

**NATIONAL MUSEUMS LIVERPOOL**  
**MARITIME ARCHIVES & LIBRARY**

INFORMATION SHEET 31

**OFFICIAL RECORDS OF PASSENGERS  
ON BOARD SHIP IN BRITAIN**

**Introduction**

Britain made no attempt to record its emigrants or other passengers during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The National Archives (PRO) holds some record of aliens arriving in British ports, from the late 18<sup>th</sup> century onwards amongst its Home Office records, eg HO 3 contains returns of alien passengers made under the Aliens Act, 1836, by masters for voyages made between 1836-1869 (except 1861-1866). Another possible source of information could be the passenger lists of HM steam packets carrying passengers to, from and within the Mediterranean area, 1831 to 1834 (ADM 30/35). (For further information consult the National Archives leaflet, *Passenger Lists Domestic Records Information 56* available on line at [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk)).

Most records of passengers leaving the UK have not survived or are hidden amongst records of colonial departments. For example, registers of passengers travelling to New England, Barbados and other colonies for 1634-1649 and 1677, can be found in the Exchequer: King's Remembrance: Registers of Licences to pass beyond the seas (E 157). Passenger lists for America in the 1630s can be found in Colonial Office records (CO 1), which also includes registers of cabin passengers emigrating with the New Zealand Company, 1839-1850 (CO 208). (See the National Archives leaflet, *Passenger Lists Domestic Records Information 56* available on line at [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk)).

A few examples of passenger lists compiled by shipping companies survive in other archive repositories. These include ones for the Cunard Line, 1840-1853, which are held at Liverpool University (a copy is available on microfilm at the Maritime Archives & Library). The Public Record Office of Northern Ireland holds some passenger records for J. & J. Cooke, Shipping Agents, for sailings from Londonderry to USA and Canada, 1847-1871. These provide the names of 28,000 Irish passengers. The Maritime Archives & Library holds many examples of souvenir passenger lists, either in shipping company collections or in ephemera collected by the passengers themselves, which date mainly from the 1880s onwards. However, the earliest passenger list in the collection is the list of crew and passengers of the ship *Speedwell*, Isaac Strickland, master, from Liverpool to Philadelphia, Newfoundland and from hence to Italy, 1769 [D/Earle/1/3].

**Board of Trade Passenger Lists at the National Archives**

It was only from 1890 that records of passenger arrivals and departures were collected by the Board of Trade. Unfortunately, no complete official lists of passengers exist in any local repositories in the U.K. The National Archives holds passenger lists of vessels travelling inwards to and outwards from British ports, including Liverpool, from the 1890s onwards. (A list of ports and years for which such passenger lists survive, may be found in the National Archives publication: *Lists and Indexes, Supplementary Series No. XI, Board of Trade Records to 1913* (1964). Copies of this list may be obtainable from the British Library through inter-library loan at major libraries.

The Board of Trade passenger lists are copies provided by the ship's masters 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, one for arrivals (BT 26) and departures (BT 27). Unfortunately, there is no index to the records, either by name or by ship, so the only method of locating information is to know the port of departure/arrival and the year/month. If you only know the name of the ship, you need to consult the Registers of Passenger Lists (BT 32).

Passenger lists do not survive after 1960 when travel by air became more popular, and no air passenger lists are preserved.

Class numbers are as follows:

(BT 26) **Passenger Lists Inward** 1877 - 1960

Only a few lists pre-1890. Note: no **European voyages**, officially (some have crept in) but **outside** Europe voyages sometimes picked up **in** Europe and these passengers are listed. These lists are available online at [www.ancestry.co.uk/search/db.aspx?dbid=1518](http://www.ancestry.co.uk/search/db.aspx?dbid=1518)

(BT 27) **Passenger Lists Outwards** 1890 - 1960

Transatlantic vessels normally provide full schedule B returns, giving name, profession, sex, marital status, age box and English/Scottish/Irish (later Welsh) classification. Vessels on other routes often provide just names and a vague destination, eg West Coast Africa. Information is much fuller from 1922 onwards. Full addresses are given for British and alien non-transmigrants. For alien transmigrants (ie those with prepaid through tickets and **not** first class) no addresses are given, only the country, port of arrival and shipping line that brought them.

The [BT 27](#) record series is available online at [www.findmypast.co.uk](http://www.findmypast.co.uk) and is fully searchable by name, ship, port and date.

(BT 32) **Register of Passenger Lists Received** 1905 - 1960

For further information consult the National Archives leaflet: *Passenger Lists Domestic Records Information 56* available on line at [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk).

### **Vital Events at Sea**

The National Archives also holds the following sources of information on births, marriages and deaths of passengers at sea:

#### **Class Number**

(BT 158) Registers of all births, deaths, marriages at sea. 1854 - 1890

(BT 158) Register of all births and deaths only. 1884 - 1887

(BT 158) Registers of all deaths only. 1888 onwards

#### **British Nationals Only**

(BT 160) Registers of births at sea. 1875 - 1891

Microfiche copies of registers of marine births and deaths, 1837-1965, are available at Liverpool Record Office, Liverpool Central Library, William Brown Street, Liverpool, L3 8EW (Tel: 0151 233 5817; Email: [recoffice.central.library@liverpool.gov.uk](mailto:recoffice.central.library@liverpool.gov.uk)).

### **Migration by Sea within the British Isles**

No official records were ever kept of passengers travelling by sea within the British Isles, including Ireland. A few personal narratives survive, and in rare instances some shipping companies archives may contain information on sailings, etc.

One exception is the magistrate's registers for the deportation home to Ireland and Scotland from Liverpool. These cover 1801-1835, and are available at Lancashire Record Office, Bow Lane, Preston, PR1 2RE (Email: [record.office@ed.lancscc.gov.uk](mailto:record.office@ed.lancscc.gov.uk)).

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TEPPER, Michael H. *Immigrants to the Middle Colonies - A Consolidation of Ship Passenger Lists and Associated Data from New England Historical and Genealogical Register*. Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., 1988.

WYATT, I. (ed). *Transportees from Gloucestershire to Australia, 1783-1842*. Gloucestershire: Alan Sutton, 1988.

### **Useful Address**

<b>The National Archives (PRO)</b> Ruskin Avenue Kew, Richmond Surrey TW9 4DU Tel: 020 8392 5200 Fax: 020 8878 8905 Email: <a href="mailto:enquiry@nationalarchives.gov.uk">enquiry@nationalarchives.gov.uk</a> Website: <a href="http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk">www.nationalarchives.gov.uk</a>	<b>Public Record Office of Northern Ireland</b> 66 Balmoral Avenue Belfast BT9 6NY Northern Ireland Tel: +44 (028) 9025 5905 (Public Search Room) Fax: +44 (028) 9025 5999 Email: <a href="mailto:proni@dcalni.gov.uk">proni@dcalni.gov.uk</a>
<b>Ulster-American Folk Park</b> The Centre for Migration Studies 2 Mellon Rd Castletown Omagh, Co. Tyrone Northern Ireland BT78 5QY Tel: 028 8225 6315 Fax: 028 8224 2241 Email: <a href="mailto:CentreMigStudies@ni-libraries.net">CentreMigStudies@ni-libraries.net</a> Website: <a href="http://www.qub.ac.uk/cms">www.qub.ac.uk/cms</a>	<b>National Archives of Ireland</b> Bishop Street Dublin 8 Ireland Tel: 1407 2300 Fax: 1407 2333 Email: <a href="mailto:mail@nationalarchives.ie">mail@nationalarchives.ie</a> Website: <a href="http://www.nationalarchives.ie">www.nationalarchives.ie</a>

Details of passengers and crew who travelled through Castle Garden between 1830 and 1892 and Ellis Island between 1892 and 1924 can be found at [www.castlegarden.org](http://www.castlegarden.org) and [www.ellislandrecords.org](http://www.ellislandrecords.org).

The National Archives of Ireland hold inward passenger arrivals from North America between 1858 and 1870 at [www.nationalarchives.ie](http://www.nationalarchives.ie)

Much information relating to emigrants can be found in the national archives at the place of destination. The US National Archives and Records Administration can be located at [www.archives.gov](http://www.archives.gov). For the National Archives of Canada see [www.archives.ca](http://www.archives.ca). For the Australian National Archives see [www.naa.gov.au](http://www.naa.gov.au)

The Ancestry website contains passenger lists inwards between 1878 and 1960 which brought migrants to the UK, <http://search.ancestry.co.uk/search>

UK passenger departure lists 1890 to 1960 can be searched at the Find My Past website  
<http://search.findmypast.co.uk/search-world-records/passenger-lists-leaving-uk-1890-1960>  
The Indexes are available free but you need to buy credits to view the results.