

ARMENIAN STUDIES FOR SECONDARY STUDENTS

A Curriculum Guide

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Osganyan eventually became a writer for the NEW YORK HERALD TRIBUNE and published The Sultan and His People in 1857. This was the first book written by an Armenian-American in English to be printed in the United States. Another Armenian studied medicine at Princeton University in 1837, and in 1841, the Rev. Haroutune Vahabedian was enrolled at Union Theological Seminary in New York. He later was elected a Patriarch of the Armenian Apostolic Church.

Christopher der Seropian, a medical student at Yale University after 1843, is credited with having invented the black and green inks that are used on American paper currency. In all, more than fifty-five Armenians came to the United States between 1850 and 1870, usually as students. After 1870, the flow of young Armenians to American shores increased, largely because of the extensive network of American missionary schools that had been opened all over Anatolia. For example, the flourishing Armenian community in New Jersey was begun by eight ^{young} men. Yale Divinity School and the Hartford Theological Seminary in Connecticut educated many Armenian youths. ~~Massachusetts~~ Massachusetts became a small Armenian center with little communities developing in Boston, Lawrence, Lynn and Worcester.

The Third Wave

What caused the large Armenian immigration at the turn of the century?

Widespread unrest and massacres in Turkey after 1895 forced thousands of Armenians to find refuge outside of the Empire. Some went to Russia and others fled to Egypt or France. However, over 70,000 Armenians landed in America in the first four years after the pogroms of the Ottoman Government were begun against them. Most of these refugees settled on the East coast in Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut or New York. This influx was interrupted for a time by World War I, but between 1920 and 1931 more than 26,000 additional Armenians got to the United States. Others were exiled in Syria or Lebanon, or went to South America. Since 1931 Armenian immigration has never stopped, but it is difficult to estimate its size because Armenians are usually listed as citizens of the land from which they

have migrated: Egypt, France, Lebanon, Iraq, Iran, Syria or Turkey; for the most part.

Worcester, Massachusetts was undoubtedly the original center of Armenian culture in the United States. The first Armenian Apostolic Church in North America was founded there in 1888. The first Armenian Evangelical Church in this country, The Church of the Martyrs, was also established in Worcester in 1892. It was the "wire mill" of the Washburn and Moen Corporation that originally attracted Armenians to the city. Although the work there was heavy and the pay low, no capital and very little English were needed for the job. Until 1920 many of the Armenians living in Worcester considered themselves to be temporary residents there. They saved as much of their wages as they could, hoping to go back to their homeland when the conditions there improved.

It was the genocide that killed more than a million Armenians between 1915 and 1917 that slammed shut all hope of being able to return home. When the free Armenian Republic lost much of its territory to the Kemalist Turks and then was taken over by the Soviets in 1920, the last ray of a possibility of getting back flickered. It was now apparent that the Armenians were in the United States to stay. Only a few of them, about a hundred fifty-two people, for example, went back to Soviet Armenia in the Caucasus during a much publicized "wave" of repatriation in the late 1940's. Small numbers of Armenians have left America to join one of the Armenian communities in the Middle East, but the overwhelming majority have chosen to be permanent residents and citizens of the United States.

These immigrant Armenians were 92.1 per cent literate in their mother tongue, a much higher level of literacy than was found in many other immigrant groups, but they now had a pressing need to learn English. At the same time, they didn't want the Americanization process to wipe out their distinctive cultural heritage. So a number of educational societies were established in this country to assist Armenian youth and teach American-born youngsters about their Armenian lagacy. Although

What events ended the last hope that Armenians could go back to their homeland?

How did Armenians adjust to American society?

many Armenians reached America destitute as refugees from the Ottoman plan to exterminate them, most of these people succeeded in adapting to their new surroundings and were soon back on their feet. A lot of the older Armenian-Americans who are still alive were born in the Middle East and can describe their experiences as newcomers to the United States.

ASPECTS OF ARMENIAN-AMERICAN ETHNICITY

Six Armenian-American communities in southern New England were surveyed in 1972. These are some of their characteristics, according to data and estimates that were furnished by local parish leaders.

| COMMUNITY: | Boston MA. | Hartford CT. | Lawrence MA. | N. Britain CT. | Provi- dence R.I. | Worces- ter, MA. |
|------------|---------------|-----------------|-----------------|-------------------|-------------------------|---------------------|
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| QUERY: | Boston MA. | Hartford CT. | Lawrence MA. | N. Britain CT. | Provi- dence R.I. | Worces- ter, MA. |
|--|---------------|-----------------|-----------------|-------------------|-------------------------|---------------------|
| Total size of the local Armenian Apostolic parish. | 1000 | 400 | 1500 | 500 | - | 900 families |
| Their origin: | | | | | | |
| Turkish Armenia | 60% | 100% | 50% | 60% | 80% | 60% |
| Syria-Lebanon | 25% | - | 38% | 15% | 5% | 15% |
| Soviet Armenia | 5% | - | 2% | 20% | 2% | 10% |
| Europe | 10% | - | 10% | 3% | 10% | 10% |
| Elsewhere | - | - | - | 2% | 3% | 5% |
| Homes in which Armenian is in daily use. | 10% | 10% | 25% | 20% | 50% | 20% |
| Armenian-Americans under 30 who are bi-lingual. | 10% | 10% | 75% | 50% | 50% | 15% |
| Those who are bi-cultural: American and Armenian. | 10% | 20% | 75% | 50% | 50% | 25% |
| Is there an Armenian Day School? | No | No | No | No | Yes | No |
| Its enrollment? | - | - | - | - | 9 | - |
| Are there classes in Armenian culture and language outside of the public school? | Yes | No | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Enrollment? | 15 | - | 25-40 | 30 | ? | 125 |

The respondents mentioned eight problems ^{which} youth ^{encounter in seeking} ~~being able~~ to preserve their Armenian ethnic identity:

- Their ignorance of the Armenian language.
- Lack of knowledge about national history and culture.
- Fear of being considered "alien".
- The indifference of "Americanized" parents.
- Inter-faith marriages (Armenian Apostolic - non-Armenian)
- Separation from proximity to other Armenian-Americans.
- Lack of qualified instructors.
- Limited financial resources.

¹ Barbara M. Stone, A SURVEY OF THE EDUCATION OF ARMENIAN-AMERICANS IN SOUTHERN NEW ENGLAND. (Storrs: Unpublished Seminar Paper, 1972.)

PETER PAUL: ARMENIAN CANDY-MAKERS

The story of Peter Paul, candy-makers now known from one end of America to the other, reads like a Horatio Alger or Nick Carter "penny-dreadful." The founder of the company was an Armenian immigrant by the name of Peter Halajian who landed in the United States in 1890. Thrift in time established him as proprietor of a small chain of candy stores in Naugatuck and Torrington, Connecticut, where he sold confectionary and ice cream of his own making. Because his customers found difficulty in pronouncing his Armenian name, he legally adopted the English equivalent, Peter Paul. Since separately owned little candy kitchens in various Connecticut towns had scant chance of ever amounting to much, in 1919 Peter Paul, in the face of some ridicule, persuaded five Armenian friends to pool their interests with his to organize a candy manufacturing firm in New Haven. By 1922 the business had grown to such an extent that more space was needed, but New Haven bankers were not interested in backing the expansion. At this point a Naugatuck bank through the efforts of the local Chamber of Commerce agreed to make a loan, and Peter Paul moved to Naugatuck. On an open hillside on the road toward Bethany the company erected a fine-looking, well-lighted, brick factory and installed modern machinery. Within two years' time the bank loan was repaid with interest.

Through the twenties the company's business grew steadily as Peter Paul "Mounds", the company's first product and always its best-selling, became better known and more popular. Most of its growing list of employees were also stockholders. The death of its founder in 1927 failed to halt the company's expansion, for Peter Paul's able brother-in-law, Calvin Kazanjian, took up the reins of management. But the depression brought reverses until company officers took drastic action based on their conviction that, out of \$200,000,000 candy sales in the United States in 1932, Peter Paul could net a larger share. They discarded the tin-foil wrapping, repackaged "Mounds" in cellophane, and then set the price of a package of two at a nickle, the former price of one. Within a month sales began to rise. By 1935 when many manufacturers were just beginning to recover from the depths of their slump, Peter Paul had doubled its employment over the 1932 figure, doubled its plant capacity, and declared a 100 per cent stock dividend. To the astonishment of old residents, Naugatuck in the minds of thousands of Americans came to mean the home of Peter Paul.