, Kingsbury placed in the hands of all licensed immigration agents throughout Germany a pamphlet descriptive of Texas, each book also containing a complete map of the United States. I printed both at Hamburg, and distributed from that place 30,000 copies during the months of April and May . . . . The Sunset road is doing all in its power, regardless of expense, and if the citizens of Texas will lend a helping hand by attentions and encouraging the new arrivals, strangers at your gates, and getting them to write good letters home, we shall make it a grand success.

Kingsbury helped to arrange other Bremen-to-Galveston charters during our time of study, including that of the Kronprinz, which arrived in Galveston in October 1881, and other Texas railroads, such as the Texas and Pacific, were also involved in promoting immigration during this period.

William W. Lang was another important promoter in the business at this time. As an agent of the Southwestern Immigration Company, which represented seven individual railroads operating in the states of Texas, Louisiana, and Arkansas, he, too, solicited the Bremen-to-Galveston immigrant trade. He seems to have been primarily responsible for organizing the charter for the Weser, which landed in Galveston in 1883.

The 619 immigrants who arrived in the steamship America in September 1880 were described as coming from Austria (Moravia and Silesia inclusive),
Saxony, Prussia, Bavaria, Württemburg, Lippe-Detmola, Russia, Brandenburg, Thuringia, Oldenburg, Bohemia, Sweden, Mecklenburg, Hamburg, and Saxe-Weimar. The Czech-American fifteen steamships and the approximately 8,038 immigrants they brought from Bremen to Galveston during the years 1880-86.

Table 1 lists available information about the seventeen voyages. The date of the departure from Bremen is available for only ten. The number of adult passengers for each voyage is given, but, unfortunately, complete lists of names in most cases are not among the U.S. Customs passenger lists held at the Port of Galveston. Although some of the lists are not available, we can speculate about the lost records on the basis of the information that is accessible and conclude that a majority of the over 8,000 passengers during the seven-year period were Germans. Perhaps as many as one-third of them were Czechs (most of them citizens of Austria).

What happened after 1886? No ship arrivals were noted at Galveston in the Galveston Daily News as bringing immigrants directly there as a port of entry for the years 1887-95. A pamphlet published by the Treasury Department Bureau of Statistics in 1893 indicates that small numbers of immigrants and foreign passengers did arrive in Galveston during this period through 1892 and the Immigration and Naturalization Service passenger lists also verify that small numbers of immigrants and foreign passengers arrived between 1892 and 1895, but these came by small coastal vessels from Central and South American ports and to Galveston was not economically feasible until Galveston's channel was deepened in 1895, although North German Lloyd did change its terminal from New Orleans to Galveston in 1884. But an important question remains: why did the special charter arrangements end after 1886? There is no one certain explanation, but several factors probably contributed to this development. The firm of Kauffman and Runge, whose primary emphasis was on the cotton trade, lost a great deal of money in an attempt to corner the cotton market in 1885, which may have affected its role in the immigrant business.

There is also evidence that Germany had begun to enforce laws against the recruiting of immigrants within its borders—a point that North German Lloyd's spokesman was quick to disclose at a U.S. congressional hearing in 1888. New domestic laws that limited immigration by exclusion were, however, probably more significant: the first comprehensive immigration law to regulate immigration, commonly referred to as the pauper's law, was enacted on August 4, 1882. Among other things, it restricted the immigration of persons who did not have sufficient personal funds to provide for themselves, though the law did contain some exemptions.

The Alien Contract Labor Law (Foran Act) of 1885 prohibited immigrant contracts for labor in return for prepayment of passage. The immigration system as it operated in Texas thrived on the importation of German and Austrian peasant farmers by means of prepaid passage, with an agreement to work to retire the debt. Both laws, when finally enforced by the secretary of the treasury or his appointees and not by local customs inspectors, seriously affected Galveston's immigrant charter.

Finally, there were economic reasons that in 1887 North German Lloyd
after the opening of Ellis Island in 1892, most Czechs entered the United States through New York Harbor, where the Statue of Liberty was a welcome sight. (NSHS Museum 638P-16, C998.1-602)

Notes

1 The figures are based on articles published in the Galveston Daily News; see Table 1.


3 See William Philip Hewitt, "The Czechs in Texas: A Study of the Immigration and the Development of Czech Ethnicity," 1850-1920, Ph.D. diss., the University of Texas at Austin, 1978; Albert Blaha and Dorothy Klumpp, The Saga of Ernst Bergmann (privately printed, 1981); Clinton Machann and James W. Mendl, Krášná Amerika: A Study of the Texas Czechs, 1851-1939 (Austin, Tex.: Eakin Press, 1983), 9-38. Another important aspect of Czech emigration to Texas that has been ignored until recently was the building of a railway system in the Czech lands that made the group emigrations feasible. Especially important was the completion in April 1851 of the Prague to Decin link, which opened up travel to the Bohemia-Saxony border and beyond to the North German port connections. See Pavel Kosmata, The 19th Century Railroads in Bohemia, Moravia, and Silesia, ed. Lawrence H. Konceny (privately printed, 1992).
1 The arrival of the bark Galveston at Galveston with forty-one passengers on November 16, 1874, marked the last arrival of an immigrant ship from Bremen before the depression. There would be no other arrivals of immigrant vessels from Bremen until the arrival of a ship from Bremen before the
3 Manuscript no. 78-0035, personal diary of Joseph Franklin, Book 1, 80; and Galveston County Probate Cause No. 1255, Book 10, 414, 444, 475-88, 589, 631 in Rosenberg Library, Galveston, Texas.
5 Manuscript no. 56-0005, Rosenberg Library.
6 This organization was incorporated in Texas as the German Immigration Company.
7 Geue and Geue, New Land Beckoned, 52. Solms says he appointed Klaiber as agent but also implies that Fischer appointed E. Kauffman as agent without Solms's permission. However, Solms says he appointed E. Kauffman as agent at Carlshafen (Indiana). According to newspaper accounts of the time the first two ships were consigned to Kauffman, as were the vast majority of the ships that followed. Other historians refer to this arrangement as "Kauffman and Klaiber" yet this partnership did not exist at this time. See Jones, Memoranda and Official Correspondence, 326, 327.
8 In a law of Jan. 4, 1841, the Congress of the Republic of Texas authorized the president to make contracts with W. S. Peters and others "for the purpose of colonizing and settling a portion of the vacant and appropriated lands of the Republic." In another law enacted Feb. 5, 1842, the Congress expanded its earlier legislation by including other colonization companies.
9 Manuscript no. 56-0005, Rosenberg Library; and Henry J. Hauschild, The Runge Chronicle - A German Saga of Success (Victoria, Tex.: Privately printed, 1990), passim.
10 W. and D. Richardson, Galveston City Directory, 1859-1860.
12 Hauschild, The Runge Chronicle, 163-64.
13 Kauffman and Runge were also the leading cotton merchants in the state at this time. It was reported that in 1881 the firm handled twice the amount of cotton as the next largest shipper. Their business connections were located in Rio de Janeiro, Vera Cruz, New York, Liverpool, Havre, and Bremen. The firm also had a considerable wholesale and consignment business throughout much of Texas.
16 "Immigrants for Texas," Galveston Daily News, Sept. 21, 1883, 2. Lang's use of Galveston's harbor facilities may have been a second choice to those of New Orleans; however, Lang did not have the cooperation of Morgan's Louisiana and Texas Steamship and Railroad Company, which was necessary in order to use that route: see "To Promote Immigration," Picayune (New Orleans), Jan. 29, 1881, 6.
17 Our project was responsible for the discovery of two of the missing lists: the 1885 arrivals of the Weser and the Hohenzollern. These two lists represent 526 of the 560 immigrant arrivals reported at Galveston in the 1893 treasury department report. In addition, the list of the Weser's passengers on its arrival in 1883 was found in a vertical file at Rosenberg Library in Galveston, Texas. A partial list for the America's arrival in 1880 was located as part of a research project organized by the late Albert Blaha. It lists all of the passengers with Czech surnames on that ship.
18 According to the monthly reports from the Bureau for Bremen Statistics and the Harbor Account Books for Bremerhaven, there was no departure of an emigration vessel from Bremen to Galveston during the years 1887-95.
20 Passenger Lists of Vessels Arriving at Galveston 1890-1948, U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service, Microcopy 1359, thirty-six rolls. This collection is classified as beginning in the year 1896; however, it includes lists dating from 1892.
21 It was estimated in 1880 that the additional costs to shippers for lightering cargo at Galveston would exceed $1 million for a five-year period. See "How to Raise the Means for Securing Deep Water," Galveston Daily News, Dec. 23, 1880, 4.
25 Table 1; See also "The Immigrant Rate," Galveston Daily News, Oct. 16, 1896, 4.
27 The arrival in Galveston of the SS Hallo from Bremen on Oct. 9, 1896, reinstated the Bremen-to-Galveston immigrant trade.