

A3445

LAND BORDER ENTRIES AND PASSENGER LISTS OF
VESSELS ARRIVING AT VANCOUVER AND VICTORIA,
BRITISH COLUMBIA, CANADA,
JANUARY 1894–FEBRUARY 1905

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INTRODUCTION

On the seven rolls of this microfilm publication, A3445, are reproduced passenger lists of vessels that arrived at Vancouver or Victoria, British Columbia, Canada, from January 5, 1894, to February 28, 1905. It also includes lists of persons who entered the United States via its Canadian land border after inspection by U.S. officials at those ports. 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 persons included in these records were examined by U.S. immigration officials at Vancouver or Victoria, British Columbia, Canada, before they entered the United States.

There are two types of records interfiled chronologically. However, the chronological arrangement is imperfect so the date spans between some rolls overlap.

First, there are passenger lists consisting primarily of Japanese and Chinese aliens, although there are also U.S. citizens returning from residence abroad and aliens from Europe, Australia, Korea, and New Zealand.

Second, there are aliens and some U.S. citizens who were not aboard a ship who intended to enter the United States. These “land border entries” or “local crossings” were recorded, beginning about 1900, on traditional ship passenger list forms chronologically by date of arrival.

The lists are arranged in rough chronological order but are highly disarranged, particularly on rolls 6 and 7. The date spans given for each roll in the roll list represent our best efforts at accuracy.

The passenger lists were collected and forwarded to the INS district office at Montreal, Quebec, Canada (later moved to Saint Albans, Vermont), which had charge of the entire U.S.-Canadian border during 1895–1905. Apparently as a result of the large number of Japanese ship passengers included in these records, 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, Japanese)” although that identifier was not accurate.

These records consist of traditional ship passenger lists printed by governmental and private entities. Each typically 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, and final destination. Each also includes the name and address of the friend or relative the alien intends to join. If the alien had ever been in the U.S. in the past, the dates and places of such residence or visitation may be indicated. The lists also note the “seaport for landing in the United States.” Not all of the above information may be recorded for every alien. Pages containing “land border entry” aliens do not have the vessel name annotated at the top of the page but are sometimes annotated “local crossings.”

The records were filmed by the INS in June 1957 and transferred to the National Archives on microfilm. The original INS target (information sheets) at the beginning and end of each roll do not give correct date spans of records found on each roll; see the roll list that follows for more accurate information. Some passenger lists were typewritten lightly, and the original film itself may have been improperly washed during original processing resulting in it having “background fog.” As a consequence of both factors this film may not reproduce well. Although some of this microfilm may be difficult to read, it is impossible to correct the situation since the INS destroyed the original records.

RELATED RECORDS

Later 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 as A3446, *Lists of Chinese Passengers Arriving at Vancouver and Victoria, British Columbia, Canada, June 1929–January 1941* (2 rolls).

Researchers may wish to determine whether additional records were created concerning a person in this microfilm publication. Related National Archives Microfilm Publications include M1461, *Soundex Index to Canadian Border Entries through the St. Albans, Vermont, District, 1895–1924* (399 rolls), and M1464, *Manifests of Passengers Arriving in the St. Albans, Vermont, District through Canadian Pacific and Atlantic Ports, 1895–1954* (639 rolls). In addition, if the alien noted an intention to enter the U.S. at another seaport, the researcher may wish to check the passenger arrival records for that port of entry as well.

ROLL LIST

ROLL	CONTENTS
1	Jan. 5, 1894–Aug. 30, 1896
2	Aug. n.d., 1896–Dec. 29, 1899
3	Jan. 2, 1900–May 29, 1901
4	May 20, 1901–June 27, 1903
5	Apr. 11–Dec. 28, 1903
6	May n.d., 1903–Feb. 15, 1905 Notes: The roll begins with December 1903. A few lists dated May 1903 will be found toward the end of the roll, along with a passenger list for the <i>Tartar</i> , dated June 18, 1900, with one passenger.
7	Mar. 26, 1904–Feb. 28, 1905