

A3446

LISTS OF CHINESE PASSENGERS ARRIVING AT  
VANCOUVER AND VICTORIA, BRITISH COLUMBIA,  
CANADA, JUNE 1929–JANUARY 1941

Compiled by Claire Prechtel-Klusens

National Archives and Records Administration  
Washington, DC  
2007

## **INTRODUCTION**

On the ten rolls of this microfilm publication, A3446, are reproduced lists of Chinese passengers who arrived by ship at Vancouver or Victoria, British Columbia, Canada, June 22, 1929–January 10, 1941. These records are part of Records of the Immigration and Naturalization Service, Record Group (RG) 85.

## **BACKGROUND**

Early records relating to immigration originated in regional customhouses. The U.S. Customs Service conducted its business by designating collection districts. Each district had a headquarters port with a customhouse and a collector of customs, the chief officer of the district. An act of March 2, 1819 (3 Stat. 489), required the captain or master of a vessel arriving at a port in the United States or any of its territories from a foreign country to submit a list of passengers to the collector of customs. The act also required that the collector submit a quarterly report or abstract, consisting of copies of these passenger lists, to the Secretary of State, who was required to submit such information at each session of Congress. After 1874, collectors forwarded only statistical reports to the Treasury Department. The lists themselves were retained by the collector of customs. Customs records were maintained primarily for statistical purposes.

On August 3, 1882, Congress passed the first Federal law regulating immigration (22 Stat. 214); the Secretary of the Treasury had general supervision over it between 1882 and 1891. The Office of Superintendent of Immigration in the Department of the Treasury was established under an act of March 3, 1891 (26 Stat. 1085), and was later designated a bureau in 1895 with responsibility for administering the alien contract-labor laws. In 1900 administration of the Chinese exclusion laws was added. Initially the Bureau retained the same administrative structure of ports of entry that the Customs Service had used. By the turn of the century, it began to designate its own immigration districts, the numbers and boundaries of which changed over the years. In 1903 the Bureau became part of the Department of Commerce and Labor; its name was changed to the Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization when functions relating to naturalization were added in 1906. In 1933 the functions were transferred to the Department of Labor and became the responsibility of the newly formed Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS). Under President Franklin D. Roosevelt's Reorganization Plan V of 1940, the INS was moved to the Department of Justice. The INS was abolished in 2003, and its immigration and naturalization recordkeeping functions were transferred to the new Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services within the new Department of Homeland Security, established January 24, 2003, by the Homeland Security Act of 2002 (116 Stat. 2135, 2205).

## **RECORDS DESCRIPTION**

The Chinese ship passengers included in these records were examined by U.S. immigration officials at Vancouver or Victoria, British Columbia, Canada, before they entered the United States. The passenger lists are arranged in chronological order by date of arrival, then by vessel. Only those Chinese (aliens and U.S. citizens) who intended to

enter the U.S. permanently or in transit to a foreign destination were inspected at the Canadian port of arrival. Common foreign destinations for those arriving temporarily were Cuba and Jamaica (British West Indies).

The passenger lists were collected and forwarded to the INS district office at Saint Albans, Vermont. As a result, the INS target (information) sheets at the beginning and end of each roll identify the port of entry as “St. Albans, Vt. (Canadian Pacific Ports, Chinese).”

These records consist of **INS Form 500-B, *List or Manifest of Alien Passengers for the United States Immigration Officer at the Port of Arrival***. It includes the date of arrival, full name, age, sex, marital status, occupation, ability to read and write, citizenship (“nationality”), “race or people,” town and country of last permanent residence, birthplace, final destination, and whether the individual possessed a ticket to final destination. It also includes the name and address of the friend or relative the alien intended to join. If the alien had ever been in the U.S. in the past, the dates and places of such residence or visitation are indicated. It also includes the alien’s height and color of complexion, eyes, and hair. Not all of the above information may be recorded for every alien.

The records were filmed by the INS in June 1957 and transferred to the National Archives on microfilm. Information on some passengers was typewritten lightly, and the original film itself may have been improperly washed resulting in it having “background fog.” As a consequence of both factors this film may not reproduce well. Although some of this film may be difficult to read, it is impossible to correct the situation since the INS destroyed the original records.

### **RELATED RECORDS**

Records of earlier Chinese arrivals at Vancouver have been reproduced as National Archives Microfilm Publication A3414, *Passenger Lists of Chinese Arrivals at Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, January 1906–June 1912* (2 rolls), and A3445, *Land Border Entries and Passenger Lists of Vessels Arriving at Vancouver and Victoria, British Columbia, Canada, January 1894–February 1905* (7 rolls).

## ROLL LIST

ROLL	CONTENTS
1	June 22, 1929–May 10, 1930
2	May 30, 1930–July 8, 1931
3	July 9, 1931–Mar. 6, 1933
4	Mar. 20, 1933–Nov. 7, 1934
5	Nov. 15, 1934–Oct. 23, 1935
6	Oct. 29, 1935–Oct. 7, 1936
7	Oct. 15, 1936–Oct. 19, 1937
8	Nov. 1, 1937–Oct. 17, 1938
9	Oct. 18, 1938–Oct. 19, 1939
10	Oct. 20, 1939–Jan. 10, 1941