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NONSTATISTICAL MANIFESTS AND STATISTICAL INDEX CARDS
OF ALIENS ARRIVING AT EAGLE PASS, TEXAS,
JUNE 1905BNOVEMBER 1929

Introduction

On the 27 rolls of this microfilm publication, M1754, are reproduced approximately 150,000 index cards to nonstatistical manifest cards and statistical index cards (interfiled) for arrivals at the port of Eagle Pass, TX, during the period June 1, 1905, to November 30, 1929. 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. 214B215); 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 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 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 U.S. 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; Lawful Entry paperwork after April 1, 1944, was placed in an alien's individual "ABFile." As of 1996, both Registry/Lawful Entry Files and ABFiles 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 U.S. 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;¹
- (3) Those required by law or regulation to present an immigration visa or reentry permit, and

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

- 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 U.S. or for a foreign country, except arrivals from Canada intending to return there by water; and
 - (5) Those announcing an intention to depart across the other land boundary.

These classes were revised in 1945 so that the statistics of arriving aliens at land border ports of entry for 1945B52 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 were individuals in transit who 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 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 immigrant 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 Permanent and Nonimmigrants

From 1906 to 1932, arriving aliens were divided into two classes: (1) immigrants, or those who intended to settle in the U.S.; and (2) nonimmigrants, who were admitted aliens who declared an intention *not* to settle in the U.S., and all aliens returning to resume domiciles formerly acquired in the U.S. From 1933 to at least 1957, aliens arriving to settle in the U.S. 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 U.S. returning from a temporary visit abroad, or nonresident aliens admitted to the U.S. 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 Publishers, Inc., ca. 1965), pp. 48B52. 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 records consist of nonstatistical manifest cards and statistical index cards of persons entering the U.S. permanently or temporarily. The cards are arranged alphabetically by surname, and thereunder by first name. Double names are filed as if the second part of the double name were not there. For example, "Jimenez De San Miguel, Petra" is filed among other persons named "Jimenez, Petra." Likewise, "Castro, Maria de los Angeles" is filed among other persons named "Castro, Maria." Both the front and reverse sides of the cards were filmed. The reverse side of the card may include annotations noting dates of subsequent entries into the U.S. or, in some cases, an attached individual or family photograph.

Forms Used

Nonstatistical manifest cards contain all available entry information, including the person's name, age, sex, marital status, race, occupation, ability to read and write, last place of residence, destination, and port and date of arrival. They also indicate the names of accompanying persons and amount of money in the individual's possession. Some cards record the port and date of an alien's departure from the U.S. Many cards record admission to the U.S. for 1 day only.

Statistical index cards consist of two basic types: cards that contain detailed information and those that contain less information. The manifest number indicated on statistical index cards, along with the person's date of arrival, is used to locate manifests that contain additional information about the person.

The detailed statistical index cards, include the person's name, age, sex, marital status ("conj. cond."), occupation, nationality, ability to read or write, last place of residence, future place of residence, date and place of admission to the U.S., place of birth, and height, complexion, hair color, eye color, and identifying marks. These cards also indicate who paid the immigrant's passage, the amount of money the person brought, and names of persons accompanying him or her. If the person's entry to the U.S. was subject to a Board of Special Inquiry, an S.I. number ("Special Inquiry") is indicated. The manifest number in the upper right-hand corner of these cards is used, along with the date of arrival, to locate the person's manifest in M1755, *Permanent and Statistical Manifests of Alien Arrivals at Eagle Pass, Texas, June 1905-June 1953*.

The less detailed statistical index cards include only the person's name, age, sex, nationality, race, last place of residence, destination, date and port of arrival, and status as immigrant or nonimmigrant. The cards also provide a Board of Special Inquiry (B.S.I.) number. Although a manifest (list) and line number are noted at the bottom of the card, the number that is annotated to the right of the person's sex is generally the "real" manifest number that is used, along with the date of arrival, to locate the person's manifest in M1755, *Permanent and Statistical Manifests of Alien Arrivals at Eagle Pass, Texas, June 1905-June 1953*. The statistical index cards reproduced in this microfilm publication serve as an index to

the June 1905BNovember 1929 statistical manifests reproduced on rolls 1 through 27 of M1755.

Records of Boards of Special Inquiry, if such records still exist, remain (as of 1997) in the legal custody of the Immigration and Naturalization Service, and researchers should direct a Freedom of Information Act request to that agency.

The records were filmed by the INS in September and October 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

Other manifests of alien arrivals at Eagle Pass, Texas, are being reproduced on the 14 rolls of M2041, *Temporary and Nonstatistical Manifests of Aliens Arriving at Eagle Pass, Texas, June 1905BNovember 1929*, and on the 2 rolls of M2040, *Index to Manifests of Permanent and Statistical Arrivals at Eagle Pass, Texas, December 1929BJune 1953*.

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