How Did They Get There From Here?
– Bradshaw's Railway Guide and Other Tools of Discovery

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How did your European ancestors get from their homes to ports of embarkation? This presentation will feature resources to help us understand transmigration (European migrants' overland journeys) between about 1880 and 1914. What did emigrants know before they set off on the overland legs of their journeys? Which routes might they have taken? What did they likely experience during travel from their places of origin to European ports? Resources will include gazetteers, *Bradshaw's Continental Railway Guide*, the Jewish Colonization Association's *Algemeyne Yediot*, high definition maps, and immigrant journals.

GAZETTEERS

A gazetteer is a geographical index or dictionary usually used in conjunction with a map or atlas. Depending upon the intent of the authors, it might include geographical, social, and demographic information, as well as information on waterways, transportation, and local government and social institutions (such as religious buildings and post offices). Check to see if your community of interest had a railroad station.

The gazetteers typically used by Jewish genealogists for eastern Europe include:

- Gary Mokotoff, SallyAnn Amdur Sack and Alexander Sharon, *Where Once We Walked*, (Bergenfield, NJ: Avotaynu, 2002). [community location, alternate names, references]
- *JewishGen* Communities Database links to:
  - Locations within the *JewishGen* website that address different communities.
  - *Slownik Geograficzny Krolestwa Polskiego in Innych Krajow Slowianskich* [Geographical Dictionary of the Kingdom of Poland and Other Slavic Countries, 1880-1902]. [*In Polish*. Community location, rivers, number of houses and residents (% Jews), religious buildings, character of local businesses/markets, and short history.]
- *Gemeindelexikon der im Reichsrate vertretenen Königreiche und Länder* [Gazetteer of the Crown Lands and Territories Represented in the Imperial Council], *Volume XII: Galizien* (Vienna, Austria: Druck and Verlag, 1907); images, *FamilySearch.org*. [*In German*. Various

years are online. Community area in hectares, population (male/female; Roman Catholic/Greek Catholic/Jewish/Other; languages spoken; houses; institutions; livestock].

ALGEMEYNE YEDIOT FAR DI VOS VILN FORN IN FREMDE LENDER [General Information for Those Who Want to Stay in Foreign Countries]

Philanthropist Baron Maurice de Hirsch started the Jewish Colonialization Association (JCA) in 1891 for ease the way for Jewish emigrants from eastern Europe and to create and populate agricultural colonies mostly in the Americas. With the cooperation of the Russian government, JCA established hundreds of offices throughout the Pale of Settlement. By 1913, there were 507 JCA offices in Russia.

The JCA created this Yiddish language 80-page booklet for prospective emigrants from Russia (a digitized version of the 1906 edition is listed, below). Topics covered:

- Who can emigrate
- Language of the country
- One must be cleanly dressed
- Money should not be wasted
- Changing money
- When to travel

- Where to go
- The road
- Tickets
- Beware of agents
- Foreign passport
- Baggage
- Countries through which the emigrant passes

- Laws governing entry
- England, USA, Canada, So. Africa, Australia, Palestine
- Foreign money
- Railway ticket prices (in Russia, Germany & Austria)
- JCA Offices

RAILROADS

Austria began to develop their rail system in the 1860s. In doing so, they adopted European standard gauge tracks (1435 mm / 4 ft. 8.5 inches wide). The Austrian government chose to keep Galicia relatively underdeveloped.

The Russian Empire's Warsaw to Vienna line was constructed in 1845 in European standard gauge. But in the 1870s, when Russia expanded their railway system, they chose broad gauge (1524 mm / 5 feet).

The first Austrian-Russian rail crossing was in 1871. Since gauges did not match, passengers had to disembark, cross the border, and then board another train.

The Prussian Eastern Railway developed a European standard gauge route linking Berlin with Danzig (Gdansk) and Königsberg (Kaliningrad) in 1851. By 1860, they extended it to their border with Russia at Eydtkuhnen (Chernyshevskoye). A parallel route from Thorn (Torun) to Insterburg (Chernyakhovsk) was operational by 1880.

As the USA increasingly restricted entry to the United States in the 1880s, Germany began implementing increasing restrictions on transmigrants. This included inspection stations at major border crossings with Russia and Austria. Migrants who intended to cross German land were placed in special sealed railway cars. While the cars included a toilet and a radiator, no food was provided. All transmigrants were funneled through Ruhleben (just west of Berlin) for further inspection before transport to German ports or ports with cooperating shipping lines.

BRADSHAW'S RAILWAY GUIDES

George Bradshaw (1800-1853) was a British surveyor, cartographer, and printer who began his career publishing maps on British inland navigable canals. Shortly after that, the British railway system started to grow exponentially with many different companies and independently published schedules. Bradshaw saw a need to compile schedules in one location and published his first British Railway Guide in 1839. Starting in 1841, his railway publications were updated monthly.

The first Bradshaw's Continental Railway Guide was published in 1847. Railroads were not only a boon to trade within and between countries, but also ushered in the growth of tourism on the continent. Wagons and canalboats had been replaced with railroads as speedier, safer, and more reliable transport. Railways made tourism a reality beyond only the upper class.[1] Bradshaw's guides provided not only train schedules and maps, but also steamship line information, hotel listings and tourism advice geared to the British traveler.

The 1913 hard-copy reproduction is a wonderful resource, especially if you have research subjects who migrated around that time. Be sure to purchase the hardcover version, which includes pull out maps and many schedules (the Kindle version does not have all the maps and schedules).

RESOURCES *[all URLs up-to-date as of 6 July 2025]*

Gur Alroey. "Bureaucracy, Agents and Swindlers: Hardships Faced by Russian Jewish Emigrants in the Early Twentieth Century." *Jews and the State: Dangerous Alliances and the Perils of Privilege*, Ezra Mendelsohn, editor. *Studies in Contemporary Jewry*, *19* (2003): 214-231.

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[1] John Leighton, "Early Railway Guides. A Retrospect," *Chambers Journal*, vol. IX, December 1905 – November 1906 (London: W & R Chambers, 1906), pp. 774-777; *GoogleBooks* (https://www.google.com/books/edition/Chambers_s_Journal_of_Popular_Literature/v4YhAQAAMAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1).

Gur Alroey. *Bread to Eat and Clothes to Wear: Letters from Jewish Migrants in the Early Twentieth Century* (Detroit, Michigan: Wayne State University Press, 2011).

Gur Alroey. "Information, Decision, and Migration: Jewish Emigration from Eastern Europe in the Early Twentieth Century. *Immigrants & Minorities: Historical Studies in Ethnicity, Migration and Diaspora* 29:1:33-63 (2011);
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Tobias Brinkmann. *Between Borders: The Great Jewish Migration from Eastern Europe*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2024.

Tobias Brinkmann. "From Green Borders to Paper Walls: Jewish Migrants from Eastern Europe in Germany Before and After the Great War," *History in Focus: Migration*, Institute of Historical Research, University of London;
https://archives.history.ac.uk/history-in-focus/Migration/articles/brinkmann.html

Tobias Brinkmann (ed). *Points of Passage: Jewish Transmigrants from Eastern Europe in Scandinavia, Germany, and Britain 1880-1914* (New York: Berghahn, 2013).
https://dokumen.pub/points-of-passage-jewish-migrants-from-eastern-europe-in-scandinavia-germany-and-britain-1880-1914-9781782380306.html

Tobias Brinkmann. "Strangers in the City: Transmigration from Eastern Europe and its Impact on Berlin and Hamburg 1880-1914," *Journal of Migration History* 2 (2016): 223-246.

Tobias Brinkman, "'Travelling with Ballin': The Impact of American Immigration Policies on Jewish Transmigration within Central Europe, 1880-1914," *International Review of Social History* 53:3:459-484 (2008); images, Cambridge University Press (https://tinyurl.com/5n6n5cjc). (Original url: https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/international-review-of-social-history/article/travelling-with-ballin-the-impact-of-american-immigration-policies-on-jewish-transmigration-within-central-europe-18801914/B9F791F1CCFD3ED0AF07F12908D66728)

John Foster Carr. *Guide to the United States for the Jewish Immigrants: A Nearly Literal Translation of the Second Yiddish Edition* (New York: The Connecticut Daughters of the American Revolution, 1912); images, *GoogleBooks*
(https://www.google.com/books/edition/Guide_to_the_United_States_for_the_Jewis/HJPP6ZTF3DEC?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PP1&printsec=frontcover)

Nicole Kvale Eilers. "Emigrant Trains: Jewish Migration through Prussia and American Remote Control, 1880-1914," in *Points of Passage*, edited by Tobias Brinkmann, pp. 63-84.

Jewish Colonization Society. *Algemeyne Yediot Far Di Vos Viln Forn in Fremde Lender [General Information for Those Who Want to Stay in Foreign Countries]*, 2nd edition. (St. Petersburg: Jewish Colonization Society, 1906); images, *National Library of Israel*;
https://www.nli.org.il/en/books/NNL_ALEPH002110901/NLI

Pamela Susan Nadell. "The Journey to America by Steam: the Jews of Eastern Europe in Transition." Doctoral Dissertation, Ohio State University, 1982; https://etd.ohiolink.edu/acprod/odb_etd/etd/r/1501/10?clear=10&p10_accession_num=osu148717345211075 .

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Annemarie Steidl, *On Many Routes: Internal, European, and Transatlantic Migration in the Late Habsburg Empire* (Lafayette, Indiana: Purdue University Press, 2021).

Selected Emigrant/Immigrant Stories

Mary Antin. *From Plotzk to Boston*. (Boston: W.B. Clark & Co., 1899); *Project Gutenberg*: https://www.gutenberg.org/files/20638/20638-h/20638-h.htm

Mary Antin. *A Promised Land.* (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1912); *University of Pennsylvania Digital Library*: https://digital.library.upenn.edu/women/antin/land/land.html
   Also, *GoogleBooks:* https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_Promised_Land/rROOAAAAIAAJ?hl=en

Yudkoff, Sunny. "Translation of Mary Antin's Yiddish letter (Precursor to From Plotzk to Boston)." *Studies in American Jewish Literature*, vol. 32, no. 1, 2013, p. 36+. *Gale Academic OneFile*. https://go.gale.com/ps/anonymous?id=GALE%7CA325091072&sid=googleScholar&v=2.1&it=r&linkaccess=abs&issn=02719274&p=AONE&sw=w [available through libraries that subscribe]

Harry D. Boonin. "Coming to America Through Hamburg and Liverpool," *Avotaynu* 22:4 (Winter 2006): 15-22.

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https://avotaynuonline.com/2008/04/coming-to-america-through-hamburg-and-liverpool-part-ii-crossing-the-atlantic-by-harry-d-boonin/ ; previously published in *Avotaynu* 24:1 (Spring 2008): 28-30.

Harry D. Boonin. "Coming to America through Hamburg and Liverpool, Part III: Arrival and Inspection Reaching the Promised Land," *Avotaynu* 29:4 (Winter 2013): 5-8.

Jocelyn Cohen and Daniel Soyer (editors and translators), *My Future is in America: Autobiographies of Eastern European Jewish Immigrants*

Lee Jaffe (compiler). "The Jewish Overland Journey from Eastern Europe," (last update 12 June 2025) accessible via Google Drive link:
https://docs.google.com/document/d/1df63pA9VF48qc6AeWDWVbMIBb1GHjffcULwFlpwstEY/edit?usp=drive_link

I. Newton Kugelmass. "A Journey from Eastern Europe to North America in 1900 & 1904," excerpt from *From Shtetl to Park Avenue: I. Newton Kugelmass (1896-1979).*
https://www.jewishgen.org/bessarabia/files/Emigration/JourneyFromEasternEuropeToNorthAmerica1900-1904.pdf

Howard Wolinsky. "Retracing My Grandfather's Journey: Kovno to Hamburg, Through Hull to America," *Avotaynu Online*, posted 1 December 2009;
https://avotaynuonline.com/2009/12/retracing-my-grandfathers-journey-kovno-to-hamburg-through-hull-to-america-by-howard-wolinsky/ ; previously published in *Avotaynu* 25:4 (Winter 2009): 26-29.

Resource Compilation

Bradshaw's Guides

"Bradshaw's Guide," *Wikipedia.org* (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bradshaw%27s_Guide). [Includes list and links to many timetables that have been digitized.]

Bradshaw's Guides (https://web.archive.org/web/20130917205121/http://bradshawsguides.com/index.html).

Percy Fitzgerald. The Story of Bradshaw's Guide. (London: Leadenhall Press, 1890); images, *GoogleBooks* (https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_Story_of_Bradshaw_s_Guide/B25HAQAAMAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=0)

G. Royde Smith. *The History of Bradshaw: A Centenary Review of the Origin and Growth of the Most Famous Guide in the World* (London and Manchester: Henry Blacklock & Company, 1939).

Vic Bradshaw-Mitchell. *Bradshaw's History* (Midhurst, West Sussex: Middleton Press, 2012)

Google Books has digitized Bradshaw's Continental Railway Guides for 1866, 1875, 1880 and 1887: https://www.google.com/books/edition/Bradshaw_s_Continental_Railway_Steam_Tra/1SspAAAAYAAJ?hl=en

Bradshaw's monthly continental railway. Steam transit, and general guide, for travelers through Europe. 1885; HathiTrust (https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/000068078).

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Bradshaw's Continental Railway Guide, 1913 facsimile edition (Oxford, UK: Old House Books and Maps, 2012). [also available for Kindle]

Bradshaw's April 1910 Railway Guide, facsimile edition (Newton Abbott: David & Charles, 1968). [British]

The Online Books Page,
http://onlinebooks.library.upenn.edu/webbin/book/browse?type=title&index=135040&key=bradshaws%20handbook%20for%20tourists%20in%20great%20britain%20%26%20ireland%20(in%20four%20sections)&c=x

Baedeker's

Austria-Hungary: with Excursions to Cetinje, Belgrade, and Bucharest; Handbook for Travellers (Leipzig: Karl Baedeker, 1911); images, *Internet Archive* (https://archive.org/details/austriahungarywi00karl).

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Murray's Handbooks

"Murray's Handbooks for Travellers," *Wikipedia* (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Murray%27s_Handbooks_for_Travellers).

A Handbook for Travellers in South Germany and Austria (London: John Murray, 1903); images, *Internet Archive* (https://archive.org/details/ahandbookfortra05firgoog/page/n1/mode/2up). [Includes Galicia. Book is titled incorrectly in Internet Archive. Look at actual digitized book, not citation information.]

Also, applicable guides for North Germany (1877, 1886); Russia, Poland and Finland (1888).

European Railways

"Rail Maps of Europe and Russia," *Topographic Maps of Eastern Europe* (http://easteurotopo.org/maps/thematic-rail/).

Mapster. http://igrek.amzp.pl *[You may search by community name]*

Russian Railways

Transport Map of Russia (1895) – "Map of the routes of Steamships Communication lines, Railways and Roads in the Russian Empire." *Barry Lawrence Ruderman Map Collection*, Stanford University Libraries. [map is in Russian]. https://exhibits.stanford.edu/ruderman/catalog/sw824jv8215

"Russian Railroad Maps 1877-1912." *Germans from Russia Settlement Locations*.
https://www.germansfromrussiasettlementlocations.org/2021/03/russian-railroad-maps-1877-1912.html

"Die russischen Eisenbahnen," American Geographical Society Library Digital Map Collection, *University of Wisconsin Milwaukee Libraries* (https://collections.lib.uwm.edu/digital/collection/agdm/id/18644/rec/207). [Direct access to 1912 Russian railway map cited in blogpost, above.]

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https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_rail_transport_in_Russia

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"Artaria's Railway & Postal Communications Map of Austria-Hungary 1887," *Gesher Galicia*.
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"Eisenbahnkarte von Österreich-Ugarn. [B IX c 16/3]," ["Railroad Map of Austria-Hungary"],
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"Prussian Eastern Railway," *Wikipedia*. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prussian_Eastern_Railway

"Main Routes of the Prussian Eastern Railway marked on map of 1905," *Wikipedia*.
https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/6/66/Karte_ostbahn-A.jpg

Polish Railways

"History of Rail Transport in Poland," *Wikipedia*.
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_rail_transport_in_Poland [includes Prussia, 1835-1914]