Microfilm Publication A3363

PASSENGER AND CREW LISTS OF VESSELS ARRIVING AT VENTURA, CALIFORNIA, MAY 1929–DECEMBER 1956

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National Archives and Records Administration
Washington, DC
1998

NATIONAL ARCHIVES MICROFILM PUBLICATIONS

INTRODUCTION

On the single roll of this microfilm publication, A3363, are reproduced passenger and crew lists of vessels arriving at Ventura, California, May 23, 1929-December 22, 1956. The records primarily consist, however, of crew lists. A few airplane passengers are also 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.

Records Description

These records primarily consist of INS Form 680 or I-480, *List or Manifest of Aliens Employed on the Vessel as Member of Crew*, although other INS forms are also included. Form 680 or I-480 varied over time, but generally

includes the following information: name, length of service at sea, position in ship's company, where and when shipped or engaged, whether to be paid off or discharged at port of arrival, and nationality. Earlier versions of the form include the alien's age, sex, race, height, and weight.

INS Form I-489, *Statement of Master of Vessel Regarding Changes in Crew Prior to Departure*, sometimes accompanies the Form I-480. This form indicates names and other information of any crewmen who (1) deserted, (2) were discharged, (3) were left in a hospital at the port of arrival, or (4) signed on at the port of arrival.

Although these records primarily consist of vessel crew members, some lists of passengers are also included. A few airplane passengers are included. These records were filed at the port of Ventura, California, but the lists frequently indicate the port of arrival as El Capitan, Ellwood, Los Angeles, Port Hueneme, San Francisco, or San Pedro, all in California.

General Remarks

The records were filmed by the INS in 1956–57 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

Target 1 (Old INS Roll 1): May 23, 1929 - November 30, 1954

Target 2 (Old INS Roll 1): March 3, 1955 - December 6, 1955

Target 3 (Old INS Roll 2): January 5, 1956 - December 22, 1956