NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS ADMINISTRATION
MICROFILM PUBLICATIONS

A3362

PARTNERSHIP LISTS OF CHINESE FIRMS IN SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA, AND NATIONWIDE, 1893–1907; AND INDEX OF CHINESE DEPARTING FROM SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA, 1912–1943

Description by Claire Prechtel-Kluskens

National Archives and Records Administration
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INTRODUCTION

On the two rolls of this microfilm publication, A3362, are reproduced partnership lists of Chinese firms in San Francisco, California, and nationwide, 1893–1907, and related indexes, as well as an index to Chinese departures from San Francisco, CA, 1912–1943. 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.

Records Description

The records consist of five series further described below.

Series 1: Index of Chinese Partnerships Nationwide Excluding San Francisco

This index has three subseries: (1) Bakersfield, CA–Willow, CA; (2) "All other California towns"; and (3) Remainder of U.S. (called "outside towns"). Each subseries is arranged alphabetically by name of city in which the partnership was located, then by the name of the firm. An INS file number is indicated for each firm, such as 13514/17. The first five digits apparently refer to a file for that city; the remaining digits apparently refer to correspondence about that firm.

Series 2: Index of Chinese Partnerships in San Francisco

This index has three subseries: (1) "All other streets", undated; (2) Clay St.–Waverly Pl., undated; (3) Brenham Pl.–Waverly Pl., 1911–1918. Each subseries is arranged alphabetically by street name. Subseries 1 and 2 include an INS file number for each firm, such as 13508/12. The first five digits apparently refer to a file for the particular street; the remaining digits apparently refer to records about that firm. Subseries 3 mostly contains printed lists that appear to have been cut from city directories and pasted onto index cards.

Series 3: Index of Chinese Departing from San Francisco, Dec. 20, 1912–Dec. 3, 1943

This series consists of index cards arranged numerically by INS file number, then by date of departure. The INS file numbers run sequentially from 12017/01 to 12017/54437. Most cards contain more than one file number. For each "12017/number", the following information is usually given: name, date, and brief description of type, such as "d/native" (departing native), "d/mer" (departing merchant), "s/n/d" (probably son of native departing).

Series 4: Lists of Chinese Partnerships in San Francisco

This series consists of five unnumbered volumes that include the following information about the partnership: name of firm, street address, date on which partnership list was filed, and names of partners. For each partner the following information is recorded: amount of capital invested, place of residence (U.S. city or "China"), and (when known) date and ship of subsequent arrival or departure.

Volume 1 is arranged alphabetically by firm name. Some pages include a reference to a new page number in a subsequent volume to which the firm's information was transferred. A street index at the end of the volume on pages headed "U.S. Treasury Department" indicates the name of the firm and "house number" (exact address).

Volumes 2–5 include, at the front of each volume, an index arranged alphabetically by the first letter of the firm name. These indexes indicate the firm's street address and the page number upon which further information appears.

Series 5: Lists of Chinese Partnership Nationwide Excluding San Francisco

This series relates to firms located in cities other than San Francisco, CA. These volumes are nationwide in scope, as they contain partnership lists of firms all over the United States, such as Bow Shang Tong Co., Butte, MT, or Sling Gee Fung, El Paso, TX.

These records consist of four unnumbered volumes. Volumes 1–3 provide the following information about the partnership: name of firm, city in which located, date on which partnership list was filed, and names of partners. For each partner, this information is listed: place of residence (U.S. city or "China"), amount of capital invested, and (when known) date and ship of departure from the United States. Sometimes there is a cross reference to an entry in another volume, such as "see #1057, page 83, Book 2."

Volume 4 indicates the firm name, city in which located, names of partners, total amount of capital invested, ship and date of arrival, and "ticket number." The street address may also be noted.

All four volumes include, at the front, an index arranged alphabetically by the first letter of the firm name. These indexes indicate the city and state in which the firm is located and the page number upon which further information appears. Volume 1 also includes an alphabetical index by name of city; this index precedes the index by firm name.

Additional Remarks

The records were filmed by the INS in 1957 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.

Roll 1 is 16mm microfilm; roll 2 is 35mm microfilm.

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ROLL **SERIES AND CONTENTS**

1 Series 1: Index of Partnerships Nationwide Excluding San Francisco

Bakersfield, CA–Willow, CA
"All other California towns," A–Z
Remainder of U.S., A–Z

Series 2: Index of Partnerships in San Francisco

"All other streets," undated
Clay St.–Waverly Pl., undated
Brenham Pl.–Waverly Pl., 1911–1918

Series 3: Index of Chinese Departing from San Francisco, Dec. 20, 1912–Dec. 3, 1943

12017/01 to 12017/54437

2 Series 4: Lists of Partnerships in San Francisco

Vol. 1: ca. 1894–1896. Unpaginated.

Vol. 2: July 22, 1893–Dec. 4, 1894. Firms 1–439. Paginated.

Vol. 3: Dec. 13, 1894–Dec. 20, 1900. Firms 440–863. Paginated.

Vol. 4: Feb. 4, 1901–Aug. 10, 1905. Firms 1–385. Paginated.

Vol. 5: Aug. 19, 1905–Mar. 15, 1907. Firms 1–82. Paginated. Cover reads: "Partnership Lists, San Francisco, Book No. 4, Aug. 19, 1905–March 15, 1907."

Series 5: Lists of Partnerships Nationwide

Vol. 1: July 22, 1893–Mar. 5, 1895. Firms 1–698. Paginated.

Vol. 2: Mar. 5, 1895–May 15, 1905. Firms 699–1195.

Note: Text of Firm 1195 indicates it was entered into this volume Jan. 12, 1906, but its filing date was unknown and could have been as early as 1893.

ROLL	SERIES AND CONTENTS
2 (con.)	Series 5: Lists of Partnerships Nationwide (con.)

Vol. 3: Jan. 8, 1901–Apr. 25, 1907. Firms 1–492.

Vol. 4: Apr. 7, 1894–May 6, 1894. Arranged by date, then by name of ship, then alphabetically by first letter of name of firm. Typewritten INS target sheet preceding this volume states:

> Partnership lists taken from Chinese verbally upon their arrival from China. No sworn partnership lists having been previously filed. Commencing with steamer *Belgie*, April 7, 1894.