

Passenger Lists

Domestic Records Information 56

[illegible]

BT 26/1425, Inward Passenger List, 1959

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1. Passenger Lists before 1878

Inwards

There are very few records recording passengers before 1878 in The National Archives. [FO 83/21-22](#) contains lists of aliens arriving at British ports for the period August 1810 to May 1811. These records were created by an act passed in 1793 *for establishing regulations respecting Aliens arriving in this Kingdom, or resident therein, in certain cases* (33 Geo III, cap IV). This act was extended by subsequent acts including an *Act for the Registration of Aliens* (7 George IV, cap 46) in 1826. Aliens' Certificates of Arrival issued under this act were destroyed when the Aliens Office was absorbed in to the Home Office in 1836, but there is an index of certificates from 1826 to 1849 in [HO 5/25-32](#) . [HO 2](#) contains original certificates of arrival of individual aliens arranged under ports of arrival for the period 1836-1852. Each certificate gives the alien's name, nationality, profession, date of arrival and last country visited, with their signature, and occasionally other particulars. The Treasury agreed to a proposal in 1849 by Sir George Grey, the Secretary of State for the Home Department, to abolish the register and no certificates survive after 1852. An alphabetical index of alien certificates of some German, Polish and Prussian persons, 1847-1852, compiled by the Anglo-German Family History Society, is available in the research enquiries room. Separate accounts of aliens arriving in the port of London between July and November 1826 can be found in [CUST 102/393-395](#) . Similarly, [CUST 102/396](#) includes accounts of aliens arriving in the port of Gravesend between October 1826 and August 1837.

The Moving Here website (www.movinghere.org.uk) has images of alien certificates issued at the port of Hull, 1793-1815 - the originals being held at the [Hull City Archives](#).

In 1836, the Aliens Act (6&7 Will IV, cap 11) introduced some relaxation in the system of registration but required that masters of vessels make a declaration on arrival of all aliens. [HO 3](#) consists of returns of alien passengers made by masters of ships under section 2 of the Act of 1836. The lists survive for the period July 1836 to December 1869 but no lists survive for the period January 1861 to December 1866. After 1869 the Home Office preserved the lists for only five years after which they were destroyed. The lists are arranged chronologically and there are four lists per year. There are no name indexes though

the Anglo-German Family History Society has extracted some 36,000 names from the period 1853-69.

In addition to the records described above, [ADM 30/35](#) contains passenger lists of H M steam packets carrying passengers to, from and within the Mediterranean area 1831 to 1834.

Outwards

Most of the records of passengers leaving the UK are scattered among a variety of record series or have simply not survived. Generally speaking, emigration passenger lists between 1776-1889 have not survived. Several registers of passengers travelling from a number of UK ports to New England, Barbados and other colonies for 1634-9, with one of 1677, can be found in [E 157](#) : Exchequer: King's Remembrancer: Registers of Licences to pass beyond the seas. The registers have been printed in J C Hotten *Original Lists of Persons Emigrating to America, 1600-1700* (London, 1874). Also, lists of passengers, with ages, on board vessels bound for America in the 1630s can be found in [CO 1](#) : Privy Council and related bodies: America and West Indies, Colonial Papers (General Series). A useful, though unfortunately short-lived, Treasury register ([T 47/9-12](#)) was kept by port customs officials of emigrants going from England, Wales, and Scotland to the New World between 1773 and 1776. The information for England and Wales has been summarised in a card index, available in the Research Enquiries Room, which gives name, age, occupation, reason for leaving the country, last place of residence, date of departure, and destination. This series also includes names of passengers to Europe. [CO 208](#) : New Zealand Company Original Correspondence, 1839-1858, contains registers of cabin passengers emigrating, 1839-1850, in [CO 208/269-272](#) , and applications for free passage, 1839-1850, in [CO 208/273-274](#) (indexed in [CO 208/275](#)).

In addition to the records described above, [ADM 30/35](#) contains passenger lists of H M steam packets carrying passengers to, from and within the Mediterranean area 1831 to 1834.

2. Board of Trade Passenger Lists from 1878

Ships' passenger lists among the records of the Board of Trade relate mainly to arrivals in and departures from UK seaports. The lists are copies furnished by ships' masters, as required by law, to port officers of the Ministry of Transport and sent to the Board of Trade for use in compiling statistics. They are arranged in two series, for **arrivals** ([BT 26](#)), there is no index to these records, see below for online searching of inward passenger lists and **departures** ([BT 27](#)), these records are available to download from [AncestorsOnboard](#) . Access is free onsite at The National Archives.

To find your document you should know the port of departure/arrival and the year/month. If you do not have this information, but do know the name of the ship, you could use the Registers of Passenger Lists, 1906-1951, in [BT 32](#) . Note that some ports are not named separately in the series lists, but are included with other, usually larger, ports nearby. Also, some ports are also known by different names, eg Queenstown = Cork.

If you do not know port of departure/arrival or the name of the ship, it may be very difficult and time consuming to find any record. (However, see below for online searching of inward passenger lists). Passenger lists do not survive after 1960 when travel by air became more popular. No air passenger lists have been preserved.

Arrivals, 1878-1960

Board of Trade Passenger Lists, Inwards ([BT 26](#)), 1878 to 1888 and 1890 to 1960, contain the names of people arriving in the United Kingdom from places outside Europe and not within the Mediterranean Sea, unless the vessels sailed originally from outside Europe and picked up passengers in a European or Mediterranean port en route. The lists are arranged under the names of the ports of arrival. Note that passenger lists of cruise vessels are included, which arrived with the same passengers with which it left.

If you cannot find the passengers you are searching for bear in mind that Britons returning from the Near East or Southern Asia, having travelled through the Suez Canal, may have disembarked at a European port such as Genoa, Trieste or Marseilles, and completed their journey to Britain overland. The ships would have returned to their ports of origin, and therefore no record is held by TNA. Ships generally took about two weeks to travel from North America, South America and Africa, while those from Asia or Australia took proportionately longer. Consequently you can expect to find two passenger lists for each ship per month.

The information given in the lists includes age, occupation and (from 1922) the intended address in the United Kingdom of each passenger. There is no indication as to how long he/she intended to stay but from the 1930s entries include the abbreviation "T" if the visit was for the purpose of tourism. Many lists earlier in date than 1890 were irregularly destroyed by order of the Board in 1900, but a few accidentally escaped destruction and are included in this series.

The [BT 26](#) record series has been digitised and is fully searchable by name, ship, port and date. These

records are available to download from www.ancestry.co.uk. Access is free onsite at The National Archives.

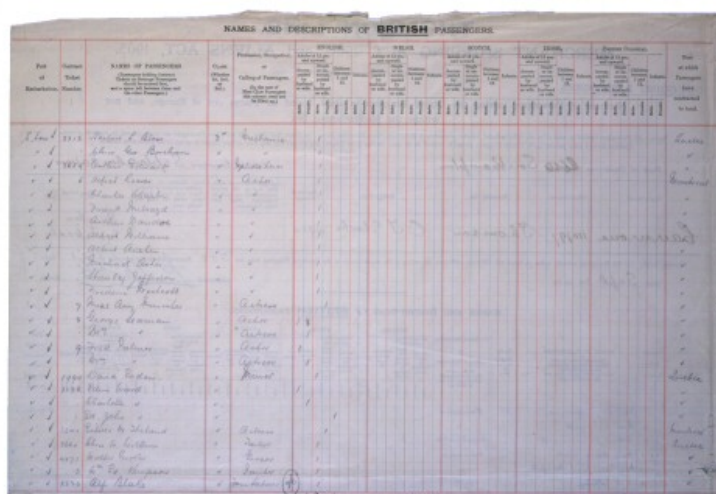
There are separate lists for British (and Commonwealth) passengers and Alien passengers. The Moving Here website www.movinghere.org.uk contains digitized images of inwards passenger lists between March 1948 and October 1960 which brought groups of Indian and Caribbean migrants to the UK - these lists have been indexed by ship and by person and are free to search and download online.

Departures, 1890-1960

Board of Trade Passenger Lists, Outwards ([BT 27](#)), 1890-1960, contain the names people leaving the United Kingdom from ports within England, Wales, Scotland and Ireland for final destinations outside of Europe and the Mediterranean Sea. Some vessels dropped off and picked up passengers in European or Mediterranean ports en route and these entries can be picked up in the records. The information given in the lists usually includes age, occupation, and (from 1922) a UK address of each passenger. There is no indication as to how long he/she intended to stay abroad but from the 1930s entries include the abbreviation 'T' if the visit was for the purpose of tourism.

The lists are arranged under the names of the ports of departure. There are separate lists for British (and Commonwealth) passengers and Alien passengers.

The [BT 27](#) record series has been digitised and is fully searchable by name, ship, port and date. These records are available to download from AncestorsOnboard. Access is free onsite at The National Archives.



BT 27/688, Outward Passenger List

3. Registers of Passenger Lists

[BT 32](#) consist of registers of passenger lists kept by the Board of Trade's Commercial, Labour and Statistical Department and its successors. Prior to 1920 they give, under the different ports, the names of ships and the month of arrival and departure; after 1920 the date of arrival or departure is recorded. Before 1908 the registers relate only to the ports of Southampton, Bristol and Weymouth. They are useful in identifying passenger lists if a name of a ship is known but the port of arrival or departure is not known.

For ships arriving in the USA, check the *Morton Allan Directory of European Passenger Steamship Arrivals* (Baltimore: Genealogical Pub. Co., 1979), a copy of which is available at The National Archives. For each year, it lists arriving ships by shipping line, route, and date of arrival: ships not part of shipping lines are listed at the end of each year. This book covers:

New York

1890-1930

Philadelphia

1904-1926

Boston

1904-1926

Baltimore

1904-1926

4. Passenger Lists in Overseas Archives and on the Web

Much information relating to emigrants can be found in the national archives of the destinations where the ships were bound. Of particular use is the American Family History Immigration History Center, an online database of 22 million passengers and crew members who went through [Ellis Island \(New York\)](#).

, for the period 1892 to 1924. Also, websites for both the [US National Archives and Records Administration](#) and the [National Archives of Canada](#) are useful for tracing emigrants to North America. For Australasian bound ships check the websites for the [National Archives of Australia](#) and the [Archives New Zealand](#). Also, [The National Archives of Ireland](#) hold quite a large number of inward passenger lists arriving from North America for the period 1858 to 1870.

[A Scottish Emigration Database](#) created by the university of Aberdeen lists (but without images) details of those people leaving Scottish ports between 1890-1960 and for non-European destinations from 1 January 1923-30 April 1923.

5. The National Archives' Library Bibliography

The following recommended publications are available in the [The National Archives' Library](#). Where indicated a publication is also available to buy at [The National Archives' Bookshop](#).

- *Immigrants to the New World, 1660's-1800's* (1997)
- *North American Exploration: a continent defined, vol. 2*, ed John L Allen (London, 1997)
- *Passenger and immigration lists: Irish immigrants to North America, 1803-1871* (1998)
- *Ship passenger lists: Pennsylvania and Delaware (1641-1825)*, ed Carl Boyer (Newhall, 1980)
- Peter Wilson Coldham, *American Migrations 1765-1799* (Baltimore, 2000)
- Peter Wilson Coldham, *Bonded passengers to America* (Baltimore, 1983), I-IX
- Peter Wilson Coldham, *More emigrants in bondage, 1614-1775* (Baltimore, 2002)
- Peter Wilson Coldham, *More English adventurers and emigrants 1625-1777: abstracts of examinations in the High Court of Admiralty with reference to colonial America* (Baltimore, 2002)
- Peter Wilson Coldham, *The complete book of emigrants in bondage, 1614-1775* (Baltimore, 1988)
- Peter Wilson Coldham, *The King's passengers to Maryland and Virginia* (Westminster, 1997)
- Noel Currer-Briggs, *English adventurers and Virginian settlers: the co-ordinated use of seventeenth century British and American records by genealogists* (London, 1969), I-III
- Roger Ekirch, *Bound for America: the transportation of British convicts to the colonies, 1718-1775* (Oxford, 1987)
- Robert Hughes, *The fatal shore: story of the transportation of convicts to Australia, 1787-1868* (London, 1987)
- Roger Kershaw and Mark Pearsall, *Immigrants and aliens* (2nd edn, The National Archives Readers' Guides, XXV, 2004) - [Available to buy](#)
- Roger Kershaw, *Emigrants and expats: a guide to sources on UK emigration and residents overseas* (Public Record Office Readers' Guides, XX, 2002) - [Available to buy](#)

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