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LISTS OF ALIENS ARRIVING AT SKAGWAY (WHITE PASS), ALASKA, OCTOBER 1906 B NOVEMBER 1934

Introduction

On the single roll of this microfilm publication, M2017, are reproduced lists of aliens arriving at Skagway (White Pass), Alaska, from October 1906 to November 1934. Some lists of U.S. citizen arrivals are also included but contain no identifying information other than the person's name and date of arrival. 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 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 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, 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, INS was moved to the Department of Justice.

Records Description

INS passenger lists reproduced in this microfilm publication are those for the port of Skagway, Alaska; many lists indicate arrival at White Pass, Alaska. Most of the arrivals were by railroad and occurred

before 1920. The lists include the names of foreign visitors and immigrants. They also usually contain names of vessels or railroads, ports of arrival and embarkation, and dates of arrival. The lists normally indicate the following information about each passenger: full name; age; sex; marital status; occupation; last residence; port of arrival and final destination in the United States; if the passenger has been in the United States before (if so, when and where); and if the passenger is going to join a relative (if so, the relative's name, address, and relationship). Beginning in 1903, race was included; in 1906, personal description and birthplace; and in 1907, the name and address of the alien's nearest relative in the country from which he or she came.

Each manifest consists of a two-page form. Due to the manner in which the records were filmed, the "right" side of the form is located to the left of the "left side" of the form.

These records were filmed by the INS on May 29, 1957, and were subsequently transferred to the National Archives on microfilm. Although some of this film may be difficult to read and have omissions or errors in arrangement, the situation cannot be corrected since the INS destroyed the original records. Some of the lists were microfilmed twice at different light settings.

Related Records

This microfilm publication is indexed by *Alphabetical Index of Alien Arrivals at Eagle, Hyder, Ketchikan, Nome, and Skagway, Alaska, June 1906-August 1946*, National Archives Microfilm Publication M2016 (1 roll). Citizen arrivals, however, are not indexed.

Search Strategy

First locate the person in the index (Microfilm Publication M2016) and copy the information provided. Then locate that person in the arrival lists reproduced in this microfilm publication by using a three-step process:

- (1) Locate the manifests containing the date of arrival.
- (2) Find the correct "list number." This number is marked in the upper right hand corner of the "right side" of the two-page form.
- (3) Find the correct line number ("group number"). This number is printed to the left of the person's name.

It is often necessary to find the date of arrival before finding the "list number" because the "list numbers" do not run consecutively.

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