

English Translation of Adolph Baltzer's 1845 Prussian Passport

"We, Frederick William †¹ by the Grace of God, King of Prussia, etc.

We hereby request, under the promise of full reciprocity, all military and civil authorities of foreign states, and command all our own military and civil authorities, upon presentation of this document:

to the *Kandidat* [candidate for ministry] †² Adolph Franz Baltzer born in Berlin, resident in Berlin, who is taking up his new evangelical office/ministry, †³ traveling via Bremen to North America †⁴

to travel freely and unhindered, and to return from there, and if necessary to provide him protection and assistance. He is legitimized as unsuspecting by the Royal Police Certificate. †⁵ The present passport must be endorsed by the police authority of every place where the holder stays longer than twenty-four hours. †⁶

Given Berlin, the fourteenth of July, 1845.

By His Royal Majesty's highest Special Command.

The Minister of the Interior. †⁷ [signature — illegible] †⁸"

Signalement (Physical Description): †⁹

- Age: 28 years
- Height: 5 Fuß 5 Zoll (approx. 5'7" or 173 cm by modern measurement) †¹⁰
- Hair: brown
- Forehead: open/clear
- Eyebrows: brown
- Eyes: brown
- Nose: ordinary/normal
- Mouth: † [grouped with chin/face, likely unremarkable]
- Chin: round
- Face: round
- Build: medium
- Distinguishing marks: none

Notes:

†¹ Frederick William IV (1795–1861), King of Prussia from 1840 until his death. A deeply religious man with strong Protestant sympathies, he was known to support the German Evangelical church movement — making it fitting that a missionary candidate like Baltzer would be traveling under his authority. His father Frederick William III (1770–1840) had died five years before this passport was issued.

†² Kandidat was the formal Prussian title for a theology graduate who had completed his studies but had not yet been ordained. Baltzer had trained at a German seminary and was being sent to America by the *Evangelischer Kirchenverein des Westens* (German Evangelical Church Society of the West) to serve German immigrant communities. He would have been ordained after arriving in America.

†³ This line is not fully legible in the original document. The transcription "*welcher, in sein neues Evangeliums-Amt sich begeben*" ("who is taking up his new evangelical office/ministry") is a best interpretation based on the visible handwriting and the context.

†⁴ "Via Bremen to North America" — Bremen was the primary German port of emigration in the 19th century. Baltzer sailed aboard the bark *Minna*, captained by Danneman, departing in early August 1845 and arriving in New York City on October 4, 1845 — a voyage of roughly 8 weeks.

†⁵ The Royal Police Certificate (*Königliches Polizei-Attest*) was a standard requirement for Prussian emigrants in 1845. Before receiving a passport, a traveler had to be cleared by the local police authority, confirming they had no outstanding debts, criminal record, or military obligations. This certificate was then referenced in the passport itself as proof of good standing.

†⁶ The 24-hour endorsement requirement was standard practice in 19th century Europe. Travelers were required to present their passport to local police wherever they stayed, who would stamp or endorse it — creating a record of their movements. This was enforced along major travel routes between Berlin and Bremen.

†⁷ The passport was issued by the Königlich Preußisches Ministerium des Innern (Royal Prussian Ministry of the Interior), whose seal appears at the bottom of the document — a crowned Prussian eagle holding a scepter and orb. Passports were an Interior Ministry function, not a foreign affairs function, reflecting that their primary purpose was controlling internal and outbound movement rather than facilitating international travel.

†⁸ The minister's signature is largely illegible. In 1845 the Prussian Minister of the Interior was Adolf Heinrich von Arnim-Boitzenburg, though the signature cannot be confirmed from the document alone.

†⁹ The Signalement (French for "description") was a standard feature of 19th century passports, as photography did not yet exist as a practical identification tool. These physical descriptions served as the only means of verifying a traveler's identity against their document.

†¹⁰ Prussian measurements used the Rhineland foot (*Rheinfuß*), slightly longer than the modern imperial foot (1 Rhineland foot = 12.36 modern inches). Five Rhineland feet, five Rhineland inches converts to approximately 5 feet 7 inches by today's standard.

†¹¹ The original document measures approximately 13 × 18 inches and is held in the collection of the Archives at Eden Theological Seminary (475 East Lockwood Avenue, Saint Louis, MO 63119, USA), which specializes in the history of the German Evangelical church in America and holds significant primary source materials relating to Pastor Baltzer and the founding of the Evangelical Synod of the West.