

CZECH AND GERMAN-BOHEMIAN EMIGRATION TO AMERICA

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The present article offers a survey of the development of Czech and German emigration to the Americas up to the 1880s. As early as the 15th century, scholars in the Bohemian Lands took an interest in the New World. The first travellers to America, in the 16th and 17th centuries, were mostly scholars as well. They were followed by members of religious bodies or minorities, who did often social work in America. Mass emigration from Bohemia to the Americas developed only after the failure of the 1848 revolution. Germans and Czechs alike left Europe in the hope for political freedom and for a job, with the common Bohemian background not infrequently forging links between both groups even in the new surroundings. Most of the emigrants came from the poorer strata in the industrialized regions of Bohemia and Moravia. Some of them, however, set up important trade companies or held political office – thus several Ambassadors representing American countries in Prague were of Bohemian origin.