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ALPHABETICAL CARD MANIFESTS OF ALIEN ARRIVALS AT  
ALEXANDRIA BAY, CAPE VINCENT, CHAMPLAIN, CLAYTON, FORT  
COVINGTON, MOOERS, ROUSES POINT, THOUSAND ISLAND BRIDGE,  
AND TROUT RIVER, NEW YORK, JULY 1929-APRIL 1956

Introduction

On the three rolls of this microfilm publication, M1481, are reproduced card manifests of over 22,000 alien arrivals at Alexandria Bay, Cape Vincent, Champlain, Clayton, Fort Covington, Mooers, Rouses Point, Thousand Island Bridge, and Trout River, NY, from July 1, 1929 to April 20, 1956. A few citizen arrivals are also included. The cards are arranged alphabetically, and include permanent, temporary, statistical, and nonstatistical arrivals. These records are part of the 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. 214-215); 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 as 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, and when functions relating to naturalization were added in 1906, its name was changed to the Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization. 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 Roosevelt's Reorganization Plan V of 1940, the INS was moved to the Department of Justice.

Keeping statistics on alien arrivals at U.S. land borders was not required by early immigration acts. Thus, the statistical treatment of Canadian and Mexican border immigrants at times has differed from that of other immigrants. When records of arrivals began to be kept at the Canadian border in 1895 and at the Mexican border, ca. 1906, the immigration authorities found it impractical to collect arrival information on lists as they did for ship passengers. Therefore, separate cards, or "card manifests," for each person were used instead. These cards contained the same information as that collected on the traditional ship passenger arrival lists, such as full name, age, sex, marital status, occupation, point of arrival in the United States, and final destination.

An act of March 2, 1929 (45 Stat. 1512), which became effective July 1, 1929, and was amended on August 7, 1939 (53 Stat. 1243), allowed a record of lawful arrival-called a record of registry-to be made for certain aliens who had lawfully entered the United States at an earlier time but for whom the INS could find no record of arrival. In particular, if an alien had entered the United States before July 1, 1924, resided in the country continuously since that entry, was of good moral character, and was not subject to deportation, he or she could obtain a record of registry by making application to the INS and paying the requisite fee. The registry program was reauthorized by the Nationality Act of 1940 (54 Stat. 1137) under the name "Lawful Entry." Registry files cover the years 1929 to 1944-1 Lawful Entry paperwork after April 1, 1944, was placed in an alien's individual "A-File." As of 1997, both Registry/Lawful Entry Files and A-Files remain in the legal custody of the Immigration and Naturalization Service, and researchers interested in examining those records should direct a Freedom of Information Act request to that agency citing the Certificate of Registry number and, if available, a Bureau file number.

### Immigration Statistics and Definitions

Beginning in 1895, immigrants who arrived at Canadian seaports with the declared intention of proceeding to the United States were recorded and included in the immigration statistics. Other alien arrivals at land borders began to be

reported in 1906, and reporting was fully established in 1908 under authority of an act of February 20, 1907 (34 Stat. 898).

Not all aliens entering via the Canadian and Mexican borders were necessarily counted for inclusion in the immigration statistics. Before approximately 1930, no count was made of residents of Canada, Newfoundland, or Mexico who had lived in those countries for a year or more if they planned to enter the United States for less than 6 months. However, from about 1930 to 1945, the following classes of aliens entering, via the land borders were included in immigration statistics:

- (1) Those who had not been in the United States within 6 months, who came to stay more than 6 months;
- (2) Those for whom straight head tax was a prerequisite to admission, or for whom head tax was specially deposited and subsequently converted to a straight head tax account;<sup>1</sup>
- (3) Those required by law or regulations to present an immigration visa or reentry permit, and those who surrendered either, regardless of whether they were required by law or regulation to do so;
- (4) Those announcing an intention to depart from a seaport in the United States for Hawaii or other insular possession of the United States or for a foreign country, except arrivals from Canada intending to return there by water; and
- (5) Those announcing an intention to depart across another land boundary.

These classes were revised in 1945 so that the statistics of arriving aliens at land border ports of entry for 1945-52 included arriving aliens who came into the United States for 30 days or more and returning alien residents who had been out of the country more than 6 months. Arriving aliens who came into the United States for 29 days or less were not counted except for those who were either certified by public health officials, held for a board of special inquiry, excluded and deported, or in transit and announced an intention to depart across another land boundary or by sea.

From 1953 to at least 1957, all arriving aliens at land border ports of entry were counted for statistical purposes except Canadian citizens and British subjects resident in Canada who were admitted for 6 months or less; Mexican citizens who were admitted for 72 hours or less; and returning U.S. residents who had been out of the country for more than 6 months. Beginning in February 1956, residents

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<sup>1</sup> A head tax was required to be paid by persons entering the United States who were not citizens of the U.S., the Dominion of Canada, Newfoundland, the Republic of Cuba, or the Republic of Mexico.

returning from stays of less than 6 months in Western Hemisphere countries also were not counted. Because of regulation changes in 1957, returning residents without reentry permits or visas who had been abroad for 1 year or less were not counted.

Summary: Statistical arrivals were immigrants or nonimmigrants who were subject to the head tax and generally not from the Western Hemisphere. By contrast, nonstatistical arrivals were immigrants or nonimmigrants who usually were natives of the Western Hemisphere and not subject to the head tax. Although arrival of the latter was not included in immigration statistics, a record of that arrival may still have been made. **It cannot be said with certainty that the definitions of statistical and nonstatistical arrivals were applied uniformly at any particular port on the Canadian or Mexican borders during the period covered by this microfilm publication.**

#### Definitions of Immigrants and Nonimmigrants

From 1906 to 1932, arriving aliens were divided into two classes: (1) immigrants, or those who intended to settle in the United States; and (2) nonimmigrants, who were admitted aliens who declared an intention not to settle in the United States, and all aliens returning to assume domiciles formerly acquired in the United States. From 1933 to at least 1957, aliens arriving to settle in the United States were further classified as quota or nonquota immigrants. Quota immigrants were those admitted under quotas established for countries in Europe, Asia, Africa, the Pacific Basin, and the colonies, dependencies, and protectorates belonging to those nations. Nonquota immigrants were spouses and unmarried children of U.S. citizens; natives from the independent countries of the Western Hemisphere, their spouses, and unmarried children under 18 years of age; and members of the clergy who entered with their families to carry on their profession. From 1933 to 1952, professors and their spouses and children were also classified as nonquota immigrants. Nonimmigrants were alien residents of the United States returning from a temporary visit abroad, or nonresident aliens admitted to the United States for a temporary period, such as tourists, students, foreign government officials, those engaged in business, people representing international organizations, the spouses and unmarried children of all these individuals, and agricultural laborers from the West Indies.

For more information about the keeping, of immigration statistics and definitions used therein, see *The Statistical History of the United States from Colonial Times to the Present* (Stamford, CT: Fairfield Publisher, Inc., ca. 1965), pp. 48-52. For further information about immigration and naturalization laws prior to 1953, see *Laws Applicable to Immigration and Nationality*, Edwina A. Avery and Catherine R. Gibson, eds., U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service, (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1953).

## Records Description

The arrivals included in this microfilm Publication include permanent, temporary, statistical, and nonstatistical arrivals. The records reproduced on rolls 1 and 2 are arranged alphabetically by surname and thereunder by first name. The records reproduced on roll 3 are arranged alphabetically by port, thereunder by surname, and thereunder by first name. The arrivals at Champlain, Clayton, Thousand Island Bridge, and Trout River include many Canadians noted as "North American Indians" or "Indians."

### Forms Used

The manifest cards consist primarily of three types of Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) forms. Both the front and reverse side of each card were filmed. These forms are described below.

**Form Spl. 187A, *Primary Inspection Memorandum***, which was used for alien arrivals, includes person's name, sex, age, marital status, occupation, ability to read and write and in what language, head tax status, citizenship, race, place of last permanent residence, citizenship before becoming a citizen of Canada, port and date of arrival, destination, purpose for entering the United States, intention of becoming a U.S. citizen, head tax status, and previous citizenships. It also includes the name and address of the friend or relative whom the alien intended to join, names of persons accompanying the alien, and the name and address of the alien's nearest relative or friend in the country from which he or she came. If the alien had ever been in the United States in the past, the dates and places of such residence or visitation are indicated. Additional information may be recorded on the reverse side of the card if the alien appealed a decision barring him or her from entering the United States.

**Form 548 or Form 1-448, *Manifest***, includes the person's name, age, sex, marital status, place of birth, physical description, occupation, citizenship ("nationality"), race, ability to read and write and in what language, place of last permanent residence, port and date of arrival, destination, purpose for entering the United States, intention of becoming a U.S. citizen, head tax status, and previous citizenships. It also includes the name and address of the friend or relative whom the alien intended to join, names of persons accompanying the alien, and the name and address of the alien's nearest relative or friend in the country from which he or she came. If the alien had ever been in the United States in the past, the dates and places of such residence or visitation are indicated. Additional information may be recorded on the reverse side of the card if the alien appealed a decision barring him or her from entering the United States.

**Form 657, *Record of Registry***, includes the following information about the alien as of the alien's date of arrival: name; age; occupation; race or people; place of last residence before entry; and date, port, place, and means (ship, railway, or

other) of arrival in the United States. This form also includes the following information about the alien *as of the alien's date of registry*: name, age, occupation, physical description, place of residence, and place of birth. It also includes the alien's photograph, date of approval of registry, certificate of registry number, district file number, and Bureau file number.

### General Remarks

These records were filmed by the INS on April 20, 1956, and subsequently transferred to the National Archives on microfilm. 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 arrivals at Canadian border ports before July 1, 1929, can be found in other National Archives microfilm publications. The arrivals are indexed by *Soundex Index to Canadian Border Entries Through the St. Albans, Vermont, District, 1895-1924*, National Archives Microfilm Publication M1461 (400 rolls) and by *Soundex Index to Entries Into the St. Albans, Vermont, District Through Canadian Pacific and Atlantic Ports, 1924-1952*, National Archives Microfilm Publication M1463 (98 rolls). The card manifests themselves are reproduced in *Manifests of Passengers Arriving in the St. Albans, Vermont, District 77 through Canadian Pacific and Atlantic Ports, 1895-1954*, National Archives Microfilm Publication M1464 (640 rolls).

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### Roll    Port; Inclusive Name Span

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1 | Rouses Point; Aarsiand, Oscar - Lалуirniere [?], Charles   |
| 2 | Rouses Point; Lamadeliene, Joseph - Zworg, Otto            |
| 3 | Alexandria Bay; Aikens, Fred - Zellin, Nils                |
|   | Cape Vincent; Abrams, Percy - Zine, Nabaha                 |
|   | Champlain; Adams, John - Whitebean, Hugh                   |
|   | Clayton; Alton, Stewart - Woodman, Stanley                 |
|   | Fort Covington; Adams, John - Zaky, Mahmood                |
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