

A3412

MANIFESTS OF STATISTICAL ALIEN ARRIVALS AT
EL PASO, TEXAS,
MAY 1909–OCTOBER 1924

Compiled by Claire Prechtel-Klusens

National Archives and Records Administration
Washington, DC
2005

United States. National Archives and Records Administration.
Manifests of statistical alien arrivals at El Paso, Texas,
May 1909–October 1924 / compiled by Claire
Prechtel-Kluskens.— Washington, DC : National Archives and
Records Administration, 2005.

11 p. ; 23 cm.— (National Archives microfilm publications ;
pamphlet describing ; no. A 3412)

1. United States. Immigration and Naturalization Service –
Archives – Microform catalogs. 2. Immigrants – Texas – El
Paso – Registers. I. Prechtel-Kluskens, Claire. II. Title.

INTRODUCTION

On the 96 rolls of this microfilm publication, A3412, are reproduced over 200,000 statistical manifests of alien arrivals at El Paso, Texas, May 1909–October 1924. Some U.S. citizens may also be included. 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 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. The INS was abolished, 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 (Pub. L. 107-296, § 471, 116 Stat. 2135, 2205).

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, 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 traditional ship passenger arrival lists, such as full name, age, sex, marital status, occupation, point of arrival in the United States, and final destination.

IMMIGRATION STATISTICS AND DEFINITIONS

Beginning in 1895, immigrants who arrived at Canadian seaports with the declared intention of proceeding to the United States by land were recorded and included in immigration statistics. (Some aliens may have chosen this route because of possibly lower fares from Europe to Canada.) All other alien arrivals at U.S. northern and southern land borders were reported beginning in 1906; and reporting was fully established in 1908 under authority of an act of February 20, 1907 (34 Stat. 898). “All other aliens” included Canadians, all aliens arriving at the Mexican border, and any alien resident or nonresident of Canada who had not, at a Canadian seaport, previously declared their intent to proceed to the United States.

Not all aliens entering via the Canadian and Mexican borders were necessarily counted for inclusion in the immigration statistics. Before about 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 six 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 six months, who came to stay more than six 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 account¹
- (3) Those required by law or regulation 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 U.S. or for a foreign country, except arrivals from Canada intending to return there by water
- (5) Those announcing an intention to depart across the other land boundary.

¹ A 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.

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 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 changed regulations 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, non-statistical 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 (PERMANENT) AND NONIMMIGRANTS (TEMPORARY)

Since 1906, arriving aliens have been 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. Since 1924, aliens arriving to settle in the U.S. have been 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. 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

These records include statistical alien arrivals, most of whom intended to establish or reestablish residence in the United States. The manifests are arranged chronologically by date, then by manifest (“serial”) number. The manifest (serial) number is located in the upper right corner and is either mechanically stamped or handwritten. Mechanically stamped numbers were often stamped very lightly and may be quite difficult to read. There may be gaps in the numbering sequence, occasional disarrangement in numbering, or unnumbered cards.

This series consists of “sheet manifest” **INS Form 548, *Manifest or Report of Inspection***, which generally 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 U.S., intention of becoming a U.S. citizen or of returning to country of previous residence, head tax status, and previous citizenships. It also includes the name and address of the friend or relative whom the alien intended to join, 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 U.S. in the past, the dates and places of such residence or visitation are indicated. Additional information may be recorded if the alien appealed a decision deporting or barring him or her from entering the United States. The reverse side of Form 548 was sometimes annotated with the names, ages, and other information about children or other persons accompanying the person who is the subject of the manifest.

Form 548 was generally a card manifest. However, during some periods at some ports, the INS used an entire sheet of paper for the Form 548 manifest, such as at El Paso through 1924. Both sizes of manifests generally included the same information.

The sheet manifests are generally arranged chronologically by date of arrival, then numbered sequentially within each Federal fiscal year by manifest (serial) number. During the years included in this microfilm publication, the Federal fiscal year began July 1 and ended on June 30.

Some aliens, however, were entered into the immigration statistics many days, weeks, or even months after the alien’s “true” date of arrival. As a result, some of these aliens are filed under the date they were entered into the statistics (and given a new manifest number) while others are filed under their “true” date of immigration (and their original manifest number).

For example, the manifest for Ernesto Lafon, who arrived February 1, 1918, had an original manifest number of 8011. Although that number was not crossed out (as many other “original” manifest numbers were), a new manifest (serial) number of “4652–27” was inserted above it. There is a note in the same handwriting as the “4652–27” that indicates he was “entered in statistics 9-20-18.” In the related index, NARA Microfilm Publication A3406, *Nonstatistical Manifests and Statistical Index Cards of Aliens Arriving at El Paso, Texas, 1905–1927* (129 rolls), Ernesto Lafon has both a statistical index card *and* a nonstatistical card, and the statistical card notes the new 4652-27 manifest number while the nonstatistical card shows only the original 8011 manifest number.

In contrast, the manifest of Elizia Anchondo, who arrived June 28, 1920, is filed under her “true” date of arrival with her original manifest number 22839, even though her manifest is file-stamped “entered into statistics” and dated February 5, 1921. In the related index, Microfilm Publication A3406, Elizia Anchondo has both a statistical index card *and* a nonstatistical card with photograph, and both cards direct researchers to the manifest number 22839.

Many rolls begin with “retakes” sections (records refilmed to ensure legibility), as noted in the table of contents. Some rolls required so many retakes that an entire retakes roll was made to accomplish that task.

GENERAL REMARKS

The records were filmed by the INS in 1955–56 and 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

The manifests in this microfilm publication are indexed by NARA Microfilm Publication A3406, *Nonstatistical Manifests and Statistical Index Cards of Aliens Arriving at El Paso, Texas, 1905–1927* (129 rolls). Researchers should first locate an individual in A3406, taking special note of the date of the person’s arrival (and the date he or she was entered into the statistics, if applicable) and the manifest number(s). With that information, the researcher will then be able to locate the person in this microfilm publication, A3412, or in A3365, noted below.

Manifests of alien arrivals at El Paso, Texas, from May 1903 to June 1909 have been reproduced on rolls 1–5 of

A3365, Lists of Aliens Arriving at Brownsville, Del Rio, Eagle Pass, El Paso, Laredo, Presidio, Rio Grande City, and Roma, Texas, May 1903–June 1909, and at Aros Ranch, Douglas, Lochiel, Naco, and Nogales, Arizona, July 1906–December 1910 (5 rolls).

Other records of alien arrivals at El Paso include

M1756, Applications for Nonresident Alien's Border Crossing Identification Cards Made at El Paso, Texas, ca. July 1945–December 1952 (62 rolls)

M1757, Manifests of Aliens Granted Temporary Admission at El Paso, Texas, ca. July 1924–1954 (97 rolls).

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| 1 | 320* | May 31–June 30, 1909 July 1–Sept. 9, 1909 | 5433–6075 1–1474 |
| 2 | 321 | Sept. 9–Nov. 27, 1909 | 1475–4388 |
| 3 | 322 | Nov. 27, 1909–Feb. 19, 1910 | 4389–6365 |
| 4 | 323 | Feb. 19–June 24, 1910 | 6366–9058 |
| 5 | 324 | June 24–30, 1910 July 1, 1910–June 30, 1911 | 9059–9108 1–1871 |
| 6 | 231* | July 1, 1911–Feb. 23, 1912 | 1–1687 |
| 7 | 232* | Retakes (extremely long) Feb. 23–May 1, 1912 | 1689–3915 |
| 8 | 233* | May 1–June 26, 1912 | 3916–5810 |
| 9 | 234* | June 26–30, 1912 July 1–Dec. 28, 1912 | 5811–5900 1–1736 |
| 10 | 235* | Dec. 28, 1912–June 30, 1913 July 1, 1913–Jan. 31, 1914 | 1737–2698 1–1048 |
| 11 | 236 | <i>All retakes on next roll</i> Feb. 3–June 30, 1914 July 1–Sept. 30, 1914 | 1049–2335 1–736 |
| 12 | 236A | <i>Retakes for Old Roll 236 (quite extensive)</i> | |
| 13 | 237 | <i>All retakes on next roll</i> Oct. 1, 1914–Feb. 28, 1915 | 737–2714 |
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| 16 | 239* | Retakes (extremely long) July 20, 1915–Jan. 20, 1916 | 217–2527 |

| NEW ROLL NO. | OLD INS ROLL NO. | DATE SPAN | MANIFEST NOS. |
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| 17 | 240* | Retakes (very long) Jan. 20–June 16, 1916 | 2528–4445 |
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| 20 | 243* | Retakes (long) Oct. 30–Dec. 30, 1916 Jan. 2–20, 1917 | 8452–10110 1–403 |
| 21 | 244* | Jan. 20–Apr. 3, 1917 | 404–2374 |
| 22 | 245* | Retakes (long) Apr. 3–June 30, 1917 July 2–26, 1917 | 2375–4031 1–366 |
| 23 | 246* | Retakes (long) July 26–Oct. 29, 1917 | 367–2486 |
| 24 | 247* | Oct. 29–Dec. 6, 1917 | 2487–4668 |
| 25 | 248 | Dec. 6, 1917–Jan. 11, 1918 | 4669–6804 |
| 26 | 249* | Retake: Jan. 15, 1918 Retakes: Feb. 15–16, 1918 Jan. 11–Feb. 15, 1918 <i>Manifest No. 8958 is the last legible manifest; see retakes section for Manifest Nos. 8960–8997.</i> | 6915 8960–8997 6805–8958 |
| 27 | 250* | Feb. 16–Mar. 12, 1918 | 8998–11170 |
| 28 | 251* | Retakes (long) Mar. 12–Apr. 6, 1918 | 11171–13381 |
| 29 | 252* | Apr. 6–May 9, 1918 | 13382–15618 |
| 30 | 253* | Retakes (long) May 9–June 10, 1918 | 15619–17801 |
| 31 | 254* | June 18–29, 1918 July 1–11, 1918 | 17802–19395 1–688 |
| 32 | 255* | July 11–Aug. 12, 1918 | 689–2470 |
| 33 | 256* | Aug. 13–Sept. 17, 1918 | 2471–4500 |

| NEW ROLL NO. | OLD INS ROLL NO. | DATE SPAN | MANIFEST NOS. |
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| 40 | 263* | Apr. 25–May 31, 1919 | 17433–19489 |
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| 50 | 273* | Apr. 14–May 18, 1920 | 18405–20645 |
| 51 | 274* | May 18–June 28, 1920 | 20646–22845 |
| 52 | 275* | June 28–30, 1920 July 1–28, 1920 Aug. 2–7, 1920 | 22847–23238 1–1500 1713–2012 |
| 53 | 276* | July 28– 31, 1920 <i>Note: See Roll 52 for Aug. 2–7, 1920.</i> Aug. 7–Sept. 7, 1920 | 1501–1712 2013–3725 |
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| NEW ROLL NO. | OLD INS ROLL NO. | DATE SPAN | MANIFEST NOS. |
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