

# A case study of a voyage of emigration from Germany to South Australia in 1876 – 1877

Presented to the German Interest Group of the San Diego Genealogical Society on 18 February 2026 by Philip Mann.

The Cesar Godeffroy left Hamburg on 9 September 1876 with 124 adults, 42 children under 12 years and 4 children under 5 years and arrived in South Australia on 7 January 1877<sup>1</sup>.

Statistics for the voyage are shown in the summary below. The voyage seems quite notable for the low number of deaths.

		Married		Single		Children		Infants	
		Men	Women	Men	Women	Boys < 12	Girls < 12	Male	Female
Births		18	18	47	19	23	19	2	2
Deaths		18	18	47	19	23	19	1	6
		14	15	47	18	23	18	2	5 = 17

Figure 1 Summary of 1876 - 1877 voyage of the Cesar Godeffroy

The List of Passengers indicates that Captain A Decker was the ship's captain for the trip from Hamburg to Port Adelaide and the voyage was made under an agreement with Francis S Dutton dated 18 October 1875.

<sup>1</sup> State Records of South Australia, *List of Passengers, nominated in the Colony forwarded to Ship Cesar Godeffroy, Captain A Decker from Hamburg with assisted passage ticketed from Messrs B Amsberg & Co. in Adelaide*, 9 September 1876, accessed 25 January 2026.  
[https://www.archives.sa.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0005/831839/GRG35\\_48\\_1\\_77-2\\_Caesar-Godeffroy.pdf](https://www.archives.sa.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0005/831839/GRG35_48_1_77-2_Caesar-Godeffroy.pdf).

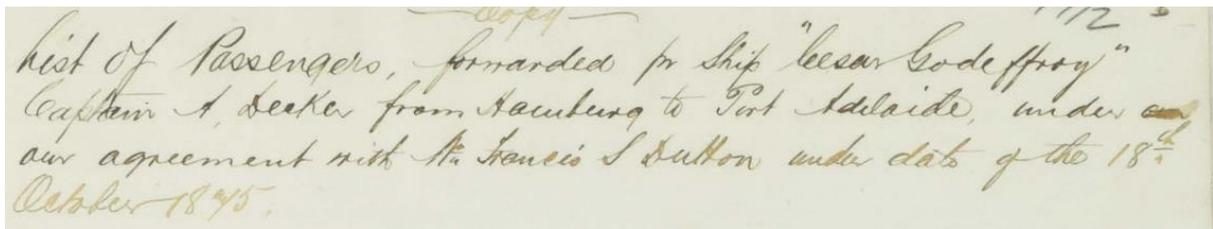


Figure 2 Heading on second page.

Passengers were all assisted passengers ticketed by Messrs B Amsberg & Co Adelaide, under an agreement with Mr Francis S Dutton and Johann Cesar Godeffroy as Agent for South Australia dated 18 October 1875.

In this paper, I will explain the background to this voyage; in particular, I will discuss:

- the colony of South Australia;
- the agreement dated 18 October 1875;
- Francis S Dutton;
- Johann Cesar Godeffroy;
- requirements of passengers;
- the voyage;
- Bohemians in South Australia;
- Bohemians in context;
- travel to the port; and
- my connection with this vessel.

## The colony of South Australia

The colony of South Australia was proclaimed on 28 December 1836. In 1834, the South Australian Colonisation Act was passed in the British Parliament, leading to the British colonisation of land in what is now the state of South Australia<sup>2</sup>. The 1834 Act empowered the King to establish South Australia as a British Province, initially as a commercial and administrative partnership between the British government and the SA Colonization Commission. The province was for migrants, not convicts, and was to be funded by the sale of land to wealthy British settlers and to investors. This money in turn would partially fund the transport of labourers and other workers to the colony. The investors and speculators living in the City of Adelaide needed people to provide labour and produce food for them. In the first 40 years of the colony, German farmers came out and settled and developed rural areas throughout the Colony. But as is the case today, there remained a demand for labourers and specific skills.

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<sup>2</sup> Much of this section is from <https://guides.slsa.sa.gov.au/c.php?g=410270&p=2794886>, accessed 20 February 2024.

## The agreement dated 18 October 1875

In the early 1870's, there was considerable competition from New Zealand, Brazil, Queensland and other destinations, for migrants from Germany. Francis S Dutton, then Agent-General for South Australia in London and a former Premier of South Australia, was advocating for free passage as a way of luring Germans to South Australia. There was considerable debate in the South Australian Parliament of the need for more ships to sail directly from Germany to Adelaide; due to the lack of direct shipping from Germany, some intending migrants were having to sail to England and then catch a ship to Australia at additional cost to them. Dutton was very keen on and involved in organising a ship to bring German emigrants to South Australia directly from Germany and was negotiating with agents.

Arguments relating to German migration to South Australia were covered in the local Adelaide media<sup>3</sup>. *Australische Zeitung* published selections from correspondence from the Agent-General re the obtaining of immigrants from Germany for South Australia. Mr. Dutton wrote to the Commissioner of Crown Lands and Immigration of a tour made by him on Continental Europe in the autumn of 1875, during which he gathered a large amount of useful information, and organized several agencies in various continental cities for the purpose of directing a stream of immigration to South Australia. It was reported that Mr. Dutton's efforts in Germany were considerably handicapped by the stringent regulations which were in force in that country against emigration, but there were urgent reasons why every lawful means should be used to obtain the right class of immigrants in larger numbers than what had been arriving. German immigrants had proved themselves to be such good colonists in the past that the prospect of a large growth in the population from Germans would be looked upon favourably. Mr. Dutton's report did not hold out much hope of such an expectation being realised. South Australia was little known in Germany compared to the United States of America which was also more readily accessible. Correspondence with family and friends by many who had left Germany to become residents in South Australia helped promote it as a destination, but only to a very small degree. The laws of the German Empire made it difficult either for the Agent-General to spread information about South Australia, or for the intending migrant to leave his native land should he wish to do so. The newspapers in Germany were under very strict regulations, and an advertisement on emigration could not be inserted in one of them without the consent of the censor. Any advertisement could not include any invitation to the people but must contain the bare announcement of the facilities provided for the embarkation of emigrants after they "have of their own freewill and without persuasion, made up their mind." Before the censor gave his permission, a reference was required to a firm of "Licensed Emigration

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<sup>3</sup> *Continental Immigrants*, *South Australian Register*, 17 February 1876, page 4, <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/rendition/nla.news-article43000057.3.pdf?followup=95605f5fc4751a62786b7472956a79ad>, accessed 28 January 2026.

Agents." There were not many [two in Hamburg<sup>4</sup>], they had to be German and they had to be in possession of a "concession" from the Government authorising them to act. They also had to deposit a considerable sum of money in the hands of the Government as security for the proper fulfilment of their duties. Any infringement of the regulations was punishable by a fine, and, if a fine was incurred a certain number of times, imprisonment was also added. Furthermore, when anyone having made up his mind to emigrate, communicated with the Emigration Agent, the latter was bound under severe penalties to give written notice to the police authorities within 24 hours. The applicant had then to satisfy the Government officials that he was not liable for military service, and, before he was allowed to leave, his name was taken off the parish register. The reason for this was that, at the age of 17, a man had to present himself to the nearest military station to be registered. Between the ages of 17 and 27, he could not leave the country because of the obligation to engage in direct military service, and, from the age of 27 to 40, he was liable to be called up in the reserve forces. One plan suggested by Mr. Dutton was regarding Swiss newspapers which circulated far and wide in Germany. In these papers advertisements and statements as to the resources of the colony could be freely inserted, and, by this means, accurate information as to South Australian affairs could be introduced into Germany. Mr. Dutton had succeeded in establishing a network of agencies in Switzerland. The same is assumed to have applied to German language newspapers in Austria and in other neighbouring countries.

*Australische Zeitung* was a weekly German-language newspaper published in Tanunda, South Australia from 1860 until it ceased publication during World War I in 1916 due to anti-German sentiment. It reported in its 26 October 1875 edition that Mr. B. Amsberg had informed them that the government had received information from Mr. Dutton in London that he had agreed with Mr. Godeffroy to send a German ship for emigrants directly from Hamburg to Adelaide between April and June 1876.

## Francis Stacker Dutton

Francis Stacker Dutton was born at Cuxhaven on the Elbe on 18 October 1818 where his father was the British Consul<sup>5</sup>. The map shows the positioning of Cuxhaven relative to Hamburg and Bremerhaven<sup>6</sup>.

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<sup>4</sup> *German Immigration, Adelaide Observer*, 13 January 1877, page 11, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article159447938>, accessed 30 January 2026.

<sup>5</sup> *Francis Stacker Dutton (1818–1877)*, Obituaries Australia, <https://oa.anu.edu.au/obituary/dutton-francis-stacker-2241>, accessed 26 January 2026. Originally published in the *South Australian Advertiser*, 24 February 1877, p 9.

<sup>6</sup> *Elbe-Weser Triangle*, Wikipedia, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elbe%E2%80%93Weser\\_triangle](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elbe%E2%80%93Weser_triangle), accessed 27 January 2026.



He was educated in Switzerland before working in Brazil for about 5 years.

He was fluent in many languages including English, German and French and was a member of the Institution of Civil Engineers.

He first arrived in Sydney, New South Wales in 1839 joining 2 of his brothers, William and Frederick<sup>7</sup>.



Figure 1 Francis Stacker Dutton. SLSA B 3657.

He then went to Melbourne for 18 months before joining his brother Frederick at Anlaby

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<sup>7</sup> Francis Stacker Dutton, Drovers Way, [https://www.droversway.com.au/legends/francis-dutton#:~:text=Francis%20Stacker%20Dutton%20\(1818%2D1877\)%20was,moving%20to%20Australia%20in%201839](https://www.droversway.com.au/legends/francis-dutton#:~:text=Francis%20Stacker%20Dutton%20(1818%2D1877)%20was,moving%20to%20Australia%20in%201839), accessed 26 January 2026.

Station<sup>8</sup> near Kapunda in South Australia. In 1842, while working at Anlaby Station, Dutton and Captain Charles Bagot discovered the Kapunda copper mine. In 1845 Dutton paid a visit to England, and while there arranged for working the mine. He returned to South Australia in 1847. In 1851, Mr. Dutton was elected a member of the Legislative Council (the Upper House in a bicameral system) and continued to be a member of that body until 1857, when he became a member of the House of Assembly (the Lower House), retaining a seat in that chamber till 1866. He was in several Ministries and served as State Premier in 1863 and 1865. He filled the position of Commissioner of Public Works in 1865, and it was while holding this office that he was appointed Agent General.

He died in London, England, on 25 January 1877.

### Johann Cesar Godeffroy

The Godeffroys were French Huguenots of La Rochelle. In 1737 they were forced to flee France to avoid religious persecution after events following the revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685.

Eventually, they settled in Hamburg and established a trading company known as JC Godeffroy & Son. At first the trade was in Western Europe and the West Indies with textiles exported from Hamburg and copper, coffee, wine, figs, and sugar imported from Cuba. Under Johann Cesar VI Godeffroy (1813 – 1885), who took over the company on his father's death in 1845, outposts were established in Havana and in Valparaiso. Godeffroy built a fleet of trading ships that numbered up to 29 deep water sailing vessels and some 100 smaller ships<sup>9</sup>.

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<sup>8</sup> South Australia's oldest merino stud and one of the great South Australian heritage properties. <https://anlabyaustralia.com/about/>, accessed 27 January 2026.

<sup>9</sup> This information is drawn from a number of sources including Wikipedia ([https://www.wikiwand.com/en/articles/Johann\\_Cesar\\_VI.\\_Godeffroy](https://www.wikiwand.com/en/articles/Johann_Cesar_VI._Godeffroy)) and Kurt Schmack, *J. C. Godeffroy & Sohn. Kaufleute zu Hamburg. Leistung und Schicksal eines Welthandelshauses*, published by Broschek, Hamburg, 1938.



According to Schmack<sup>10</sup>, the finding of gold in Australia made emigration to Australia more important from month to month, with the number of those who wanted to seek their fortune growing exponentially. In 1850, only 7,062 people were moved overseas to all destinations from Hamburg on 60 ships, but, by 1851, the number had risen to 11,798. In 1852, the number had doubled to 23,449. According to Poniewierski<sup>11</sup>, JC Godeffroy and Son became for a time the largest shipping firm in Hamburg, with the greatest number of ships, the highest tonnage, and the largest two ships.

The growth of JC Godeffroy and Son during this time was assisted by the repeal of the Navigation Acts in 1849 and 1854<sup>12</sup>. The Navigation Acts, starting in 1651, aimed to limit trade with England, Ireland, and English colonies to English ships or ships from the colony itself. The laws also specified that certain colonial goods, like sugar, tobacco, and indigo, could only be shipped to England, Ireland, or another English colony. Later, the Acts stipulated that European goods destined for the English colonies had to pass through England first. After the repeal of the Navigation Acts, continental European ships were able to bring migrants directly from continental Europe to South Australia.

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Barbara Poniewierski, *J.C. Godeffroy and German Migration to Queensland*, published by Germanica Pacifica in *Germans in Queensland: 150 Years*, Andrew G. Bonnell Rebecca Vonhoff (eds.).

<sup>12</sup> *Navigation Acts: United Kingdom*, <https://www.britannica.com/event/Navigation-Acts>, accessed 9 February 2026.

It was obvious that J C Godeffroy & Sohn would not be the only ones to operate the liner service to Australia and California. The favourable prospects also attracted others. However, others did not have the opportunities for obtaining return freight that the Godeffroys had secured with their share in the Burra-Burra mines in South Australia and their trading activities in the South Pacific. Australian copper made the emigration journey even more worthwhile as Godeffroy also had an interest in a copper smelter in Hamburg. It was therefore only logical that Johann Cesar set up a branch of his company in Melbourne under Otto Neuhaus in 1852 and established contact with companies in Tasmania.

From 1852, B Amsberg & Co operated as an agent for J C Godeffroy & Sohn from Adelaide and the services he was offering are shown in the advertisement. Note that Bernhard Amsberg was also the Consul in South Australia for both the Free City of Hamburg and the Grand Duchy of Mecklenburg



Figure 3 Advertisement in Adelaide Observer 27 Nov 1852 and translation using Google Translate.

Trading in the Pacific was very profitable and new outposts and plantations were established on many islands. The goods were copra, coconut oil and luxuries such as pearl, as well as slaves. Godeffroy was also able to take advantage of an immigration scheme to Southern Africa and between October 1859 and September 1883, 36 ships sailed for southern Africa, bringing hundreds of German families. After the financial crash of the late 1850s, the firm supplemented its revenue by taking on passengers to the Australian gold rush and the California gold rush. The German imperial government used the Godeffroy company as part of its colonial policy in the Pacific Islands. Nevertheless, in 1878, the company went bankrupt due to speculation with German mining stocks.

## Requirements of Passengers

*Australische Zeitung* reproduced verbatim a printed letter dated March 1876 in German from Messrs. Godeffroy & Son in Hamburg, as it was sent to an emigrant. I will quote a Google translation of some sections:

*“The renowned, copper-hulled, fast-sailing packet ship “Cesar Godeffroy,” Captain Decker, is to be dispatched to Port Adelaide, South Australia, at the end of August 1876.”*

*Passengers who are in possession of passage tickets issued in Adelaide for the journey there should register in writing, providing precise details of their name, age, occupation, and place of residence, with the shipbroker Aug. Bolten,*

*successor to Wm. Miller, in Hamburg, Admiralitätstrasse No. 33-34, in good time, so that the necessary places can be reserved for them.*

*Passengers who join and wish free carriage must pay 33 marks for each person over 12 years of age and 18 marks for each child under 12 years of age, for which they will be provided with free lodging and board in the port of embarkation during the three days prior to the scheduled departure of the ship, their luggage will be transported on board the ship, and they will be provided with the necessary mattresses, eating, drinking, and washing utensils, as well as two sheets, etc., for the journey. Applications for free passage, including precise details of name, age, occupation, and previous place of residence, as well as an officially certified health and conduct certificate, should be submitted to the Commissioner of the Australian Government [sic], Mr. Francis S. Dutton, via the address of Messrs. Joh. Ces. Godeffroy & Son in Hamburg."*

The newspaper reported that in the margin of the letter, the agent wrote: "Passengers assume no obligations whatsoever and are not required to repay anything for the passage granted to them."

It is evident from this letter that the requested payment of 33 marks for adults and 18 marks for children is for services granted to them. The article reported that English emigrants receive the same services at state expense, and since the Minister of State has declared that German emigrants in Hamburg are entitled to the same benefits, an investigation or cessation of these payments was to be easily accomplished.

Fares advertised in a Godeffroy brochure shown in Schmack<sup>13</sup> reveal that the passage from Hamburg to Adelaide and Sydney cost 110 Prussian thalers in the steerage and 300 in the cabin, whereas to San Francisco some had to pay 180 thalers and others 380 thalers.

What was it like in steerage? According to Don Charlwood<sup>14</sup>, emigrants travelling in steerage:

*... shared dormitory-type accommodation, based on government experience in transporting convicts.*

...

*'Each berth was six feet square, and into each berth four people were fitted' that is eighteen inches of width for each person. The allowance for convicts had been precisely the same, for slaves, sixteen inches.*

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Don Charlwood, *The Long Farewell: A history of the first migrations to Australia*, 2018.

*... headroom of only six feet four inches was claustrophobic, though on many ships it was more than this by a foot, even by two feet. Heavy beams cut into this headroom. Within this vertical space fitted the two levels of bunks, the lower one with a space of six inches beneath it for passengers' heavier belongings. (Their bulkier possessions were stowed in the hold.)*

*... on most ships, a couple had not only another couple above or below them, but a second couple within arm's reach to one side. Within a six-foot square, four people slept; four more lay directly below them. Engravings show that on some ships curtains suspended from rings could be drawn across the open ends or the sides of bunks, but they were not fitted on all ships, and were also too stifling to use in the tropics.*

Schmack<sup>15</sup> advises that the meals on board were arranged as follows. The steerage passengers were divided into groups of 10 to 12, one of whom had to be the conductor. The conductor received the meat for the next day in the evening, had to hand it over to the passenger cook and collect it the following day together with the vegetables for his charges. Bread and butter were distributed to the conductors once a week, and each passenger had to make sure that they had enough until the next distribution. The dishes had to be cleaned and stored by the passenger themselves. At the start of the journey, all emigrants had to elect a committee that would represent them to the captain and ensure order.

## The Voyage

According to *Australische Zeitung*<sup>16</sup>, the Caesar Godeffroy arrived on Saturday 6 January with 183 German immigrants from Hamburg, a late but very happy arrival. It had left Cuxhaven on 14 September, meaning it took 8 days short of 4 months to travel to Port Adelaide with no stops between.

This next section is heavily based on Google Translate and my translation of the article. The weather was very unfavourable and stormy until Madeira but improved on the rest of the journey. There were no serious illnesses of any kind among the passengers. One man, a girl of about 25 years and three children under one year old died enroute, while four children, all of them female, were born. After the inspection by the colonial doctor on the day after arrival, Cesar Godeffroy was towed into the harbour by a steamer. The writer reported that he felt the large number of children, even those born at sea, were so completely healthy and cheerful, as he had rarely seen on an immigrant ship after such a long journey. The highest level of politeness prevailed on board and in the people's clothing, and the entire state of everything immediately provided proof that the captain,

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> *Neuseeländer Bericht*, 9 January 1877, page 4, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article228780503>, accessed 30 January 2026, translated using Google Translate.

doctor and ship's crew had not only done their duty completely, but even more than that. The captain had already made three trips to Adelaide, the first time in 1848 and the second time in 1867. He was very positive about the immigrants he brought, although some of them had made his life very difficult at times. The comments the papers used to print!

## Bohemians in South Australia

79 of the Cesar Godeffroy passengers were from Austria<sup>17</sup>, with the others predominantly from Germany with seven from Switzerland and one from Sweden. Of those from Austria, 76 were from Bohemia.

Those from Bohemia had surnames including:

Baier	Blascheck	Bohn
Eckert	Hahn	Hartelt
Kirchhoff	Messer	Peukert
Pietsch	Plischke	Posselt
Roesler/Roessler/Rössler	Wenzel	Wiener/Weiner
Wolf	Zenker/Zenkner/Zanker	

These are German names whose families had been living in Bohemia for a number of generations.

Localities they came from included:

Gablonz  
Morchenstern  
Neudorf  
Pocernic  
Reichenberg  
Teplitz  
Wiesenthal

These locations (excepting Pocernic) are tightly clustered in the North Bohemian region, which was heavily German-speaking before the post-WWII expulsions. They were in the same administrative districts (Sudetenland), railway lines (Liberec–Tanvald), and industries (glass and jewellery).

According to the History Trust of South Australia<sup>18</sup>,

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<sup>17</sup> Calculated from available information, from the State Records of South Australia, [https://www.archives.sa.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0005/831839/GRG35\\_48\\_1\\_77-2\\_Caesar-Godeffroy.pdf](https://www.archives.sa.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0005/831839/GRG35_48_1_77-2_Caesar-Godeffroy.pdf), and from *Ship Cesar Godeffroy (7Jan1877)*, [https://localwiki.org/adelaide-hills/Ship\\_Cesar\\_Godeffroy\\_%287Jan1877%29](https://localwiki.org/adelaide-hills/Ship_Cesar_Godeffroy_%287Jan1877%29), accessed 1 February 2026.

<sup>18</sup> *Czechs in South Australia*, SA History Hub, <https://sahistoryhub.history.sa.gov.au/subjects/czechs-in-south-australia/>, accessed 31 January 2026.

*The first known Czechs to come to South Australia were Roman Catholic missionaries from both Bohemia and Moravia. The first of these was Brother Alois Kreissl, who arrived in 1870 to work at the Jesuit settlement at Sevenhill, where he died in 1888.*

*... The number of Czechs who migrated to Australia between 1900 and the First World War was negligible. Many chose to emigrate to the United States because opportunities there were greater and Czech communities larger. The imposition of immigration quotas in the United States from 1921 until 1924, however, led a number of Czechs to come to Australia. This came to an end in 1925 when the Australian government passed an immigration act that introduced quotas for immigrants from countries other than Britain.*

*The first significant wave of Czech migrants came to Australia in the aftermath of the Second World War. After the communist takeover of Czechoslovakia in February 1948, thousands of Czechs fled on foot to neighbouring Germany. These refugees awaited resettlement in Displaced Persons' (DP) camps in West Germany, Italy and Austria. Those who chose to migrate to Australia were sent to Bagnoli, near Naples in Italy, where they boarded ships for Australia. In later years Czech migrants departed from Hamburg. Between 1949 and 1951 over 10,000 Czechs and Slovaks arrived in Australia.*

## Bohemia in context

In 1877, Bohemia was part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, which covered a large part of central Europe from Romania to Switzerland and from Montenegro to Germany (map courtesy of Encyclopaedia Britannica)<sup>19</sup>.

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<sup>19</sup> <https://www.britannica.com/place/Austria-Hungary#/media/1/44386/121069>, accessed 12 July 2024.



Today, Bohemia is part of Czechia (formerly known as the Czech Republic<sup>20</sup>).

A map<sup>21</sup> of Bohemia in 2010 with current village names (in Czech) is shown below. Note Liberec was Reichenberg (in German) and Jablonec nad Nisou was Gablonz.

The area most of these Bohemians came from is circled on the map.

<sup>20</sup> [https://mzv.gov.cz/jnp/en/foreign\\_relations/public\\_diplomacy/czechia\\_vs\\_czech\\_republic/index.html](https://mzv.gov.cz/jnp/en/foreign_relations/public_diplomacy/czechia_vs_czech_republic/index.html), accessed 1 February 2026.

<sup>21</sup> <https://cdn.britannica.com/87/7887-050-A75D365F/Czech-Republic-boundaries-map-cities-locator.jpg>, accessed 1 February 2026.



Why were people leaving Bohemia? According to the Encyclopedia of Cleveland History<sup>22</sup>, migration at this time was prompted primarily by economic conditions, where employment opportunities were meagre, incomes low, and taxes intolerable. Poor living conditions of the lowest strata and working conditions in factories led in 1872, 1873 and 1876 to emigration<sup>23</sup>. I stumbled across a document in Portuguese listing Bohemian immigrants to Brazil between 1862 and 1890<sup>24</sup>; many of these had the same surnames and came from the same villages as those on the Cesar Godeffroy<sup>25</sup>. Governments' demands that young men serve three years in the army was another reason for migration; it is doubtful that people felt German or Austrian or Czech at that time even though nationalism was growing in the late 1800s. Eventually nations in the sense that we know now were formed; earlier just the autocratic ruler mattered. The people we are talking about in Gablonz and Liberec county lived a long way from Vienna, Berlin and even Prague, and decisions made in those distant cities may have been adhered to differently in the regions.

The Czech immigrants as a group had an extraordinarily low illiteracy rate, as they had enjoyed one of the best education systems in the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

<sup>22</sup> <https://case.edu/ech/articles/c/czechs>, Case Western Reserve University, accessed 19 July 2024.

<sup>23</sup> [https://www.smrzovka.cz/en/vismo/dokumenty2.asp?id\\_org=100709&id=1002&p1=1010](https://www.smrzovka.cz/en/vismo/dokumenty2.asp?id_org=100709&id=1002&p1=1010), accessed 12 September 2024.

<sup>24</sup> Henrique Fendrich, "Lista de imigrantes boêmios – List of Bohemian immigrants", 13 January 2016, Genealogia Boêmia, <https://genealogiaboemia.wordpress.com/2016/01/13/lista-de-imigrantes-boemios-list-of-bohemian-immigrants-2/>, accessed 17 September 2024.

<sup>25</sup> Relatives at RootsTech 2026 has identified a 9<sup>th</sup> cousin in Brazil whose Most Recent Common Ancestor came from that region.

## How they may have travelled from Bohemia to Hamburg and Bremen

Much of the following section is based on research by Allison Schmidt<sup>26</sup>. Although it is mainly directed at emigration to the United States, it is also relevant to emigration to Australia and other parts of the world.

Emigrants from Bohemia left Europe via northern instead of Mediterranean ports for a number of reasons. Thanks to earlier waves of British and German migrants, northern port cities already had shipping lines and infrastructure to move massive numbers of people for a reasonable price. Emigrants from Bohemia could reach Hamburg and Bremen as easily as Mediterranean ports due to the layout of railway networks in East Central Europe. Travel agents representing northern shipping companies built a customer base in Austria-Hungary through word-of-mouth and surreptitious advertising.

In small villages, the journey via Germany usually began with a walk or cart ride to the nearest train station. Most migrants came from rural, agricultural areas like the Bohemians on the Cesar Godeffroy. Emigrants had either received pre-paid shipping tickets through family or local recruiters or planned to buy them at a shipping agency along the way. Occasionally, travel agents led groups through the railway journey and assisted with translation. They rode in packed fourth- or third-class carriages to the next major railroad hub, say Vienna or Prague, and continued to the German border.

Once the migrants reached Germany, they entered the “transit corridor.” Exact German border controls varied throughout the years, but unless sponsored by an aid organization, migrants needed to possess a shipping ticket from the German cartel or 400 Marks as proof of financial independence, and they needed to be healthy.

Once they crossed the border into Germany, migrants from Bohemia would then travel in special wagons or trains to the railroad hub of Leipzig. There they passed through an emigrant registration station, where shipping company agents recorded demographic information into a book with a copy for the Leipzig city council. From that moment, shipping companies took official responsibility for the travellers. This policy encouraged the German state to support the registration system, with police and health officials directing migrants to the station. State-owned German railroads also prospered from masses of travellers, and train personnel would assist with directing migrants. After registration and a quick medical inspection (the turnaround at Leipzig was about an hour), the migrants continued via trains to port cities.

The Leipzig registration station was part of a network of inspection stations that screened overseas-bound emigrants as they crossed Germany enroute to port cities. German shipping companies benefited from this system because only migrants with

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<sup>26</sup> Allison Schmidt, *Emigration Routes from Austria-Hungary: Germany*, Parts 1 and 2, <https://botstiberbiaas.org/emigration-routes/>, accessed 1 February 2026.

tickets from the German shipping cartel could pass, thus creating a near monopoly on traffic.

Eventually the emigrant trains arrived at the departure port cities. After their arrival, migrants were guided from the train station to “emigrant halls” or hostels where they ate, slept, prayed (there were church buildings, a mosque, and a synagogue in the Hamburg location), and prepared for an overseas departure.

Shortly before departure, emigrants underwent another medical inspection and, as required by US law, received an inoculation against smallpox. Doctors based this last necessity on whether the migrants already had a vaccination scar.

Depending on the departure and arrival ports, the transatlantic voyage from continental Europe to the United States lasted anywhere from ten to fifteen days (to Australia, it was about 4 months). Working-class emigrants usually travelled in steerage, the lower decks, with cramped sleeping quarters and unappetising food. Many passengers had some form of seasickness at first and headed to the decks for fresh air.

## The Passengers

My interest was drawn to this voyage as my widowed 2xgreat grandmother Anna Wolf and her 9-year-old daughter also known as Anna were among the Bohemians on this ship. Her brother-in-law Kajetan Posselt, her sister Mathilde and their 7 children were also with them in steerage. Other emigrants from Morchenstern included Josef Posselt (probably a relation of Kajetan) with his 8 children and Joseph and Eleonore Rössler and 4 children.

My great grandmother, the younger Anna Wolf had 7 children in Australia, of whom 4 married. One of her grandchildren, my mother Elsie Kuchel had 11 children and 39 grandchildren. I have not counted later generations (in some cases, already 3 more generations). So from one Bohemian woman, there are many Australians. One of my nephews and his family has moved to the United States and lives in Escondido in San Diego County, another in North Carolina.

And finally, a photo of the 4 generations before me, 2 Bohemian-born women and 2 Australian-born.



Figure 4 My Bohemian maternal line

## Further research

This paper has covered one ship of German-speaking migrants to Australia. There are many more ships and many more stories to be told and lots of research possibilities for interested persons.

## Acknowledgement

My sincere thanks to Dr Lois Zweck for reviewing my first draft and suggesting helpful comments.

Philip R Mann

18 February 2026

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