McManus Family Adventures in Coming to America Ann Ramage March 2022

I've always known that my dad's relatives came to the United States from Scotland. When we kids were growing up, we received Christmas gifts from our mysterious cousins in Selkirk, Scotland. I also remember writing thank you notes for those presents on that old airmail stationery.

When I was first started out in genealogy, my dad's side of the family was the hardest to find any information about. I recall my delight when I found my dad's grandfather, John McManus, and his entire family's records at Ellis Island. The McManus family landed at New York City on 5 September 1916. Later, when I located the family on the ship's passenger list, I took this information as confirmation of what I already knew. As a result, I didn't pay that much attention to the information on the ship's passenger list itself. That's partly because I thought I already knew everything. And because I didn't know what some of the notations on the ship's passenger list meant.

Within the past several years, I found a card that indicated that Bella McManus, one of John McManus's children, had been held for special inquiry at Ellis Island. The card didn't indicate what the inquiry was about. Although I found this information curious because it appeared that she was the only one of the family of seven who was detained, I let it go because I knew she had been admitted to the United States, married, and had seven children.

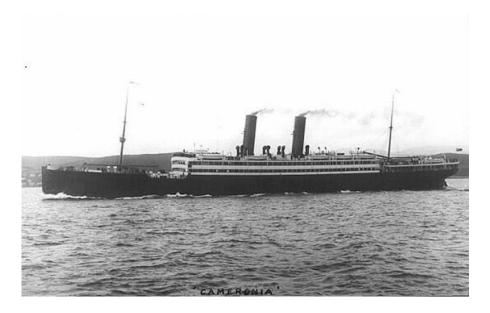
Then a couple of weeks ago, I attended one of Foothills Genealogical Society's meetings. The speaker's topic was "Unlocking Notation Codes on Alien Passenger Lists." As a result of this class, I now have a clearer understanding of these forms.

The McManus family left Selkirk, Scotland and probably traveled by train to Glasgow.



This is a photo of the Selkirk railway station. Although the photo was taken well after the family left Scotland, I doubt that it changed much. I presume that the Selkirk train station was the first stop on the way to the port of Glasgow, Scotland.

Here they boarded the S. S. Cameronia on 25 August 1916.



The paper trail starts here. They are listed on the Outgoing Passenger Form as British Passengers who embarked at the Port of Glasgow. This form collected basic information including their names, ages, occupations, the country they left and the country they plan to reside in. Attached is a portion of that outgoing passenger form.

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Note that John McManus is 68 years old. That raises a question. What would entice a 68-year-old man to leave his birth country and take his entire family across the dangerous waters of the Atlantic to the United States?

Remember that WWI was going on in Europe. Britain had declared war on Germany on 28 July 1914. Scotland was part of the British Empire. So, young Scots were expected to enlist in the British military. At that time, the United States was neutral. By the time the family left Scotland, World War I had been going on in Europe for almost two years with no end in sight. Perhaps the family was trying to protect their young boys ages 14 and 12 from being drafted into the war effort.

But this voyage had its own dangers. The Germans considered the waters between England and the United States to be a war zone. In fact, the Germans had sunk the RMS Lusitania, which was carrying civilian passengers, on 7 May 1915, a little over a year before the McManus family left Scotland for the United States.

Then again, their timing for making this voyage on the S S Cameronia was good. The year before on 21 Jun 1915, the Cameronia had been attacked by a German submarine near Liverpool.

When the Captain of the Cameronia turned the boat to ram the submarine, the attack was aborted. And in 1917, the year after their voyage to America, the Cameronia was converted to a British troop transport ship. It was again attacked by a German U-boat on 15 April 1917. This time the ship was sunk in the Mediterranean near the island of Malta.

Besides all the potential dangers the McManus family faced, there were a few bright spots for this family. Once they were in the States, they weren't totally on their own.

Thomas McManus, John's son from a previous marriage, had immigrated to the US around 1907. He was working for the Chicago and Alton railroad and living near Jacksonville IL.

Also, Helen McManus Hill, John's daughter from a previous marriage immigrated to the states in 1914 and was living with her husband and family in Jacksonville IL.

Although the family spoke English, their thick Scots brogue would be difficult for most Americans to understand. It's also nice to have a trusted guide in a new country to help with the adjustment to the culture shock.

Back to the McManus voyage to the United States. The Cameronia's route included one stop before beginning the Atlantic crossing. The next day, 26 August 1916, the ship stopped at Liverpool, England and picked up more passengers for the trip across the Atlantic to New York City.

On 5 September 1916, 12 days after its departure from Glasgow, the Cameronia docked at New York City. I'll bet the McManus family was delighted to be on solid ground after being at sea for that long. I wonder what the family thought when they first caught sight of the Statue of Liberty?

The foreign passengers went through customs at Ellis Island and these generated additional forms including the *List or Manifest of Alien Passengers for the United States Immigration Officer at Port of Arrival.* This is a 2-page form containing a wealth of genealogical information. A portion of the first page of this form is attached. Note that the McManus family is recorded on lines 6 through 13.

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It seems that John McManus aged 2 years since the beginning of the voyage. He was 68 years old when he left Scotland and is now 70 years old.

The stamp in the far left hand column says that the family was admitted on the same day that they arrived. This should have been a clue that there were other records for this group. Most of the passengers do not have this stamp.

The following image is the second page of that form.

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7m	James														
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The entire McManus family was held for special inquiry, not just Bella.

In the column labeled "Cause of Detention" there is a ditto mark. Two lines above there are the initials LPC which means <u>Likely</u> to become a <u>Public Charge</u>.

With this hint, I scoured the ship's passenger list for clues to why the family was detained. They had their ticket to their final destination of Jacksonville, IL. I presume that Tom McManus, who worked for the railroads, had sent them their tickets. And the family is all in good health.

The only thing that I can see is that the family only had \$250. That amount is \$100 short of the \$50 per person that the inspectors wanted everyone to have. Despite the perceived shortage of funds, the family was allowed into the United States at 2:15 p.m. on the day of their arrival.

One other interesting fact shown on this detention record is that the entire family was fed a lunch at Ellis Island. And the ship had to pay for this meal. The ship was responsible for all the costs associated with the detention and deportation of any passengers that it brought to the States.

Just as I was wrapping up this story, I remembered hearing that the local newspaper often listed the arrival and departure of the various ships that came into port. Turning to newspapers.com, I found the following article on page 7 of the Wednesday 6 Sep 1916 edition of the New York Times.

Five transatlantic liners came into the port of New York City on 5 September 1916 carrying a total of 4,175 passengers. Ellis Island officials were only equipped to process 2000 passengers. I'll bet my McManus relatives were delighted that their ship, the Cameronia, was one of the 3 ships chosen to be processed on the day that they arrived. The passengers on the other two ships had to spend another night aboard their ship.

## BIG RUSH OF IMMIGRANTS.

## Arrivals on Five Liners Overtax Ellis Island Accommodations.

Five transatiantic liners arrived yesterday from European ports bringing a total of 4,175 passengers of all classes. This was the biggest day's total since the beginning of 1915. The Italian liner Giuseppe Verdi, from Genoa, headed the list with 2,000. The America, from Naples, brought over 800, the American liner Philadelphia, from Liverpool, 554; the Anchor liner Cameronia, from Glasgow and Liverpool, 396, and the Scandinavian-America liner United States, from Copenhagen, 425.

The Immigration Bureau at Ellis Island, under war conditions, accommodates only 2000 steerage passengers and was able to receive the immigrants from the United States, the Cameronia and America only. Those on the Giuseppe Verdi and the Philadelphia had to remain on board for the night and will go to the island today.

When the Verdi arrived in quarantine the Captain sent a wireless message for a police boat, and when the Patrol ar-rived alongside, the officers handed over ten hostlers who had been kept in irons since Aug. 28 for stabbing some of their fellow workmen. They were sent to the Tombs. Passengers said that during the riot among the 300 horsenien, six men were shot and stabbed and they were fighting the whole voyage. Four of the injured men were able to leave the ship's hospital and so ashore, but John Mechan of Canal and Greenwich Streets, Manhatian, had been so severely stabbed in the left side that he was taken to the City Hospital.