

A3395

**INDEXES AND MANIFESTS OF ALIEN ARRIVALS
AT DEL RIO, TEXAS, JUNE 1906–JULY 1953**

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INTRODUCTION

On the 15 rolls of this microfilm publication, A3395, are reproduced manifests of over 105,000 alien arrivals at Del Rio, Texas, from June 1906 to July 1953. 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. 214–215); 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.

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, gender, 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 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 required 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 “A-File.” As of 2008, both Registry/Lawful Entry Files and A-Files remain in the legal custody of the Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services, and researchers interested in examining those records should direct a Freedom of Information Act request to that agency.

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 his 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.

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, nonstatistical arrivals were immigrants or nonimmigrants who usually

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.

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

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., 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 are arranged in five series described below, and consist of statistical, nonstatistical, permanent, and temporary alien arrivals. Some U.S. citizens are also included. Series 1, 3, 4, and 5 are arranged alphabetically; series 2 is arranged chronologically by date and then numerically by manifest number.

Names are usually arranged alphabetically by surname then by first name. The alphabetical arrangement is imperfect, however, due to human error or relaxed filing arrangements. For example, given names are sometimes *not* alphabetized within a surname, or given names starting with the same letter may be filed together. In addition, alphabetically arranged series follow special rules. Double names are filed as if the second part of the double name were not there. For example, “Jimenez De San Miguel, Petra” is found among other persons named “Jimenez, Petra,” and Montalvo-Hernandez, Jose” is found among other persons named “Montalvo, Jose.” Spanish surnames containing the letter “s” may be filed as if the letter were “z.” For example, persons surnamed Dias might be filed among those named Diaz, and those surnamed Espinosa might be filed among those named Espinoza.

All rolls—except “old” rolls 6A, 7, 8, and 10—begin with “retakes” sections (records refilmed to ensure legibility).

SERIES 1: PERMANENT, STATISTICAL, AND NONSTATISTICAL INDEX CARDS INTERFILED, JUNE 1906–JULY 1928

This series consists of an alphabetical card index to statistical and nonstatistical manifests. Information was recorded on INS Forms 621, 629, Spl. 125, Spl. 222, Spl. 259, Spl. 442, and P(A) (all described below under “Forms Used”). The nonstatistical cards contain all available entry information. The statistical cards provide a manifest number that, in conjunction with the date of arrival, may lead researchers to the related manifest in Series 2, described below. This series includes some agricultural laborers admitted during 1918–20. There are also some U.S. citizens, who are often recorded on Form Spl. 442.

SERIES 2: STATISTICAL MANIFESTS, JUNE 24, 1906–MAY 13, 1953

This series consists of INS Forms 548 and I-448 (described below under “Forms Used”) of permanent and statistical alien arrivals. Manifests for June 24, 1906–Aug. 10, 1925, are Form 548 “sheet” or long-form manifests; manifests for Aug. 10, 1925–May 13, 1953, are “card” form manifests.

In general, they are arranged chronologically, then by manifest number. The manifest (“serial”) number is located in the upper-right corner. There are gaps in the numbering sequence, and some manifests are unnumbered.

The chronological arrangement is partly by Federal fiscal year, partly by quarter year, and partly by month. Monthly, quarterly, and yearly segments are often arranged in reverse chronological order (and, hence, reverse numerical order). The chronological segments and their related manifest numbers are noted in the roll list. There is some chronological and numerical disarrangement of the records for July 1945–July 1951.

Some arrivals are filed under the date their manifest was moved from the non-statistical files to the statistical files, *not the actual date of the alien's arrival*, as a result of the alien changing from a temporary visitor to a permanent resident. The date the person's manifest was moved to the statistical file was often several months after his actual date of arrival.

These records are indexed by Series 1 (described above) for arrivals from 1906 to 1928, and by Series 3 (described below) for arrivals from 1925 to 1953.

SERIES 3: INDEX TO PERMANENT AND STATISTICAL MANIFESTS, AUG. 10, 1925–MAY 13, 1953

This series consists of typewritten index cards arranged alphabetically by surname then by first name. However, the alphabetical arrangement is imperfect; there is some disarrangement. Each index card contains arrival information for one or more people sharing the same first and last name. For each person, the following information is given: age, gender, place of last permanent residence, destination, legal reason for admission (such as “ret. U.S. res.” [returning U.S. resident]), date and port of arrival, and manifest number. The manifest number is to the left of the person's name. This series serves as an index to part of Series 2 (described above).

SERIES 4: TEMPORARY ADMISSION MANIFESTS, JULY 1928–1939

This series consists of INS Form 548 (described below under “Forms Used”). They are arranged alphabetically and include temporary and nonstatistical alien arrivals.

SERIES 5: TEMPORARY ADMISSION MANIFESTS, 1939–JULY 1953

This series consists of INS Forms 548, I-190, and I-448 (all described below under “Forms Used”). They are arranged alphabetically, but it is imperfect due to disarrangement. Temporary and nonstatistical arrivals are included.

FORMS USED

The manifests consist of several types of Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) forms. Both the front and reverse sides of each card- or sheet-size form were used. The most common forms are described below.

Form 548 or Form I-448, *Manifest or Report of Inspection*, is the most common form, and generally includes the person's name, age, gender, 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 country. Form 548 or I-448 is generally a card manifest. However, during some periods at some ports, the INS used an entire sheet of paper for the Form 548 manifest. Both sizes of manifests generally included the same information. The reverse side of the card manifest Form 548, if filmed, sometimes includes the person's photograph.

Form 621, *Statistical*, includes the following information about each alien: name, age, gender, marital status, race, occupation, ability to read and write, last place of residence, future place of residence, name of person he or she plans to join, date and place of admission, physical description, place of birth, citizenship ("nationality"), and names of persons accompanying him or her.

Form 629, *Nonstatistical*, includes the person's name, age, gender, marital status, race, occupation, ability to read and write, last place of residence, destination, and port and date of admission. It also indicates the names of persons and amount of money accompanying him or her. This index card apparently contains all available entry information.

Form P(A), *Application for Border Permit Card*, includes the date and port of issuance of the card, card number, and the alien's name, citizenship, birthplace, permanent residence, business address, age, marital status, occupation, gender, height, weight, eye color, hair color, physical marks, ability to read, signature, and photograph.

Form Spl. 125, *Alien Laborer's Identification Card*, includes the date and port of issuance of the card, card number, and the alien's name, age, marital status, height, physical marks, last residence, and whether able to read. It also includes his photograph and his destination, including employer, such as "Arizona Cotton Growers Assn., Tempe, Arizona." It also includes this text:

The bearer, a native and citizen of Mexico, has this day been granted the privilege of temporarily entering the United States in accordance with and under the conditions of Department [of Labor] circular of June 12, 1918, as amended.

Form I-190, *Application for Nonresident Alien's Border Crossing Identification Card*, includes the alien's name, date and place of birth, gender, marital status, occupation, ability to read and write, place of residence, citizenship

("nationality"), physical description, purpose of U.S. visit, and photograph *or* fingerprint of right index finger. The number, date of issuance, and place of issuance of the person's passport may also be noted. The border crossing identification card number and its date and place of issuance are also included.

Form Spl. 222, *Departure*, includes the person's name, age, gender, race, citizenship ("nationality"), occupation, marital status, ability to read or write, country of future permanent residence, country of birth, country where he or she lived before coming to the United States, date and port of last arrival into the United States, and town and state of last U.S. residence. If the person was a native born U.S. citizen, the date and place of birth is given. If the person was a naturalized U.S. citizen, the date and place of naturalization is given. The port and date of the person's departure is noted.

Form Spl. 259, "*statistical*," is an index card that contains each person's name, age, gender, citizenship ("nationality"), race, last place of residence, destination, and port and date of admission. It also indicates a manifest ("list") and line number that corresponds to a "long form" Form 548 (described above).

Form Spl. 442, *Nonstatistical*, includes the person's name, age, gender, marital status, race, occupation, ability to read and write, place of last permanent residence, destination, and port and date of admission. It also indicates the names of persons and amount of money accompanying him or her. This index card apparently contains all available entry information.

GENERAL REMARKS

The records were filmed by the INS in 1956 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.

NEW ROLL NO.	OLD INS ROLL NO.	CONTENTS	
7	8	June 21–June 1916	913–945
		July 1916 – June 1917	1–1486
		July 1917 – June 1918	1–976
		July 1918 – June 1919	1–648
		July–Oct. 1919	1–217
8	9	Oct. 1919 – June 1920	218–1014
		July 1920 – June 1921	1–941
		July 1921 – June 1922	1–742
		July 1922 – May 28, 1923	1–913
9	10	May 28, 1923 – June 1924	914–1155
		July 1923 – June 1924	1–2869
		July 1924 – Aug. 10, 1925	1–60
10	12	Aug. 10, 1925 – June 1926	61–575
		July 1926 – June 1927	1–883
		July 1927 – June 1928	1–560
		July 1928 – June 1929	1–492
		July 1929 – June 1930	1–228
		July 1930 – June 1932	1–786
		July 1932 – June 1933	1–175
		July 1933 – June 1934	1–162
		July 1934 – June 1935	1–249
		July 1935 – June 1936	1–341
		July 1936 – June 1937	1–238
		July 1938 – June 1939	1–534
		July 1939 – June 1940	1–471
		July 1940 – June 1941	1–150
		July 1941 – June 1942	1–910
		July 1942 – June 1943	1–454
		July 1943 – July 1944	1–305
		July 1944 – June 1945	1–740
		July 1945 – June 1946	15–458
		July 1946 – June 1947	6–229
		Apr.–May 1948	165–184
		Aug. 1948 – May 1949	15–188
		July 1949 – June 1950	8–218
		July 1950 – July 1951	4–210
		Aug. 1951 – May 1953	7–220

NEW ROLL NO.	OLD INS ROLL NO.	CONTENTS
11	11	SERIES 3: INDEX TO PERMANENT AND STATISTICAL MANIFESTS, AUG. 10, 1925–MAY 13, 1953 Abita – Zwahlen
12	13	SERIES 4: TEMPORARY ADMISSION MANIFESTS, JULY 1928–1939 Abaunza – Rutiago
13	14	Saavedra – Zuniga SERIES 5: TEMPORARY ADMISSION MANIFESTS, 1939–JULY 1953 Abaroa – Dominguez <i>Note: Retakes (if any) for this segment will be found at the beginning of the roll.</i>
14	15	Dovalina – Nuñez
15	16 17	O – Trevino, M. Trevino, N. – Zuniga