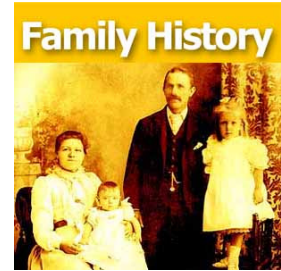


# Family History: Genealogy Made Easy

with *Lisa Louise Cooke*

*Republished 2014*



Welcome to this step-by-step series for beginning genealogists—and more experienced ones who want to brush up or learn something new. I first ran this series in 2008-09. So many people have asked about it, I'm bringing it back in weekly segments.

## Episode 31: Immigration and Naturalization Records for Family History, Part 3

Did you know that all those annotations and scribbles on passenger lists may hold important clues to your family history? In this episode, we continue our discussion with Stephen Danko about immigration and naturalization records. Specifically, we'll listen in on a presentation he gave on passenger list annotations and what the immigrant's experience was like at Ellis Island.

We've talked already about ship passenger arrival lists in Parts 1 and 2 of this mini-series on immigration and naturalization records. Now let's get out the magnifying glass, so to speak. We'll look closely at the little notes on these records.

Annotations on passenger lists could have been made upon departure, arrival or later when that immigrant applied for citizenship. One of the common misconceptions about passenger lists is that they were not filled out at Ellis Island, as many people believe. Rather they were completed at the port of departure. So notes could have been made at a variety of different times.

Here are three examples of annotations that were made upon a person's arrival in the United States:

D=detained for inquiry

SI or DSI=Special Inquiry or Detained for Special Inquiry—this was really bad!

USC=Was born in the U.S. or was a U.S. citizen

For a more thorough list of annotations on passenger records, click on the pdf of Stephen's handout, *A New Look at Immigrant Passenger Manifests*, below. His companion blog posts show you real-life examples.

Here are some more great tips from that conversation:

- Check at the end of the manifest for pages called Record of Detained Alien Passengers, and Records of Release of Aliens Held for Special Inquiry.
- Our ancestors could have traveled back and forth from their homeland several times before they became citizens. Those passenger lists are just as valuable as their original immigration. If they hadn't completed the naturalization process yet, then you may find an indication of that re-entry number or their citizenship status.
- As Stephen mentioned in a previous podcast, depending on the timeframe, your ancestor may have had to request a certificate of arrival when applying for citizenship. And if you haven't found their naturalization records yet, and are lucky enough to find a certificate

of arrival annotation on the passenger list, then you will have a really good chance for tracking them down.

- Certificates of arrival were required for anyone who applied for citizenship beginning in 1926 who had arrived after 1906. Annotations on the passenger list about the certificate of arrival (C/A) can lead you to where and when they applied for citizenship. A number like 1X-151953 indicates a request for a certificate of arrival was made after 1926 to help with the naturalization process. The first number “1” is the naturalization district, if there is an “X” it means the person didn’t have to pay for the Certificate of Arrival and the numbers after the dash are the certificate of arrival number or the application number. The date of the certificate of arrival may appear after this number sequence.
- Another code, VL, is the verification of landing, often seen for arrivals before 1906, before certificates of arrival were issued.
- Numbers like 432731 / 435765 = the passenger was a permanent resident of the U.S. and was returning home with a re-entry permit.
- If someone’s name was crossed out on the passenger list but the rest of the line was not, it probably means their name was amended. It was likely misspelled.
- Look through every page of the ship’s manifest for your ancestor’s voyage. You may find record of stops the ship made along the way, recording of friends or relatives, or even a second entry for your ancestor as Stephen mentioned in the case of changing class of ticket.
- The more recent the passenger list, the more information we’ll find and possibly the more annotations we may find. In my case my great grandparents made the journey from Antwerp Belgium in 1910, and sure enough in looking back over their passenger lists (they each have their own because they traveled three months apart) I found that sure enough there are numbers and markings on their record that I hadn’t really paid much attention to, so when I heard Stephen’s talk I was very excited to figure out their meaning.

Listen to the podcast itself for more details on:

- Head taxes charged;
- Names entered at port of departure for people who may not have sailed;
- Why a person might appear twice on a passenger list;
- Notations that they were hospitalized upon arrival—or that they died there;
- The number of meals eaten at Ellis Island; and
- Grounds for exclusion for entry to the U.S.

## Updates and Links

A New Look at Immigrant Passenger Manifests. This pdf by Stephen Danko provides a timeline history of the information requested on passenger lists. You’ll also find annotations made before and after arrival.

[http://lialouisecooke.com/?attachment\\_id=6077](http://lialouisecooke.com/?attachment_id=6077)

Stephen’s Blog: A New Look at Immigrant Passenger Manifests

<http://stephendanko.com/blog/268>

Stephen's Blog: More Annotations on Immigrant Passenger Manifests  
<http://stephendanko.com/blog/1935>

One-Step Webpages by Stephen P. Morse (Ellis Island Search Tool)  
[www.stevemorse.org](http://www.stevemorse.org)