

A3398

CREW LISTS OF VESSELS ARRIVING AT  
ARANSAS PASS AND PORT ARANSAS, TEXAS,  
1912-1921 AND 1959-1965

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## **INTRODUCTION**

On the two rolls of this microfilm publication, A3398, are reproduced crew lists of vessels arriving at Aransas Pass and Port Aransas, Texas, September 8, 1912–December 21, 1921, and January 31, 1959–March 11, 1965. A few passengers are also included, and a few lists indicate vessel arrival at Galveston, Texas. 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).

## **RECORDS DESCRIPTION**

These records primarily consist of INS Forms 577, 680, and I-418 (all described below under "Forms Used"). There are also handwritten or privately printed forms containing

information similar to that reported on the Form 577. The crew lists primarily consist of alien crewmen, including a few Chinese, but many U.S. citizen crew members are also included. A few passengers are also included.

Most of the vessels departed from Tampico, Mexico, but a significant number departed from European or Central American ports. The port of arrival is variously indicated as Port Aransas or Aransas Pass, two adjacent localities on the Texas coastline.

An annotation on Roll 1's original box label indicates that the crew list for the *Wakina*, which arrived on October 1, 1914, was (for unstated reasons) "on file" at the INS, and was not filmed.

#### FORMS USED

The manifests consist of several types of Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) forms. The most common forms are described below.

**INS Form 680, *List or Manifest of Aliens Employed on the Vessel as Members of Crew*** (later known as Form I-480), usually contains the names of vessels and shipmasters, ports of arrival and embarkation, dates of arrival, and the following information about each crew member: full name, position in ship's company, whether able to read, age, sex, race, nationality, height, weight, and physical marks or peculiarities. The "race" column indicates the crew member's ethnic background, such as Irish, German, Polish, etc. It also indicates the date and place at which he was engaged for employment and whether he was to be paid off or discharged at the port of arrival. Although the primary purpose of this form was to record pertinent information about aliens, many U.S. citizen crew members are frequently on these lists.

**Form 577, *Alien Crew List***, includes the dates and ports of departure and arrival, and the following information about each person: name, age, position in crew, citizenship ("nationality"), date and place where shipped out, whether a bona fide seaman (yes/no), and evidence of intention to remain in the United States (yes/no).

**Form I-418, *Passenger List/Crew List***, includes the name of the ship, the port and date of embarkation, the port and date of arrival, and the following information about each person, if applicable: name, citizenship ("nationality"), passport number, crew position, and where the crewman was shipped or engaged. Other remarks or information may also be annotated on the form. This form was used for the 1959–1965 crew lists.

#### GENERAL REMARKS

The records were filmed by the INS in 1957 and 1965 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.

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