GREEK IMMIGRATION TO, AND SETTLEMENT IN, CENTRAL ILLINOIS, 1880-1930

BY

ANN FLESOR BECK

DISSERTATION

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Educational Policy Studies in the Graduate College of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 2014

Urbana, Illinois

Doctoral Committee:

Professor James D. Anderson, Chair
Associate Professor Christopher Span
Associate Professor Yoon Pak
Professor Terry A. Barnhart, Eastern Illinois University
Abstract

This dissertation is a micro-history of Greeks immigrants to central Illinois between 1880 and 1930. The study focuses specifically on those Greek immigrants who were involved in the confectionery trade, opening candy stores (often accompanied by soda fountains and restaurants) in the small towns and cities of rural Illinois. The study draws upon, as its primary case study, the life and experiences of my own grandfather, Constantin “Gus” Flesor, a Greek immigrant who settled in Tuscola, Illinois in 1901 and owned a candy store/soda fountain business there for 75 years. In all, this dissertation tells the stories of more than 160 such Greek immigrant confectioners in more than forty towns and cities in central Illinois. Examples from the lives of my grandfather and these other first-generation Greek immigrants are interwoven throughout the dissertation to illustrate particular experiences.

The dissertation begins with a discussion of migration theory, which seeks to locate the first-generation Greek immigrant experience in rural areas within the larger theoretical debate that has primarily focused on the urban immigrant experience. Chapter Two provides a geographical and historical background by briefly reviewing relevant features of Greek geography, particularly that of the Peloponnese region from where most of the immigrants in this study originated. This chapter also contains a short history of Greece that helps to frame the important question of Greek heritage and identity. Chapter Three presents an overview of first-generation Greek immigration to America, focusing particularly on immigration to Chicago and St. Louis, the primary cities that served as transit points for Greeks coming to central Illinois. Chapter Four explores education and the Greek immigrant, and specifically how Greek immigrants learned the
confectionery business. Chapter Five addresses the question of Greek identity, anti-immigrant hostility during this period, especially the activities of the Ku Klux Klan, and how Greek immigrants in these small towns responded to this prejudice and bigotry.

Finally, Chapter Six looks at the lives and businesses of the individual Greek immigrants to central Illinois. In my conclusion I address the questions raised by this study and possible avenues for further research.
Acknowledgements

The idea for this dissertation evolved after my sister, Devon, and I reopened Flesor’s Candy Kitchen at the corner of Main and Sale streets in Tuscola, Illinois in 2004. It had been closed for more than thirty years, since the mid-1970s, and its revival offered customers who began to come in an opportunity to share stories of the Greek candy stores that they had known as children in their small hometowns in central Illinois. It was soon evident that my grandfather’s store was only one of perhaps dozens of Greek confectioneries in the region and that there was a story here that needed to be told. As a result, the ongoing support from our customers for this project has been most gratifying.

I am indebted to my sister, Devon, for allowing me time off from the store to conduct the research and write “our story.” My brother, Scott, has been an integral part of our business and his wisdom is always helpful.

This research could not have been conducted without the wise counsel and provocative questions posed by my advisor, Dr. James D. Anderson. I also wish to thank my committee: Dr. Christopher Span, Dr. Yoon Pak, and Dr. Terry Barnhart for their insightful observations.

I am also deeply appreciative of the librarians and archivists in all of the towns visited during this research. They are rare gems in the prairie.

My husband, Roger Beck, has provided consistent support for this project and I am deeply grateful for his suggestions and enthusiasm. I am also thankful for my friend, Dr. Cynthia Shahen and her many years of encouragement. The members of the Eastern Illinois History Department have contributed freely of their time, expertise, encouragement, and books from their shelves. Dr. Sharon Kazee, who only relatively
recently received her Ph.D., provided much appreciated enthusiasm and inspiration as I neared the end of my project.

Most importantly, I am thankful for the stories shared by the Greek community in central Illinois. Deeply humbled by the experiences of our fathers, mothers, grandfathers and grandmothers, I have been proud to share our heritage. My grandfather and my parents taught me how to work “on the corner,” and develop a successful business. They are missed.

To my grandfather, Gus Flesor, thank you for your continuing spirit that lives on at Flesor’s Candy Kitchen.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION: .........................................................................................1

CHAPTER 1: United States Immigration History and Theory .......................11

CHAPTER 2: Greek Geography and History ...........................................66

CHAPTER 3: Greek Life in America: The First Generation .......................104

CHAPTER 4: Education and the Greek Immigrant ....................................170

CHAPTER 5: Greek Identity, the KKK, and Resistance to Anti-immigrant
Prejudice .................................................................................................216

CHAPTER 6: Greek Immigrants and Confectioneries in Central Illinois .......268

CONCLUSION: .........................................................................................400

MAP: Locations of Greek Confectioneries in Central Illinois, 1880-1930 .......409

BIBLIOGRAPHY ......................................................................................410
INTRODUCTION

In 1957, Tuscola, Illinois celebrated its “First 100 Years” by posing the question, “Why Tuscola?”¹ In answering that query, the writer suggested that as American territory expanded westward, Douglas County, Illinois, had been initially passed by because the “treeless prairie and marsh land was thought not fit for man or beast.”² It was the railroad, that new navigable manmade highway, which had been chartered in 1853 and eventually extended through Tuscola in 1873, which really put the town upon the map.³ The centennial celebratory renderings included the names and occupations of early settlers, mostly English surnames, the “struggle” by Irish settlers in 1875 to establish the Catholic Church, and the overall general sense that Tuscola’s establishment had been a good and righteous effort without turmoil or discord. Businesses had developed and flourished, the railroads serviced the agricultural and industrial growth of the county, and the population grew accordingly. In 1859 Tuscola became the county seat for Douglas County.⁴

In his famous 1951 study of immigrants, Oscar Handlin observed “immigrants were American history.”⁵ Yet, Tuscola’s immigrant population, some of the millions who left their families and traveled across the globe to new homes in large cities or small rural communities, received only passing notice in the centennial celebration materials. There was one quick mention of my Greek grandfather, Constantin “Gus” Flesor, observing that

---

² Ibid.
he had the longest continuous operation of a business by one man in any business in Tuscola. The newspaper also noted that “Mr. Flesor was born near Tripoli, Greece, in 1886 and came to America in 1901. He began work in a confectionery in the same building where the business is now located the same year. In 1904 he bought the business and has operated it ever since.” The Candy Kitchen, the reporter observed, “is a prominent landmark in the community.” The reporter made no mention of the overt resistance to my grandfather’s business establishment by the Ku Klux Klan in the 1920’s. He also failed to report that my grandfather and his family and the families of his two brothers were the only southern European immigrants to settle in Tuscola. There was also no mention of the few African-American families who lived in town or of the locals’ resistance to the Irish Catholics. Tuscola’s minority immigrants were not considered when trying to answer the question of “Why Tuscola?” for the centennial celebration, nor was ethnic conflict recognized as part of Tuscola’s story.

My sister and I now own and operate Flesor’s Candy Kitchen in Tuscola, Illinois. My grandfather’s business was in operation until the late 1970’s when my father Paul, Paul Flesor, Sr.  


7 “Candy Kitchen Oldest Business,” Tuscola Journal, August 15, 1957, p. 16. Gus was born in 1879, not 1886. Family tradition holds that his Greek name was “Flesouras,” and that this was changed to Flesor when he passed through Ellis Island. As I will discuss later, grandfather Flesor came from the village of Pigadakia, in the Peloponnese region of Greece, south of Tripoli. Between 1895 and 1920 there were several immigrants with variations on the spelling Flesouras (Flesourus, Flesaris, Flessouras, Flesoras, Flesuras, Flessuras) who came to America from Pigadakia. In February 1901 there was a "Constantin Flesouras" who arrived at Ellis Island with $14 in his pocket on his way to Chicago where the manifest says he will go to live with an uncle. This is possibly my grandfather, although the manifest gives his age as 18, instead of 22 in 1901. It is difficult to read the name of the “uncle” as well and I do not know who this would have been. See “List or Manifest of Alien Immigrants for the United States, Port of New York”, Arrival: February 24, 1901; Age: 18; Marital Status: Single; Ship of Travel: La Gascogne from Le Havre; Last Place of Residence: Patras, Greece; Page: 0537; Manifest Line: 0002.
who had taken over the business in the mid-1960's, retired. Gus’ three grandchildren through Paul—I, my brother Scott, and my sister Devon—grew up in the store but we all left town after high school to attend college and forge our own lives in very different third-generation Greek-American ways. In 2003, my sister and I were back residing in central Illinois. Driving down Main Street in Tuscola one afternoon, I noted a “For Sale” sign in the window of my grandfather’s store. The building had been vacant for almost thirty years. I pondered our fate. What if we revived the business and reopened the family confectionery and soda fountain? I approached my sister cautiously with the idea and she immediately responded so positively that we set the project in motion. Eighteen months later, in the autumn of 2004, Flesor’s was reborn. As the years have passed, we have had many customers who have shared their own family stories about their Greek grandparents, aunts, uncles, and other relatives in each of the small towns in east central Illinois. Or, we have customers who recall their own downtown Greek confectionery from their childhoods—the ones in Arcola, Mattoon, Villa Grove, and other towns up and down the railroad lines or main roads. They share stories of the one Greek immigrant family who established a home in a strange place and became a piece of the community fabric. While larger Greek immigrant communities developed in cities such as Champaign-Urbana, Decatur, Danville, and Springfield, Illinois, the lone settlers in the small outlying towns began to coalesce into a story of the “downstate” communities that must be told. This study will document the journey to, and establishment of, these Greek immigrants in central Illinois.

In approaching this study, a foundation in immigration history is integral to the process of researching Greek immigration to America. Marcus Lee Hansen contended
that the “source material from which the history of immigration can be drawn is infinite.” He suggested that the methodology employed for one’s study should be comprehensive. It should be a holistic approach, integrating many different disciplines, and be broad enough to include immigration statistics, as well as such varied source materials as personal accounts, church records, occupational trends, oral interviews and newspaper articles.

My methodology for this study will be to construct a firm historical foundation of immigration history in the United States for the period 1890-1930 and then specifically address the history of Greek immigration to America, to Chicago and St. Louis as major settlement sites, and finally to east central Illinois. While most studies of Greek immigrants have focused on their lives in urban areas, which is where most Greeks settled, this is the one of the first studies that explores the settlement of Greeks, often a single man or a family, in rural America. In the process of exploring Greek immigration

---


9 Indeed, there are few studies of any of the different immigrant groups in rural America and this remains a wide-open field for further research. There is one study of Italian immigrants in a rural parish in Louisiana. See John V. Baiamonte, Immigrants in Rural America: A Study of the Italians of Tangipahos Parish, Louisiana. (New York: Garland Publishing, 1990). See also the review essay by Eleanor Meyer Rogg that discusses the multi-volume series of immigration histories -- some classics and many previously unpublished doctoral dissertations -- published by Arno Press and Garland Publishing. The essay is reviewing specifically the 28
to these small towns in central Illinois, I will discuss a number of related topics, such as
chain migration and immigrant networking, resistance by local citizens to these newly-
arrived southeastern Europeans, education and acculturation, “niche” businesses (such as
confectioneries), entrepreneurship, and the success or willingness of succeeding
generations to maintain the businesses founded by the first generation of Greek
immigrants.

Among the source materials I have used are interviews with Greek-American
immigrants’ family members, letters, diaries, church records, newspaper accounts, city
directories, high school yearbooks, and census data. I have also drawn on published
material, such as studies of occupational trends, social mores, and immigration history
and theory, to place this study in context, and to tell the story of the Greek immigrant in
east central Illinois a century ago.

This is also a personal story of my own family, particularly of my grandfather
Flesor’s journey to America, his life, and his legacy. It is a rich story, a micro-history of
Greek immigration from his tiny village in Greece to Ellis Island in New York, to
Chicago, to east central Illinois, out west to work on the railroads, and back to Tuscola,
Illinois, where he died. Pierre Force, in addressing the place of micro-histories in current
scholarship, has observed that “One might be tempted to dismiss this kind of work as
pandering to the popular obsession with genealogy and to argue that studying the history
of one family will never yield any generalizable results.” He contends, however, that

---

volume series, *European Immigrants and American Society*, edited by Timothy Walch
Rogg, “American Immigration and Ethnicity-Filling Gaps in the Literature and
Reconceptualizing Critical Issues,” *International Migration Review* 27, no. 4 (Winter
these types of studies tell us much about the complexity of specific cultures and their survival.\textsuperscript{10} Moreover, Earl Lewis adds that memories are “defined from the inside out,” and cites David Thelen’s observation that the “struggle for possession and interpretation of memory is rooted in the conflict and interplay among social, political, and cultural interests and values in the present.”\textsuperscript{11} Richard White’s \textit{Remembering Ahanagran: A History of Stories} melds history and memory while recounting the story of his mother’s life in Ireland and her immigration to the United States. He says, “Most of us live with our family stories, but generally we don’t think about them very often. I think about them constantly.”\textsuperscript{12} White acknowledges that he once believed the memories of his mother to be history, but as an historian, he now feels that history is the “energy of memory.” We can utilize memory as the guide to history.\textsuperscript{13} The underlying purpose and intention of collecting the stories and weaving them into the history is to define “what America is and means and who gets to define it.”\textsuperscript{14}

One critical aspect of melding history and memory is the importance of place. Ned Kaufman pinpoints the value of place subsumed within its story and storyscape,

\textsuperscript{13} Ibid., p. 4.
\textsuperscript{14} Ibid., p. 6.
connecting people and places, and revealing the social value and sense of place. He asks us to consider that place supports the perpetuation of socially useful narratives, and when put together, multiple places become part of the cultural heritage. The story of east central Illinois Greek pioneers is one small facet of America’s history, and the focus on Greek confectioneries is central to the discourse as well.

*Austin Lunch: Greek-American Recollections* is a collection of family and friend’s stories by Constance Contant, recalling the history of her own Greek family’s immigrant experience and their family restaurant in Chicago, “Austin Lunch.” Her hope was to preserve “a flicker of time, of place, and of some of the good people who lived…so the stories would not be completely extinguished.” Contant’s mother escaped extreme poverty in the Peloponnese region of Greece and came in the 1920’s on one of the last immigrant ships to dock in New York harbor. In remembering that experience the mother believed that “Most immigrants didn’t feel worthy enough to be welcomed into America….Quietly matriculating through Ellis Island, they put all of their efforts into blending with the new culture, trying not to stand out, preferring even to be invisible to avoid disdain by ordinary Americans and harassment by vicious men wearing white sheets.”

Contant also included her mother’s recollections of how Constance’s father began his life in America at the turn of the century as a shoeshine boy. After WWI he left that

---

16 Ibid., p. 22.
18 Ibid., p. 30.
job and went to work for free in a Greek-owned restaurant to learn the trade. Eventually he pooled his meager resources with his brother and a close friend to open the Austin Lunch, named for the street corner where Austin intersects with Clark. The author recalled, “Our childhood years were very different from those of our parents, who were raised in the sunny, fresh air of rural Greek villages. Nick [her brother] and I grew up in the Austin Lunch. We looked within its dark walls and tobacco-scented and smoke-filled air for parenting, comfort, and sustenance.” Despite some financial hardships during the Depression, the Austin Lunch survived. It was always referred to as “the store,” as were most of the retail businesses by the Greeks. “The word was pronounced with reverence when applied to one’s own enterprise.”

My family always referred to my grandfather’s business as “the store” as well, and we still do today. While not always a term of reverence (especially after a long day and perhaps night of making candy), it is clear that the moniker is the symbol of those same remembrances of visceral smells of chocolate, popcorn, sweet syrup, tobacco, and decades of family members coming and going. As children, we knew the store held the tangible feelings of comfort, parenting, and sustenance as well. I believe most of the first-generation Greeks to east central Illinois took great pride in their stores. These buildings generally became icons of success not only for the immigrants but also for many of the small towns in which they were located. Usually situated on the Main Streets of all of the towns documented in this study, the Greek confectioneries and soda fountains were often anchor businesses in once-thriving small-town American

19 Ibid., p. 41.
20 Ibid., p. 46.
21 Ibid., p. 147.
downtowns. One can find evidence of their once common-place presence in American society in quite unusual places. A problem in a 1909 mathematics text for example, reads, “A Greek confectioner bought 12 bushels of chestnuts at $2.50 per bushel and retailed them at 5¢ per pint. Find his gain.”

Similarly, a 1918 Minnesota Course of Study guide noted that “Sixth-grade pupils are alive to speech rhythms, and enjoy learning bits of foreign languages. If encouraged, they will gather from public speakers, from visitors or helpers in the home, from the German shoemaker, from the Greek confectioner, the Italian fruit vendor, or the Chinese laundryman, bits of foreign speech that will vitalize all language’s study.”

This study will begin with a general foundation of immigrant history and Greek immigration history. We shall also focus upon formal and informal education and examine the resistance of Greek migrants to America and how that shaped the process of identity. Over fifty small cities and towns in central Illinois where Greek immigrants established confectioneries have been researched. A multi-disciplinary approach has been utilized to ensure the most complete study of first-generation Greek immigrants between the years 1880-1930.

In a 1938 essay Marcus Lee Hansen first presented an hypothesis he called “the principle of third generation interest,” which stated, “What the son wishes to forget the grandson wishes to remember.” This became known as Hansen’s Law. It predicts that

---

some degree of ethnicity is preserved among immigrants, weakens in their offspring, but receives renewed interest among their grandchildren.\footnote{24} So to begin.

\footnote{24 Marcus Lee Hansen, \textit{The Problem of the Third Generation Immigrant} (Rock Island, IL: Augustana Historical Society, 1938): 9.}
CHAPTER 1: United States Immigration History and Theory

United States immigration history is rich in its discourse despite the relatively still young age, in a global perspective, of American settlement. This history reflects the saga of a territory, home to Native Americans, which was invaded by waves of explorers, forced laborers, and settlers from all regions of the world. Immigration history demonstrates the impact of political, social, and economic forces which shaped, and continue to shape, America’s destiny.

World historians Jan Lucassen, Leo Lucassen, and Patrick Manning suggest that because historians framing the contemporary debate and discourse on immigration are able to “analyse continuity and change, they can not only correct widespread misconceptions, but also help understand general conditions under which migration processes occur and the factors that influence the ensuing acculturation processes.”¹ Their contention is that focusing upon immigration as a topic within world history provides context for contemporary political and social worldwide debates, encourages comparisons and aspects that go beyond Atlantic perspectives, and informs more local studies explaining the multi-faceted impacts on individual and group immigration.² It is with this charge that we position a history of United States immigration with the following questions:

1) What is immigration history?
2) What are different approaches to the discourse?
3) What is the history of immigration in the United States from 1880-1920, with special emphasis on southeastern Europeans?

² Ibid., p. 6.
Christine Harzig, Dirk Hoerder, and Donna Gabaccia,\(^3\) offer the most current overview of immigration history. They examine whether or not “traditional” perspectives, such as the “emigration-immigration dichotomy,” depicting a one-way directional movement from another country to the United States, are encompassing enough to allow for multiple options of mobility. The authors also suggest that the utilization of the terms immigration and immigrant provides a more holistic picture of the individual and collective agency of men and women, who, “within their capabilities, negotiate societal options and constraints in pursuit of life-plans.”\(^4\) Considering immigration from additional vantage points, clarifying terminology (such as “home,” “space,” racial definitions and criteria, the commodification of workers and laborers,) and measuring multiple social, political, economic, and even geographical impacts adds to the complex analyses of immigration history.\(^5\) Colin Wayne Leach and Donna Gabaccia agree that the study of immigrants in the United States still “makes sense.” It allows us to personalize immigrants as “ordinary people living full, complex lives every day that they move through time and space, rather than aliens or outsiders, members of ethnic or racial groups, and problematic.”\(^6\)

\(^4\) Ibid., p. 3.
\(^5\) Ibid., pp. 3-4. The terms “emigration,” “emigrant,” “immigration,” “immigrant,” “migration,” and “migrant,” are used interchangeably and inconsistently throughout the literature. To be consistent I have generally used the terms “immigrant” and “immigration” throughout this study. One exception is the term “chain migration,” which never appears as “chain immigration.”
Harzig, Hoerder, and Gabaccia posit that scholars began studying immigration through the utilization of empirical data to measure the extent of the transatlantic mass immigration of “unskilled” laborers to the United States during the late 1800’s and into the twentieth century. This data-gathering methodology led to a bias among immigration studies scholars toward the study of economic effects and outcomes, but it also prompted a public social discourse in response to the massive influx of newcomers to the United States. While European and Asian immigrants were certainly a major impetus to economic growth, the extant United States populace viewed the newcomers as “problems,” potential criminals, dangerous, and therefore unfit for full membership in society or citizenship.\(^7\)

One of the most important and successful movements that sought to address the issue of exploding European immigration and influx into urban areas was the settlement house movement that began in England in the late 1800’s, and soon spread to American cities. This movement not only provided scholars with an opportunity to assist the new immigrants with their multiple needs—housing, education, socialization, and adaptation to their new environment—it also offered them an opportunity to study the entire phenomenon first-hand. In addition, the United States Senate’s Dillingham Commission of 1911-1912 lent a certain degree of uniformity to the national discourse by codifying immigrant categories according to nation, class, skill, and race.\(^8\)

\(^7\) Harzig, Hoerder, Gabaccia, *What is Migration History?*, p. 55.
\(^8\) Ibid., p. 57. See also chapter 1 in Nancy Foner, *In a New Land: A Comparative View of Immigration* (New York: New York University Press, 2005) for a discussion of the construction of race in regard to the migration of Italians and Jews in New York City during the immigration time period of 1880-1920.
Scholars at the University of Chicago were pioneers at the time in this sociological research. They were led by Robert E. Park, who coined and conceptualized the term “assimilation” to describe the fusion of individuals and groups—outsiders—into the existing “American culture.” Although Harzig, Hoerder, and Gabaccia contend that Park “took an absorptive power of established institutions for granted and saw ethnic groups or ‘races’ as less developed,” they observe that, to his credit, he was a reformer and not totally submissive to the white-supremacist tenets of the time.

Herbert Gans has challenged received tradition by arguing that the sociologists at the Chicago School did not conduct as extensive research as previously believed, due to the multiple languages of the immigrants and the lapse of time between the first and second generations. He argues that the Chicago School did not study first generation immigrants as extensively as they might have because, by the time full-scale empirical data was being collected, the second generation was more available and accessible for study. In addition, Gans contends that the second generation was more interesting to scholars in studying how America affected immigrants. He suggests that this research should be revisited. Alejandro Portes questions the usefulness of assimilation as a concept, by noting that it is historically time-bound to the turn of the twentieth century.

---


12 Ibid.
He critiques assimilation in its stereotypical characterizations of immigrant groups and its focus on superficial aspects of adaptation, such as language, cultural behavior, and spatial and residential patterns. He maintains that the term represents nothing more than “our intellectual legacy as we set out to make sense of similar events taking place today.”

He posits that contemporary immigration theory and study considers the processes that drive immigration, such as social networking, community influences, and household strategies, which are more “ground up” micro-approaches to the discourse.

In the 1950’s and 1960’s scholars favored the economic “push-pull” model of immigration. Harzig, Hoerder, and Gabaccia argue, however, that this model is too simplistic and utilizes too few variables in the decision-making process. They suggest that multiple factors, such as “risk diversification, family strategies, personal life-course expectations, emotional factors, oppressive (but non-quantifiable) conditions in the locality of origin, and intergenerational aspirations for the lives of (future) children” are the minimal determinants propelling individual and family choices of whether or not to leave the country of origin and immigrate to a new land.

These and other deconstructions of the push-pull economic model left it with few adherents. In the 1970’s world-systems economic theories, postulating a bifurcated world

---

14 Ibid., pp. 800-01.
of “core” and “periphery,” placed the study of immigration on a more macro level.\textsuperscript{16} With the advent of family history, women’s studies, and gender studies, a micro-level approach allowed scholars to personalize history and led to current models of immigration history, that incorporate concepts of agency, networks, and human and social capital.\textsuperscript{17} Harzig, Hoerder, and Gabbaccia affirm the concept of process, embracing agency and the fluid dynamics of change. They contend that the “scope of agency is dependent on the ‘human capital’ or personal resources and on the ‘social capital’ or networks a person has been encouraged to develop in the process of socialization and has augmented in adolescent and adult life.”\textsuperscript{18} Human and social capital gives immigrants control of their lives and more self-efficacy than the impacts of external devices, such as economics or politics. New concepts have come into use in contemporary immigration theory, such as networking, which describes the process whereby the manifestations of human and social capital provided the immigrant with information that gave them the ability to adapt environmentally and to negotiate a new life in a new place on individual terms. Similarly, sequential, or “chain migration,” is based on networks, incorporating the social capital of knowledge in moving from one country or one place to the other, and the more tangible capital of tickets.\textsuperscript{19}

Immigrant “movement” also includes what are termed “mental maps,” which are metaphysical in nature. An example of a “mental map” would be discussing one’s parents or relatives as if in close proximity, when, in fact, they have immigrated to Paris or Chicago. It can allow the definition of “home” to be always a country of origin. This

\textsuperscript{16} Harzig, Hoerder, and Gabbaccia, \textit{What is Migration History?}, pp. 73-74.
\textsuperscript{17} Ibid., pp. 78-82.
\textsuperscript{18} Ibid., p. 79.
\textsuperscript{19} Ibid., p. 80.
brings us to the conceptual differences among “perceived, conceived, and lived space.” Current thinking about these differences is an outgrowth of a theory advanced by Henri Lefebvre to define a person’s place wherever it is. This theory is valuable for it advances the discourse, yet it proves difficult to always understand or reconstruct. Two useful terms that have evolved from this exploration of mental mapping, however, are “diaspora” and “scape.” “Diaspora” is usually used for the African, Jewish and the Hellenistic or Greek dispersals across the globe and may refer to communities or groups that are linked to one another and to their respective place of origin. These communities or groups believe that there is a shared common culture. “Scapes” refer to social spaces filled with particular meanings. This term refers to “people and their multiple contexts in the present, including an orientation towards options in the future—not merely an expectation of one single path of life.”

As we move to consider the most current models of immigration theory, we find the term “trans-nationalism” injected into the discourse. Trans-nationalism implies continuities in the experiences of immigrants, such as integrating new cultures while maintaining one’s own, exchanging funds between and among people or family in different places, and maintaining emotional bonds between or among two or more places. Some scholars suggest that transnationalism is not new, arguing basically that

20 Ibid., p. 81.
21 Ibid., pp. 81-82.
22 Ibid., pp. 83-84.
23 See, for example, Foner, In a New Land, pp. 62-63.
the concept of nation is a “constructed unit” and does not fully describe the immigrant’s self-defined essence of place.\textsuperscript{24}

Another recent, and useful, concept is that of “transcultural,” discussed by Dirk Hoerder in his study of immigration and identity in Canada.\textsuperscript{25} He observes that “Transculturalism denotes the competence to live in two or more differing cultures and, in the process, create a transcultural space. Called a ‘third space,’… it is not necessarily a distinct but an overlapping, interactive space….In the process of transculturation individuals and societies change themselves through integration of diverse lifeways into a new dynamic everyday culture. Subsequent interactions will again change this new—and transitory—culture.”\textsuperscript{26} Similarly, Harzig, Hoerder, and Gabaccia assert that: “Transcultural approaches to migration between societies, regardless of their territorial extent, connect multiple spaces in which people live and interrelate and which transcend political (‘national cultural’) boundaries.”\textsuperscript{27}

Transculturalism denotes a wide range of competencies: the ability to identify a new culture while maintaining one’s original culture; creating a fluid space which allows entry and exit into one’s place of origin as well as the space of destination; future connection to other spaces; and, the constant negotiation of being in whatever culture and space one finds oneself in at the time. It also assumes one has the capacity to plan and

\textsuperscript{24} Harzig, Hoerder, and Gabaccia, \textit{What is Migration History?}, p. 84.
\textsuperscript{26} Ibid., p. 374.
\textsuperscript{27} Harzig, Hoerder, and Gabaccia, \textit{What is Migration History?}, p. 84.
act upon a new life-project within a range of choices. This model invokes the integration of external and internal impacts with a very heavy emphasis on human agency.²⁸

These various theoretical models and concepts are useful only if historians and others working in the field of immigration studies actually apply them in their work. Hasia Diner²⁹ posits that attempts by various immigration historians, such as Roger Daniels, Allen Jones, and David Ward, to include a theoretical perspective in their work in order perhaps to create structure, compare, and/or contrast, usually have fallen a bit short of the mark. She writes that “American historians of immigration and ethnicity have by and large shied away from theory, even when they paid lip service to it…they continue down a well-trodden road, avoiding theory even as they acknowledge its salience to their project.” (p. 31) Diner observes that historians and social scientists frequently develop and continue to cultivate a single approach to problem solving, which is one explanation for the tunnel vision quality in their work. Diner characterizes typical immigration history as generally adopting a structural approach comprising a linear analysis of what is termed ‘before and after.’ She then suggests that American historians are more “theoretically challenged” than their European colleagues. (p. 35) She identifies two scholars who do not shy away from theory: the German historian Dirk Hoerder; and, an exception to the rule, the American Walter Nugent. Hoerder incorporates social science theories of immigration within his work and Nugent focuses upon interconnected

²⁸ Hoerder, To Know Our Many Selves, pp. 376-77; Harzig, Hoerder, and Gabaccia, What is Migration History?, p. 85.
processes of immigration with emphasis on modernization and its impact on demography. (pp. 35-36)

Diner proposes that in evaluating texts on immigration history some standards need to be used to ensure that historians engage in some dialogue about immigration theory. She cites some recent examples of authors who have attempted to challenge fixed categories, such as the notion of place as “definite and finite,” and a reexamination of immigration as a fluid process, which consists of very active participants defining their own places and experiences. Such a deconstructionist position is exemplified in Lucy Salyer’s work, Law Harsh as Tigers,\(^\text{30}\) which juxtaposes Chinese immigrants as agents against the judicial constraints of the time during the height of Chinese immigration exclusion. Salyer portrays the Chinese immigrants as exceptional and notable as persons who fought the judicial system. Salyer does not merely present factual circumstances and objectify the experience. Diner offers other examples of current historical works that compare and contrast immigrant groups located within the same geographical area, unpacking the environmental structures and investigating how immigrants responded to them.\(^\text{31}\) She applauds those historians who “get to the heart of their project: the


negotiation within the group, and between the group and the larger society, over the nature of identity and community.”

Extending her suggestion to keep unpacking the notion of ethnicity, an interest often coming from individual scholar’s own personal stories, Diner challenges historians to move from the more chauvinistic view that one’s own group is “worthy of study in and of itself.” (p. 41) Such a narrow study only perpetuates the basic mode of analysis and does not further the scholarship through, for instance, a comparative historical approach. Comparative histories might require, however, multiple linguistic mastery, extensive time to research thoroughly the experiences of other groups, and the need for theory to explain any similarities or differences between and among groups, which may explain why such studies are infrequently attempted. Diner observes that historians “fundamentally say, both directly and indirectly as reflected in the structure of the field, that context is everything and contexts differ from place to place, and change over time,” but comparative histories remain relatively rare. (p. 38) The issue of format is also at play here, with the narrative front and center as the fundamental structure of discourse. Diner asserts that history remains a field “committed to telling stories.” (p. 38) Finally, immigration history in America is almost always American-centered, with a quite predictable storyline consisting of a brief historical backdrop of the “old country,” a brief description of the immigration process, and the majority of the tale focused upon the American experience. Such narratives ignore the fact that immigrants disperse themselves all over the world, return to their native lands, and leave a most unlinear storyline in their wake. Despite these, in her opinion, weaknesses in current scholarship,

---

Diner has no expectations that there will be any conflating of American immigration history and theory and believes that history is poorer for it. (p. 39)

Diner’s pessimism is perhaps a bit exaggerated, however. It appears that as we moved through the latter part of the twentieth century and into the present millennium, approaches to immigration history shifted from more normative linear structural models of assimilation and accommodation, into deconstructionist models, which seek to take a more micro and individual perspective rather than a macro nation-state tack. Before turning to some individual histories of particular ethnic, national, and religious immigrant groups, it will first be necessary to provide a brief account of American immigration history.

From the 1680’s, the English colonies in America had attracted a diverse population of immigrants representing many countries and ethnic groups. With a brief hiatus during the American Revolution, immigration of French, Irish, and Germans, in particular, remained strong into the early 1800’s. During the eighteenth century approximately 450,000 immigrants came to America, over half of whom were Irish, but that number also included French, Germans, Scots, and Russian Jews. Even so, John Higham, one of America’s first immigration historians, points out that as late as 1790, English immigrants still comprised approximately sixty percent of the white population

---

33 John Higham, *Send These to Me: Immigrants in Urban America* (Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins University Press, 1984): 18. This is a revised edition of Higham’s earlier work: *Send These to Me: Jews and Other Immigrants in Urban America* (New York: Atheneum, 1975), which, as the subtitle suggests, focused more on the Jewish experience, although that experience remains an important part of this revised work. It should be noted as well, that, of course, there were approximately 500,000 enslaved Africans brought to North America but this was not voluntary immigration, which is the subject of this study.
and “conceived of themselves as founders, settlers, planters – the formative population of those colonial societies – not as immigrants.”

In Europe (as in America) throughout the nineteenth century, populations shifted from rural to urban. By 1900, there were 135 European towns with a population of over 100,000, as compared to only 23 such towns in 1800. The trend for “city migration” became strongest after 1875 when the uneven agricultural depressions of the 1840’s and again in the 1880’s, solidified labor migration to the growing industrial centers in Britain, Germany, and France. Leslie Moch contends that over the decades leading up to the latter part of the nineteenth century, the “circular” systems of migration, which could be seasonal in nature or factored upon industrial supply and demand, created the systems of “chain” migration that moved people out of their home areas to take up permanent residence in cities or even in other countries. As the title of Oscar Handlin’s classic work, *The Uprooted*, suggests, however, this was not necessarily a smooth or easy transition. He observes, “For centuries the size of the population, the amount of available land, the quantity of productive surplus, and the pressure of family stability, achieved together a steady balance that preserved the village way of life.” After 1800, he argues, the elements of this familiar equilibrium had begun to disintegrate.

The 1840’s witnessed the beginning of eighty years of mass immigration to the Americas. An estimated 13 million Europeans immigrated to North and South America

---

34 Ibid., p. 6.
36 Ibid., p. 129.
between 1840 and 1880, with an additional 13 million leaving Europe over the remainder of the nineteenth century.\textsuperscript{38} Approximately 37 million of these traveled to North America between 1860 and 1914. Most were people who came from rural areas in Europe. Moch suggests that the immigrants were most frequently moving to improve their economic condition, drawn to new beginnings through increased land ownership opportunities or the availability of higher working wages. The “region, rather than the nation, played the key role in transoceanic migration” for many Europeans.\textsuperscript{39} “Push” factors in the old country that fueled immigration abroad, included poverty, urban and rural population growth, war, and crop failures (such as the great potato famine in Ireland). Chain migration over time, by which initial immigration by a few individuals or families set in motion a continuous stream of immigrants from a particular area, was also a push factor. Some European countries incorporated intercontinental immigration as a strategy for making money, or for ridding themselves of excess population, criminals and other undesirables, and the poorer classes. In the mid-nineteenth century a series of events, some of them particularly tragic, also increased immigration streams abroad, particularly from Ireland and Italy.\textsuperscript{40}

Chain migration was driven by networks of people sharing personal information about their journeys, destinations, and experiences in new lands. Immigrants coming from the same village, region or country, or belonging to a particular religious or ethnic group, often congregated in specific cities or areas in the United States and appeared to gravitate toward particular occupations, whether by choice or chance. As immigration

\textsuperscript{38} Moch, \textit{Moving Europeans}, p. 147.
\textsuperscript{39} Ibid., p. 150.
\textsuperscript{40} Ibid.
increased, new immigrants could count on compatriots or relatives waiting for them at the other end of their journey. “On the eve of World War I, nearly 80 percent of immigrants to the United States had a relative waiting for them; 15 percent were joining friends.”41

Walter Nugent elaborates on Moch’s assertion that the transatlantic immigration was an extension of a “long-established pattern of labor migration within Europe, even within countries or districts.”42 He contends that immigration, whether transatlantic, or within the European continent, had been common since the seventeenth century. New travel technologies only enhanced and extended opportunities and possibilities for global immigration, and made travel, whether across Europe or across the Atlantic, more accessible and more common.43

Sucheng Chan has argued that any discourse on why immigrants leave their homelands must take into account three factors that might influence the immigrant’s decisions. First, the economic geography of a region, which includes fundamental natural resources, ownership of land, and exploitation, as well as social arrangements such as kinship and inheritance patterns. Second, the immigrant must consider political factors at the national level when evaluating the potential for upward socioeconomic mobility and advancement. Third, the immigrant must consider current legal and economic forms of exploitation both home and abroad and whether immigration would offer them escape.44

41 Ibid., 153.
43 Ibid., p. 36.
Michael Lemay delineates two notable surges of European immigration, the first from 1845-1854 and the second from 1865-1875. The Irish and Germans dominated the first surge, while the second included British and Scandinavians along with more Irish and Germans. German immigration reached approximately seven million by the mid 1800’s and coalesced around religious groups such as Mennonites, Dunkers, Lutherans, Calvinists, and a few Jews. An agricultural revolution in central Europe and a change in inheritance laws concerning children prompted many Germans to seek skilled labor opportunities in America. The opening of the American Midwest, along with the enticements of state governments, railroad lines, and new and greater opportunities for jobs in manufacturing, were lures for immigration as well.

Irish immigration surged following the calamitous 1840’s potato famine with approximately 1.2 million Irish arriving in the United States between 1847 and 1854. The Irish came with high rates of illiteracy and possessed few job skills that would allow easy access to the opportunities that the expanding industrial manufacturing sector in America offered at the time. What is more, according to LeMay, the Irish became the first group of immigrants to experience overt job discrimination.

After the Civil War, the opportunity for immigration expanded again with the southern, Midwestern, and western states vying for new labor and more settlers. The railroads sent agents to Europe to attract immigrants to settle the land and ensure the viability of expansion across America. Efforts by nativist forces to get state governments,
primarily in New York, Massachusetts, and other eastern states, to restrict immigration were blocked by Supreme Court rulings in 1849 (the *Passenger Cases*) and 1876 (*Henderson v New York*), which held that “Congress alone had the right to regulate immigration.”

While Catholics had comprised only one percent of the total American population in 1790, that number had risen to 7 percent in 1850, and by 1900 the 12 million Catholics in America made up 16 percent of the total. This dramatic increase in Irish and other Catholic immigrants gave rise to a significant pushback from the country’s native Protestant populations and, together with a severe economic depression in the 1870’s, put a damper on efforts to attract new immigrants. Anti-Catholic forces began to pressure Congress to limit Catholic immigration. In a very timid response to these concerns, the United States Congress enacted a statute, the Page Act of 1875, which limited the entry of immigrants considered “undesirable,” and was primarily aimed at prostitutes and convicts. Although this act had almost no effect on the flow of immigration, or on the composition of that immigrant flow, “it did signal that the forces advocating restrictions were gaining strength and legislative effectiveness. It clearly presaged the door-ajar era, when the beginnings of restrictionism in immigration policy were enacted.”

Bodnar concurs with LeMay’s assessment of why European immigrants came to America in large numbers during the latter half of the 1800’s, but expands upon the nature of these immigrant population surges. Bodnar argues that capitalism was the underlying force that drove immigration. He suggests that capitalism altered the

49 Ibid., p. 34.
51 LeMay, *From Open Door*, pp. 36-7.
development of European countries in two ways. First, transportation networks enabled manufactured goods to penetrate into the rural markets and undercut the economic livelihood of skilled artisans. Second, the rise of industrial cities created large markets for agricultural produce, which shifted agricultural production from subsistence crops to cash crops.

These developments, he argues, caused skilled artisans and peasant farmers to immigrate. These he labels “first-tier” immigrants. The “second-tier” immigrants consisted of marginal landowners who hoped to earn enough money in America to return and add to their resources.

Thus, Bodnar makes a strong case that immigration was solely economically driven, if one also includes the failure of key crops, like potatoes, and changes in inheritance laws. To that end, Bodnar contends that immigrants were not ignorant of the capitalist influences emerging in Europe in the mid- and late-1800s and were active participatory players in organized entities such as credit cooperatives, mutual aid societies, agricultural societies, and political groups. When they left their homelands, the immigrants brought all this knowledge and these associations with them, along with heightened expectations of increased monetary wealth for themselves, their new families in America, and their relatives remaining in Europe.

Roger Daniels’ concern is with the large migration movement to the United States from southeastern Europe beginning in the 1880’s. He suggests that the nature of immigration from Europe at this time began to change from family groups to single individuals, and that many of the new immigrants to the United States in this period were

---

53 Ibid., p. 56.
54 Ibid.
urbanized. “Immigrants from Russia, Ireland, Italy, and Poland were the most urbanized of the larger groups,” with rates of urbanization of up to 85 percent or higher.55 Within Europe, immigration had attracted settlers to Berlin, Stockholm, Paris, and London. With the development of steam-powered ships and trains, millions of peasants could now leave their native villages far behind, whether to travel to a large city, or another country. By the 1890’s, major European passenger steamship companies were competing in the lucrative business of transporting immigrants from Europe to the Americas. The ports of Naples, Bremen, Liverpool, and Hamburg sent over one million immigrants to the United States within the first decade of the 1900’s.56 Although the flow of immigrants from Britain, Ireland, Germany, and Scandinavia continued at the turn of the nineteenth century, immigrants coming to America were increasingly from eastern and southeastern Europe, with heavy concentrations coming from the Austrian-Hungarian empire (over two million), Italy (over two-million), and Russia (over 1.5 million).57

LeMay contends that 1896 was a turning point for immigrants from eastern and southeastern Europe because that was the year the numbers from that region of Europe exceeded those from the northwest.58 For Americans whose ancestors came from northwestern Europe (Great Britain, Germany, France, Holland, Belgium and the

57 Daniels, Coming to America, p. 188.
58 LeMay, From Open Door, p. 38.
Scandinavian countries) these new immigrants were “different” in many ways; they were Catholic or Orthodox in religious practice rather than Protestant; they spoke a multitude of languages, which were difficult for the earlier immigrants to understand; and physically they were “darker” than the peoples from northwestern Europe. This surge of immigration was also overwhelmingly male.\textsuperscript{59}

Donna Gabaccia agrees that while women may have outnumbered men in European urban migrations, males outnumbered females in mass immigrations to the United States, including during the period that is the focus of this study from the late 1800’s into the early 1900’s.\textsuperscript{60} She examines the arguments of why women did or did not immigrate. Factors such as differences in culture, economic influences on both sides of the Atlantic, and even provisions in United States immigration law impacted the rate of female immigration. (pp. 91-92) Gabaccia suggests that in general, male and female immigrants to the United States were more similar than different, i.e., both were about equally literate, similar in age and marital status, and roughly similar numbers of men and women of working age. One difference between the sexes was the annual immigration rhythm. Most men arrived in the United States from March through June, but half of the women immigrants arrived from July through December.

There were also gender differences in patterns of immigration relating to destination and occupation. Women were more likely to head for east coast ports, especially New York City, but also to Boston and elsewhere in the Northeast. “In 1890, \textsuperscript{59}\textsuperscript{60}


\textsuperscript{60} Gabaccia, “Women of the Mass Migrations,” p. 90. The following discussion draws on this groundbreaking essay by Gabaccia unless otherwise noted.
women made up over half the foreign-born population of New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, New York, and Maryland.” (p. 93) Women immigrants were also less likely to return to their homelands. (p. 93) They were predominantly employed in the domestic services sector, but also worked as seamstresses, dressmakers, spinners, weavers, and teachers. (p. 94) The percentage of newly arrived immigrant women who were working ranged from ten percent in the 1870’s to a high of thirty percent by 1900; it dipped to less than twenty-five percent after the Great War. (p. 94)

Gabaccia observes that one cannot conclude that immigrants moved only as family units because some, as was the case with Irish immigrants, were single women. She also urges a more thorough examination of the sex ratios of immigrants from those areas in Europe and Asia that were mainly rural with economies dominated by agriculture. Women from the Netherlands, southwestern Germany, and Scandinavia comprised approximately forty percent of permanently immigrating families, while immigrants from southeastern Europe and China were predominately male and more transitory. (pp. 96-97) Greek immigrants to the United States, the focus of this study, were nearly 90 percent male.  

The availability of land in the United States was appealing to northern Europeans, while others, more commonly from southern and southeastern Europe, came with dreams of earning enough money to return to their native homelands and purchase land there. In addition, as European populations increased and urban areas expanded, it became a more logical next step for young people to move from agricultural work to the cities or abroad,

and particularly for young women to go into domestic service or take semi-skilled occupations, such as in textile production, whether within Europe or in the United States. “Women were most likely to become international immigrants in areas where local urban middle classes were already well developed and drawing rural girls out of their families to work as domestics in nearby cities.  

Women from northern and central Europe appear to have had more independence than those of Asian or southern European descent. Northern European women were required to seek work and/or marriage away from their families of origin at an earlier age than young women from those areas. Moreover, southeastern European women, originating from families engaged in subsistence agriculture, were culturally bound to more deeply-rooted work and marriage practices. (p. 99)  

In the nineteenth century, United States’ farming regions attracted more male immigrants than women, although immigrant women formed a significant segment of the agricultural communities in Wisconsin, Missouri, and Iowa. Foreign-born women, however, were most highly represented in large cities along the east coast, such as New York or Boston. This is not surprising as it was in these urban areas, as mentioned previously, that gender-based jobs in domestic service and factory work were most commonly found. These job opportunities influenced population settlement; textile jobs and garment production were concentrated in New England and the Mid-Atlantic states, and it was here that three-fifths of immigrant women resided. (p. 100) Immigrant males gravitated toward more heavy industrial or mining jobs, which further delineated the gender-specific job categories of immigrant workers. Into the twentieth century demand

---

for domestic work grew slowly. Opportunities for women in the workforce became more white-collar oriented and these were jobs that were not usually open to foreign-born women. Thus, as the new century opened, the relative number of immigrant women in the workforce declined. If they worked at all, whether paid or unpaid, it was often only to support or to supplement either family formation and/or the incomes of the immigrant males. As an example, married immigrant women might work at home as boarding-house keepers in addition to outside work as domestics or factory employees. (p. 100)

One interesting situation relating to female employment opportunities, and one that would be the target of much debate and legislation, was that of prostitution, particularly within the Asian community in California. By 1860 approximately 24 percent of San Francisco’s Chinese population was female, and of that number, 85 percent worked as prostitutes. Tomàs Almaguer draws on the work of sociologist Lucie Cheng Hirata, to explain why these numbers were so high. Chinese women, situated in an extremely patriarchal system, were subservient to their fathers or husbands, and, when widowed, their sons. If the family was not self-supporting, female prostitution became an acceptable vehicle for economic survival. This practice was so pervasive that it propelled the California State legislature to enact in March 1870 an “anti-prostitution” measure that required any Chinese or Japanese woman entering the United States to present evidence of voluntary immigration and a permit from the Commissioner of Immigration authorizing entry. 63

One of the largest immigrant groups between 1880 and 1920 was the Italians. In those years over four million Italians entered the United States. Earlier in the century large numbers of Italian immigrants had settled in Argentina and Brazil, and thereby had established a tradition and even system in Italy of overseas immigration. Italian immigrants to the United States were more likely to participate in return migration, estimated at between thirty and fifty percent. These immigrants were predominately male and most, during this time, entered the United States through New York City. Moch suggests that immigrants returning to their native countries exemplified a notable global migrant labor market, one made easier with quicker boat trips, available funding to pay for passage, and the increased sophistication of the immigrant. Indeed, “European immigrants lived in a far larger world than the one assigned to them by history.” Still, many Italian immigrants came to New York City and remained there, so that by 1920 New York had an Italian community numbering almost four hundred thousand.

Daniels notes that Italians settled in ethnic neighborhoods and some developed distinctly ethnic businesses, though they may not have been the predominant ethnic group. Male Italian immigrants also sought manual labor jobs, and moved into the niche previously occupied by the Irish of railroad building and street paving. Many eventually

---

64 Daniels, Coming to America, p. 188.
65 Moch, Moving Europeans, p. 157.
moved into the building trades. Significant numbers of Italians became street vendors, selling fruits and candy.

Newly arrived Italian immigrants frequently found jobs through ethnic labor contractors, or padroni (“patrons”), who were essentially labor brokers. These padroni recruited laborers for large employers and sometimes acted as overseers on work sites – as they spoke the necessary languages or dialects. They also aided other immigrants, such as the Greeks, Chinese, Mexicans, and Japanese. Many padroni exploited their fellows to such an extent that the relationship between immigrant and padroni became essentially one of indentured servitude, or in some cases even slavery. Because they had arrived earlier, most padroni knew some English, and had mastered the American “system” of doing business, which allowed them to manipulate that system. Padroni were known to keep control over wages, contracts, food and lodging. They extracted a percentage of the daily wages in such occupations as bootblacking, longshoring, or service tradework.

For most Italian immigrants, indeed, for most immigrants, wages were low and living conditions were deplorable. Initially, mainly all-male households managed to survive the early years until families could be sent for or established. Once children reached their teen years in America, they were usually sent to work; few Italian girls or boys attended school much beyond their grade school years. Daniels argues that Italians

---

67 Daniels, *Coming to America*, p. 195.
69 Daniels, *Coming to America*, p. 196.
were Catholics in name only by showing that church attendance was not like that of other Catholic immigrants. He asserts that “Italians went to church only three times—to be hatched, matched, and dispatched…,” nor did they initially provide much monetary support for parochial schools. Due to their more unskilled and semiskilled status in the labor force, relatively few were participants in labor unions, other than the garment workers. Daniels contends, however, that Italians were important in the American radical movement. They were represented by key members of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) in strikes of immigrant workers in Massachusetts and New Jersey. Of course, the unfortunate Italian anarchists, Ferdinando Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti, also brought attention to the Italian immigrant population. Coming at a time when a wave of anti-immigrant hostility was sweeping the country, the two were convicted (although historians continue to debate whether fairly or unfairly), of the armed robbery of a business in South Braintree, Massachusetts on April 15, 1920, and the murder of two local citizens. They were executed in the electric chair on August 23, 1927, and became symbols of foreign anarchy as well as folk heroes for many.

Mormino’s extensive study of St. Louis Italians illuminates the networking process that brought Italians to America from their respective villages. He uses the model of chain migration to describe the process of movement. The links in the chain were forged through letters back and forth across the seas, and through reports brought back by returning immigrants or during visits. The process was quite fluid, and “encouraged cunning,” requiring immigrants to learn to “falsify medical information and

---

70 Ibid., p. 197.
71 Ibid., pp. 200-01.
seek lines of least resistance, to cushion the shock of adjustment.” Chain migration linked “individuals and groups to specific economic niches and settlement patterns. What later became stereotyped—Italian fruit vendors and Polish foundry workers—reflected more the economic flow of migration patterns and less the innate work habits of these people.” Indeed, whole communities from Italy settled in Tampa and those from the town of Melilli were found en masse in Middletown, Connecticut. John Bodnar concurs, observing that because of the networking among families and friends, immigrants “seldom left their homelands without knowing exactly where they wanted to go and how to get there.”

Italians have resided in Chicago since the 1850’s. During the large wave of southeastern European immigration in the 1880’s, they established themselves in neighborhoods and suburbs in the central city and the near North Side. One noted neighborhood, on the near West Side, was in the area made famous by Jane Addams, the renowned settlement house founder, and Hull House. Italians from Naples, Salerno, Bari, Messina, Palermo, Abruzzo, Calabria, Basilicata, the Marche, and Lucca shared this neighborhood with Russian Jews and Greeks. Most of the Italian immigrants came to Chicago for “bread and work,” and found employment as railroad laborers, construction workers, small-scale fruit and vegetable peddlers, shoemakers, and barbers; few worked in the meatpacking plants. Work was initially procured in Chicago by the padrone

---

72 Mormino, Immigrants on the Hill, p. 45.
73 Ibid.
74 Bodnar, Transplanted, p. 57.
76 Ibid., p. 231.
77 Ibid., p. 234.
system and worker exploitation was greatest in the 1890’s when levels of unemployment were at their highest. As families became established, however, the need for *padroni* diminished.\textsuperscript{78} Dominic Candeloro posits that the image of Italian immigrants in Chicago was mostly negative. Lingering poverty, illiteracy, association with organized crime, and participation in Prohibition-related violence contributed to the Italian immigrants’ poor image in American minds, whether they supported nativism or not. In the 1920’s and 1930’s Italians’ perceived association with Italy’s fascist leader, Mussolini, in the 1920’s and 30’s did not help matters either and only moderated when the second generation of immigrants enlisted as American soldiers in World War II.\textsuperscript{79}

Daniels depicts Italy as a classic country for immigration, primarily due to the extreme poverty in its southern provinces. Still, although Italians may have immigrated in great numbers, they also returned in great numbers. One estimate suggests that between 1871 and 1971 approximately twenty-six million Italians immigrated, and almost fifty percent returned.\textsuperscript{80} Moch agrees that the Italian immigrant rate of return was high, while observing that it was higher for those who immigrated to Latin America than for those who settled in the United States.\textsuperscript{81}

Mark Wyman proposes several reasons for this high Italian rate of return. The temporary immigrant viewed job opportunities as short-term and had returning to his homeland as foremost of his goals. Those who arrived without family ties also had more incentive to return unless a marriage was arranged. One of the most important reasons

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{78} Ibid., pp. 235-36.
\item \textsuperscript{79} Ibid., p. 243.
\item \textsuperscript{80} Roger Daniels, *Not Like Us. Immigrants and Minorities in America 1890-1924* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 1997): 68.
\item \textsuperscript{81} Moch, *Moving Europeans*, p. 156.
\end{itemize}
for returning was striving for status. Earning enough money to purchase land or a business of one’s own was highly motivating for those wishing to return, a means to an end. One must also not discount the individual pull of family back to the motherland—homesickness. For many, returning to the familiar was to return to the safe haven of distinct family and cultural traditions.82

Overt resistance and even hostility toward immigrants during this period also provided motivation for immigrants to return to their native lands. Daniels discusses the importance of the migration chains and the development of ethnic settlements for immigrants who felt themselves the target of ethnic or religious prejudice and bigotry. He suggests that ethnic enclaves and neighborhoods in America were conscious and deliberate creations by immigrants to express their agency and autonomy despite the challenges of arriving and surviving in a new location. He notes as well, however, that these neighborhoods were also targets—being, as they were, enclaves of foreignness—for immigration opponents. These critics cited the cohesive living quarters and symbiotic relationships and organizations as examples of the immigrants’ desire to remain separate and not to integrate themselves into American life. Social isolation and ethnic clustering added to the stereotyping of many of the southeastern European immigrants.83 Resistance to these immigrants will be explored in more detail in the next chapter.

83 Daniels, Not Like Us, pp. 41-2.
Russians, and particularly Russian Jews, also came to America in large numbers at this time. From 1899-1913, it is estimated that over fifty thousand Russian immigrants entered the United States. Almost half of these were Russian Jews fleeing pogroms. More than half of these immigrants resided in New York and Pennsylvania and worked in mines and mills. Some gravitated toward Chicago as well to work in the slaughterhouses. Usually unskilled, they received lower wages for their work, and were, for the most part, non-unionized, despite the presence of the United Mine Workers (UMW) and the IWW.

Orthodox Russian immigrants quickly established churches in the United States. The Russian Orthodox Church had nearly one hundred thousand members with established church schools by 1916. They also created mutual aid societies, which provided health insurance, death benefits, and job referrals. Politically active, they formed their own work organizations, such as clockmakers, garment workers, bookmakers, and mechanics; the largest was the Union of Russian Workers. Such ethnically-defined groups called overt attention to themselves and became the targets of anti-Russian and anti-Bolshevik protests, with accompanying prejudice and discrimination. One example was the suppression of Russian-language newspapers, primarily because of political events in Russia that saw the victory of the Bolshevik party.

---

84 LeMay, *From Open Door*, p. 50. LeMay points out that this religious/political persecution was an additional “push” factor motivating Jewish immigration, and “ultimately the most compelling cause.” (p. 50)


86 LeMay, *From Open Door*, p. 50.
in the Russian Revolution. Between 1900 and 1920 over fifty Russian-language newspapers were published. By 1921 only five remained.\textsuperscript{87}

Jewish immigrants generally came in family groups with the intention of remaining in America. They settled primarily in the eastern seaboard ports of entry such as New York, Philadelphia, and Baltimore, living in sub-standard housing initially. Because they brought a broader set of job skills than many immigrant groups they were able to accelerate their accession into better paying positions and better living conditions, and become acculturated more quickly in general to their new homes. Approximately sixty-seven percent of Jewish males were classified as skilled workers.\textsuperscript{88} Jewish immigrants also gravitated quickly toward the unions, in particular, the garment industry. The Amalgamated Clothing Workers were comprised primarily of Italians and Jews; it has been estimated that over fifty percent of the New York City’s Jewish labor force worked in the clothing trade.\textsuperscript{89} The overt prejudice experienced by Jews in America was visible and ugly, with Jews being marginalized and excluded at every turn. In the 1870’s, Jews were excluded from the New York Bar Association and later that decade, New York college fraternities barred Jewish members. This initiated a domino effect with private clubs, schools, and resorts across the county soon adopting these exclusionary practices against Jewish members. The Ku Klux Klan targeted Jewish immigrants as well but this did not dissuade Jewish support for their own in America or for those still suffering in Europe.\textsuperscript{90}

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{87} Ibid., pp. 50-1.  \\
\textsuperscript{88} Ibid., p. 51.  \\
\textsuperscript{89} Ibid.  \\
\textsuperscript{90} Ibid., p. 52.
\end{flushright}
Jews comprised eight percent of Chicago’s population by 1930,\(^91\) and fell into two distinct groups: the earlier arriving German-speaking Jews who originally came from central Europe; and the next wave of Yiddish-speaking Jews who were Eastern European and came from Russia, Poland, Romania, and Lithuania. This latter group grew to over fifty thousand in number by 1900 and crowded into an area southwest of the downtown; Greeks, Italians, Poles, and other Bohemians shared this area as well. Synagogues were established as well as Jewish schools, although some synagogues split due to conflicting local customs. Some of the less religious Eastern European Jews attended public schools. As with the Italians and Greeks in this neighborhood, Jane Addams’ Hull House was a hub for education and Americanization. In addition to the settlement houses, Jews formed their own relief committees to aid victims during World War I and, of course, during the Holocaust. The Arbeiter Ring was established in 1903 as a socialist fraternal organization running secular Yiddish-language schools and camps and promoting a general foundation of Americanization.\(^92\)

Jews in Chicago worked primarily in the clothing industry sweatshops and in cigar-making factories. Some became small entrepreneurs but most were in sympathy with other immigrant workers being exploited in the meatpacking and garment industries. In 1910, almost forty-five thousand workers, eighty percent of whom were Jewish, went on strike against a Jewish-owned concern, resulting in the organization of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America. Over the years, the Eastern European Jews

---


\(^92\) Ibid. pp. 137-38.
improved their economic status. This enabled many to move out of the Halsted and Maxwell Street area into other parts of the central city and suburbs.  

Greeks, the primary focus of this study, were another major ethnic group to immigrate to America at this time. Greeks first came to this country as individuals and not as families. Significant Greek immigration to the United States did not occur until the 1890’s. During the latter half of the 1800’s, more Greeks lived outside of their own country than in it, primarily residing in the Balkans, Turkey, and Egypt; it was assumed that two-thirds of the immigrants from Turkey to the United States at the time were actually Greeks. Like the Italians, most of the immigrants were male, and over half returned to Greece. Most pursued occupations in urban areas, eschewing agricultural jobs due to the hardships they had experienced as peasant farmers in their native land. The majority of immigrants came from small villages in the Peloponnesus area of Greece, but many also came from Turkey, or areas under the control of Turkey. The majority settled along the east coast, but some headed to Chicago and the Midwest. Many, like my grandfather, continued on to the American west for short stints working on the railroads.  

Greek padróni were also part of the migration chain that brought immigrants to America. Hundreds of shoeshine stands were established in cities, and many Greeks gravitated toward this type of work as well as fruit peddling and restaurant work. These types of businesses made sense for recently arrived immigrants because they did not require large amounts of start-up capital, were labor intensive, and provided services to

93 Ibid., pp. 144-45.
94 Daniels, Coming to America, pp. 202-03.
those of similar economic means. Greeks also established confectioneries and soda fountains in large numbers. One interesting enterprise Greeks pioneered was the motion picture business. Developed in small neighborhood storefronts and movie houses, Greeks created major theater chains across the country and were instrumental in the formation of the 20th Century-Fox studios. 96

One of the most famous of the Chicago Greek immigrants was Mr. Christos Tsakonas. Tsakonas and a large number of Greeks from the Sparta region came to the United States in the late 1870’s and 80’s. Theodore Saloutos, in his classic study, The Greek in the United States, described these Spartan immigrants as the “Greek Pilgrim Fathers,” 97 and Tsakonas as the “Columbus of Sparta.” 98 Peter W. Dickson, drawing upon Saloutos’ work, has framed a history of this large group of Spartan Greeks immigrants, together with another important group from the central Peloponnese who began arriving in the United States in the early 1890s. Dickson asserts that these mass immigrations were heavily influenced by Tsakonas, who came from the village of Zoupena, a few miles southeast of Sparta. 99

According to Saloutos, it appears that Tsakonas, born in 1848, set out for the Greek port city of Piraeus after two years of grammar school, looking for work. Finding little success, he boarded a boat for Alexandria, Egypt, but experienced the same situation upon reaching there. Tsakanos then teamed up with an Arcadian, Nikolas Anagnostou

96 Daniels, Coming to America, p. 204.
97 Salutos, Greeks, p. 22.
98 Ibid., p. 24.
and left for America. They arrived in New York in 1873. At that time, there were less than five hundred Greeks in North America, most of them sailors who lived in port cities such as New Orleans, San Francisco, Boston, and New York. In Chicago, the 1870 census listed only ten known Greeks.

Tsakonas found America to his liking. He came west and settled in Chicago where he had some success as a fruit peddler. This allowed him to pay some family debts and return to Greece in 1874. There he recruited with five young male compatriots—nephews, cousins, and friends—and returned immediately to America. These men, Saloutos suggests, were the nucleus of an exodus that witnessed increasingly larger numbers of Greeks immigrating to America. Approximately twelve to fifteen Greeks emigrated from the village of Tsintzina in 1877; seventy more left for Piraeus in 1882 where they boarded ships for America.

Subsequent research by Dickson found that Christos Tsakonas was actually born in the village of Tsintzina. It appears he was directly and indirectly responsible for encouraging approximately one thousand young Spartans to settle in Chicago in the 1870’s and 1880’s, many of whom came from the area of Tsintzina. In Chicago, Tsakonas created a settlement of young Greek men. As the population grew, a society was formed, the Therapnean Society. This group drew its members from a geographical area that included Tsintzinia and six other villages on the southwestern slopes of the Parnon Mountains in the Peloponnese. This initial enclave of Greek immigrants settled

on the near north side of Chicago’s “Loop,” near the intersection of Clark and Kinzie streets.

Tsakonas’ Greek community in Chicago spawned similar Greek neighborhoods in other large cities, like the one formed in 1888 in San Francisco. There, one immigrant, Demitrios G. Camarinos, became a wholesale fruit merchant in San Francisco’s Bay area. He may have been one of the Tsintzinians who came to America in 1877. He did have direct contact with the Chicago Greeks, supplying them with bananas and pineapples from Hawaii through his import-export firm based eventually in Honolulu. Thus, by 1890, the Greek immigrant network was extending across the country and young Greek entrepreneurs were supporting each other in business.

Greek immigrants also gravitated toward structure in their religious and social lives. Like the Orthodox Russians, the Greek Orthodox Church served not only for religious worship but as a gathering place for community life and for the maintenance of the Greek language and culture. The first Greek Orthodox Church predated the wave of immigrants in the 1880’s and 1890’s, having been established in New Orleans in 1864. In the 1890’s New York, Chicago, and Lowell, Massachusetts opened churches and these were followed by many more in other major cities across the country. Over the next four decades there were tensions and conflicts regarding jurisdiction in America in regard to the Orthodox Church since the Greeks and Russians shared the same doxology and governance; however, these disputes were settled by 1930.

Greek immigrants had not cut all of their political ties either, despite living in a new country. Strife in Greece between King Constantine and Eleutherios Venizelos, 104

104 Ibid., p. 43.
head of the Greek Liberal Party, created factions in America as well. Greece was a major combatant as well in the Balkan Wars of 1912-13, and over forty thousand Greek Americans returned to fight for the mother country. This manifestation of the native political rifts resulted in the formation of Greek American organizations. AHEPA, or the American Hellenic Educational Progressive Association, was primarily middle-class and promoted Americanization and accommodation. GAPA, the Greek American Progressive Association, was anti-assimilationist and required the strict use of the Greek language, the constant promotion of Greek heritage and culture, and adherence to the Greek Orthodox Church.\(^{105}\)

Having briefly examined three of the major European immigrant populations—Italians, Greeks, and eastern Europeans—which came to the United States in the 1880’s and into the early twentieth century, it is possible to return to a short overview of the political climate in America when these immigrants arrived. We have noted above how Michael LeMay identified two notable surges of European immigration in the nineteenth century: the first from 1845 to 1854 and the second from 1865 to 1875.\(^{106}\) John Higham suggests that immigration to America came in “two quite distinct phases. His “First Immigration” began in the 1680s and lasted until 1803. It consisted of the “original inhabitants,” the English (and to a lesser extent the Dutch in New York and New Jersey), followed by Germans, Scots, French, Irish (predominantly Presbyterians), and also Jews from various lands.\(^{107}\) Higham contends that the “original” settlers relatively easily

\(^{105}\) Daniels, *Coming to America*, pp. 205-06.
\(^{106}\) LeMay, *From Open Door*, p. 21.
\(^{107}\) Higham, *Send These To Me*, p. 5-6. Higham notes that by 1790, roughly 60 percent of the white population in the thirteen colonies identified as English, and that they
accepted the somewhat later arrivals into the new republic despite differences in language and religion, although these differences would cause tension in later years.

Higham then identifies a “Second Immigration,” lasting from the 1820’s until the immigration restriction law of 1924, with a tide surging “to a high point in the 1850s, to a higher one in the early 1880’s and to a crest in the opening decade of the twentieth century.” While the First Immigration had been predominantly white, Protestant and English-speaking, Higham’s second phase “brought a Babel of tongues and an array of complexions ranging from the blond Scandinavian through the swarthy south Italian to the West Indian Negro. And whereas the First Immigration had been very largely Protestant, the second was heavily Catholic from the outset; and by the end of the century it was increasingly Jewish and Eastern Orthodox.” Both Higham and LeMay provide a foundation for the examination of immigration law, which reflected the response of the descendants of the First Immigration to the immigrants arriving in the Second Immigration during the latter half of the 1800’s and into the twentieth century.

Aristide R. Zolberg contends that by the early 1800’s, America’s immigration policy had been influenced by the shipping industry seeking to maximize traffic and profit; by the eastern seaboard states, interested in extracting passenger income; and by the national government, which promoted land sales as a significant revenue stream until around 1840. Roger Daniels agrees, in theory, that the founding fathers initially had a

---

considered themselves founders, settlers or planters – “the formative population of those colonial societies -- not as immigrants.”

108 Ibid., p. 18.
109 Ibid., p. 21.
keen economic interest in filling their “largely empty new nation” and welcomed foreigners. The new United States Constitution included a provision establishing a uniform rule of naturalization and enabled immigrants eligible for all federal offices with the exception of President and Vice President. This provision also protected the foreign slave trade, another form of immigration, for another twenty years until 1808.¹¹¹

Presidents Washington through Tyler believed that immigration was “vital for the health of the nation” and the anti-immigration legislation of the 1790’s, the Alien and Sedition Acts, were not efforts to restrict immigration, but maintain Federalist power. A pro-immigrant consensus prevailed, and for over sixty years, immigration and naturalization laws were almost negligible. In 1790, a statute was enacted restricting naturalization to “free white persons” and was later amended to bar the immigration of Asians; however, many Asians were naturalized up through the mid-1800’s. In 1819, Congress ordered that every vessel entering an American port deliver a manifest of passengers for the collection of customs. There were no other immigration statutes enacted until after the Civil War.¹¹²

John Higham’s landmark analysis of immigration history, Strangers in the Land: Patterns of American Nativism 1860-1925, provides a theoretical foundation for immigration legislation after the Civil War that is relevant to this discourse. Higham’s treatise outlines the evolution of anti-foreign sentiment and action. He contends that a tradition of anti-foreign thought came out of the English Reformation and the Protestant hatred of Rome and Catholicism. This anti-Catholicism, Higham argues, merged into

¹¹² Ibid., p. 7.
nativistic feelings and behaviors. He suggests that this “Protestant nativism” persisted from the early American colonial period into the nineteenth century, and became institutionalized through cultural, social, and political organizations, practices, and laws. “Americans regarded political liberty as their chief national attribute and supreme achievement,” rendering the authoritarian Catholic Church and the new American way of liberty as distinctly incompatible concepts.  

With the “flood” of Catholic immigrants, especially Germans and Irish, American nativists began to react negatively, and a second fear, that of foreign radicalism, created more tension. Higham then adds a third layer of anti-foreign sentiment to the mix, that of racial nativism. Building on the Social Darwinist theories of the mid- and late-nineteenth century, First Immigration Americans considered themselves a superior Anglo-Saxon “race,” who were threatened by the inferior “Other,” as exemplified by the African-Americans, Asians, and southeastern immigrants of the Second Immigration. Higham concludes, “The anti-Catholic, anti-radical, and Anglo-Saxon traditions had opened channels through which a large part of the xenophobia of the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries would flow.”

Roger Daniels and Otis Graham draw on Higham’s arguments as they link the immigration policy of the late 1800’s with that of the first two decades of the twentieth century. Daniels categorizes the period of 1882-1924 as one of “high immigration and

---

114 Ibid., pp. 8-9.
115 Ibid., p. 11.
growing restriction.” He does not assign the descriptors of “floods,” “waves,” or “inundation” to the immigration process as he believes those terms separate the immigrant from the total of American history and relegate the immigrant to a position of the ‘Other’. His intention is to characterize immigrants as participatory agents of change.

The period of 1882-1924 is bookended by the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 and the Immigration Act of 1924. While the immigration history of Asians has not been highlighted thus far in this study, it is no less important than that of European immigration and will be examined briefly now as an integral and very important aspect of American immigration history. Significant Chinese immigration to the United States really began with the California gold rush in 1849. Chinese coolie laborers had suffered horrific lives as slaves on British plantations in the tropics and in Hawaii. Before the annexation of Hawaii in 1898, there were approximately 46,000 Chinese

---

117 Ibid., p. 7.
contract laborers there. The annexation of Hawaii brought the outlawing of contract labor and prohibited further Chinese labor immigration.\textsuperscript{120}

Between 1849 and 1882, approximately 250,000 Chinese immigrated to the United States, primarily as immigrants of choice; they were overwhelmingly male and from Kwangtung (Guangdong) Province in China.\textsuperscript{121} More than two-thirds took up residence in California and assisted in the land and mineral development of the American West. Many worked on the railroads. Daniels describes Chinese labor contractors, similar to the padroni system of the Italians and the Greeks, which “advanced money to would-be immigrants under the ‘credit ticket’ system.” They then sent many thousands of these immigrants to work on the railroad –“reportedly at a rate of $1 a man a month”-- and they also “profited from contracts to provide rice and other commodities to the workers.”\textsuperscript{122} Ten thousand Chinese laborers were part of the crew completing the Union-Central Pacific Railroad at Promontory Point, Utah on May 10, 1869.\textsuperscript{123}

In the mid-1800s, anti-Chinese sentiment began germinating in San Francisco and spread to other parts of the western United States. The economic Panic of 1873 turned mild hostility toward foreigners “into outright violence when [the] economy soured and people were in fear of losing their jobs.”\textsuperscript{124} The anti-Asian sentiment had, as Daniels states, “a thoroughly racist character,” and was fueled by Anglo-Saxon nativist beliefs. In

\textsuperscript{120} Daniels, \textit{Not Like Us}, p. 5.
\textsuperscript{121} Roger Daniels, “Chinese and Japanese as Urban Americans, 1850-1940” \textit{The History Teacher} 25, no. 4 (August 1992): 430. Daniels states that Kwangtung Province was “the home of almost all nineteenth century Chinese immigrants to America.” See also Daniels, \textit{Not Like Us}, pp. 5-6.
\textsuperscript{122} Ibid., p. 431; Daniels, \textit{Not Like Us}, p. 5.
\textsuperscript{123} Daniels, \textit{Not Like Us}, pp. 5-6, 12-13.
\textsuperscript{124} Seonnichsen, \textit{The Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882}, p. x.
1870 a prominent New York labor leader, John Swinton, railed that the Chinese “were an ‘inferior type’ of humanity, bringing paganism, incest, sodomy, and the threat of miscegenation to American shores.”

Responding to this perceived threat, Californian lawmakers passed a series of anti-Chinese laws. In 1854 the California Supreme Court ruled that the testimony of a Chinese person against a white person could not be accepted in court. Several pieces of federal legislation passed in 1870, including naturalization laws that denied citizenship to Chinese and other Asians, despite the fact that some Asians had already been naturalized. Chinese women were also prevented from immigrating to the United States with their husbands. The 1870 legislation determined that Asian immigrants were ineligible for citizenship because they were not “white” or of “African descent,” entrenching the definition of “white” into the legal system. In 1879 Congress passed, but President Rutherford Hayes vetoed, the “15 Passenger Bill,” which would have restricted the number of Chinese passengers allowed on a ship coming to the United States to 15. Anti-Chinese sentiments became increasingly vitriolic over the next three years. United States Representative George Hazelton (R-Wisconsin), for example, called the Chinese immigrant a loathsome…revolting…monstrosity…[who] lives in herds and sleep like packs of dogs in kennels.” William Calkins (R-Indiana) said that if Congress permitted the Chinese to enter, “you plant a cancer in your own country that will eat out its life and destroy it.”

125 Daniels, Not Like Us, p. 7.
126 Ibid., pp. 8-9.
127 See Gyory, Closing the Gate, pp. 4-6.
128 Both quotes contained in Gyory, Closing the Gate, p. 5.
In 1882 Congress passed a 20 year Chinese Exclusion Act that suspended the immigration to America of skilled and unskilled Chinese laborers for 20 years, and also prohibited state and federal courts from naturalizing Chinese immigrants. When President Chester Arthur vetoed this first bill, Congress passed a second, 10 year, Chinese Exclusion Act that became law. Although originally only intended to be in force for 10 years, it was renewed in 1892, made permanent in 1902, and only finally repealed in 1943.

Erika Lee has called the Chinese Exclusion Act a “watershed” moment in American history. It marked the first time that a federal law banned a single group of people from the United States based on race or ethnicity alone, and “thus helped shape twentieth-century United States race-based immigration policy.”129 Lee notes that this law impacted all subsequent immigrant groups, including the Greeks who are the focus of my study. She argues that “Chinese exclusion also introduced a ‘gatekeeping’ ideology, politics, law, and culture that transformed the ways in which Americans viewed and thought about race, immigration, and the United States identity as a nation of immigration.” Moreover, “it legalized and reinforced the need to restrict, exclude, and deport ‘undesirable’ and excludable immigrants….It established Chinese immigrants…as the models by which to measure the desirability (and ‘whiteness’) of other immigrant groups.” And perhaps most importantly, the Chinese exclusion laws “set in motion the government procedures and the bureaucratic machinery required to regulate and control both foreigners arriving to, and foreigners and citizens residing in, the United States.

Precursors to the United States Immigration and Naturalization Service, United States passports, ‘green cards,’ illegal immigration and deportation policies can all be traced back to the Chinese Exclusion Act itself.”

Anti-Asian sentiment continued to grow in America through the Spanish-American War of 1898, which brought in three new United States territories: Hawaii; Puerto Rico; and the Philippines. Residents of Hawaii became Americans, residents of Puerto Rico became citizens in 1917, but no citizenship rights were granted to Filipinos. Attitudes toward the Japanese were more ambiguous as Japan, at the time, was a rising world power. President Teddy Roosevelt, in a conciliatory overture to that nation in 1908, made a Gentlemen’s Agreement with Japan whereby Tokyo would stop issuing passports for Japanese male laborers for passage to the United States or Hawaii, and, in turn, Washington D.C. agreed not to legislate the banning of Japanese immigrants. Current Japanese laborers already residing in the United States could leave and return with family members or have family members join them. This resulted in the immigration of approximately twenty thousand “picture brides” —that is, arranged marriages with Japanese women. Consequently, the Japanese population on the United States mainland continued to grow—from 72,000 in 1910 to 111,000 in 1920. Nativists who

---

131 Daniels, “Chinese and Americans,” pp. 433-44; Daniels, Not Like Us, p. 9.
132 Daniels, Not Like Us, p. 9; Daniels, “Chinese and Japanese,” pp. 433-44.
133 Daniels, Not Like Us, p. 10. See also, Lee, “Chinese Exclusion Example,” pp. 44-45; Daniels, “Chinese and Japanese,” pp. 32-35;
were already paranoid about the possibility of a ‘yellow majority’ in California, began to protest against Roosevelt’s previously friendly agreements with Japan.

After a somewhat benign first century of immigration, the nativists and anti-Catholics had tried their best to marginalize and categorize immigrants from Asia and Europe, but the labor needs of a rapidly industrializing nation only increased the numbers of immigrants coming and settling across America. It was time to deal with this influx on the ground.

By the 1880’s, the volume of immigration from Europe seemed to necessitate more efficient and effective “gate-keeping.” In 1882 immigration fell under the auspices of the Secretary of the Treasury but many functions were decentralized to different states. New York State ran Castle Garden (later Ellis Island), the immigrant depot, which was subsidized by the federal government. A fifty-cent head tax was put upon each incoming immigrant and collected by the steamship companies. This head tax rose incrementally, and it was eight dollars by 1917. Immigrants also had to demonstrate they could work or had work waiting, a regulation intended to exclude the poor. By 1891 more restrictions were added. There were twenty-four inspection stations for arriving immigrants, headed by a new Superintendent of Immigration. By that time, there were already many categories for refusal of entry, such as being mentally disturbed, suffering from contagious diseases, persons convicted of crimes or felonies, and polygamists.

---

134 Lee states that this gate-keeping metaphor was first used by California politicians and anti-Chinese activists in the 1870s, and that it became “inscribed in national conversations about immigration during the twentieth century.” See Lee, “Chinese Exclusion Example,” pp. 37-39
(which targeted Mormons). Following the assassination of President McKinley in September 1901, anarchists were added to the list of those who could be refused entry.

Economic strife in the United States added to the nativist angst as the economic depression of the 1890’s intensified anti-immigrant sentiment. A group of Harvard graduates led by the Boston Brahmin, Prescott Hall, established the Immigration Restriction League in 1894, which remained active for the next thirty years. Its primary focus was the development of a literacy test that would, in Hall’s words, select the “alien men and women who are coming here to be the fathers and mothers of future citizens.”

Although Congress passed a bill supporting the literacy test for immigrants in 1913, 1915, and 1917, it was vetoed once by President Taft and twice by President Wilson. Congress overrode Wilson’s second veto, however, and the test became law in 1917. This law did not specify English as the language of literacy, but it required an ability to read in some language by immigrants sixteen years of age or over. Those exempt were women and children—wives, mothers, grandmothers, and/or sons and daughters of a literate male alien. Daniels reports that in 1920-21 only 1.5% of the 800,000 immigrants admitted were rejected for any of the reasons mentioned above. Illiteracy only barred 450 immigrants.

---

136 Quoted in Petit, The Men and Women We Want, p. 2. See also pp. 17-30.
137 Daniels, Not Like Us, p. 14; Higham, Strangers in the Land, pp. 189, 191-93. For a contemporary perspective on the Literacy Test debate see the article by the important historian of Greek immigration, Henry Pratt Fairchild, “The Literacy Test and Its Making,” The Quarterly Journal of Economics 31, no. 3 (May 1917): 447-460. For a more recent discussion see Jeanne D Petit, The Men and Women We Want.
138 Daniels, Not Like Us, p. 15; Higham, Strangers in the Land, p. 308.
From the late 1890’s through the turn of the twentieth century, immigration administration became more solidified as a bureaucratic entity. Ellis Island was opened in 1892 and became an integral arm of the government as a means to filter out unwanted immigrants. In 1903 immigration administration was transferred to the Department of Commerce. Immigration officials gained more power in 1906 when they became responsible for naturalization, which now included knowledge of English. The office was then renamed, becoming the Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization.

In 1907-1911 the United States Immigration Commission, chaired by Republican Senator William P. Dillingham of Vermont, studied all aspects of immigrants in the United States and eventually published a hefty 42-volume report of their investigation. Although the commission compiled a massive quantity of research and data, one recent scholar, Rebecca Root, concludes that the “Dillingham Commission compiled a directory of immigrant groups that is riddled with culturally biased descriptions and highly racialized imagery.” Root is also critical of the commission for having “considered…southeastern European immigrants far less desirable than their northwestern European predecessors and closely associated with this demographic shift with the rise in strikes, unemployment, crime, and other evidence of social unrest that

---

139 There are many popular histories and picture books about Ellis Island. A good place to begin a scholarly study of Ellis Island is Vincent J. Cannato, American Passage: The History of Ellis Island (New York: Harper, 2009).
140 Daniels, Not Like Us, pp. 15-16.
141 The Reports of the Immigration Commission, often referred to as the Dillingham Commission, became part of the Senate record and were published by the United States Government Printing Office in Washington, DC. The report on Immigrants in Cities is discussed in chapter 3.
accompanied late-nineteenth-century industrialization and urbanization.” Daniel Tichenor agrees, observing that “the recurrent theme of its forty-two reports was the vast contrast between immigrants from traditional European source countries and those from southern and eastern Europe. Whereas old immigration brought skilled and industrious settlers who were well acquainted with republican institutions, newer arrivals represented an invasion of ‘unskilled laboring men’ from ‘less progressive countries of Europe.’” Daniels also notes that the commission’s conclusions were that “older” immigrants from the British Isles, Germany, and Scandinavia were more favored because they appeared more stable and permanent, and the “newer” immigrants—Italians, Greeks, Poles, and Eastern European Jews—were transient and interested only in temporary wages. Consequently, the Dillingham Commission recommended that numerical limits, or quotas, be placed on the “newer” immigrants, but quotas were not legislated until 1921 and 1924.

Immigration to the United States dropped precipitously following the outbreak of World War I. After the war, unemployment became a major concern as millions of young men were released from military service. The country was also rife with rumors of radical and poor Europeans lining up to immigrate to America, partly fueled by the successful communist Bolshevik Revolution in Russia that caused a “Red Scare.” By 1920 eight categories of immigrants were barred from admission to the United States:

---

144 Daniels, *Not Like Us*, pp. 16-17.
contract laborers; Asians other than some Japanese and Filipinos; criminals; persons of dubious moral standards; diseased people; poor people; radicals; and illiterates. 145

During the 1920’s a resurgence of conservatism permeated many parts of the American social fabric. As Ngai observes, “While war nationalism [during the Great War] was aimed principally at German Americans, it provided a popular basis of support for nativists that had been campaigning for restriction since the 1890s. The Red Scare of 1919-1920, which equated foreigners with radicalism, gave yet additional support to immigration restriction.”146 The more conservative political climate prompted the passage of the first quota law, known variously as the Emergency Quota Act, or the Emergency Immigration Act of 1921, or the Immigration Restriction Act of 1921, which established an annual immigration quota of three percent of the number of foreign-born from each country as listed in the 1910 census. The number of annual quota spaces was approximately 350,000. President Harding signed this act into law in May 1921. John Higham believes that this law proved in the long run the most important turning-point in American immigration policy. It imposed the first sharp and absolute numerical limits on European immigration. It established a nationality quota system based on the pre-existing composition of the American population—an idea which has survived in one form or another through all subsequent legislation. It ensured especially that the new immigration could not reach more than a small fraction of its prewar level. Above all, the policy now adopted meant that in a generation the foreign-born would cease to be a major factor in American history.147

The new law did provide for some minor exceptions. Children of United States citizens under the age of eighteen, and relatives of citizens or resident aliens who had

145 Ibid., p. 18.
146 Ngai, ”Nationalism,” p. 11.
147 Higham, Strangers in the Land, p. 311.
filed for citizenship were allowed entry. Some intellectuals, artists, members of learned professions and domestic servants received special status and were admitted. Also exempted were natives of independent countries of the Western Hemisphere or people who had resided in a country for at least one year preceding application for entry. This enabled Canadians, Mexicans, and some Europeans to enter without quota restrictions.¹⁴⁸

The discourse on immigration restriction reached its zenith with the passage of the 1924 Immigration Act. Congressman Albert Johnson, chair of the Immigration Committee and orchestrator of the new act, was a rabid anti-Semite and eugenicist.¹⁴⁹ Johnson’s concern over the threat Jewish immigration posed to the country led him to paraphrase reports from like-minded American consuls to argue that America was in danger of being “overrun by hordes of ‘abnormally twisted’ and ‘unassimilable’ Jews, ‘filthy, un-American and often dangerous in their habits.’”¹⁵⁰ In passing the new legislation, Congress also sought to limit the numbers of southeastern European immigrants entering the United States by basing the quota numbers on the census of 1890 instead of 1910. Because there were far fewer Greeks and other southeastern Europeans in the United States in 1890, this small change significantly reduced the numbers of future immigrants from that region. It cut the “Italian quota from 42,000 to about 4,000, the Polish from 31,000 to 6,000, the Greek from 3,000 to 100.”¹⁵¹

Using quota numbers based on “two percent of the 1890 census also lowered the total number of spaces from about 270,000 annual quota immigrants to some

¹⁴⁸ Daniels, Not Like Us, p. 19.
¹⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 309; Daniels, Not Like Us, pp. 133.
¹⁵¹ Higham, Strangers in the Land, p. 319.
Immigration from the western hemisphere remained outside of the quota system as it and the provision for wives and unmarried children remained fairly in tact.

One other important addition to the immigration process contained in this 1924 law was the “consular control system.” Persons seeking to immigrate to America now had to obtain their visas abroad, at an American consulate or embassy, before being granted admission to travel to the United States. This new system also applied to western hemisphere immigrants. At the time, the cost of a visa was nine dollars and an additional head tax was eight dollars. These entry fees were particularly onerous for Mexican immigrants and encouraged the informal crossing of the border.  

One compelling item of the law was the call for the creation of a “national origins system,” which would govern immigration after July 1, 1929 by reducing the number of quota spaces to 150,000. The terminology of “national origin” incorporated a calculation of inhabitants in the continental United States in 1920 who could be assigned to specific nations. It excluded immigrants from the New World and their descendants, any Asians and their descendants, descendants of “slave immigrants” and descendants of “American aborigines.” In essence, this new terminology underscored the opinion that African descendants, Native Americans, and Asians “were simply defined as not members of the American nation.” The quota for immigrants from the the United Kingdom was systematically raised and quotas were dramatically lowered for immigrants from Ireland,

---

152 Daniels, Not Like Us, p. 21.
154 Ibid.
Germany, Sweden, Norway, and Denmark, thereby ratifying the notion of race and
ethnicity as determining factors of what was defined as “American.”

Writing in 1926, Jeremiah Jenks and W. Jet Lauck, in their report, *The
Immigration Problem: A Study of American Immigration Conditions and Needs*,
summarized the mood of the country at the time of the 1924 Immigration Act. It was
their opinion that the Immigration Act of 1924 “legally crystallizes the remarkable
change in the point of view of the American public from an open door policy to one of
drastic restriction, in the case of the Oriental, of exclusion.” They agreed that exclusion
and ineligibility of citizenship for Asians was necessary. The permanent restriction was
justified because the “type” of immigrant coming to America would change the “entire
racial make-up of the American people.” They also believed that as of 1924, the United
States was not in need of excess labor due to the perceived limitation of natural resources
impacting industry, and thus impacting American standards of living. External
population control appeared necessary to preserve the American way of life.

Jenks and Lauck congratulated the Immigration Commission for having made a
most deliberate and exhaustive examination of the immigrant question. It was
determined that the yearly average wage earnings of one million immigrants held down
the living conditions of other American wage earners, and in some cases, lowered these
conditions. The reason for this leveling of wage and living standards was due to the lack

---

155 Ibid.
156 Jeremiah Whipple Jenks and William Jet Lauck, *The Immigration Problem: A Study
of American Immigration Conditions and Needs*, 6th ed. (New York: Funk and
Wagnalls, 1926): 448. Jenks and Lauck published their first edition of this book in
1911.
157 Ibid., p. 460.
of the ability of the “newer” southeastern European immigrants to assimilate. The contrast between the northern European and southeastern European immigrants was stark, according to the report. They stated that the southeastern European immigrant “racial types differ far more widely from ours than do those of the earlier immigrants from northern and western Europe.”\(^{158}\) These immigrants settling primarily in urban areas promulgated “dangers of disease, crime and revolution, as well as of partisan political influence.” They agreed that quota restrictions and selection were the two best solutions to the “immigration problem.”\(^{159}\)

There were now two major pillars of immigration legislation in place. Ngai identifies these as “the system of quotas based on national origin, and the exclusion of persons ineligible to citizenship.”\(^{160}\) The quota system was intended primarily to restrict immigration from the nations of eastern and southern Europe, particularly Italians, Poles, Jews, southern Slavs, and Greeks, “very few of whom were Protestants.”\(^{161}\) The “ineligible to citizenship” provision referred primarily to Asians, implemented initially decades earlier through the Chinese Exclusion Act and other legislation. Thus, although “China, Japan, India, and Siam each received the minimum quota of 100,…the law excluded the native citizens of those countries from immigration because they were deemed to be racially ineligible for citizenship.” This “created the oddity of immigration quotas for non-Chinese persons from China, non-Japanese persons from Japan, non-

---

\(^{158}\) Ibid., p. 462.

\(^{159}\) Ibid.


\(^{161}\) Daniels, Not Like Us, p. 133; Ngai, “Architecture of Race,” p. 73.
Indian persons from India and so on.”\textsuperscript{162} Ngai points out that by one account, these provisions “barred half the world’s population from entering the United States.”\textsuperscript{163}

By the end of the 1920s, the efforts of these legislators of exclusion were in place and taking effect. As Roger Daniels, one of the leading immigration scholars concludes, “The passage of restrictive immigration legislation and the phasing in of the national origins system in the 1920s bought an entire era of American immigration history to an end. The century of immigration was over.”\textsuperscript{164}

This chapter has offered a brief overview of immigration theory and history in the United States, with emphasis on the immigrants from southeastern Europe and the political impact on their ability to immigrate and settle. The next chapter will focus more closely on Greece, its geography and history, before turning in Chapter 3 to the Greek immigrant experience in particular. Examination of the cultural and historical heritage Greeks brought with them to America, will better enable us to consider how they reacted and responded to their new home and to the Americanization process.

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{162} Ngai, “Architecture of Race,” pp. 72-73.
\textsuperscript{163} Ibid., p. 80.
\textsuperscript{164} Daniels, \textit{Coming to America}, p. 287.
\end{footnotesize}
CHAPTER 2: Greek Geography and History

From 1880’s through the 1920’s, hundreds of thousands of Greeks migrated to America. As we narrow our focus from immigrants from southeastern Europe generally to Greek immigrants specifically, particularly those from a region known as the Peloponnese, there are several questions that guide our discourse. What geographical factors may have influenced their migration? What history of Greece, and of themselves, did these immigrants carry with them? Why did the years from 1880-1930 witness such significant Greek migration to America? Where did these first Greek immigrants settle and why? What were their initial experiences? Toward what occupations did they gravitate?

The topography of Greece is central to our migration story. Modern Greece is a peninsula. It is connected to Southeastern Europe on the north by Bulgaria, Macedonia, and Albania, but surrounded on three sides by large bodies of water – to the west the Ionian Sea, to the south the Mediterranean Sea, and the Aegean Sea lies to the east. Sprinkled out across the Mediterranean and Aegean seas off Greece’s southeastern coast are many Greek islands, including Crete, Euboea, Lesbos, Rhodes, Corfu, the Dodecanese, and the Cyclades.

The southernmost part of Greece is actually another large peninsula, the Peloponnese, which is attached to central Greece only by the narrow Isthmus of Corinth. The Peloponnese comprises about twelve percent of Greece’s total landmass, and is where Olympia, home of the ancient Olympic Games, is located, near the sea on the northwestern coast. The famous city of Sparta is situated in the south. Mycenae, capital of the ancient Mycenaean civilization, Corinth, and Argos all are on the eastern side of
the Peloponnese. The Peloponnese area is important because it is from here that most of the Greek migrants in this study began their odyssey to the United States.

Eighty percent of Greece is mountainous, making it one of the most mountainous countries in Europe. Indeed, one author has observed, “The best three words to describe the Greek mainland are rocky, hilly, and mountainous.” It is equally true that as one travels from north to south, the land becomes rockier and even more mountainous. This is because most of the mountain chains run northwest or west to southeast or east, the product of millions of years of the African tectonic plate colliding with the Eurasian plate. The greatest of Greece’s mountain ranges is the Pindus. Known as the “spine of Greece,” it lies along the western edge of the mainland, from southern Albania down to the north of the Peloponnese. Continuing through the Peloponnese from northwest to southeast are several mountain ranges, including the Taygetos Mountains to the southwest and the Parnonas and Menalo mountains to the east. These mountain ranges continue underwater out into the Aegean Sea, resurfacing occasionally as one of the many Aegean islands, including Crete. In central Greece, the famous Mount Olympus, rising southwest of Thessaloniki, Greece’s largest city after Athens, is the highest point in Greece, at 9,570 feet. In the Peloponnese, Mount Taygetos is the highest mountain, whose peak, the Profitis Ilias (Prophet Elias) summit, rises to 7,897 feet above sea level.

\[\text{1 Michael Denis and Reynold Higgins, } A \text{ Geological Companion to Greece and the Aegean} \text{ (Ithica, NY: Cornell University Press, 1996): 40-64.} \]
\[\text{2 Richard Clogg, for example, notes "From the 1890s large-scale emigration, initially predominantly from the Peloponnese, got under way to the United States. It has been estimated that as many as a quarter of all Greek males aged between 15 and 40 sought their fortune in America between 1900 and 1915...." See Richard Clogg, } A \text{ Concise History of Greece, 2nd ed.} \text{ (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002): 111.} \]
\[\text{3 Stephanie Lynn Budin, } The\text{ Ancient Greeks. New Perspectives} \text{ (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2004): 11.} \]
Greece’s mountainous terrain has had a significant influence on Greek history and its people. “It caused many individual city-states to be cut off from their neighbors, and the city-states consequently evolved with a strong sense of regionalism and political independence from one another. This kept the Greeks from uniting into a single power until the rise of Macedon in the fourth century [B.C.]. This also forced the Greeks to travel a great deal by sea, which led very early on to long-distance trade and naval prowess.”

One might also add that the topography led to Greek traders and settlers establishing Greek communities all along the coasts and on the islands of the Mediterranean Sea. Greek immigration was not new in the late 1800s, nor was the Greek entrepreneurial spirit.

The mountains of Greece are also steep and abrupt. Due to this rugged topography, the percentage of arable land is only nineteen percent and only eight percent of the land is viable for permanent crop use. Even today, as Charles Freeman has noted, “those who want to make a living from the land have little alternative but to exploit the niches left between mountains: hilly slopes, narrow valleys, the occasional larger plain or lowland.”

Rich soil and flat terrain were limited to the north of central Greece, as were large trees except around the Isthmus of Corinth. Olive trees and grapevines were what grew best.

---

6 The problems associated with deforestation and soil erosion go back to ancient times, when the use of wood was ubiquitous, for making everything from ships to shoes to eating utensils. See J. Donald Hughes and J.V. Thirgood, “Deforestation, Erosion, and Forest Management in Ancient Greece and Rome,” *Journal of Forest History*, 26, no. 2 (April, 1982): 60-75. The authors describe how the high forest gave “way to maquis, a dense evergreen thicket, and this in turn to garrigue, a sparse growth of spiny and often aromatic low shrubs that can support itself on the dry,
Nor can large cattle graze on the “scrubby, dry, rocky surface of the land…but it is ideal for sheep and goats.”

Moreover, Greece has a Mediterranean climate, with hot, dry summers and mild, damp winters. Rainfall varies between heavy storms and long droughts, “so farming…is precarious.” When the rains come they cascade down the steep mountainsides, causing extensive erosion, and making it difficult to gather water for irrigation. Irrigation is important for agriculture in the Peloponnese because in the summer many of the peninsula’s rivers dry up. Freeman concludes, “This is a tough environment and it made for a tough, hardy people. When the Greeks began to travel and settle in other parts of the Mediterranean they found almost everywhere outside Greece more fertile and easier to work.”

The majority of Greek immigrants in this study came from an area in the southcentral Peloponnese between the Taygetos Mountains to the west and the Parnonas Mountains to the east. The heart of this region is from Tripoli (in the region of Arcadia) in the north to Sparta (in the region of Laconia) in the south. Today highway E961 runs between these two cities and continues on south to Gytheio on the Laconian Gulf. The Eurotas, one of the major rivers in Greece, begins just across the border in Arcadia, then runs southeast in a rift valley between the two great Taygetos and Parnonas massifs though the center of Laconia for about 51 miles before emptying into the Mediterranean Sea in the Laconian Gulf. The river is fed by streams and tributaries flowing down from denuded slopes. Further destruction can produce landscapes as bare as any steppe, a condition seen on countless Mediterranean hillsides today.” (p. 67)

7 Budin, Ancient Greeks, p. 12.
8 Ibid.
9 Freeman, Greek Achievement, p. 22.
the two mountain ranges through deep ravines. Because of the mountains’ steep slopes and intermittent heavy rainfall in the winter months, flooding and erosion are serious problems. In November 2005, particularly heavy flooding damaged communities along the entire valley. Nearly 61 square miles of land was ruined, and the valley’s famous olive groves and orange trees severely damaged. On the other hand, villages and towns all along its route drain the Eurotas of its water through wells and irrigation channels for irrigation and general use, to such an extent that long stretches of the river are often dry in the summer. The only fertile lowlands in the Peloponnese are along the coast. Most of the Greek immigrants who came to central Illinois, and indeed, the majority of Greek immigrants who came to America in the later 1800’s and early 1900’s, were peasant farmers from the Peloponnese interior.

Modern Greece is a nation-state younger than the United States, its present political formation having emerged in the 1820’s and 1830’s. Yet, it is the rich tapestry of classical, ancient Greece that defines the country for many people, Greeks and non-Greeks alike, and continues to influence current historiography. Even in America, as historian Steve Frangos reminds us, for many decades Greek history meant ancient and classical cultural Greek history, and it was this history that was once integral to the American education curriculum. Yiorgos Anagnostou, however, posits that there is a “natural continuity between ancient and modern Greece,” and that migrant narratives in particular are often informed by current historical and anthropological scholarship in

Douglas Dakin echoes those sentiments and suggests that Western scholarship is the source of the consciousness that even modern Greeks have of their classical roots, including the personification of ancient Greek heroes as national heroes. Revisiting this history is helpful to create a context and explore how Greek immigrants (calling themselves “Hellenes” and coming from “Hellas”) constructed a Greek-American ethnic identity after they began arriving in the United States at the end of the 1800’s.

Theodore Saloutos, perhaps the most famous of Greek-American historians, observed that the first generations of Greek migrants arrived feeling “passionately about the land of their birth.” In his landmark study, *The Greeks in the United States*, Saloutos asserted that the Hellas of the immigrant was a “land of poverty, restlessness, unstable rule, and passionate Panhellenic aspirations,” which formed a foundation for identity as the immigrants left their native land and traveled to new worlds.

Critical to our study, however, is the knowledge that “there was certainly never a separate ethnic group which could be called Greek. The archaeological evidence suggests that even the early inhabitants of Greece, like those of most parts of the Mediterranean,

---

15 Ibid., p. 20.
were a mixture of native and immigrant stock.” John Myres asked the question, “Who Were the Greeks?” and famously answered “the general conclusion is that the Greeks never wholly were ‘one people,’ but were ever in the process of becoming.” Helen Papanikolas underscores how “varied and how deeply rooted the Greek heritage” is: “Each tribe, each army left some of their blood to mix with the Greeks on the stony land and some of it in children’s veins. The invaders left words that were incorporated into the Greek language, but they themselves were taken in and assimilated.” This varied and deeply rooted Greek heritage will reappear again and again in our discussion of Greece’s history and immigration.

So, as Anagnostu asked, “who are the folk?” Who are these Hellenes and from what history were they born? These are questions that appear in every book about Greece and its people. Freeman, for example, contends that “it is within this setting of mountain and sea with all the challenges they brought both to seafarers and to farmers that a Greek identity was cradled,” but that “it is impossible to pinpoint the origins of Greekness.” He continues, “the earliest evidence that the Greeks recognized themselves as a distinctive culture comes from an inscription at Olympia dating from 600 BC which

---

16 Freeman, Greek Achievement, p. 24.
20 Freeman, Greek Achievement, p. 23.
talks of the judges of the games as *hellanodikai* (“Greek judges”).” These games drew all the city-states and peoples together, and only “Greeks” could participate. 21

Historically, Greece was home to one of Europe’s first civilizations, and “the archetype for the cultural, intellectual, and spiritual development of later civilizations.”22 The earliest inhabitants of continental Greece and its surrounding Aegean Islands were a small Neolithic population. These were eventually displaced by bronze working peoples around 3000 B.C. in a period called in Greek history, the Helladic. 23 The Greek history as remembered in the textbooks and in popular conceptions of “Greece,” however, begins with the arrival of the Bronze Age on the island of Crete around 2700 BC. In Greek mythology Crete was ruled over by King Minos, the son of the god Zeus and goddess Europa. By 1700 BC a culturally sophisticated civilization, the Minoan (named after King Minos), had evolved on the island, with life centered around grand palaces spread about the island, with the main palace in the center at Knossos. The Minoan civilization lasted until about 1450 BC when a massive earthquake and perhaps volcanic eruptions destroyed many of the palaces. Only Knossos survived largely intact. Over these 250 years the Minoans dominated the Aegean world, carrying on long distance trade with

---

Europe, pharaonic Egypt and the Near East.\textsuperscript{24} They also evolved a written language, known as Linear A.\textsuperscript{25}

On the Peloponnese and the Greek mainland meanwhile, the Helladic communities grew more slowly and were heavily influenced by the Minoans. The interplay between these cultures led to the birth of a new civilization in the Peloponnese, the Mycenaean. After 1400 B.C. the Mycenaeans overran Knossos but they appeared “to have retained some awe for the Minoan achievement and were ready to adopt much of Minoan culture rather than destroy it.”\textsuperscript{26} Perhaps the most important of these borrowings was the Minoan script, Linear A. The Mycenaeans adapted this script to their language, which was an archaic form of Greek, and this adaptation is now known as Linear B.\textsuperscript{27} The Mycenaean civilization, ruled over loosely by a warrior aristocracy from its main palace and citadel at Mycenae, in the northeastern Peloponnese, lasted until about 1100 B.C. The Mycenaeans, like the Minoans before them, participated in the great trading networks of the Mediterranean and Aegean seas.\textsuperscript{28}

The Mycenaean age was a time of great inspiration, of story telling, myth making, hero-worshipping,\textsuperscript{29} comprising as it does the beginning of the Homeric age (ca. 1200 BC-750 BC), and the time of the Trojan War (ca. 1260-1240 BC). Accounts of this great war and its aftermath began as oral traditions and then were written down between the 9\textsuperscript{th}

\textsuperscript{24} For this history, see Rodney Castleden, \textit{Minoans. Life in Bronze Age Crete} (New York: Routledge, 1993).
\textsuperscript{25} Freeman, \textit{Greek Achievement}, pp. 28-32.
\textsuperscript{26} Ibid., p. 32.
\textsuperscript{28} Garland, \textit{Daily Life}, pp. 1-3; Budin, \textit{Ancient Greeks}, pp. 53-54.
and 6th centuries BC as epic poems, the *Iliad* (the West’s earliest known literary work) and the *Odyssey*. Traditionally attributed to the Greek poet, Homer (ca. 7th-8th centuries BC), the *Iliad* recounts how the Achaeans (part of the Mycenaean civilization in the Peloponnese) laid siege to and then sacked Troy (in northwest Anatolia in modern Turkey). The *Odyssey* describes in wondrous flights of imagination the return home of the Greek hero Odysseus. The Mycenaean civilization began to decline between 1200 and 1100 B.C. Scholars have offered several explanations for how this came about: the steady migration of Dorians, or more primitive Hellenic northern tribesmen; invasions of “Sea Peoples,” (seafaring raiders in the Aegean Sea); climatic or environmental calamity; and internal power struggles. None of these so far have proven entirely satisfactory.30 What is known is that Bronze Age civilization collapsed across the eastern Mediterranean world at this time, and the Mycenaeans disappear from history, along with their Linear B script.

Even less is known about the cultures that followed the Minoan and Mycenaean civilizations after 1100 BC. The following three hundred years (ca. 1100 BC to ca. 800 BC) are popularly referred to as the Greek Dark Ages, although this appears to be due more to a lack of archaeological record than to lack of cultural or social advances.31 Athens, which has been continuously inhabited for over seven thousand years, had been an important settlement during the Mycenaean age and a major Mycenaean fortress sat atop the Acropolis. Athens, too, went into decline during this period, but by 900 BC had grown into a formidable center of commerce.32 Toward the end of the Dark Ages, during

a period known as the Archaic Age (800 – 480 BC), the concept of the polis, or city-state, such as Athens, developed. Primarily, polis referred to the body of citizens (with the right of citizenship) who ruled the city. The polis represented a sophisticated political and social organization and made its distinctive mark on classical Greece. Sparta, in the Peloponnese region, evolved into a strong city-state as well, and by about 650 BC had become a rival to Athens.\textsuperscript{33} Their disparate cultures demarcated the two patterns of bifurcated political development. Athens was associated with Hellenic democracy, possessed a more cosmopolitan atmosphere, and had access to the sea, which gave it a great advantage over the landlocked Sparta, which remained isolated and authoritarian, more concerned with the military than with the cultural.\textsuperscript{34} Besides these two centers of power, other individual city-states developed as well into independent political entities in their own right, leading to internecine warfare. However, the eventual creation of the Olympics in 776 B.C. and other Panhellenic festivals at religious centers such as Delphi, Olympia, and Eleusis brought Greeks together as a collective culture.\textsuperscript{35}

In the fifth century B.C., Athens emerged as a symbolic leader to stave off the westward expansion of the Persians. Athens also forged an alliance among Greek city-states under the moniker of the Delian League. The Athenians and their allies turned back several attempted Persian invasions led by Xerxes II between 499 and 479 B.C., including the battle of Marathon in 490 BC, and the great naval victory at Salamis in 480 BC. After Salamis Xerxes returned to Persia but left behind a large land army that he

\textsuperscript{33} Ibid., pp. 9-12; Budin, \textit{Ancient Greeks}, pp. 78-79.
believed could defeat the Greeks. This large Persian force lost the battle of Plataea in the following year, however.\textsuperscript{36} Persian attacks eventually came to an end in 451 when the Greeks signed a mutual non-hostility treaty with Persia, the Peace of Kallias, effectively ending the Delian League. For the next several decades most fighting was between Greece and Sparta and their respective allies.\textsuperscript{37}

Greece now entered its “Golden Age.” This time period delineated the emergence of Hellenic culture, producing the art and literature for which ancient Greece is most known and admired. Playwrights such as Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, and Aristophanes gave the world tragedy and comedy; Herodotus and Thucydides wrote the first histories, and sculptors and architects left the world masterpieces in stone that still survive today.\textsuperscript{38}

Conflict between the Athenians and Spartans—the Peloponnesian Wars (458-45, 431-404 B.C.)—over commerce and culture brought an end to this idyllic Golden Age. Thucydides’ account of the second of these wars (to 411 BC) earned him the honor of being recognized, along with Herodotus, as one of the first true historians.\textsuperscript{39} Sparta was the ultimate victor, but it left both powerful centers depleted of many resources.\textsuperscript{40}


\textsuperscript{37} Budin, \textit{Ancient Greeks}, pp. 69-77.


\textsuperscript{40} Freeman, \textit{Greek Achievement}, p. 214.
the next century political turmoil lent itself to the philosophical contemplations of Socrates, Plato and Aristotle, but also brought an end to Athenian and Spartan domination. Macedonia, Greece’s neighbor to the north, under the Macedonian king, Philip II, invaded Greece and subjugated the Greek city-states. Philip was assassinated in 336 B.C. and was succeeded by his son, Alexander the Great. Alexander united and centralized Greece and expanded his empire to Greece, Egypt, and beyond, with Greek serving as the official imperial language. Alexander died in Babylon in 323 B.C. at age 33, but the dissemination of Greek culture and commerce continued after his demise and the subsequent collapse of the Macedonian empire, during what is known as the Hellenistic Period (ca. 323-30 BC). Much of the eastern Mediterranean, from Macedonia to southern Turkey, Syria, Iran, and Egypt, were influenced by Hellenic or Greek culture and language at this time. The period ended with the emergence of the Roman Empire and its capture of Ptolemaic Egypt in 30 BC.

Macedonia continued to rule Greece for the next two hundred years, but the city-state structure prevailed. The Romans waged four wars against Macedonia and in 148 B.C. Macedonia became a Roman province, and Greece became a Roman protectorate. The Romans considered Greece one of the favorite parts of their empire, and the period

---

42 Freeman, Greek Achievement, pp. 315-23.
45 Budin, Ancient Greeks, p. 19.
of Roman rule (ca. 27 B.C. to ca. 4th century A.D.) was one of peace and prosperity and Greek culture flourished.\textsuperscript{46}

The Emperor Diocletian reorganized the Roman Empire in A.D. 285 and split it between the eastern Latin-speaking half and the eastern Greek-speaking half. His successor, Constantine, established a new capital at the site of Byzantium, or the “New Rome,” in A.D. 330 and named it Constantinople. Constantinople remained the center of power of the Byzantium Empire for nearly twelve centuries until its capture by the Ottoman Turks in 1453.\textsuperscript{47} During its existence, the Byzantine Empire was Greek in language and culture and Roman in law and administration. In 391 A.D., Emperor Theodosius I made Christianity the official state religion, to the exclusion of all others, and a patriarchate was established in Constantinople with ecclesiastical jurisdiction over the eastern Greek portion of the empire. The Greek Church was not as formidable in its stately power as the Latin Church with its pope, and had to subordinate its interests to that of the state. Theological and political differences resulted in a great schism between the Greek and Latin churches in 1054, when the Greek patriarch refused to recognize the Latin pope’s claim to supreme power and authority. The Greek Church claimed it possessed the true faith for it practiced the tenets of Christian orthodoxy as taught by the original Apostles.\textsuperscript{48}

\textsuperscript{46} Freeman, \textit{Greek Achievement}, pp. 409-33.
\textsuperscript{48} Erickson, \textit{Orthodox Christians}, p.8. For a brief discussion of this schism, see Norwich, \textit{Short History}, pp. 228-230.
Christianity replaced the Hellenistic religious practices that were considered pagan by Christians, and Hellenes were marginalized to the Roman/Byzantine backwater. Over time continental Greece was overrun by Persians, Arabs, Turks, and Slavs. The latter people were assimilated into the Greek population through the Greek Church. Greek Orthodox missionaries had gone out from Constantinople and two of them, Saint Cyril and his brother Saint Methodius, standardized the Slavic language, called Old Church Slavonic, and translated the Greek bible and other sacred texts for worship. A modified form of the Greek alphabet, the Cyrillic alphabet, was later adopted as the Slavic writing system and is still in use today.\textsuperscript{49} This missionary work by Cyril, Methodius and others enabled the Eastern Orthodox Christianity to become culturally embedded into the Bulgarian, Serbian, Ukrainian, and Russian populations.\textsuperscript{50} Western European conquerors and merchants had also become intrigued and attracted to the Byzantine Empire, both by its wealth, and also by its weakness. Constantinople was sacked in 1204 by the armies of the Fourth Crusade, and some of the Aegean Islands fell to the French crusaders.\textsuperscript{51} The French also separated some of the conquered Greek territory into feudal states, creating a “New France,” making the infusion of western institutions into Greek society inevitable.\textsuperscript{52}

Over the next one hundred years there was constant warfare between Greeks and French as well as invasion by other European countries, such as the city-states of Venice and Genoa. In 1205, a Burgundian knight, Otto de la Roche, set up his residence on the

\textsuperscript{50} Herrin, \textit{Byzantium}, pp. 31-38; Papanikolas, \textit{An Amulet}, pp.13-14).  
\textsuperscript{51} Herrin, \textit{Byzantium}, p. 262-63; Shinn and Keefe, \textit{Greece}, p. 15.  
\textsuperscript{52} Herrin, \textit{Byzantium}, p. 270-80.
Acropolis in Athens and established a Crusader state known as the Duchy Athens. The Parthenon became the Duke’s church.\textsuperscript{53} Athens was taken by the Catalans in 1311, passed to the Florentines in 1388, and then conquered by the Turks in 1456. The Byzantine Greek Palaeologi (ruling family name) dynasty of Nicea was the last dynasty of the Byzantine Empire. They had fled Constantinople after its sacking during the Fourth Crusade. In 1259 they recaptured Constantinople, restored the Byzantine Empire and ruled over it until the fall of Constantinople to the Ottoman Turks in 1453.\textsuperscript{54} The Italian city-states, however, retained control of a number of Greek islands; Venice controlled Crete until 1699.\textsuperscript{55} After the sack of Constantinople in 1453, many Byzantine Greek scholars, or \textit{logioi}, and intellectuals fled to the West and became part of the European Renaissance, most notably the painter Dominicos Theotocopoulos, better known as El Greco, who settled in Spain.\textsuperscript{56}

During the centuries of Ottoman rule from 1453 to 1821, the Turkish rulers generally treated Greeks on the mainland and the islands as inferior, marking the origin of the hatred between the Greeks and Turks, and the recurring conflicts between the two peoples. Christianity was subsumed under Islam. Taxes became particularly burdensome, and the law required that in every Christian family one male in five between the ages of ten and twenty be conscripted to serve in the sultan’s army. This was a tax called the “tribute of children,” and provoked Greek resistance in the form of bandits, or \textit{klephts}.

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{53} Herrin, \textit{Byzantium}, p. 272; Shinn and Keefe, \textit{Greece}, p. 15.
\item \textsuperscript{54} Herrin, \textit{Byzantium}, 190-91, 263, 282, 299-320.
\item \textsuperscript{55} Ibid., p. 269; Shinn and Keefe, \textit{Greece}, p. 15.
\end{itemize}
(originally meaning thief or brigand, but here, anti-Ottoman insurgents), who targeted not only Turks but anyone who subjugated and oppressed Greeks.\(^{57}\)

Despite the tumultuous four centuries of Ottoman rule, it was the Greek Orthodox religion that codified the criterion for defining Greek nationality. “To be an Orthodox Christian was to be a Greek, just as a Greek who converted to Islam thereby became a Turk.”\(^{58}\) Under the Ottoman Turks, each religious community was regarded as autonomous, which allowed the Greek Orthodox Church to wield power despite the downgraded status of Christianity. The patriarch of Constantinople was the spiritual head of the church and was also responsible for the civil administration of the populace, thereby giving him tremendous power as the political head of the Greek community.\(^{59}\) This arrangement allowed the Greeks to survive as a people during centuries under foreign rule.\(^{60}\) These Orthodox Christian communities were called “millets” and the patriarch was titled the \textit{ethnarch} (ruler/leader). The patriarch and other church leaders held authority over all civil matters, such as marriage, divorce, guardianship of minors, testaments, and successions. The \textit{ethnarch} also collected the taxes for this system that lasted over 400 years. The patriarch was a most powerful localized figure, both in law and in practice.\(^{61}\)


\(^{59}\) Ibid.

\(^{60}\) Scourby, \textit{Greek Americans}, p. 2.

\(^{61}\) Kourvetaris, \textit{Studies}, p. 5.
Within each of the small communities, occupationally, Greeks were usually farmers, vintners, or shepherds. J.K. Campbell studied the lives of shepherds in Sarakatsani, north of Corinth, and concluded that during the Byzantine period, shepherds were not considered as important as merchants, traders, or scholars, and yet they became important within their own sphere. He refers to the shepherds as *Vlachs*, or, “shepherds who, in step with the rhythm of the seasons, lead their animals alternately down to the plains and up to the mountains.”

Campbell also describes an alliance of approximately forty-six villages, formed by the 18th century, which became entrepreneurial, traveling into Romania, as an example, and establishing trade agreements between the alliance and Romanian and other merchants. As a result, the shepherds earned more money, returned home and created more prosperous communities. However, grazing land began to shrink through the nineteenth century, lessening the shepherds’ ability to earn even a modest living.

Over time, as corruption within the Turkish ruling class grew, and the ideological and economic foundations of the empire began to erode, a small Greek elite, known as the Phanariots, grew in political power. Of greater significance for the nationalist movement “was the emergence in the course of the eighteenth century of an entrepreneurial, widely dispersed and prosperous mercantile class, whose activities were

---

65 Clogg, *Concise History*, p. 20-21. The Phanariots came from prominent families living in the Phanar, the main Greek quarter of Constantinople.
as much based outside as within the Ottoman domains.”66 This Greek mercantile class expanded their trade into Asia Minor, central Europe and the Black Sea. “By the eighteenth century, Greek traders dominated commerce in the Aegean, and their profits, much of what was returned to the mainland, helped to provide funds for education and cultural development in Greece.”67 Clogg points out how it was these merchants that were responsible for supporting the intellectual revival that was such a vital factor in the development of a national consciousness, an awareness of a specifically Greek rather than merely Orthodox Christian identity…They endowed schools and libraries, and subsidized the publication…of an increasingly secular body of literature aimed at a specifically Greek audience…Perhaps most important of all, [they] enabled young Greeks to study in the universities of western Europe…[and] here they came into contact not only with the heady ideas of the Enlightenment, of the French Revolution and of romantic nationalism but they were made aware of the extraordinary hold which the language and civilization of ancient Greece had over the minds of their educated European contemporaries.68

Thus, not only did Greek commerce and culture survive and spread under Ottoman rule, but Greek nationalist sentiments also developed, which led to the formation of a Greek independence movement during the first two decades of the 1800’s.

In the spring of 1821 a full-scale rebellion against Ottoman rule began in the mountainous Peloponnesus, where there had always been strong and violent opposition to the Muslim Ottomans. This War of Greek Independence lasted until 1832 and gained external support from Russia, Britain, and France. These nations were anxious to help because of the power vacuum they believed would be created with the demise of the Ottoman Empire and the disruption of commercial activity in the area. While the Turks

66 Ibid., p. 21.
67 Scourby, Greek Americans, p. 17. See also Clogg, Concise History, pp. 21-27.
68 Clogg, Concise History, pp. 25, 27.
were fighting the Greeks, they also went to war in 1828 with Russia. The Ottoman sultan soon was forced to sue for peace and according to the Treaty of Adrianople that concluded the Russo-Turkish War, Russia forced Turkey to recognize Greece as an independent republic in 1829, although Crete and Thessaly remained in Turkish control.\footnote{Shinn and Keefe, Greece, pp. 20-21.}

The Greek War of Independence was not simply a political event but also a time when Greeks expressed and reaffirmed their Hellenism, or Greekness, and underscored the importance of Greece to European civilization. In his book, \textit{The Necessary Nation}, Gregory Judanis discusses this discourse of Hellenism by Greek intellectuals during the rebellion against Ottoman rule. Although small farmers, shepherds, and peasants fomented the revolution in the Peloponnesus area, it was Greek intellectuals who became the national voice of Greece and sought acceptance in the West “by tracing a direct relationship between their own modern nation and European culture, taking advantage of the prominent position Hellenism enjoyed in the West.”\footnote{Gregory Judanis, \textit{The Necessary Nation} (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001): 111.} They promoted Greece’s uniqueness in world history. Judanis argues that even if the Greek intellectuals did not begin the rebellion and did not have much input in the formation or development of the future Greek state, “they had a formative impact on the modernization project, for they provided a set of models, discourses, and symbols of a unified nation.”\footnote{Ibid., p. 112.} For the creation of a national identity a sense of collective destiny needed to be developed with a national story. Thus, a link between the classical, ancient Greece and the present presented a unified Greek voice to the world. Judanis suggests that these Greek intellectuals “set out to create a sense of collective destiny” and fashion a national story that ran like this:
“Oppressed, humiliated, denied enlightenment, Greeks should rebel against the Turks; they should realize that, rather than the toiling peasants of a decaying Oriental empire, they were the descendants of ancient Hellas, the spring of Europe and modern Enlightenment.” A cultural, linguistic, historical, geographic, and ethnic integrity became the narrative and was, according to Judanis, transformed into Greek nationalism. This narrative spread throughout the West.

There was great popular sympathy for the Greek cause during the Greek War of Independence in Europe and in the United States due to the classical Greek heritage embedded in the West’s culture. For example, notable figures such as Lord Byron and the physician Samuel Howe both traveled to Greece and joined the revolutionaries. The London Philhellenic Committee loaned approximately three million pounds in 1824 and 1825 to the cause. Scholars in Scotland, artists in France, poets, and other writers and politicians throughout Europe and the United States galvanized great public sympathy for the Greeks and Philhellenism became romanticized as young intellectuals related modern events in Greece to those of Greece’s ancient past. The words of Percy Bysshe Shelley, who had never been to Greece, are representative of the naiveté and false assumptions that many of these young romantics held: “We are all Greeks. Our laws, our literature, "

---

72 Ibid.
73 Ibid., pp. 112-13.
our religion, our arts have their roots in Greece. But for Greece, we might still have been savages and idolaters.”

Official United States policy was one of cautious support. In 1822 President Monroe had invoked the Monroe Doctrine, one of whose main principles was non-interference by the United States in European affairs. There were many in Congress, however, who lobbied for an exception in regard to the Greeks. Led by Daniel Webster, a great Congressional debate over Greece ensued in January 1824. These debates did not sway formal policy since there was significant commercial interest in that area of the world and it was crucial to maintain a neutral stance with regard to the Ottoman government. United States government reticence, however, was in sharp contrast to the “Greek fever” popularized by the public press in the 1820’s. Following the lead of the poets, writers, artists, and dramatists, hundreds of newspaper articles were written recording key battles and recounting stories of Greek personalities. From a religious perspective, many Americans viewed the Greek War of Independence as a Christian struggle against Muslims and tyranny. Moved by the “Greek fever,” some Americans raised funds for the Greek armies. The U.S. government did not interfere with these private efforts, which eventually ebbed as the war ended.

Although the war for Greek independence against the Ottoman Turks would continue until 1932, a Greek National Assembly was formed in 1827 and elected Ioannis Kapodistrias (John Capodistrias, 1776-1831) as their new head of state – with the Greek title of Governor (Kvemetes). A native of the Greek island of Corfu, Kapodistrias

---

76 Quoted in Howarth, Greek Adventure, p. 73.
trained as a medical doctor and then became a diplomat, serving for some years as a foreign minister for the Russian Tsar, Alexander I. He was one of the most admired and illustrious European diplomats, and certainly Greece’s most famous politician. His biographer calls him “the first international civil servant.”

After negotiating a peace treaty with the European powers and the Ottoman Empire, Kapodistrias attempted a program of reform and modernization, re-establishing a standing militia, introducing medical protocol to stem epidemics, creating the first modern Greek currency, organizing local civil administration, and introducing the cultivation of the potato. He is now considered the founder of Greek independence, and the father of the modern Greek state. Despite his many positive accomplishments, however, Kapodistrias was not supported by many of the traditional clans that had wielded economic and political power before and during the war. He was assassinated on October 9, 1831 on his way to church. Kapodistrias’ younger brother, Augustinos, succeeded him as governor, but his rule lasted only six months while Greece fell into chaos.

At the London Conference of May, 1832 the Great Powers (France, Britain, and Russia), without Greek input, met to create a stable government in Greece, and

---

79 The definitive English biography of Kapodistrias is Woodhouse, Capodistria, but see also Clogg, Concise History, pp. 41-45; Douglas Dakin, Unification, 55-63; and Christopher Montague Woodhouse, Modern Greece. A Short History (London: Faber and Faber, 1991): 148-56.
established the Kingdom of Greece as a free and independent Greek state. The Greek crown was bestowed upon Otto, the younger son of the King of Bavaria. Otto was a minor at this juncture, so Bavarian Regents governed the country until 1835. The Great Powers also moved to put an end to the Greek War of Independence with the Ottoman Turks. On July 21, 1832 the Great Powers and the Ottoman Empire concluded the Treaty of Constantinople, which set the boundaries for the new Kingdom of Greece.\(^81\)

The new kingdom had been ravaged by years of war, and the country was in chaos, in some places depopulated and in others crowded with refugees. Peasants still practiced primitive forms of agriculture to produce crops on what were often marginal soils at best. On the other hand, nearly nine million acres of land that had been taken from, or abandoned by, Muslim Ottoman owners during the war was now available for settlement. These lands were nationalized, considered as public land, and designated “National Estates.”\(^82\)

Various attempts were made by the Greek government to construct a plan for distributing the national estates but agreement could never be reached among the different factions. Governor Kapodistrias came the closest by attempting first to simply identify and quantify all of the land that might be considered a part of the national estates but his assassination in 1831 put an end to all his efforts. Finally, in 1835 the Bavarian Regency passed a “Law for the Dotation of Greek Families,” which “was the major undertaking of the Bavarian regime in the area of social and economic reform and

---

\(^81\) Dakin, *Greek Struggle*, pp. 310-12; Woodhouse, *Capodistria*, pp. 504-07.

Two of the law’s primary objectives were 1) “to settle uprooted peasants, itinerant workers, indigent veterans, refugees, and to attract mountaineers to a more sedentary and productive way of life,” thereby “giving even the most volatile elements of the population a stake in the new order;” and 2) to “establish private ownership of land, thereby ending the Ottoman system…and laying the basis for a free and politically independent citizenry.” This act allocated 2,000 drachmas credit to every Greek family with which they could purchase at auction a twelve-acre farm at a low-percentage loan rate.

The Dotation Law was a noble gesture, but it suffered from many shortcomings, not the least of which was an immediate drop in the value of the drachma as the effect of the issuance of credit certificates was the same as a massive printing of currency. The sale by auction of the national estates’ land also caused a quick rise in the value of the land, thereby reducing the amount a family could purchase. Another particularly onerous requirement was that the buyer “begin payments within one year of purchase irrespective of whether the farm was productive.” Subsequent government clarifications, refinements, and revisions to the law “were all pathetic endeavors to salvage a scheme which was doomed from the outset.”

The government had anticipated over 150,000 families purchasing land in the first year of the law—and filling government coffers with immense revenues—but by the end of 1836 only 835 families had completed the cumbersome process and received their

---

83 Ibid., p. 161.
84 Ibid., pp. 161-62.
Over the coming decades government distribution of the national estates remained stagnant as few peasant families applied for the dotation. Moreover, agricultural production for cash markets continued to be nearly non-existent, not only because the farmers did not own their own land, or because the soil was poor and the farming methods antiquated, but also because Greek farmers had almost no access to markets.

McGrew, in his extensive study of land tenure in nineteenth century Greece, observes that “In the early 1850s the total length of roads was under one hundred miles, consisting mostly of approaches to the major towns; by 1862, 150 miles of roads had been constructed throughout the country. A typical village was Karpofora in Messenia [in the southwestern Peloponnese], which in the nineteenth century had no road wide enough for a cart to pass. Though situated close to a fertile plain and only a few miles from the sea, its fundamentally family-subistence economy had very weak links to the cash market until about 1880. Produce could not be moved from the villages of Greece across mountains, rivers, and marshes. Only large expenditures of capital could hasten the otherwise slow process of economic growth, but capital was the resource in shortest supply.”

The Bavarian Regents also turned their attention to developing the infrastructure, and here they were somewhat more successful. Although their actions were unpopular, they did put in place modern systems of education, justice, military and administration. A centralized bureaucracy was established, which replaced the local, and autonomous,

87 An interesting discussion of land use and peasant farming in Greece is found in Gallant, Modern Greece, pp. 91-97.
88 McGrew, Land and Revolution, p. 175.
control of the landowners and priests. The Orthodox Church was declared independent, yet subordinate to the state, as Otto was a Roman Catholic and now official head of the Church. Athens was restored as the capital of the country in 1834, although it was not much more than a “dusty village.” The intent was for Athens to be the symbol of the classical period of Greece’s history merging into the new modern times.

Greek nationalists led a revolt in 1843 and forced Otto to draft a constitution granting universal male suffrage. Otto also convened a Greek National Assembly. One important member of the National Assembly was Ioannis Kolettis (1773-1847), who was also a trained doctor. A charismatic politician, Kolettis was elected prime minister in 1844 and remained in that post until his death in 1847. There was constant tension between Otto and Kolettis, however, which resulted in a confusing struggle over power and patronage. During debates between the two in 1844, Kolettis first referred to the *Megali Idéa* (Greek for the “Big Idea”)—the nationalist goal of Greek unification of all the lands and islands of the former Byzantine Empire, with Constantinople as the capital. It was nationalism without boundaries, as one early nationalist, Benjamin of Lesvos, known as the “teacher to the nation,” declared: “Nature has set limits to the aspirations of other men, but not to those of the Greeks. The Greeks were not in the past and are not now subject to the laws of nature.” At the time, only about a third of all Greeks of the old Ottoman Empire lived within the boundaries of the new Greek state—the rest

---

remained under Turkish rule. The “Big Idea” dominated Greek politics for the rest of the 
nineteenth century and into the early twentieth century.\footnote{92}{Clogg, Concise History, pp. 46-55; Dakin, Unification, 82-86; Gallant, Modern Greece, 54-60.}

In 1863 Greek nationalists forced King Otto from power and asked Britain, 
Russia, and France to find a replacement for him. They chose a young Danish prince, 
William George (1845-1913) of the House of Glücksburg, and the National Assembly 
elected him King George I of the Hellenes. George had married a Russian grand duchess, 
and his two sisters, Alexandra and Dagmar, were the wives of the British King Edward 
VII and the Tsar Alexander III of Russia respectively. His wife was Russian Orthodox, 
and to further demonstrate his allegiance to the Church, he allowed his sons to be raised 
in the Greek Orthodox faith.\footnote{93}{Gallant, Modern Greece, p. 45); Clogg, Concise History, pp. 55-57, 240-241.}

George I ruled as king until his death in 1913. He founded 
a Greek royal dynasty, the House of Glücksburg, which lasted until 1973, when the 
Greek military junta in power at that time abolished it.\footnote{94}{Clogg, Concise History, pp. 162-163; Gallant, Modern Greece, p. 203.}

King George proved a popular and influential king and he supported 
constitutionalism, but his reign also had its challenges; for example, there were five 
different governments between 1867 and 1870 alone.\footnote{95}{Woodhouse, Modern Greece, pp, 172; Shinn and Keefe, Greece, p. 26.}

And, daily life changed very little 
for the majority of the Greek population during George’s reign. Approximately 75% still 
lived in small villages and were small-scale farmers, many living in abject poverty 
without amenities or supportive infrastructure such as running water or adequate 
transportation services. There was no notable middle class and the small wealthy class of 
merchants, ship owners and civil servants contrasted starkly with the large peasant
class. King George did engage in an effort to systematize public education across the
country and the University of Athens, founded in 1837, assisted in the development and
emergence of a more educated elite group of liberal arts experts and engineers.  

When King George I took the throne, the population of Greece was approximately
750,000. The new state was comprised of central Greece, the Peloponnese, and the
Aegean Islands of the Cyclades. Macedonia and Thessaly remained as part of the
Ottoman Empire. The British held the Ionian Islands. In 1864, the British ceded the
Ionian Islands to Greece, which added approximately 1800 square miles to Greece’s
landmass and increased its population by 236,000. In 1881 Greece annexed Thessaly,
which at the time consisted of large estates. The estate owners preferred leasing the land
to shepherds for grazing, which limited agricultural production. Those peasants who did
farm were obligated to surrender between one third and one half of their yield to the
owners, thus limiting their incentive to produce.  

In the 1880’s the Greek economy continued to decline as imports measured far in
excess of exports, especially manufactured products and food grains. Approximately
75% of adult males were engaged in agriculture, fishing, or forestry in 1870 and that
number fell only to 62% by 1907. There were some wealthy shipowners and landowners
but the majority of the population remained little better off than they were at
independence. Agricultural development made little progress during the nineteenth

96 Shinn and Keefe, Greece, pp. 24-25.
97 Dakin, Unification, pp. 95-96; Shinn and Keefe, Greece: p. 25; Gallant, Modern
Greece, pp. 107-112.
98 Dakin, Unification, p.100.
99 Stavros T. Constantine, “Profiles of Greek Americans,” in Kate A. Berry and Martha
L. Henderson, eds. Geographical Identities of Ethnic America: Race, Space, and Place
century, as primitive farming methods and marginal lands continued to hinder greater crop production. William Moffett, U.S. Consul in Athens reported in 1888 that agriculture is here in the most undeveloped condition. Even in the immediate neighborhood of Athens it is common to find the wooden plow and the rude mattock [hand tool for digging and chopping], which were in use 2,000 years ago. Fields are plowed up or scratched over, and crops replanted season after season, until the exhausted soil will bear no more. Fertilizers are not used to any appreciable extent, and the farm implements are of the very rudest description. Irrigation is in use in some districts, and, as far as I can ascertain, the methods in use can be readily learned by a study of the practices of the ancient Egyptians. Greece has olives and grapes in abundance, and of quality not excelled; but Greek olive oil and Greek wine will not bear transportation.  

Despite the difficulties in transportation, currants and olives became the main export crops, which, as we shall see, would prove disastrous.

In addition, the issue of land distribution remained a major point of contention among the peasants, for, as we have seen, the Dotation Law had been a complete failure. In the late 1880’s, land allotment established multiple, small family subsistence farming that did not offer economic profit or growth. Conversely, larger estates and plantations were formed “through foreclosures and expropriation of peasant families.” In the Peloponnesus, Ionian Islands, and Thessaly, the large estates produced currants primarily and were worked by tenants or hired labor.

During this time period, however, some reforms were attempted, particularly in education. Between 1860-1900 male enrollment in primary schools increased from

---

101 Gallant, Modern Greece, pp. 49-50.
102 Ibid., p. 50.
44,000 to 178,000; secondary school enrollment rose from 6,000 to 240,000; university students gained enrollment from 1,100 to 3,300. For girls, significant improvement was noted in primary schools with enrollment increasing significantly from 8,000 to 82,000.\footnote{Ibid., p. 50; Dakin, Unification, pp. 96, 253-55.}

How to finance the needed reform for education and for the infrastructure necessary to move Greece forward economically became the ongoing and unanswered query. Greece had taken on major debts to finance its wars and conflicts and by 1887, approximately forty percent of the governmental budget went to servicing the national debt. In the early 1890s, as one strategy to pay the notes, then Prime Minister Charilaos Trikoupis (1832-1896) levied taxes on the general populace and instituted taxes on wine, tobacco, sheep, goats, oxen, and donkeys. The economy could not sustain the level of taxation and debt and, together with the momentous decline of currant prices, collapsed. By 1893, Greece was bankrupt.\footnote{Dakin, Unification, p. 144; Galant, Modern Greece, p. 51; Shinn and Keefe, Greece, p. 27.}

Greece’s financial difficulties as well as political turmoil did not prevent the country from agreeing to host the Games of the 1st Olympiad, the first international Olympic Games of the modern era, in April 1896. Expected to cost 3,740,000 gold drachmas (about 20 million American dollars at that time), King George and government leaders managed through private gifts, public donations, and a special set of postage
stamps issued to commemorate the games, to raise enough funding to put them on. Despite the costs, the games were a success and revived Greek patriotism.\footnote{Karl Lennartz and Stephen Wassong, “Athens 1896,” in \textit{Encyclopedia of the Modern Olympic Movement}, edited by John E. Findling and Kimberly D. Pelle (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2004): 20-21, 24.}

This patriotism found a new focus in the following years as long-standing disagreements over territorial possessions, particularly over the “Cretan Question,” between Greece and the Ottoman Turks became more heated. Although the majority of people living on Crete were Greeks, the island remained under Ottoman rule. When, in January 1897, Cretan Greeks revolted against the Turks, Ottoman Muslim forces carried out massacres against the Greek Christian population to put down the rebellion. When the Great Powers took no action to intervene, and with extreme Greek nationalist politicians calling for retaliation, King George moved to seize the island on 3 February 1897, sending a Greek force of about 1800 men and Greek warships.

King George’s actions spurred the Great Powers to action and they intervened, declaring on 25 February 1897, that Crete was to come under autonomous administration under Ottoman suzerainty. All Greek and Ottoman forces were to be removed from the island. The Turks removed their troops but the Greeks refused. When the Greeks dispatched more troops, the Ottoman sultan, Abdul Hamid II, declared war. Despite Greek Prime Minister, Theodoros Deligiannis (in off. 1895-1897) and King George throwing their full support behind the war, and receiving the enthusiastic endorsement of masses of Greek patriots, the Turks quickly defeated the Greeks by the end of April 1897. One positive outcome of the war was that it signaled the presence of a genuinely
nationalist movement that was uniquely Greek, defined by the country and not just by religious affiliation.\textsuperscript{106}

Another positive outcome was the emergence of a Cretan politician, Eleftherios Venizelos (1864-1936), who would become “the most charismatic politician of the first half of the twentieth century.”\textsuperscript{107} British Prime Minister Lloyd George called him “the greatest statesmen Greece had thrown up since the days of Pericles.”\textsuperscript{108} A lawyer by training, Venizelos had joined the island’s Liberal Party in 1889, and his reputation reached near mythical proportions when he led a force of about 2000 rebels against Ottoman military positions in the revolt of January/February 1897. Venizelos was appointed Minister of Justice in the new autonomous Cretan government, but resigned his post in 1901. In 1905 he led what became known as the Theriso Revolution. In this insurrection Venizelos organized a provisional government (centered in his mother’s home town of Theriso), and declared Cretan independence with the eventual goal of forming a single political union between Crete and the Kingdom of Greece. Crete eventually achieved official independence in 1913.\textsuperscript{109}

Meanwhile Venizelos’ actions in Crete had moved him onto the national Greek stage, and in 1910 his Liberal Party won a majority of the seats in the Greek National Assembly. In 1911, as prime minister, Venizelos’s party introduced and enacted almost fifty constitutional amendments. These related to land reform as well as social reforms.

\textsuperscript{107} Clogg, \textit{Concise History}, pp. 71, 255-56.
such as minimum wages for women and children, and the legalization of trade unions. Taxation was addressed and a progressive tax system was installed, although it did not detract from the traditional reliance on taxing the poor. Venizelos was supported by the business class and sought to gain appeal from the working classes. He personally took charge of the army and marine ministries. All of these policies created a new positive energy for Greece as a nation.\textsuperscript{110}

However, despite his reforms, Venizelos preserved the basic essentials of the 1864 government and strengthened the position of the monarchy. This created a schism later between pro- and anti-monarchy factions that tested loyalties among Greece’s citizens.\textsuperscript{111}

While nationalism was reignited, the reality of life for Greek peasants was quite another story. The war had resulted in higher taxes and once again the disproportionate share of the burden fell upon the rural citizens. Revenue from the taxes was spent upon infrastructure primarily in Athens to support the building of public structures, streetcars and power systems in addition to ports. Politicians rarely traveled outside of Athens to inspect the rural areas and inquire about peasant’s needs. Peasant hostility to the government was evident in the delinquent taxes due from the farmers and shepherds. Between 1882 and 1891, for example, the Greek government was over 75 million drachmas in arrears.\textsuperscript{112}

Meanwhile, proponents of the Big Idea (\textit{Megali Idéa}) shifted their focus geographically to the north of Greece, and especially to the region of Macedonia, which

\textsuperscript{110} Clogg, \textit{Concise History}, pp. 75-76; Gallant, \textit{Modern Greece}, pp. 116-17, 123-25.  
\textsuperscript{112} Saloutos, \textit{Greeks}, p. 7.
had been a battleground between the Ottoman Empire and Bulgaria, Greece, and Serbia since 1903. These three countries together with Montenegro formed the Balkan League in 1912, in opposition to Ottoman rule and on 8 October 1912, attacked the Turks in the First Balkan War. It ended seven months later with the Treaty of London (May 1913), which forced Turkey to surrender to the Balkan League all of its European territory except eastern Thrace and Albania. Albania was granted independence. But Bulgaria was unhappy with the aftermath of the peace terms, as Greece and Serbia refused to give up parts of Macedonia to Bulgaria as the treaty stipulated. This led to the Second Balkan War in June 1913 that featured a new alliance of Serbia, Greece, the Ottomans, and Romania against Bulgaria. Threatened with being overrun by the allied forces, Bulgaria requested an armistice and agreed to the Treaty of Bucharest (August 1913), which forced them to return some of the gains they had made in the First Balkan War back to Serbia, Romania, Greece, and the Ottomans. The peace agreement awarded Crete, the Aegean Islands, and Macedonia (including Thessaloniki) to Greece. This increased Greece’s landowning by 70 percent and added two million people to its population, increasing it from 2.8 million to 4.8 million.\(^\text{113}\)

On 18 March 1913 King George I was assassinated in Thessaloniki and his son, Constantine, succeeded him. King Constantine was ruler in name only, however, as Venizelos held the real power as Prime Minister.\(^\text{114}\) None of King George’s successors were ever able to gain the public support or to be as influential and powerful as George had been.


When the Great War broke out in August 1914, Greece declared its neutrality. It remained neutral until entering the war on the side of the allies against the Central Powers in May 1917. But events on the ground were much more complex than that. Venizelos aligned himself with Britain, France, and Russia against Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Turkey at the onset of WWI in 1914, believing that they would win, and also that they had the power to blockade Greece and the Greek populations in its various possessions. He is famously quoted as saying, “One cannot kick against geography.”

King Constantine, however, who had a German wife, was the brother-in-law of Kaiser Wilhelm II. He and his court publicly supported Germany and Austria. Constantine did not push to ally Greece with Germany, but he did take a strict stance supporting Greek neutrality. The King and Prime Minister were thus openly at odds, which led to a National Schism – the anti-Venizelos royalist faction and the Venizelos faction. The dispute became so intense that in February 1915 Venizelos resigned but was then re-elected and formed a new government. In December 1915 King Constantine forced Venizelos to resign again and dissolved the Parliament. This on-going conflict divided Greece politically.

In addition, pleading his neutral position, King Constantine refused cooperation with Britain and France in a total Serbian evacuation across Greek territory and surrendered a crucial fortress to the Central Powers in May of 1916. In August of that year, pro-Venizelos troops in Thessaloniki spearheaded a coup against the government. Venizelos established a provisional government based there and formed a

---

116 As we shall see in chapter 5, it also divided Greeks in the United States.
private army to join the Allies. By this time, the Allies had begun a blockade pressuring Constantine to turn over Athens to them.  

In June 1917 Britain and France used their authority as “protecting powers,” which they had technically held from the early 1800s, to push for Greece to adopt a constitutional form of government, and demand King Constantine’s abdication. His younger son, Alexander, who sided with the allies, was made king.  

Venizelos returned to Athens at the end of May 1917, unified the government and the country and officially led Greece into war against the Germans and Austrians. This action proved decisive in the eventual outcome of the war. Numbering 300,000 men, the Greek army now moved north along with an allied force on the so-called Macedonian front. The Greek forces were the critical mass the allies needed to defeat Bulgaria, recapture Serbia, and threaten Hungary. Rather than be invaded, Austria-Hungary surrendered in November 1918, leaving no obstacles between the allied armies and southern Germany, where the Germans were unprepared to fight a war.  

On 11 November 1918 the Germans signed an armistice with the allied forces. As a reward Venizelos was invited to the Paris peace talks as Greece’s chief representative. A skilled diplomat, Venizelos emerged victorious from the talks—Greece was awarded Western

---

Thrace, Eastern Thrace, Smyrna, the Aegean islands of Imros and Tendeos, and the Dodecanese except for Rhodes.\textsuperscript{120}

The war did not end the conflict between the pro-royalist supporters and Venizelos supporters, however, and the feuds carried on for the next twenty years. Two philosophies were in contention: one for a modern and progressive Greek capitalist republic, and the other for a conservative constitutional monarchy.\textsuperscript{121} Greece would remain in political turmoil throughout the twentieth century.

Thus, there were compounding factors that coalesced and served as catalysts for Greeks to migrate from their small farms to other lands. At the end of the nineteenth century, America, the land of freedom and opportunity, beckoned, and families were forced to make important life-changing decisions. Yiorgos D. Kalogeras contends that Greece’s rich history makes Greeks “of particular interest” as an ethnic group of study. For example, they are endowed with “a very old illustrious history” and their countries of origin in regard to immigration to the United States include not only Greece, but countries and regions in eastern Europe and the former Ottoman Empire. The immigrants also spoke other languages than Greek, adding complexity to their linguistic, geographic, and political background.\textsuperscript{122}

\textsuperscript{121} Shinn and Keefe, \textit{Greece}, pp. 34-37; Clogg, \textit{Concise History}, pp. 143, 170
CHAPTER 3: Greek Life in America: The First Generation

In his fictional account of first generation Greeks in America, Harry Mark Petrakis'\textsuperscript{123} recounts the story of the Cretan Greek Kostas Volakis, the only son of Marko, a goat herdsman. Sponsored by his father’s cousin, Stathis Glavas, a restaurant owner in Chicago, Kostas comes to America in 1919. Before his journey, he marries Katerina Paterakis, “the plainest of four daughters of a teacher in a village across the mountains, a girl betrothed at twenty-one by the grace of a dowry supplied by a brother in Melbourne and another brother in Athens.”\textsuperscript{124} The dowry is used to pay for their passage to America. Arriving in Chicago, the couple live in a tenement and they both work twelve to eighteen hours days. Katerina becomes pregnant, which ends her working days, but the son dies in childbirth. Soon thereafter, however, a daughter is born followed by two sons and another daughter. Kostas becomes successful and learns to read and write from the local Greek priest. When his father's cousin returns to Greece, Kostas takes over the restaurant and manages to live through the Depression. The story ends with Kostas approaching sixty and reflecting upon his life. This simple, "typical," Greek immigrant tale contains elements of the thousands of true stories of the first Greek immigrants to America, which is what we will examine in this chapter.

Greeks came late to America, in significant numbers only in the late 1800s and early 1900s. Contemporaneous scholarship on these first generation Greeks, their arrival and lives in America, is relatively scarce.\textsuperscript{125} Henry Pratt Fairchild’s \textit{Greek Immigration}...

\textsuperscript{123} Harry Mark Petrakis, \textit{The Odyssey of Kostas Volakis} (Lincoln, NE: iUniverse, 2000).
\textsuperscript{124} Ibid., p. 3.
\textsuperscript{125} Yirogos D. Kalogeris offers a brief overview of the historiography of Greek immigrants written during the first two decades of the twentieth century. See
to the U.S. (1911), Thomas Burgess’ *Greeks in America* (1912), J.P. Xenides’ *The Greeks in America* (1922), and Seraphim Canoutas’s *Hellenism in America or the History of the Greeks in America* (written in Greek in 1918), are the primary contemporary studies. B. Malafouris’ *The Greeks of America 1528-1948* (1948 – also in Greek) and Theordore Saloutos’ *The Greeks in the United States* (1964) added to the historiography in the decades following the arrival of these first Greeks immigrants.\(^{126}\)

Kalogeres contends that the works of each of these scholars are reflective of the Greek immigrant story at the time when they were written. Thus, the early works were published during a period of nationalistic fervor in Greece and the United States.\(^{127}\) Allan Spear concludes that increasing hostility in the form of racist and anti-immigrant attacks during the period under study resulted in an intensification of the group consciousness of the immigrant peoples. Each ethnic group therefore “organized its own defense associations and began to develop a defiant nationalism which glorified the achievements of the group both in the Old World and in America. One of the manifestations of this nationalism was a flood of filiopietist histories which related, with glowing pride, the important contributions of the various nationalities in American life.”\(^{128}\) These early


\(^{127}\) Kaloger atas, “Narrating,” p. 16.

narratives, Kalogeras maintains, attempted to build bridges between the past and present, for Greeks in both in Greece and in the United States, by conjoining nation and ethnicity in one continuous presence. These studies “implied ties and connections among the members of the group, between them and the pre-Americanized motherland, between the latter and the New World, and finally between the ethnic group and the socio-political becoming in the U.S. and Greece.”

Spears argues that “Hurt and offended by the charges that their people were incapable of appreciating American institutions, the filiopietists emphasized the compatibility of their groups’ values with traditional American ideals. Each immigrant spokesman was eager to show how democracy or freedom of speech or public education was the birthright of his nationality.” Kalogeres argues that this process resulted in the initial creation of the Greek ethnic group, and the link to the past became the fundamental foundation of the construction of a Greek ethnic identity. Therefore, while we utilize these scholars’ research to reconstruct the history of Greek immigration to America, we must also locate each scholar along a timeline of immigration as we examine catalysts for movement, the American experience, settlement strategies and development, occupational choice, socio-political participation, and Greek ethnic identity.

We can begin with Henry Pratt Fairchild, who, in 1911, cited as one catalyst for immigration at that time the difficulties of subsistence farming in Greece due to

---

130 Spear, “Marcus Lee Hansen,” p. 260. Greeks, of course, were in a better position to make this argument than most. Spear notes that for later writers, “the filiopietist works were more useful as source material than for any intrinsic merits of interpretation or insight.” (p. 260) That has been the case in many instances for this writer.
131 Ibid., p. 17.
unfavorable governmental policies and overpopulation relative to the limited, marginal land available.\footnote{132}{Fairchild, \textit{Greek}, p. 7.} In addition, Fairchild noted that Greek peasants continued to employ traditional—that is, not modern—agricultural methods,\footnote{133}{Ibid.} which remained true well into the twentieth century. In her 1943 work, Alice Scourby, also referred to these primitive agricultural practices, and observed that at the end of the 1870’s, 82\% of the Greek population lived in rural villages, on land two-thirds of which was mountainous.\footnote{134}{Alice Scourby, \textit{Greek Americans} (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1984): 3.} At the end of the 1800’s the principal agricultural products of Greece were currants, wheat, olives, figs, corn, hashish, tobacco, and vegetables. Villages were typically self-sustaining, and produced little surplus because the lack of adequate roads and transportation facilities made it difficult to move surplus produce to market. Most of the railroads were privately owned and the cost of moving products to urban areas for consumption or export ate up most, if not all, of the profit.\footnote{135}{Fairchild, \textit{Greek}, pp. 60-63.}

A primary reason for the significant Greek male exodus in the 1890’s was the decline in the price of currants, then Greece’s principal export crop. At this time the majority of currants came from the Peloponnese and some of the islands, and provided “practically the whole currant supply of the world.” Fairchild wrote disapprovingly that “the dependence of the whole Greek people on the currant crop is almost pathetic.”\footnote{136}{Ibid., p. 64.} In the mid-1800s France’s entire grape production was struck by a severe blight caused by the \textit{phylloxera aphid}. These tiny pests destroyed perhaps two-thirds of France’s
vinyards.\textsuperscript{137} This forced France to purchase Greek currants to replace the grape for French wine making. Between 60,000-70,000 tons, or approximately half of Greece’s total currant production, were being shipped to France in the last decades of the nineteenth century.\textsuperscript{138} Fairchild pronounced disparagingly that greed then seized the Greek farmers, who, “allured by the promise of large and speedy profits in currant raising,…allowed the silk culture to decline, and very many of them cut down their fine old olive orchards and planted the ground with vines.”\textsuperscript{139}

The French meanwhile were working feverishly to find a solution to the blight. They found their answer in the grafting of resistant American rootstock, which were not susceptible to the \textit{phylloxera aphid}, to the grafted branches of French vines. By the early 1900s French vineyards had been replanted and replenished (the “Reconstitution” as it was called).\textsuperscript{140} To force a return to French currants, France and Russia also enacted protective tariffs legislat ing Greek currants out of their market. This was an unmitigated economic disaster to the Greeks, who had destroyed multiple olive crops to make use of the land and produce currants.\textsuperscript{141} As Fairchild wrote in the early 1900s, “The depressed state of the currant market is one of the most noticeable features of the economic situation in Greece at the present time….A large part of the crop of 1908 was still lying unsold in the warehouses the following spring.”\textsuperscript{142} Saloutos notes that “the response of

\textsuperscript{138} Saloutos, \textit{Greeks}, p. 28.
\textsuperscript{139} Fairchild, \textit{Greek}, pp. 76-77.
\textsuperscript{140} Cranshaw and Redak, \textit{Bugs Rule!}, p. 238; Fairchild, \textit{Greek}, pp. 76-77.
\textsuperscript{141} Saloutos, \textit{Greeks}, pp. 29.
\textsuperscript{142} Fairchild, \textit{Greek}, p. 77.
many Greeks to this depressed state of affairs was emigration.” The exodus was greatest from the Peloponnesus, the area from where many Greeks immigrants to central Illinois came. Ironically, the main point of embarkation for the immigrants to America was the port of Patras on the northwest coast, which was also the main shipping port for the currant crop.

Another significant impetus to immigration in the late 1800s was the Greco-Turkish War (1896-1897), which required forced military service. Yet another was an indifferent and elitist government, which invested public funds on servicing the ever-present foreign debt while developing Athens instead of investing in the rural areas. In Fairchild’s words, “an indifferent government squandered public funds on party parasites and ignored the welfare of the peasants.” Saloutos agrees, writing that “even Cretans as late as 1912, fourteen years after they had gained their independence from the Turks, complained that they found themselves in the same depressed state they had known under Ottoman rule.” Saloutos concludes that Greek males leaving the country before 1912 usually left for political reasons, as the ongoing strife among the Bulgars, Turks and Greeks made the atmosphere uneasy and unknown. Xenides also cites the desire to

---

143 Saloutos, Greeks, p. 29. Fairchild also points out the timelessness of this truth, “The traditional method of relief...from the burdens of their existence...for the Greek people is emigration.” Fairchild, Greek, pp. 77-78.
144 Fairchild, Greek, p. 65.
145 Scourby, Greek Americans, p. 4.
146 Fairchild, Greek, p. 30.
147 Saloutos, Greeks, p. 30; Fairchild, Greek, p. 30.
148 Ibid., p. 33.
“escape Turkish oppression or military enslavement” as a key element in the decision to immigrate.¹⁴⁹

For women, the dowry system was a driving force of immigration. Saloutos observed that “a duty-bound brother seldom married until after his sisters had obtained husbands.”¹⁵⁰ Ruined crops did not yield any income to provide dowry funds, so fathers and sons left Greece, hoping to make enough money in America to be able to send some back to their families to pay for dowries, as well as to pay for wives or sisters to come over.¹⁵¹ Women looking for husbands and unable to provide dowries “also emigrated, hoping to find suitable mates.” Saloutos finds it surprising, however, “that more women did not take advantage of the matrimonial frontier that emigration opened up.” Perhaps, he surmises, “this was too venturesome an undertaking for the usually restricted women

¹⁴⁹ Xenides, Greeks in America, pp. 30, 38. In a brief biographical essay, Charles Moskos described growing up in an area of Albania to parents who were “born Ottoman subjects of Greek ethnic stock....” The villages surrounding the main town, Argyrocastro, “were predominantly Greek Othrodox. In the town itself, however, Albanian Muslims outnumbered Greek Christians by about three to one. Christians dominated the commerce of the city, but Muslims owned most of the real estate. Many of the Christians spoke Albanian, but they identified with their co-religionists in ‘liberated Greece’ across the border to the south. Such sectarian cum national demographics were the paramount social facts of my father’s (b. 1898) upbringing.” His father left from Patras to Corfu, Italy to America. “His two older brothers and a maternal uncle were already in Chicago. The decision to emigrate to America was inevitable.” In December 1916 “my father – who was born under Ottoman rule, who spoke Albanian as his first tongue, who was technically Greek, who was presumably recorded as an Italian immigrant, and who was to become an American citizen -- arrived at Ellis Island.” Charles C. Moskos, Jr., “Growing Up Greek American,” in Society 14, no. 2 (January-February 1977): 64-71.

¹⁵⁰ Saloutos, Greeks, p. 31.

¹⁵¹ Ibid., pp. 31-32.
to attempt on their own, or perhaps they believed that most men would return to Greece and thus spare them the need of going to America.”

During the 1880’s approximately two thousand Greeks, mostly male, arrived in America, primarily from the Sparta region. Over fifteen thousand Greeks from a wider geographic region came during the next decade. Most of the immigration took place during the first two decades of the twentieth century; from 1900 to 1915 almost one in four Greek males between the ages of fifteen and forty-five immigrated to America.

Before continuing with the story of this mass immigration of Greeks to the United States in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, some mention should be made of those adventurous individuals who came even earlier.

Melvin Hecker and Heike Fenton studied the history of the Greek presence in America from 1528 to 1977 and concluded that from 1528 through the Greek War of Independence in the early 1800s, there was scarcely any immigration to America from Greece and virtually no records of colonization. The first Greek they found mentioned in the early records was Theodoros, who, in 1528, arrived with some Spaniards at Tarpon Springs, Florida, today a major Greek tourist destination. Theodoros travelled “inland with some seemingly friendly Indians to get water” and never returned. In 1652, Konopios, a Cretan, established the first Greek coffee house in New England.

---

152 Ibid., p. 32.
One of the more famous early Greek settlements was the New Smyrna colony in Florida. E.P. Panagopoulos has written extensively about this doomed experiment. In 1767, several hundred Greeks from Coron sailed with Dr. Andrew Turnbull, who had gone to Greece to recruit “adventurers willing to begin a new life in Florida.” (p.9). The British government had exchanged Havana for Florida in 1763 with the Peace of Paris agreement. Florida, at that time, was almost depopulated, so land grants were developed and Turnbull was intrigued with the possibility of establishing a colony. “He began to dream of a large estate with would produce cotton, silk, indigo, and other valuable commodities, giving him and his large family the joy of a gay and sunny environment.” (pp. 10-11)

It was proposed to Turnbull that Greek people would be a “natural” population suited for the hot climate and planting of olives, tobacco, and cotton. In addition, the Greeks were also Christian, which was also in alignment with Turnbull’s utopian community vision. Greeks were oppressed by onerous taxes and poverty and had limited land resources. It appeared to be the perfect solution for all. Moreover, Turnbull was married to the daughter of a Greek merchant from Smyra.

In 1766 he and Sir William Duncan applied to King George III for land grants in east Florida. They were granted twenty thousand acres of land south of St. Augustine. Turnbull recruited Greeks and Italians from various islands in the Mediterranean and by 1768, approximately twelve hundred men, women, and children were on board.

---

Turnbull’s ship ready to sail to Florida. Turnbull planned to set the men to farming the lands with the promise of future ownership. Once the crops became productive the Greeks could “purchase” their own farms from Turnbull.

After months of sailing, the settlers landed and were met with wilderness, scarcity of food, and mosquitoes; in fact, this area of settlement was called “’the Mosquitoes’—which legend claimed were more vicious and numerous there than in any other part of the southern colonies.” (p. 59). The insects brought malaria and at this juncture, 95 of the men revolted against Turnbull. Kiriakopoulos concludes that these men had “realized that they had fled the wrath of the Ottoman Turks only to become the slaves of the English taskmaster in this foreign land.” They fled northward 75 miles to St. Augustine where they took refuge with a Spanish benefactor. By 1768, the total dead from disease and starvation was 450. By late spring, 1777, most of the immigrants of New Smyrna had moved to St. Augustine. The population was less than one-third of those who had first arrived.

Panagopoulos blames the demise of New Smyrna on Turnbull. “His greedy, unresponsible transportation of so many Europeans to a remote subtropical coast of the New World without providing the means for their support; his lack of consideration for their lives; his view of them as mere tools for the success of his venture; his arrogance, despotism, and cruelty had all contributed to making these settlers abandon the colony.”

---

156 Kiriakopoulos, First Greeks in America, pp. 11-12. The name of their benefactor was Estevan Avero, and his house, the Avero House. In Kiriakopoulos’ words, “The Avero House became our Plymouth Rock.” In 1982 the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of North and South America purchased the Avero House “and dedicated it as the National Greek Orthodox Shrine, naming it St. Photios, after the man considered the greatest of all Byzantine Patriarchs. (p. 12)
There was, however, some justice in the end. It had cost £40,000 sterling to develop the colony and the investors wanted to recoup their investments. Turnbull had a price of £4,000 sterling on him to remain in Florida and not having these funds, he became a prisoner in 1780. He and his family escaped to Charleston, South Carolina, leaving everything behind, including his papers, which he thought would aid in reconciling himself to his former partners.

In October 1781, after the American Revolution, Turnbull wanted to leave Charleston, but was persuaded to remain and practice medicine, although he remained a British subject. He died in 1792 after carrying on a successful medical practice and enjoying a comfortable latter part of his life. The Greek settlers remaining in St. Augustine later married and became shoemakers, carpenters, sailors, and teachers.

As Greek immigration increased in the mid-1800’s we find notable individual Greek settlers residing in New York, Chicago, and New Orleans. Some of these early Greek immigrants include Evangelides Apostolides Sophocles who was a professor at Harvard in 1842; John M. Rodonaki, the Greek consul in Boston in 1850; Spyros Bazanos, a well-known restaurateur in New York City in 1857; the Reverend Agapius Honcurenko who served as a priest in New Orleans in 1865, and Michael Anagnos, a teacher at the Perkins Institution for the Blind in Boston in 1868. It is possible to cite these individual cases because the number of Greeks residing in America, let alone ones making names for themselves, was so small. In the early 1880’s, fewer than two hundred
Greeks were arriving annually in the United States but this changed dramatically by the end of the decade.\textsuperscript{157}

Although there have been a small number of studies on these few Greeks who came to the United States in the seventeenth, eighteenth, and early nineteenth centuries, most Greek immigration studies have focused upon the mass Greek immigration to America from the late 1880’s until the present. The majority of these have focused on Greek settlement in large urban areas. The remainder of this chapter will review some of the more important of these studies.

At the end of the 1800’s in Greece, most adult males and females were married. Moreover, Greek families continued to have many children. The 1920 Greek census reported that 42\% of Greek families had more than five children; 15\% were comprised of eight or more.\textsuperscript{158} In 1920 also over 70\% of the country was living in villages, and almost 52\% of Greece’s entire population resided in villages with populations of less than one thousand. A typical village held either approximately two to three hundred people or six hundred to seven hundred.\textsuperscript{159}

In the Peloponnese region the villages were built on hillsides and slopes rather than on arable land. In addition, hot and dry summers required that the villages be located near reliable water sources. The village may have had a church or central square around which houses would cluster. Houses were typically built of stone and one third of the structures on the land were devoted to stabling animals. The livestock consisted of

\textsuperscript{157} Hecker and Fenton, Greeks, pp. 6-10; Saloutsos, Greeks, pp. 20-25.
\textsuperscript{159} Ibid., p. 86.
perhaps a donkey, sheep, or goats. This was subsistence farming, with the most common crops being olives, wheat, barley, maize, legumes, and some fruit. If extra produce were available, it was sold for cash.\textsuperscript{160} Despite the land distribution legislation in 1871, scholars estimate that over fifty thousand families occupied and cultivated land for which they had no ownership rights. There was reticence to make a long-term investment in productivity and there were also taxes to pay for usage. The 1871 laws supposedly enabled peasants to purchase some farms, but corruption led to a maldistribution and thousands of farmers held title to lands insufficient to meet minimal needs. Negative cultivation periods led to debt, which resulted in farmers needing to become seasonal wage laborers or sell off part of the land to creditors, again contributing to the cycle of loss.\textsuperscript{161}

As has already been mentioned, Greeks were not strangers to immigration. Susan Buck Sutton demonstrates in her work on Greek American families that Greek families have been “in motion” for centuries. She found that over half of the villages she researched were founded or grew significantly during the 1800’s before losing population to immigration and urbanization in the 1900’s.\textsuperscript{162} Sutton suggests that this constant social and familial fluidity places the Greek family within a new context, such as the freeing of the normative implication of lineal continuity and the consideration of the development and formation of new connections of households. This could, for Greek and other immigrant groups as well, contribute over time to a possible renegotiation of more

\textsuperscript{160} Ibid., pp. 92-93.
\textsuperscript{161} Ibid., p. 93.
\textsuperscript{162} Susan Buck Sutton, “Family Ties: Marriage, Migration and Community in 19\textsuperscript{th} and 20\textsuperscript{th}-century Greece,” in \textit{Greek American Families: Traditions and Transformations} (New York: Pella Publishing Company, 1999): 100.
traditional gender roles and expectations.\textsuperscript{163} Certainly the mass immigration at the end of the 1800’s and the beginning of the 1900’s added to the development of new socially constructed norms.

The agency of Greek women immigrants and their role in Greek settlement is one example of this development of new socially constructed norms. Helen Papanikolas (1917-2004) was a Greek American ethnic historian, novelist, and folklorist, who wrote extensively on this topic, drawing on her considerable collection of Greek American oral tradition gathered in her native Utah and the American West.\textsuperscript{164} She tells the story of one Greek woman who came to Utah in 1902 with her husband and raised eight children of her own and also took in a Greek orphan boy. In addition to her household, this immigrant woman also took in boarders to augment the family income.\textsuperscript{165} Another tale Papanikolas recounts is of a woman arriving in 1909 after her husband had immigrated to America. This woman also bore many children and then became a midwife.\textsuperscript{166} A third story relates the journey of a Greek woman who arrived with her husband and settled in 1911 in Colorado; she was the only Greek woman among Italian, Yugoslavian, and Mexican women immigrants. She and her husband fled Colorado after the Ludlow Massacre in 1914 and moved to Utah.\textsuperscript{167} Many of these women, as Papanikolas notes, lived with the constant fear that their husbands or sons could be killed or injured working

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{163} Ibid., p. 100. \\
\textsuperscript{164} Papanikolas argues that few Greek women at the time were literate, thus there is little written documentation of their lives, and moreover, Greeks are more rooted in oral tradition than the written word. See Helen Zeese, “Greek Immigrant Women in the Intermountain West,” in \textit{Journal of the Hellenic Diaspora}, XVI, nos. 1-4 (1989): 17. \\
\textsuperscript{165} Ibid., p. 20. Papanikolas contends that many of the mining families had over five children. See pp. 26-27. \\
\textsuperscript{166} Ibid., p. 21. \\
\textsuperscript{167} Ibid., p. 23. 
\end{flushright}
in the mines. These fears were well-founded. On March 8, 1924, for example, there was an explosion at the Number Two mine in Castle Gate, Utah, which killed 171 men; among these were 49 Greeks. Ten had been married and over forty children became orphans.\textsuperscript{168}

Many of these Greek women had arrived in America after the Balkan Wars of 1912-1913, with the intention of marrying Greek males, beginning families, making money and returning to Greece. Some of them were intentionally selected for immigration by their parents or male relatives in Greece. In the 1920’s, many Greek immigrant women became refugees to America following the forced exchange of populations between Greece and Turkey. Some of these Greek women were left with no dowries due to their families’ property being confiscated by the Turks. Many had no more formal education than their new husbands in America. The ones who did taught Greek school or began writing about their time in the new land.\textsuperscript{169} There also arose the suspicion that some of the Greek women (and those of other nationalities) coming to the mining camps were prostitutes. Female detectives working for the United States government are known to have followed groups of women from Ellis Island to the West to keep track of their activities.\textsuperscript{170}

In the 1910s an Athenian journalist named Maria Sarantopoulou Ekonomidou came to America to visit Greek immigrant communities, particularly in the American

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{168} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{169} Ibid., p. 29.
\item \textsuperscript{170} Ibid., pp. 24-25.
\end{itemize}
West, and to report on their living conditions in her articles back to Greece.\textsuperscript{171} Hers are some of the earliest accounts of daily Greek American life outside of the major cities. She asserted that the exploitive conditions in which the miners were forced to work contributed to the mine owner's profits and concluded that the labor of the Greeks and other immigrants were “the greatest factor in the industrial progress of this country.”\textsuperscript{172} She was the only woman with direct access to the mining camps, particularly the Clear Creek, Utah camp, populated with Cretans and Lefkadians. Maria was supportive and encouraging with the young men there, quite different from the mine guards who treated the workers with contempt. She notes, “The guards are not in a position to comprehend the pain of the brave Cretan who feels dishonored to work and live among people who stare at him with contempt.”\textsuperscript{173} Ekonomidou describes a life without amenities and absent institutional support from entities such as schools, churches, or recreation facilities that might have offset the daily grind and repetitive cycle of work.\textsuperscript{174} In one report Eknomidou discusses a Greek female prostitute whose sole purpose was to sing the songs of the villages, dance a bit, and move along to the next camp.\textsuperscript{175}

Many Greek women of course immigrated to America to wed, often sight unseen in arranged marriages. Papanikolas contends that most of the marriages appear to have been arranged, although some Greek women without any prospect of a dowry (such as

\textsuperscript{172} Ibid., p. 37.
\textsuperscript{173} Ibid., p. 40.
\textsuperscript{174} Ibid., p. 41.
\textsuperscript{175} Ibid., p. 42.
the refugees from Turkey noted above) were anxious to leave their villages for the
opportunities America offered. She wrote, “More than one woman came as the supposed
wife of an immigrant already in America.”

Like the Japanese mentioned in chapter 1, the prospective Greek brides and
grooms sometimes exchanged photos. Papanikolas notes that, not surprisingly, the men
often sent photos that were not really of themselves, but substitutes to entice the women
to make the journey to America. Steve Frangos agrees, observing as well that not only
were some of the photos not of the person they were suppose to be, but that they also did
not always fully reflect the real circumstances of life in America. Still, in a time before
the widespread availability of telephones, much less the World Wide Web, this was one
method whereby a prospective couple could become acquainted with each other over
great distances. “The exchange of letters between various family members soon proved a
forum in which prospective brides and grooms could ‘meet.’ In this correspondence,
photographs would often ‘just happen’ to be included of, say, a young man standing in
front of his candy store, or the portrait of a Greek maiden from a rural mountain
village.”

Complex legal dowry contracts, or ta prikia, were arranged, engaging, for
example, a bride’s brother in America who would send money to Greece, and then some

---

177 Ibid.
monetary exchange may take place on behalf of the groom in another town or city in America by relatives who would be acting on behalf of the groom’s family, and then once both sides of the families were satisfied, the Greek woman would be put on a boat bound for America and her new husband. Frangos cautions that this exchange was not just a monetary quid pro quo, but elaborate legal documents drawn up at Greek Consular Offices in San Francisco, Chicago, New Orleans, or New York. They included testimonies from Greek priests in regard to a young man’s character, and bank documentation ensuring information on net worth or clear titles on property.

Frangos warns, however, that while “some scholars mark the real beginning and establishment of Greek America” with the presences of brides, many women were not keen to leave home and travel to America, and over half of the Greek male immigrants from 1880-1920 never married. Therefore, he argues, “the sociological importance of these [unmarried] men cannot be stressed enough. They not only physically embodied Greek America, they also actively helped finance the very establishment of a Greek community in North America…” Alternatively, Frangos observes, “there was an entire generation of women in Greece, especially in the Peloponnese, who never married because of the massive Greek immigration to North America. Aside from the missing men, another totally unintended difficulty arose. With brothers in North America willing to provide a handsome dowry, finding a suitable groom in the village became increasingly problematic.”

179 Frangos, “Picture Bride Era,” p. 4
180 Ibid.
181 Ibid., pp. 4-5.
182 Ibid.
Papanikolas contends that in the western United States, despite the harsh living conditions, housing was better than it was in Greece, as was the consistency of the food, not being dependent upon specific harvests and weather conditions. In the 1920’s, larger numbers of Greek males became sheep and cattle ranchers. Many first served as shepherds for American ranchers and Scandinavian immigrants and were paid with sheep or cattle. Some of the Greeks in Idaho, Nevada, Utah, and Colorado became prosperous ranchers. The wives of these men supported the industry by feeding workers, assisting with lambing and shearing, and by traveling with their husbands and the livestock to Denver, Kansas City, and Chicago to support sales and be, if often behind the scenes, business partners.183

Not all Greek men married Greek women, however. Julius Drachsler, based on his research conducted in 1921, found that of those Greeks who lived in New York City, 22% of Greek marriages were with non-Greek women between 1908 and 1912. He concluded that the Greeks were about in the middle among all ethnic groups studied in this respect.184 In her research, Papanikolas found that Italian, Yugoslavian, and even German and Swedish women who intermarried with young Greek men in the West “learned to speak Greek, cooked Greek foods, converted to Orthodoxy, and raised their children in the Greek tradition.”185 There remained a general expectation, however, that

183 Papanikolas, “Greek Immigrant Women,” p. 27.
185 Papanikos, “Greek Immigrant Women,” p. 32.
young Greek girls born into the second generation should obtain an education at least through high school and to marry Greek boys.\footnote{Ibid., p. 33.}

Phyllis Pease Chock concurs with Papanikolas that the lives of the first-generation of Greek immigrant women were rife with the pressures of arranged marriages, not being literate and unable to speak English, and being marginalized in the immigrant accounts and relegated to supportive roles as mothers, wives, and daughters.\footnote{Phyllis Pease Chock, “‘The Self-Made Woman:’ Gender and the Success Story in Greek-American Family Histories” in \textit{Naturalizing Power: Essays in Feminist Cultural Analysis}, ed. by Sylvia Yanagisako and Carol Delaney (New York and London: Routledge, 1995): 243.} She argues, however, that first-generation Greek women should also be depicted as successful protagonists in the American success story, for many women were equal partners with their husbands in business. Chock seeks to reshape the narrative to portray women more as agents of change and influence and not simply as appendages of the males.\footnote{Ibid., p. 240.}

Steve Frangos cites the work of Aphrodite Clamer on Greek widows. Clamer contends that these women frequently took over their husbands’ businesses and managed them quite successfully, allowing them to enjoy a life never considered possible in Greece.\footnote{Steve Frangos, “The Picture Bride Era,” \textit{The National Herald}, Special Issue: "Greek Weddings" (March 12, 2005), p. 8. Frangos mentions Aphrodite Clamer’s work here but does not cite it.} More local or regional micro-histories will be able to discern and document the actual roles of Greek immigrant women.

Let us return to the paths of migration from Greece to America. Thomas Gallant, in his history of modern Greece, identifies three basic flows of Greek immigration to America: 1) mostly men and a few women who had lived in Greek cities for a while, or
were recently arrived and could not survive financially, thus propelling them to America; 2) those coming directly from the countryside, comprising 16% of all the immigrants; and 3) small groups of merchants and skilled workers. Most of this last group left from cities, and “constituted the majority of those who moved as couples or as complete families.” According to Gallant, therefore, most immigrants went initially to the Greek cities to find work and then departed from there for new opportunities.

Gallant notes that the factors driving the overseas immigration were "for the most part the same ones that caused the shift in population from the countryside to Athens. Relative rural over-population, a scarcity of labor, and low wages made it simply impossible for households with more than one or two sons to make ends meet and to provide for the continuation of the family into the next generation by providing dowries and inheritances that could sustain new households." This was particularly a problem when, as we have noted above, nearly 60 percent of Greek families had 5 to 8 or more children. External events, such as the collapse of the currant market in the 1890s that wrecked the Greek economy, also made rural life much more difficult. Gallant also underscores the fact that 63% of the Greek immigrants to urban areas were either unskilled workers or servants. Thus, their opportunities for meaningful work were limited.

Saloutos suggests that progress in developing rural infrastructure, such as the installation of an electric railway system, aided travelers in moving from the Greek interior to ports of departure in Patras and other districts, such as Sparta, Pyrgos and Tripolis. The Corinth Canal was completed in 1893 and joined the Isthmus of Corinth

192 Ibid.
with the Saronic Gulf, shortening the journey from the Adriatic and ports in Austria, France, and Italy to the Aegean Sea and its ports in Turkey, Romania, Russia, and Asia Minor. A railroad linking Piraeus and Larissa was developed in addition to the completion of a Peloponnesus railway, bringing all of the sections of that part of Greece within reach of each other.\footnote{Saloutsos, Greeks, p. 3.} Adding to the new transportation opportunities was the advent of the steamship agent who travelled from village to village, extolling the great life to be had in America. The agent spoke to captivated audiences in coffee houses, manufacturing the dream of a new life. Saloutos observes that “for a time the most popular, if not the sole, form of advertising in the village coffeehouse and grocery store was a picture of a transoceanic liner or some other notice regarding the United States.”\footnote{E. Repouli, A Study of Immigration, with Suggested Legislation (in Greek) (Athens: n.p., 1912): 57, cited by Saloutsos, Greeks, p. 33. This was a report written by Repouli for the Greek government. Saloutos describes it as "perhaps the best-known government report on immigration." (p. 30) See also, Theodore Saloutos, They Remember America: The Story of the Repatriated Greek-Americans (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1956): 3-4.}

Chain migration grew stronger as letters from the first immigrants reached the villages and lured brothers, cousins, and neighbors.\footnote{Evan Vlachos, The Assimilation of Greeks in the United States, with Special Reference to the Greek Community of Anderson, Indiana (Athens: National Centre of Social Researches, 1968): 58-59.} Fairchild, in his quite early history (1911) of Greeks immigrants, reported that by 1908 one steamship company, the Austro-American, had forty-two sailings a year from Patras to the United States. Twenty-nine of these departures were immigrant boats to New York, six to New Orleans, while seven cargo boats traveled to New York, Philadelphia, and Boston. “Almost every important Atlantic steamship company has an agency or connection in at least one of the Greek ports,” he observed, while “many immigrants still go to America by way of Naples, or
even of Cherbourg, or Havre.” From 1900 to 1920 approximately 370,000 Greeks left their country and 95% of them went to the United States.

From his research, Saloutos concludes that most immigrants had a minimum of five hundred francs [roughly $150 in 1900] in their possession at the time of departure. This money came from accumulated savings, which had been obtained from the sale of land or animals, or, less often, had been borrowed from relatives or creditors. The immigrants believed they could repay this money soon after their arrival in America, since they expected to be earning high wages right away. Saloutos contends that new arrivals to America, “often arrived without any clear-cut objectives in mind and without special training, trusting that they would find gold in the streets or that God would provide in one way or another.” Interestingly, Saloutos mentions that “Once an immigrant reached his destination, he wrote his parents immediately; within a few more days he followed up this initial letter with a second that contained a small sum of (often borrowed) money, but made no mention of work or working conditions. Such letters, and accompanying cash, touched off a chain reaction. It persuaded others to leave for America in the hope that they, too, could obtain ready money to forward to their families.”

Remittances back to Greece were real enough, however. In 1905 alone, Saloutos notes, “between four and five million dollars were received by families in Greece…from

---

199 Ibid., p. 86.
200 Ibid., p. 32.
relatives in the United States. This was about the average amount of remittances sent back annually between 1903 and 1914 from immigrants to their families in Greece. The immigrants’ first letters, “portraying the United States as a land of promise, often contained [money for] the cost of passage” for others to follow. Scourby describes how Greeks also mortgaged their property to provide for ship passage and pocket money. When the immigrant sent the money back there was great celebration.

The process of getting to America was conducted in stages. The prospective immigrant was examined by a physician at the time of application for passage. Only about 3% of applicants were rejected. He or she was then required to make a deposit for the ticket purchase, and received in return a certificate of reservation. After reaching a port city, Patras, for example, there was another medical examination and then the passenger was stamped for departure. At Patras the immigrant was required to sign a statement declaring whether or not he or she had a criminal record, and how much money they possessed. Each person then went through an inspection line where he and his luggage were inspected. Initially the Greek government kept no records of immigration, and neither males nor females needed official permission to leave the country. This was primarily because the Greek government actually encouraged immigration because of the flow of money it brought back to Greece from America. These remittances became critical to the economic survival of thousands of families. In 1905, however, the government did lower the age of obligatory military service to nineteen from twenty-one

---

201 Ibid., p. 39.
202 Ibid., p. 33.
203 Scourby, Greek Americans, p. 27.
204 Saloutos, Greeks, p. 36.
so they could catch young potential immigrants who had not yet discharged their military obligations.\(^{205}\)

In 1907, a financial crisis in the United States “literally stopped” immigration from Greece, and also money remittances back to Greece. “The building of churches and homes with money sent from the United States came to a standstill.” Those Greeks who opposed immigration seized upon word of the hardships experienced by Greek sons and daughters in America during this crisis to discourage others who still wanted to immigrate.\(^{206}\) As soon as the American economy began to recover, however, the exodus to the United States picked up again. The outbreak of the Balkan Wars in 1912 also halted immigration of able-bodied males between the ages of eighteen and forty-one. But, once peace was restored, mass immigration recommenced.\(^{207}\)

During the mass immigration out of Greece in the 1890s and early 1900s, approximately 40% of the Greek male population left the country. In Greece, some large landowners had to bring in laborers from Albania, and wages in some industries rose due to the labor shortage. In addition, one of the more negative consequences of young male immigration was that factory owners replaced male immigrants with women and children at much lower wages. The Greek military suffered because fewer men were available for military service. Land went uncultivated, and many villages appeared deserted, or were populated with just older people, women and children.\(^{208}\) Frangos believes that almost an

\(^{205}\) Ibid., p. 39.
\(^{206}\) Ibid., pp. 40-41.
\(^{207}\) Ibid., pp. 41-42.
\(^{208}\) Gallant, Modern Greece, p. 115.
entire generation of women, particularly those left behind in the Peloponnese region, never married due to the massive male immigration out of the villages.\textsuperscript{209}

Even though over 365,000 Greeks left the country between 1908 and 1930, significant numbers returned to Greece, many of them permanently. It is impossible to cite an exact number or percentage of those returning and different authors propose conflicting numbers. Saloutos, who wrote an entire study about repatriated Greeks, suggests that approximately 40\% or almost 200,000 immigrants returned. He argues that the first wave of returnees was due to the U.S. financial Panic of 1907 and the subsequent economic recession. Greek railroad workers, of which there were thousands, were the first to leave and those working in industrial unskilled jobs also experienced hardships and returned. Saloutos cites one newspaper in Athens estimating the weekly departure back to Greece at 25,000.\textsuperscript{210} The Balkan Wars in 1912 and 1913 also drew men back to fight. One source estimates that 57,000 Greek-Americans volunteered for service in the wars, but it is difficult to know how many of these came back to America following the wars.\textsuperscript{211} Eva Sandis contends that between 1908 and 1912, 40,718 immigrants departed back to Greece and that this trend continued. Her research shows that between 1913 and 1917 over 58,000 immigrants in America listed Greece as their primary residence.\textsuperscript{212}

The relatively small number of Greek women in America available to marry was another reason Greek men returned to Greece—to ensure marriage with one of their own.

\begin{footnotes}
\item[209] Frangos, “Picture Bride Era,” p. 4.
\item[210] Saloutos, \textit{They Remember America}, pp. 29-32.
\item[211] Vlachos, \textit{Assimilation}, p. 69; Saloutos, \textit{Greeks}, pp. 110-17.
\end{footnotes}
For first-generation immigrant males, this was important.\textsuperscript{213} It was also the case that some wives had been left in Greece, and the pull to return to them could be palpable. In addition, elderly parents often required the son’s presence, and there was also the need to maintain customs and traditions for the next generation. Health and climate were also contributing factors. Thus, the causes were varied but for most the primary reason was simply that their original goal of going to America and earning enough money to support the needs of their families had been accomplished. Or not, for many as well. Whether successful or not, they returned to Greece. As Saloutos concludes, “Sometimes the immigrant himself preferred the Greek way of life to the American.”\textsuperscript{214}

For the most part, Ellis Island was the portal through which most Greek immigrants passed and the first wave of men coming through Ellis Island moved immediately into low-level service occupations or unskilled labor. Many moved out to the western United States to work on the railroads.\textsuperscript{215} Most of the new arrivals gravitated toward urban centers, such as New York, Chicago, Boston, Lowell, Massachusetts, Philadelphia, San Francisco, Savannah, and New Orleans. Saloutos states that by 1900 at

\textsuperscript{213} Ibid., p. 40.
\textsuperscript{214} Drachslers, \textit{Intermarriage in New York City}, p. 45.
\textsuperscript{215} The railroads employed agents to hire newly arrived immigrants in Chicago to work out west, but con men also operated freely, and sometimes the two were the same. An editorial in the \textit{Saloniki-Greek Press} describes a case of 100 Greek laborers from Chicago paying fees to railroad company labor agents, and being transported out near Omaha, Nebraska to work. After only a couple of days they were told to stop working and leave the place. Far from Chicago, and without money or a place to sleep, the men started tearing apart the railroad line. They were arrested but after telling their story, the judge released them and made the railroad pay their way back to Chicago. Another incident involved either a Macedonian or Bulgarian con artist defrauding 50 Greco-Macedonians of a ten-dollar fee with promises of working on a new railroad station in Chicago. Of course, the station was never built. The editorialist calls on Chicago’s Greek businesspeople, especially restaurant and candy store owners, to give work to the thousands of unemployed Greeks in the city. See “The Labor Question,” \textit{Saloniki-Greek Press}, May 4, 1915.
least half of the approximately 8500 Greeks newly arrived in the United States were living in urban areas, while the remainder were fanned out across the country. The bulk of the Greek population lived in Chicago, New York, Lowell (MA), Detroit, and San Francisco. 216

By 1895, hundreds of Greeks had settled in New York City on the East Side, in Chelsea, and the South Bronx. Eva E. Sandis supports the early scholarship of Thomas Burgess, who, in 1913, stated that New York state led the country in that year with the largest population of Greeks, approximately 32,200. Approximately 20,000 resided in New York City alone, while there were also significant Greek communities in Albany, Buffalo, Schenectady, and Yonkers. 217

In New York, Greeks competed with Italians and Jews in occupations such as the wholesale food business, produce hauling, and trucking. These three groups also “met on the corner” with stands selling fruits, vegetables and flowers. There were eventually 150 Greek florists in New York City, which they eventually developed into a monopoly. Greeks also expanded into the confectionary and restaurant trades and became a significant presence in those two businesses. By 1912, there were approximately two hundred Greek restaurants on New York’s Lower East Side. At first the Greeks catered to their own, but later attracted lunch crowds more representative of the whole population. The food business had low overhead costs and family labor cut down on paid help, which

contributed to overall profit.\textsuperscript{218} Greeks also carved out a niche in the fur industry, which will be discussed later. A Greek Orthodox Church was established in 1892 in New York and Greek schools opened as early as 1911.\textsuperscript{219}

Greeks in New York also formed their own regional societies and business associations. Ideologically they were split between the Royalist and Venizelios camps, reflecting similar divisions in political loyalties back in Greece. Two Greek newspapers, the \textit{Atlantis}, begun in 1894 as a defender of the Royalist cause, and the \textit{National Herald}, first published in 1915 and pro-Venizelios, both enjoyed a national readership.\textsuperscript{220}

Moving up the coast to Boston, we turn to the scholarship of Mary Bosworth Treudley. Since the generally poor and unskilled Greeks were later participants in the settlement of New England, first arriving in large numbers only in the 1890’s, they gravitated toward factory work, following patterns established “by the dominant Yankee group through long experience in using immigrant workers to their own ends.”\textsuperscript{221} Treudley suggests that the recently arrived Greek immigrants had to adapt to new American work ethic norms, such as conforming to a punctual schedule and adhering to the Puritan “work harder for gain” doctrine. She believes that those who did not wish to conform to the New England labor practices would open their own businesses, similar to those in New York.\textsuperscript{222} In two not so complimentary articles in the \textit{Boston Daily Globe}, the reporter noted that officials from the Boston City Board of Health toured the wards in

\textsuperscript{219} Ibid., pp. 67-68.
\textsuperscript{220} Ibid., pp. 68-69.
\textsuperscript{222} Ibid.
the city’s west and north ends. A mission house was visited where Greeks and Italians lived. They used the space to also store their fruit for street peddling during the day. A single room cost twenty cents. Marble tables were installed to make candy. “Speaking of the Greeks later, Mr. Hicks, Chief Inspector, said: ‘If the people who buy candy and fruit from these people on the streets could only see where the candy is made and the fruit kept they never in the world would buy any more. Although it looks pretty clean and fresh when offered for sale, its condition a few hours previous was in most cases anything but inviting.’”

At least the independent confectioners and fruit peddlers in Boston had agency in choosing their occupations. Greek factory and mill workers were not so fortunate. A fictional work written in 1977 about the Greeks in “Cabot City” during the Depression tells a story of strife and tension between Greeks and Irish for the crumbs of economic power and political favors. One of the main Greek protagonists, a Mr. Manol, describes his early days as a new immigrant: “I also remember in those early years the gauntlet we had to run every time we came out of the mill at night. Gangs of thugs would be waiting for us. First they would start swearing at us. They would ridicule every single inch about us. I can hear them now. ‘You dirty, black Greeks. What are you doing here? You, with the stupid looking hat, you with the short pants, you with the big nose and black ears, you with the turd-shaped mustache, you with the short legs and the bald head.’”

In another fictional account of New England Greek immigrants, Mary Vardoulakis tells the story of Cretan immigrants to a Massachusetts mill town. At first the young Greeks met other

---


young immigrants who would “show them the ropes,” and assist them in acclimating to
the work in the mill. George, the main character, had the job of oiling the power looms
for ten hours each day, five and one-half days per week. When he receives his first
paycheck for five dollars and fifty-two cents he sits aside two dollars to send back to his
mother in Crete. He then goes out to purchase “American” clothes: long trousers and an
American shirt and shoes. Helen Balk documents how Greeks first arrived in Lowell,
Massachusetts around 1890 and began as street peddlers. The financial panic of 1892,
however, brought street peddling to a standstill and the men had to resort to work in the
factories, primarily the cotton mills.

Treudley, in her study of Boston’s Greek community, acknowledges that not all of
Greek immigrants were poor, undereducated, and unskilled. The founders of the Greek
Cathedral in Boston, for example, were generally well-educated. They joined with those
from peasant backgrounds to establish and provide leadership for the church and other
social and fraternal organizations that were important to the development and
maintenance of the Greek communities in New England. As more immigrants moved
to urban areas in New England, formal organizations such as Greek schools, mutual aid
societies, charitable and social societies, the American Hellenic Educational Progressive
Association (AHEPA), the Greek American Progressive Association (GAPA) and the
Helicon enabled immigrants to maintain links to their Greek culture and heritage. These

organizations promoted “Greekness” through such activities as Greek language study and use, Orthodox religious worship, and Greek cultural celebrations. At the time they also stressed “Americanism” and “success,” as measured by educational advancement, rising incomes, and active promotion of the Greek community within the infrastructure of their new environment. 228 Treudley notes that these goals were more difficult to accomplish in Boston because Greek Americans were physically scattered throughout the city and had no fixed “colony” like the Italians did in the North End. Thus, the Greeks had no “geographic base for their informal relationships, once they…graduated from the coffee house.” 229 The Church, therefore, became the focal point for personal interaction, and the formal associations served as extended outlets for social contacts and business development. 230

Many first generation Greek immigrants actively participated in the labor movement, particularly in New York and Massachusetts. Dan Georgakas argues that historians have ignored or marginalized the history of Greek-American laborers’ presence within, and contribution to, the American labor movement. 231 He contends that from the onset of their arrival in the United States, Greek immigrants were involved in a variety of reform and revolutionary movements. Greeks, for example, joined the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) within a year of its inception in 1905. They were also instrumental in founding the Communist Party-USA in 1919. They were integral members of the

\[\text{\textsuperscript{228}}\text{Ibid., p. 49.}\]
\[\text{\textsuperscript{229}}\text{Ibid., p. 50.}\]
\[\text{\textsuperscript{230}}\text{Ibid.}\]
Socialist Labor Party by 1916 in New England, for which they established their own Greek-language newspaper, *Organosis* (*The Organization*). (p. 207) Other newspapers were published from 1918-1959 that emphasized worker rights. (p. 216)

Lowell, Massachusetts had the third highest concentration of Greeks after New York and Chicago. In the Lowell textile mills, Greeks organized as an independent labor union, primarily in reaction to the poor treatment of earlier immigrant groups by the mill owners. They often instigated strikes at the Lowell mills and assisted in a successful strike against employers in Lawrence, Massachusetts in 1912 as part of the I.W.W. (pp. 208-09) The I.W.W. provided the impetus for the later organization of the Communist Party and the Congress of Industrial Organizations, which included Greek workers’ clubs throughout the New England states into the early 1930’s. Georgakas contends that this continued fervor for activism, “produced a string of post-World War II liberal Democrats” such as Michael Dukakis, Paul Tsongas, and others. (p. 209) Greek males active in unions and activist organizations gathered in the coffeehouses where politics were discussed as well as other pertinent news. Less formal than the church, the Greek coffeehouse was the daily gathering place for conversation, social activities, and mutual assistance. We will have more to say about Greek coffeehouses in chapters 4 and 5.

The I.W.W. not only led strikes of textile workers but also strikes of food workers in New York City hotels, particularly in Manhattan. Haris Claron was a Greek immigrant who became an influential figure in the food workers’ rights movement and spurred labor activism from the late 1910’s into the 1960’s. He established the Spartakos workers club, which played a prominent role in the Communist movement in America. (p. 211)
Another notable example of the Greek presence in the Communist movement was Greek membership in the Fur Worker’s Union, which had been organized by Spartakos Club members in the 1920’s. This union sought to enroll about fifteen hundred Greek workers who were employed by three hundred Greek-owned fur shops, primarily in New York. In October 1925 the Greek fur shop workers held a ten-day strike that resulted in Greek wages and working conditions being raised to the higher standards experienced in other union shops in the city. (pp. 216-17) One conservative Greek newspaper at the time, the *Atlantis*, was anti-Semitic and publically accused Greek fur shop workers of aligning more with Jewish workers than with their Greek bosses. The newspaper was also upset that these unions gave full rights to African American workers. These attacks were ineffectual, however, and Greek furriers remained “loyal and militant trade unionists.” (p. 217)

The fur shop workers were the foundation of the Greek leftist movement and, in addition to fundamental union activities, they offered summer camps, theatrical events, lectures, and other social venues to their members. They also contributed to the Communist press and led union organizing up and down the east coast and across the country to the Midwest, holding membership drives in Greek social halls and churches. Communist Greeks continued to be active through the 1930’s. (pp. 218-19)

Greek immigrant workers in the western part of the United States numbered about 10,000 in 1910. Here they were exposed to the information and membership campaigns of such organizations as the I.W.W., the W.F.M., and the Socialist Party, represented by men such as Louis Theos (Theodropoulos), who, acting covertly, was the sole Greek organizer for the I.W.W. in Utah and Colorado in 1912. Greeks worked as miners,
railroad workers, lumber, and construction workers, and here, as on the east coast, they were active in the labor movement. In 1912, for example, a sawmill strike in Grays Harbor, Washington, resulted in the expulsion of nearly 200 Greeks via ship and train. They shared their stories throughout the state and encouraged other workers in various industries to join their labor action. Also in 1912, Greeks participated in a strike led by the Western Federation of Miners at the Bingham, Utah copper mine, where Greeks had been members of the I.W.W. and W.F.M. branches as early as 1906.232 This strike action resulted from the Greek labor boss being eliminated and scab workers being brought in to replace the ethnic miners, who included Greeks, Italians, and Japanese. A resolution was reached—the union was not recognized and labor bosses were eliminated, but wages were raised, and some safety standards were developed.233

Yet another memorable example of Greek miners’ involvement in strike action was in the infamous Ludlow, Colorado massacre where 1,200 striking coal miners and their families were attacked by members of the Colorado National Guard and Colorado Fuel and Iron Company camp guards on 20 April 1914. Altogether between 19 and 25 people were killed, including women and children, in what the historian Howard Zinn has described as “the culminating act of perhaps the most violent struggle between corporate power and laboring men in American history.”234 One of the most prominent miners killed was Louis Tikas, a Greek-American who was the main labor union leader and

232 Ibid., p. 212.
233 Ibid.
organizer for the United Mine Workers at the Ludlow camp. Tikas had run a coffeehouse in Denver before going to work in the mines.\textsuperscript{235}

Many of the Greek immigrants to east central Illinois, including my grandfather, worked as railroad workers in the West in order to earn funding for their confectionary and other business enterprises, and of course, to remit back to Greece. Georgakas laments that the documentation about these tens of thousands of Greeks who labored west of the Mississippi, an “important epoch of Greek-American history,” is spotty and sporadic.\textsuperscript{236}

Gunther Peck has focused on another aspect of Greek labor history with his study of the padrone system in America. Coercive contract labor developed in the western United States between 1885 and 1925. “Padrones,” Peck writes, “controlled immigrant workers primarily by exploiting their geographic mobility and the family networks that sustained it.”\textsuperscript{237} Peck suggests that “padrones were among the first modernizers of the unskilled labor market, directly linking isolated rural hamlets around the globe…. (p. 851) Padrones were an integral part of the chain immigration system.

\textsuperscript{235} See Thomas G. Andrews, \textit{Killing for Coal. America’s Deadliest Labor War} (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008); Zeese Papanikolas, \textit{Buried Unsung: Louis Tikas and the Ludlow Massacre} (Salt Lake City, UT: University of Utah Press, 1982); and Scott Martelle, \textit{Blood Passion: The Ludlow Massacre and Class War in the American West} (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2008). Strikes and violence continued until December 10, 1914 when the mineworkers called off the strike. Martelle points out how many of the striking miners were “Greek and Montenegrin immigrants, veterans of Balkan wars and armed with high-powered rifles – a much tougher force than the mine guards likely thought they were facing.” (p. 89)

\textsuperscript{236} Georgakas, “Greek-American Radicalism,” p. 214.

\textsuperscript{237} Gunther Peck, ““Reinventing Free Labor: Immigrant Padrones and Contract Laborers in North America, 1885-1925,” \textit{Journal of American History} 83, no. 3 (December 1996): 849. The following discussion is taken from Peck unless otherwise noted.
One part of Peck’s study looks at the Greek miners in Bingham County in 1911. In spring of that year, fifty Greek miners wrote a letter to the Utah governor demanding action regarding their padrone, Leon Skliris, who was known as the “Czar of the Greeks.” Since signing work contracts with Skliris promising good wages, they had experienced endless pay deductions. In addition, in Bingham, Utah, they were forced to purchase food and necessities at the Panhellenic Grocery Store, run by Skliris’s brother. If they quit their jobs and looked for work elsewhere in Utah, they were still not out of Skliris’ reach since he controlled access to most of the mining and railroad jobs in the state. This was not the freedom they had been searching for, they wrote, when they came to America. (p. 848)

Skliris actually worked as a salaried labor agent for the Utah Copper Company and he was the most powerful padrone in the region. He initially recruited Greek immigrants already resident in America, but by 1912 he was importing over two hundred Greeks directly to Utah each month from villages in the southern Peloponnese and Crete. (p. 852) Saloutos notes that these labor agents worked in Chicago, Kansas City, Omaha, Salt Lake City and other urban centers to recruit railroad workers. In 1900, Utah’s Greek population was three, but that rose to over 4,000 by 1910.238 Work contracts that were signed by each Greek ensured that Skliris received one dollar per month of wages earned.239 He worked around the immigration laws, in particular, the Foran Act of 1885, which was supposed to prohibit contract labor among foreigners and aliens. He and his agents taught newly arrived Greek immigrants at Ellis Island to say they did not have

---

jobs waiting for them in Utah, but he also enabled them to demonstrate they were not paupers by having at least thirty to fifty dollars in cash. (p. 854) Skliris charged each Greek immigrant ten dollars to get a job. One immigrant reported that Skliris would let the miners work for twenty days and then have them fired, which allowed him to hire more immigrants. If one stayed there would be another hiring “fee” and garnishment of wages. (pp. 860-61)

Workers’ resistance to Skliris’ power proved to be tricky. If they quit their jobs or left, Skliris lost nothing, money or new workers. The letter to the Utah governor proved futile as his response suggested they take their complaint to management. Utah fraternal and some labor organizations, to which Greeks would usually turn for positive interventions, were all controlled by Skliris. (pp. 866-67) He even had close ties to the established Greek community in Salt Lake City, where his brother served on the Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church board. The Greek workers ultimately responded by remaining on the job and joining the Western Federation of Miners. (p. 867) In August 1912, one thousand Greek and Italian miners joined the W.F.M. and voted to strike. They were joined by two thousand Italian, Slavic, and Japanese immigrant workers, all demanding the dismissal of Skliris and the termination of the padrone system for all ethnic groups in Bingham. Two weeks later six hundred Greek miners in Ely, Nevada, led a sympathy strike. The strike actions led to Skliris’ resignation as chief labor agent for the Utah Copper Company. He left town in fear for his life after organizing one last job for the company—strike breaking by newly arrived Greek miners, no less! (pp. 867-69)
While urban areas on the east coast were primary destinations for new immigrants, so, too, were cities in the Midwest. Residents from New England and the Mid-Atlantic states had been moving to the Midwest since the 1840s, when thousands of people began relocating to this less-settled, more attractive (in their opinion), region of the United States that offered new opportunities. Cities in the east were becoming overcrowded, land prices had soared, and the farmland soil itself was becoming depleted. Consequently, land sales in Illinois benefitted. By the mid-1830’s the state had seven land offices—in Chicago, Galena, Quincy, Springfield, Danville, Vandalia, and Palestine—and over three million acres of land had been purchased.240

In addition to the “Yankees” came an influx of Germans and Irish. The German population in Illinois numbered 38,000 by 1850 and 131,000 by 1860. Notable German settlement developed in Quincy, Alton, Peoria, Springfield, Galena, and Peru. By 1860 the Irish numbered 87,600, with a sizeable concentration in Chicago.241 The rapid growth of rail and water transportation provided quick and easy access to most sections of the state from either coast.

Foreign-born populations continued to grow in Illinois through the remainder of the century, with Germans and Irish still leading the flow of immigrants to the state. These earlier immigrants were joined by settlers from Sweden, Great Britain, and Bohemia. “About three-fourths of the foreign-born lived in Illinois’ cities, and most of them settled in Chicago. In 1870 more than half of the city’s residents were foreign-born;

241 Ibid., pp. 62-63.
in 1890 first-and second-generation immigrants constituted more than three-fourths of the population.”\(^{242}\)

Chicago and St. Louis were the main urban centers to which most of the first-generation Greeks in east central Illinois initially gravitated. Saloutos wrote extensively about Chicago in his early work and noted that it was a destination for young boys because work was available and “almost every province of Greece was represented here.”\(^{243}\) The padrone system was alive and well in Chicago, especially for shoeshine boys who worked seven days a week for twelve or more hours per day.\(^{244}\) Many of the boys lived together in one place and shared household duties. Saloutos suggests that this way of life for new immigrant boys at this time period in American cities was “a passing phase in the life of an immigrant youth,” and that the benefits offset the harsh experiences. If they remained in America, “this was part of the price they had to pay for emigrating from a retarded agricultural economy to one that was urban, industrial, commercial.” If they returned to Greece, they would have some money to take home.\(^{245}\)

Not everyone agreed, however, with Saloutos’ rather benign characterization of the shoeshine, or bootblack, boys’ lives. As early as 1908 Chicago newspapers began attacking Greek shoeshine parlor operators and hatters for “exploiting and underpaying

\(^{242}\) Ibid., pp. 130-31.
\(^{243}\) Saloutos, Greeks, p. 51.
\(^{244}\) Although Greek shoeblacks are not the focus of this study, it is important to devote some space to them here because of the significant role shoeshine parlors and shoe repair shops played as a niche for the Greek entrepreneurial spirit. Any discussion of Greek businesses includes confectioneries, restaurants, and shoeshine and shoe repair shops. This was true in central Illinois, even in the smaller towns. For a fuller discussion of this topic see Zeese Papanikolas, “To A Greek Bootblack,” Journal of the Hellenic Diaspora 20, no. 1 (1994): 64-85.
\(^{245}\) Ibid., p. 53.
their hard-working laborers." In his work on the padrone system, Babis Malafouris refers to a study conducted in 1911 by Alcibiades Seraphic, an inspector with the Bureau of Immigration, which revealed that the padrone system from 1900-1910 operated among Bulgarians, Turks, Greeks, Mexicans, Austrians, and Italians. Among the Greeks, the system was operational in every city with a population of over ten thousand, and was primarily confined to shoe shining establishments and railroad laborers. Indeed, Seraphic found that the Greeks had displaced the Italians and other ethnic groups in the shoe shining business, leaving them in nearly total control across the country. Shoeshining became the occupational niche for young (usually) Greek boys, while older Greek men, generally twenty years of age or older, gravitated toward the railroads. Arrangements in

246 “The Greeks of Chicago: Do Greek Businessmen Exploit Our Youth?” Greek Star, September 25, 1908. In this article the Greek Star was very defensive, accusing the Chicago newspapers of “violent but unfounded accusations,” and of accusing all Greek businessmen rather than the very small number of Greek employers who might be guilty of such abuse.


248 Ibid., p. 88. Young Greek bootblacks became so ubiquitous in Chicago that in 1907 or early 1908 a well-published University of Minnesota professor of comparative literature, Oscar W. Firkins, sat down to get a shoeshine from one of them and was inspired to write a rather unmemorable, but patrician poem, “To a Greek Bootblack.” Here is one verse:

In a dusk and scant retreat
Fronting on the noisy street,
Six lads, quick of hands and feet,
Ply a trade for song unmeet,
       In the passer’s careless view:
I, from Saxon loins that rose—
Churl or swain or serf—who knows?—
High-reared, propping heels and toes,
Brood in meditant repose
       O’er the Greek who blacks my shoe...
Greece before the young men left for America ensured that the new arrival would be met by a padrone or his representative and brought to, for example, Chicago, where, within a week, he would be employed in the shoe shining business. While the bootblacks did earn some money, they were required to pass their tips to the padrones and deduct the cost of room and board. Living conditions for these young bootblacks, as well as for those who peddled candy, fruit, and vegetables, were often unsanitary, with poorly ventilated rooms, and beds often without linens of any kind.

In spite of Seraphic’s 1911 report, conditions continued to grow worse for these young immigrants. In December 1915 the *Saloniiki-Greek Press* began a crusade on behalf of the young boys’ cause and over the next few months they published a series of editorials and letters to the editor condemning the padrone system and the harsh life the boys were forced to live. They began by referring to the case of a Greek shoe-shine parlor owner, “a conscienceless boss, whose teeth glittered with numerous gold filings as he adjusted his diamond tie pin.” This man “forced seven Greek youths, in his employ, to sleep upon the bare floor in the basement of his establishment,” and excused his harsh treatment of them by arguing that the “boys are accustomed to a hard life, and pay no attention to it….Those children are little peasants, if you allow peasants to sleep in beds they become lazy and worthless.” The newspaper painted a distressing image of the boys, whose skin “is as yellow as faded autumn leaves. They are bent crooked…unwashed, and black from the polishes and dyes, with sunken eyes resulting from sleeplessness and continual work…wrecked and ruined for life…. The *Saloniiki-Greek Press* editor

---

249 Ibid., p. 87.
250 Ibid.
251 Ibid., pp. 79-80, 82.
declared that the paper intended to “exercise all its powers to punish those who exploit these…thousands of small Greek boys, enslaved in Greek-American cleaning and shoe-shine establishments.”\textsuperscript{252} A week later, a Mr. Prasinos, a shoe-shine parlor owner himself, wrote to the editor supporting their action and calling on the city of Chicago and even the Illinois state legislature to take action against such abuses.\textsuperscript{253}

In January another editorial appeared in the \textit{Saloniki-Greek Press} relating that they had incurred the wrath of many shoeshine parlor owners, but would continue to “spare no effort to save the shoeshine boys from a life of veritable slavery.” The newspaper had begun to receive letters from bootblacks in several states, including Minnesota, Tennessee, Oklahoma, and Montana. They noted that the boys were forced to work sixteen to seventeen hours a day, seven days a week – about “three times as many hours as the law allows.” It was also well known, the editorialist continued, that “they are given food that is not only unappetizing but is actually rotten, and makes the children sick. Everyone knows that these children all sleep in one room, and the room usually has no window, and is full of filth and vermin.” These “are the evils the \textit{Saloniki} intends to wipe out….This evil must be stopped, and stopped for good.”\textsuperscript{254} In February they ran another editorial, whose headline encapsulates the story – “The New Generation: Two Thousand Shoe-Shine Parlors in Chicago – Three Thousand Greek Children Kept in Semi-slavery.”\textsuperscript{255}

\textsuperscript{252} “Shoe-Shine Boys, (editorial),” \textit{Saloniki-Greek Press}, December 18, 1915.
\textsuperscript{255} \textit{Saloniki-Greek Press}, February 5, 1916. A letter at the end of the month from a James Polizois, a “shoe-shine boy,” reads a little suspiciously, displaying as it does a
In May the newspaper announced that a meeting had been held to organize the Greek shoeshine parlor owners, and to formulate a set of rules and regulations that included “To keep harmony between the employees and the employers,” and “To see that justice is administered and the labor laws of the United States are not broken.”

In November 1916 nearly all of the Greek physicians in Chicago joined together to write a letter to the United States Immigration Commission, accompanied by a letter from the long serving Greek Consul-General in Chicago, Nicholas Salopoulos, protesting against the padrone system and the deplorable living conditions of the Greek immigrants.

Saloutos asserts that in time Greek participation in the shoe shining business declined, partly due to the rise of automobile travel and less walking, changes in footwear, sidewalks and paved streets, and because of the eventual lessening of the padrones’ power. An expanding economy and increased knowledge of the language and customs in America also opened up new opportunities in different work venues.

---

258 Saloutos, Greeks, p. 56. In the early 1920s the shoeshine boys also formed the Association of Chicago Greek Shoeshiners. See “First Annual Picnic of the Shoeshiners’ Association,” Saloniki-Greek Press, August 04, 1923. They also formed a union, the Bootblacks Protective Union, No. 17852, that was affiliated with the American Federation of Labor. In February 1926 they won a court case against three hoodlums who were extorting money from Greek shoe repair shop owners and forcing them to join their protection racket. Otherwise, the hoodlums warned, the shops would be the victims of broken windows and other acts of terrorism. The three men were not Greeks -- “J. Sandler, Wm. Shaw, and R. Burke.” See “Victory for
One of the alternative business enterprises to which Greeks gravitated in Chicago was fruit and vegetable peddling. Selling on the street appealed to new immigrants because there was a minimal amount of capital expense for start-up and one did not need to know that much English. Working in the open air and keeping one’s own hours was also attractive. In Chicago the Greeks butted up against the Italian peddlers who had entered the fruit and vegetable trade earlier and in large numbers. The Greek Star credited the Greeks’ success to “being at the market with their wagons just a little earlier than their competitors, and thus reaching the trade before their less diligent rivals appeared.”

Both the Greek and Italian peddlers were competing with neighborhood merchants, however, and in 1904 the Grocers’ Association took action against street peddling and petitioned the city council to either prohibit selling on the streets or to impose a heavy tax. The city council refused the petition, but in 1909 the city of Chicago

---

259 In a somewhat idealized account, the Greek Star offered this version of the process. “According to our investigators, [around 1885] the Greeks began to arrive in Chicago. Unlike other aliens, the Greek did not seek work on the railroads,...nor did he attach himself to any other form of day labor. As far as we have been able to learn, he avoided all heavy work and used his brains instead. We find him first associated with Italian merchants as helpers in a fruit store or a market, and because he was thrifty, industrious, and quick to learn, it was not long before he was peddling produce on his own account.” “The Greek as a Restaurant Man,” Greek Star, November 14, 1919.

260 Ibid.
raised the license for peddlers from $25 to $200 per year and the Greeks took this increase personally, galvanizing them to become citizens and voters.\textsuperscript{261}

An increase in the fees for the peddlers’ licenses was not the only problem the Greek peddlers faced. An article in the \textit{Greek Star} in 1908 describes some Greek fruit and vegetable peddlers who started their own Peddlers’ Protective Association in that year to protect themselves against “shameless and dishonest enforcement [police] officers” who intimidated the peddlers and forced them to pay small fees to avoid harassment and arrest. As late as 1929 Chicago grocers were still complaining about the competition from Greek fruit and vegetable peddlers and they wanted “the Greek leeches off the street.”\textsuperscript{262}

It was the confectionary trade, however, where Greeks found the perfect niche. Pioneer confectioners in Chicago were Eleutherios Pelalas of Sparta and Panagiotis Hatzideris of Smyrna who established a candy shop in 1869. Pelalas then moved to Springfield, Massachusetts and opened more stores, while Hatzideris formed a partnership with another associate in New York and sold popular commercially produced brands of candy. Although Hatzideris eventually returned to Smyrna, his associate formed the Haggis Greek-American Confectionery Company that produced candies in New York, Memphis, and Pittsburg.\textsuperscript{263} Pelalas and Hatzideris provided employment and confectionery training for many of the initial immigrants from Sparta. Another early

\textsuperscript{262} See “The Greeks of Chicago. The Fruit and Vegetable Business,” \textit{Greek Star}, September 1908, and “Chicago Grocers Against Greek Peddlers,” \textit{Saloniki-Greek Press}, December 4, 1929. An editorial in 1911 called for Greek fruit peddlers to buy their fruit from Greece, for “there are no better lemons, pears, citrons and apples than those that come from Greece.” The editorial noted that the “Greek steamship lines approve of the idea and the cost of transportation isn’t much.” See “The Fruit Business,” \textit{Loxias}, March 25, 1911.
\textsuperscript{263} Saloutos, \textit{Greeks}, p. 262.
pioneer was James A. Benekos. He was born in Tsintzinian, Greece and arrived in Chicago in 1881. Here he first learned the confectionery trade and then became a confectionery store proprietor and taught others the trade. Benekos later took his candy-making skills to Pennsylvania and New York State.\textsuperscript{264}

Saloutos contends that Chicago became “the Acropolis of the Greek-American candy business.”\textsuperscript{265} A Greek and English language newspaper in Chicago, the \textit{Hellinikos Astir} (the \textit{Greek Star}), reported in 1904 that “Chicago, not New York, has the credit of being the city of candy-makers. Practically every corner in Chicago was occupied by a Greek candy store. Seventy percent of the Greek candy-merchants in America were originally citizens of Chicago. After they had learned the trade from fellow-Greeks for whom they worked, and by saving had accumulated enough capital, they bade Chicago farewell and scattered to the four corners of this great country,….which is sweetened by the exquisite art of the Greek confectioner.”\textsuperscript{266}

In an editorial in the \textit{Greek Star} in August 1906, the reporter noted that “One out of every four Greeks living in Chicago is in business of some kind, but the Greek confectioner predominates among Greek business men with the restaurateur second.” These Greek confectioners, “because of their great numbers and the tremendous business which they do have untold power in their hands, whether they know it or not,” and, the writer counseled, “such power and such influence, if properly and wisely used, will bring

\textsuperscript{264} \textit{The Greek Star}, June 26, 1934, p. 4.
\textsuperscript{265} Salutos, \textit{Greeks}, p. 262.
\textsuperscript{266} “The Greek Confectioners. Chicago the Mecca of the Candy Business,” \textit{Greek Star}, April 01, 1904.
honor and credit to them and to the Greek community….”267 In a 1915 review of the Greek confectionery business, another Greek newspaper in Chicago reported that “The confectionery business employs about fifty thousand Greeks throughout the United States. It is estimated that in every major city – for example, New York or Chicago – there must be over ten thousand candy stores…which are a creation of our native Greek sense of beauty. For the establishment of these fine, clean, and luxurious stores, which are an adornment and a thing of beauty on the main streets of our American cities, the Greek confectioners certainly deserve more profits and greater recognition.”268 An editorial a week later in the same paper, noted that the majority of Greeks in the confectionery line were from Sparta and the surrounding provinces of Laconia and Arcadia, and that they accounted for “almost two-thirds of the confectionery business of Chicago.” Together with the ice cream, soda drinks, cigars, cigarettes, and fresh fruit that are sold in these stores, the “annual sales made by Greek candy stores amount to many millions of dollars. Business conditions in Chicago are determined, to a large extent, by the progress and prosperity of our many enterprises, especially of the Greek-owned confectionery and restaurant businesses.”269

Chicago became the center not only of established confectionaries but of providers of materials and supplies to make candy; there were hundreds of salespeople moving throughout Illinois and the Midwest keeping confectioners going after they had learned their trade and then moved out from the city to open new stores.270 One company

270 Saloutos, Greeks, pp. 262-63. An article in the Saloniki-Greek Press in 1915 estimated that “Many thousands of Greeks throughout the United States are
still in business in the twenty-first century is White Stokes, founded by Greeks in
Chicago and utilized by my grandfather, my father and now my sister and me as a
supplier of fondant mix and other materials.  

Greeks also added soda fountains to their
shops and became ice cream sellers as well. By the 1930’s Liquid Carbonic, the makers
and installers of soda fountains across the Midwest, was reporting an increase in sales of
almost 57%.  

Greek confectioners in Chicago organized into the “Greek Confectioners’
Association” in 1919, and the Loxias newspaper proudly proclaimed that there were now
“6,000 candy stores under one roof. Bravo!” In 1926 more than two hundred
storeowners, comprised of the early Greek settlers in Chicago, joined together to help
each other with the challenges of doing business in America and pooling their resources.
This was crucial because the advent of chain drugstores and their soda fountains, lunch
counters, and less expensive candies were beginning to cut into their business.  

Even though at one time Chicago had perhaps as many as five thousand Greek-owned candy

---

271 White Stokes took out many advertisements in the Greek Star. See for example, passim for White Stokes’ ads in the 1920s in that newspaper.
272 Greek Star, February 16, 1934, p. 7.
273 “Greek Candy-Makers,” Loxias, March 7, 1918. Later in the article the paper
admitted that actually, “The exact number of Greek confectioners is not known. Some
wholesalers claim that there are 6,000 or 7,000, others say there are over
10,000; anyway it is a tremendous force....” See also “The Greek Confectioners’
Union,” in Saloniki-Greek Press, May 10, 1919. An article in 1927 said the
association’s object was to “elucidate the methods and ways of the Confectionary
man and thoroughly Americanize the confectionery business.” See “The Greek
274 As early as 1929 small Greek businessmen were concerned about the threat from
chain stores that were a “combination store of candy, grocery, book, tobacco,
hardware, jewelry, restaurant and haberdashery stores.” See “Greek Trade is in
Peril,” The Greek Press, July 1, 1929.
stores or more, by the mid-1940’s that number had dropped to an estimated 350-400 shops with 80% of candy manufacturers located within the city center.  
Certainly the Great Depression severely impacted Greek businesses, but the first-generation Greeks’ tenacity and flexibility enabled many of them to survive, some even into the second half of the twentieth century.

The restaurant business was another notable niche for Greeks. Initially the immigrants served their own with native “comfort” food, but eventually the menus evolved into offerings that catered for the general public. Saloutos asserts that, like the candy business, success in the food business was “hardly the product of a national talent,” in reference to the fact that most of the Greek immigrants were originally small peasant farmers. He contends that as early as 1900, Greeks in urban areas quickly learned

---

275 Saloutos, Greeks, pp. 264-65.
276 There are many articles about Greek restaurants in the Chicago Greek newspapers. In one editorial in 1909 the writer notes that “the largest number of restaurants in Chicago are owned and run by Greeks.” He then warns, however, that “Recently a small number of Americans entered this field….The Greek restaurateurs in Chicago must organize immediately. They must protect themselves from this unsuspecting menace. When an American opens up a restaurant, a Greek loses one....Some day all the Greeks will be thrown into streets.” Given the debate over Americanization and Greek identity discussed in chapters 4 and 5, it is interesting here to see this differentiation between Greeks and Americans. “The Restaurants,” Loxias, October 9, 1909. The real aim of this article seems to be to create anxiety among the Greek restaurant owners so they would attend an organizational meeting of Greek restaurant owners. In an editorial in the Greek Star, the writer also encouraged the formation of a Greek Restaurant Association, which would include confectioners as well. “The Greek Restaurant Association, Editorial” Greek Star, October 8, 1909. Less than a year later the “By-Laws of the Greek Restaurant Association of Chicago” appeared in Loxias, April 23, 1910. A Greek restaurant employees’ union was formed in 1916. “Greek Restaurant Employees’ Union,” Saloniki-Greek Press, July 8, 1916.
277 The Greek Star discussed this question in an article on the Greeks as restaurateurs, noting that “Of the Americans of Greek birth or extraction in this country over 75 percent are in some kind of food business.” Thus, the “question naturally arises, Why? Is it racial tendency, instinct, natural ability, or what? The
what their customers wanted and they created profitable businesses that did not require burdensome overhead costs or place too much reliance on skills that required extensive training. Having all the family members work in the restaurant or confectionery – as my sister, brother, and I did growing up -- also contributed to cost savings, as did leasing space until enough funds were saved to purchase property. In Chicago, street peddlers were not allowed to sell hot food from wagons. As a consequence, groups of peddlers would sometimes band together, pool their resources, and open joint-owned restaurants, illustrating the old adage, “when two Greeks meet, they open up a restaurant.”

Greek restaurant owners also organized to push back against attacks on their success, particularly from more “native” Americans who opposed “foreigners” succeeding in business. One of the most common accusations was that Greek restaurants

---

278 The **Greek Star** credits the Greeks’ initial success with the lunch wagon as the means and the factory worker’s patronage as the end. About 1900, “the dinner pail was the emblem of the American workingman, and it seemed likely to continue to be so, because no one had thought of the idea of creating a restaurant to serve this man. Then the Greek came. He drove his lunch wagon at the noon hour to the factory district, and was popular from the start. Later he opened restaurants close to the factories, serving food at prices which appealed to the laborers, and eventually he won a reputation for himself.” **Greek Star**, November 14, 1919.

279 Ibid., pp. 265-66. In 1909 the editor of **Loxias** called for the owners of confectioneries and restaurants to follow more professional business practices, remarking sarcastically, “A few Greeks think that the only thing necessary to open a store is $50, $100, or $200 borrowed from Paul or Gus.” See **Loxias**, “Progress and System,” May 20, 1909.
were unsanitary places. In 1919 the American Association of Greek Restaurant Keepers organized and resolved to raise “the standards of cooking, sanitation, working conditions, and service. It sought to aid members to comply with health regulations; it sponsored a program of naturalization, aiming to have all owners and employees become citizens of the United States; it urged its members to conform to American ideals and institutions; it fought all attempts to prejudice the public against the Greek restaurateur and all attacks based on untruthful statements regarding working conditions.” Greeks also made their mark in the tobacco business, the theater business, and the wholesale food business. For the purposes of this study, however, we shall remain centered on confectioneries and related food enterprises in east central Illinois, which were the primary occupations of the immigrants to that part of the state.

---

280 As early as 1907 Greek editorial writers were calling on Greek confectioners to stop using “Analine [aniline] and other substances, used in the dye of sweets.” The Illinois state legislature was considering a bill at the time to ban its use, but the newspaper asked the businesses to strive toward using the purest ingredients, “whether the pure food bill is passed, amended, or killed.” See “To the Greek Business Men in Chicago,” Greek Star, May 17, 1907.

281 In 1917 the Municipal Council of Chicago passed an act that denied business licenses to those aliens who had not applied or gained American citizenship. Introduced by an alderman who “declared that aliens are rapidly taking the place of the men who enlisted in the army,” it was estimated that up to 6,000 non-declarants would lose their licenses. “No Citizenship, No License, May be New City Law,” Chicago Tribune, December 14, 1917, p. 5. The act passed and was to go into effect on May 1, 1918. The Greek newspapers raised an alarm about the consequences of this act for Greek merchants in Chicago. “Six Thousand Aliens Will Be Refused the Right to Do Business,” Saloniki-Greek Press, March 30, 1918. Before the act took effect, foreign embassies weighed in, raising the question of treaty obligations, as the act threatened “to precipitate international complication which may bring complaints from the federal government. Chinese businessmen, for example, could not meet the requirements because the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 prevented them from becoming citizens. “Treaties Clash With City Law Against Aliens,” Chicago Tribune, April 18, 1918, p. 5. Because of these conflicts with international treaties, on the day before the act was to go into effect, the municipal council announced the ordinance would not be enforced. “Licenses,” Chicago Tribune, May 1, 1918, p. 11.

Since many of the first-generation Greeks finding their way to central Illinois passed through Chicago, a brief discussion of life in that city is necessary. I particularly want to highlight the living conditions and opportunities they encountered, and the networks they established there that were so integral to their later movement downstate and to their choice of occupation.

Greeks immigrants primarily settled in the neighborhood that is today known as "Greek Town," along Halsted Street around Hull House, Jane Addams’ famous settlement house. Hull House was instrumental in providing multiple services to immigrants coming to Chicago. Ms. Addams also spearheaded studies of immigrant living conditions and fought for years to improve housing and raise sanitary standards in poor neighborhoods. In 1909, Grace Abbot conducted a study of the Greeks in Chicago, supported and assisted by Hull House. Ms. Abbot was the Director of the League for the Protection of Immigrants and she reported on housing conditions, occupations, family life and aspirations. Over 1400 Greeks were interviewed at 350 residences. These residences were not confined to one neighborhood, and thus represented a range of family circumstances.\(^{283}\)

From the 1908 school census in Chicago, Abbott determined that there were 3,521 foreign-born Greeks out of 4,218 Greeks in the city. School censuses were taken in May after the railroad workers had left for the summer, so that population number was probably lower than one taken in the winter. Of the 424 Greeks living near Hull House,

205 hailed from Sparta, 102 from Tripoli, and only 5 from Athens.\(^{284}\) Abbott reported, “Like all pioneers who come from various countries of Europe to the United States the Greeks expect to return.” (p. 380) And, at this time, of the 790 men over the age of twenty in the study, only 124 had been naturalized. (p. 380)

Greeks settled primarily in the neighborhood of the nineteenth ward; Hull House was strategically placed among them. There was a Greek Orthodox Church with a Greek school, where the focus was on teaching some English, some Greek, “much of the achievements of Hellas, and the obligation that rests on every Greek to rescue Macedonia from the Turks and the Bulgarians…” (pp. 380-81) In the neighborhood resided a holistic community with the necessary amenities for survival in this new world. There was a bank, steamship ticket office, multiple coffee houses for the men, and Hull House, which provided a safety net for families. (pp. 380-381)

Abbott’s comments on the character of the new immigrants are telling, for they appear to represent an educated native American’s rather stereotypical perceptions of what Greeks should be like. She wrote, “With the glory of ancient Greece and Byron’s romantic championship of the modern Greek in mind, one is shocked when he meets for the first time a representative of that people in the thrifty, good natured, and polite keeper of a fruit-stand or ‘shoe-shine parlor.’” (p. 381) She suggested that average Americans expecting Greeks to represent Apollo and Pericles would conclude that “the race has

\(^{284}\) This would support one of the primary conclusions of my study, which is that the majority of the immigrants coming to Chicago and then downstate came from the central Peloponnesian between Tripoli in the north and Sparta in the south. Abbott herself observes that “Most of the Greeks who come to the United States are from the Peloponnesus....” and that “most of those who say they came from Sparta and Tripolis have not really lived in those towns but in the country villages near by.” See Abbott, “Study of the Greeks,” p. 380.
degenerated and constitutes a most undesirable addition to our population,” but she added that such a characterization would be unfair and that the Greek immigrant should be accepted and assisted in his development in America. (p. 382) Abbott noted that a very large proportion of the Greeks were males and that they were desirable immigrants. Of the almost one thousand Greek men in her study, 195 were laborers, 178 were peddlers, and approximately 400 were engaged in the food business as waiters, owners of ice-cream parlors or restaurants. She reviewed the apprentice system instituted by padrones and concluded that once a man had earned some money, perhaps on the railroad, he could then become a peddler or start a business. She concluded that, “during the short time that he has been in Chicago the Greek has established his reputation as a shrewd business man. On Halsted Street they are already saying, ‘It takes a Greek to beat a Jew.’” (pp. 385-86) Abbott also predicted that the Greeks would become great business and professional men because they were willing to do any kind of work. She added that the compulsory education in Greek contributed to over half of those interviewed being literate in Greek and, of those included in her survey, 348 could read and write in English. Greeks were also attending adult education classes at a public school as well at Hull House. (p. 387)

Abbott underscored the unsanitary conditions in which many Greeks lived, particularly the single Greek males who inhabited rooms above barns and feed stores. As an example of these cramped and unsanitary conditions she described a situation where fifteen young peddlers were living above a barn, all unmarried and earning an average of ten dollars per week. “This place is not clean. There is no furniture except beds and a long table in an inside room which serves as a dining-room. Here the boys were found
one night between half-past nine and ten o’clock. They had just returned from work and were eating their supper of soup and stewed corn.” (p. 392)

In 1915, Natalie Walker, with the Chicago Schools of Civics and Philanthropy, conducted an updated study, which found that within the Hull House neighborhood the Greek population by 1914 had grown to 1,881, “the largest colony of that race in Chicago, and one of the largest in the United States.” Describing the neighborhood in which they resided, she noted that the sidewalks were lined with Greek newspapers, bookstores, groceries, saloons, pool halls, as well as the offices of professional men such as dentists, physicians, and businessmen. (p. 286)

Walker's focus was on sixteen blocks in Ward 19 of Chicago, an area in which there were over ten thousand inhabitants. More than half of these people lived in families, approximately thirty percent were children under the age of twelve, and over ten percent were lodgers, mostly male and somewhat transitory. (p. 289) Within this district the Italians were the largest immigrant group, making up 72 percent of the residents, followed by the Greeks at 13 percent. The remaining 15 percent of the population was comprised of 27 other nationalities. Most heads of families were either unskilled laborers, or employed in various trade occupations including barbers, bakers, confectioners, cobblers, saloonkeepers, peddlers, and tailors. The women who were employed held jobs as housekeepers, seamstresses, tailoresses, and laundresses. (p. 290)

Walker also reported that only nine percent of the population owned their homes, and noted that over half had lived in the neighborhood less than two years; twenty-five

---

285 Natalie Walker, “Chicago Housing Conditions. X. Greeks and Italians in the Neighborhood of Hull House,” *American Journal of Sociology* 21, no. 3 (November 1, 1915): 286. The following comes from Walker's study unless otherwise noted.
percent had lived there less than six months. (pp. 291-92) The houses themselves were primarily frame buildings and in a slow state of disintegration. They were built to house one family, but many held three or four. (p. 293) She devoted a significant amount of her report to describing specific conditions, such as overcrowding, poor ventilation, and inadequate light as well as the deplorable state of indoor plumbing. Walker noted that despite these conditions, some of the residents endeavored to keep their homes clean and attractive. One Greek painter, while unemployed for a brief time, stenciled the walls of his apartment, and sometimes in good weather window boxes of flowers could be seen or vegetable gardens were planted. (pp. 313-14)

Walker concluded her report by admonishing the property owners for failing to take care of their properties. She also urged government vigilance in maintaining the housing laws, which were supposed to ensure clean and healthful surroundings for the city and its people. (p. 316)

The story of Georgia Bitzis Pooley, the first Greek woman known to have settled in Chicago, offers an insight into the world of immigrant women at the end of the nineteenth century.\(^{286}\) Georgia Bitzis was educated at an academy in Corfu, where her paternal grandfather had migrated from Epirus. She studied multiple languages in addition to other subjects; a formal education that was rare at the time. She married Peter Pooley (Pangiotic Poulis) and they arrived in Chicago in 1885. Georgia was in her mid-

---

thirties, but gave birth to seven children, beginning in 1886. The couple and their children lived in Greek Town along Halstead Street and Pooley ran a confectionery business next door to their home. He died in 1914.287

When Georgia arrived in Chicago, the Greek community was comprised of approximately one thousand males who worked long hours for low pay and lived in unsanitary conditions. Georgia was appalled at the deplorable state of these living arrangements and she organized some older Greek men and their (mostly) non-Greek wives of Italian and Irish descent to assist with improving the financial and social situations of the young immigrants.288 She pushed to establish Greek Orthodox Church services and a Greco-Slavonic Brotherhood was formed in 1885 that provided religious structure. This arrangement eventually resulted in the establishment of the Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church in 1892.289 Pooley used Hull House as the vehicle to reach out to the Greek women who were, for the most part, illiterate and unemployed. She also encouraged them, their husbands, and their children to learn English.

As we have seen, Hull House was the Greek focal point for recreational, educational, and health programs. Pooley was instrumental in creating the Philoptochos (“Friends of the Poor”) Society of Greek Woman at Hull House, which aided indigent Greeks. During this time as well, Pooley also encouraged women to leave their homes and become more formally educated following the establishment of the first Greek school

287 Ibid., p. 10.
288 Ibid.
289 Ibid., p. 11. See also the Greek Star, April 9, 1937, p. 1.
in Chicago in 1905-1906, and the Socrates parochial day school in 1908.\textsuperscript{290} During the Second World War, when Pooley was in her 90s, her concern over the suffering of her Greek countrymen and women in Nazi-occupied Greece drove her to participate in the Greek War Relief Association to raise funds for the homeless and starving back in her homeland.\textsuperscript{291} Georgia Pooley lived to be 96 years old and clearly left an indelible mark for women, in particular, but also young men through her philanthropic endeavors and partnership with Hull House.\textsuperscript{292}

Chicago was an integral thread in the story of Greek immigration to not only the United States, but to east central Illinois in particular. Many newly arrived immigrant males gravitated to the city, which had the second largest Greek community in America, before heading out west to work on the railroads or in the mines. But Chicago became a destination in itself for Greeks who saw it as a place to work for a time, earn some money and learn a trade, meet up with fellow Greeks and determine whether or not the city was the place to remain.

St. Louis, although not always recognized as a primary destination like Chicago, was an important stop as well for Greeks who eventually came to east central Illinois. Gary Mormino posits that St. Louis failed to draw more immigrants to the city at the end of the 1800’s and into the early 1900’s due to multiple factors. Large numbers of Slavs settled across the Mississippi River to the east, in Illinois, which evolved into “an industrial matrix of iron foundries, oil refineries, slaughterhouses, and leather

\textsuperscript{290} Kopan and Kopan, “Georgia Bitzis Pooley,” p. 11; Kopan and Kopan, “Pooley, Georgia Bitzis,” p. 708.
\textsuperscript{291} Kopan and Kopan, “Pooley, Georgia Bitzis,” p. 709; Kopan and Kopan, Georgia Bitzis Pooley,” p. 11.
\textsuperscript{292} Kopan and Kopan, “Georgia Bitzis Pooley,” pp. 11-12.
tanneries." Land on the Illinois side was less expensive, the government was more compliant to the needs of industrialists, the coal was plentiful, and rail and barge access was easy. Factories were built in East St. Louis, Granite City, Wood River, Alton, Belleville, Madison, Venice, and Roxana. By 1920 there were over 25,000 immigrants in Madison and St. Clair, Illinois counties. Granite City had the distinction, prior to 1910, of containing “Hunky Hollow,” where lived the largest Bulgarian population in the United States. Despite all of that, Greeks did gravitate to St. Louis, along with Italians, Jews, and Slavs. And, of course, Germans made up the largest immigrant community in St. Louis.

Immigrant experiences in St. Louis were not unlike those in Chicago. In 1916, sociologist Ruth Crawford, a researcher for the St. Louis School of Social Economy, submitted a report on St. Louis' immigrant population. Drawing on various sources, Crawford attempted to determine the size and ethnic identity of St. Louis’ immigrant population. The 1880 census indicated that approximately thirty percent of the St. Louis population was foreign born. According to Crawford, the majority of these were German and Irish settlers with a distinct notation of “Bohemians,” but there was already a large settlement of Italians as well. There were no Greeks listed in the 1880 or 1890 censuses,

---


294 According to Robyn Burnett and Ken Luebbering, "Jews were the largest new immigrant group in St. Louis in the first decades of the twentieth century. The city's Jewish population grew from some 10,000 to more than 50,000." Robyn Burnett and Ken Luebbering, *Immigrant Women in the Settlement of Missouri*, Missouri Heritage Readers (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 2005): 126.

and only thirty-eight listed in 1900. The 1910 census, however, contained over 1300 Greeks. In addition, in 1910 there were fifteen thousand Russians and seven thousand Italians. At the onset of the Balkan War in 1912, the registry of the Greek consul estimated the number of Greeks in the city at five thousand, with two thousand returning to Greece to fight in the war. World War I caused a brief halt in immigration but that resumed when the war ended.

The train trip from New York to St. Louis in the early 1900s usually took two days. Immigrants traveling across the country often rode in special train cars no longer used for regular service. In 1913, the St. Louis YMCA hired a “foreign” secretary whose role was to meet all of the immigrant trains and assist settlers in navigating their way through their new environment. On February 9, 1915, the city council passed a municipal ordinance establishing a City Immigration Bureau in St. Louis’ Union Station. Former St. Louis mayor, Bryan Mullanphy, also bequeathed funds to establish the Mullanphy Fund, which was for “the relief of all poor immigrants and travelers, coming to St. Louis on their way ‘bona fide’ to settle in the West.”

The United States Immigration Commission Report of 1911 included information on immigration to cities such as Chicago, Philadelphia, Boston, and Cleveland, but omitted St. Louis. To try and compare St. Louis’ immigrant population with that of


298 Ibid., p. 16.

299 Ibid., pp. 16-17.

some of the similar size cities that the Immigration Commission did include in their report, Ruth Crawford turned to a study conducted by the Civic League of St. Louis in 1908 on the Jewish and Italian districts in the city. This report revealed over-crowding in dwellings and the transitioning of homes from “native” St. Louisans and Germans, to occupation by the Irish, then Jews, then Italians, and then Poles.” “The Negroes,” the report concludes, “have held on through all the changes.”\textsuperscript{301} This report also noted that “there are a few Hungarians, a few Roumanians, a few Greeks,” in these districts, but “these races…have formed colonies elsewhere in the city.” She also found that “of the Greeks there are said to be some 3000 in the city, and only about ten families among them; nearly the whole number being unattached men, who help complicate the lodger problem.”\textsuperscript{302} Crawford added that a later study, in 1914, on this area of the city, found that Greeks and Turks were “fast wedging their way into these same premises vacated by the removal of families to a better part of town.”\textsuperscript{303} Crawford concluded that “the strong endure their surroundings with but one idea – that of escape…” and that immigrants are “inordinately desirous of better surroundings” for themselves over time. (p. 19)


\textsuperscript{301} Charlotte Rumbold, \textit{Housing Conditions in St. Louis. Civic League of Saint Louis, Housing Committee}. (St. Louis: Civic League of St. Louis, 1908): 63-64. See also Crawford, \textit{The Immigrant in St. Louis}, pp. 18-19.

\textsuperscript{302} Rumbold, \textit{Housing Conditions}, p. 64. In this regard, the St. Louis Globe-Democrat commented, “The early Greek colony was overwhelmingly masculine. One report placed fifteen hundred men and six women at the 1907 Greek Orthodox Easter Services.” See \textit{St. Louis Globe-Democrat}, June 28, 1907, Magazine Section, p. 4

\textsuperscript{303} Crawford, \textit{The Immigrant in St. Louis}, pp. 18-19. Crawford does not cite this 1914 report. The following material is taken from Crawford unless otherwise noted.
In 1908, St. Louis enacted a Housing Code as a result of the housing investigation. Outdoor plumbing was prohibited and running water was to be accessible on every floor of a building. Lighting was to be placed in hallways and a janitor was to be provided for tenements housing eight or more families. Cellar leasing for living space became illegal. (p. 19)

The United States Immigration Commission’s failure to include St. Louis in its report also meant that Crawford had little data on industries and employment to include in her study. Thus, she asked the St. Louis Business Men’s League to submit a list of firms employing large number of foreign-born employees. Another list was obtained from the “factory inspector of smaller establishments such as tailors, restaurants, and shoe shining parlors.” (p. 33) Thirty-seven firms were then selected as most representative of industries employing foreign labor, and asked to submit employment information. Eight refused to participate; three had closed; and twenty-six firms reported employing almost 23,000 people. Seven of the twenty-six businesses indicated that they did not employ many, if any, non-English speaking immigrants or those from southern Europe.

The breweries, started by the Germans, employed over six thousand men and women in 1913-1914. Workers in the breweries were unionized and that required American citizenship. “For this, among other reasons, Germans and Austrians, who have been in the country for many years, are almost the only types found” in the brewery industries. (pp. 33-35) The shoe industry employed local native whites, Germans, and Irish, but with the influx of southeastern immigrants, engaged Italians in 1900, followed by Bohemians and Poles in 1902, Greeks, Armenians, and a few Turks in 1904, and small
numbers of Swedes and Maygars in 1905. There were 212 males and 2 females working in the shoe industry at the time of the study. Greeks and Turks “were found in supply plants where there is packing and heavy work, or in the most unskilled departments, such as heel cutting. They also build heels, which, in the cheap shoe,…consists of merely sticking the ‘lifts’ together with cement.” (p. 36) Greeks and Italians also worked in the brick and tile industry along with “white labor” and a few blacks. (p. 37) Crawford noted that, for the most part, the neighborhood in which a plant may reside drove the employee composition, but officials agreed that overall, recent immigrants comprised only approximately 16 percent of the total employee population. (p. 35)

Greeks in St. Louis, as in Chicago and other urban areas, gravitated to entrepreneurship. The approximately five thousand Greeks living in St. Louis by 1915 had established over four hundred business concerns representing over one million dollars’ worth of investment. These included moving picture theatres, multiple restaurants and confectioneries, coffee houses, and shoe-shining parlors. Crawford noted that a report by the Consumer’s League in 1915 found that the preparation of food in Greek restaurants was “done under sanitary conditions.” She then observed that “the shrewd business sense of the Greek made him glad to incorporate any changes suggested by the inspector.” These Greek businesses did come under criticism, however, in regard to “moral issues.” Young girls from the YWCA hired as waitresses in some Greek restaurants or coffee houses, had had negative experiences in the form of sexual advances and mistreatment, “although it is almost impossible to find girls who will produce on the

304 Ibid., p. 41. Crawford does not cite the Consumer League’s report.
witness stand the evidence necessary for conviction.” The coffee houses, frequented by Greek themselves, had a “particularly unsavory reputation.” (pp. 41-42)

Crawford’s study also noted the existence of the padrone system in St. Louis with regard to the shoe-shining businesses. Crawford reported on one case where thirty-five boys were kept in one loft for the entire winter in horrible conditions. One padrone operating parlors on Sixth and Seventh Streets paid the parents of each boy $150 to send them to St. Louis for work. This money was used to pay wedding dowry for daughters left in Greece. One boy escaped his peonage and testified against the padrone, freeing the others from their sad existence. (pp. 41-42)

Immigrant women did work in St. Louis, but specific information about the lives of individual Greek immigrant women is sparse. Perhaps this is because there were relatively few female Greek immigrants, or because they too had very little formal education and left behind few written records, or because they generally remained at home or assisted in their family restaurants or other private businesses. Mormino observes that the Greek population was the most celibate of the immigrant groups, the men traditionally marrying late in life after establishing themselves in business. Even as late as 1930, the St. Louis census showed that Greek males outnumbered Greek females 1,207 to 377.305

Chicago and St. Louis were the Midwestern cities where many newly arrived Greek immigrants began their new lives in America. It was in these cities that they linked up with relatives who had come before, where they learned their first words of English, and where they became Americanized. Here also they learned about the opportunities

305 Mormino, Immigrants on the Hill, p. 107.
available for Greek immigrants in America, where the Greek niches were, and it was from these cities that they took this knowledge and headed to central Illinois.
CHAPTER 4: Education and the Greek Immigrant

In the early twentieth century, immigrants from southeastern Europe comprised over eighty percent of the total immigrant population coming from Europe. Resistance to those immigrants not from northern and western Europe had begun to manifest itself in racist and prejudicial stereotyping, including accusations of inferior intelligence. Indeed, even the relatively liberal scholar and president, Woodrow Wilson, in his majestic ten volume history of the American people, could declare that

Throughout the [nineteenth] century men of the sturdy stocks of the north of Europe had made up the main strain of foreign blood which was every year added to the vital working force of the country, or else men of the Latin-Gallic stocks of France and northern Italy; but now there came multitudes of men of the lowest class from the south of Italy and men of the meaner sort out of Hungary and Poland, men out of ranks where there was neither skill nor energy nor any initiative of quick intelligence; and they came in numbers which increased from year to year, as if the countries of the south of Europe were disburdening themselves of the more sordid and hapless elements of their population, the men whose standards of life and of work were such as American workmen had never dreamed of hitherto.  

---

306 Woodrow Wilson, A History of the American People, vol. X, Reunion and Nationalism, 10 vols., Documentary Edition (New York and London: Harper and Brothers, 1918): 98-99. One might compare Wilson’s bigoted stereotypes of southern European immigrants here with his romantic reveries in 1916 about Americanization and the American spirit: “I have no doubt that many a simple soul has been thrilled by that great statue standing in the harbor of New York and seeming to lift the light of liberty for the guidance of the feet of men; and I can imagine that they have expected something ideal in the treatment that they will received…and it has caused me many a time to turn upon myself the eye of examination to see whether there burned in me the true light of the American spirit which they expected to find here.” Woodrow Wilson, "Address to the Citizenship Convention, Washington, DC, July 13, 1916,” in Winthrop Talbot, ed., Americanization: Principles of Americanism, Essentials of Americanization, Technic of Race-assimilation, Annotated Bibliography (New York: H. W. Wilson Company, 1917): 28.
While not all observers at the time blamed the nation’s ills on the essential character of these “new stock” immigrants as compared with the “old stock,”\textsuperscript{307} the majority of policy makers, who generally came from the “old stock,” did hold such views and these guided their actions. Desmond King contends that such negative characterizations influenced American society in three major ways: they formalized and generalized the differences between native and new immigrants, thereby escalating the perceived dangers and inferior innate capabilities of the southeastern Europeans; the emphasis on new immigration reinforced the continued marginalization of African Americans through its preoccupation with defining whiteness within the taxonomy of color; and, they promoted the concept of Americanization, as immigration policy, public institutions, and business enterprise grappled with the influx of millions of newcomers to America.\textsuperscript{308}

In this chapter we shall examine the third of these, the Americanization process, to understand how it worked and evolved, particularly as it related to education. We are especially interested in how Greeks adapted to these Americanization efforts and how they went about becoming Americans. In this regard, some questions to consider are:

\textsuperscript{307} For example, the author of an editorial in 1914 in the weekly magazine, the \textit{Outlook}, published in New York City, wrote: “With a lack of foresight which has been criminal in its stupidity, we have brought in small armies of men and women ignorant of our language, laws, and habits, planted them in isolated colonies, done little or nothing to show them how to be Americans, left them to the leadership of agitators, and then, when they have become turbulent and lawless, have accused them of violating the hospitality of the Nation. As a matter of fact, hospitality has never been offered them. They have been brought over in shiploads, carted like freight to distant points, and dumped in a mass like usable human refuse. They have been worked; they have not been Americanized.” See “The Old Stock and the New,” an editorial in \textit{The Outlook}, (June 13, 1914): 334-335.

how formally educated were the “new” Greek immigrants upon their arrival in America? What institutions or other conveyers of knowledge and learning were available to Greek immigrants in America, and in east central Illinois in particular? Did the first generation of immigrants participate in public educational institutions, and, if not, how did they obtain formal or informal educations? And, particularly critical to this study, how did the Greek confectioners learn to make candy and about the candy business?

In his case study of formal and informal educational opportunities for Greeks in Chicago in the twentieth century, Andrew T. Kopan begins with a description of the Greek (predominantly) male immigrants who were newly arrived in an often bewildering urban American environment. Before coming to America, life in Greece for these immigrants had revolved around scratching a subsistence living from poor soil in a rural setting. The farming life routine was interrupted only by religious holidays and celebrations. Devotion and loyalty to the family was deeply rooted, but the Greeks were also strongly individualistic. Kopan notes that “Underlying all institutions of Greek society is a highly-developed sense of philotimo (individual self-esteem)…The word philotimo derives from the concept of honor, dignity and, in a more extended sense, social worth and rank.” Work was very important but if done under the authority of, and for, others, indicated a loss of freedom; hence the Greek immigrant tendency to gravitate toward entrepreneurship in America once they were able.

---

310 Dimitri Tassiopoulos states that the Greek economy at the beginning of the 21th century is still “mostly dominated by family controlled businesses.” He points out that “the Greek economy is notable for having the highest density of small and medium-sized businesses per 1000 inhabitants in the European Union.” See Dimitri
As discussed in chapter two, the Greek government implemented universal primary and secondary education in Greece in 1911. Prior to that time, however, a nationwide system of elementary schools had been in place. Ioannis Capodistrias, the first President of Greece in 1827, was a passionate advocate of elementary and secondary schools. He considered a universal educational system the key to uniting the Greek people into a nation, and an “integral element in the economic development of the people.” To do this the system had to promote the unifying social forces that all Greeks shared: the Orthodox Church, the history of Greece’s glorious past, and the patriotism of the armed forces. 311 Prince Otho of Bavaria, the King of Greece from 1833 to 1862, also supported the widespread availability of education, and in 1834, school became compulsory for all children between the ages of five and twelve. If children were not enrolled, parents were fined, although this law was not strictly enforced.

In 1883 a United States Bureau of Education report on education in Italy and Greece highlighted a 90 to 95 percent illiteracy rate in the districts of Thebes and the Peloponnesus, the home districts of many Greek immigrants to America in the years to

---


follow. Differences in education levels for men and women in the late nineteenth century were stark. Whereas in some districts at least half the men had some level of education, there were few where even 30 percent of women had any education, “while often only 1 to 2 per cent have been instructed.” Of the Greek males between ages ten and thirty who came to America in 1907, approximately one third were deemed illiterate; for females, it was close to 80 percent.

Kopan’s research found that most of the Greek immigrants at the end of the 1800’s and beginning of the 1900’s were from agrarian backgrounds, and the average illiteracy rate was approximately 27 percent for the years 1900-1908. In comparison, the illiteracy rates for other ethnic immigrant groups were: Germans, 4.2; Hebrews, 19.4; North Italians, 10.4; South Italians, 49.7; and Scandinavians, 0.4 percent. By 1920 the overall illiteracy rate for Greeks had dropped to an acceptable 3.2 percent, probably due to the enforcement of the compulsory education laws in Greece.

One of the most difficult challenges to the success of the Greek public education system was that of which form of the Greek language to use and teach in the schools.

---

313 ibid., p. 8.
315 This was true, as Oscar Handlin notes, for the great majority of all immigrants between 1820 and 1920. See Oscar Handlin, “Education and the European Immigrant, 1820-1920,” in *American Education and the European Immigrant, 1840-1940*, edited by Bernard J. Weiss (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1982): 3.
316 Kopan, *Education and Greek Immigrants*, p. 75.
317 Thus, the 1883 Bureau of Education report on education in Greece begins “A great stumbling block to learning is said to be the use of modern Greek in
There was a “high” Greek (called Katharevousa, or “purified”), and a “low,” or popular Greek (called Dimotiki, or “[language] of the people”). The higher form was the official language of the Greek Church and the government and was used in literature. The popular Greek was the everyday spoken language. Prime Minister Eleftherios Venizelos’ education reforms of 1917 required the Demotic form to be taught in the first four years of school, which gave the Demotic legitimacy. Between the 1910s and 1930s, however, the popular form became negatively associated with Communism, and when the Greek military junta came to power in 1967 they banned its teaching altogether. In 1968 the generals made katharevousa the official language of the state. This high Greek form now became closely identified with the unpopular junta government, and when they lost power in July 1974, steps were taken to make the Demotic the official language of the country, which it became in 1976, and the sole language of education, which it became in the school year 1977-78.318

Of course, education and language were only two of many problems faced by Greek and other immigrants to America in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. The totality of attributes immigrants had to acquire to become fully integrated into society in their new homes is frequently described as “Americanization.” Robert A. Carlson contends that the broad ethos of Americanization had its origins with the Puritans conversation and ancient Greek in official and social correspondence. Even adults find that this creates a difficulty, and for children it is especially hard to overcome.” See Bureau of Education, Education in Italy and Greece, p. 7.

in Massachusetts, who set out to establish within their community “the best religion, the best government, and the best society yet obtained in an imperfect world.”\textsuperscript{319} It was Benjamin Franklin, however, who refashioned the Americanization ideal by encouraging the colonists to “adopt a more secular and nationalistic mission.”\textsuperscript{320} He sought to create a “happy mediocrity” by promoting a “secular and middle class society that would overcome…religious extremism and also…do away with both the rich and the poor, with the aristocracy and the ‘rabble.’”\textsuperscript{321} Franklin came to represent this middling American and in the nineteenth century “became not only an icon that ordinary people could emulate but also the most important mythical figure used to assimilate foreigners to American values. Franklin came to represent the America of innovation and enterprise, of moneymaking and getting ahead. He was everything that immigrants thought America was about.”\textsuperscript{322} As one expression of his desire for Americans to socially and financially better themselves, as he had done, Franklin supported the American Revolution in part


\textsuperscript{320} Carlson, \textit{Americanization Syndrome}, p. 3. Prior to the revolution, however, Franklin had a very limited view of who this “American” colonist should be. Gordon Wood maintains that Franklin “was a true-blue Englishman,” and envisioned an America made up only of the English and the Indians, ‘the lovely White and Red.’” He issued an “angry outcry against the massive immigration of Germans into Pennsylvania,” and would have excluded “all Germans and black people from the New World.” See Gordon S. Wood, \textit{The Americanization of Benjamin Franklin} (New York: Penguin Books, 2004): 71.

\textsuperscript{321} Carlson, \textit{Americanization Syndrome}, p. 3. Gordon Wood argues that the Americanization of Benjamin Franklin himself continued throughout his lifetime, and in the several decades after his death in 1790, until many considered him the “first great American.” See Wood, \textit{Americanization}, pp. 1-13.

\textsuperscript{322} Wood, \textit{Americanization}, p. 3.
because he believed that economic and social equality could only be achieved through westward expansion and the economic opportunities it would provide.\textsuperscript{323}

Writing in 1906, the Harvard educated lawyer and Boston Blue Blood, Prescott F. Hall, believed the revolution marked a turning point in the nation’s history, for “after the birth of the United States as a separate nation, colonization in the earlier sense ceased entirely. European nations [such as England and France] could no longer send out their own citizens and form communities directly dependent upon themselves and subject to their own jurisdiction. The immigration of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, therefore, differs widely in character from the colonization of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.”\textsuperscript{324} Hall was a founder of the Immigration Restriction League, played a significant role in the formulation and passage of the Immigration Act of 1917, and was an advocate for eugenics. It is no surprise, therefore, that he could conclude that following the revolution one had to make a distinction between “those who took part in building the political framework of the thirteen colonies and of the Federal Union, and those who have arrived to find the United States Government had its social and political institution in working operation. The former class have been called colonists, the latter are immigrants proper.” Hall argued that “this distinction is important,” for, “as against the native Indians, all comers might be considered as intruders and equally without claim of right.” Rather, the descendants of “those who have built up a complicated framework

\textsuperscript{323} Ibid., pp. 3-4. The British, of course, had limited westward expansion, and this became a major issue among the colonists before the revolution.

of nationality” have certain rights “as against others who seek to enjoy the benefits of national life without having contributed to its creation.”

Still, as Allan Carlson points out, at the time of the revolution, “most persons saw the American identity in abstract, ideological terms. For obvious and personal reasons, ethnic considerations among the Anglo-American revolutionaries drew little attention. America stood as the ‘asylum of liberty,’ …where the ideals of freedom, equality, and republicanism governed. American nationality stood open to anyone who desired to adhere to these principles.” The nationalization policy adopted in 1790, “bespoke great confidence in the power of American principles, institutions, and environment to transform immigrants quickly into acceptable Americans without systematic coercion.”

It was also true, however, that at least up until the 1840s, systematic coercion was seldom an option. Oscar Handlin shows that until then the issue of formal education for immigrant children was “largely irrelevant.” He argues that “urban schools were decidedly class institutions, even those conducted under the auspices of Catholic orders. Neither then nor later were the established old-stock townsfolk eager to bring great hordes of foreign-born youngsters into contact with their own or to pay the taxes to support expansion.”

---

325 Hall, Immigration, pp. 3-4.
In the middle of the nineteenth century, as millions of immigrants began flooding into America from countries other than Great Britain, the Anglo-American ruling class found their “great confidence” in a natural Americanization process increasingly tested. Schools as a “force for cohesion in a nation characterized by heterogeneity” in sectional and class differences, now had to address ethnic differences as well. The development of public schools in the mid- and late-nineteenth century furthered the Americanization process, especially of the newly-arrived Irish and German Roman Catholic immigrants in urban areas. After the Civil War, New England schoolteachers and missionaries took their nationalistic mission into the South during Reconstruction. Carlson contends that following the Civil War, efforts at Americanization narrowed more explicitly along racial lines and influenced the late nineteenth and early twentieth century effort to Americanize the newly arriving immigrants from Southern and Eastern Europe. The militant Anglo-Saxonism that had helped to reunite North and South now challenged the newcomers as a potential threat to the nations’ racial purity. The lack of faith in the heritage of these people made it easy to question their loyalty when World War I and the Russian Communist revolution engendered panic in the United States. In this atmosphere, there arose an educational campaign so intensive that Americanization education came to be associated in popular thought almost exclusively with the attempted indoctrination of Eastern and Southern European immigrants.

The first arrival of Greeks immigrants in Chicago coincided with the Progressive Era (c. 1890s-1920s), a period when those seeking social and political reform through

---

329 Ibid., p. 8. Handlin argues that toward mid-century this “explosive fusion of conversion and reform transformed the mission of the schools in the view of many influential Americans,” making them “less important as media for the transmittal of specific bodies of knowledge or skills...[than] instruments for molding the thoughts and behavior of the next generation and thereby reshaping society.” (p. 7) See pages 4-13 for Handlin’s interesting discussion of this transformation of the American educational system in the middle and late nineteenth century, and the debates it engendered between reformers and immigrants.

330 Carlson, Americanization Syndrome, pp. 3-5.
activism (with a Protestant tinge) met opposition from those who believed the nation’s burgeoning industrialization and urbanization should be allowed to develop without restrain or government interference. Progressives sought to expose the rampant corruption they believed was prevalent in business and government, to bring an end to all-powerful political machines and bosses (as in Chicago, Boston, and New York), and often supported women’s suffrage and progressive taxation. They were optimistic that new advances in technology and science could end hunger, fight disease, raise standards of living, and control nature (e.g., the Titanic). Progressives generally worked to bring modern methods and practices to all areas of society, such as in public education, medicine, public health, housing, child rearing, and the family. They believed in an engaged internationalism and globalization, rooted in American style democracy and capitalism.  

Progressives also generally supported the ideal of Americanization, although immigration reform was not one of their primary goals and there were deep divides...

---

among them over the issue. One leading historian of this period, Roger Daniels, asserts that “progressivism was not only led by a relatively narrow middle-class professional elite, but…for all intents and purposes, [it was] a progressivism for old American stock whites only.” He continues, “While some progressive leaders, such as Theodore Roosevelt, at least paid lip service to ethnic democracy, others, such as Woodrow Wilson, were openly and blatantly racist, and contemptuous of most recent immigrants.” Only when Wilson was seeking ethnic votes in the 1912 and 1916 presidential elections did he publicly modify his views about immigrants – although “not about African Americans.”

An “100 percent Americanism” crusade was spawned during World War I, and nationally amplified in the presidential campaign in 1916 between Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson. Max Paul Friedman argues that the rally for “100 percent Americanism” was used to exclude immigrants, socialists, Jews, and others from the national community. “Theodore Roosevelt’s term ‘100% Americanism’ became the watchword of the anti-immigrant groups that preached a blend of scientific racism, cultural conformity, and strict obedience to authority. They ranged from the American Legion, whose national convention voted in 1919 to make its basic ideal the promotion of ‘100 percent Americanism’ and to combat ‘all anti-American tendencies,’ to the revived

332 Roosevelt had promoted his fellow Republican and progressive, William Howard Taft, to succeed him as president in 1908, but Taft held a more conservative conception of progressivism than Roosevelt. Roosevelt and other progressive members of the Republican Party broke away in 1912 to form the Progressive (“Bull Moose”) Party. Goodwin spends many pages discussing this divide among the conservative and progressive wings of the Republican Party during this period. See, for example, pp. 378-80, 434-36, 627-28, 663-65, in Goodwin, The Bully Pulpit, .
Ku Klux Klan, whose Imperial Wizard promised to fight ‘anti-Americanism’ of all kinds….The word ‘Americanism’ was appropriated by the nativist right as its sole patrimony, and ‘anti-Americanism’ linked unpopular ethnicity and progressive politics to disloyalty to the nation itself.”

The “100 percent Americanism” campaign intensified even more following the sedition and espionage persecutions in 1917-1918, the Red Scare in 1919-1920, the immigration restriction laws of 1921 and 1924, the growth of the American Legion, the Ku Klux Klan resurgence and the spread of anti-union sentiment in the mid-1920’s. All these events contributed to an “antihyphenism” culture that seeped into the American psyche. Southeastern European immigrants became the targets of the Americanization

---


335 The American Legion and the American Communist Party were both formed in 1919. The American Legion’s first national convention was held that year in Minneapolis, Minnesota and the assembly wrote into the preamble to their constitution that it was the organization’s “duty” to “realize in the United States the basic ideal...of 100 percent Americanism.” The American Legion continues to promote this ideal. See The American Legion, *Americanism Manual* (Indianapolis, IN: The American Legion, National Americanism Commission, 2011): 3, 4.

336 Theodore Roosevelt’s primary target in this campaign during wartime was German-Americans, whose patriotism he questioned. In a speech on June 14, 1916, he declared: “No good American...can have any feeling except scorn and detestation for those professional German-Americans who seek to make the American President in effect a viceroy of the German Emperor....[there should be no] adherence to the politico-racial hyphen which is the badge and sign of moral treason.” Frederick C. Luebke, *Bonds of Loyalty; German-Americans and World War I* (Dekalb, IL: Northern Illinois University Press, 1974): 174. Other examples of his attacks on hyphens:
process. Factories, YM/YWCAs, settlement houses, and other community organizations established classes for English language instruction, citizenship, and American customs. Robert Carlson maintains that “Adult education developed into a profession in the United States at this time largely as a result of this campaign that involved large numbers of volunteers and all levels of America’s burgeoning educational establishment.”

Zoë Burkholder argues that professional educators at the turn of the twentieth century were influenced by “two distinct, yet interrelated phenomena that impacted the social production of race in [public] schools, Americanization and transnational dialogue.” Teachers grappled with the tension between preserving some aspects of immigrant “heritage,” or erasing them wholesale. Pressure to adopt the latter policy grew as a result of the “100 percent Americanism” campaign during and following the Great War.

“The hyphen is incompatible with patriotism;” “A hyphenated American is not American at all;” “There is no such thing as a hyphenated American who is a good American. The only man who is a good American is the man who is an American and nothing else.” Theodore Roosevelt, Fear God and Take Your Own Part (New York: George H. Doran Company, 1916): 19, 361, 362. Only a couple of days after Roosevelt’s speech on June 14th, the Democratic Party, meeting in their national convention (held in St. Louis, a heavily German-American city), put a plank in their campaign platform attacking “hyphenates,” and promoting Americanism. President Wilson promised to make “anti-hyphenism” the principal issue in his campaign, and expanded his attacks to include pro-German Irish-Americans. See June Alexander, Ethnic Pride, American Patriotism: Slovaks And Other New Immigrants (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2008): 16-19; and Carlson, The “American Way,” pp. 17-18.

Greek-Americans were not, of course, unaware of these trends. In these years Greek newspaper editorialists routinely discuss Americanization. See, for example, “Our Societies and Clubs Must Be Americanized in Order to Succeed,” Loxias, May 2, 1917; “Our Duty, (It is our duty and to our benefit to be ‘American’ even more than we are ‘Greek’),” Saloniki-Greek Press, September 19, 1917; and “Business and Americanism,” Saloniki-Greek Press, July 16, 1921.

Carlson, Americanization Syndrome, p. 5.

War. Burkholder contends that “Americanizing white racial minorities would define the dominant discourse on race in public schools from 1900 to 1938,” which included most immigrants of European descent. “American teachers,” she notes, “applied the test of color to determine which minorities were worth Americanizing….” Generally, she writes, these teachers “did not distinguish between racial or color variations within European nations the way the federal government did on immigration and naturalization documents….”340

In 1913, just prior to the nation’s political leaders’ promotion of “100 percent Americanism,” the United States Commissioner of Education instructed public schoolteachers to respect the ideals of immigrants and “strengthen the best of their Old World lives they bring with them.” Oscar Handlin observed that for the peasant immigrant, school was “understood as an ancillary, supportive communal instrument.”341 The transnational educational strategy would be to ensure that the public schools, especially for the children of immigrants, would not interfere with the continued language and cultural indoctrination and education of the home country.342

The American progressive reformer Jane Addams believed in this idea of promoting cultural differences, in helping immigrants develop a sense of community, and in helping immigrant children understand their parents and the lands and cultures from which they came.343 Fearful of the tide of nationalism and increasing racism and

340 Ibid., p. 16. Her emphasis.
342 Ibid.
343 Pickus argues that Addams and John Dewey belonged to a school of “left-leaning Progressivism, which emphasized cultural pluralism and an open-ended project of cosmopolitanism as the heart of this identity.” This left-leaning Progressivism was
intolerance that grew stronger during the Great War, she called in 1919 for the adoption of a less rabid form of Americanizing of the immigrant population. She thought it important that “Americans should not make a problem for themselves by placing an unfair emphasis upon differences which are inevitable in a country such as ours…and to utilize properly the enthusiastic patriotism engendered by the war by making it more inclusive…. [If] we undertake a mutual task of this sort ‘how our convulsive insistencies, how our antipathies and dreads of each other’ would soften down; what tolerance and good humor, what willingness to live and let live, would inevitably emerge.”344 A decade later, she argued that “internationalism engendered in the immigrant quarters of American cities might be recognized as an effective instrument in the cause of peace.” Addams witnessed such internationalism and peaceful interaction on a daily basis, for while Hull House celebrated diversity and cultural differences, it also gathered peoples of widely diverse ethnic and religious differences to work, study, and play together.345

But, as we have seen, Addams’ more tolerant and widely inclusive approach was not one favored by most policy makers in the 1920s. Indeed, “seen from the point of view of racial and ethnic minorities, the [Progressive] period could very well be called the

---

‘regressive era,’” a time in which things grew a little worse, a time when nativism and racism gained strength and acceptance at all levels of society.”

Thus, these shifting and conflicting vagaries in American attitudes toward the millions of newly-arrived immigrants at the turn of the twentieth century, presented the immigrants themselves with many challenges as they tried to settle in to their new homes and adapt to a new culture. For the early Greek immigrants in Chicago, the Orthodox Church was a focal point for the neighborhood and community. Generally it was the church that kept alive the Greek language and allowed the people to maintain something of their Greek identity, which, of course was closely tied to the Greek Orthodox religion itself. Greek schools, attached to the churches, offered Greek language courses, but also taught new generations about Greek culture, history, and life.

Hull House, the neighborhood settlement house, and other voluntary associations, also offered Greek immigrants opportunities to maintain their identities through such activities as dances, theatre, and sports, but they also taught the acculturation and Americanization essentials needed to cope with the exigencies of urban, and American, life. Hull House, in particular, played an integral role in the lives of the Greeks in Chicago, and in the microhistory of my family as well.

346 Daniels, Not Like Us, p. 48. For a comprehensive discussion of World War I, hyphens, Americanization, education, and the family, especially as it related to the German-American community, see ch. 3 (pp. 17-54), “Hyphenates, Hausfraus, and Baby-Saving: The Peculiar Legacy of German America,” in Carlson, The “American Way.”

Since I was a child, my non-Greek mother, a product of a Chicago upper class family of English and German ancestry, 348 shared stories about Jane Addams, a contemporary of my mother’s grandmother, and the world-famous founder of Hull House. 349 As an adolescent, my mother volunteered there, teaching new immigrants in the early 1930’s how to handle American money and finances. The irony of this story is that I know some of my father’s Greek family also spent time at Hull House on the receiving end of this volunteerism. Thousands of Greeks utilized the services and classes at Hull House until it became known as the place to go for Greeks to receive assistance and education, and to participate in recreational and cultural activities.

Mina Carson’s work illuminates the historical and philosophical origins of the American Settlement Movement. Beginning in 1884 in England with the founding of Toynbee Hall, the settlement movement was “couched in the resonant terms of mid-Victorian discourse on the relation between the individual and society.” 350 Carson posits that the “settlement appeal” created a binary approach to humanitarianism with service on the one hand and social control on the other, creating a constant tension in the development of settlement programs. She describes the movement as “Janus faced,” with workers struggling to provide services to the residents while ultimately becoming social

348 When my parents, Paul Flesor and Margaret Leonard, married, my father’s relatives commented on how he had married a “white” girl.
349 In 2002 I recorded an oral interview with my mother about her experiences at Hull House, and deposited a copy of this interview in their collection. See Special Collections Box 3, Folder 30, “Margaret Leonard Flesor,” Hull House Oral History Collection, 1974-2002, University of Illinois, Chicago.
and economic researchers who sought to move social services into social welfare and control.\textsuperscript{351}

One of several reform initiatives that evolved from the latter part of the nineteenth century into the first two decades of the twentieth, the progressive movement was grounded in the belief that if one’s social environment could be improved, then positive character changes would result. Providing the appropriate guidance and services, settlement workers sought to create a new social environment for immigrants in order for them to adjust to a new way of life in a new country and, in time, become more “American.”

Proponents believed the waves of southeastern immigrants could be transformed into Americans through the assimilation process offered by neighborhood settlement houses. Charles Hirschman, however, characterizes this “melting pot theory” as a naïve romantic notion, “due to the implicit assumption that most immigrants and their descendants are anxious to shed their social and cultural heritage.”\textsuperscript{352} Hirschman credits University of Chicago sociologist Robert E. Park with providing scholarly validation for these assumptions. In the 1920’s Park developed a theory of assimilation relating to immigrants, which posited a four stage “race-relations cycle” of contact, competition, accommodation, and assimilation.\textsuperscript{353} Park believed certain criteria, such as language,

\textsuperscript{351} Ibid., p. 8.
\textsuperscript{352} Charles Hirschman, “America’s Melting Pot Reconsidered” in \textit{Annual Review of Sociology} 9 (1983): 397–423. Although the “melting pot” concept is often associated with Israel Zangwill’s 1909 play, “The Melting Pot,” this was not the first time the term was used. See Richard Conant Harper, \textit{The Course of the Melting Pot Idea to 1910} (New York: Arno Press, 1980).
\textsuperscript{353} Robert Ezra Park (1864-1944) was an American urban sociologist at the University of Chicago who, along with his colleague Ernest Watson Burgess and
culture, and race, which tended to divide people, could be eradicated through societal forces of change.\textsuperscript{354} Such a process implied the unbiased willingness of nativist white individuals to participate in creating positive forces of change that included immigrants and minorities in the mainstream of American society. David R. Roediger suggests that during the Progressive Movement there was tension between the inclusion of immigrants and the creation of a melting pot and the “Anglo-Saxon and Teutonic superiority,” which became manifest in immigration restriction, discriminatory labor contractual law, and racial attacks.\textsuperscript{355} He states “the Progressive project of imperialism and the Progressive nonproject of capitulation to Jim Crow systems of segregation ensured that race thinking would retain and increase its potency.”\textsuperscript{356} In essence, a racial taxonomy was formed, with blacks at the bottom, the “inbetween peoples” of southeastern Europe in the middle, and white, Anglo-Saxon Protestants at the top.\textsuperscript{357} The predominantly white, Anglo-Saxon, Protestant settlement house movement, despite its altruistic intentions, exemplified the prevailing racist ideologies of the time.

The Greek immigrants in Chicago took every opportunity to extract any and all services from Hull House, whatever the prevailing ideologies that formed the

\textsuperscript{354} Hirschman, “America’s Melting Pot Reconsidered,” p. 400.
\textsuperscript{356} Roediger, \textit{Colored White}, p. 148
\textsuperscript{357} Ibid., p. 138.
undergirding foundation of its purpose or intentions. As one of the pillars of community life, Hull House met many of the Greek immigrants’ needs.

Founded in 1889, Hull House fulfilled the needs of Jane Addams as well. She attended Rockford (Ill.) Seminary for Women (and there became friends with my great-grandmother) where she developed a more liberal and progressive view of the world. After a visit to Toynbee Hall in London in June 1888, Jane Addams found her life’s work and moved to Chicago’s South Side to found her famous settlement house. Clearly unprepared for the experience of working with thousands of European immigrants of all nationalities, Addams and her female cohorts learned “on the job” that “life cannot be administered by definite rules and regulations; that wisdom to deal with a man’s difficulties comes only through some knowledge of his life and habits as a whole; and to treat an isolated episode is almost sure to invite blundering.”

In her introduction to Jane Addams’ autobiography, Victoria Bissel Brown suggests that the work of Hull House reinforced Addams’ belief that poverty was not a direct result of personal failure.

Jane Addams lived in Hull House and became part of the neighborhood in which she resided. She also became a prolific writer and expounded widely and frequently upon her experiences and philosophy. In her speeches and writings, Addams crystallized her philosophy of life, why she chose education as her “critical instrument of social

359 Addams, Twenty Years, p. 109.
360 Ibid., p. 23.
reform,” and why she viewed her “school” as encompassing the broadest of physical environments—the club, the workplace, and the settlement.\textsuperscript{361} She approached education “by considering the consequences, in terms of behavior, social sensibilities, and attitudes toward self and others, of existing and possible patterns of social relationship and of available and needed opportunities for meaningful work, recreation, growth, and renewal.”\textsuperscript{362} To accomplish this, Addams sought to expose the immigrants at Hull House to the aesthetics of culture and politics, normally reserved for the white upper and upper-middle classes and to integrate these aesthetics into the daily experiences of work and family life.\textsuperscript{363}

One event that integrated cultural aesthetics with daily life was the Hull House Theater, inaugurated in December of 1899 with a production of “The Return of Odysseus,” the classical Greek tragedy portrayed with real Greek immigrants as the actors. In a speech about the theatre at Hull House given three years later in New York, Jane Addams recalled,

One of the most successful of the plays presented was an adaptation of a Greek play. The actors were drawn from the street vendors and tenement-house population of the neighborhood. Those in charge of the production were greatly surprised to find that some of these seemingly ignorant people already knew the lines which were assigned to them, having studied the classics as a part of their early education in Greece….The

\textsuperscript{362} Ibid., p. 3.
\textsuperscript{363} In her Introduction, for example, Victoria Bissell Brown writes: “In [Addams’] mind, a democratic, industrial society required that all participants have a working knowledge of both bread and roses; they had to know what material struggle was really like in order to devise realistic solutions to urban problems, and they had to appreciate human artistry in order to imagine solutions that allowed spiritual growth. It was this philosophy that guided the programming of cultural classes at the Hull-House settlement.” See Addams, \textit{Twenty Years}, pp. 20-21.
Greeks took great pride in the play which had a long run….After deducting the expenses…a clear profit of $300 remained. This, it was suggested, should be divided, a part to go to the Greek Church in the vicinity, and a part to Hull House. The players, however, would not agree to this, saying that they had been amply repaid by the opportunity, as they said, of “upholding the honor of Greece,” and insisted upon devoting the entire profits to Hull House.364

This was the first time in Chicago an ancient Greek tragedy had been acted out by Greeks.365 Another Greek play, Sophocles’ “Ajax,” was produced in 1903 with six performances, presented in the original Greek with Greek male immigrants as the actors.366 “The theater at Hull House,” Addams observed, “has been a ready and potent means of training the young people of the neighborhood in manners and personal refinement and courtesy…This is only one instance of similar lessons having been taught in the only way in which a great many of these people can be reached. For the number of those who like to read has been greatly overestimated.”367

Jane Addams’ concern for “the Greek immigrants and her espousal of Greek culture as indicated by these activities and many others that she sponsored, quickly

364 A report on Addams’ speech together with long excerpts from it, is found in “What the Theater at Hull House has Done For the Neighborhood People,” Charities. A Weekly Review of Local and General Philanthropy VIII, no. 13 (March 29, 1902): 284-86. The quotation above is found on page 285. Greeks were, of course, not the only ethnic group to put on theatrical productions. Writing in 1910, one Hull House staff member reported that “The Italian, Lithuanian, Russian, Jewish and Greek neighbors use the large auditorium for theatricals of their own; even deaf mutes once gave a representation in their sign language.” See Victor von Borosini, “Our Recreation Facilities and the Immigrant,” Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science 35, no. 2 (March 1, 1910): 149.
365 Kopan, Education and Greek Immigrants, p. 120.
endeared her to the Greek community as a patroness of Hellenic arts and ideals. It did much to help solidify ethnic solidarity and pride among the Greek immigrants of Chicago.”

In May 1930 the Greek government bestowed upon Addams the “Gold Medal of Military Merit,” one of its highest awards, in recognition of “her Phil-Hellenic spirit and the encouragement and consideration extended to the Greeks of Chicago for the last forty years.”

There were multiple clubs for both men and women at Hull House. Sunday evenings found an average of four hundred men attending social functions. There was an active athletic club with an emphasis on wrestling. The Hellenic League for the Molding of Young Men was also developed at Hull House in 1910. Partly run by former Greek army officers, one of the many activities of this group was the drilling and training of young Greek men to fight in the Balkan Wars. Educational activities included English language instruction, music, dancing, and crafts as well as lectures from professors at the University of Chicago and other famous visitors.

In 1905 the Greek newspaper, the Greek Star, announced that the first public lectures in Greek, under the auspices of the Pan-Hellenic Society, would be given on Sunday, November 26, at Hull House. This was

---

368 Kopan, Education and Greek Immigrants, p. 121.
369 “Miss Jane Addams Decorated by Greek Government,” in The Greek Star, May 23, 1930. This newspaper article noted also that Miss Addams’ hospitality to the Greeks attracted wide attention not only in this country but in Greece as well, particularly when she staged two ancient Greek plays in Hull House...in the ancient Greek language.” The “Medal of Military Merit,” adopted in June 1917, was normally reserved for Greek military officers only. Ironically, Jane Addams received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1931, a year after receiving this award. See also “Greek Community Pays Homage to the Late Jane Addams, The Saloniki-Greek Press, May 30, 1935, for a moving tribute following her death on May 22, 1935.
an all-day affair, after church, and ended with the singing of the “Hymn of the Turk-fighting Greek.”

Hull House became the “safe place” for Greeks to express themselves, and nothing so emphatically as their constant complaints about the hostility they encountered daily in Chicago. Overall, they believed this criticism was unfounded due to the historical background and traditions Greeks brought with them to America, despite their supposed differences in language and customs. They called for public meetings to be held in English where Americans could learn more about the history of Greece. Other meetings could be held in Greek to inform their fellow countrymen of some of the ways to navigate the various duties and requirements related to being an American. There were usually multiple sessions held during these programs and newspapers reported that capacity crowds were in attendance.

Thus, “due to Jane Addams ceaseless dedication, Hull House became the spiritual and cultural hearth of the Greek immigrants—their veritable second home.” In 1901, a Dr. Solas, with the Greek Consulate in Chicago, and others, spoke to a group of male Greek immigrants, primarily railroad workers, advising them to learn English and become more familiar with American ways. Classes to assimilate new immigrants

\[\text{371 “First Public Greek Lectures at Hull House,” in The Greek Star, November 24, 1905. The program included 1) singing of the Greek and American national anthems; 2) piano selections; 3) introduction, by the president of the Pan-Hellenic Society; 4) address on “Mutual Love and Mutual Assistance”; 5) a poem read by George Koutoumanos; 6) address on “The Political Situation in Greece”; 7) song by the choir; 8) address on “The Duties of the Greek in America”; 9) Address on “America and Greece”; 10) piano selections and songs; 11) Hymn of the Turk-fighting Greek. For a report on another Sunday of lectures see “The Greeks of Chicago,” in Greek Star, November 22, 1907.}\]


\[\text{373 Kopan, Education and Greek Immigrants, pp. 123-24.}\]
continued fairly regularly through the 1930’s when, due to lack of attendance, they were disbanded. In addition to settlement house programs, institutional systems, such as health care, also infused a more nativist approach to the environmental impacts on the new immigrants. Allan Kraut observes that “Native born reformers thought the best solution for the newcomers and the public health, generally, was rapid Americanization.”

Lynne Curry’s scholarship on the Americanization of immigrant mothers offers a unique insight into this aspect of health care. She asserts that Chicago health care reformers in the early 1900’s “envisioned themselves as mediators between the Old World and the New, for the movement they created was as much about modernizing immigrant mothers’ attitudes and beliefs toward personal hygiene, household cleanliness, and the efficacy of early intervention in keeping young children alive as it was about safeguarding the public’s health.” Activists associated with Hull House determined that a multi-faceted attack on a wide range of physical and social maladies would be the answers to lowering infant mortality rates and decreasing the childbirth rates, allowing women more opportunity to care for themselves and their children.

Of course, the Progressives’ desire to lower immigrant birth rates was not always, or simply, an humanitarian gesture. As Angela Davis points out,
birth control advocates either acquiesced to or supported the new arguments invoking birth control as a means of preventing the proliferation of the ‘lower classes’ and as an antidote to race suicide. Race Suicide could be prevented by the introduction of birth control among Black people, immigrants and the poor in general. In this way, the prosperous whites of solid Yankee stock could maintain their superior numbers within the population. Thus class bias and racism crept into the birth control movement when it was still in its infancy. More and more, it was assumed within birth control circles that...what was demanded as a ‘right’ for the privileged came to be interpreted as a ‘duty’ for the poor.378

Similarly, Peter Engelman observes how this desire for control of immigrant birth rates, while opposing any form of birth control for the old Yankee stock found its strongest support among “traditionalists and a growing number of eugenicists who were convinced that the so-called “native-stock,” the lineage of the Protestant Yankee, was rapidly dying out because the more educated and affluent had adopted family planning practices.”379 The eugenics movement too rose in power during the anti-hyphen, “100 percent Americanization” campaigns in the 1910’s and 1920’s. Engelman asserts that eugenicists were largely responsible for convincing key members of Congress and much of the American public that immigrants from southern and eastern Europe were “overbred, underachieved, and accounted for a disproportionate number of patients in insane asylums and inmates in correctional facilities. Metaphors about the bottom of the ‘melting pot’ falling out and horrific visions of the coming ‘mongrelization’ of America

stirred up resentment toward new immigrants and black Americans and increased public support for immigration restriction.”\textsuperscript{380}

Efforts to persuade immigrant women to improve personal hygiene practices, promote household cleanliness, intervene early when children were sick, and practice birth control were a tough sell, however.\textsuperscript{381} Immigrant mothers needed to be convinced of the safety and efficacy of the health care offered to them before they would relinquish their belief systems.\textsuperscript{382} Customs and traditions tied to the experiences of pregnancy, birth, infant care and feeding were deeply embedded in centuries of culture. The health care workers “complained, for instance, that Eastern European mothers insisted on feeding their children pickles, cooked cabbage, and other ethnic foods which reformers themselves found repulsive, while Italian mothers allowed family members and even neighbors to lavish physical affection on babies and small children, a custom that appeared disturbingly unhygienic…”\textsuperscript{383}

For the newly arrived Europeans, “good health” was defined as the absence of any immediately life-threatening diseases. “For generations of peasants from southern and

\textsuperscript{380} Ibid., p. 135.
\textsuperscript{381} In this regard Alan Kraut writes, “In the neighborhoods where they settled, on the blocks where they lived, in the hospitals and dispensaries and pharmacies of the city, immigrants made some compromises and not others, cautiously negotiating their break from Old World definitions of health and from traditional therapeutic practices….Health care providers had no choice but to become actors in the immigrant’s Americanization drama, constructing a paradigm or blueprint of health care to which the foreign-born were expected to conform but often did not – right away.” Kraut, Silent Travelers, p. 225.
\textsuperscript{382} According to Kraut, most immigrant groups also had their own physicians and pharmacists, individuals to whom a newcomer “could turn and explain their ills in a familiar language, where cherished customs and traditions were respected and observed,” and who “treated patients with drugs drawn from another, more familiar medical tradition.” Ibid., pp. 222-23.
\textsuperscript{383} Curry, Modern Mothers, pp. 41-42.
eastern Europe, the performance of arduous physical labor remained crucial to survival, and therefore they placed a high cultural value on physical mobility; one was considered to be ill only at the point at which one became totally incapable of moving about.”

Different ethnic groups established hospitals in Chicago to serve the needs of the immigrant populations. Jewish residents opened Michael Reese Memorial Hospital in 1882, the Polish community founded St. Mary of Nazareth Hospital in 1889, and between 1880 and 1902 five Catholic hospitals were opened to serve the needs of their neighborhoods. In addition more out-patient dispensaries, settlement houses such as Hull House, and neighborhood pure milk stations provided well-baby services. In 1905, the Chicago Relief and Aid Society in conjunction with the Chicago Visiting Nurse’s Association created outdoor baby tents, which offered fresh air and medical care for sick babies. The baby tent program proved successful with the immigrant mothers since they were located in the ethnic neighborhoods and mothers could be close to their children.

In small towns outside of the urban areas, health care practices were not as progressive as in urban centers. Rates of infant mortality—the yardsticks used by Progressive Era health and child welfare advocates “to measure society’s overall state of advancement”—were lower in Chicago in 1926, 66.57 per 1000 live births, than they

384 Ibid., p. 45.
385 For a discussion of the hospitals, see Curry, Modern Mothers, pp. 46-47. Alan Kraut, in his extensive study of immigrants and disease, describes the other side of medical care – medical quackery. Quacks, both as physicians and as pharmacists, advertised in immigrant papers, in the language of the paper, and accounted, according to one study in Cleveland, for 36 percent of the advertising. Kraut, Silent Travelers, pp. 222-25.
386 Curry, Modern Mothers, pp. 46-47.
387 Ibid., p. 48.
were in downstate Illinois, 71.51 per 1,000 live births. Curry contends that despite the seemingly unlimited supply of fresh air, the rural population of Illinois was actually decreasing due to the rising cost of machinery and land. The total number of farms declined over eighteen percent from 1900 to 1930. Farm households in downstate Illinois often had no indoor plumbing and fewer hot-air furnaces. “Fully 59 percent of the southern farm families surveyed in 1915 drank water that had been obtained from open or uncovered wells.”

In May, June, and July, 1916 my grandfather was affected by the unsanitary water coming from one such well. There was an outbreak of typhoid fever in those months in Tuscola, which spread quickly throughout Douglas County, reaching a total of 110 cases. The source of the outbreak was traced to a single well, “famous for the clearness, coolness and fine flavor of its waters,” but which had defective walls. It serviced multiple homes as well as the businesses of the local druggist, the confectioner (Gus Flesor) “in the manufacture of soda water,” and the hotel owner. This epidemic was instructive to Illinois health reformers because it was a clear example of the dangers of contaminated water, which might be found “in any of these communities where wells are used as the source of domestic water supply…and, incidentally, that coldness and clearness and fine flavor have nothing to do with the purity of drinking water.” Armed with this example

388 Ibid., p. 65.
389 Ibid., pp. 66-67.
390 Ibid., p. 68.
392 Ibid. Typhoid fever is the result of the typhoid bacillus being transmitted by human carriers through food or water. In the Tuscola case the “leaking well was located near the privy vault of a livery stable, leading the public health officials who investigated the outbreak to presume that the disease originated with a traveller passing through the town.” Curry, Modern Mothers, p. 28. The Illinois Medical Journal
of the need to upgrade living conditions, health officials could begin to formalize clean water programs.

Returning to Chicago and the Americanization efforts there, Kopan reported that in addition to the settlement houses, other organizations, such as the YMCA also offered Americanization classes, especially prior to WWI. After the War, the YMCA offered evening classes in order to qualify for citizenship. Kopan contends that mostly Greek professionals attended these classes because they could afford the nominal tuition charged. For example, the editor of the Greek Press newspaper learned English at the YMCA as well as citizenship requirements.393

Greeks utilized these external institutions for learning about such matters instead of organizing any instruction within their own community. However, by the late 1930’s two Greek Orthodox Church parishes sponsored Americanization classes using the services of a Chicago public school teacher. These classes were necessitated by the

reported that the well “was very popular on account of the ‘fine quality’ of the water. The ‘fine flavor’ of the water in this well brings to mind the many instances of ‘mineral wells’ which have come into high favor until it was ascertained that the mineral taste was due to just about such things as one would expect to find in a livery stable well.” “Communicable Diseases during May,” in Illinois Medical Journal 29 (June 1916): 461. The infected traveller may have come from or gone to Pana, Illinois, about 71 miles away. There was an outbreak of typhoid at the same time in Pana, with thirty-eight clearly defined cases. See “Communicable Diseases,” p. 461, and also “Medical News, Typhoid Dangers,” in Journal of the American Medical Association 66, no. 2 (June 10, 1916): 1862. Carriers can appear healthy. Kraut provides a lengthy discussion of the most famous carrier in American history, Mary Mallon, an Irish immigrant from County Tyrone, who came to be known as “Typhoid Mary.” In America Mary worked as a cook for several wealthy families and left a trail of typhoid fever behind her as she moved from family to family. In all, conservatively, she “is known to have infected a minimum of fifty-three individuals...three of whom died.” (p. 102) See Kraut, Silent Travelers, pp. 96-103. Kraut notes also that “Mary Mallon [became] synonymous with the health menace posed by the foreign-born.” (p. 97)

393 Kopan, Education and Greek Immigrants, p. 197.
feeling that by the 1930’s the Greeks remaining in Chicago were probably going to stay in the country and should become naturalized. Day classes were attended more by women and evening classes by men.\textsuperscript{394}

World War I ushered in a new wave of patriotism and nativism. More businesses required their employees to be English-speaking and have American citizenship. Schools displayed their allegiance to the United States by eliminating German as a subject and evaluated students’ degree of citizenship by noting their outward behavior.\textsuperscript{395} Americanization reached into the schools in 1919 with the National Education Association’s recommendation to Congress that all young people take a year-long course of civic, physical, and vocational training. Criticism from more liberal factions suggested that this type of education was propaganda and that union uniformity was not only impossible to achieve, but unwarranted. Conservatives critics, including one historian of Greek immigrants, Henry Pratt Fairchild, suggested that the immigrants were “mongrelizing” the Anglo-Saxon United States, and the popular American press supported that view.\textsuperscript{396}

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{395} Carlson, \textit{Americanization Syndrome}, p. 93.
  \item \textsuperscript{396} Ibid., pp. 96-97. In regard to Americanization, Fairchild wrote, for example, “it is very doubtful if it is possible for even the most exceptional adult immigrant, from the southeastern European races, at least, to become thoroughly assimilated in his lifetime. The barriers of race, set for the most part by Americans, can hardly be broken down. The immigrant is still an Italian, or a Slav, or a Greek, as long as he lives….The mental habits, also which are the result of long race inheritance are very
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
In 1921, the National Education Association created a Department of Immigration Education; however, at this juncture in American history, the immigration restrictionists were galvanizing their platform to end southeastern European and other European migration from countries needing asylum for refugees after the Paris treaties ending the Great War split up the old European dynasties. In concert with that view, as we have noted, eugenics and the biological categorization of racial and ethnic characteristics came to the forefront as reasons to restrict further migration to America. The continued propaganda fed into the lengthy attempts to institute literacy testing for immigrants in 1917, an emergency immigration quota in 1921, and the National Origins Act in 1924, all of which have been discussed in chapter 3. All of these forces impacted Greek immigrants as they attempted to move into business, follow educational pursuits, and participate in social interactions.

One example of the role of the Greek Orthodox Church as an Americanizing agency can be found in the work by Mary Bosworth Truedley, which focuses on the Greek church in Boston. She observes that in Greece, most individuals took on a more passive role in regard to church organization and hierarchy; in America, that role was reversed because the settlers were now responsible for the development and support of church membership, structures, and supporting the operations of a building, staff, parochial schools, and programs. The process of creating a formalized church in America, Treudley surmises, became itself an exercise in Americanization. Questions of membership, language use in the Liturgy, programming, and financial challenges deep-seated, and can hardly be altered even after a long residence in a foreign country.” Henry Pratt, *Immigration, a World Movement and Its American Significance.* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1920): 402-03.

duplicated the everyday difficulties faced by new immigrants. Treudley concludes that “Much as the more conservative element, among both the priests and the laity, might like to block change in the traditional religious culture, the church by its very functioning contributes to the Americanization of its members and thus necessitates its own development according to American pattern.”

Other Greek organizations, such as youth and women’s groups as well as the more prestigious national groups like AHEPA (American Hellenic Education Progress Association), GAPA (Greek-American Progressive Association) and the Helicon, which stressed Americanization and success measured by education, income and philanthropic activities, lent themselves to the less formal education of Greeks. These organizations offered a safe place to navigate issues relating to acculturation and Americanization. They assisted in the process of adapting from a village life to an urban, American environment; they maintained interaction among the immigrants; they created an overt ethnic social structure for their own community and for the external community in which the immigrants worked or resided; and they served as a clearinghouse for problems arising from being newly arrived in (to them) a foreign country. For those immigrants who did not have access to the Greek Church or social/cultural organizations, they joined other voluntary associations affiliated with their businesses or their children’s schools. In many of the small towns sampled in this study, men joined, for example, the Masons and

the Chamber of Commerce, and their wives may have become active in the Parent–Teacher’s Associations or Eastern Star.

The Greek press was another vehicle of education and information. Xenides lists thirty-one publications reaching the Greek immigrant population in the first two decades of the 1900’s.\(^{400}\) Saloutos asserts that the Greek-language press was extremely influential in community life. Papers carried international news, and detailed stories about affairs back in Greece. “It kept the immigrant with little or no knowledge of English in contact with happenings in the homeland, perpetuated Old World feuds and gave rise to new ones.”\(^ {401}\) In Chicago, the *Greek Star* newspaper also perpetuated the promotion of Americanism. One article of many, for example, reports on the installation of officers in the Hellenic Post No. 343, one of the oldest posts in the country, of the American Legion. It suggests that the new members, who were the “adopted sons of America, of Greek birth, as well as those born here of Greek parentage” could mutually share in the honor of victory in WWI.\(^ {402}\) In that same newspaper was a series of articles on “Know Illinois” in the late 1920’s, which provided facts and figures on the Illinois economy.\(^ {403}\)

An editorial in the *Greek Star* for November 14, 1919 provides an interesting Greek perspective on the issue of “Americanism.” It noted, in reference to the “Red Scare” of the time, that Americanism is a “popular word today, and rightly so, as the present industrial situation demonstrates; for a slow but mighty struggle is going on to determine


\(^{403}\) See for example the issue of the *Greek Star* for February 1928, p. 8.
whether American principles or radical foreign theory shall prevail. Americanism in this sense is not directed at race, creed, or the so-called hyphenates, but at the destructive or anti-progressive forces.” What was needed, therefore, was “to differentiate between the American of foreign birth who is a good citizen and the foreigner who is a detriment to his adopted country….” To do that the newspaper intended to publish a series of articles—this was the first—about Greeks businesses in Chicago. These, it was hoped, would provide the reader with “an unprejudiced view of the nationalities in the restaurant field,” while setting aside the “time worn race question.”

As a follow-up to this editorial, the Greek Star sent out investigators to 1503 Chicago restaurants (the newspaper estimated there were then 3000 Greek restaurants in Chicago), and interviewed 217 “Greek-American” restaurant owners. They asked questions such as “Does the Greek use another name than his own for his restaurant because he has reasons for hiding his identity, because he is ashamed of his name, or for some other reason?” And, “Does the Greek pay low wages, employ only Greeks, and use un-American methods?” For the question of whether “Greeks hoard their money to

---

405 Relevant to our study, besides the estimated 3,000 restaurants, the newspaper estimated there were also 1,500 confectionery stores that served lunch – some of these were included in the study as well. This article began with the observation that “A history of the Greek in the American restaurant field would be a history of the Greek people in America, for the history of Greek-Americans and the history of Greek-American restaurants are almost identical.” See “The Greek as A Restaurant Man,” Greek Star, November 14, 1919.
406 To this question the common answer was that their Greek names were too long or impossible to pronounce or to remember. They also felt it good business practice to localize their restaurants by giving them neighborhood names.
407 The investigators found that the Greeks paid wages that were equal to those paid by other restaurants, that nearly every nationality was represented on the payrolls, and that "the environment and the working conditions of employees were, on the average, as good as those in other restaurants visited, and there was a noticeable
send it abroad, or do they spend it in America?” the newspaper interviewed several prominent bankers in Chicago. The bankers estimated that Greeks had $8,000,000 invested in Chicago alone, and that they found them to be good bond customers, thrifty, and inclined to invest their funds in real estate.\textsuperscript{408} To the question of whether Greeks were naturalized American citizens, the newspaper found that “of the 3000 so-called Greek restaurants in Chicago, 90 percent were operated by American citizens of Greek extraction.” The writer concluded this article with the observation that “the Greek-American is a good businessman; he is industrious, and he has vision and foresight. His rise in Chicago is due solely to these faculties, which after all are the foundation of nearly every American’s success, regardless of race or nationality.”\textsuperscript{409}

In St. Louis, the other portal of Greek migration to east central Illinois, settlement houses were also important refuges for newly-arrived immigrants, although not to the extent that Hull House was in Chicago. In 1916, a self-reporting survey of all organizations providing social service programs in St. Louis included findings detailing the current status of their programs and recommendations for future needs. Of the ninety-four different charities documented, there were eighteen neighborhood centers listed, and all but two served only native and immigrant whites.\textsuperscript{410}

\begin{flushleft}
\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{408} As we shall see in chapter 6, my grandfather saved his earnings from the Candy Kitchen and bought a farm in Douglas County.

\textsuperscript{409} “The Greek As A Restaurant Man,” \textit{Greek Star}, November 14, 1919.

\end{flushright}
\end{flushleft}
The reports depicted a multifaceted approach to settlement house programs at the time. For example, the Jewish Alliance did not define itself as purely a settlement and indicated that its programs drew Jewish people from all the neighborhoods in the city. Activities at the center, however, were open to everyone. The director stated, “The neighborhood [where the center was located] is now largely Italian and Polish, and Negroes come in proportion.”

The report also reveals the fluid nature of the immigrant neighborhoods. The Jewish Alliance was situated in a Catholic neighborhood, where the moving picture entertainments in the area attracted over ten thousand attendees, mostly Italians. The Wesley House, a Methodist settlement house, was on the verge of closing its doors at the time of the survey. The director wrote that the “Jewish people are rapidly crowding out the Irish in the neighborhood. There is a large proportion of Negroes in the neighborhood, too. The Colored Branch of the Y.W.C.A. is not more than one-third of a mile away. The Church of Holy Communion with its settlement activities is a little farther away than that.”

Most St. Louis settlement houses were located within neighborhoods filled with European immigrants, such as Germans, Russians, Italians, Croatians, Greeks, Irish, and English, as well as poor native white Americans. Hundreds of families were served each week through multiple services. Programs offered were day nurseries, kindergartens, literary clubs, citizenship classes, sewing, cooking, stenography, and recreational activities. Relief in the form of clothing and food was also provided, and a couple of

---

411 Ibid., p. 385.
412 Ibid., pp. 385-86, 393.
places, such as the Guardian Angel Settlement, assisted women in securing employment.\footnote{Ibid., p. 404.}

Ruth Crawford’s 1916 report on immigrants in St. Louis concluded that night school for immigrants was integral to their adjustment in St. Louis. Fifteen night schools opened during the winter term of 1914-15 for seventy-five nights. Fourteen of those schools offered English to new immigrants. Before immigrants could move on to other life skills classes, they had to master enough English to enable them to participate in classes in mathematics, science, dressmaking and other practical educational offerings. The schools were located throughout the city and were well attended.\footnote{Crawford, \textit{The Immigrant in St. Louis: A Survey}, pp. 51-53.} The YMCA also offered English classes and over six hundred men were in attendance at those. Of the total night school attendees in St. Louis in 1915, there were almost four hundred Greek males and thirteen females.\footnote{Ibid., p. 56.}

Many, if not most, immigrants recognized the value of education and of reading. They were also shocked to find that in America, public libraries were open to everyone, and, more importantly, free, something unimaginable in most of their mother countries. Immigrants enthusiastically supported public libraries in St. Louis, therefore, which held collections of books in fifty-four different languages, and offered books in the specific language of the ethnic neighborhood in which the library was located. Many of the library buildings had auditoriums and clubrooms, which were popular for the various neighborhood clubs. The libraries were also places where social service agencies, such as the YMCA, could hold English classes. Of course, English books were promoted and

\begin{verbatim}
\text{\footnote{Ibid., p. 404.}} \text{\footnote{Crawford, \textit{The Immigrant in St. Louis: A Survey}, pp. 51-53.}} \text{\footnote{Ibid., p. 56.}}
\end{verbatim}
the traveling libraries often stopped at factory sites and delivered books at the lunch hour for interested readers.416

The St. Louis YMCA was also instrumental in reaching out to immigrants upon their initial arrival into the city, and with assisting them later. Crawford reported that YMCA employees had met over nineteen thousand newcomers at the train station and over sixteen thousand had been given direct service of some type. The YMCA secretaries kept in touch with most of the male immigrants while they remained in the city and many were urged to take English and citizenship classes located at sites around the city. The YMCA believed it was its duty to provide these services because “The largest percentage of immigrants coming to this country at the present time are from Southeastern Europe, and thousands of them settle in our city every year to make their homes with us. They are looking to the American people to give them an opportunity to make the most of their lives as residents of our community, and as citizens of this great country of ours.”417

Out away from Chicago and St. Louis, in the smaller towns and cities in Illinois, the Country Life Movement arose as a rural response to the Progressive Movement and urbanization. It began in 1908 when President Theodore Roosevelt created the Commission on Country Life to investigate rural issues. The Country Life Movement then evolved from the findings of this commission as “an attempt to improve the standard of living of rural dwellers, primarily through various educational initiatives.”418 Paul Theobald believes the popularity of the Country Life Movement grew out of a rural need

---

416 Ibid., pp. 61-63.
417 Ibid., pp. 64-65.
to respond to the rapid urban development of the 1890’s. The financial panic of 1893, which witnessed thousands of labor strikes, catapulted the unemployment rate to twenty-five percent in some regions. The decline in the 1890s in agricultural jobs, from nine-tenths of the nation’s population to one-third in 1900, was notable and alarming.

Frederick Jackson Turner’s declaration that the frontier was closed as of 1893, philosopher William James’ criticism of the gilded age capitalists, and Thorstein Veblen’s theory of the leisure class, set the foundation for the rural-urban bifurcation of “traditional American values and institutions.” Rural values were based upon more nativist ideologies. Theobald contends that the increased urbanization and immigration in the early twentieth century created paranoia among those “who believed the strength of the nation was derived from ‘native stock’ in the countryside.” Advocates of Country Life became influential in the rural areas through their presence in the Boy and Girl Scouts and, most importantly, through the 4-H movement, which is still in existence one hundred years later in many small towns.

In the smaller cities located in central Illinois, such as Champaign-Urbana, Decatur, Danville, and Springfield, the two philosophies of Progressivism and Country Life intermingled in the institutions of social services, adult education, and the Greek Church’s programs as first generation Greek immigrants made their way to these small towns.


420 Theobald, Call School, pp. 164-66.

421 Ibid., p. 168.

422 Ibid., pp. 170-71.
cities and towns. For this first-generation of Greek immigrants in central Illinois, however, the possibility of obtaining a formal education was not open to them. There were no settlement houses in small towns or social service agencies and the public schools did not offer adult education classes.

From a general survey of the recently released 1940 United States Federal Census, which was the first census to have a category for “Highest Grade of School Completed,” it appears that the majority of first-generation Greek male immigrants to central Illinois were literate, meaning they could read and write Greek, and possessed an average 8th grade education or less. From the same census it appears that Greek female immigrants had an average 4th grade education at best. Thus, these first generation Greeks had to learn on the street, on the job, and from each other. They learned about business from the few who came before them, from the suppliers traveling up and down the highways and railroad lines, and from benefactors in their small towns, who took the time to explain the exigencies of life and business in America and in the Midwest.

In addition to experiential teaching under the guise of mentors, the monthly Confectioner’s Journal, published in Philadelphia, was an essential resource for keeping up with trends, supplies, suppliers, and recipes. Jacob Friedman’s Common-Sense Candy Teacher, first published in 1906, went through many editions and assisted not only with recipes, but also with practical suggestions regarding how to keep a clean shop, how to handle employees, and set up window displays. The author had been working in the

423 Jacob Friedman, Common-sense Candy Teacher: A most complete line of up-to-date formulas, with all instructions in the art of making candies, both steam and open fire work, for the large manufacturer or the beginner, by two practical workmen of thirty-five years’ experience in teaching the craft both in America and Europe. Up-to-date Ice
candy business since 1870 in Chicago for M.E. Page Candy Company. He started at the age of fourteen and worked in different shops to “learn the trade.” As an adult, Friedman traveled to thirty-one states and to Europe to get ideas about being a great confectioner.\textsuperscript{424} He remarked in his book that being a confectioner was not an easy trade to learn. “Boys, it takes more than six or nine months to become a candy maker. First, learn how to open a barrel of sugar, or glucose; how to keep a clean shop; how to take care of the tools; how to build a decent fire.”\textsuperscript{425} Many confectioners also utilized Rigby’s \textit{Reliable Candy Teacher with Complete and Modern Soda, Ice Cream and Sherbet Sections},\textsuperscript{426} which was a complete guide to the confectionary business, from the equipment needed to set up a small shop to pages and pages of recipes.\textsuperscript{427} Mr. Rigby also recommended certain products and where to purchase them, for example, Fondax from White Stokes, a company started by Greeks and still operating in Chicago in 2013.\textsuperscript{428}

In the 1940s Helen Balk offered an historical overview of economic contributions of Greeks to the United States up to that time. She posited that after initially working in factories, railroads, mines, or farms, Greek immigrants used the money they had saved by working in these unskilled entry-level jobs and invested it in a fruit, flower, or candy stand and then into a small business. It was common for several Greeks to pool their

\begin{flushright}
\textit{Cream and Fountain Work in all its branches}, 4\textsuperscript{th} ed., with an enlarged Supplement by William H. Kennedy (Chicago: Jonas M. Bell, 1915).
\end{flushright}

\textsuperscript{424} Ibid., pp. 5-6.
\textsuperscript{425} Ibid., p. 13.
\textsuperscript{426} Will O. Rigby and Fred Rigby, \textit{Rigby’s Reliable Candy Teacher: With Complete and Modern Soda, Ice Cream and Sherbet Sections ...}, 13th ed. (Topeka, KS: Rigby Publishing Company, 1920). I still have my grandfather’s copy of “Mr. Rigby,” and we continue to turn to it for tips about the candy business and recipes.
\textsuperscript{427} Ibid., The information on the equipment needed to set up a small shop is on p. 3 and includes everything from a candy furnace and copper kettles to a caramel knife, wooden paddles and wax paper.
\textsuperscript{428} Ibid., pp. 21 and 62.
resources and open a variety store, confectionery, shoe shining business or flower mart. She observed that “trade in fruit, candy, and flowers can be started with small capital and little experience. The turnover is almost daily. Only small funds are tied up in the business at any one time, but they can gradually be expanded until profitable proportions are reached.” Of particular relevance to this study, Balk reported that approximately ninety percent of Greeks in the United States were congregated in urban areas and only seven percent resided in rural areas; less than two percent of these, however, were farmers, or settled on farms. George A. Kourvetaris asserted that Greeks, as a whole, were economically self-sufficient and independent. To become impoverished and dependent upon public aid was inexcusable and one lost the respect of their fellow countrymen. Independent entrepreneurs among first generation Greeks were considered to be of lower-middle class status, though highly respected as they had risen above their peasant class in Greece. Initially the goal of just making seed money for later investment (and some to remit to Greece) meant railroad work in the Midwest and

429 Reflecting the strong presence in the Greek mind of the classical heritage, a 1927 Chicago Greek newspaper article asserted that “The predominating trade of the Greeks of America, besides the Restaurant trade, is the selling of flowers. The Greek is inclined to go into the florist business, in this trail being like the Ancient Greeks, who were lovers of flowers.” The article then goes on romantically to describe how “Wreaths, garlands, and flowers, were indispensible in the Greek life...Flowers were sold by beautiful maidens in the ‘Agora’ [market square] of Athens. The Ancients Greeks wrote and sang poems of the rose....Owing to their great love of flowers, the Ancient Greeks strove to develop body and soul, emulating the flower, thus both sexes of the Greeks were known for their beauty and they were called demi-gods. The Greek of today, being a descendant of such a race, manifests his love for flowers by selling them.” See “The Flowers Sellers,” Saloniki-Greek Press, August 06, 1927. 430 Helen H. Balk, “Economic Contributions of the Greeks to the United States,” Economic Geography 19, no. 3 (July 1943): 270. 431 Ibid. 432 George A. Kourvetaris, First and Second Generation Greeks in Chicago: An Inquiry into Their Stratification and Mobility Patterns (Athens: National Centre of Social Research, 1971): 68.
West, shoe shining in Chicago, and peddling. These then led to more established fruit, vegetable and confectionary shops that were taken over from the Irish and Italians. Hot dog stands morphed into restaurants.\footnote{Ibid., p. 73.}

Balk states that Greeks ventured into fields where they thought there was a niche not already occupied by other ethnic groups. Opportunities were identified through chain migration and networking. As they became embedded in a business, individuals then “broke out” away from the more established group and settled in smaller towns and cities, so that, she wrote, “today almost all small towns have at least one Greek citizen or representative. Sometimes a Greek who has established himself in a business starts a branch of that business in another city and sends a compatriot to manage it. When the manager has saved sufficient funds he may buy the business and run it for himself.”\footnote{Balk, “Economic Contributions,” p. 271.}

Balk also employs naturalization statistics as indicators of residential permanence and economic stability. In 1910, approximately 75,000 Greeks males over the age of twenty-one were eligible for citizenship. Only 6.6\% were naturalized and just 6.1\% had taken out their first applications. By 1920, approximately 176,000 were eligible for citizenship and 16.8\% were naturalized, 117,290 were aliens at that time and 21,451 had applied for their first papers. In 1930, of 174,526 foreign-born Greeks, 65,977 were aliens, 78,059 or 44\% were citizens and 25,112 had applied for citizenship.\footnote{Ibid.}

Kourvetaris notes that first-generation Greek males were initially ambivalent about remaining in the United States, but once they were married, they found it difficult to leave. “First-generation Greek families were as a rule patriarchal, stable, and closely-
In his study, home ownership was another indicator of stability, and in Chicago, over fifty percent of first-generation Greeks owned their own home.437

The first generation of Greeks settling in central Illinois were examples of those who networked, taught each other, loaned money to those in need to start their businesses, and, despite their isolation, kept in touch and supported each other in the early years. Once the Greeks in central Illinois had made some cash from either working on the railroad or working for others in their shoe shining businesses or confectioneries, and had learned the trade, they opened their own shops. But opening a shop did not guarantee automatic success, nor did it imply acceptance into the local community. As we shall see in chapter 6, these first generations like my grandfather faced many more obstacles, from economic depression, to political regulation, to racism and intolerance.

---

436 Kourvetaris, First and Second Generation Greeks, p. 51.
437 Ibid., p. 60.
CHAPTER 5: Greek Identity, the KKK, and Resistance to Anti-immigrant Prejudice

The anti-hyphen xenophobia that developed in the United States after the Great War had real, often violent, and sometimes tragic consequences for the immigrant communities. In 2002 Helen Zeese Papanikolas recalled how, when she was, “an immigrant child growing up in the 1920s…the American Legion, the Ku Klux Klan, and daily newspapers vilified immigrants from southern Europe, the Middle East, and Asia.” She remembered the Klan demanding universal English literacy and the abolishment of foreign-language newspapers. Among all the ethnically diverse newcomers to America, Greeks were singled out in particular and admonished publically for establishing Greek schools, remitting large numbers of money orders to relatives back in Greece, and reading Greek newspapers in their coffeehouses. Papanikolas cited one popular Klan song:

When cotton grows on the fig tree
And alfalfa hangs on the rose
When the aliens run the United States
And the Jews grow a straight nose
When the Pope is praised by everyone
In the Land of Uncle Sam
THEN—the Ku Klux Klan won’t be worth a damn.439

---

439 Ibid., p. 161. James Schofield says Klansmen also passed out cards at election polls with the words to this song on it. See James S. Schofield, “AHEPA and the Ku Klux Klan: Winning the Battle Against Bigotry, Part I,” Hellenic Heritage 50, no. 7 (August 1997): 5. Schofield also notes how it is supremely ironic, given the Klan's
Papanikolas remembered that among “nativist” Americans “southern European immigrants were accused of being un-American because they did not immediately forget their language and customs, sent great amounts of money to their homelands, and became involved in labor strikes.”\footnote{Helen Papanikolas, “Greek Immigrant Women in the Intermountain West,” \textit{Journal of the Hellenic Diaspora} XVI, no. 1–4 (1989): 27.} In addition, E.D. Karampetsos notes that in the West, the term “Greek” became linked to monikers such as “alien,” “troubblemaker,” “inferior,” and “not white.”\footnote{E.D. Karampetsos, “Nativism in Nevada: Greek Immigrants in White Pine County,” \textit{Journal of the Hellenic Diaspora} 24, no. 1 (1998): 62.} In this chapter we shall explore the tensions inherent between the immigrants’ native Greek identity and their newly adopted (or not) American identity as well as how Greeks were viewed by the “old stock” Americans. We shall also discuss how the anti-immigrant policies of the American government and the activities of the Ku Klux Klan and other “100 percent American” organizations impacted the settlement of southeastern Europeans in America in general, and the Midwest in particular, and how they resisted these efforts to segregate them or even drive them away.

Even before the revival of the Ku Klux Klan in 1915, there were incidents of violence aimed specially at Greek communities in different parts of the country. These events are instructive for our understanding of the general climate of the time, and particularly of attitudes toward Greeks. One such occurred in February 1909, when anti-Greek riots broke out in South Omaha, Nebraska after a Greek immigrant, John

Masourides, was accused of killing a policeman. From the beginning, it was clear that the riots were not aimed at Masourides alone, but the entire Greek community. There were about 1200 Greeks living in South Omaha, along with a number of railway workers who came to Omaha during the winter seeking employment when railroad work in the West had ebbed.

---

442 John G. Bitzes, “The Anti-Greek Riot of 1909 -- South Omaha,” *Nebraska History* 51, no. 2 (1970): 200. South Omaha was a separate metropolitan area until it was joined with Omaha in 1915. There were between 2000 to 3000 Greeks in the two cities combined, tending to the higher number in the winter months when the unemployed railroad gangs swelled the population. Theodore Saloutos included a description of the 1909 Omaha riots in his article on Greeks in the Great Plains and Rocky Mountain West, but all his information is taken from Bitzes’ article published ten years earlier. See Theodore Saloutos, “Cultural Persistence and Change: Greeks in the Great Plains and Rocky Mountain West, 1890-1970,” *The Pacific Historical Review* 49, no. 1 (February 1980): 85-88. Bitzes references what he believes might have been the first violence aimed specifically at Greeks in the United States, which occurred in July 1907 in Roanoke, Virginia. Here “mobs of hundreds” attacked Greeks and their businesses, but, unlike in Omaha two years later, “law and order was quickly restored…and the lawlessness was not permitted to get out of hand. See Bitzes, “Anti-Greek Riot,” p. 201.

443 The annual laying-off of railway workers in winter was felt in Chicago as well. In October 1915 the *Saloniki-Greek Press* carried a long editorial about the “many thousands of Greek laborers who will be released from hard, dangerous work on the railroads.” “Hundreds of them,” the article went on, “will swarm into the Greek quarter this winter, as usual.” There were more than fifty thousand Greeks employed on the railroad according to this article. The newspaper intended to use their presence in Chicago to conduct a study of the laborers and ask them “to give an account of their life, their conditions of work, and their problems.” No record has been found of whether this study was conducted, or if it was, what became of its findings. See “Our Laboring Class,” *Saloniki-Greek Press*, October 25, 1913.

444 Bitzes, “Anti-Greek Riot,” p. 203. Bitzes writes that there was “growing tension between the native and Greek...especially during the winter months when the railroad gangs were idle and had plenty of money in their pockets....Many were idle, however, and idleness bred mischief.” In addition, Saloutos says that workers in the meatpacking industry struck for higher wages in early 1909 and “the packers broke the strike by bringing in Greek (and some Japanese) strikebreakers willing to work for lower wages. This action aroused deep resentment toward the Greek newcomers.” Saloutos provides no source for this reference, however, and may have simply misread Bitze’s account of such a strike in 1904 when “a number of Japanese
The Greeks in South Omaha were viewed as “clannish, immoral, unclean, and un-American, especially after they had begun to move into the Irish neighborhood.” Greek laborers were willing to work for lower wages and local “native” businessmen faced strong economic competition from a group of successful Greek business entrepreneurs. These Greeks had “established their own grocery stores, confectioneries, shoeshine parlors, and coffee houses,” where the language was Greek. Bitzes asserts that the Greeks “kept very much to themselves,” and that “few Greeks were interested in learning English because most were waiting for the day they would return to their poor native land to live luxuriously on their American earnings. Often their earnings went home to support their families and to furnish dowries for their daughters and sisters.”

Most of the Greeks in South Omaha were young, single males, and they were naturally attracted to women in the city. Thus, “too often…they insulted, or it was thought they insulted, women as they passed the Greek rooming houses, and brawls between Greeks and the other men of the community were not uncommon.

On the evening of Friday, February 19, a thirty-six year old Peloponnesian immigrant, John Massourides, was confronted by an Irish policeman, Ed Lowery, in the

and some Greeks were imported to work as strike breakers.” See Saloutos, “Cultural Persistence,” pp. 85-86, and Bitzes, “Anti-Greek Riot,” p. 201. Still, the point remains that there had been a history of Greeks as strikebreakers. In Chicago in 1904 there was a two-month strike at the Diesel shops and Greeks were employed as strikebreakers. The leader of the union on strike noted later that the “newly-arrived Greek immigrants, who took the jobs of the strikers, did not know what it was all about.” The Greek Star called on Greeks in America “to be organized and educated in American methods of making a living in order that they may avoid causing harm to their fellow-workers.” See “The Strike in Chicago Ended. The Greek Strike-Breakers Ousted. Union President Sympathetic,” Greek Star, April 15, 1904.

445 Bitzes, “Anti-Greek Riot,” p. 202. All of the quotations in the paragraph come from this source.
446 Ibid., pp. 202-203.
company of a young seventeen-year old woman of “questionable virtue,” and arrested for vagrancy. Massourides later testified that on the way to the station he tried to throw away a pistol that he was carrying illegally, that Lowery then started firing at him and Massourides returned the fire, killing Lowery and being wounded himself.\textsuperscript{447}

The following day an anti-Greek petition, published in two of South Omaha’s three major newspapers, led the attack on Massourides and the city’s Greek community. It charged that “The so-called quarters of the Greeks are infested by a vile bunch of filthy Greeks who have attacked our women, insulted pedestrians upon the street, openly maintained gambling dens and many other forms of viciousness.” The petition called on the city hall “to take such steps and to adopt such measures as will effectually rid the city of the Greeks, and thereby remove the menacing conditions that threaten the very life and welfare of South Omaha.”\textsuperscript{448} The anger and hostility toward Greeks stirred up by this and similar yellow journalism\textsuperscript{449} led to “a vindictive mob causing injury to scores, inflicting thousands of dollars in personal damages, resulting in the flight of some twelve hundred Greek citizens and immigrants from South Omaha, and straining the United States’

\textsuperscript{447} Ibid., pp. 204-205.
\textsuperscript{449} The \textit{World Herald} ran an article that described Masourides as a Greek whose “life was filled with the brightness of freedom and his pockets filled with the easy gold. He was made to feel that he was a human being. He grew fat in arrogance and pushed aside the native sons or used them as mere rungs of his ladder of success….And when a gentle hand sought to restrain him for a moment from wrong doing his thought was only to kill, to kill craftily. And he killed.” \textit{Omaha World-Herald}, February 21, 1909. Quoted in Bitzes, "Anti-Greek Riot," p. 200.
relations with Greece, Austro-Hungary, and the Ottoman Empire, all three of which
demanded indemnities and received them.  

For those Greeks remaining in Omaha, the Greek community rallied and
leaders urged calmness. An Omaha law firm was hired to represent victims of the riot
suing for damages. Lambros Coromilas, the Greek diplomatic representative in
Washington, D.C. sent Theodore Ion, an attorney, to South Omaha to conduct an external
investigation and report findings to the Greek government. The investigation proved that
Mr. Massourides was responsible for the policeman’s death, but was not having an illicit
affair with a prostitute because, upon medical examination, the woman in question,
Lillian Breese was found “virtuous.” Attorney Ion concluded that Massourides had no
motive for opening fire upon the policeman. Ion’s report also placed blame on local
authorities, citing inflammatory rhetoric stemming from city leaders and fueling the riot.
Greek property owners had no real recourse in recovering damages to their property. Ion
proffered that such acts of mass violence could happen again and to other European

---

450 Bitzes, “Anti-Greek Riot,” pp. 200, 212. See also the editorial in the Chicago
Greek-language newspaper, Greek Star, February 26, 1909.
451 Which did not include any of the Greeks working in the city’s largest industry, the
packing house. Bitzes notes that “all the plant’s Greek employees...asked for their
pay and left town.” Of the two to three thousand Greeks in the Omaha area at the
beginning of 1909, only a few hundred remained. The 1910 census listed 187 in
452 Breese had in fact been giving Massourides, who had a wife and four children
back in Greece, English lessons.
453 Massourides eventually served five and a half years and seemingly then moved to
ethnic groups as well.\textsuperscript{454} This violent episode triggered at least two other anti-Greek riots, in Kansas City, Kansas and Dayton, Ohio, within the week.\textsuperscript{455}

These anti-Greek riots in 1909 were random events for the time,\textsuperscript{456} but the hatred and bigotry unleashed on the Greek immigrants were precursors to the xenophobia that developed during and after the Great War. The anti-immigrant, anti-hyphen, 100 percent American campaigns encouraged by America’s leaders beginning with presidents Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson, by America’s newspapers, and by various national organizations such as the Ku Klux Klan and the American Legion created a hostile, threatening environment for anyone not of “old stock” and Protestant.

Sparked by the “heroic image of the Reconstruction Klan as the defender of white womanhood and Christian civilization” in D.W. Griffith’s 1915 silent film, \textit{The Birth of A Nation}, the Ku Klux Klan was reborn in that year on Stone Mountain, Georgia.\textsuperscript{457} One

\textsuperscript{454} Bitzes, “Anti-Greek Riot,” pp. 218-220. Barely more than ten years later Omaha experienced race riots once again that included attacks on African-Americans and all the immigrant communities – who, including Jews, made up thirty-two percent of Omaha’s residents. Along with all the other, mainly union and labor-related, issues that brought on the riots, a weekly newspaper charged Greeks men “with insulting ‘American Girls,’ and suggested that the police deal energetically with these ‘no good bums’ and that the government deport them if necessary.” \textit{Omaha Mediator}, September 19, 1919. Michael Lawson cites this passage in his article on the 1919 riots. See Michael L. Lawson, “Omaha, a City in Ferment: Summer of 1919,” \textit{Nebraska History} 58, no. 3 (Fall 1977): 406.


recent historian of this “second era” Ku Klux Klan, Thomas Pegram, contends, however, that the Klan had very little presence on the American scene until 1921. He also argues that although “its taste for vigilantism, and well-publicized cases of Klan violence in the 1920s marked the Ku Klux Klan as sinister and extremist,” there was also an “ordinary, everyday quality to the Klan’s presence in the still-dominant white Protestant America of the 1920s.”\footnote{58} Although it is beyond the scope of this study to offer an in-depth history of the second era Ku Klux Klan, we must still discuss the strong Klan presence in Illinois in the 1920s, and its members’ attacks on the Greek confectioners that are the subjects of this study, including, as we shall see, my grandfather.\footnote{59}

In studying the Klan in Illinois it is the “ordinariness” of the organization that is most striking. Studies of Klan membership rosters of the second era Klan “have shown that Klansmen were ordinary Americans representing an occupational cross section of the local white Protestant society,” and that “the secret order recruited those who had taken an active part in the community’s civil and political affairs.”\footnote{60} Leonard Moore concedes

\footnote{58}Ibid., pp. 6-7.
\footnote{59}There is a significant literature on the Klan in the 1920s. One could begin with the sources mentioned here. A good overview of scholarship on, and interpretations of, the Klan at this time through the 1990’s is found in the review essay by Leonard J. Moore, “Historical Interpretations of the 1920’s Klan: The Traditional View and the Populist Revision,” in \textit{Journal of Social History} 24, no. 2 (Winter, 1990), pp. 341-357. Moore’s long essay is a review of two books: David H. Bennett, \textit{The Party of Fear: From Nativist Movements to the New Right in American History} (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988; and Wyn Craig Wade, \textit{The Fiery Cross: The Ku Klux Klan in America} (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1987). Moore’s essay conveys the complex nature of the 1920s Klan and how difficult it is for scholars to arrive at any common interpretation.
that “the Klan attracted its share of ‘low status’ individuals, men prone to violence, and many thousands from rural communities and small towns who felt threatened by urban America and might have wished for nothing better than to see the great cities and their ‘unAmerican’ inhabitants disappear from the landscape.” But it is clear, Moore concludes, that “the Klan was composed primarily of average citizens representing nearly all parts of America’s white Protestant society.”

In his study of the Ku Klux Klan in Williamson County, Illinois (county seat – Marion), Masatomo Ayabe found that the “Invisible Empire of Williamson County was in fact highly visible….The Herrin Semi-Weekly Herald declared that it was ‘owned by Klansmen, edited by Klansmen, and printed by Klansmen.’” The paper’s editor, B.E. Green, wrote “We shall state plainly that we belong to the Klan and we are proud of it, just as proud as we are of our church membership.” Indeed, the pastor of the First Christian Church of Mattoon “explained that the Ku Klux Klan was the ‘masculine part’ of the Protestant Church in action.”

Similarly, Thomas Pegram found that in the 1920s, “While secret, Klan membership in many communities was nonetheless an open secret and included public


462 In 1925 a Marion businessman, John L. Whiteside [sic], was elected the “Great Titan of Province No. 7, Realm of Illinois.” In this post, Whiteside had “power over 39 counties in Southern Illinois, extending from Cairo to Decatur.” As ruler over the largest province in the state, Whiteside had “authority over the largest populated province in the imperial Kingdom of Klandom.” See “New Great Titan of Ku Klux Klan,” _Marion Daily Republican_, February 28, 1925, p. 1.


officials, Protestant ministers, and ordinary and prominent citizens alike.” Nancy MacLean writes that a typical Klan meeting “resembled one any other organization might hold: minutes read and approved, new members voted in, dues collected, plans laid for a recruitment campaign, an educational discussion, and even niceties: members received thanks [from one member] for having visited him when he was sick, and from the board…of a local church for having attended its recent revival meeting with a contribution.” And, although the Klan in Indiana had a larger membership, Pegram could have been describing downstate Illinois when he writes, “The Invisible Empire in Indiana was so tightly interwoven into the fabric of society that newspapers regularly advertised Klan events, [and] Klan members there felt comfortable marching in public without masks.” Thus, in the December 19, 1924 edition of the Eldorado Daily Journal, the Eldorado Furniture Company had an advertisement announcing the arrival of a “large shipment of K.K.K. Records and Player Rolls,” the “very latest numbers in Klan music.” Songs included “Women of the Ku Klux Klan,” “Why I am a Klansman,” “Uncle Sammy’s Melting Pot,” “Midnight Roll Call,” “100% March,” and “Daddy Swiped Our Last Clean Sheet and Joined the Ku Klux Klan.” There was also a recorded lecture on “America’s Task,” by Dr. Hiram Evans, Imperial Wizard of the Klan.

465 Pegram, One Hundred Percent American, p. 6.
467 Pegram, One Hundred Percent American, p. 6. See also, for example, the ad for a “Parade and Open Air Meeting of the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan” in the Mount Carmel Daily Republican-Register, September 23, 1925, p. 5.
The second era Klan was quite different from the post-Civil War old Klan. It was “both a product and a reflection of the distinctive patterns” of post-World War I America.” The Klan revival built upon twentieth century developments such as “mass entertainment and leisure, patriotic voluntary associations, advertising and the go-go economic style of the 1920s.” Moreover, the “cultural balkanization of the urban, industrialized, pluralistic United States into a racialized, religious tribalism…produced a greater range of potential enemies for the new Klan to confront.”

The Ku Klux Klan had mixed success in Illinois during the four or so years—1922 to 1926—when it was most active. Kenneth Jackson, whose groundbreaking work, *The Ku Klux Klan in the City: 1915-1930*, focuses on Klan development and activities in urban areas, found that Masons in Chicago, “joined the organization by the hundreds, and

469 In 1924 one of the high schools near Marion, Illinois even had a full-page Klan advertisement in their yearbook. Below a Christian cross, it begins with a mention of Klan eligibility – “native-born American citizen, no allegiance to a foreign government, political party, sect, creed, or ruler, and engaged in a legitimate occupation.” One also had to believe in such ideals as the Tenets of the Christian Religion, White Supremacy, Protection of our pure womanhood, preventing unwarranted strikes by foreign agitators, the limitation of foreign immigrants, and Pure Americanism. Interestingly, this list also included the separation of church and state, freedom of speech and press, and “much needed local reforms.” Finally, perhaps appropriately for a high school yearbook but strange coming from the Klan, the advertisement states that the Klan believes the United States “has the finest free public school system of any nation in the world, and that every child between the ages of 6 and 16 years, regardless of race, creed, color or religion, should be compelled to attend these schools.” See the *Williamson County Illinois Sesquicentennial History*, ed. by Stan J. Hale (Paducah, KY: Turner Publishing, 1993): p. 111. This advertisement was included with an article about “Bloody Williamson,” and the caption, “This KKK advertisement appeared in an area high school yearbook in 1924.” I have not been able to identify the school in whose yearbook the advertisement appeared.

470 Pegram, *One Hundred Percent Americanism*, pp. 6-7. As regards the Klan’s use of mass entertainment, the Klan was still using the movie, *The Birth of a Nation*, for recruiting into the 1970s.
Masonic Halls were frequently utilized for Klan meetings.\(^{471}\) In Chicago as well, the growth of the Klan was most successful on the south side of the city, drawing its support “primarily from lower echelon white-collar workers, small businessmen, and semi-skilled laborers, many of whom resented the economic, social and political pressure of the city’s Catholics and second-generation immigrants, and were equally alarmed by rapid influx of Negroes.”\(^{472}\) There were eighteen Klans operating in the City and twelve outside of Cook County by 1922.\(^{473}\) Their influence went all the way to the governor’s election in 1924, when they claimed credit for the reelection of Gov. Len Small.\(^{474}\) But by 1925, “the Invisible Empire was virtually inert in Chicago.”\(^{475}\)

Chalmers argues that “On the whole, the Klan did better downstate,” particularly in the southern part of the state. Here, “for generations, the mountain people of Kentucky and Tennessee,” had peopled the land, “forming a backwater of rural, fundamentalist, old-stock America.” After coal was discovered in the 1890s, “a flood of foreigners began to pour in,” opening the way for Klan activity by citizens “concerned about foreigners,

\(^{471}\) Kenneth T. Jackson, *The Ku Klux Klan in the City, 1915-1930* (New York: I.R. Dee, 1967): 95. Groundbreaking because Jackson broke from the traditional interpretation, prevalent since the 1920s, of the Klan as primarily a small town, rural phenomenon, consisting largely of illiterate, “backward,” rustics. He demonstrates that the Klan movement was actually centered in large cities. Membership numbers were divided about equally between rural and urban areas but state headquarters were nearly always located in urban areas and from here state leaders directed activities for the rest of the state.

\(^{472}\) Ibid., p. 126.

\(^{473}\) Ibid., p. 97. Shawn Lay asserts that by early 1922, "local Klan chapters—which would include tens of thousands in Chicago alone—were gathering strength in the Midwest...." Shawn Lay, ed., *The Invisible Empire in the West: Toward a New Historical Appraisal of the Ku Klux Klan of the 1920s* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2004): 8.

\(^{474}\) “Mystery Solved; Klux Paper Says They Did It All: And, If You Please, For Clean Politics,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, April 22, 1924, p. 2.

Roman Catholicism, saloons and roadhouses, gambling, prostitution, and widespread public corruption. In addition, an almost endemic struggle ranged between the unions and anti-labor mineowners.\footnote{476}

For those in downstate Illinois who longed for some active response to the new immigrants,\footnote{477} Klan membership appealed to those who were middle class, nativist, nationalist, and Protestant. Pegram notes that the aftermath of World War I “generated a lingering postwar suspicion of labor unionists, political radicals, recent immigrants, Southern black migrants, and other Americans then considered marginal.”\footnote{478} Becoming a Klan member was, for many, equated with Americanism and not aligned with exclusionary doctrine or discrimination.\footnote{479} In his study of congressional hearings in 1921 on the Klan, Shawn Lay takes an opposite position, finding that

> a central core of beliefs…held the Klan together. As the organization’s constitution and other Imperial documents indicate,

\footnote{476} Chalmers, *Hooded Americanism*, p. 185. Given that membership in the Klan was almost equal between rural and urban areas, and that Chicago had a very large Klan membership, Chalmer’s use of the term “better” here would need to refer, perhaps, to less organized opposition than was present in Chicago. He does not make this clear.

\footnote{477} While immigrants are commonly associated with urban areas, it must be remembered that there were millions of immigrants in rural Illinois the Klan might take exception to, beginning with German Catholics, particularly during and after the Great War. There were also many thousands of immigrants from the British Isles, Italy, Austria, Poland, Russia, and Greece, among others. The great majority of these worked in southern and central Illinois coal fields. For a detailed study of these immigrants and radicalism in the coal fields, see Stephane Elise Booth, “The Relationship Between Radicalism and Ethnicity in Southern Illinois Coal Fields, 1870-1940,” Doctor of Arts, Dissertation, 1983, Illinois State University, Bloomington, Illinois. In an Appendix Booth includes more than 40 tables containing data about the numbers of immigrants from all the various ethnic groups, and showing how many were in each location, and how these numbers changed, over nearly 50 years.

\footnote{478} Ibid., p. 11.

\footnote{479} Ibid., pp. 22-23.
Klansmen advocated ‘pure Americanism’ and ‘the faithful maintenance of White Supremacy.’ The Klan viewed with suspicion those who owed ‘allegiance of any nature or degree to any foreign Government, nation, institution, sect, ruler, person, or people,’ and proudly asserted that Anglo-Saxons were ‘the only race that has ever proved its ability and supremacy and its determination to progress under any and all conditions and handicaps.’ The order also advocated strict enforcement of the law, particularly the various prohibition statutes.\(^{480}\)

Leonard Moore, however, argues against “the traditional view of the Klan as an extremist organization devoted almost exclusively to the persecution of Catholics, Jews, immigrants and blacks.” He notes that although “there can be no argument that the Klan’s racist, anti-Catholic, anti-Semitic ideology was offensive and threatening to many Americans during the 1920s…to describe such ideas as extremist and pathological…is to paint a rather distorted picture of mainstream racial and ethnic attitudes.” Moore points out that “blatantly discriminatory immigration restrictions were enacted during this time not by the Ku Klux Klan, but by a bipartisan coalition in the United States Congress. And if anti-Catholicism was the code of radical fringe group, it was also the most important single factor in Herbert Hoover’s victory in the presidential election of 1928.” He notes that in many places (like Indiana) where the Klan was most popular, racial and ethnic minorities were tiny or even nonexistent. To focus on the Klansman’s anxiety over the distant urban immigrant, Moore argues, is to “preclude the possibility that local events and circumstances played any important part in the Klan’s popularity.”\(^{481}\)

Rory McVeigh takes a similar view to Moore’s, trying to look beyond the blatantly racist and bigoted behavior and activities of the Klan as reasons for Klan membership, and focusing on their economic and political messages. In his study of

---

\(^{480}\) The quotations within this passage come from U.S. Congress, House, Committee on Rules, *Hearings on the Ku Klux Klan, 67th Congress, 1st session*, 1921, 67-68, contained in Lay, *The Invisible Empire in the West*, p. 9.

\(^{481}\) Moore, “Historical Interpretations,” p. 346.
membership data for the state of Indiana, McVeigh concluded that while Klan leaders would not have “promoted the supremacy of white, Protestant, ‘100 percent Americanism’ if these cultural appeals were not meaningful to the people that they intended to recruit,” the Klan’s economic and political rhetoric also must be considered.\textsuperscript{482} In fact, he writes, “the Klan’s rise is best understood as a response to the sudden devaluation in the economic and political ‘purchasing power’ of the Klan’s recruits.” He theorized that the Klan used the cultural appeals to the anti-immigrant, anti-African-American, anti-Catholic prejudices in their targeted membership “to stimulate demand for what its members had to offer in exchange with economic and political markets. It also used cultural attacks to restrict the supply of competitors.”\textsuperscript{483} Interestingly, however, while Protestantism was a key component of these cultural appeals, more than one third to one half of the membership was comprised of Protestants without a religious “home.”\textsuperscript{484}

There was also a social aspect to the Klan that gave its members, particularly those in rural areas and small towns, a chance to come together, socialize, and be part of a larger movement. As Pegram observes, “Spectacle was a device for establishing the Klan as a mysterious presence and for winning converts to the Invisible Empire, but it was also a continuing tool for community-building among white

\textsuperscript{483} Ibid., p. 1461. David Horowitz points out that “Independent merchants...often viewed minority tradespeople as members of dangerously cohesive blocs and as unethical competitors.” David A. Horowitz, “The Normality of Extremism: The Ku Klux Klan Revisited,” Society 35, no. 6 (1998): 77.  
\textsuperscript{484} Pegram, One Hundred Percent American, p. 9.}
Protestants.” Public demonstrations, such as visits to Protestant churches and cross burnings, were augmented by elaborate parades and speeches.

During the “great summer of Illini Klandom,” in 1923, “the members turned out by the tens of thousands for a succession of enormous outdoor Klan rallies at Joliet, Rockford, Springfield, Oak Forest, and Urbana. Zenith Klan No. 56 of Champaign-Urbana bought the old Illinois Theater, which seated over a thousand, to use as a Klavern.” When Hiram Evans, the Klan’s Imperial Wizard, came to Champaign-Urbana that fall, “a mammoth open meeting was staged in the University of Illinois armory.” At one gathering in Kokomo, Indiana on July 4, 1923, there were at least fifty thousand people gathered who were entertained with “boxing matches, a pie-eating contest, a beautiful baby competition, a parade featuring Klansmen towering on twelve-foot stilts, and everywhere the extravagant display of American flags.” Pegram contends that these public gatherings were akin to those held in the previous decade by Progressives, determined to invite membership with music, picnics, and speeches.

Women were also active in the Klan. From her research, Kathleen M. Blee concluded that “many white Protestant women in the 1920s—perhaps half a million or more—joined the Women of the Ku Klux Klan.” She asserts that in some states women

---

485 Ibid., p. 28. Pegram discusses these spectacles on pp. 28-32, and communities on pp. 32-42. Pegram recounts how “one Jewish man from Muncie, Indiana...took his son to watch Klan parades for their entertainment value.” (p. 29)

486 Ibid., p. 28.


488 Pegram, One Hundred Percent Americanism, p. 31.

489 Ibid., p. 29.
comprised nearly half of the Klan membership. Blee states that the women of the Klan “drew on familial and community ties—traditions of church suppers, kin reunions, and social celebrations—to circulate the Klan’s message of racial, religious, and national bigotry.” By the mid-1920s approximately four million women and men had enlisted as members of the Klan. Blee argues that the factors that made the Klan appealing to women at this juncture in American history included the recent passage of women’s suffrage and their wide-reaching participation in the temperance movement. These activities empowered women and they looked to the Klan as another vehicle for the expression of agency. Some Klan chapters became social service agencies for young women seeking employment and housing in urban areas, while making them swear never to vote for non-American-born, nonwhites, or non-Protestants, or to consider them for positions as teachers, governesses, or instructors of children.

Women seemed ready for a public sphere of activity and power, and by November, 1923, thirty-six states had established chapters of the Women of the Ku Klux Klan with membership totaling at least 250,000. Although the Klanswomen aligned themselves with the national KKK tenets, they also articulated their own agenda to

---

491 Ibid., p. 3.
492 Ibid., p. 17.
493 Blee notes that women in Indiana were drawn to the Klan through their involvement in the temperance movement. Ibid., p. 103. For a discussion of why contemporary women join the Klan and other extremist groups, see Kathleen M. Blee, “Becoming a Racist: Women in Contemporary Ku Klux Klan and Neo-Nazi Groups,” *Gender & Society* 10, no. 6 (December 1996): 680–702.
495 Ibid., p. 29.
achieve equality with men for white Protestant women.\textsuperscript{496} In time, however, the women’s Klan chapters in Indiana displayed much internal strife.\textsuperscript{497} With the general decline of the Klan in the Midwest, women’s membership in the Klan had also ebbed considerably by 1928.\textsuperscript{498}

Leonard Moore, in his review essay on works about the Klan in the 1920s, concludes that “A single term may not be adequate as a label for the 1920s Klan,” but if a single label is needed…’populist’ seems best. Certainly it is better than ‘extremist,’ ‘terrorist,’ ‘nativist,’ or the other terms historians have traditionally employed.” After summarizing most of the major studies of the Klan from the 1920s to 1990, he feels that the Klan appears to have acted as a kind of interest group for the average white Protestant who believed that his values should be dominant in American society. Prohibition represented the great symbol of that desire, and support for Prohibition seemed to bond together the nation’s Klansmen more tightly than any other single issue. The crisis of Prohibition enforcement, in fact, may have been the most powerful catalyst of the Klan movement and during the early 1920’s the Klan may have been the most popular means of expressing support for the Noble Experiment….The reformist attacks on political and economic elites…make the term ‘populist’ appear particularly credible….the Klan became a means through which average citizens could resist elite political domination and attempt to make local and even state governments more responsive to popular interests….The Klansmen were too much a part of America’s social mainstream to be dismissed as an extremist aberration. Their movement spoke to to too many social and political concerns to be understood through ideology alone.\textsuperscript{499}

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{496} Ibid., p. 35.
\textsuperscript{497} Ibid., p. 129. Internal dissention within local Klan organizations was a universal problem in both men’s and women’s groups. Jackson describes how Klan affiliated women in Chicago organized as the National League of Protestant Women in America in the summer of 1943 but “only enjoyed one year of peace before beginning to war among themselves.” Jackson, \textit{The Ku Klux Klan in the City, 1915-1930}, p. 123.
\textsuperscript{498} Blee, \textit{Women of the Klan}, p. 125.
\textsuperscript{499} Moore, “Historical Interpretations, pp. 353-54. See also Horowitz, “Normality of Extremism,” who found, after a study of Klan records in La Grande, Oregon, that “the
\end{footnotesize}
The Klan was not allowed, however, to carry on its activities in a vacuum. Anti-Klan activists challenged the Klan through the law and in the courts, with public exposure of Klan members, by staging boycotts, by forming organizations to oppose the Klan, and sometimes, with violence. Pegram observes, “Even in an age when assumptions of white supremacy, unembarrassed ethnic chauvinism, and religious intolerance toward Catholics and Jews were commonplace, the Klan’s expression of these themes was deemed incendiary and objectionable.”

Between the two world wars the “greasy spoon Greeks” were very often “attacked or at the least frequently harassed by those around them.” Scofield asserts, “Many Greek-owned confectionaries and restaurants failed financially or were sold at sacrificial prices to non-Greeks because of boycotts instigated by the Klan. Greek establishments doing as much as $500 to $1000 a day business, especially in the South and Midwest, dropped to as little as $25 a day. The only recourse was to sell or close. The Klan often bolstered its boycotts by openly threatening or attacking customers entering and leaving.” To underscore the fact that the Klan targeted Greeks, Scofield refers to a Klan lecturer in Spokane who called for Mexicans and Greeks to “be sent back to where they came from so that white supremacy and the purity of Americans could be preserved.”

klavern provided a meeting ground for the ordinary denizens of ‘Middle America.” He notes that since “its rise to national prominence in the 1920s few mass movements have attracted as many unsupported generalizations as the Ku Klux Klan,” and suggests that social scientists and historians must “abandon simplistic and elitist notions about mass movements like the Klan.” (p. 77)

500 Pegram, One Hundred Percent Americanism, p. xii.
He also notes how a Klan affiliate, the Royal Riders of the Red Robe, was formed as a patriotic organization for “approved naturalized citizens unluckily born outside the United States.” Immigrants from Greece, Italy, and the Balkans, however, were not eligible to join.\(^{503}\)

George Leber contends that violence against Greeks was even more violent in the South. “Young Greek men working in the kitchens of restaurants in the South were taken, along with black workers, by the Ku Klux Klan on lynching “parties” into the woods, where the Greeks were roughed up and released, but the blacks were lynched.” Leber says he has no evidence that any Greeks were ever lynched by the Klan, but “they were intimidated and told to leave town. Another favorite warning of the Klan to the Greek was not be “seen with a white girl.”\(^{504}\)

As direct targets of Klan attacks, Greek immigrant leaders\(^{505}\) felt a need to respond and on July 26, 1922, they formed the American Hellenic Educational Progressive Association (or Order of AHEPA).\(^{506}\) Through no coincidence, their

\(^{503}\) Ibid., p. 8. Scofield also provides a number of other examples of Klan intimidation, bigotry, and violence against Greeks in Scofield, “Final Triumph of Hellenism,” p. 15.


\(^{505}\) There are several different accounts of who these men were and how AHEPA came to be founded. There is agreement on the place, the date, and the need to respond to the violence increasingly perpetrated against Greek immigrants as the primary reason for founding the organization. The best summary of the various versions is Frangos, “Origins of AHEPA,” pp. 13–16.

\(^{506}\) When the second era Klan died away at the end of the 1920s, AHEPA remained and remains active today supporting Greek-American causes, communities, and charities. As an 1935 editorial in the Chicago-based *Greek News* observed, however, in the beginning its purpose was “to protect the Greeks from the attacks of the K.K.K.” “Editorial – The Work of AHEPA’s Convention,” *Greek News*, August 24, 1935.
founding meeting was held in Atlanta, Georgia, home of the national Imperial
Headquarters of the Klan.\textsuperscript{507} The primary figure in this history is George Poulos, who
“was employed by the Imperial Palace of the Ku Klux Klan [in Atlanta] in a confidential
capacity and…he was present and participated in its secret meetings and
conferences….In this capacity he was in a position to have advanced knowledge of the
plots and plans of the clans….This advance information was constantly used to the best
advantage of the unsuspecting victims.”\textsuperscript{508} Frangos concludes that though Poulos’
“contact with the Klan was nothing short of terrifying,” and that while his “role as Klan
consularrie is never explained in detail,…his role at the Palace was unquestionably as spy
and not a fellow conspirator.”\textsuperscript{509}

Poulos and the other AHEPA founders had to frame a response to this “wave of
hostility which had almost drowned them,” and chose “to create a patriotic fraternal order
espousing undivided loyalty to the United States, American citizenship, proficiency in
English, active participation in the civic mainstream, economic stability, social unity, and
the pursuit of education.”\textsuperscript{510} Frangos observes that it was through their knowledge of
business corporations and how “fraternal organizations can link lone individuals to a
wider network of other Americans” that the Greek founders of AHEPA “sought to gain
moral and political influence through collective efforts.” Thus, “from this perspective the

\textsuperscript{507} Scofield, “Winning the Battle Against Bigotry,” pp. 6-7.
\textsuperscript{508} Frangos cites “a series of National Herald articles on the foundation of AHEPA
published during October 1950” by V.I. Chebites for this quote. Frangos, “Origins of
\textsuperscript{509} Frangos, “Origins of AHEPA, p. 15.
\textsuperscript{510} Scofield, “Winning the Battle Against Bigotry,” p. 7. These positions were not
without controversy, as they placed AHEPA squarely in the middle of the debate
discussed in chapter 4 over the need to maintain one’s culture and heritage or to
drop the hyphen and become an American.
Greeks are far from hapless peasants bumbling about America.” Frangos believes they made AHEPA “the most influential Greek fraternal organization in the history of the United States.”

In his article on the origins of AHEPA, Frangos provides a selection of stories about violence against Greeks in this period to “help contextualize why AHEPA had such immediate and nationwide support.” One of his personal anecdotes is particularly relevant to our story. While a student at Indiana University Bloomington in the early 1980s he met an elderly Greek woman who said her father had owned a candy store in the town. She told him that when she was a little girl, “every Friday night the Ku Klux Klan would ride horses around and around the main square in a torch like parade. Many times the windows in her parent’s store were broken.”

In Chicago, Kenneth Jackson asserts, “the Invisible Empire came under continuous attack.” In 1922 a Chicago attorney, Pat O’Donnell, began publishing long lists of Klan members in his periodical, *Tolerance.* This resulted in an assortment of attacks on Klan members, including Klanmen’s business establishments being bombed,

---

512 Ibid., p. 15.
513 Ibid., p. 15. This woman was almost certainly the daughter of Gus C. Poolitsan, who is listed in the 1920 Bloomington census as working in a candy store, along with his wife, Angelike, and their four children, including a daughter, Catherine, who is 7 in 1920. See the 1920 Census, Bloomington Ward 4, Precinct 3, Monroe, Indiana. Roll: T625_457; Page 1B, Enumeration District 178. In the 1920 City Directory, Gus C. Poolitsan owns the Poolitsan Candy Co., which operates the Greek Candy Store (located on “East Side Square, opp. Court House”) and the Book-Nook. See Bloomington, Indiana City Directory (Louisville, KY: Caron Directory Company1920): 7 passim (advertisements), 68 (listing), and 179 (“Confectioners”).
514 Kenneth Jackson notes that “Tolerance represented the only major attempt in the nation to publicize the names of rank and file Klansmen on a systematic basis.” See Kenneth T. Jackson, *The Ku Klux Klan in the City, 1915-1930,* p. 104. The Ku Klux Klan in Chicago is discussed in chapter 8, pp. 93-126.
Klansmen being barred from grand jury duty, and aldermen calling for the firing of city employees who belonged to the Klan.515

One of the key organizations leading the attack on the Klan was the American Unity League (AUL). Founded in Chicago in 1922, with Patrick O’Donnell as its chair, the AUL was dedicated to the eradication of the Ku Klux Klan not only in Chicago, but nationally.516 It was designed to be inclusive of African Americans and Jews, but, according to Jackson, did not receive the full cooperation or participation of those groups, and initial supporters were priests, inciting the Klan to brand the organization as “an Irish, Roman Catholic clique.”517 The American Unity League used the names, addresses, and occupations of thousands of Chicago Klansmen that were published in O’Donnell’s *Tolerance* to carry out massive boycotts. The boycott of one Klan member’s bank, for example, resulted in a dramatic decline in deposits.518 A *New York Times* article in November 1922 began: “To be a member of the Ku Klux Klan in Illinois, particularly in Chicago, these days is to invite social ostracism and business disaster. The fact is slowly but surely being driven into the minds of the 50,000 or so members of the secret organization in and around this city.”519 Also publically engaged in vanquishing the Klan

---

517 Jackson, *The Ku Klux Klan in the City, 1915-1930*, pp. 103. See also Pegram, *One Hundred Percent Americanism*, pp. 81-82.
519 “Chicago Opens War on Ku Klux Klan. Bankers and Business Men known to Be Members are Being Boycotted. Barred As Jurors by Judge. American Unity League
was the *Chicago Defender* newspaper, which rallied voters to vote against a Klan candidate.\footnote{520}

The American Unity League went bankrupt within a year of its founding, primarily because of the many lawsuits filed against it.\footnote{521} But other anti-Klan organizations took its place and across the north these groups began to use “considerable violence…far more violence than the Klan had ever employed in the North.”\footnote{522} Although the Klan in Chicago and elsewhere appeared to be on the rise in 1923, it was actually at its zenith.\footnote{523} Eventually its activities waned, and “by early 1925, many members who had rushed to join were rushing to get out.”\footnote{524} Jackson asserts that the demise of the Chicago KKK was due to internal disputes but also from the efforts of the American Unity League and its publication of membership lists. “In Chicago the names of Klansmen were not only lost to the enemy, but also printed and distributed to the public.”\footnote{525} Goldberg thinks the Klan’s demise came about partly as a result of the violence used against it. He writes,

---


\footnote{520} David Joseph Goldberg, *Discontented America: The United States in the 1920s* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999): 135. Although several of the sources used here have devoted two or three pages to the American Unity League, I have been unable to find any full-length studies of the AUL, or even any articles devoted to it. Jackson’s six pages on the AUL in *The Ku Klux Klan in the City*, seems the most complete account – pp. 102-107.

\footnote{521} Ibid., pp. 135-36.

\footnote{522} Ibid., pp. 116-17; Goldberg, *Discontented America*, pp. 136-37.

\footnote{524} Goldberg, *Discontented America*, p. 137.

\footnote{525} Ibid., p. 125. There was at least one publishing of names by the American Unity League outside of Chicago. In 1923, the AUL, through the Tolerance Publishing Company in Chicago, published a list of names, ages, home and business addresses, and occupations of Ku Klux Klan members in Mahoning County, Ohio, and names and addresses for Klan members in Trumbull County, Ohio, the two counties in the Youngstown area. See *Is Your Neighbor a Kluxer?* (Chicago: Tolerance Publishing Company, 1923).
“[The Klan] attracted its share of hatemongers, but for the most part, its rank and file consisted of ordinary, naïve, fearful, gullible citizens. There were not the American equivalent of Blackshirts or Brownshirts…anxious to spill blood in the streets….Intimitated by the violence and unprepared to respond in kind, the Klan discovered that it could not hope to organize in any community where a significant number of those ineligible to join the KKK had decided to take the law into their own hands.”

As Goldberg observes, “Deep seated and powerful social movements do not generally decline overnight,” but yet, a combination of factors led, by 1926, to the Klan having only a token presence in the North.

Despite its being a main Klan headquarters of the Grand Goblin of the Domain of the Mississippi Valley, and home to two King Kleagles, the Invisible Empire never got traction in St. Louis. They got off to a bad start when, shortly after organizing in 1922, they made a $10,000 pledge to a Boy Scout troop and then raised only $1000. Membership was never more than two thousand, and Jackson estimates that between 1915 and 1944, total Klan membership in St. Louis totaled only five thousand.

The Klan was more successful in East St. Louis, and, as we have seen, in southern Illinois, but its history in these areas is filled with violence. Gary Mormino has

---

527 Goldberg, “Unmasking the Ku Klux Klan,” p. 44.
528 Jackson, *The Ku Klux Klan in the City, 1915-1930*, p. 163.
529 West central Illinois had been the scene earlier of the “Illinois Coal Wars” (sometimes “Illinois Mine Wars”) from 1898 and 1900 between white and black coal miners. See Victor Hicken, “The Virden and Pana Mine Wars of 1898,” *Journal of Illinois State History* 52, no. 2 (Summer 1959): 263–278. The Great War also led to violence in the coal-producing areas of central and southern Illinois between “native” Americans and various ethnic groups, particularly the Germans. See David Dechenne,
documented several violent outbreaks involving Italian migrants in southern Illinois from 1914-1920, and shows that there was violence against immigrants even existed before the second era Klan formed in 1915. In 1914, for example, mob violence broke out in Willisville, Illinois when an Italian poolroom operator shot two locals during an attempted robbery. A crowd of five hundred stormed into the jail where Piazzia, the poolroom operator, was held, and hanged him. In 1915, six hundred residents of Johnson City seized Joseph Stranzo, an Italian accused of killing a local farmer; Stranzo was shot to death. In 1920, West Frankfurt, Illinois was the scene of two nights of riots, culminating in a bombing of the Italian neighborhood, killing one migrant, injuring thirty and destroying property. After the West Frankfurt incident at least 250 Italians were reported to have departed for St. Louis.\footnote{Gary Ross Mormino, \textit{Immigrants On the Hill: Italian-Americans in St. Louis, 1882-1982} (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 2002): 62-63.}

Once the Klan started recruiting in southern Illinois they found a receptive audience. Roger Biles argues that bootlegging contributed to the “downstate” Illinois perception that bootleggers and gambling operators, spawned from Chicago’s “underworld” of foreign influence, were working in alliance with Catholics to infiltrate rural areas. The Klan played on these perceptions, portraying itself as the “self-appointed defenders of public morality.”\footnote{Roger Biles, \textit{Illinois: A History of the Lands and Its People} (DeKalb, IL: Northern Illinois University Press, 2005): 206.}

Williamson County, in particular, a coalmining region with a long history of violence, had a strong KKK presence. The Klan here vowed to eradicate bootlegging and
gambling and focused upon Italian migrants who had come to the region to be coal miners. Williamson County was the scene of the famous “Herrin Massacre” in June 1922, in which union miners killed 19 of 50 strikebreakers and nine mine guards. Three union miners also died. It was also, from December 1923 to April 1926, the site of a “civil war in which Klan and anti-Klan factions engaged in fierce battles over Prohibition enforcement on the streets as well as at the polls.”

Mormino neatly summarizes the Klan antipathy towards the Italians as opposition to “chianti, Catholicism, and crime.” Both the National Guard and state troopers were called in to maintain order but the battles continued. They ended with the “election day riot” of April 13, 1926, won by the bootleggers, and putting “the hooded organization out of existence in ‘Bloody Williamson’ county.” The end of the Klan did nothing, however, to lessen anti-immigrant sentiments.

Violence continued in southern Illinois. In *Sundown Towns: A Hidden Dimension of American Racism*, James Loewen asserts that in Ziegler, Illinois, coal miners drove out all of the Greek migrants at gunpoint, only for two days, but also forced all of the African Americans out of town, and contends that they are still unwelcome into the twenty-first century. Loewen maintains that these “sundown towns,” or towns who primarily declare the total exclusion of African Americans, in particular, or at least have them out

---

of sight by sundown, “provided fertile recruiting fields for the Ku Klux Klan in the 1920’s and still do today.”

The end to the bloody violence in Williamson County and elsewhere “failed to ameliorate the economic misery in southern Illinois.” In Mormino’s words, “King Coal had simply collapsed.” Hundreds of Italians fled southern Illinois to St. Louis as a result of the attacks and the economic hardships. Mormino posits that the Italians rejoined family members in the city, demonstrating internal migration from rural areas in America back to an urban setting. He estimates that during the 1920’s and 1930’s as much as fifteen percent of St. Louis’ Italian population grew as a direct result of Italian migration from central and southern Illinois. He cites one migrant’s move from Buscate, Lombardy in Italy to Herrin, Illinois in 1905 to be a miner, moving then to Christopher, Illinois in 1912, to Belleville, Illinois in 1920 and back to St. Louis that same year.

Mormino also compared the Italian community with the Greek migrants in St. Louis during the same time period, suggesting that the Italians developed into a distinct conclave whereas Greeks were dispersed throughout the city as they engaged in the entrepreneurial endeavors of restaurants, confectioneries, shoeshine operations, and entertainment. The Greek community in St. Louis was small and could only support a “limited number of endeavors, hence the Greek population became geographically decentralized.” He suggests that their specific business interests were also catalysts for

537 Ibid., p. 339.
538 Mormino, Immigrants on the Hill, p. 63.
539 Williamson County is less than a 100 miles from St. Louis.
540 Mormino, Immigrants on the Hill, 63.
541 Ibid. Robyn Burnett and Ken Luebbering do note, however, that there was something of a Greek neighborhood around the St. Nicolas Greek Orthodox Church.
Greeks to be more mobile outside of St. Louis where they could apprentice themselves before moving to the city or moving out of the city to other areas. Mormino researched 167 Greeks who had petitioned for naturalization and discovered that only 37 percent had immigrated directly to St. Louis upon their arrival in America. In addition, 75 percent of the Greeks were single males and therefore able to be more transitory.

Moving to our primary region of research, the Ku Klux Klan was also very active in central Illinois from 1922 through 1926. We will discuss particular acts of bigotry or violence directed at first-generation Greeks in this area in the following chapter. Here we want to address broader questions, such as, How did Greeks and other southeastern Europeans cope with and respond to nativist resistance? What are some considerations with regard to a discourse on ethnic identity and adaptation to the social and political exigencies during the first three decades in America for Greek migrants?

James R. Barrett and David Roediger provide an excellent foundation for positioning southeastern Europeans in the discourse on resistance and identity. They posit that the new wave of migrants did not arrive in America with any preconceived notions or definitions of race and yet they became engaged in active participation through on Forest Park Avenue in St. Louis, which was established in October 1917, although the Greek Orthodox community dates back to 1904. A Greek Festival was held that first year and is still held every year on Labor Day Weekend around the church, the 96th Annual Festival being held in 2013. See Robyn Burnett and Ken Luebbering, *Immigrant Women in the Settlement of Missouri*, Missouri Heritage Readers (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 2005): 12; and the church’s website, http://www.sngoc.org (accessed 9/18/2013).
their being defined by others and then having to examine their own response.\textsuperscript{544} The authors state: “A whole range of evidence—laws; court cases; formal racial ideology; social conventions; popular culture in the form of slang, songs, films, cartoons, ethnic jokes, and popular theater—suggests that the native born and older immigrants often place these newer immigrants not only \textit{above} African and Asian Americans, for example, but also \textit{below} ‘white’ people.”\textsuperscript{545} It had only been a generation earlier that the Irish had been perceived as “nonwhite” as well and the authors also explore the process of becoming “inbetween.”\textsuperscript{546} During the time of the mass migration of southern Europeans, Barrett and Roediger contend that America was a nation “obsessed by race. For immigrant workers, the processes of ‘becoming white’ and ‘becoming American’ were intertwined at every turn.”\textsuperscript{547} The conflation of Americanization and being white combined a national dialogue of state, class, and work with a personal response of immigrants of developing their own private spheres of adaptation. Barrett and Roediger utilize specific examples of Greeks and Italians who suffered as “inbetween” immigrants. The Omaha riot in 1909 involving Greeks, the lynching of eleven Italians in Louisiana in 1891, and the Greek and Italian coal miners in Utah already discussed in this research, with other examples occurring in southern Illinois, reflect the “ambiguous positions with regard to popular perceptions of race” at the time.\textsuperscript{548}

\textsuperscript{545} Ibid., p. 4.
\textsuperscript{546} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{547} Ibid., p. 6.
\textsuperscript{548} Ibid., p. 8.
Thomas A. Guglielmo has written about Italian immigrants in Chicago in the years between World War I and II, and utilizes the term “color structure” to define a dynamic structure of “resources,” such as homes, schools, jobs, wages, and citizenship, and “schemas,” such as ideas, stories, metaphors, and assumptions, that are in constant motion and reinforce each other. Guglielmo argues that these two dynamics assist in interpreting the individual and collective experiences and responses of Italian immigrants as they learned about “whiteness, blackness, and at times, brownness, and yellowness, too.”

While a complicated process, Guglielmo attempts to discern how Chicago Italians “encountered and learned about the color structure in their everyday lives.” At a basic level, the first intersection of their lives with the construct of color was at home, through family interpretations of social interactions. He cites an example of a mother exhorting her children, especially daughters, not to associate with African Americans. Friends also informed the boundaries of acceptance in regard to “mixing” with the “others,” and nuanced the distinctness of identifying the range of color among African Americans and Mexicans. Interestingly, though, youth gangs in the 1920’s appeared to be interethnic, including Polish, Italian, Irish, Jewish, and Slavic young men, a place where the European color boundaries were easier to cross. However, Italian gangs and

550 Ibid.
African American gangs did fight on playgrounds and in the streets from the late 1920’s into the 1940’s.\textsuperscript{552}

Guglielmo asserts that a more formal education about color was gleaned in the settlement houses, which excluded African Americans. The Madonna Center and the Garibaldi Institute, both on the Near West Side, as a policy, did not serve African Americans, or Mexican Americans (especially the Madonna Center), nor did the Hull-House, the Eli Bates House and the St. Rose’s Social Center. Hull-House initially served Mexicans immigrants after World War I, but a committee of Italians came to the settlement house threatening that if Hull-House continued to serve Mexicans, the Italians would not utilize the house for wedding receptions and other festivities. While Hull-House did not capitulate to these demands, it did begin to segregate Mexican immigrant activities and, as we have mentioned, was not openly inclusive of African Americans in its regular programming.\textsuperscript{553} Other institutions, such as nursing homes, camps, children’s homes, nurseries, hospitals, and many branches of the YMCAs and YWCAs also refused to provide services to African Americans. Catholic churches segregated by race as well. These all served as overt lessons about color structure for the Italians (and implicitly for other groups as well, including the Greeks) in Chicago.\textsuperscript{554} Guglielmo notes that the city’s leisure establishments also drew color boundaries in regard to not only African Americans, but also for Mexican and Asian migrants, although there were certainly

\textsuperscript{553} Ibid., p. 154.
\textsuperscript{554} Ibid.
exceptions, such as dance halls where males and females of different racial and ethnic groups would intermingle.\textsuperscript{555}

Chicago’s mainstream newspapers also became vehicles of education about color structure. Guglielmo suggests that the three largest mainstream city papers “expressed serious doubts about Italians’ racial desirability throughout the interwar years. They were often portrayed, especially in the [Chicago] \textit{Tribune}, as innately criminalistic, as belonging to a biologically inferior wave of ‘new’ immigrants, and as being particularly barbaric in their war to ‘civilize’ Ethiopia.”\textsuperscript{556} Guglielmo does point out, however, that the press did not question whether or not Italians were “white,” and he notes that this also informed Italians about how to define themselves even as they straddled that “inbetween” site of identity.\textsuperscript{557} In response to the Chicago mainstream press, the Italian press, which comprised two newspapers, did not address the issue of whiteness. These papers were more focused upon their own Italian “race,” and even during the Italian-Ethiopian War in 1935-1936 did not report it as a race war per se, but as a war between countries, emphasizing a nation-state approach.

Guglielmo asserts, however, that both Italian newspapers were “quite disparaging of African-Americans,” although they took sides with African Americans during the race riot of 1919 and also supported William Hale Thompson for mayor in 1931 because he seemingly was treating all people equally, despite their differences in religion, nationality,

\begin{footnotes}
\item[555] Ibid., pp. 157-58.
\item[556] Ibid., p. 158. Fascist dictator Benito Mussolini’s Italian army invaded the Ethiopian (or Abyssinian) Empire under Emperor Haile Selassie in October 1935. The war lasted until May 1936 when Italy defeated and occupied Ethiopia and declared it to be part of Italian East Africa. The occupation was short-lived as combined allied forces led by the British liberated Ethiopia at the end of 1941.
\item[557] Ibid.
\end{footnotes}
race, or color. The left-wing Italian press attacked any race hatred and suggested that black and white workers join together in a common struggle for worker’s rights. These leftist papers consistently labeled Italians as “white,” which Guglielmo suggests was reflective of their worldview.

Chicago public schools also drove home supposed racial differences and perceived inequalities of African American students, which sustained the emphases on color taxonomy and reinforced the whiteness of Italians. Guglielmo also asserts that even in the work place, despite the comingling of many different ethnicities, that many foremen, bosses, superintendents, or owners simply refused to hire people of “color” or placed African Americans or Mexicans in the least desirable jobs.

Barrett and Roediger discuss the tensions between the newly arrived black working-class—part of the Great Migration of African Americans from the South during and following World War I—and the “more settled but struggling immigrant population” in the North that at times locked groups into real competition. They question, however, whether or not there was more racial tension or inter-ethnic competition. They assert that work gangs were segregated by nationality as well as race and that the workplace became a place designed by its owners to undermine unity and depress wages so as to increase competition and productivity.

Lastly, Guglielmo discusses the distinct neighborhoods in which Italians and other ethnic groups lived, and concludes that the Roosevelt Road became a “dividing line”

---

558 Ibid., p. 160.
559 Ibid., p. 161.
560 Ibid., p. 164.
561 Ibid.
between “whites” and “blacks” that taught Italians social boundaries of color through spatial barriers. All of these formal and informal ways of defining the color structure had a lasting impact and enabled and empowered Italian migrants to not only define their own color constructs and take on the privilege of whiteness within their own cultural and socio-political spheres, but also develop their own identity in relationship to other nativist groups and migrants within the entire city. Yiorgos Anagnostou describes this effort as “capitalizing on the knowledge of the system and its ‘mechanisms of power’ to reflect and deliberate on strategic positioning.”

Guglielmo’s assessment of the Italian construction of race and color through a multi-dimensional approach to adaptation leads us to consider the possibility that Greek migrants adjusted to life in Chicago or in other urban areas using many of the same means. Evangelos C. Vlachos has studied the residential patterns Greek immigrants adapted in America, and notes that chain migration initially led to regional settlement based upon specific villages in Greece. The Spartans and Arcadians were found on the East Coast and the Midwest, Utah was settled by Cretans, Dodecanesians found their way to Tarpon Springs, Florida, and towns in Pennsylvania and West Virginia. Immigrants from Leros went to Seattle. Astoria, New York held Greeks from Nisyrosand. Korinthians and Spartans concentrated in Anderson, Indiana. Vlachos suggests that these communal settlements relocated from Greece assisted in cushioning the shock of

---

leaving their native cultures and coming to the United States. Vlachos also asserts that the concentration of regional or village affiliation was due to the Greeks’ penchant for the need to be surrounded by “countrymen with whom he could use the same language, and with whom he could once again celebrate the traditional Greek holidays. An isolated life on a farm instead of usual bustling village life, would be something incomprehensible for the Greek immigrant.”

On a more macro level of kinship, Vlachos contends that formal Greek organizations and national societies, such as the American Hellenic Educational Progressive Association (AHEPA), the Greek American Progressive Association (GAPA) and church groups created a bond that connected all of the Greeks in the United States. At this time of immigration, Greeks rallied around the consistent pride in, and identification with, their Greek heritage and ethnic background. Vlachos posits that the critical unifying factors were a common language and religion. These were the core elements that allowed one to identify himself as Greek. “Being Greek” encompassed a larger ethnic identity than by region or by village, although there were “still among this larger group intra-ethnic lines of division.” (p. 132) Vlachos found that among first-generation Greeks social contacts and close friendships tended to be confined to native village groups, and choices of godparents and marriage sponsors came from that first sphere of contact. He suggests, however, that a model of diversified sub-groups based

566 Ibid.
567 Besides the sources used in the discussion above, a good overview of the formation of AHEPA, is found in Kimon A. Doukas, “The Story of Ahepa,” Athene XI, no. 2 (Summer 1950): 39–43.
568 Vlachos, Assimilation, p. 79. The following discussion is taken from this source unless otherwise noted.
upon point of origin in Greece could be subsumed by the external identity of “Greek” to the nativist populations or to other ethnic groups. (pp. 79-80)

Many Greek immigrants found it difficult to adapt to American life. Vlachos contends that many were disappointed when their dreams of making quick riches and then returning to their mother country were not realized. Greek male migrants, in particular, felt mistrusted, were relegated into tough jobs such as railroading or mining or indentured labor as shoe shine boys, and quickly realized that they were not accepted into the mainstream nativist cultures because of their appearance, language, and their different religious practices. (p. 81) Vlachos concludes that “The extreme nationalism of the Greeks, their inconsistent attitudes, their illiteracy due to their peasant background, and impatience of Americans for a fast assimilation made the American attitude toward the Greeks more inflexible.” (p. 82) Greeks, in turn, felt that the older immigrant groups resented their presence and manifested the same hostility they themselves had received when they arrived decades earlier. (p. 82) Vlachos observes that on multiple levels, Greek immigrants understood and learned the vagaries of race and acceptance. To that end, he asserts that there was a bimodal response of frustration and aggression, which accelerated the discarding of regional affiliations and promoted increased identification with the dominant American culture. Conversely, the racist ideology “increased in many a Greek the feelings of superiority derived from the glory of his ethnic past and a sense of Hellenism.” (p. 83) For some, however, this protracted their isolation within American life and perhaps propelled a return to Greece. The 1924 anti-immigration legislation solidified the immigrant’s ambivalence over whether or not to return to Greece and halted the constant infusion of Greek culture from new immigration. (pp. 83-84)
Yiorgos Anagnostou studied the Greek immigrant experience in the early years of the mass migration at the turn of the twentieth century by focusing in particular on the activities and principles of AHEPA. In his view, AHEPA served as an assimilationist response by Greek immigrants to the two-pronged impact of political/cultural nationalism and racist nationalism in play as the dominant narratives of American identity during the first two decades of the twentieth century.

AHEPA was modeled like an American institution, sanctioning the use of English as its official language, and its membership was open to anyone regardless of religious affiliation or ethnic descent.\footnote{Anagnostou, “Forget the Past,” p. 38.} “In AHEPA’s identity narrative, the term of ‘Greek’ signified a non-voluntary ascription (since it was granted at birth), ethnic nationalism, and a set of traditional cultural practices incompatible with American modernity.”\footnote{Ibid.} The new “American Hellenic” identity “stood for choice, progress, and political allegiance to America.”\footnote{Ibid.} This tacitly implied a direct connection to Classical Greece and allowed AHEPA members to reference “biological determinism” as “racial descendants” of the ancient Greeks, and thereby bestow on them the credibility that had been part of the nativist American culture before World War I. Anagnostou asserts that this connection thus equated Hellenism with Americanism and therefore “endorsed the precepts of ‘one hundred percent Americanism’ by distancing itself from working class activism as it cultivated an identity of American middle-class respectability.”\footnote{Ibid.} AHEPA appeared to consciously and publically reject the nativist notions of undesirability. He states,
“Bracketing immigrant exclusion as a national aberration became a middle-class instrument to legitimize the politics of assimilation.”  

Anagnostou cites the comments of George Horton, who served as U.S. Consul General in Athens and American Consul in Smyrna, who urged Greeks in America to “combat ‘sly anti-Hellenic propaganda by not speaking ill of another Greek in public’ and keep any differences between or among themselves to themselves.” Horton’s admonitions, according to Anagnostou, delivered the very powerful lesson that “public self-presentation matters in America.” Indeed, the *St. Louis Globe-Democrat* in 1907 perpetrated a somewhat condescending and carnival-like characterization of ethnic migrants by concluding that “if all the peoples of St. Louis wore their native costumes, the City could be fenced and admission charged.” In a Chicago *Greek Star* commentary almost three decades later, clearly the moment of being marginalized from Americanization had passed with its observation that “He who is a good Greek can be a good American and vice versa. The danger does not lie upon a man who loves two countries, but upon a man who loves none.”

Anagnostou’s concern is with which country and in which time period. Lineal progression in socio-economic status appeared to be muting the allegiance and identity of the folkways that the first-generation migrants brought with them. Anagnostou cautions that the resulting inclusion in American “whiteness,” while benefitting Greeks

573 Ibid., p. 27.  
574 Ibid., p. 39.  
575 *St. Louis Globe Democrat*, February 3, 1907, Magazine section, p. 5.  
socially and economically, demands conformity to Americanism and may distort the
historiography of exclusion and the undergirding narratives of race, class, and gender.\textsuperscript{578} He posits that AHEPA repositioned the memories of a “Greek racial continuity” and connected those memories with a dominant American narrative, negating the many ways of being Greek.\textsuperscript{579} Moreover, he conflates the concepts of race and class, suggesting that AHEPA’s urgency to be in alignment with the one hundred percent American schemata,\textsuperscript{580} not only fractured the relationships with the Greek migrant working class members, but became linked with the “propertied class” of white native Americans.\textsuperscript{581}

Citing James Barrett’s work on class conflict between corporate America and labor, Anagnostou argues that while Americanism for the working class meant improvement in wages, collective bargaining, democratization of the work place, and the opportunity for lineal progression into middle-class status, during the 1920’s these defining aspirations associated with labor’s definition of Americanism waned because the already established middle and upper classes considered them un-American.\textsuperscript{582} Thus,

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{578} Anagnostou, “Forget the Past,” p. 27.
\item \textsuperscript{579} Ibid., p. 42.
\item \textsuperscript{580} The tension between those who wanted to maintain their Greek identity, and the One Percent Americanism ideal of AHEPA, is evident in such places as an article in the Greek News in Chicago, which noted how it had sometimes attacked AHEPA, “particularly when it had as its purpose the program, ‘One hundred per cent Americanism.’” See “Editorial – The Work of AHEPA’s Convention,” Greek News, August 24, 1935.
\item \textsuperscript{581} Ibid., p. 50.
\end{itemize}
AHEPA members believed class trumped ethnicity, and that if one adhered to this conception of Americanism, one would receive his just rewards.\textsuperscript{583}

Initially, for first-generation Greek migrants, mostly males and peasants from the farms, coffee houses served as the focal points where one could transition between “home” and being in America. Here one could learn how and where there might be opportunities to make a living, but also how to deal with prejudice, bigotry, and instances of overt discrimination.\textsuperscript{584} Coffee houses were places where one could hear news from Greece, and where one could debate political, economic, and social issues, whether in Greece or America. Many immigrants had letters from their families back in Greece sent to them care of the coffee house. And the coffee house became the “safe” place for Greeks to express themselves without fear of shame or reprisal.\textsuperscript{585}

Yiorgos Anagnostou contends that the first-generation Greek migrants simply moved their “immigrant vernacular cultures” to America. These “folk practices” were comprised of layers and levels of secular and religious components, such as storytelling, songs, dances, ritual laments, Orthodox traditions and beliefs, and folk healing, primarily

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{583} Ibid., p. 52.\
\textsuperscript{584} One newspaper editorial noted that “A stranger, recently passing through our city, was dumbfounded at the number of coffee houses and customers we have....He couldn't understand that [they are] in the Greek blood....The life story of almost every Greek becomes known in these coffee houses. They discuss politics; they form associations; they discuss business problems; they argue, they quarrel and make up.” See “Coffee Houses,” Saloniki-Greek Press, April 9, 1930.\
\textsuperscript{585} At least in 1913, coffee houses were also seemingly hotbeds of illegal gambling. An editorial in the Saloniki-Greek Press warned that “gambling is the coffeehouse’s black spot.” The newspaper was not opposed to the coffeehouse, which was a good business enterprises and social center, and simply “a pleasant meeting spot,” but noted that “there are very few coffeehouses which have not been raided, and whose owners and patrons have not been taken to the police station on a gambling charge.” See “Gambling and the Coffeehouse (Editorial),” Saloniki-Greek Press, November 1, 1913.}
shared orally, and was not discriminatory by region, class, or even gender.\textsuperscript{586}

Anagnostou concludes that, “Certainly, tradition functioned ideologically to reproduce the moral order,” and social functions such as patriarchy, the occasional sanctioned use of violence, and the use of space and social movement within their own culture continued in this country.\textsuperscript{587}

George A. Kourvetaris’s study of first and second-generation Greeks in Chicago underscores this clinging to tradition by the first-generation migrants. He suggests that these Greek migrants, again mostly male, kept their language in tact as well as their music and news from Greece, which was shared in the coffeehouses.\textsuperscript{588} They were not directly or actively engaged in local Chicago politics nor did they join non-Greek affiliated social or voluntary organizations.\textsuperscript{589} Greek newspapers, however, frequently ran articles with news from Greece, particularly about the on-going power struggle between the royalist supporters of King Constantine and the democratic supporters of Prime Minister Eleutherios Venizelos in the late 1910s and 1920s. These sometimes led to

\textsuperscript{586} In his review of Marilyn Rouvelas’ book, A Guide to Greek Traditions and Customs in America, Robert Stephanopoulos recalls, “When I was growing up, if you wanted information about such things you asked your elders: your parents or grandparents, or perhaps your priest.... When it came to explaining to yourself (let alone to others) what it means to be Greek or an Orthodox Christian, there was more mystery than clarity.” Robert G. Stephanopoulos, “‘Being Greek’ in America: A Guide to Greek Traditions and Customs in America,” Hellenic Heritage 46, no. 12 (December 1993): 43. In the early years, newspapers sometimes provided this information. See for example, “What is the Religion of the Greeks?” Loxias, January 5, 1916; “Change of Names,” Greek Star, February 26, 1917; and “Greek Literature,” Saloniki-Greek Press, July 24, 1926.


\textsuperscript{589} Ibid., pp. 63-65.
vitriolic Greek coffee house discussions. However, once these single men formed family units, opened their own businesses, and became more socially and financially secure, they found it difficult to consider returning to Greece. Over time then, customs, traditions, and behaviors changed through their affiliations like AHEPA and GAPA.

For first-generation Greek women, formal and informal networks were developed as well. We have already discussed the participation of Greeks in Chicago at Hull House. As churches were built and became integral to the Greek community structure, women formed their own auxiliary groups, such as the Philoptochos Society. Stella Coumantaros writes about the Holy Trinity Church in New York, where in 1902, a small group of Greek Orthodox women met to form the first official Greek Orthodox Ladies

---

590 There are many examples of this dispute between the two factions in Chicago’s newspapers. See for example, “Eleutherios Venizelos (editorial),” Saloniki-Greek Press, August 21, 1915, and “Greeks of Chicago Greet Venizelos,” Saloniki-Greek Press, May 24, 1919. In October 1921 Venizelos visited Chicago – “Greeks Go Wild Over Venizelos and His Bride,” Chicago Tribune, October 17, 1921. Chicago’s Greek Community was generally more supportive of Venizelos than of King Constantine. See “Chicago Greeks in a Great Gathering Approve of Venizelos’ Policy,” Loxias, July 19, 1916; “The Greek Democratic League of Chicago Liberals to the Prime Minister of Great Britain and the Premier of France,” – declaring that they are opposed to the recognition of Constantine as King. “We plead with you, in the name of humanity, to prevent him from being restored to the throne which he has so dishonorably seized.” Saloniki-Greek Press, January 29, 1921; “Greeks Here Denounce King,” Chicago Daily Tribune, September 7, 1922. The editorial writer in the Greek News for September 11, 1935 asked “Are There Greek Royalists in America?” and concluded that if there are, they should “realize that Kings and institutions of Monarchy are historic events of the past, of an epoch that has gone never to return.” Venizelos himself published an open letter in Loxias, May 9, 1917, under the headline, “Venizelos Encourages the Greeks of America to Support American Democratic Ideals as Symbolized by the Star Spangled Banner.” The paper’s editor concluded, “Undoubtedly the Royalists of Chicago will feel uneasy when they read the above in the daily papers. It is never too late, fellow-Greeks, to change your minds.” Two weeks later the Loxias viciously attacked the Loyalists League, who supported the king, for being “either idiots or monstrous liars.” “Chicago Loxias Again Exposes the New Two-Faced Propaganda of Greek Loyalists,” Loxias, May 23, 1917.

591 Ibid., p. 51.
Philoptochos Society. Their organization was modeled on the Ladies Philoptochos Society of Smyrna and its intention was to assist needy Greek migrants and their families. Philoptochos translates as “friends of the poor,” and the location of this particular church in lower Manhattan was indeed near to where the newly processed, and mostly poor, immigrants arrived after being transported from Ellis Island.\textsuperscript{592} Women members of this church were from Constantinople and Asia Minor, and had fled from the Turkish assault. Many had left behind an affluent life and were some of the few truly educated Greek women among first-generation immigrants to America.\textsuperscript{593}

Coumantaros contends that most of the first generation Greek female immigrants in America were very much embedded in a private, home-focused sphere. “Their lives centered around family, home, and church. Very few women left home to work, and few learned the English language or communicated with their non-Greek neighbors.”\textsuperscript{594} The Greek Church became a place of familiarity with known traditions and rituals that created a “sense of being safe in a world that was so different from that which they had left.”\textsuperscript{595} Constance Callinicos offers her grandmother as an example of just such a life. She had lived in America 45 years when she died, after coming to America as a “picture bride” in 1922.

Yet, unless I took her hand and led her to her destination and spoke English for her…she was unable to do even the simplest marketing at the corner supermarket…None of her friends, with the exception of a few hardy vanguards of their generation, was any different than she: helpless,

\textsuperscript{593} Ibid., pp. 191-92.
\textsuperscript{594} Ibid., p. 192.
\textsuperscript{595} Ibid.
homebound and dependent….Outside of her house and her backyard, the only place my grandmother spent more than an hour’s time was the Greek Orthodox Church. Her world was confined, narrow. It was…just as it would have been had she lived her life in the village of her birth. In fact, my grandmother did live out her life in the village, even though her body was here in America. 

From her studies of the lives of many Greek immigrant women, Callinicos consistently found that, like her grandmother, first-generation Greek women were very traditional in their behavior and expectations and that these traits transferred with them to America. She considers arranged marriages as the defining sacraments that gave Greek women their identity. Writing in 1990, Callinicos, a modern American feminist, somewhat incredulously observes that in modern Greece, and even among some Greek families in America, “the arranged marriage is what we are all about. It is what Greek patriarchal culture expects of its women. It prepares us for that, it is the only role our grandparents offer their women, given their village background and peasant culture, a culture which even today in Greece is difficult to let go of in urban areas, much less the village.”

As noted above, the only acceptable public sphere in which women could participate and find common support among their own cohort was the service world of the Greek Orthodox Church. Before the Philoptochos Society formalized, ad hoc groups of Greek women had begun meeting in 1894 in New York to work in the churches baking the bread for the Liturgy, assisting the priest with specific family issues, and maintaining the church holidays with decorations and teaching Sunday school. As the Philoptochos

597 Callinicos, American Aphrodite, p. 28.
598 Ibid., pp. 27-28.
Society grew in New York, it evolved into a national society in 1931, and most Greek Orthodox Churches had and still have chapters whose function is to serve those in need. Fundraising efforts are still pretty traditional and concentrated within the Greek community itself, although “outsiders” are invited to festivals or bazaars. During World War II, the Philoptochos societies in America assisted soldiers in Greece, through the purchase of clothing and food, even an ambulance, as an expression of support for their own. In more recent times, the organization has raised millions of dollars to support the Hellenic College, the Holy Cross School of Theology in Brookline, Massachusetts. Beginning in the 1970’s and up to the present, the Philoptochos Society has broadened its scope internationally with support of Orthodox Mission work and contributing to the United Nation’s efforts on ending discrimination and religious intolerance for women and children.

In Chicago, the life of Stella Christoulakis Petrakis, the wife of a Greek priest (called Presbytera in Greek) also illustrates the traditional spheres of “work” in which women could engage publically. Born in 1888 in Chania, on the island of Crete, Petrakis attended a teaching school and, while still a student, met and married at the age of seventeen the Reverend Mark E. Petrakis. In total, she bore six children; four in Greece and two in the United States. The family migrated to America in 1916 where they served parishes in Utah, Georgia and St. Louis before going to Chicago. In Chicago

600 Ibid., pp. 195-196.
Presbytera Petrakis was a whirlwind of activity, organizing the Amalthia Chapter of Cretan Women. In the 1930’s she served on the Board of Directors of the United Greek Charities of Chicago, helping needy families during the Great Depression. She also galvanized other associations to assist in the effort, such as the Greek Churches, AHEPA, GAPA, the Masonic Lodges, Young Ladies Hellenic Societies, athletic clubs, and other organizations. Throughout her life, she maintained a quiet and humble demeanor that was motivational and garnered her international and national recognition. Presbytera Petrakis became an exemplary model to first-generation Greek women without compromising her traditional values.

As we summarize the discussion on resistance and response, we cannot ignore the fact that approximately fifty percent of Greeks returned to their mother country. As Vlachos noted, for many immigrants the journey to America had not resulted in the quick appropriation of riches or in being accepted. Theodore Saloutos’s revealing study of repatriated Greeks, *They Remember America: The Story of the Repatriated Greek-Americans*, discusses multiple catalysts for their return to Greece. Perhaps they did not make as much money as they thought they would: some railroad workers would work three days and be laid off for ten. Middlemen exploited new Greek entrepreneurs and

---

602 Thomopoulos and Greek Women’s University Club (Ill.), Images of America (Charleston, SC: Arcadia, 2000): p. 20.
603 Ibid., p. 21.
604 From the perspective of 1930, the editor of the *Saloniki-Greek Press* painted a different picture: “Of the thousands upon thousands of Greeks who came to America with a dream of acquiring some of the wealth of this great country and returning to their native town or village and living a peaceful life, sun-bathing in beautiful and ever-green Greece, very, very, few ever returned to realize the dream of their youth. The rest of the hundreds of thousands, remain here absorbed by the American environment.” See “Realization of His Dream,” *Saloniki-Greek Press*, February 8, 1930.
took all their money. The weather was disagreeable. Family obligations in Greece pulled them back. Or, perhaps, the immigrants just never really felt comfortable in America and found it easier to return home even if to do so created economic problems for themselves and their families in Greece.  

Saloutos reported that in 1909, Lambros Coromilas, the Greek Minister to the United States, was accused of describing America as a “living hell,” and a place where Greeks were dying of hunger, departing for countries such as Chile, and depending on Italians for assistance. The *Atlantis*, a Greek newspaper published in New York, charged that Coromilas had failed to relate the success stories of thousands of Greek immigrants who were not only doing well, but were continuing to “honor their birthplace.” George Horton, the United States Consul-General in Athens responded by underscoring the thriving conditions of the many migrant communities he had visited and observed. Thus, the tension between publically admitting that America was perhaps not the land of opportunity and the public lauding of its offerings is another narrative that intersects race, ethnicity, social class, the role of the “state” and identity, and that adds to the richness of the immigrant experience.

---


606 Somewhat similar allegations were made in 1906 in “newspapers in the Greek capital and in other European countries,” which painted “the condition of the unskilled worker in America as ‘intolerable slavery.’” The editor of the *Greek Star* took exception to this characterization and addressed particularly the living and working conditions of Greek unskilled laborers and the opportunities opened to them in America. He concluded that “The American unskilled laborer of today is therefore not in a state of ‘intolerable slavery,...but he is a king compared with the unskilled laborer of any other country.” See “The Inaccuracies of the European Press, the Unskilled Laborer in America is not a slave,” *Greek Star*, March 2, 1906.

607 Saloutos, *They Remember America*, p. 34.

608 Ibid.
Angelyn Balodimas-Bartolomei has analyzed and summarized six intergenerational studies that looked at affinity to, and identity with, “being Greek.” She concludes that all the studies found that first-generation Greeks “strongly identified with and perpetuated their ethno-religious identity while adapting to American culture.” Contantinou and Harvey’s study indicated a decrease in the self-identification of ethnicity. By the third generation, Greek-Americans supported broad aspects of ethnic values in relationship to a wider American culture, but were personally searching for placement within their own group. Although generally by the second generation, Greek language loss became more prevalent, the studies suggested that Greek language use was a strong thread that would keep Greek identity stronger if utilized. Participation in the Orthodox faith was also more important than ethnic identity, particularly among second-generation Greeks. The author concludes that more comparative studies should be conducted to measure current views on ethnic identity, and attachment to Greek ethnicity, among third, and what is termed “third-plus” generations Greek Americans. One study, a random sampling conducted in 2008 and 2009 among 181 Greek Americans...

611 Ibid., pp. 74-75.
612 Ibid., p. 75.
demonstrated a generational decrease between second and third generations in Greek cultural, ethnic, and religious identity. If a third or third-plus generation individual felt part of a Greek community, they were more likely to participate in cultural or religious activities. The survey indicated, however, a notable decline among this cohort group in being interested in Greek cultural pursuits.\textsuperscript{613} The third generation is proud of its Greek heritage but not preoccupied with the aspect of identity. This group does not believe that it is important for Greek Americans to be a closed knit community in order to maintain their culture. However, among all of the generations, the importance of the role of family as the keeper of Greek culture is high.\textsuperscript{614} If individuals attend Greek Church, their participation in the celebration of Greek Orthodox holidays is important, although church attendance is higher among second generation Greeks than third or third-plus generations. Inter-marriage with non-Greek Orthodox members is not much of an issue among the third generation; seventy percent of the second generation surveyed favored marrying a Greek.\textsuperscript{615} The third generation also does not favor Greek Americans speaking Greek among themselves, nor do they feel a need to send their children to Greek School. Language has diminished as the thread that binds Greek culture together.\textsuperscript{616}

Yiota Papadopoulos, in his study of first and second-generation Greeks, found that if these Greeks continued to hold fast to their native language, they would be less likely to relinquish Greek cultural values, and that maintaining the Greek language also influenced their perception of prejudice. Perhaps not surprisingly, Greeks “who spoke English more than they spoke Greek tended to be more oriented to U.S. culture and to

\textsuperscript{613} Ibid., p. 91.
\textsuperscript{614} Ibid., p. 93.
\textsuperscript{615} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{616} Ibid., p. 94.
experience less prejudice.” Similarly, Sodowsky and Plake, in their 1991 study, demonstrated that Greek migrants who spoke more English tended to be more acclimated to U.S. culture and less likely to experience as much overt prejudice as their compatriots who retained their language use as normative. Papadoupoulos concluded that in time Greek migrants have the potential to “pass” as native Americans due to their ability to change their name, lose an accent, gain formal education, and become economically successful. Perhaps that was the primary strategy for some immigrants.

There were many strategies for forming identities and fighting prejudice and bigotry for the first generation of Greek immigrants who came to America at the end of the nineteenth century and into the twentieth. Yiorgos Anagnostu argues that Greek migrant history and identity is integral to the discourse of the Greek diaspora. The first generation’s challenge was to maintain their Greek culture and also adapt to the American way of life and this created a tension of identity. Anagnostu maintains that this tension was “constructed at the intersection of transnational and national discourses.” The layers of various constituencies within this construct of transnational and national discourses may negotiate an individual and/or a collective response with the host society,

---

620 Anagnostou, “Forget the Past,” p. 47.
challenging the notion of a unified ethnic memory or history. Let us now turn to the central Illinois narrative of the Greek immigrants and explore that history.

---

621 Ibid., p. 52.
CHAPTER 6 – Greek Immigrants and Confectioneries in Central Illinois

The Midwest had been attractive to residents from New England and the Mid-Atlantic states since the 1840’s, when thousands of families began to head “west.” Eastern cities were becoming overcrowded, property prices were soaring, and farmland was scarce and becoming depleted. Consequently, land sales in Illinois benefitted. By the mid-1830’s, the state had added seven land offices in Chicago, Galena, Quincy, Springfield, Danville, Vandalia, and Palestine, and speculators and farmers alike had purchased over over three million acres of land.\(^1\)

These early “Yankee” settlers were followed by an influx of Germans and Irish. The German population in Illinois grew from 38,000 in 1850 to 131,000 by 1860. Notable German settlements developed in Quincy, Alton, Peoria, Springfield, Galena, and Peru.\(^2\) Distinct German Catholic groups settled in the counties of Effingham, St. Clair, Madison and Clinton; Lutheran Germans settled in Madison and Sangamon counties.\(^3\) The Irish, nearly all Catholic, numbered 87,600 by 1860 with a sizeable concentration in Chicago.\(^4\) The rapid growth of rail and water transportation provided quick and easy access to most sections of the state.

Foreign-born populations, still predominately Germans and Irish, but augmented by growing numbers of immigrants from Sweden, Great Britain, and Bohemia, continued

\(^{2}\) Ibid., p. 62.
to flow into the state through the remainder of the century. “About three-fourths of the foreign-born lived in Illinois’s cities, and most of them settled in Chicago. In 1870 more than half of the city’s residents were foreign-born; in 1890 first-and second-generation immigrants constituted more than three-fourths of the population.”

In the late 1800s and early 1900s new waves of immigrants began arriving in America, particularly from Asia and eastern and southern Europe. The European immigrants included many from Russia (particularly Jews), Poland, other parts of Eastern Europe, Italy, and Greece. Greeks in Illinois increased from only a handful in 1870 to 16,465, or 1.4% of the total foreign-born, by 1920. Those aged twenty-one and older numbered 15,278; of these, approximately four thousand, or 24.8% were naturalized citizens. Most of these Greek immigrants to America first passed through Ellis Island in New York. Many then headed west, generally to Chicago, less often to St. Louis. Nearly all the Greek immigrants who eventually settled in central Illinois transited first through one of these two cities. Some then headed farther west to work on the railroads for a handful of years, before returning to Illinois. They used the money they had earned and saved to marry, start a family, and start a business.

From the settlement patterns emerging from my research, Chicago Greek immigrants moved “downstate” following the railroad lines or main highways south. They generally had three options when deciding where to settle. First, they could stop in a town where there was already an established Greek business and go to work for these Greeks. Second, they could go to a town where they had relatives and join them in their

---

5 Ibid., pp. 130-31.
business. Third, they could settle in a town where there were no Greeks and set up their own business. Some Greeks travelled directly from New York to St. Louis (or via Chicago), and then spread out from that city to southern, central and northern Illinois in the same manner and for the same reasons.

Kristen Hoganson, in her study of the beef producers of Champaign County, Illinois, utilizes local history to study these paths of migration in order to better understand the “wider sets of relationships” in chain scholarship and to explore ways in which particular threads weave together to form “larger relational webs.”\(^7\) I have researched more than seventy significant Greek immigrants, predominantly confectioners, in approximately forty towns and small cities across central Illinois, including Champaign/Urbana, Decatur, Danville, and Springfield during the time period from around 1880 through the 1920’s. The micro-history of one of these, my grandfather, Gus, or Constantine, Flesor, will serve as the primary case history for the Greek immigration narrative in central Illinois to demonstrate the larger relational webs that developed among Greek immigrants. My grandfather’s story contains elements of all the stories of these Greek pioneers and their journeys.

In April 2010 Mr. Fred Ross, a Tuscola, Illinois native, recalled for me his favorite Flesor’s Kandy\(^8\) Kitchen memory:


\(^8\) Gus, and other Greek confectioners, went back and forth between spelling candy with a K or with a C. Although one might assume they switched to a C following their experiences in the mid-1920s with the Ku Klux Klan, there is no clear evidence to support this. One still finds Greek Kandy Kitchens after the 1920s. However it was spelled, this was by far the most popular name for a Greek confectionery, and the
In February 1962, I had a Gusburger on my mind on a train ride all the way from San Diego, California to Tuscola. My family were members of the Presbyterian Church in Tuscola and friends with Bill and Helen Skinner. Bill was married to Helen, the daughter of Gus Flesor. Bill was also influential in my decision to join the Navy in 1959. While frequently drinking “green rivers” and visiting with Bill about his experience in the US Navy in WWII, I knew I wanted to serve my country. I enlisted. (As a naval reserve, I was on active duty followed by reserve meeting in Decatur.) When I had completed my active duty, I returned to Tuscola. (In those years, the passenger trains from Chicago to New Orleans stopped in Tuscola.) I was home! I picked up my seabag, (which is still in our attic), and got off the train. Even before I called my folks, Virgil and Mary Ross, I walked from the depot to the Kandy Kitchen and ordered a Gusburger. Immediately Bill said, “It’s on me!” He soon served up two Gusburgers and two green rivers.”

The Kandy Kitchen was that downtown corner touchstone for Fred Ross and so many others over its span of seventy-plus years in business. As we shall see, across central Illinois nearly every town of any size had at least one or more Greek confectionery and soda fountain. Many small town citizens in this region continue to hold poignant and lasting memories of these Greek candy stores. Let us begin with Gus Flesor’s Kandy Kitchen.

Constantine “Gus” Flesor was born in 1879. He left his native village of Pigadakia, Greece while still a young man, and immigrated to New York in 1900. By

---

9 My grandfather did not serve lunch except for some hamburgers that he grilled each day and smothered with his own relish. The locals called these “Gusburgers,” and we still serve them today.
10 A lemon-lime soda fountain drink.
11 Fred Ross to Ann Beck, private correspondence, April 17, 2010.
12 Pigadakia is spelled various ways, including Pagadakia and Pegadakia. Pigadakia is in the Peloponnese and should not be confused with the Pigadakia on the island of Zakynthos in the Aegean Sea. It is about 20 to 25 miles nearly due south of Tripoli just to the east off the E961 highway. The E961 today connects Tripoli and Sparta.
1901, via Chicago, he was in Tuscola, Illinois, making him one of the earliest Greeks to settle in central Illinois. My uncle, George, later related that his father, Gus, grew up on a farm and was given $100 for his passage to America. At the time of his migration, he left behind two brothers and a sister. He claimed to have sailed to first to Marseilles, France and then on to Ellis Island with 2500 other immigrants. When I was young, my grandfather told me that his family was very poor and there was not enough income to support everyone; in addition, there was always the concern of conscription into the Greek army. Both of these reasons served as catalysts for many males in his village to immigrate. After arriving in Chicago, it is said, my grandfather travelled to Champaign where he worked for a local confectionery there. He then took the train south to Tuscola, Illinois, where he worked in the confectionery store belonging to George D. Vaky and Peter G. Vriner. This was the Candy Kitchen at the corner of Main and Sale Streets, the same location as our current store.

Peter G. Vriner and my grandfather were both from Pigadakia, in the Peloponnese region in Greece, and were possibly first cousins. My grandfather's mother's maiden name was Viola Vriner, so she could have been Peter's sister or aunt. Their journeys to central Illinois illustrate the chain migration process operating at the time: both my grandfather and Mr. Vriner travelled from Pigadakia, Greece to Ellis Island to Chicago to

---

14 Vaky and Vriner lived in Champaign but owned stores in both Champaign and Tuscola. See George D. Vaky, 1900 United States Federal Census, Champaign Ward 3, Champaign, Illinois. Roll 240; page 9A; Enumeration District 0006; and Peter G. Vriner, 1900 United States Federal Census, Champaign Ward 3, Champaign, Illinois. Roll 240; Page 9A; Enumeration District 0006.
15 The only mention I have ever found of this connection is in my great-uncle Nick’s obituary where it says he (and therefore Gus) “was a son of George and Viola Vriner Flesor.” See “Attack is Fatal to Nick Flesor at Age of 72,” Tuscola Journal, June 30, 1955, p. 5.
Champaign-Urbana, and finally, to Tuscola. Mr. Vaky and Mr. Vriner originally came to Champaign in the late 1890’s. Mr. Vriner arrived first and was listed in the 1900 Champaign/Urbana City Directory as a proprietor of a confectionary and a fruit store, the Champaign Candy Company. Mr. Vaky is also listed as working there as Mr. Vriner’s clerk. Then, in the 1904 and 1906 Champaign/Urbana city directories, the two men are listed as partners.

According to George Vaky’s son, James, George Vaky’s mother had become a widow with two sons, and since George’s friends were leaving their Greek village of Paradiso for America, George thought he should leave as well and make some money for his mother. His mother made him a suit and George departed. He came to America from the Sparta region with his younger brother at the age of 15 and migrated to Chicago, where he sold bananas in a pushcart. George Vaky wanted to improve his chances of success and decided to go to Boston and learn the confectionery trade. In Boston, he worked for a few years and learned to make candy at a professional confectionery school. He heard from some Greek friends that there was an opportunity in the “downstate” region of Illinois, so he went to Champaign, where he met Peter Vriner, who had

---

16 1900 Champaign/Urbana City Directory (Bloomington, IL: Pantagraph Printing and Stationery Co, 1900): 147.
19 I have not been able to locate a village with this name in the Sparta region.
established his own business around 1898. Once established in Champaign, George sent his mother fifty dollars per month for the rest of her life, but he never returned to Greece.

Mr. Vaky eventually left Vriner’s and began his own business in Champaign, but he and Peter Vriner also started another confectionery in Tuscola, called the Tuscola Kandy Kitchen.

It was the Pigadakia connection between my grandfather and Mr. Vriner that brought Gus Flesor to Tuscola in 1901. According to my father, Paul, my grandfather worked at the store for a couple of years and then left in 1902 to work in the west on the railroads in order to save enough money to purchase the business for himself. He received a letter from Mr. Vaky in 1904, which said that if he wanted the business, Vaky and Vriner would sell it to him for $500. My grandfather earned $1.10 per day working on the railroad and had saved sufficient funds to make the purchase. Gus returned to Tuscola and the Kandy Kitchen became his.

Eventually Gus sponsored his brother, Nick, who arrived in Tuscola in 1908, and his other brother, Tom, in 1912. Nick later opened his own candy and camera shop, “Nick’s,” across the street from Gus’ store in 1945. Their sister, Viola (“Milia”),

---

20 Mr. Vaky’s obituary says that he came to Champaign/Urbana in 1898. “George D. Vaky, Ill Over Year, Dies at 71,” Champaign/Urbana News-Gazette, January 31, 1944, p. 3.
22 “Nick’s Candy in Photo Business,” Tuscola Journal, August 15, 1957, p. 26. Nick also sold Kodak and other camera brands as well as camera supplies in his store. Although chocolates and cameras may seem a strange combination, many of the Greek candy stores also sold cigars, and the Govits brothers in Mt. Carmel, Illinois sold PASCO Phonograph players and accompanying records and would “deliver... to
remained in Greece. My grandfather also maintained his working relationship with the Vriner clan. George P. Vriner, Peter G. Vriner’s son, recorded on his WWI draft registration, that he was employed in 1918 by Gus Flesor & Co. in Tuscola. The connections between and among the Flesors, Vriners, and Vakys continued for many years.

In 2010 I interviewed Christine Katris Kockler whose narrative links my grandfather’s family to Greece, and reveals another strand of Flesor immigration to Chicago. Christine is the granddaughter of my grandfather’s sister, Viola, who remained in Greece. Viola married a priest in Greece, Father Soteras, and they had seven children. Two of the daughters, Maria and Paula, and a son, Nick, came to America. Maria Soteras immigrated to America and married Christ Katris in Chicago; this was an arranged marriage. Christ Katris owned a grocery store, which he bought after first working on the railroad to make money.

During the Depression, Chris Katris’ grocery was located in the Swedish neighborhood on Clark and Berwyn Streets. The Katris family lived in the back of the

---

23 In late 1954, early 1955, Gus and his brothers were reunited with their sister, Viola. For Gus it was the first time he had seen her since 1901. She came to visit her children and her brother Tom in Chicago, and came down to reunite with her other two brothers, Gus and Nick, in Tuscola. “Reunion Occurs Here After Over 53 Years,” Tuscola Journal, January 6, 1955, p. 1. The article said that all three of her sons in Greece were in education, and that one of the sons had received a special award from the Greek government to study American teaching methods in the United States for six months.

24 U.S. World War I Draft Registration, Douglas Co. Local Board, Tuscola, IL, Sept. 12, 1918.


26 In the Greek Orthodox Church, priests may marry.
store. There were three children in the family. Christine was the oldest, joined by a sister, Betty, and a brother, Nick. Her father eventually became a milk distributor until his retirement. Christine related that her mother, Maria, immigrated from Greece with another woman, Agnes Tzanopoulos, who came to Tuscola and married my grandfather’s brother, Nick Flesor, thus becoming my great-aunt. Christine also told me that she herself did not marry a Greek man, causing a cultural rift in the family. As a result, her mother, Maria, did not speak to her for seven years, until Christine had her first child.

The Flesors with one “s” are also second cousins to the Flessors with two “ss’s,” who originated in Alipoheri, a village outside of Tripoli near my grandfather’s village of Pigadakia. The story begins with Helen and Jim Papageorge, brother and sister, who immigrated to Chicago in the early 1900s. Jim Papageorge came first, by himself, in 1904 at the age of fifteen. His mother had mortgaged her property in the village for ten thousand drachmas and sent her son to America. He later paid her back. When Jim

27 It is not known if Maria and Agnes were related. The 1930 Federal Census gives Agnes’ name as “Argro.” See 1930 United States Census, Tuscola, Douglas, Illinois; Roll 510; Page 19A; Enumeration District: 0017. The 1940 Federal Census gives her name as “Argero.” See 1940 United States Census, Tuscola, Douglas, Illinois; Roll T627_795; Page: 7A; Enumeration District: 21-17. Sometime in the mid-1920s Nick, Agnes, and their twin children, George and Mary, went back to Greece, returning to New York on November 7, 1928 on the ship, Presidente [sic] Wilson. On the ship’s manifest, her name is given as Argero, her birthplace as Agios Vasilios, a small town to the east of Tripoli, and her father’s name as Nick Tzanopoulos. Nick and the children are American citizens at this point but Agnes is not. See “List or Manifest of Alien Passengers for the United States,” Port of New York, on the S.S. Presidente Wilson, sailing from Patras, arriving November 7, 1928. New York, Passenger Lists, 1820-1957, Roll T715, 4000-5000, Roll 4379. Nick and Agnes are buried in the Tuscola Township Cemetery. On her gravestone her name is engraved as Agnes P. Flesor (June 30, 1900-May 6, 1977). Nick G. Flesor was born February 25, 1880 and died June 26, 1955.

arrived in Chicago, he was employed in the ice cream business. Jim never married, but brought his nephews into the ice cream and confectionery business. In 1920, he bought a building on 92nd Street and Commercial and named his establishment Gayety Candies.

Helen Papageorge immigrated to Chicago in 1916 with some cousins. She married Tom Flessor in 1920, when she was sixteen. This marriage was for love, not an arranged marriage. Tom and his brother George were second cousins of my grandfather. The two left their brother, John Flessor, back in Pigadakia. John never immigrated to America, but he did marry a woman named Georgia, the sister of my great-aunt Agnes.29 Tom’s brother George Flessor was the godfather to my Aunt Viola, my father’s oldest sister, and to my Uncle George, my father’s older brother. The Chicago-Tuscola connection therefore stayed strong.

Helen and Tom Flessor had four children: Lee, Nick, Bea, and Art. Lee Flessor worked with his uncle, Jim Papageorge, in the confectionery business and eventually took it over himself. Gayety’s moved from downtown Chicago, after the steel mills closed, to Torrence Avenue where the rent was more reasonable. Lee did well, expanding his business to three candy and ice cream stores. He met his wife, Angie Chiou, at the Greek Church and they had three children; son Jim is now the third generation to own and operate Gayety’s Candies in Lansing, Illinois. Lee and his brother Nick visited my grandfather upon occasion and the two brothers, in their 80s, came down to Tuscola in 2009 to wish us well in the reopening of my grandfather’s store. They are very proud men and proud of the Flesor/Flessor heritage.

29 Agnes’ husband, my great-uncle Nick, was seemingly thus her distant cousin.
In early 1914 my grandfather spread the word to the wider Greek community that, as he had established his confectionery and soda fountain business, and had also purchased a house,\textsuperscript{30} he was looking for a wife. In June 1914, he married seventeen-year-old Sophia Tingus in an arranged marriage. They were married in Danville, where she was then living with relatives. Sophia was born in Boston to Greek immigrant parents and was the eldest of five children—four daughters and one son. In the 1910 census Sophia’s mother, Dimitra, is listed as a housewife and her father, James, as a molder in a Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania foundry.\textsuperscript{31} According to family history, my grandmother’s family moved frequently. Considering that my grandmother’s family had many daughters, I am sure they were happy to have one leave the nest and sad that she would not be able to assist her mother with her younger siblings.

Unfortunately, Sophia died in 1927, not long after the birth of her eighth child, named Sophie. All of her childbirths had been in the home, but she had been transferred to the hospital for the last birth because of complications. At this time, Sophia’s mother was in Chicago and my grandfather took baby Sophie to Dimitra in Chicago for her to care for the baby that first year. The Tuscola newspaper reported that Sophia Flesor was “a woman who had friends everywhere, in spite of the fact that she was essentially a home woman and spent most of her time there with her housework and children, to whom she was passionately devoted.” As the news of her death became known, “there was

\textsuperscript{30} “Ten Years Ago in 1914,” Tuscola Journal, June 19, 1924, p. 2. “Gus Flesor has purchased the residence property on North Main Street from Fred Overstreet.”

sadness all over the city.” Her funeral services were held at home and with the minister from the Presbyterian Church in Tuscola, not a Greek priest. “The spacious home was filled with friends of the family and the many there attested to the high regard in which she had been held by people who had known her during her residence in Tuscola.”

According to my cousin, Esther Skinner Boyer, my grandfather did not allow his children to talk much about their mother after she died, and my grandfather never remarried.

Five living children remained: Viola, George, Paul (my father), Helen, and baby Sophie.

We have discussed the confectionery niche that Greeks filled in Chicago, and I always wondered who taught my grandfather how to make candy since he grew up on a farm in Pigadakia. George Vaky was the teacher and mentor to several Greeks in the area, starting with the Vriners and my grandfather. George Vaky’s son, James, said his father was born in Sparta and migrated to America with a younger brother. He had been told that America had streets paved with gold and that is why he took his brother and

32 “Sad Death. Mrs. Gus Flesor Passes Away at Hospital After a Brief Illness,” The Tuscola Review, Tuesday, February 8, 1927, p.1.
35 As she was his oldest daughter, my grandfather gave my Aunt Viola a huge wedding, for which the Tuscola Review devoted two and a half columns. The priest from the Decatur Greek Orthodox Church came to Tuscola to officiate at the wedding. The article stated that “the bride is one of Tuscola’s most popular and attractive young women,” and was “radiantly lovely.” Guests included Mr. and Mrs. George Vaky and son, Russell, of Champaign, Mr. and Mrs. John Pelofas and daughter, Bessie, of Urbana, and Mary Katris of Chicago, my grandfather’s niece, the daughter of his sister Viola who had remained in Greece. “Viola Flesor and Chris Voltes Wed Sunday in Presbyterian Church,” Tuscola Review, October 29, 1942, p. 6.
joined his friends not only for the great adventure but to earn money to send to his
widowed mother. James says that when his father was 14 he went to Boston and
remained there for several years while he worked and attended a school of candy making.
We know that Mr. Vaky spent some time in Chicago, but whether this was before or after
his time in Boston is not clear. At any rate, after he learned the candy business George
Vaky heard that there was an opportunity to start one’s own business in the Midwest and
decided to try out Champaign/Urbana for one year. George joined the Vriners in 1898
and eventually became a manager. Then he heard of an excellent location at the corner of
Main, Neil, and Church streets and established his own confectionery, which he managed
for 49 years. George met and married a German-American woman in Tuscola while
running the Tuscola Candy Kitchen that he established there.

In an interview I conducted with James Vaky in 2011, a year before he died, he
shared that indeed his father had taught my grandfather how to make candy and operate a
business. They employed Mr. Rigby’s confectionery book as their guide, and there
are still their notations in our copy passed down from my grandfather that we use today
for our own candy manufacturing. From my research and interviews, it is clear that
George Vaky taught many if not all of the central Illinois Greek confectioners how to
make candy and set up their businesses. Besides my grandfather, there was Mike Poulis
in Arcola, for example. According to James Vaky, after one early visit to assess his latest
batch, Mr. Vaky judged Mike’s candy as similar to “mudballs” and helped him improve
his technique. Mr. Vaky assisted other Champaign/Urbana Greeks as well as those

38 Will O. Rigby and Fred Rigby, Rigby’s Reliable Candy Teacher: With Complete and
Modern Soda, Ice Cream and Sherbet Sections . . . , 13th ed. (Topeka, KS: Rigby
setting up shop in Rantoul, Decatur and Danville. James recalled that on Sunday afternoons his father would drive to visit his Greek protégées in Tuscola, Danville, Decatur, and Springfield to give them encouragement and to make a “Greek” connection since some were far afield from their own compatriots.

With Mr. Vaky’s help, my grandfather, at first on his own and then with his two brothers, worked hard to make his business a success. According to my father, in 1910 or 1912, grandfather purchased the Union Building on the corner of Main and Sale Streets in downtown Tuscola, where his store was (and is still) located. The price was $25,000 but $1200 was deducted from that because the basement had to be dug out. This is important because the Flesors manufactured candy in this basement until the 1970’s, which seems to have been a fairly usual practice among Greek candy makers. My father remembers freight coming on the railroad and being delivered to the store, including big barrels of Coca Cola syrup. He shared that in Tuscola in the first decade of the 1900’s there was a small downtown that included the Kandy Kitchen, Mr. Cox’s hardware store, a men’s clothing store, the movie theater and other retail shops. He recalled that as a boy, Tuscola, being a farm community, was excitingly active on Saturday night. Farmers with their families would come into town with their produce to barter with others for theirs. They would park their cars or trucks, have dinner, take in a movie and enjoy an ice cream soda on the corner of Main and Sale.  

In the small towns outside of Champaign/Urbana, Decatur, Danville, and Springfield, there were no Greek communities of any number. Often, as was the case with the Flesors, there was but one or two Greeks, generally male, in town, and unless

---

they married and had families, they usually remained foreigners and outsiders. My
grandfather and his brothers, however, worked hard to integrate themselves into the
community, given the time constraints imposed by operating a small business. They all
married and had children. My grandfather and Nick remained in Tuscola, while Tom
traveled north to Elmhurst, IL after 1930. My uncle Nick served in the army in World
War I. All of the Flesor brothers were in the store seven days a week and demonstrated
what would be viewed as a great Protestant work ethic. One strategy for becoming a
respected business community member was to join the Masonic Lodge. My grandfather
was asked to join the Masons and received his first Masonic degree in 1909. He utilized
his tutoring in learning the degrees to improve his English. His brother, Tom also joined
the Masonic Lodge in 1918. This attempt to extend themselves into the public realm of
community was planned; only Greek was spoken at home and among the brothers and
family at the store. My father always said that he did not speak English until he went to
public school at the age of five.

As discussed earlier in this study, the Masonic Lodge was an integral part of life
among the nativist populations in the Midwest, and the Tuscola Lodge was an important

---

40 On his draft registration card he was listed as “Oriental (Asian).” See United States,
World War I Draft Registration Cards, 1917-1918. Registration State: Illinois;
Registration County: Douglas, Roll: 161318.
41 “History of the Tuscola, Illinois Masonic Lodge,” Lodge No. 32.” This is a brief,
typed, history written by Frank Lincoln, a Tuscola citizen and member of the lodge.
Mr. Lincoln gave a copy given to me, along with copies of some records of my
grandfather’s membership in the lodge.
42 Thus illustrating the tension discussed in chapter 5 between the “home” Greeks
maintaining some aspects of the Greek culture in their homes and among
themselves, and the “public” Greeks assimilating into American society and culture.
part of my Greek immigrant grandfather’s life as well.\textsuperscript{43} The Lodge had first been convened in Tuscola on March 5, 1860.\textsuperscript{44} (p. 1) The Tuscola Lodge was organized “at a time when the surrounding area was open territory and brethren felt the need of banding together, not only for survival but for social reasons as well.” (p. 9) The Lodge participated in the ceremonial cornerstone laying of numerous churches and civic buildings in Tuscola, such as the First Christian and First Presbyterian churches, and the Tuscola Public Library. (p. 12) One of their more famous members was Joseph G. “Uncle Joe” Cannon, who entered politics as Douglas County’s first state’s attorney. He was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives in 1873, and, with the exception of two terms, served in Congress for fifty years, including eight years as Speaker of the House from 1903-1911. (p. 3)

\textsuperscript{43} From my research it is clear that Greeks were active in Masonic Lodges across the state, including in Chicago. There is, of course, a long history of Freemasonry in Greece, not to mention the references to Ancient Greece in Freemasonry symbolism. This relationship between Greeks and Freemasonry has received little attention, however, from scholars. The Greek organization AHEPA was organized along Masonic lines, but I have no evidence that my grandfather or great uncles belonged to AHEPA, GAPA, or any other similar Greek organization. The Masons served as the means by which they were Americanized, and learned English. Interestingly too, one of the largest single groups from which the Ku Klux Klan drew its members was the Masons. Indeed, a Klan lecturer in 1922 “boasted that 75 percent of Klansmen were recruited from the Masons.” Thomas R. Pegram, \textit{One Hundred Percent American: The Rebirth and Decline of the Ku Klux Klan in the 1920s} (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2011): 8. In his study of the Klan in the West, Shawn Lay observes that “Relatively little is known about the precise manner in which these professional [Klan] organizers went about setting up fledgling klaverns,” and suggests that “evidently the majority of initial contacts took place in fraternal lodges, particularly those of the various Masonic orders.” Shawn Lay, ed., \textit{The Invisible Empire in the West: Toward a New Historical Appraisal of the Ku Klux Klan of the 1920s} (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2004): 7.

\textsuperscript{44} Unless otherwise noted the following information is taken from Phil White, \textit{100 Years of Masonry in Tuscola, Illinois: 1860-1960}; publication of Tuscola Lodge No. 332, Ancient Free and Accepted Masons, April 3, 1960.
The Tuscola Masonic Lodge, after its founding, had been located in a few different buildings in the downtown area. Its second location was in a building that was part of what was called the Commercial Block. “The ground floor was occupied by five business houses, including the banking firm. The second floor contained a theatre seating 800 people and its stage was fitted with curtains, backdrop and scenery in the latest mode of the day.” (p. 6) This new hall was dedicated in 1870, but the last meeting held there was on March 6, 1873, when on March 11, a fire was started by exploding gun powder in a grocery store on the west end of Sale Street. “A total of 30 buildings at the west end of Sale Street and Central Avenue were destroyed, including the Commercial Block. The loss was estimated at $150,000.” (p. 7) The Mason’s last move came in 1937 when it relocated to its building at 107 N. Main Street, which my grandfather purchased from the Knights of Pythias lodge. “In turn, Mr. Flesor gave the second story half of the building to the lodge, free of conditions or obligations, for as long as it is needed for Masonic purposes.” (p. 7). For my grandfather and uncle, as “foreigners,” to have been accepted as members in the Masonic Lodge meant acceptance into the community. For that, and for helping him to learn English, my grandfather bought them a building as a way to show his thanks.

My grandfather was self-taught, with only a few years of formal education, and managed to learn about America from various sources throughout his life. His knowledge was on full display one summer Sunday morning in 1950 when a young reporter from Chicago, Norma Lee Browning, from the Chicago Daily Tribune was “wandering
through" central Illinois and stumbled into the Tuscola Kandy Kitchen. As the sole customer on a Sunday morning, the reporter got a unique insight into a man who was at home in his domain. She wrote, “I have just had the honor of meeting Gus, a Greek philosofer [sic], whose fame has spread across the corn belt of Douglas County. His bailiwick is the village sweet shop in Uncle Joe Cannon’s home of Tuscola, population slightly under 3000.” My grandfather quizzed her on facts from the Bible to American history. He had the answers on his pad of penciled notations listing American “facts,” his world atlas, and newspapers, some dated, but still useful. While impressed Ms. Browning had attended college, he chastised her for not attending church that morning and not knowing basic American history, such as the number of votes in the Electoral College or facts from the Bible. On her way out the door, Gus gave her a stick of gum and some peanuts. In her article Ms. Browning listed some of Gus’s accomplishments. He was a 33d Mason and had recently donated funds for the new Masonic Hall in Tuscola. He was also a director in one of the banks, had brought up four children as a single parent, and had “adopted” another boy to keep him out of the orphanage. Ms. Browning concluded her article by observing that “Gus came to this country when he was 15 to work in an uncle’s confectionery for $70 a year. He couldn’t speak English. Nearly everyone in Douglas County agrees that Gus has done all right. But what pleases him most is to put the bee on a college graduate, because Gus went to school only thru the fourth grade.”

Gus did do all right, keeping the store going right through the anti-immigrant, Ku Klux Klan era of the 1920s and the Great Depression, but his life did not pass without

46 Ibid.
47 Ibid.
incident. Although by the 1920s he had already been in business for twenty years, not everyone accepted him as a rightful member of the community. Here is how I learned about the Ku Klux Klan and our family’s becoming a target of its local reign of terror in the 1920’s.

When I was in high school I would work every day at the Candy Kitchen after school. If we did not have a scheduled official school activity, my brother, sister, and I had to be at the store at 4:00 p.m., without excuse. One day I was working behind the soda fountain with my father mixing and serving phosphates and sodas to our customers. My grandfather (by then in his 80s) was in his usual spot at the end of the counter in the corner sitting on top of two cardboard cartons of Coca-Cola syrup. An elderly man came in for refreshment. He called out to my grandfather, with a wave and a “Hello, Gus!” My grandfather replied, “Hello” and then inserted a Greek moniker for this man who beamed at being specially recognized. However, this was a Greek word I did not know, so I asked my father what name grandfather was calling our customer. My father took my arm and led me to the back of the store where the booths were located so no one could hear us. “It means ‘horse’s ass’ in Greek,” he whispered. So I queried why grandfather would call anyone by that name and my father explained that this man had been in the Ku Klux Klan and had participated in burning a cross in grandfather’s yard and in the downtown area. So I pondered this for a while, knowing a bit about the KKK, and concluded with great satisfaction that not only had grandfather retaliated in his very personal way every day for almost fifty years, maybe sometimes twice a day, but he had also taken this man’s money while he was doing it. The man had never asked Gus what he was being called; he just assumed it was a special Greek nickname. Indeed. And I
decided, good for grandfather. Of course, we were all then complicit participants in this behavior, never questioned it, and never said a word about it.

The *Tuscola Journal* began reporting about Ku Klux Klan activities nationally as early as 1921, when they ran a story about school teachers in Virginia asking children to donate a hen or some eggs in exchange for Anti-Tuberculosis Christmas Seals. If they donated a hen, they could become charter members in the KKK, and if they gave eggs, they could become active members. This appeared to be an innocuous activity that engaged whole families.\(^{48}\) At this time the newspaper suggested that the Klan was a “sinister organization,” but that did not prevent it from continuing to run stories about its activities.\(^{49}\) It was not until around 1923 that the KKK became overtly active in central Illinois.

Local lore has placed the locus of Klan activity in Douglas County in Atwood, a small town directly west of Tuscola on Route 36, although there are no known written records surviving of the Douglas County Klan’s activities. There was plenty of newspaper coverage, however, reporting how the organization had attracted hundreds to its rallies and memberships rolls with its unique mix of Midwestern racism, bigotry, community “values,” anti-corruption and bootlegging crusades, 100 percent Americanism, and showmanship. The *Tuscola Journal* reported, after a large cross was burned with no one present in the Ervin Park in Tuscola north of town, that it was “generally known that there is a large Klan of Ku Klux followers in and around Tuscola” and that meetings were held in large halls and outdoors in fields, especially in nicer weather.\(^{50}\) The Mattoon,

\(^{49}\) Ibid.
Illinois chapter appeared to have a large membership and notable influence among the few counties in central Illinois, although there were influential chapters in Champaign/Urbana as well. The Mattoon *Daily-Journal-Gazette and Commercial Star* reported on multiple public Klan demonstrations. In May 1923, five hundred plus members walked down Broadway Street in Mattoon between 9:00 and 10:00 p.m. on a Saturday night and thousands viewed the parade. Banners calling for “100 Per Cent American” were on display all around. The newspaper added that the Champaign Klan had sent a letter to their fellow Klansmen in Mattoon indicating that they shared the goal of eradicating the area of bootleggers and to “clean up the city.” Cars in the parade hailed from Champaign/Urbana, Shelbyville, Paris, and Newton, IL, reflecting the multi-county participation in the rally.\(^51\) In July 1923, the Mattoon newspaper ran an informational piece on the plight of immigrants attempting to enter the country at Ellis Island. The focus of the article was on the thousands of immigrants from Greece and natives from “Asia,” and how the Greek immigrant quota had been exhausted already for the year.\(^52\) Three days later in Villa Grove, Illinois, the town directly east of Tuscola in Douglas County, a religious revival was held. In typical Ku Klux Klan fashion, thirteen men in white robes marched down a church aisle and handed the speaker a sealed envelope containing a $25 offering from the Klan.\(^53\) At the end of July the Mattoon newspaper reported on a major Klan rally in Paris, Illinois in Edgar County. Thousands of visitors were on hand in Paris, the paper observed, to witness or participate in an all-

---

day Klan celebration at the county fair grounds. James B. Dively was the exalted Cyclops at the time and the Reverend of the First Baptist Church gave the welcome address before the Universalist Church minister spoke briefly.54

Similar rallies were held throughout the summer of 1923. Five thousand people gathered in Villa Grove to hear Reverend McMahan of Mattoon, who became a noted regional Klan leader and spokesperson for the Klan’s xenophobic and supremacist agenda. McMahan spoke for two hours “explaining to the crowd the mysteries of the Klan as understood by him.”55 The article concluded with a notice that the next Klan meeting would be held in Tuscola, where a speaker would be expounding upon the ideals of the KKK and teaching about 100 percent Americanism.56

As promised, the Klan held a rally in Tuscola the following week and it was a large one.57 The rally began on Saturday night when, the local paper reported, the town was filled with approximately five hundred carloads of “country people” coming to shop, and a “bomb explosion” was heard at the west end of Sale Street. The explosion came from the lighting of a huge “fiery Cross” that blazed in the night sky and was witnessed by a large crowd. The next day, on Sunday afternoon at the Frahm grove south of Tuscola,

55 “Villa Grove Vents Versions: Ku Klux Klan Knits Kith Kindly: Knocks Knights Keenly, Kindles Kount,” Tuscola Journal, August 16, 1923, p. 1. This headline carries alliteration to a bit more of an extreme than most, but the newspaper wordsmiths often had great fun with the headlines for these Klan articles. Of course, the organization itself practiced this type of wordplay as their hierarchical structure included klaliffs, kludds, kigrapps, klabees, kladds, and klexters, down to their local chapters, known as klaverns.
56 Ibid.
57 The following description of this rally comes from “Ku Klux Klan Hold Open Meeting, Burns Cross Saturday Night,” Tuscola Journal, August 23, 1923, p. 1, unless otherwise noted.
hundreds of automobiles filled the park and surrounding roadsides and an estimated five thousand people gathered to hear speakers from Danville and Villa Grove. The newspaper writer remarked that “Who called the meeting, who sponsored it, and who were the moving spirits remained a mystery.” Pierson’s band from Mattoon provided the music, and two Christian Church ministers, James Masters, formerly of Danville, and the Rev. Mr. Hollingsworth of Villa Grove, officiated and pronounced the benediction.

The featured speaker was “a practiced talker and threw off his coat and then jerked his collar and tie away.” He was a “young man and rather given to imitating the Reverend Billy Sunday. Stomping his feet, clinching his fists, and slinging slang, he startled his audience from the first.” He began with an attack on the United States District Court judge for Northern Illinois, and from 1920, the first Commissioner of Baseball, the famous Kenesaw Mountain Landis. Landis at that time was still best known for his handling of the 1919 Black Sox scandal, and his refusal to reinstate the eight-team members who had been permanently banned from organized baseball. “The Klan,” the speaker railed, “stands for the election of judges, and for the complete separation of the white and the colored people in church and school, and in marriage.”

The next speaker, the minister, Jack Masters, was particularly energetic. He began with an attack on the Catholic church that “was vitriolic. He complained that Woodrow Wilson had seventy percent of his appointments to political office from this church.” Masters then made “a most seething denunciation of foreigners and especially the Greeks.” Stung by this polemic, the newspaper writer felt an immediate need to respond, allowing us a rare insight into how Tuscola’s citizens felt about my grandfather and his brothers.
The Greeks in some towns may not live up to our standards, but the attack was unfair to the Flesor boys who conduct the Candy Kitchen in Tuscola. These boys are all naturalized citizens; one of them was a soldier in the late war, and all of them have saved their money and invested it in Tuscola property. They are prominent Masons and highly respected in Tuscola.”

The writer might also have mentioned that my grandfather sent his children to the Presbyterian Church. Everyone in town probably knew this because family legend holds that grandfather would stand outside the store on the corner of Main and Sale, and watch every Sunday morning as his children left the house two blocks north of the store and paraded past to the church, two blocks south. At any rate, my grandfather was appreciative of this local public support, and he did not forget it, something he shared with me in his later years.  

The summer passed, and my grandfather remained in Tuscola and continued to advertise his business. On December 4th and 8th, 1923, he ran a large ad for his open house celebration of the Kandy Kitchen remodeling. “Our Remodeling Work is now nearing completion and we are planning to have a Grand Opening” headed the advertisement. The Grand Opening was scheduled for December 15, 1923 and all were welcome. On the same day when the first ad appeared, there was also another Klan attack. The Tuscola newspaper reported that three explosions were heard and a huge cross erected and burned near the Presbyterian Church on South Main Street. A car then

---

58 Occasionally there are other glimpses in the Tuscola newspaper of the esteem in which my grandfather and his family were held. In November of 1923, for example, my aunt Viola suffered from a ruptured appendix and that incident was reported with the observation that “many friends of the family hope for a speedy recovery.” See “Viola Flesor at Hospital,” Tuscola Journal, November 15, 1923, p.1.

came from East Sale Street toward the Kandy Kitchen on the corner of Main and Sale.
Two men “with their coat collars turned high to hide their faces alighted from the car and
planted a cross at the street intersection and set it afire and hurried on northward.”

Grandfather and my uncles carried on undaunted and the Tuscola Journal encouraged
everyone to attend the reopening celebration, “Tommy, Nick and Gus will be there with
that big welcome smile and feed you on candy and ice cream or pass the best cigars.
Visit Douglas County’s most beautiful store…on December 15th, just in time for the
holidays.”

The Klan seems to have taken the rest of the winter to regroup, but renewed their
efforts in the spring when the weather was better. The spring of 1924 would prove to be
very active and violent.

On May 17, 1924, four men, allegedly KKK members -- Lee Bensken, Leonard
Campbell, Harley Campbell, and Glen Allen -- went to the Tuscola home of Mr. Sherman
Denny under the pretext of gaining his assistance in retrieving a car from a ditch. There
were conflicting reports as to what happened next, but it seems a fight ensued and Denny
shot Leonard Campbell in the leg. Denny was then shot through the chest and killed by
Lee Bensken. The Tuscola Journal concluded that the violent incident reflected
negatively upon the Klan. The four men were not from Tuscola, but from Newman and
Champaign. Harvey Campbell eventually confessed to the fatal shooting but no one was

---

60 Tuscola Journal, December 4, 1923, p. 7. There was no follow-up to this story and
no charges seem to have been brought against the perpetrators.
charged with the murder because a jury determined Campbell was acting in self-defense.\textsuperscript{64}

The Klan continued its activities throughout the summer with a “Klantauqua” in Villa Grove in June.\textsuperscript{65} There was also a band concert in Tuscola at Ervin Park in July, but the concert, given by the Danville Klan, primarily attracted members from Champaign, Decatur, Mattoon, and other towns in Douglas County.\textsuperscript{66} As we saw in chapter 5, the Klan eventually lost its appeal and its following and after 1925 it receives little mention in the local Tuscola newspaper. Through it all, the Flesor Brothers had gone about their daily business at the Tuscola Kandy Kitchen.

My grandfather took great pride in his business and in the store’s interior.\textsuperscript{67} Over the years, he invested funds to keep improving the fixtures and this always made headlines.\textsuperscript{68} In 1921 he had installed a new parquet tile floor that cost two thousand dollars and can still be seen in our store today.\textsuperscript{69} The soda fountain bar he purchased (still used today) is marble and was manufactured by Liquid Carbonic, the “one-time General Motors of the soda fountain business.” The Chicago Soda Fountain Company was begun

\textsuperscript{64} The People of the State of Illinois vs. Bensen et al., No. 2792, Douglas County (Illinois), Circuit Court, p. 48.
\textsuperscript{67} As did most of the Greek candy and soda fountain storeowners. Newspaper articles and advertisements frequently mention the amount that the owners have spent on a new tile floor, or new pressed tin ceiling, or new soda fountain, and announce that theirs is now the “grandest store in the land,” or some similar pronouncement.
\textsuperscript{68} “Gus Flesor Redecorating,” Tuscola Journal, February 17, 1921, p. 5.
\textsuperscript{69} When one studies the photos of all the early Greek candy stores in central Illinois as I have, and sees almost invariably the same style of parquet tile floor as in our store, one can imagine that a tile floor salesman swept through the region in the early 1920s and sold all the Greeks the same tile floor.
by Sam Schy. His grandson, Phil, and his sister now own and operate the business, renamed the American Soda Fountain Company. This business was responsible for installing hundreds of soda fountains all over the Midwest, including ours, and we are happy that the third generation is able to work with us and keep the soda fountain tradition alive and working. Soda fountains are reminders of small town downtown meeting spots and local teen hangouts across the nation and the Greek confectioneries with soda fountain service became iconic symbols of Main Streets in America.  

Maintaining the Tuscola Kandy Kitchen was a family affair and as we have noted, my great uncles Tom and Nick worked for decades with my grandfather until they established their own businesses, one across the street in Tuscola and one in Elmhurst, IL. After his brothers left, my grandfather employed his two son-in-laws, my uncles Bill Skinner and Chris Voltis, husbands of my aunts Helen and Viola respectively. My father’s cousin, George, one of Nick’s three children, took over Nick’s as the owner and he and his wife, Irene, managed it until their retirement in the 1970’s. Nick’s was then sold to a non-Greek who ran a restaurant for several years before closing.

My aunt Viola’s marriage was semi-arranged. My father’s version of the story is that my grandfather put out “the word” that his eldest daughter was eligible to be married. Grandfather had sent both my aunts to college for at least a year or two, so they were more formally educated than many Americans at the time. Chris Voltis became the prospective bridegroom; he and Viola were married by a Greek priest in the Tuscola Presbyterian Church. My father was also expected to marry “a good Greek girl,” but he

---

70 As Sinclair Lewis recalled in his classic tale of middle America, Main Street, where teenagers gathered “at the counter of Greek Confectionery Parlor.” Sinclair Lewis, Main Street (New York: P.F. Collier & Son, 1920): 102.
went to Eureka College where he met my mother, Margaret “Betty” Leonard, a product of a wealthy Chicago WASP family. My mother roomed with my aunt Helen at Eureka and that is how she met Paul Flesor. They eloped to get married in Missouri, which caused a scandal at the time in both families. Consequently, my mother was disinherited for marrying the son of a Greek immigrant, and my father was in trouble with his father, at least for a time, for not marrying a Greek girl. When my mother came to Tuscola for the first time, she was relegated to the kitchen with the Greek women while the males ate in the dining room. “I thought I had landed on the moon,” she told me. “Here I was in a small town in the middle of nowhere, Greek ladies chattering away in their language, no smoking for women allowed in the house or in public, and the men in the other room laughing and having a good time. I could not believe my fate.” She eventually became a master chocolate dipper, however, and that skill put her solidly in Gus’s good graces.

Betty and Paul’s union did, however, clear the way for my aunt Helen to marry her Tuscola sweetheart, Bill Skinner. While my aunt Helen was being courted, my parents had to chaperone them on their dates. My mother said she and my father would just sleep in the back seat of the car.

My parents eventually moved to the east coast where my father had two confectionery stores over the course of twenty years; one in Maryland and one in Pennsylvania. He also tried the insurance business for a time, but missed being a confectioner. We gravitated back to Illinois in the mid-1960’s and settled in Tuscola. As children, we were required to work at the store in the afternoons when school was over if we did not have a school activity and of course, we worked Saturdays and Sundays for wages paid “under the table.” Many afternoons I completed my homework at the counter.
while I served coffee and sodas and during the holidays I packed hundreds of boxes of candy.

We were fortunate that my grandfather still came into the store everyday. He called me, my brother, Scott, and my sister, Devon, “half-breeds” since we were not fully Greek, but that never really bothered me personally. We did not discuss what it meant to be Greek, although my father and grandfather spoke Greek often during the day with each other. My father’s cousin, George, son of Nick from across the street, came in everyday to get ice; he and my father spoke Greek then as well. We learned “store Greek,” or specific words for things like the numerations of money, shoplifting, or one’s capability to complete a task, usually reserved for the “outside” help. My aunt Agnes, George’s mother, was still living as well, and both she and my grandfather spoke with pretty thick accents into their senior years. My grandfather always scared me, but yet he was approachable. He was filled with great axioms of life lessons and would make us listen to his words of wisdom at every opportunity. As a teenager, though, I must admit, much of it was lost on me. I did understand though what it had taken to immigrate to America, establish a business, become successful and survive the Depression, two World Wars, and the changing entrepreneurial climate.

I remember the local businessmen, in the 1960’s-1970’s, meeting every afternoon at our corner store for a drink and gossip. Before email and the Internet, our store was the hub of information gathering and dissemination. I learned quite a bit from just observing. At that time there were two banks in downtown Tuscola, two newspapers, and many shops. The businesspeople, bankers, lawyers and others would come in with their news, political views, and candor on the local and world events. Farmers, if not in the
fields, would come into town for shopping and would also make their way into our store. We were the neighborhood repository of all that was happening in our world at that moment. It was heady stuff for a young person to absorb; perhaps that is what I missed the most, and it motivated me in the decision to return to Tuscola. Of course, there was also just the visceral feeling of the place. My memories are similar to those of Constance Contant, author of *Austin Lunch*. The Candy Kitchen for me was the safe place where I could go everyday, I could have ice cream or chocolate, my family was all together, and even though it was very hard work, it was that familiar and constant element of my life.

That was not enough at the time, however, to keep we three third-generation Greeks there on the corner. My siblings and I all knew how to make our products from the beginning to end and it was hard work. None of us had any desire to continue in this business after high school, nor did my parents encourage it. We all went off to college and had left Tuscola behind by the end of the 1970’s and early 1980’s. This was also a time when fast food chains, big box stores and small retail shops were spreading from less busy downtowns to new shopping malls, suburbs, and small towns. They sounded the final death knell for first and sometimes second- generation owned soda fountains and candy stores, as we shall discuss below. My father retired and our building was sold. It remained empty for almost thirty years until my sister and I resurrected it in 2004 and Flesor’s Candy Kitchen reopened on the corner of Main and Sale.

The confectionery business in the Champaign/Urbana Greek community began, as we have previously mentioned, with Peter Vriner and George Vaky. Mr. Vaky died in 1944, but left behind a great legacy of entrepreneurial success and community support. After learning the candy making trade in Boston, Mr. Vaky settled in Champaign/Urbana
and opened the Champaign Candy Company at 55 Main Street with Peter G. Vriner. He then founded the Urbana Candy Company, and in 1908, opened the Frat Confectionery at 3 Main Street in Urbana. He and Mr. Vriner also opened the Tuscola Candy Kitchen in 1901. It was in Tuscola the Mr. Vaky met and married his German-American wife there. His son, James, recalls, “My father was 14 when he came across (with his brother). They immigrated to Boston, where he worked for 14 years during which time he went to night school and also attended the Boston School of Candy Making. Then it’s hard to believe how he ended out here in the cornfields, but he had heard that there’s a chance to start business on your own in the Midwest. He heard this through some Greek friends.” Mr. Vaky seems to have been a bit of a maverick. He did not marry a Greek woman and although he supported the Greek Orthodox Church, he was not an active member. He was also instrumental in organizing the AHEPA lodge in Champaign/Urbana.

None of the Vaky children desired to enter the confectionery business. James Vaky worked on Saturdays in his father’s store, but was drawn to the arts, which he pursued in college. He related that his older brother, Theodore, attempted to enter the business and even took Ice Cream Making and Hotel Management courses at the

---

71 “George D. Vaky, Ill Over Year, Dies at 71,” Champaign-Urbana News Gazette, January 31, 1944, p. 3.
72 University of Illinois Student Life, 1928-38 Oral History Project. James Russell Vaky, Class of 1933, Champaign, Illinois, May 22, 2001. Located on-line at www.library.illinois.edu/sic/researchguides/oralhistory/depression_oral_histories (accessed 9/15/2013). Mr. James Vaky’s recollections have some contradictions. Mr. Vaky came to the United States in 1887 at the age of 14. It would not have been possible for him to have worked in Boston for fourteen years, come to Chicago and work as a fruit peddler, and be in Tuscola to start a business by 1901. In my interview with Mr. Vaky he said his father went first to Chicago and then back to Boston. Of course, at the time of my interview he was 91 years old.
University of Illinois, but his real passion was for flying. George Vaky supported that endeavor and paid for his son to learn to fly. Therefore, when Mr. Vaky died, Vaky’s Confectionery died as well.\(^74\)

Although they were living in a community with a large university, Greeks faced overt discrimination based upon their ethnicity. James Vaky recalled his sister, Alpha, being excluded from a university (Greek!) sorority because she was Greek. Years later this event still obviously deeply troubled him.

Now my sister, you talk about discrimination, as I say she was a beautiful young lady and so forth. She was of course rushed to the various sororities. Then there was this private session, when they go over the young ladies’ names, and how do we know this? Because a wonderful family friend was present at this time and later told my mother, not my sister. My sister’s name came up, this English teacher from Champaign High, whom I had later, this English teacher made the comment that, they said, ‘Oh yes Al was a very beautiful girl, but you know her father owns a confectionery. He’s a Greek.’ That was the end of that.\(^75\)

James Vaky also remembered being part of a choir that sang at the funeral of a Klan member in Champaign, and as he gazed upon the audience, all the participants were


wearing their robes. He did not know, however, if his father had had any run-ins with the Klan.76

The Champaign County Klan began in the fall of 192177 and held a conclave in August 1922.78 In addition, Champaign-Urbana businessmen who were members of the Klan were supposed to identify each other with lapel pins and anyone caught doing business with non-Klan members were liable to possible marginalization or retribution. The Greek immigrants in Champaign/Urbana appeared to maintain their businesses and thrive despite the short-lived activities of the local KKK.

Peter G. Vriner, partner of George Vaky, was the other Greek pioneer in Champaign/Urbana. He began as a fruit peddler in the late 1890’s in Champaign/Urbana, as we have noted, arriving from Chicago. According to the 1900 U.S. census date, Peter lived with George Vaky.79 He and Vaky became partners in the confectionery business and also began the confectionery in Tuscola. There were two Vriner factions in Champaign/Urbana.80 One family was headed by Peter G. Vriner, and another family,

77 Daily Illini, October 4, 1921, p. 5.
78 Daily Illini, August 9, 1922, p. 1.
79 United States Federal Census, 1900: Champaign Ward 3, Champaign, Illinois; Roll 240; Page:9A; Enumeration District: 0006.
80 The ships’ manifest lists for immigrants arriving at Ellis Island include several Vriners, or Vrinioses, from Pigadakia. See Constantinos Vrinios, Pigadakia, age 19y, single, arrival September 20, 1911, from Patras on the S.S. Alice, Manifest Line No. 0007; George Vrinios, Pigadakia, age 27y, married, arrival August 17, 1912, from Patras on the S.S. Macedonia; Manifest Line No. 0015; Georges Vrinios, Pigadakia, age 22y, single, arrival July 08, 1906, from Le Havre on the S.S. La Touraine, Manifest Line No. 0018; Georgios Vrinios, Pigadakia, age 26y, single, arrival February 24, 1912, from Patras, on the S.S. Themistocles, Manifest Line No. 0008; Stavros Vrinios, Pigadakia, age 17y, single, arrival October 28, 1910, from Palermo on the S.S.Prinzzess Irene, Manifest Line No. 0015; Stavros Vrinios, Pigadakia, age 19y, single, arrival August 17, 1912, from Patras on the S.S. Macedonia, Manifest Line No.
believed to be cousins, was headed by George Vriner. The Vriners came from Pigadakia, my grandfather’s village. In 1912, the *Champaign-Urbana City Directory* lists multiple Vriners in business: George Vriner was at Vriner’s Confectionery; James Vriner was the manager at Vriner’s Confectionery, Peter G. Vriner, married by this time to Christina, was the proprietor of Vriner’s Confectionery. He had two stores listed under his name, one at 55 Main and one at 132 W. Main, both in Urbana. In 1914, Peter G. Vriner bought a building from the Schlitz Brewing Co. of Milwaukee, at the corner of Main and Market Streets in Champaign. The *Urbana Daily Courier* speculated that the purchase price, though not confirmed, was estimated at $25,000. Mr. Vriner’s intent, the newspaper stated, was to “remodel the building into one of the most magnificent confectioneries in this part of the state.” Peter G. Vriner died in June 11, 1929 at the age of 66. Sam Vriner (or “Tyke”), Peter’s son, took over the Vriner Confectionery business. One of Sam’s sons, Pete, ran the confectionery until the 1970’s, before it closed. Pete still makes candy canes at the holidays when he is able, and they are always welcomed and enjoyed by central Illinois folks who remember the famous Vriner candy

---

0014—this may have been the same Stavros who came over in 1910, went back and returned again in 1912; Vassile P. Vrinios, Pegadaki, age 19y, single, arrival May 5, 1905, from Napoli, on the S.S. Sardegna, Manifest Line No. 0012. I have found many references to other Vrinioses who are not listed here, such as Peter G. Vriner.

81 None of the Vriner family know what the connections are between these different Vriners—Peter G. Vriner, George Vriner, and the Chicago Vriners—although they all came from the same small village in Greece.


84 “Services for P.G. Vriner To Be Held Tomorrow at 2 P.M.,” *Urbana Daily Courier*, June 13, 1929, p. 2.
canes.\textsuperscript{85} George P. Vriner, another son of Peter G. Vriner, lived in Tuscola and worked with my grandfather for a short time. Just as with my grandfather’s brother, Nick, George’s draft registration for WWI lists his nationality as Oriental (Asian).\textsuperscript{86} At some point George moved back to Champaign/Urbana and was in business there.

Louis, or Lambros Vriner, of the other Vriner faction, was born in Greece and migrated back and forth a couple of times before settling in Champaign/Urbana. Louis married in Greece and four of his five children—George, John, Dina, and Mary—were born there. His fifth child, Anna, was the only one born in America. Louis’ son, John Vriner, wrote his family history while in 8th grade after moving to Champaign, and his recollections of life both in Greece and America are revealing. According to John, the family name originally was Vrinios, and the family lineage could be traced to 1821 and the Greek war with Turkey. The Turks killed all but one of the Vriners. The sultan spared the last remaining male, who then married and had two sons. John states that his father, Louis, first came to America at the age of eleven in 1903 and worked in Chicago and in Champaign. Louis’ brother, George, ran the Olympia Confectionery in Champaign from 1914 until Louis took over in 1920.\textsuperscript{87} Sadly, John passed away in his early twenties.

\textsuperscript{85} Ann Beck interview by phone with Pete S. Vriner, October 30, 2013. Of all the Vriners, Pete was the only one to remain in the confectionery business until the 1970s. Except for the occasional candy canes, with Pete’s retirement the Champaign/Urbana Vriner candy dynasty ended as well.
\textsuperscript{86} Is there a pattern there for the Greeks registering in Douglas County and being labeled as Oriental? See U.S. World War I Draft Registration Cards, 1917-1918: Illinois; Registration County: Douglas; Roll: 1613181, George P. Vriner.
\textsuperscript{87} John Vriner, private family history, pp. 6-7. Copy in possession of Ann Beck.
Louis’ youngest daughter, Anna Vriner Lecos, remembers her father’s business fondly and recalls the lines of people waiting for candy at Valentine’s Day, Easter, and Christmas. As a child, she remembers, it was like being in a type of fairyland and again, it was that safe and familiar place. She shared, though, that moving between the confectionery and the “outside world”—one Greek and one American—became more significant as she grew into young adulthood. As a young Greek woman, her mother reminded her, “God is always watching you!” and she was very aware of her behavior while participating in school activities.  

Diana Vriner Krandel, daughter of Peter G. Vriner’s eldest son, George P., also shared with me more Vriner family history. Her father, she said, who had worked for my grandfather in Tuscola and lived there for a while, returned to Champaign and struck out on his own, establishing a pool hall and a café. In another rebellious act, Diana’s father married a non-Greek woman, whom he had met at a coffee shop he frequented. George died in 1953 when Diana was a child. As mentioned, Sammy “Tyke” Vriner, George’s brother, took over the confectionery business from his father, Peter G. Their younger brother, died in WWII. When asked if she or her parents recalled any derogatory acts or speech against them for being Greek, Diana recalled her mother sharing the story of walking with Diana as a baby in the stroller and having a neighbor comment, “She’s not so dark after all” after gazing into the carriage.

---

90 Ibid., As mentioned above, it was Diana’s father, George, who had been listed as “Oriental” when registering for the draft in Tuscola.
The Vaky/Vriner connections spread throughout east central Illinois and touched their relatives and other immigrants from their own villages or villages near their own in Greece. For example, Mr. Vaky influenced Tom Lessaris to come to Champaign/Urbana, according to Tom’s son, Peter, and Peter’s sister-in-law, Sophia Lenardos Lessaris.91 Thomas John Lessaris was born in the village of Geraki, about twenty miles southeast of Sparta on Jun 15, 1882.92 It is not clear when he came to America but he appears to have been working as a confectioner in New Haven, Connecticut in 1900 and 1901.93 Tom’s brother, Andrew, also born in Geraki, immigrated to Chicago and then came down to Champaign/Urbana in the early 1920s. Thomas opened the Blue Fountain, selling candy and food, located near Vriner’s. He then established the Elite Restaurant in 1923 or 1924, according to his son Pete, and that store remained opened until 1936. The Lessarises also

93 1900 New Haven [Connecticut] Directory including West Haven (New Haven, CT: Price & Lee Publishers, 1901); 365; 1901 New Haven [Connecticut] Directory including West Haven (New Haven, CT: Price & Lee Publishers, 1900): 370. Family tradition, according to Peter and Sophia Lessaris, has Tom immigrating to Chicago in 1889 or 1890 after first stopping in New Haven, Connecticut, where he worked as a dishwasher in a confectionary and ice cream store. It appears, however, that Tom must have immigrated somewhat later and went directly to New Haven for two years before going to Chicago around 1902. In the 1901 directory, on p. 370, Tom is listed as: “Lessaris, Thomas, confectionery and ice cream, 95 Congress Avenue,” where he is a rooomer. On p. 689, however, Thomas Lessaris is listed under “Confectioners and Fruit Dealers” at 95 Congress Ave. He is also listed on p. 715 under “Ice Cream Mfrs.” at the same address. These entries suggest he was more than just a dishwasher. We do not know what he did in Chicago but it appears he already knew the confectionery business when he came to Champaign, and could open the Blue Fountain so soon after arriving.
made candy there for a few years. In 1936 they moved the store’s location to 116 N. Neil, where it remained in business until the 1980’s.  

Thomas married Dina Kontoyiannes, who was also from Geraki, Greece. He was nineteen years older than his wife. The three Lessaris sons, Pete, John, and George, carried on in the food business and expanded into Top Boy Drive-Ins, the first of its kind in the area. They eventually expanded to twelve stores in different states. Sophia Lenardos was from Aurora, Illinois, and met her husband, George Lessaris, at a funeral. George and Sophia were distant cousins and were married in 1951. Sophia, like many wives who were employed in the businesses, was very integral to the success of the Elite.

When I inquired of Peter and Sophia whether they were ever aware of any discrimination because of their ethnicity, Peter shared the story, known to all of the Champaign/Urbana Greek community, about Mr. Vaky. George Vaky wanted to purchase a “nice” brick home near Prospect and University, and the word got out to the general population. A local doctor bought it out from under him, so that a Greek would not “infiltrate” the neighborhood. Like Mr. Vaky and the Vriners, the Lessaris brothers were very successful and Pete is very proud of his heritage. Both he and Sophia are active in the Greek Orthodox Church in Champaign; there is no doubt that they identify fully with being Greek, and yet are proud to be Americans as well.

Another Vriner chain migration link is with the Samaras family in Champaign/Urbana. In my interview with Alexander, “Lex,” Samaras, he shared that Peter Vriner was a great uncle on the Samaras’ mother’s side. There were four Samaras

---

95 Ibid.
brothers: Nick, Paul, George, and William. Their mother had been a Vrinios before her marriage. The Samarases came from the village of Lygoudista, Greece, again in the Peloponnese area of Greece. According to Lex Samaras, the four boys had become orphans and their great uncle (or uncle), Peter G. Vriner, took it upon himself to send for them and have them join him in Champaign/Urbana. Nick was the first to arrive in 1902 when he was eleven, and Peter later paid for Nick’s brothers, Paul and George to join him. William remained in Greece. The manifest list for the S.S. Martha Washington, shows that the three brothers, Nicolas, Georgios, and Apostolos (Paul), from Ligoudista, Greece, arrived at Ellis Island on April 26, 1911. Nick is listed as a “confectioner,” age 20, and as having already lived in Champaign from 1902 to 1910. His brother Georgios is 18 and a “farmer.” Apostolos is 11 and a “pupil.” The manifest notes “parents dead.” They are travelling on from New York to join their uncle, Panagiotis (Pete) Vrinios, at 55 Main Street, Champaign, Illinois, who “has store Champaign Candy Co., Champaign, IL.” The manifest says that none of the three can read or write. From this it seems that Nick spent 8 years in Champaign working for Peter Vriner as a confectioner, and then returned to Greece in 1911 to bring back his two brothers.

---

97 The name of this town was changed later in the twentieth century to Chora. It is located near the coast of the Ionian Sea, almost 4 miles due north of the port city of Pilos, and about 15 to 20 miles nearly due west of Sparta. It is quite some distance from Pigadakia, home of the Vrinios (Vriner) clan.
98 The family version according to Lex Samaras is that George was 11 when he came over but, according to my research, the ship manifest for their arrival gives a somewhat different story than this family version. See Nicolas, Georgios, Apostolos Samaras, Ellis Island Passenger Records, List or Manifest of Alien Passengers to the United States Immigration Officer at Port of Arrival: Ethnicity: Greece, Greek; Last Place of Residence: Ligoudista, Greece; Date of Arrival: April 26, 1911; Age of Arrival: 20y, 19y, 11y; Marital Status: S; Ship of Travel: Martha Washington; Point and Date of Departure: Patras, April 10, 1011; Manifest Line Numbers: 003, 004, 005.
In a 2011 reprinted article from 1946 in the *Hoopeston Chronicle*, George Samaras is said to have learned the candy making business at Vriner’s, but enlisted in the Army and served in France during WWI. Discharged in 1919, he returned to Champaign and married a local non-Greek woman; they had four children. His brother Nick, after learning the trade, moved to Hoopeston in 1927 where he opened a confectionery named The Ritz. George joined Nick in 1933. In 1936, George bought the business from his brother, who then moved to Lansing, Michigan and opened a business there. Proud of his confectionery lineage, George was quoted as saying “There are easier ways to make candy, but I have always maintained that quality is the most important factor in a good finished product.”

The store was completely remodeled in 1940 to reflect a more modern feel, and by the mid-1940’s candy production reached over four thousand pounds. “Lex” Samaras joined his father in Hoopeston in 1951 after serving in WWII. He had graduated from college with a music major and initially had no intention of going into the confectionery business, but he and his sister, Helen, bought the business from their father in 1952. “Lex” then bought out his sister the next year. He became very active in the community, serving on the school board and becoming a member of multiple service organizations.

During our interview, “Lex” shared that he remained in Hoopeston until the late 1950’s when he opened another Ritz in Watseka. Having no offspring of his own who was interested in continuing the business, the Ritz closed in the 1970’s. As “Lex” related his life experiences with me, he obviously took great pride in the fact that the first-

---

100 Ibid., p. 32.
generation Greeks came to America at such young ages, worked hard, learned a trade, and became successful despite being labeled “greasy Greeks.” He had his father and uncle’s immigration records and it was clear that he cherished his connection back to Lygoudista and took great pleasure in learning about his family heritage. 101 “

The Tomaras family in Champaign/Urbana is another link in the local chain migration network, in this case through both the Vakys and Vriners. The Tomraras story begins with Pangiotis (Pete) Tomaras who immigrated to America in 1903, and his story demonstrates the central and southern Illinois Greek networks in play during the early years of the twentieth century. His son, Peter, has written a family history that he has generously shared with me. 102 Here begins his family narrative:

My father arrived at Ellis Island in September, 1903, aged 18. He had a 6th grade education and less than $20. He and an uncle had been watching a steamship prepare to sail for the U.S. and, almost on the spur of the moment, the uncle bought his passage and put him on the ship, in that there was little future for Pangiotis Tomaras at his home village of Paradisi, Korinth, Greece, which is high on a mountain above the gulf-side town of Kiato. As with most immigrants, my dad had the name of a cousin or uncle in NY who took him in at first. He shined shoes. He washed dishes. At some point he began work on the railroads and became enamored of them; the NY Central, the Pennsylvania, the Nickel Plate. I do not know how much he worked for any of those, but I do know that he put in several years with the Union Pacific. He was on the gangs, who took rails from flat cars and laid them on ties, building the lines West. The railroad work took my father from Chicago west to Denver, with North Platte, NE as a main stopover. I do not know for sure that he ever worked for the Illinois Central; he may have worked for the C & N (Chicago and Northwestern) because something took him to southern Illinois where, for a time, he worked in coalmines around Benld. I believe he did not like working underground, and probably went back to the railroads, teaching

102 Peter Tomaras Recollections. Copy sent via email to Ann Beck, June 5, 2011. In the following, Pete Tomaras is the father, and Peter Tomaras is the son.
himself English by reading newspapers and saving money as he could. (p. 1)

In the mid-1920s Pete left the railroads, and partnered with someone to open a tavern in Monticello, Illinois but that adventure failed. He then returned to railroad work to recoup his financial losses. Peter says that in about 1928 his father found an opportunity in Champaign.

Now, how did these men know where to look? As I said, they had support systems of friends with whom they communicated. So, on the brink of the Great Depression, he learned of a 10-seat counter diner, owned by a Greek, that was broke. The First National Bank had seized it. My dad went to the banker and said, ‘I will take over the operation, pay the debts of the previous owner, and then pay back the loan you give me to get it going.’ The bank thought that sounded like a deal. He named the place Pete’s Annex. The Annex was a one-man operation; Pete cooked on the grill, plated, and served customers who sat at the C-shaped counter. He paid all the back debts, including suppliers, and put himself in position to make an offer for Grindley’s (another restaurant) in 1929. (pp. 2-3)

At this point Mr. Vaky stepped in and loaned Mr. Tomaras $5000 to enable him to purchase the new restaurant. “This solidified their friendship, and Mr. Vaky baptized my [Peter, the son] sister, Diamando, in 1922.” (p. 3)

As he had been busy establishing his businesses, Pete Tomaras had not yet married. In 1930 he returned to Greece where, as family tradition has it, eligible girls from the village were paraded before him. He was forty-five years old, however, and realized while in Greece that he was in love with his hostess/worker, Julia Creighton, a non-Greek woman from a farm between Potomac and Armstrong, IL. Pete told an uncle in Greece that Julia was running his restaurant while he was away. The uncle urged him to return to America and marry her since she was able to be his partner in business as well. (pp. 3-4)
Over time, the restaurant was renamed the Quality Café, and it was very successful as a downtown Champaign institution. Pete and Julia lived upstairs above the business. Peter, the son, remembers working at the restaurant during WWII, and that despite good business, it was difficult to obtain foods such as meat, sugar, coffee, and chocolate. Christos Bartges, a confectioner and restaurant owner in Danville, and best man at Pete and Julia’s wedding, had somehow cornered the market on sugar and had hundreds of pounds on the second floor of his business. He supplied his fellow Greeks with sugar throughout the war for barter or cash. (pp. 3-4)

The Tomaras family was successful and Pete wished to purchase a lovely home on a large lot at the corner of University and Prospect Avenue, but did not. Many years later, Peter recalls, Kyle Robeson told him: ‘You know why your folks didn’t get that house, don’t you?’ I was clueless. ‘They wouldn’t let them,’ he replied. That is, the country-club set, the ‘good’ people of Champaign, did not want an immigrant restaurant man to have that property. Would simply not be acceptable.’” (p. 4) Eventually immigrant restaurant man, Pete Tomaras, purchased a house and the land for the development of the Paradise Inn Motel and Restaurant, named for Pete’s village, Paradiso. It went through several iterations through the 1960’s and 1970’s, until Peter, the son, sold it in July 1981. [pp. 5-6]

Even though Pete Tomaras was not a confectioner, which is the primary focus of this study, we are so fortunate to have such vivid recollections of his Greek immigrant’s journey from Greece to central Illinois, taking a similar route as did many other Greek entrepreneurs, including my grandfather. The decision to immigrate from Greece to America was often a thoughtful and deliberate one, and yet at times, as Pete’s son, Peter,
describes in his narrative, the decision could also be a capricious one, as was the case with Peter’s father. Also, as with my grandfather and many other Greeks, Pete first worked on the railroad gangs and then went into the food business. He did so with the assistance of a more established owner, Mr. Vaky, who loaned him the funds needed to move ahead. And, when Andy Lanbrakis needed financial support to purchase Mr. Vaky’s business, Mr. Tomaras returned Mr. Vaky’s favor and loaned Lanbrakis $5000 to make the purchase. 103 Pete also broke tradition when, after travelling to Greece to choose a Greek wife in an arranged marriage, he came back home and married a young non-Greek woman from Illinois instead.

Pete Tomaras was also an integral and active member of the Greek community. He was instrumental in the establishment of a Greek Orthodox Church in Champaign. In his Recollections, Pete’s son, Peter Tomaras, describes the effort and determination demonstrated by the Greek community to form an Orthodox Church in Champaign/Urbana. Before the Greek Church was established in Champaign, Greeks who wanted to attend church drove to the one in Decatur. “Going to Decatur on occasion was difficult, especially for those whose businesses operated on Sunday. AHEPA finally bought a frame house at the corner of Green and Locust Streets in 1953, thinking it would be a good location when and if they could raise the money to build. They wanted it close to campus for UI Orthodox students. Once in a great while a priest (from Decatur) would hold a Liturgy there on a Saturday.” 104

Gus Leo Furla, Pete Tomaras and the older Lessaris brothers, John and George, were all involved in establishing a Greek Church. The frame house was eventually demolished in 1960, and the next year a new building was opened. Funds to accomplish this were provided by Mr. Furla, the Lessaris brothers, Pete Tomaras (the father), and John Trebellas, a “new” Greek in town who owned the Pepsi franchise. All of these donors contributed $5000 and a center was built, not yet a formal church. However, in time, an altar was positioned and the church board of directors formed. Pete Tomaras was President and Mr. Furla was the treasurer.

The Danville Greeks, who attended church in Decatur, were invited to join this new church, but they refused and continued to support the Decatur Church. In 1965 a permanent priest was assigned, Father Yalouris, who came down from Chicago for Sunday Liturgy only. The Greek women also formed the Champaign Ladies’ Philoptochos Society and there was a Hellenic Student Organization on the University of Illinois campus. Today the Church serves approximately two to three hundred members and is active in reaching out to Orthodox students at the University of Illinois.105

The Pelafos family also ran a Greek confectionery business in Champaign/Urbana. Jeni Pelafos Mechalas shared with me her family story and her experiences as a daughter growing up in a Greek confectionery business in central Illinois. Her father, John Pelafos, owned the White and Gold Confectionery. It was located two doors over from one of the Vriner confectioneries and she contends that the two families did not get along. “The White and Gold sold home made candy, chocolates of all kinds, peanut brittle, caramels, taffy apples, candy canes, roasted peanuts, and were made using copper kettles. The

105 Three Hierarchs Greek Orthodox Church, Champaign/Urbana, Illinois -- www.threehierarchs.org/history, pp.1-3 (accessed 10/21/2012)
chocolates were hand dipped by my father. Marble slabs were used for the peanut brittle and candy canes.” Her father was born in Greece in 1882. He arrived in Chicago and worked for the railroad there for a time and then learned the candy business from a relative in the city. Jeni was not sure how her father found his way to Champaign/Urbana because her parents did not really discuss the family history with their children. She knows that her mother was a seamstress in Greece and had her own shop in her family home in Tripoli. In the 1920s John Pelafos set up his first confectionery in Champaign/Urbana, the Palace of Sweets. Jeni shared that her father’s first wife died and he returned to Greece to remarry in 1927, and returned to Urbana in 1928. While he was in Greece for the year, his Palace of Sweets failed due to poor management. So when he returned he began again with the White and Gold confectionery. It was a successful business until John’s death in 1951.107

Jeni remembers that the children in her father’s store, as well as in the Vriner’s, all worked in the business. “In my family, we ran the cash register, bussed tables, waited on customers, ran the soda fountain, and washed dishes. But we were allowed to have ice cream, and not candy or soft drinks. What kid does not like candy. That was hard to take.”108 John’s grandson, Mark Pelafos, believes that the Pelafos family initially lived up above the store, as many Greeks did when they purchased a business. That investment in store property would have been more important than in a house.109 One childhood memory that stands out in Jeni’s mind occurred on a July 4, when she was ten years old. “For the 4th of July, White & Gold and Vriners had fireworks of all kinds, rockets, roman

107 Ann Beck interview by phone with Jeni Pelafos Mechalas, September 18, 2013.
candles, sparklers, bombs, etc. for sale. We had a table set up in front of the store, and so did Vriners. Vriners also had fireworks in their window. Something happened and the Vriners’ fireworks ignited and rockets, roman candles, sparklers, etc. shot all over Main Street! You can imagine the chaos. I was frightened and ran down to the Princess Theater and took cover in the lobby. Downtown was lit up brighter than the Northern Lights! Fire engines, police, and ambulances were on the scene. After that incident, fireworks were not allowed on Main Street.”

When she was growing up, Jeni’s parents, John and Georgia, ran the business together, and the whole family worked. John Pelafos was also a friend of my grandfather, and Jeni recalls visiting Tuscola. For her family business, Jeni agreed that once the first generation Greek male died, the widow and children would usually attempt to carry on with the business, but that would not last long as most of the offspring left to pursue other interests. So it was with the White and Gold, which faded from Champaign/Urbana’s business scene as well. “We, Mom, me, and my two brothers kept the place for a while and later rented to other businesses until we sold the building in the 60’s and it is now The Heel and Toe shoe store.” Her brother, Peter, opened a restaurant and bar but he passed away in his early 40’s and his business closed. Her brother, Nick, joined the Navy, and her sister, Betsie got married.

In the 1927 Champaign-Urbana City Directory, there were multiple Greek confectioners listed, and the narratives shared thus far have been representative of those

111 Ibid.
112 Ann Beck interview with Jeni Pelafos Mechalas, September 18, 2013, Champaign, Illinois.
113 Ibid.
who immigrated to the twin cities and opened their own enterprises. In addition to Mr. Vaky, the Vriners, the Lessarises, the Samarases, and the Pelafoses, there were Paul Angel, George Kageaveas, and J.A. Sarris.\textsuperscript{114} As we have discussed, Mr. Samaras moved to Hoopeston and re-established his business there. Mr. Sarris came to Champaign and is listed as a confectioner there as well for many years, although I have not been able to learn much about him.\textsuperscript{115} In my interview with Diana Vriner Krandel, she stated that her grandfather, Peter G. Vriner, sponsored many Greek males so they could come to America. Some stayed and worked in his store for a time to learn the trade and determine whether or not they wanted to be confectioners. Some established their own businesses in Champaign, while others moved on to other cities or towns.\textsuperscript{116} Paul Angel worked for Peter G. Vriner,\textsuperscript{117} and later opened the Apollo Confectionery,\textsuperscript{118} and then the Olympia Confectionery,\textsuperscript{119} both before 1940. His Apollo Confectionery eventually evolved into the Apollo Restaurant on Main Street in Urbana.\textsuperscript{120}

\textsuperscript{115} See J.A. Sarris, 1930 United States Federal Census, Champaign, Champaign Co., Illinois; Roll: 409; Page: 13A; Enumeration District: 17.
\textsuperscript{116} Ann Beck interview with Diana Vriner Krandel, November 4, 2013, Champaign, Illinois.
\textsuperscript{117} Paul Angel, WW I Draft Registration, June 5, 1917, Illinois; Registration County: Champaign; Roll: 1452377; Draft Board: 2.
\textsuperscript{120} “East Central Illinois Deaths, Paul Angel, Sr.,” \textit{Champaign-Urbana Courier}, October 28, 1970, p. 20. Although he operated a business for many years in Champaign-Urbana, Mr. Angel’s obituary was very brief. It said he was born in St. Peters, Greece on December 26, 1899, and was married to Madge Johnson on May 30, 1930. She died in 1946. Mr. Angel was a member of the Greek Orthodox Church and the Order of AHEPA. He died on October 27, 1970.
Three notable confectioners near Champaign/Urbana were Gus Petrakis in Rantoul and Christos Bartges and George Sanichas in Danville. Gus Petrakis was born in Greece in 1890 and immigrated to America in 1916; he moved to Rantoul in 1918 and established the Princess Confectionery. He did not marry until 1940 and died in 1958. The Rantoul newspaper related that his confectionery was popular and well respected, and that he was a member of the Decatur Greek Orthodox Church, AHEPA, and the American Legion in Rantoul.

George, James, and Peter Sanichas all immigrated to Danville and established the Sanichas Candy Company in the early 1900’s, which operated for several decades.

In August 2013 I had the good fortune to visit with Phyllis Bartges Bayles, and to hear the poignant story of her Greek immigrant father, Christos Bartges. Christos Bartges was born in 1908 in a tiny village on the Bay of Corinth, Greece. Heightened tensions between Greece and Turkey in 1918 prompted the Greek military to began going from village to village to force young men and even boys to take up arms and fight.

Phyllis said that her grandfather was concerned that his eldest son would be conscripted,

---

121 Kankakee County, Illinois Marriage Index, 1889-1962, Kankakee County Clerk, Kankakee, Illinois.


so he smuggled him to a port on the coast and placed young Christos on a ship bound for America. This was in 1919.

He had fourteen dollars pinned to his underwear. His ‘luggage’ was a paper bag of meager possessions. He was scared and lonely and missed his family. He wondered if he would ever see them again. During his voyage, the passengers kept busy trying to pass the time. They visited. They prayed. They walked around the decks of the ship. The women would sew, and the men would smoke and discuss politics, the war, and the rumors they had heard about America. At night, they would find ways to keep their spirits up. There were passengers not only from Greece, but from several other countries. Each nation had its own type of music, and each group had at least one person who had brought along a musical instrument. So, the people would play their native songs and dance to their music. My dad told me that, although he cried every night from being scared and lonely, listening to the music, and watching the dancing, helped lift his spirits and take his mind off things.

A lovely Greek woman on the trip befriended Christos on the crossing, and looked after him. When Christos landed in New York he was met by an uncle who took him to Boston. There he worked as a busboy. Christos and his uncle then travelled to Chicago, where Christos was surprised to find the kind Greek lady from his ship—she had married Christos’ uncle! In Chicago, Christos worked in a factory for less than one week and decided that was not the job for him. He attended classes at Northwestern University for approximately one year. An uncle, George Variames knew of relatives in Lansing, Michigan and Christos went there. In Lansing he met his wife, Margaret, and they then moved to Danville. Christos began business, albeit briefly, as a confectioner, but quickly moved into the food business. He took over a successful restaurant that had previously been owned by Gus Paras, another Greek.

As mentioned above, Christos Bartges was instrumental in supplying the Greek restaurant and candy storeowners in central Illinois with sugar during World War II.
Phyllis stressed that the Greek community in Danville was quite tight-knit. There were approximately twenty families there and she said that everyone got along, especially the women. She was not aware of Ku Klux Klan activity in Danville, but she did recall that her mother had told her that the non-Greek townspeople called them “the dirty Greeks,” and suggested that the first-generation Greeks knew what prejudice was out there in the community. Because the Danville Greeks were so close, they were one of the first communities in downstate Illinois to establish a Greek Orthodox Church, in 1927. It was named St. Barbara’s and is still in existence, although the Champaign/Urbana priest conducts services for both congregations.

In 2011 Phyllis Bartges Bayles published an essay about Greek identity and community strength entitled “Memories of a Church Bakery.”125 In this essay she highlights the role of women in the Greek community. In St. Barbara’s Church “…the chapel’s kitchen [her italics] was where the strength of the Greek community was at its finest. The women ruled. This was their domain—and nobody in his or her right mind would ever question, doubt, or argue that fact.” (p.22). The ladies baked to raise funds for the church repair and maintenance. In addition to ruling the kitchen, Phyllis said that other old country traditions for women prevailed as well. Very few second-generation Greek women, for example, did not marry Greek men while, conversely, only two or three male members of the community married Greek women. The three mainstays of women’s lives were home, church, and the business. “You know what your dad did and

---

your friends know what their parents did. That engendered respect.” Indeed, in an interview with Phyllis’ brother, Dean Bartges,\textsuperscript{127} he shared that family was very important and that his aunt and uncle lived upstairs in their house.

Education was the key to success for the second generation and both Phyllis and Dean left home to attend college and have professional careers. Dean said his father hinted to him that perhaps he might consider staying in the restaurant business, but Dean had different aspirations, and his father supported that decision. Phyllis and Dean both related, however, that through working at the family restaurant as children, they learned a great work ethic and understood what it took to make a living, as many of the second-generation Greek youngsters certainly appreciated being an integral part of their parent’s businesses.\textsuperscript{128}

One of the most important Greek communities in central Illinois was in Decatur. Like several other “downstate” cities, Decatur owed much of its rapid growth to the railroads. After the mid-1800’s, it was positioned as a “processing point for agricultural products, a transportation link to larger markets, and a distribution center of retail goods to the surrounding hinterlands.”\textsuperscript{129} By 1860, Decatur’s population was close to four thousand and increased to seven thousand over the next ten years. In 1860, the Illinois State Republican Party held its convention there and endorsed local lawyer Abraham Lincoln, who had been trying cases there since 1838.\textsuperscript{130} Decatur’s population grew to

\textsuperscript{126} Ann Beck interview with Phyllis Bartges Bayles, August 5, 2013, Charleston, Illinois.
\textsuperscript{127} Ann Beck interview with Dean Bartges, August 22, 2013, Charleston, Illinois.
\textsuperscript{128} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{130} Ibid., p. 226.
almost fifty thousand by 1920, approximately twice the size of Champaign/Urbana in the same year.\textsuperscript{131}

Decatur became the national center for the processing of farm produce from central Illinois for export. After WWI, soybeans were second to corn as the crop most produced by Illinois farmers. My grandfather, who bought a farm in the 1930s, recalled how representatives from the large Decatur based agribusiness, A.E. Staley, came to Tuscola to try and convince him and other farmers in Douglas County to plant soybeans instead of corn. It was a radical move at the time, but turned out to be profitable. Staley initially provided free seed to those who would try it.

Decatur eventually became known as the “Soybean Capitol of the World.”\textsuperscript{132} The burgeoning growth of Decatur and its accessibility to the railroads and newly built highways, such as Route 36, beckoned immigrants such as the Greeks to establish themselves in business there. It was the Decatur Greeks who also created a number of networks of migration, making connections with Mattoon, Cairo, Greenup, Jacksonville, Champaign/Urbana, Springfield, Litchfield, Pana, and even over to Iowa. They were an enterprising group.

As in Champaign/Urbana, Decatur has a long and rich history of Greek confectioners, and they came early to the city. Among the earliest Greek confectioners and ice cream makers were John A. Papadopulos, Louis G. Nichols, Samuel Malleos, Peter Balamos, and Peter J. Loomis.

According to federal census records in 1910 and 1920, John Papadopulos was born in Greece in 1855, came to America in 1884 and became a naturalized citizen in 1886. He does not appear in any early record, however, until he is listed as a confectioner in the 1899 Decatur City Directory, one of two confectioners in the city. The other was John F. Somerville, not a Greek.\textsuperscript{133} That was the only year Mr. Papadopulos appeared in the Decatur City directory. By 1902 he had moved to Mattoon, Illinois and opened a candy store there. He remained in Mattoon for four years,\textsuperscript{134} and then, around 1905, he moved again, this time to Cedar Rapids, Iowa.\textsuperscript{135} In 1907, he was listed as a confectioner with his wife, Lucretia, in the city directory there.\textsuperscript{136} The 1910 federal census shows them as “roomers, living with a woman who is a dressmaker and two other people. John Papadopulos is listed as a confectioner, while his wife and another roomer, a Greek man named George Perkirs (or Peskirs), are both listed as salespeople in the candy store. John is 55 and Lucretia is 54.\textsuperscript{137} In the 1915 Iowa state census, John has five years of common school and his church affiliation is Greek Orthodox. In the same census, Lucretia’s church affiliation is Catholic and she has 4 years of common school.\textsuperscript{138} Lucretia, a non-

\textsuperscript{133} “Confectioners,” \textit{Ebel’s 1899 Decatur City Directory} compiled by Chas. O. Ebel (Decatur: Review Printing and Stationery Co., 1899): 616.

\textsuperscript{134} 1902-1903 \textit{Mattoon, Illinois City Directory}, comp. by A. Sumerlin (Mattoon, IL: Mattoon Commercial Print, 1902-03) 286; and 1904-1905 \textit{Mattoon, Illinois City Directory}, comp. by A. Sumerlin (Mattoon, IL: Mattoon Commercial Print, 1904): 303.

\textsuperscript{135} Iowa, State Census Collection, “J.A. Papadopulos,” and “Lucretia Papadopulos,” Year: 1905; Roll no.: IA_96; Card nos.: 808, 809.

\textsuperscript{136} “Confectioners,” \textit{The Gazette’s Cedar Rapids City Directory}, 1907, p. 265.

\textsuperscript{137} United States Federal Census, Year: 1910; Census Place: Cedar Rapids Precinct 1; County: Linn; State: Iowa; Roll: T624_411; Page: 1A; Enumeration District: 0098. John’s birthplace and that of his parents in this census is given as “Turkey (Europe),” but in all the other records he is Greek. He may have been from one of those areas controlled by Turkey.

\textsuperscript{138} Iowa, State Census Collection, 1836-1925, “J.A. Papadopulos,” and “Lucre Papadopolus,” Year: 1915; Roll no.: IA915-299; Card nos.: B878 and B879.
Greek, hailed from Kentucky. Ten years later the couple are still living in a house at 111 South 2nd Street in Cedar Rapids, and still have the candy store. No children are listed. In the 1921 Cedar Rapids City Directory, Mr. Papadopulos was listed as a confectioner, and he and Lucretia lived at the same address as their business. Many other Greek names are listed in directory entries relating to the food business, suggesting a large Greek entrepreneurial community there. Mr. and Mrs. Papadopulos, like many of the Greeks in our story, both then disappear. Of course, by the 1920s, they are in their late 60s and perhaps they retired. They may have remained in Iowa, but there are no census rolls, city directories, or other records indicating what became of them.

Louis George Nichols was another early Greek immigrant in Decatur. Louis was born in Greece on March 18, 1872 and immigrated to America in 1890 at the age of eighteen. By 1900 he was living in Decatur, rooming with non-Greeks, and working as a candy maker. According to the city directory, Louis was in partnership with John F. Somerville, who was previously mentioned as a Decatur confectioner in addition to Mr. Papadopulos in 1899. In 1905 he married a non-Greek woman from Illinois, Lillian Burrows, in Chicago. They returned to Decatur to establish a family. Mr.

139 1920 United States Federal Census, Cedar Rapids, Iowa; Ward 4: Linn, Iowa; Roll T625_500; Page 1A; Enumeration District 116.
140 The last place they appear is in McCoy's 1921 Cedar Rapids City Directory (Rockford, IL: McCoy Directory Co., 1921): 455.
141 1900 United States Federal Census, Decatur Ward 1, Macon, Illinois; Roll: 323; Page: 10B; Enumeration District: 0047. He was listed in the 1900 federal census as having a Greek father and a German mother, but this is almost certainly an error as all other records show him having two Greek parents.
143 Illinois, Cook County Marriages, 1871-1920, Illinois Department of Public Records, Division of Vital Records, Springfield, Illinois. Louis was 33 and Lillian 18.
Somerville no longer appears in the 1907 city directory, but Louis is shown as owning the “Nicholas Candy Co.” He is also listed as being one of 8 retail confectioners with addresses on N. Water Street.\textsuperscript{145} Mr. Nichols continued as a candy maker in Decatur at least until 1912.\textsuperscript{146} Sometime between 1912 and 1920, he gave up the candy business and moved with his family to Delaware, Ohio, where in the 1920 federal census his occupation is given as a farmer.\textsuperscript{147} By 1930 Louis Nichols and his family seem to have given up farming and are living in Schoolcraft, Michigan where he is again a confectioner. His son, John, is a salesman in the candy store they own.\textsuperscript{148} Louis Nichols died in Schoolcraft in 1934 at age 62, and Lillian in 1968 at age 75.\textsuperscript{149}

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{144} 1910 United States Federal Census; Census Place: Decatur Ward 7, Macon, Illinois; Roll: T624_307; Page: 12B; Enumeration District: 0019. They eventually had three sons, Louis Burrows (1906-1977), Robert Francis (1908-1958), John Bennett (1912-2004), and a daughter, Dorothy Jane (1920-1988).
\textsuperscript{147} 1920 United States Federal Census; Census Place: Delaware, Defiance, Ohio; Roll T625_1376; Page: 17A; Enumeration District: 10. It is interesting to speculate that, like my grandfather, Mr. Nichols maintained a love for the land and saved the money he made from his candy business to eventually purchase a farm. By 1930, however, he is back in the candy business. My grandfather kept his candy business and let others farm his land.
\textsuperscript{148} 1930 United States Federal Census; Census Place: Schoolcraft, Kalamazoo, Michigan; Roll: 998; Page 5A; Enumeration District: 0055. Louis’ name is this census is given as Lewis G. Nichols.
\textsuperscript{149} Michigan, Deaths and Burials Index, 1867-1995. The descendants of Louis Nichols have placed extensive documentation of his life on Ancestry.com, including photographs of Louis and Lillian. See, for example, \url{http://trees.ancestry.com/tree/322572/person/-2095296079?ssrc=} (accessed 10/14/2013)
\end{flushright}
In Decatur the names Malleos and Balamos became synonymous with confectioneries and soda fountains in the city.  

Sam J. Malleos, along with his brothers Thomas, Nickolas J., and Peter J., came directly to Decatur from San Nicholas, Greece in 1903, and opened a confectionery, Sam’s, on North Water Street. He remained there for five years before moving to 114 Merchant Street on Lincoln Square. Sam was described as “a good business man and progressive, always endeavoring to make his place the most attractive in the city. Only recently he spent several thousand dollars in remodeling his place on Lincoln Square. He was known to practically everybody in Decatur.” Brother Thomas did not go into the confectionery business but began working initially in Decatur as a bridge worker on the Wabash Railroad, and remained a railroad employee as a section foreman, employment agent and interpreter. Nick and Peter went into the confectionery business with Sam, as the “Sam J. Malleos Brothers Co.”

Tragically, Sam and Thomas died in 1923 within two months of each other. Sam died from surgical complications, and Thomas was electrocuted assisting with wiring for a huge city festival. It appeared that Sam’s brothers, Nick and Pete, kept the business running. In 1925 Nick is listed as president and Pete is secretary and treasurer of the Sam

---


151 “Electric Shock Kills Tom Malleos,” *Decatur Herald*, July 9, 1923, p. 3; “Sam Malleos Dies Unexpectedly,” *Decatur Herald*, September 27, 1923, p. 11. Although Sam Malleos’ name appears in all the census records and city directories, the biographical information for this narrative was taken from his long obituary. The same is true for Thomas Malleos.
J. Malleos Brothers Co. They continued to maintain the business together until Peter died in 1945. Nick then ran the business himself until 1948, after which it appears he retired. Thus, Sam’s was a mainstay of the Decatur downtown for over forty-five years.

Peter J. Balamos established the American Ice Cream Company after arriving in Decatur in 1904. He lived with his Greek compatriots, James Kareotes and William Marinois, and partnered in the business with Kareotes. By 1925, Balamos and Kareotes’s business evolved into the American Confectionery. James Kareotes was also in partnership with Greek immigrants Gust Pappas and George, Thomas, and Andrew Greanias in the Central Park Confectionery. The American Confectionery and the Central Park Confectionery were located on N. Water Street in Decatur. Peter Balamos and James Kareotes were succeeded by their children in the American Ice Cream and Confectionery Company and it remained a favorite place to go for candy and ice cream until it closed in 1955.

---

153 “Malleos, Peter J.” Illinois, Deaths and Stillbirths Index, April 10, 1945.
154 According to Nick’s tombstone at the Fairlawn Cemetery in Decatur, Nick died on June 15, 1952.
Another Greek candy institution in Decatur was the Princess Confectionery, run by the Bacopulos brothers. Peter G. and William (Bill) Basil Bacopulos came to America in 1903 and first lived in Jacksonville, IL where they had a cousin, Basil Geanetas (or Geanetos, or Geanetes). These men all came from Dira, Greece, located near Tripolis. They were living together in Jacksonville in 1910.\footnote{“Peter Bacopulos,” “Basil Bacopulos,” “Basil Geanetas,” 1910 United States Federal Census; Census Place: Jacksonville Ward 2, Morgan, Illinois; Roll: T624_313; Page: 9B; Enumeration District: 0101.} Peter and Bill Bacopulos then moved to Decatur where Peter was listed as a confectioner in the 1915 Decatur City Directory.\footnote{“Bacopulos, Peter,” Ebel’s Decatur City Directory, 1915, comp. by Chas. O. Ebel (Decatur: Review Printing & Stationery Co., 1915): 754.} By 1921 Peter, Bill, and another Bacoupulos, John, had opened the Princess Confectionery and Peter kept it open until 1946.\footnote{“Bacopulos, Basil,” “Bacopulos, John,” and “Bacopulos, Peter,” Decatur City Directory, 1921 (Peoria, IL: Leshnick Directory Co., 1921): 103-104. It is not clear how John was related to Basil and Peter. “Bacopulos, Peter,” Decatur City Directory, 1946 (Decatur: Huston-Patterson, 1946): 16. For the directories after 1946 Peter’s name appears alone without mention of the Princess.}

In 2013 I interviewed Peter Haikalis, a grandson of Basil Geanetas, who shared with me this information about the chain migration from Dira, Greece to Jacksonville and the network from there to Decatur.\footnote{Ann Beck interview by telephone with Basil Geanetas, June 10, 2013. Mr. Geanetas did not have dates for many of these events. All of the following is based on this interview unless otherwise noted.} Peter told me that his grandfather came from a very poor family in Greece and made plans to immigrate to America. His steamship ticket, however, only allowed him to travel as far as the port in Marsailles, France, where he was not allowed to continue to America. He had no choice but to remain in France, where he lived for four to five years, and apprenticed with a confectioner. After earning enough his passage to America, he arrived at Ellis Island and then went to Eau Claire, Wisconsin
where there were others from his village he knew who had settled there. Basil then returned to Greece and married Vassiliki (Bessie) Chekos. Her father was the mayor of her village and was in the grain business, so this apparently was a good match with a dowry. The couple returned to America and settled in Jacksonville, Illinois, and Peter Haikalis’ mother, Basil and Bessie’s daughter, was born in 1911. With the Bacopulos cousins they formed the Jacksonville Ice Cream Company, which, Peter Haikalis reflected, looked like the Tuscola Candy Kitchen, which he and his brother visited in 2012. They took pride in their store and even ordered ice cream chairs from Austria. Basil and Bessie had five children; one died, and Peter claims that his mother was the favorite. She, and her siblings, would gravitate to the store after school to do their homework and work in the shop as needed. In 1929 Peter’s mother graduated from high school and was sent to Illinois College. Bessie Geanetas was illiterate and she wanted her daughter to be educated. According to Peter, his mother began a process for an arranged marriage; appropriate suitors were sent but it seems the men did not want to marry a woman who had attended college. As a result, she went to Decatur to stay with an aunt and there met her husband, Mr. Haikalis, who owned a grocery store. They were married in 1931 and stayed in Decatur until 1964, when he sold his businesses and moved to California. The Jacksonville Confectionery was sold in 1937 following Basil Geanetas’ death, and his son was not interested in continuing the business.

Another landmark Decatur confectionery was the Empress, with founding proprietors James K. Dovekas and Gust Constantopulos. James Dovekas was born in Katompolios, Greece in June 1889, and immigrated to Decatur, presumably from

Chicago, where he had returned to work with the National Tea Company by the 1940’s. 163 James and Gust Constantopulos then ran the Empress, 164 and Christ Constantopulos opened The Butterfly Confectionery. 165 Christ Constantopulos had been a grocery salesman in his own business in Chicago before joining the family in Decatur. 166 Christ later returned to Chicago and was a cook in Evanston according to the 1940 census. 167 Gust Constantopulos partnered with James Dalmares to establish The Chocolate Shop in 1928. 168

By the middle of the 1920’s other Greek confectioneries had been established. There was the Candyland Confectionery Co., operated by G.P. Stamas, James Sanas, D.A. Regiokos, and Pete Moukas, 169 Paul Dalamas and Peter Mitrakos had set up the Eureka Confectionery, 170 while Theo. Athas was listed as a confectioner on E. Eldorado Street. 171 Paul Dalamas’ son, Paul T., Jr. kept the Eureka opened into the 1950’s. 172

166 “Christ Constantopulos,” United States World War I Draft Registration; Local Board for Division No. 50, Roll: 1613569; Draft Board: 50.
167 “Christ Constantopulos,” 1940 United States Federal Census; Census Place: Evanston, Cook, Illinois; Roll: T627_778; Page 1B; Enumeration District: 16-185.
171 “Confectioners,” Ibid., p. 549.
We would also be remiss to exclude the Grenias brothers, George, Andrew, Tom, and Nick, originally from Kastri, Greece. As mentioned, J.G. Kareotes was in partnership with Peter Balamos in the American Ice Cream Company and Confectionery. The Greanias brothers, George, Thomas, and Andrew, and Gust Pappas, joined Kareotes to create Central Park Confectionery listed in the 1925 Decatur City Directory. Eventually the Grenias brothers moved out of the candy business and into the restaurant field, where they established the Lincoln Square Cafè in Decatur. Andrew immigrated to the United States at the age of twelve and immigrated to Decatur. His two sisters remained in Greece.173 Andrew lived only briefly in Chicago before moving to Chicago. Tom Greanias first opened the Lincoln Square Cafè in 1914, and was also working at the Central Park Confectionery.

Tom Grenias was born in a different village in Greece, Masklena in the province of Acadia, in 1883, a year before Andrew’s birth in 1894. Tom immigrated to America in 1899. He initially went to Chicago and then moved to Decatur. Tom was instrumental in the organization and establishment of the Greek Orthodox Church in Decatur and was active in the World War I Red Cross food drive.174 George Grenias immigrated to America in 1912 at the age of seventeen and went first to Chicago before joining his brother in Decatur in 1916 and helping to run the restaurant.175

Another confectionery established in the 1920’s was the Candyland Confectionery Company, run by George P. Stamas, James Sanas, Demetrius Rogiokos,

175 “G.C. Greanias Dies at 56,” Decatur Herald, October 23, 1963, p. 34.
and Pete Moukas.\textsuperscript{176} The Candyland remained open until around 1938.\textsuperscript{177} In 1935, Pete Moukas had opened his own shop, the Rainbow Confectionery, and he was one of the longer survivors, remaining in business at least until 1960.\textsuperscript{178} Although this research is focused upon the first two decades of the 1900’s, there were later Greek immigrants who also operated confectioneries in Decatur. These would include James Dalmares of the Chocolate Shop, which was in business from 1941 to 1961,\textsuperscript{179} and Kyros Ashemos, who ran the Ashemos Candy Shop from 1935 to 1966. Kyros Ashemos, and his brother Gus, was born in Kastansonhori, Arcadia, Greece. He became a very prominent member of the Decatur community. He was active in the Masons as well as the Greek Orthodox Church.\textsuperscript{180} His brother, Gus, operated a restaurant in Decatur before moving to Champaign.\textsuperscript{181}

The original Greek confectioners in Decatur, while maintaining a small ethnic conclave, became part of the established Decatur business community and reached out to a variety of customers, including as young adults. During the first two decades of the twentieth century, the Greek confectioners in Decatur advertised heavily in the high school yearbook of Decatur High School, the \textit{Decanois}. As with many advertising efforts by the first-generation Greeks, the ads revealed a rich narrative about pride in their businesses, the desire to articulate cleanliness and accessibility, and the fact that they

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{176} “Candyland Confectionery,” \textit{McCoy’s 1922 Decatur City Directory} (Decatur, IL: McCoy Directory Co., 1922): 555.
\textsuperscript{177} “Candyland Confectionery,” \textit{1938 Decatur City Directory} (Decatur, IL: Huston-Patterson, 1938): 467.
\textsuperscript{179} “James Dalmares,” \textit{Decatur Herald, Obituaries}, September 1, 1974, p. 25.
\textsuperscript{181} “Gus Ashemos,” \textit{Decatur Herald, Obituaries}, July 8, 1963, p. 3.
\end{flushleft}
were all in competition with each other despite the affinity they had in maintaining their chain migration networks.

Sam Malleos made his store and his name memorable by utilizing his first name as the moniker for his confectionery. He also advertised that his was “The Original Confectionery.” Malleos also proclaimed that “Our place is the cleanest, coolest and most sanitary place in the city. All interurbans and trolley cars stop in front of our store at the transfer house.” The Princess Confectionery underscored their “up-to-date and sanitary shop” and also staked their reputation on being “The coolest and most sanitary place in town.” The Empress Confectionery emphasized their location in the Empress Building and announced that their confections were “clean and fresh.” These ads were repeated over the course of several years through the 1920’s, and one can only assume that the emphases on sanitary conditions and the modernization of their stores was an effort to eradicate any anti-foreign characterizations of Greeks as having unclean environments and old-fashioned modes of operation. During one of the Klan’s more active years, Sam’s invited all patrons in because “Our place is always open to public inspection.” The Butterfly Confectionery in 1923, in contrast, simply advised teens to not forget them during the summer months.

High school yearbooks were not the only advertising method employed by the confectioners. The Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church, founded in 1927, not only

---

182 Decanois, Decatur High School Yearbook, 1914, p.162.
183 Ibid.
184 Ibid., p. 192.
185 Decanois, Decatur High School Yearbook, 1918, p. 170.
186 Decanois, Decatur High School Yearbook, 1924, p. 160.
served it parishioners in Decatur, but its reach touched most of the Greek communities in central Illinois. It published two histories, one completed in 1945, and a second in 1997 that celebrated its 70th anniversary. The Annunciation Church’s histories included pages advertising, congratulating, memorializing, announcing, recognizing, remembering, and honoring families and businesses in Decatur, Springfield, Champaign-Urbana, Pana, Mattoon, Charleston, Taylorville, Clinton, and other towns across central Illinois. Many of these celebrated the growth and success of the Greek, and Greek business, community. The church began on April 14, 1919, which was the date that the State of Illinois recognized the “Hellenic Society of Decatur, Illinois.” Founding trustees were familiar names: Sam Malleos, Nick Spell, Peter Balamos, James Dovekas, Peter Bacopoulos, George Calfas, and George Davis. They began to raise funds for the building of the Church, and in 1927, the project was completed and Rev. Emmanuel Papapanagiotou was the first Priest to say the Divine Liturgy on Christmas Day. Men elected as officers of the Church were Tom Greanias, Nick Malleos, William Frank, and William A. Chiagouris (ibid, p. 2). The first Greek Language School was established in 1931, and most of the second-generation Greek children were enrolled!

In the 1945 Church Dedication book, we find recognitions from families with sons who had served in World War II, such as the one for Lt. Commander Gus T. Greanias. Mrs. Christine Vriner of Champaign displayed a page of remembrance for her son, William, who had been killed in November 1944. (p. 23) “Beloved son and

---

188 Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church, 70th Anniversary, 1927-1997 (Decatur, IL: Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church, 1997): 2.
189 Ibid., p. 17.
190 Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church, Dedication, November Eleven, Nineteen Hundred and Forty-Five (Decatur: Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church, 1945): 20. The following references all come from this 1945 volume unless otherwise noted.
brother, Louie Poullos, who had been killed in 1945, was remembered by the Steve Poullos family. (p. 25) The “Ritz” in Hoopeston, Illinois proudly recognized the World War II service of “Lex” Samaras, who was pictured in his Lieutenant’s uniform. (p. 29) Vriner’s Confectionery in Champaign’s ad displayed a picture of son, Sammy, and congratulated the Church on its formal dedication. (p. 47).

Businesses, very much an integral part of the church family, also advertised, but there was no need in these messages to say they were clean and sanitary. They were mainly sending best wishes and congratulations to their own community. Pete Matrakos and family from the Eureka Confectionery (p. 26), the Ostademetriss brothers, Gregory and Chris, in Clinton (p. 41), Mr. and Mrs. Tom Nasis of the Gaiety Confectionery in Springfield (p. 72), Mr. and Mrs. George A. Kehayias and Family in Pana (p. 77), and the Greanias family (p. 83) all sent their compliments to the Church. Other Greek communities sending best wishes included the Lesaris Family and the Elite Confectionery in Champaign (p. 84), George Lekas Candy Company in Pana (p. 105), the White and Gold Confectionery in Urbana (p. 134), George’s Candy Shop in Taylorville (p. 143), Pete Tomaras and the Quality Restaurant in Champaign (p. 145), Louis Vrinios and the Olympia Confectionery in Urbana (p. 151), and Bill Pana in Charleston (p. 154). Of course, the Decatur confectioners were represented: Ashemos Candy Shop (p. 114), Central Park Confectionery (p. 119), American Ice Cream Co. and Pete Balamos and James Kareotes (p. 131), and the Haikalis Grocery in Decatur, with its connection to Jacksonville, also sent its compliments (p. 127). These early pioneers, not only in business, but also in developing a church community, demonstrated the importance of the
Greek Orthodox Church as a focal point for the Greek community that touched the single family in the small towns surrounding Decatur.

The Greeks in these small towns surely needed the sense of community that the Orthodox Church and the Greeks in the larger towns offered. There was often only a single Greek man, or perhaps one or two Greek families in most of these small towns. We shall now recognize and remember these Greeks, who, like my grandfather, worked hard and made a place for themselves in these rural communities in east central Illinois.

In the early 1900’s Greek immigrant, Peter John Loomis, “passed through” Decatur from Burlington, Iowa on his way to Cairo, Illinois. In 1900, Peter lived with his parents and wife, Annie, in Burlington, Iowa, and Peter, his father, John, and brother, George, ran a candy store.\textsuperscript{191} In the 1900 Burlington City Directory, the Greek Candy Factory is owned by “John Loomis & Sons.”\textsuperscript{192} Since Peter came to America in 1888, his brother in 1896,\textsuperscript{193} and his father only in 1899, it is possible that Peter began the candy store, or perhaps brothers and father began the store in 1900 after the father’s arrival.

\textsuperscript{191} 1900 United States Census; Census Place: Burlington, Des Moines, Iowa; Roll 429; Page 6A; Enumeration District: 0009. Peter’s father name is abbreviated as “Jno.” (born 1847) This census lists Peter’s father and mother, John and Mary Loomis, as coming to America in 1899, and Peter and his wife Annie in 1888, eleven years earlier. This suggests as well that Peter and Annie were married in Greece. In the 1902 Burlington City Directory, G.J. Loomis is listed as a “mfn. & dealer of ice cream & candy.” Gould’s County and City Directory, 1902 (Burlington, IA: Ora J. Gould, 1902-03): 212. In the 1907 Burlington City Directory there are 32 confectioners listed, although G.J. Loomis appears to be the only Greek. See “Confectioners,” McCoy’s Burlington Business Directory, 1907 (Rockford, IL: McCoy Directory Co., 1907): 202.

\textsuperscript{192} Gould’s City and Classified Business Directory, Burlington, 1900-1901 (Burlington, IA: Ora J. Gould, 1901): 212

\textsuperscript{193} George came over in 1896 at the age of 29 (birthday c.1867). His wife, Athanasia (Mouselers) Loomis, (age 18), came over in 1899, and could have travelled with her father-in-law, John, who also came over in that year, but I could find no evidence of this. See 1920 United States Federal Census; Census Place: Keokuk Ward 2, Lee, Iowa; Roll: 7625_498; Page: 13A; Enumeration District: 70.
Peter left Burlington shortly after this,\(^{194}\) and in 1910 George is listed as the proprietor of the candy store in Burlington.\(^{195}\)

Peter appears as a confectioner in the Decatur city directories for 1905, 1906 and 1907, with his residence the same as his business address.\(^{196}\) In the 1907 Decatur city directory there are 3 “manufacturing confectioners,” and 22 “retail confectioners” listed, which may have been a good reason to move, which he did. By 1909 he had left Decatur and relocated to Cairo, Illinois with his wife, Annie, and four children.\(^{197}\) In Cairo he established a confectionery, The North Pole Candy Kitchen.\(^{198}\) He was still in business with this enterprise in 1922,\(^{199}\) but Annie died in 1928, leaving Peter a widower. He then left the confectionery business and moved into the soft drink business.\(^{200}\)

Peter and George Loomis had another brother, Thomas, and the three brothers are good examples of the concept of chain migration. Thomas was born in Greece in 1875.\(^{201}\)

---

\(^{194}\) If one looks at all the records closely there is a hint that in 1900 Peter and Mary’s one-year old son, John, died. That may have been the reason for them leaving Burlington.

\(^{195}\) 1910 United States Federal Census; Census Place: Keokuk Ward 1, Lee, Iowa; Roll: T624_410; Page: 9B; Enumeration District: 0065.


\(^{197}\) 1910 United States Census; Census Place: Cairo Ward 3, Alexander, Illinois; Roll: T624_230; Page 3A; Enumeration District: 0006. Peter is listed as age 38 in this census, making his birth year around 1872.

\(^{198}\) 1915 Cairo, Illinois City Directory, compiled by Ernest H. Miller (Asheville, NC: Piedmont Directory Co., 1915): 232. His wife, Annie, and daughter, Mary, are listed as working at the North Pole Candy Kitchen as well; Mary as a “clerk.” (p. 231)


\(^{200}\) 1930 United States Census; Census Place: Cairo, Alexander, Illinoisin; Roll 406; Page: 3A; Enumeration District: 0003.

\(^{201}\) Thomas died on October 26, 1954.
and immigrated to America in 1907, although an article in a Greenup, Illinois history suggests that he made several trips back and forth to America to seek his fortune. In 1912, he became a confectioner with his brother, Peter, in Cairo. Eventually Thomas moved to Greenup, a town located on U.S. Route 40, south of Charleston, IL, and opened his own business, the Greenup Candy Kitchen, on the west side of the square. He later relocated to the southwest corner of the downtown business district and this confectionery and ice cream soda fountain remained in operation for approximately forty-five years. The initial living quarters were above the candy kitchen, as was common among Greeks just starting in their entrepreneurial endeavors.

There had been two confectioners in Greenup before Thomas Loomis: Julius Conzet (not a Greek) and another Greek, Thomas Kores. Kores moved to Effingham in 1910. After Thomas Loomis established his business, he returned to Greece and married Angela Kominos. They had six children, three of whom were born in Greece. Initially the family lived in Cairo, Illinois and then relocated to Greenup. Daughter Mary remained in Greece to care for the Loomis parents. In 1925 the Greenup Candy Kitchen was remodeled and updated and it became known for its ice cream, taffy, and triple-dip sundaes. Husband and wife, Tom and “Lil,” as Angela was called, were also known for their energetic banter. “Almost as celebrated as their sweets were the frequent domestic

---

203 “The Greeks—The Candy Kitchen,” in Greenup Jubilee 150 years 1834-1884, ed. by Bobbie Clarie Goodman, self-published, pp. 73-74
204 Ibid., pp. 75, 79. For Tom Kores, see the 1910 United States Census, 1910: Effingham Ward 2, Effingham, Illinois; Roll: T 624-286; Page: 6A; Enumeration District 0038. We shall discuss them more when we move to Effingham.
spats, staged in their native tongue, by Tom and Lil.”

In a brochure printed by the recently restored Greenup Candy Kitchen, there is an additional anecdote that Lil would sometimes chase Tom around the store with a butcher’s knife. The Loomis family remained in business until the early 1960’s. Lil, by then a widow, and her son Sam, kept the store open until Lil’s health declined. Her daughter, Niki, then took Lil back to Greece and they never returned. Sam closed the Candy Kitchen and returned to Greece as well.

The Greenup Candy Kitchen business was refurbished and reopened in the late 1990’s by a local, non-Greek, family, but it did not remain in operation and has since closed.

Up Old National Road 40 to the east of Greenup, is Marshall, Illinois where Tom Koutsoumpas, Nick Borglas, and Pete and George Hilakos established the Marshall Candy Kitchen in 1915, one of the earliest Greek immigrant businesses in small-town central Illinois. These four were commonly known as “The Greeks.”

---

205 Greenup Jubilee, p. 79.
207 Greenup Jubilee, p. 74.
209 Besides the “Greeks,” there were three other Greeks who all appear together in the 1920 Marshall census and then move on before the 1930 census. See “Peter Mazarokas,” “George Kanes,” and “George Metaxas” in 1920 United States Federal Census; Census Place: Marshall, Clark, Illinois; Roll: T625_302; Page: 9B; Enumeration District: 14. Peter Mazarokas or Moynayker (the name is unclear on the census) came to America in 1904 and is listed on the 1920 Marshall census but we do not know when he arrived in Marshall, when left, or where he went. His neighbors in 1920 were George Kanes and George Metaxas. George Kanes was listed as a proprietor of a candy kitchen, but it is not clear if this was the Marshall Candy Kitchen, or a second Greek confectionery in Marshall. George Metaxas immigrated in 1910. Although we cannot say for certain, Metaxas may have gone initially to East St. Louis, which might explain the chain migration to Marshall, as he could have met Tom Koutsoumpas there. For this connection see “George Metaxas,” 1910 United
Koutsoumpas kept their confectionery going until 1939 when John Rademaker purchased it.  

According to family legend, Tom Koutsoumpas was born in Amalios, Greece, the son of John and Katherine Koutsoumpas. He arrived in America at the age of seventeen and immigrated to East St. Louis. In the draft registrations records for WW I, there is a Vasilios Koutsoumpas in E. St. Louis; he is a druggist and may have been one of Tom’s relatives, which would account for Tom going there first. Tom married a local woman in 1922 and they had four sons and three daughters. He was active in the community and a member of the American Legion, the Masonic Lodge, and kept ties with the Ainad Temple of E. St. Louis.

We have little information about the Hilakos brothers. George G. Hilakos was born in March 1894 in Lagada, Greece. He came to America in 1909 and went directly to Springfield, Missouri, where, it appears, a relative, Constantinos Hilakeos, ran the

---

210 “Koutsoumpas,” in History of Marshall, Illinois and Eastern Clark County, 1978, compiled by the Clark County Democrat (Marshall, IL: Clark County Democrat, 1978): 150. Ruth Koutsoumpas Taylor submitted a brief biography of the Koutsoumpas family for this history. This is only place that Nick Borglas is mentioned and I could find no other information about him.
211 Ibid.
212 “Vasilios Koutsoumpas,” United States Draft Registration Cards, World War I; Registration City: East St. Louis; Registration State: Illinois; Registration County: St. Clair; Roll: 1613184; Draft Board: 1; Year: 1917.
214 “George G. Hilakos,” United States Draft Registration Card, World War I; Registration State: Illinois; Registration County: Clark; Roll: 1504089; Year: 1917. On this card George gives his birthplace as Lagada, Lagada Prov., Greece, and his occupation as a self-employed “Candy Maker” in Marshall, Illinois.
George arrived in Marshall sometime before 1915, presumably already somewhat knowledgeable about the confectionery business. At some point he left Marshall and moved to Mt. Vernon, Indiana, where he became a poultry producer. His brother, Peter Hilakos, moved to Greenville, Illinois to manage a restaurant.

When studying Greek confectioners in Pana, Illinois we begin with the story of George Kehias. George came to Pana from Centralia with five dollars in his pocket, according to legend, and bought a soda fountain business from a Mr. Hybarger. He then purchased ingredients to make taffy for Christmas and, having sold that, decided to remain in Pana. He went to the First National Bank for a loan, and that propelled him into a career as a highly successful businessman for many decades. He was one of eight children from the village of Vumbacou, near Sparta. His family lived in a valley and grew olives and oranges, but two brothers, George, and his brother Thomas,

George is 18 years of age, single, and from Laggada, Greece. He is travelling with two other people from Laggada: Nicholas Hilakeos (age 24) and Elias Vlahaviolas (age 35). In response to the question of whether they are going to join a relative or friend, all three give Constantinos Hilakos, 409 Boonville, Street, Springfield, MO.

216 In the city directory for Springfield, Missouri in 1906, two brothers, Paul and Chris Catrakis, are listed as confectioners at 409 Boonville Street. In the next available city directory, for 1915, we find at 409 Boonville Street the “Athens Candy Company.” The Catrakis brothers are no longer listed in 1915, but in neither directory could I find anyone named Constantinos Hilakos (or any of its variations). He may have been living in a small town near by. “Chris Catrakis” and “Paul Catrakis,” 1906 Springfield, Missouri City Directory (Springfield, MO: Citizens Directory Company, 1906): 112, 592; “Athens Candy Co.,” (Springfield, MO: Durham Directory Co., 1915): 583.

217 “George Hilakos,” United States World War II Draft Registration; Registration State: Indiana; Registration County: Posey; Registration City: Mt. Vernon; Registration Year: 1942. “Peter Hilakos,” United States Selective Service System, Selective Service Registration Cards: Fourth Registration, Record Group Number 147; and U.S. census, 1940, Greenville, Bond, Illinois; Roll: T627_759; Page: 7A; Enumeration District: 3-4). In 1948, a Peter Hilakos was listed in E. St. Louis associated with the Majestic Candy Shop and restaurant, but it is not clear if this is the same person. “Peter Hilakos,” 1948 East St. Louis City Directory (St. Louis: R.L. Polk & Co., 1948): 331.
immigrated to America. George arrived in New York in 1909 and first went to Wisconsin, where he had cousins. From there he went to Chicago, and then ventured down to Centralia before his final stop in Pana. Louis Kehias, a cousin, immigrated to America in 1904, and resided in Chicago for a while with his later business partner, Peter Leharis. They then travelled down to Mattoon and established a confectionery there. In a newspaper interview with George Kehias’ son, Avgary, he related that during World War I, his father’s cousin, Louis ran George’s store in Pana while George served in the Army. Avery eventually took over the Pana business after his father’s death in 1953. He fondly remembers contacting Louis for an English toffee recipe that included the temperature to which it should cook before pouring it out on the marble table, “but we know he didn’t use a thermometer,” Kehias laughed. He added that candy recipes and flavor formulas were exchanged and shared among the confectioners in Taylorville, Mattoon, and Champaign.

George Kehias married Katherine Haynes, a non-Greek woman from Riverton who met George while attending the opera in Pana. She embraced Greek customs, such as cooking, and the couple made multiple trips to Greece during their marriage. Of their five children, the eldest, Avgary, as mentioned, took over his father’s business with a partner, Auggie Kronshagen, a childhood friend who had worked in George’s from an early age. Avgary had attended the University of Illinois and Wayne State University in

221 Ibid.
Michigan as well as serving in World War II, but his heart was back in Pana. He and Auggie transitioned into ownership of George’s in 1949 and operated the business for the next forty-two years. Because of Avgary, George’s remained in business into the early 1990’s, which was pretty phenomenal for the small-town confectioneries and soda fountains. Driving through downtown Pana in 2013, however, it is clear that the once vibrant business district has become decimated, There were many empty buildings, and it was sad to think that George’s was once part of a thriving business community in the heart of a town.

Cousin Louis Kehias established his business, the Blue Bird Confectionery, in Mattoon in 1919, in partnership with Peter Lehares. Together they ran the Blue Bird Confectionery until Kehias’ retirement in 1946, when the business was sold to Fred J. McKibben, a confectioner, and Herman “Doc” Hutton. An article about Louis in the Mattoon Journal-Gazette mentioned that he had first worked in Newton before he settled in Mattoon. In Newton, there was a College Inn Confectionery, owned by John Argyros, and perhaps he took over the business from Louis Kehias, although I found no evidence in the archives to support that conclusion. Mr. Argyros, however, was in business for several years and advertised in the Newton Community High School yearbooks in 1921 through 1926. Argyros’ advertisements announcing “Our Candies are Always Fresh and Pure,” echo the ads from the Decatur yearbooks and the same type

---

of advertising was demonstrated in the Newton Press in 1927.\textsuperscript{225} It appears that Mr. Argyros did not remain in Newton after the end of the 1920’s.

Louis Kehias never married, but was active in the Mattoon community. He joined the Masons and was a member of the Elks Lodge in Danville, IL.\textsuperscript{226} The Blue Bird Confectionery was part of a restaurant/confectionery partnership with Peter Lehares. Pete ran the confectionery from 1921 until 1953, working with the newer owners after it was sold in 1946. Peter was also a Mason and a member of the Decatur Greek Orthodox Church.\textsuperscript{227} Peter was married to Stella Rezinas, the sister of the Shelbyville confectioner, Tom P. Rezinas.\textsuperscript{228}

As discussed in Chapter 5, Mattoon was notorious for spawning an extremely active Ku Klux Klan membership in the mid-1920’s, but, like my grandfather and other Greeks in central Illinois, Louis Kehias and Pete Lehares just kept on with their daily tasks and rising above the fray. They continued to advertise, even during the worst of the Klan years, proclaiming the Blue Bird Candy Shop to be the “Coolest Place in Town,” and urging all to stop in for ice cream and a soda.\textsuperscript{229}

There was another early Greek immigrant in Mattoon, who, while not a confectioner, deserves some mention. This is Peter J. Sutter, or Peter Sotiropoulou. His

\begin{itemize}
  \item[\textsuperscript{226}] “Obituaries: Louis Kehias,” \textit{Coles County Daily Times-Courier}, April 4, 1972, p. 3.
  \item[\textsuperscript{227}] “Obituaries: Peter D. Lehares,” \textit{Mattoon Journal-Gazette}, June 29, 1966, p. 3.
  \item[\textsuperscript{228}] “Tom Rezinas, Lakewood, Dies Sunday,” \textit{Shelbyville Daily Union}, August 18, 1980, p. 4.
  \item[\textsuperscript{229}] \textit{Mattoon Journal-Gazette}, August 8, 1923, p. 2.
\end{itemize}
story is representative of many we have already explored, but one worth sharing due to
the central Illinois links to Springfield and Champaign with the Katsinas family, who
were also in the food business like Mr. Sutter. Peter Sutter owned and operated the
Victory Café in Mattoon. The Victory was the type of roadside restaurant from yesterday
year that Will Anderson later eulogized in *America’s Golden Era Roadside Restaurants,
Where Have You Gone, Starlight Café?* ²³⁰

According to Peter Sutter’s daughter’s recollections as recorded in a History of
Coles County, he was born in 1890 in Aegeon, Greece, and immigrated to America in
1903. A tag attached to his clothing said he was destined for St. Louis. He worked in St.
Louis at the Mayflower Hotel for $3 per week, beginning as a bus boy and working into
more advanced positions of waiter and assistant chef. This experience gave him a great
opportunity to learn the food business from the ground up. Peter’s brother, Anthony, and
another brother, Michael, immigrated to America several years later. Anthony became a
confectioner in Peoria, Illinois, working at the Lekas Candy Store and Restaurant. Peter
and Michael both worked in St. Louis until they enlisted in the Army, fighting in World
War I. Returning to St. Louis, Peter met John Katsinas, later famous in
Champaign/Urbana for his restaurants. They formed a partnership and moved to Decatur
where they opened a restaurant. Peter and John Katsinas then took their partnership to
Mattoon in 1919, where they opened The Victory Café. The space soon became too small
and they relocated to larger quarters in 1923 as the business prospered. Having
established himself, Peter returned to Greece in 1923 and to the village of Gropa, near his
home village of Aegeon. There he married Photula Marantis. They returned to Mattoon

and raised a family. During the Depression years, Peter and John Katsinas dissolved their partnership and John moved to Champaign. Peter Sutter’s Victory Café was well known and beloved by Mattoon citizens. Pete was a good community participant and volunteer, holding office in the American Legion and becoming active in the Illinois State Restaurant Association, becoming President at one time, demonstrating a more prominent involvement outside of Mattoon. In 1950, Pete unfortunately suffered a cerebral hemorrhage. The Victory was sold in 1957 after thirty-eight years in business.\textsuperscript{231}

Charleston lies a few miles east of Mattoon, and there another “bachelor Greek confectioner” created a downtown institution, the Corner Confectionery. William Panas, or Panagiotopolos, began his confectionery career apprenticing with Coutrakon and Kerasotes confectioners in Springfield in 1918,\textsuperscript{232} before moving to Charleston and opening his own confectionery in 1920. Local historians say that that Louis Kerasotes owned the Charleston confectionery in 1910 before he moved to Springfield,\textsuperscript{233} although there is no census data that places Louis Kerasotes in Charleston at that time. I met Mr. Panas as an undergraduate student at Eastern Illinois University and he knew my father and grandfather. His place on the northeast corner in downtown Charleston looked like most of the Greek confectioneries, including ours, replete with the parquet tile floor that is still in place today, in what is now the Uptowner Bar.

We have an interview with Bill Panas, conducted by Candy Hoem, an Eastern Illinois University student, in February, 1971. Panas described the gaslights that used to illuminate the shop and the different types of confections that he created and sold: taffy, caramels, pecan rolls and peanut brittle, all standard fare for those of us in the business. For the original price of 20 cents per pound, folks could enjoy the bounty of homemade goodness. Mr. Panas installed an air-conditioner in 1934 that he claimed was the first one in town. Other than employing electric lighting, Ms. Hoem reflected that in the early 1970’s the store looked much the same as it might have when it opened, were it not for Panas’ advancing age, the decline of the downtown retail business community, and the booths along the back of the store with their dusty shelves, all of which made her realize that the Corner Confectionery was a dying testament to another era. It seemed to be a sad foil against the newer McDonalds dotting the region then.

Mr. Panas told Hoem that until the late 1960’s the candy was still manufactured in the basement of the store, as we did at Flesor’s Candy Kitchen until my father, subedly encouraged by the local public health department, moved the candy making upstairs into a more sanitary location. Panas said that his recipes were “acquired from other candy shops and other candy makers. ‘Not everything can be learned from books,’ he said, reflecting the ongoing connections and communications among Greek confectioners in the region.”

Mr. Panas died in May 1977 after a long hospitalization. In his obituary it stated that, “memories of his ice cream and candy store will remain with many former EIU

---

students and Charleston residents.\textsuperscript{235} His Corner Confectionery on the northeast corner of the Charleston Square was one of many properties he had acquired in his over fifty years in Charleston. He owned the Lincoln Building and also founded the Charleston National Bank, reflecting his great financial success and what the newspaper dubbed a “rags to riches” life. It was reported that he immigrated to America by stowing away in a ship bound for New York, and received aid from a Greek Orthodox Church there before joining relatives in Milwaukee. In Milwaukee he worked in a grocery store and managed to save his money to become a partner in the business. We know he went to Springfield, but his obituary states that he went to Decatur as well “with the goal of starting an ice cream and candy store. After looking over several communities in the Central Illinois area, he purchased an existing store...” in Charleston.\textsuperscript{236} Burl Ives, the famous actor and folk singer, and a former EIU student, is said to have been one of his best customers. Mr. Panas died a very wealthy man. He had no family in Charleston, but had a sister and several nieces and nephews in Greece. He left his entire, and considerable, fortune to them.\textsuperscript{237}

Further east from Charleston along Highway 16 is Paris, Illinois, home of another Greek confectioner, Stavros John Papadakos. Papadakos owned and operated the Papadakos Confectionery and Soda Fountain, which he began in 1908.\textsuperscript{238} It was a popular place for decades, and although Stavros passed away in May 1947,\textsuperscript{239} the business

\textsuperscript{236} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{237} Ibid. Bill Panas was also a member of the Greek Orthodox Church in Decatur.
continued for approximately ten more years before it closed. One Paris native, Paul Jacobs, remembers as a teen in the 1930’s that “the place was so busy on Saturday night, they charged a 10 cent admission! It was quite the hang out.”\textsuperscript{240} Mr. Papadakos came from the Sparta region and immigrated to the United States in 1896.\textsuperscript{241} He first went to Terre Haute, Indiana, where he partnered with a Greek man named James Zarafonetis in 1901 in the “Papadakos & Zarafonetis Confectionery,” at 676 Wabash Ave.\textsuperscript{242} Sometime soon after, Zarafonetis made his way from Terre Haute south to Vincennes, Indiana, and became a well-known confectioner there.\textsuperscript{243} It appears that in 1904 Stavros partnered at the same location with James and Peter Georgopoulos in Terre Haute,\textsuperscript{244} so he had several years to learn the confectionery trade before moving to Paris and starting his own business in 1908.

\textsuperscript{240} Ann Beck interview with Paul Jacobs, December 4, 2013, Flesor’s Candy Kitchen, Tuscola, Illinois.
\textsuperscript{242} “Confectioners, Papadakos & Zarafonetis,” \textit{Ebel’s Terre Haute, Indiana City Directory, 1901-1902} (Terre Haute, IN: Charles O. Ebel, 1901-02): 544, 761, 921. It seems that they lived at this address as well, perhaps above the store as was so common.
\textsuperscript{244} “Confectioners, Papadakos & Georgopoulos,” \textit{Terre Haute City Directory, 1904} (Terre Haute, IN: Moore & Langen Printing, 1904): 799. Papadakos seems to have also had a second store because on the same page under “Confectioners,” and just up the street at 826 Wabash Avenue, is an independent store listed under “Papadakos Staphe. J.”
A brief mention of the Villa Grove Confectionery will highlight the Chunges brothers and their business. John Chunges immigrated to America in 1905 and was joined by his brother, Tom, in 1907. Their business was active in the 1920’s.

Arcola, Illinois, which lies seven miles south of Tuscola, was home to one Greek confectioner, Mike Poulis, my father’s godfather. Mr. Collin “Corky,” Cain, described Mike Poulis as an “old Greek,” and stated that Mike was well-liked in the community and that he made the best candy and ice cream from local farm sources—much like the current trend of “farm to table.” Dr. Robert Arrol, longtime Arcola resident, concurred with Mr. Cain’s assessment of Mike. “Mike was tall and strong and had an accent; he was well-liked and made great candy. He was a great kidder. On April Fool’s Day he would dip onions in chocolate as a joke!”

Mike Poulis moved to Arcola in the latter part of 1914 and opened the Arcola Candy Kitchen on February 4, 1915. He retired on February 14, 1951 and the business continued until 1965 under the management of Mike’s partner, Ben Bushu, who had joined him in 1945.

Mike was born in 1888 in Patros, Greece. According to Mike’s son, Mike P. Poulos, Jr., after arriving in New York Mike travelled to the Baltimore area, then to

---

Chicago, and somehow made a connection with Mr. Vaky in Champaign. Mike then worked for Mr. Vaky and learned the confectionery trade. When he was ready, Mr. Vaky helped Mike get started in Arcola, another town on the north-south railroad line with a main road, Route 45, that went to Chicago. Mike, Jr. remembered that he was sent across the street to buy butter for the English toffee and that his father would dip his hand into the copper kettle, pick up a bit of boiling hot toffee in his hand to determine if it was done, and then run his hand under cold water. Trips to Tuscola were frequent and Mike, Jr. was enlisted to work for my grandfather as a teen. He ran the popcorn machine\textsuperscript{250} on Saturday nights and worked after school.

Mike Poulis was another Greek business success story. He purchased farmland during the Depression, as my grandfather did, and utilized income from that to augment his business. Mike Jr. was not interested in continuing in the business and Ben Bushu, a local Arcola resident, took over the store.\textsuperscript{251} Larry Bushu, Ben’s son, shared that the relationship between Mike and Ben began when Ben went to work for Mike after he finished high school. Larry stated that he, in turn, worked for Mike as well when he was in seventh and eighth grade, and it was a wonderful environment in which to work and to meet the public. Larry recalled that Mike and Ben kept the candy and ice cream recipes in their heads and shared them orally. They kept in constant communication with the Tuscola Greeks as well as the Champaign contingent, and would exchange supplies with

\textsuperscript{250} We still have this antique popcorn popper/peanut roaster on display in our store.

\textsuperscript{251} Ann Beck interview with Mike P. Poulis, Jr., March 20, 2013, Decatur, Illinois.
the Lessaris family. Larry was not interested in working with his father in the business either so the Arcola Candy Kitchen closed in the mid-1960’s.\footnote{Ann Beck interview with Larry Bushu, March 20, 2013, Arcola, Illinois; “Arcola ‘Saddened’ by Closing of Arcola Candy Kitchen,” \textit{Arcola Record-Herald}, September 23, 1965, p. 7.}

Of course, speaking of English toffee, the most important question of all confectionery questions in east central Illinois is, “who really taught the Heath family, famous for the nationally known Heath Bar, how to make toffee?” To try and find an answer to that answer, we must move southeast to Robinson, Illinois. There we begin with the Souris brothers, John, Peter, and Theodore, who opened The Original Robinson Candy Kitchen in 1911.\footnote{See “Better than Diamonds, Sweet as Honey,” an advertisement for the Original Robinson Candy Kitchen, in the Robinson, Illinois Business Directory, 1911 (Quincy, IL: W.H. Hoffman, 1911): 153, 157.} Their business was located on the west side of the downtown square and it appears that they lived above the store. John Souris had originally migrated to Peoria and was a clerk there for confectioner James Basil in 1906.\footnote{“Basil, James, confr,” and “Souris, John, clr.” \textit{White’s 1906 Peoria Directory} (Peoria, IL: John A. White, Publisher, 1906): 85, 745.} It appears, however, that Souris brothers did not remain in Robinson long as they sold their confectionery to B.G. Olwin in 1912, according to a brief Heath Candy Company history.\footnote{Bittersweet: The Story of Heath Candy Co.” by Richard J. Heath with Ray Elliott (1994, Tales, Inc., Urbana, Illinois): 42.} John Souris eventually moved to Alton, Illinois, where he opened a restaurant called the Campus Inn.\footnote{“John Souris,” 1930 United States Federal Census; Census Place: Alton, Madison, Illinois; Roll: 540; Page: 5B; Enumeration District: 3: “Souris, John,” and “Restaurants, Campus Inn,” \textit{Huber’s Alton City Directory}, 1933 (Alton: Huber Directory Co., 1933): 463, 722.}
After B.G. Olwin purchased the business from the Souris brothers, he sold it to L. S. Heath in 1914.\textsuperscript{257} L.S. Heath ran a confectionary and soda fountain in this location for approximately eighteen years as the Heath Brothers’ Store.\textsuperscript{258} However, one intriguing and somewhat mysterious figure in this tale is that of an American confectioner, born in South Bend, Indiana to a French father and a Swiss mother, named Maurice Andrew Jonquet. He was initially the principal confectioner in Mr. Heath’s store. The question arises then as to whether the recipe for the toffee came from Mr. Jonquet, or from the Greek candy makers in Champaign—Mr. Vaky or Mr. Vriner perhaps? Called “trail toffee,” this confection may also have come from a recipe shared by the traveling salesmen passing up and down the railroad lines and roads from Chicago around the Midwest.\textsuperscript{259} According to the official Heath Candy literature, L.S. Heath’s eldest son, Bayard, took the basic toffee recipe and developed it into what is now known as the Heath Bar. It was first offered for sale in 1928. “The confection grew in popularity and word quickly spread that the Heath Brothers Confectionery was the one and only place to get the delicious ‘English Toffee.’ This was the era of the oil boom in southern Illinois, and many travelers passed through the city. It was traditional to take Heath English Toffee with them when departing.”\textsuperscript{260}

If only the Champaign Greeks had had the foresight to recognize how valuable their recipe was, they might have made the fortune rather than Mr. Heath. The other

\textsuperscript{259} Ibid., p. 48.
\textsuperscript{260} This quote is found on page 2 of a printed brochure for sale in the Heath Company gift shop in Robinson. “Heath,” (Robinson: L.S. Heath and Sons, n.d.): p. 2.
person who might have been responsible for it all, the Heath Brothers’ original
confectioner, Maurice Jonquet, had been born on June 3, 1885 in South Bend, Indiana.  
In 1900, in the South Bend City Directory, his father is listed as a cook.  
Maurice was then age 15, and working as a dry goods clerk.  
We can assume that he honed his cooking skills with his father’s guidance, because by 1912 he was married, living in
Mishawaka, Indiana, and listed as a candy maker for Solari and Co., a candy company in
in that city.  
He then moved to Robinson, Illinois to work with the Heath Brothers,
before moving on to Decatur, Illinois by 1920.  
Here he settled down with his wife and at least four children, and was listed as a candy maker for many years in the city
directories.  
We shall probably never know if the Greeks or the French influenced the creation of the Heath Bar!

Effingham also shares a rich Greek confectionery history. It was a city with a population of five thousand and it was the county seat. This made Effingham about the

261 “Maurice Andrew Jonquet,” United States, World War I Draft Registration Cards, 1917-1918, Registration State: Illinois; Registration County: Crawford; Roll: 113185. Interestingly, on this card, he gives his occupation as “Mgr. Ice Cream Factory, L.S. Heath, Robinson.”
262 “Jonquet, Maurice,” 1900 United States Federal Census; Census Place: South Bend, St. Joseph, Indiana; Roll: 402; Page: 20B; Enumeration District: 0128. It is here that we learn his father was French and his mother was Swiss.
263 Ibid.
264 Jonquet, Maurice,” Hibberd’s South Bend and Mishawaka City Directory, 1912 (South Bend, IN: Hibberd Directry Co., 1912): 1066.
265 “Jonquet, Maurice,” 1920 United States Federal Census; Census Place: Decatur, Macon, Illinois; Roll: T625_384; page, 5B; Enumeration District: 132. His wife’s name was Laura and the children were Eugue (10), Marguerite (8), Gertrude (5) and Robert (10/12).
266 Jonquet, Maurice,” McCoy’s Decatur City Directory, 1922 (Decatur, IL: Review Printing & Stationery, 1922: 291; “Jonquet, Maurice,” Decatur City Directory (Decatur, IL: Huston-Patterson, 1944): 235. He must have retired shortly after this and died in Litchfield, Illinois on August 11, 1947. He is buried in Graceland Cemetery in Decatur.
average size of the other small towns in which the Greek confectioners located.

Effingham’s early Greek settler was Thomas Kores. In the 1910 census, Thomas Kores was listed as a candy maker in retail, born in Greece. Besides his wife and children, there is also a Georgios Louis Kores rooming with them. This may be Thomas’ brother.\(^{267}\) In the 1912 Effingham City Directory, Mr. Kores advertised his “Effingham Candy Kitchen, Home-made Ice Cream and Candy.”\(^{268}\) There was also an advertisement in the 1914 *Echo*, the senior class yearbook for Effingham High School.\(^{269}\) There were two spellings of Mr. Kores’ name; one was Koeres and the other was Kores.\(^{270}\) There were five other confectioners listed in Effingham at the time; Mr. Kores was the only Greek. The 1920 census tells us much more about him. He is still in Effingham, still in the confectionery business. Tom was born in Greece, as was his wife, Aderta. In 1920 he was 52 and Aderta is 46. He has six children, ranging in age from 18 to 5/12 months. His older daughter, Amanda, was also born in Greece; all the other children in Illinois. Tom, Aderta, and Amanda immigrated to America in 1902, and all three became naturalized

\(^{267}\) “Thomas Kores,” 1910 United States Federal Census; Census Place: Effingham Ward 2, Effingham, Illinois; Roll: T624_286; Page: 6A; Enumeration District: 0038. The names for the family on this census are poorly written and difficult to read. On his World War I draft registration card, Georgios gives his birthplace as Greece and his occupation as candy maker and ice cream, working for T. Kores. His nearest relative he says is Panagiota (Peter) Louis Kores in Sparta, Greece. See United States, World War I Draft Registration Card; Registration State: Illinois; Registration County: Effingham; Roll: 1613398.


\(^{269}\) “Effingham Candy Kitchen,” *The Echo*, Effingham High School Yearbook, 1914, advertising section, no page number.

citizens in 1907. Amanda is listed as a “saleslady” in the candy store in 1920.\textsuperscript{271} There is one recollection gathered for a newspaper article by Peggy Pulliam from a Mr. Ivar Knowles who remembered Tom Kores’ Candy Kitchen in 1910 or 1911 as being originally located on the west side of Banker Street, but that it later moved to the building that had housed a drug store.\textsuperscript{272} In a follow-up piece, Mrs. Pulliam elaborated on the confectionery: “Of the many stores in the Loy Building, the best remembered is the Kandy Kitchen. A Greek by the name of Tom Kores made mouth-watering delicacies. Later, Louie Licos and his brother, also Greeks, continued selling homemade candies there. At that time the Austin Building (now Jansens) had been a movie theater, so the Kandy Kitchen was a very popular place.”\textsuperscript{273} It appears that Mr. Kores had sold his business to the Licos brothers by the 1920’s, and indeed, in the next available city directories, Mr. Kores is no longer listed, and the Licos brothers are given as the proprietors of the Effingham Candy Kitchen.\textsuperscript{274} It is not clear what happens to the Kores family after this. They do not appear in later censuses. Like several others in this study, the Greek candy makers seem to disappear, even after, as with Tom Kores, an approximately ten to fifteen year stay in Effingham that was seemingly successful.

\textsuperscript{271} “Thomas Kores,” 1920 United States Federal Census; Census Place: Effingham Ward 2, Effingham, Illinois; Roll: T625_366, Page: 6A; Enumeration District 54.
The only records available for the Licos brothers are the Effingham telephone directories, where they are listed through the 1930’s. This indicates an investment in their business over time.275 A clever advertisement in the 1928 Signet, the Effingham High School yearbook, extolled the Candy Kitchen’s virtues with a poem:

“The Song That Everybody Should Know”
For Ice Cream and Candies that can’t be beat
  Go to the Candy Kitchen, the House of all Sweets;
It’s the CANDY KITCHEN, the place you surely know,
  It’s where the Ice Cream Lovers go.
And if to the play you happen to go,
  Just visit us right after the show;
It makes no difference, early or late,
  You’ll find us always up-to-date.
Our Ice Cream and Candies are made of Pure Cream
  And tastes good whenever and wherever seen;
Quality and Quantity both combined,
  When once you try you’ll say—
“Candy Kitchen for mine.”
  So don’t delay, but come today,
To the EFFINGHAM CANDY KITCHEN276

Louis Licos included his photograph in his yearbook ads. In the 1935 edition he did not advertise the Candy Kitchen, but supported the boys in their athletic

275 Part of the problem as well is that, for whatever reason, there are not many public records available for Effingham. In the Effingham telephone directories there are the following listings: July, 1931, p. 3 listing for Effingham Candy Kitchen; p. 6, listing for Louis Licos; June, 1932, p. 3 listing for Effingham Candy Kitchen; p. 6 listing for Louis Licos; 1935, listing for Louis Licos, p. 6.
276 1928 Signet, Effingham High School yearbook, advertising section, no page number.
achievements. In an ad in the 1938 Signet he left his name out but included the names of his brothers.

The Licos brothers were listed in the January 1939 phone directory, but not the one for July, 1939. However, a new name becomes associated with the Effingham Candy Kitchen in 1938, that of James Potakes (or Potakis). He had earlier been in Vandalia, Illinois, where he registered for the draft in 1918 and gave his occupation as “clerk” in the Vandalia Confectionery. In 1920 he is still living in Vandalia, as a roomer with James and Mary Seolas, along with James Clenfis and Alex Karon, and all four were listed as candy makers in the 1920 census. In 1928, however, James moved north to Champaign-Urbana, where he linked up with Mr. Vaky and got a job at Vaky’s as a soda dispenser. He remained in Champaign and lived with the George Samaras family, another familiar name, and was listed as working in a confectionery in the 1930 census. James was still single, but then migrated south again to Effingham where he placed a Christmas ad in the newspaper in 1938 that shows he is now the owner the

---

277 1935 Signet, Effingham High School, Effingham, Illinois, advertising section, no page number.
279 Effingham Telephone Directory, listing for Louis Licos, p.3. I have not been able to find any clear reference to the Licos Brothers after this date either.
280 “James Potakes,” United States, World War I Draft Registration, September 12, 1918; Registration State: Illinois; Registration County: Fayette County; Roll: 1613399.
Effingham Candy Kitchen. He evidently remained in the area and married a local woman; they resided in Sigel, a small town north of Effingham. James also enlisted for service in World War II and served from September 9, 1942 through September 24, 1943. He died and was buried in Sigel, Illinois, in 1958.

The Greek confectionery story in Vandalia began with Jim Pappas, who was listed in the 1910 census as a widower; he was joined there later by Charles Petter and George Colovos, but there is no evidence that they remained long in Vandalia. The original Vandalia connection mentioned above with Mr. Potakes yields more links to central Illinois. James Seolas operated a confectionery there by 1918, which was indicated in his World War I draft registration and the 1920 U.S. census records. He had established a family by then but moved to Springfield at least before 1933 when he is listed in the city directory as a luncheonette owner in the Famous Department Store.

---


285 National Archives and Records Administration; Washington, D.C.; Applications for Headstones for U.S. Military Veterans, 192501941; National Archives Microfilm Publication: A1, 2110-C; Record Group Title: Records of the Office of the Quartermaster General; Record Group Number: 92; wife listed as Emma Potakes.


287 “James Seolas,” United States, World War I Draft Registration; Registration State: Illinois; Registration County: Fayette; Roll: 1613399, June 5, 1917. This document states that he was self-employed in a confectionery, and originally immigrated from Corinth, Greece; “James Seolas,” 1920 United States Federal Census; Census Place: Vandalia Ward 2; Fayette, Illinois; Roll: T625_367; Page: 9A; Enumeration District: 94.

The Seolas family later relocated to Phoenix, Arizona and where they operated the Capitol Lunch.\textsuperscript{289}

One other boarder with the Seolas family in 1920, excluding Mr. Potakis, was Alex Karon, who also migrated to Springfield and became a partner in a confectionery, which will be discussed later as we explore the Greeks in the capitol city.\textsuperscript{290} I was not able to uncover much information on James Clenfis.

It appears that the entire Seolas household left Vandalia and migrated to Effingham and Springfield. One reason for their departure may have been competition from the Matalas brothers, Gus and John, who owned and operated a confectionary in Vandalia for many years. In the 1940 census, Gus is listed as the proprietor of a cafe.\textsuperscript{291}

The Matalas migration was a mobile one. I believe that the patriarch of the family, Nicolas Matalas, immigrated to the United States in 1909 from Arachors, Greece, with his sons, Constantinos (Gust) and Joannis (John); wife Penelope was left behind in Greece for the time.\textsuperscript{292} They say on the manifest form at Ellis Island that they are going to go stay with a cousin who has a restaurant in Chicago.

\textsuperscript{290} “Alex Karon,” 1930 United States Federal Census; Census Place: Springfield, Sangamon, Illinois; Roll: 559; Page: 4A; Enumeration District: 0042.
\textsuperscript{291} “Gus Matalas,” United States Federal Census; Census Place: Vandalia, Fayette, Illinois; Roll: T 627_801; Page 7A; Enumeration District: 26-25.
\textsuperscript{292} “Nicholas Matalas,” List, or Manifest of Alien Passangers for the United States Immigration Officer at Port of Arrival, Ellis Island, New York. Last Place of Residence: Arachors, Greece; Ship: S.S. Oceania; Port of Departure: Patras; Ship of Travel: Oceania; Manifest Line Number: 0021.
Nicholas moved to St. Louis in 1910, but it is not clear if his sons accompanied him. He is listed as a confectioner.\(^{293}\) There was also a Peter Matalas who lived in St. Louis in 1910, so perhaps they were related. We next find Nicholas Matalas in W. Frankfort, Illinois, where he died in July 1917. His occupation was listed as a confectioner merchant and he was fifty-five years old.\(^{294}\) Nicholas’ wife, Penelope, had immigrated to West Frankfort, Illinois in 1914, and lived there in 1920 with her two sons, Gust and John.\(^{295}\) Previously, though, the sons had migrated to Paducah, Kentucky, either from Chicago or St. Louis, to establish their own business.\(^{296}\) As indicated by his World War I draft registration, John had moved back to West Frankfort, Illinois by 1917.\(^{297}\) The sons joined their mother in 1920, perhaps to continue their father’s business.

John Matalas branched out alone; however, and it appears he took over a confectionery in Mt. Carmel from the Greek Govits brothers. They had come to Mt. Carmel a short time before, and did not remain there long before selling to John Matalas. Matalas changed the name of the Govits brothers’ business from the Mt. Carmel Candy Kitchen to Candyland, and his first ad appeared in the 1923 Christmas edition of the newspaper. It urged buyers to purchase sweets for shipment or immediate delivery, and announced that he was operating an ice cream dispensary as well as a confectionery.\(^{298}\)

\(^{293}\) “Nicholas Matalas,” Gould’s 1910 City Directory of St. Louis, Missouri (St. Louis: Gould’s, 1910): 1361.
\(^{295}\) Penelope Matalas,” 1920 United States Federal Census: Census Place: Frankfort, Franklin, Illinois; Roll: T625_364; Page 6B; Enumeration District: 34.
\(^{297}\) “John Matalas,” United States, World War I Draft Registration; Registration State: Illinois; Registration County: Franklin; Roll: 161304, June 5, 1917.
However, John Matalas’ time in Mt. Carmel was also short-lived, for unknown reasons. He next migrated north to Casey, Illinois, and opened another Candyland Confectionery, replete with a grand opening featuring an orchestra and the dispensing of carnations. The local report from February 1925 was that the Candyland was “one of the best appointed in this part of the state. The interior was blue and white with a flashing sign said to have cost $500.” This venture did not last long either, and John Matalas returned to Vandalia to partner with his brother. They were both listed in the 1930 census in Vandalia and remained until around 1940. Gust and his family, including his mother, Penelope, were listed in the 1940 Vandalia census, but both brothers then migrated again to Henderson, North Carolina. Thus ended the peregrinations of the Matalas brothers in Illinois.

Before John Matalas migrated to Casey, Sam Stergos had attempted to open and maintain a confectionery there. Our earliest record of Mr. Stergos is from the 1920 census, where we learn that he had immigrated to the United States in 1902 while his wife, Alexandria, immigrated in 1915. One interesting note: Sam was listed racially as “White and Octoroon.” His time in Casey was short as well, since we know John Matalas comes to Casey in the mid-1920’s. By 1930 the Stergos family had moved to St. Louis.


301 “Sam Stergos,” 1920 United States Federal Census; Census Place: Casey, Clark, Illinois; Roll: T625_302; Page: 1B; Enumeration District: 5.
where Sam was working in a canning manufacturing plant.\textsuperscript{302} There were no other Greek confectioners in Casey. Bertram’s Fresh Candies, not owned by Greeks, had been an established institution since 1904 and remained in business until 1955. Perhaps in a small town such as Casey, one confectionery was enough.\textsuperscript{303}

Returning to Mt. Carmel, we find that attempts by Greek migrants to open and maintain confectioneries evolved over a period of approximately ten years. The first Greeks to open a confectionery were the Ginos brothers, who had originally immigrated to Hillsboro, according to the 1910 census.\textsuperscript{304} We shall explore their full story in Hillsboro later. For some reason, they then moved to Mt. Carmel and established the Mt. Carmel Candy Kitchen (N.A. and S.A. Ginos) downtown on Market Street, where they lived above their store.\textsuperscript{305} They were in Mt. Carmel for at least 4 years, seemingly coming right after the census was taken in Hillsboro in 1910. In their 1914 Christmas ad, they state, “The Mt. Carmel Candy Kitchen has had for some years the well deserved reputation of place before the people of Mt. Carmel every Christmas the most complete line of Candies in Mt. Carmel….Before you decide to buy your Xmas candies, visit

\textsuperscript{302} “Sam Stergos,” 1930 United States Federal Census; Census Place: St. Louis, St. Louis (Independent City), Missouri; Roll: 1243; Page: 15A; Enumeration District: 526.
\textsuperscript{304} “Nick Ginos,” and “Spyros Ginos,” 1910 United States Federal Census: Census Place: Hillsboro, Montgomery, Illinois; Roll: T624_313; Page: 12B; Enumeration District: 0092.
Ginos Bros. and let them help you select your gift.” Or perhaps the Ginos brothers just suggested that they had been there longer than they really had! Another Christmas ad in 1918 continued to name the Ginos Bros. as the proprietors of the Candy Kitchen. It should be noted that there were several confectioners in Mt. Carmel, particularly Guy H. Hadley, who regularly took out large ads in the newspaper, with bold headlines such as, “Candies Made Fresh Every Day. Largest Soda Fountain in the State,”

In 1920 the Mt. Carmel Candy Kitchen has new proprietors, the Govits Brothers. They were also selling the new Pasco Phonograph, which, at the time, was quite the item. James and Gus Govits had immigrated to America in 1914 and 1912 respectively and settled in Mt. Carmel, rooming with a family that took in boarders. Gus Govits (or Govites as his W.W.I draft registration stated) probably migrated to Mr. Carmel from St. Louis, where he was registered as a trunkman. Like Sam Stergos and John Matalas in Casey, the Govits brother’s time in Mt. Carmel was very short. There was no advertising for the Govits after 1920 and then John Matalas appeared in 1922, which has been discussed. It seems then that all the Greeks had left Mt. Carmel by the middle of the

308 Mt. Carmel Daily Republican-Register, September 17, 1925, p. 7, as just one example.
310 “James Govits,” and “Gus Govits,” 1920 United States Census; Census Place: Mount Carmel Ward 2, Wabash, Illinois; Roll: T625_410; Page: 3A; Enumeration District: 221 for both sources.
311 “Gus Govites,” United States, World War I Draft Registration; Registration State: Missouri; Registration County: St. Louis (Independent City); Roll: 1683743; Draft Board: 6, June 5, 1917. Of particular interest on this card, there was a written comment saying, “Does not intend to become citizen of USA.” Perhaps Gus originally intended to return to Greece.
1920’s. Gus gravitated to Evansville, Indiana, as recorded in the 1927 city directory, where he is listed in Store Fixtures, and the 1930 Evansville census, where it says he is a salesman for a confectionery.\textsuperscript{312} James Govits, by 1926, had moved to Owensboro, Kentucky, and was a clerk with Mike Callas, another Greek, at the Progress Candy Company.\textsuperscript{313}

Chain migration from Effingham landed Tom P. Rezin\texta{\textacutes} in Shelbyville, Illinois. Rezin\texta{\textacutes} immigrated to the United States in 1912 from the Sparta region with his uncle George Tsourunis and two others who were apparently his father, Peter, and brother Stavros. Their initial destination after their arrival in New York was Ipswich, Massachusetts. Tom then moved to the Midwest, and spent time in Effingham, perhaps to learn the confectionery trade. He then took the train to Shelbyville, where he partnered with his uncle George Tsourunis, and lived above the store.\textsuperscript{314} Tom operated the Shelbyville Candy Kitchen from 1919 until retirement in 1955, and the Candy Kitchen then closed its doors.\textsuperscript{315} From the historical accounts of the store, the Candy Kitchen was akin to most of the confectioneries and soda shops operated by Greeks during this time period. Candies were hand-made and hand-dipped and the ice cream was also hand-made. Tom invented a machine in the mid-1920’s that accelerated a process for making candied Easter baskets, which was popular and sold around the country. In the 1940’s the

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{312} “Gus Govits,” \textit{1927 Evansville City Directory} (Evansville, IN: Bennett Directory Co. 1927): 228; and “Gus Govits,” 1930 United States Federal Census; Census Place: Evansville, Vanderburgh, Indiana; Roll: 632; Page: 17B; Enumeration District 0006.
\item \textsuperscript{313} “James Govits,” \textit{1926 Owensboro City Directory, Owensboro, Kentucky} (St. Louis, MO: R. L. Polk & Co., 1926): 88, 58.
\item \textsuperscript{314} \textit{Shelbyville Past and Present} (Shelbyville, IL: Shelby County Historical Genealogical Society, 1999): 119-121; and Ship Manifest for the S.S. Patris of Andros sailing from Gythion, July 12, 1912, Ellis Island Records at New York, ship manifest.
\item \textsuperscript{315} “Tom Rezin\texta{\textacutes}s, Lakewood, Dies Sunday,” \textit{Shelbyville Daily Union}, August 18, 1980, p. 4.
\end{itemize}
business expanded with food service for lunch and incorporated a jukebox to lure evening customers into the shop for treats. Of interesting note, the family lived above the shop in the wintertime to enable them to be available for candy making and serving the customers despite the weather. In the summer they lived in a home on Broadway Street.\textsuperscript{316} Tom had married a local woman and they were the parents of four children.\textsuperscript{317}

Mr. Rezinas, like Mr. Kehias in Pana and my grandfather in Tuscola, and the other Greeks established in successful businesses in the mid-1920’s, carried on despite a very active Ku Klux Klan in the area. In the summer of 1924, the Reverend James L. Delk was headlining the Klan meeting in Pana and answering the three questions that were announced in an ad for the meeting in the Shelbyville newspaper: Is the Klan hostile toward the Catholic religion?; Is the Klan hostile toward the Jew?; Is the Klan hostile to the Negro?\textsuperscript{318} This ad was nested among a series of stories about the Klan, including one about its recent gift of $5000 to a Baptist church in Pana.\textsuperscript{319} Shelbyville was home to the Chautauqua, a large gathering site for various religious and civic organizations, including Klan Day. At the end of July 1924 through the middle of August, there were multiple offerings advertised for community participation.\textsuperscript{320} The infamous Glenn Young of Herrin was a featured storyteller on Klan Day, arriving in his car that had been shot at during the Herrin Massacre days.\textsuperscript{321} Through all of this activity, Tom Rezinas continued

\textsuperscript{316} \textit{Shelbyville Past and Present}, pp. 120-121.
\textsuperscript{317} \textquotedblleft Tom Rezinas, Lakewood, Dies Sunday,	extquotedblright \textit{Shelbyville Daily Union}, August 18, 1980, p. 4.
\textsuperscript{319} \textquotedblleft Klan Offers Gift to Pana Church,	extquotedblright \textit{Shelbyville Daily Union}, June 11, 1924, p. 2.
\textsuperscript{320} \textquotedblleft Twenty-Fourth Annual Shelbyville Chautauqua,	extquotedblright \textit{Shelbyville Daily Union}, July 18, 1924, p. 2.
\textsuperscript{321} \textquotedblleft Ku Klux Klan Day,	extquotedblright \textit{Shelbyville Daily Union}, August 11, 1924, p. 1.
to advertise, exhorting the townspeople and visitors alike to “Refresh Yourself with one of the Delightful Drinks we serve at our Fountain, You’ll find our store restful, neat and home-like...Shelbyville Candy Kitchen “Home of Sweets.””322 Perhaps because he had married a local woman, Tom did not experience overt Klan threats. But whether he did or not, he was not deterred in his perseverance and dedication to his business.

Near Shelbyville is Sullivan, another stop in the chain migration for the Greeks. William Pappas established a candy store there by 1920 after immigrating to the United States in 1916; He was not in Sullivan long, however, before he moved to Fairfield, Illinois, where he worked as a clerk in a confectionery store there.323 James Krieslias operated the candy store in Sullivan in the 1930’s, but his time spent in Sullivan was also brief.324 In my interview with Glen Ryherd, a Sullivan resident, he shared that his father, William, had worked for Mr. Krieslias, or “Jimmy the Greek,” as he was called, in the early 1930’s at the store on the corner of Main and Harrison in Sullivan. His salary was $9.00 per week. Mr. Krieslias also sold beer in his store to make a bit of extra money.325 From the census records, it appears that Mr. James Krieslias moved to Texas and eventually returned to Europe, probably Greece, where he died in 1966.326

322 Shelbyville Daily Union, June 5, 1924, p. 5 and June 21, 1924, p. 4.
323 “William Pappas,” 1920 United States Federal Census; Census Place: Sullivan, Moultrie, Illinois; Roll: T625_397; Page: 8B; Enumeration District: 179; and “William Pappas,” 1930 United States Federal Census; Census Place: Fairfield, Wayne, Illinois; Roll: 567; Page: 3A; Enumeration District: 12,
325 Ann Beck interview with Glen Ryherd, June 14, 2010 in Sullivan, Illinois. Selling alcohol in the candy kitchens was rather unusual, although the selling of cigars was quite common, as in my grandfather’s store.
The last Greek to establish a confectionery in Sullivan was James Nichols. He was born in 1894 in Solaki, Greece and immigrated to the United States at the age of seventeen. He learned the confectionery trade in New York City and then enlisted in the army for service in World War I. When the war ended, he returned to New York, and there continued his work as a confectioner. At one time he came out to Mattoon and worked for a while with Louis Kehias before returning to New York. Around 1950 he moved to Sullivan and established his own confectionery business there. He retired in 1960 and his son, John, took over the business for a short time.\(^{327}\)

In my interview with another of James’ sons, Charles, he referred to the networking that the central Illinois Greeks maintained. Charles recalled visiting my grandfather at the Tuscola Kandy Kitchen in 1958 and remembered my grandfather’s copper bracelet that he wore to ward off illness. Charles said his father also kept in touch with Bill Panas in Charleston. He also mentioned that his two uncles came to America as well, but they returned to Greece. They had been sponsored by James, as my grandfather had sponsored his two brothers to come over, but James’ brothers made their fortunes in Chicago, and returned home where they could “live like kings” on their United States social security checks. Charles also told me that his father would open the store at a later time every other Sunday, so he could drive to Mattoon and pick up the Greeks to attend the Decatur Greek Orthodox Church. Charles was not interested in going into the confectionery business and eventually the store closed.\(^{328}\)

\(^{328}\) Ann Beck interview with Charles Nichols, March 6, 2013, Charleston, IL.
As mentioned, William Pappas migrated from Sullivan to Fairfield, which had a
thriving Greek confectionery for many years. In July of 2013 I received a note from one
of our Tuscola customers, Jean Attebery, a Fairfield native. She stated that the candy
store there contributed at one time to the identity of the town and she sent along a long
article on the history of the Greeks there.\footnote{Personal letter to Ann Beck from Jean Attebery, July 12, 2013.} William Pappas and Gus Theofanopoulos had
two separate businesses in Fairfield around 1930, which was an ambitious time to enter
into business. Gus immigrated in 1911 to America and we can assume that Chicago was
his home for several years. He married Helen Chrysovergis there in 1924. His Corner
Candy Store opened in Fairfield in June, 1930, in a building he commissioned: “The Jett
Brothers were the contractors. ‘The building was very strong. The floor was six inches
thick with terrazzo marble embedded in it. The ceiling was twelve feet high; the counter
top was imported green marble from Italy.’”\footnote{“Sweet Memories of the Greek,” by Judith Puckett, \textit{Wayne County Press}, June 27, 2013, Section 2, p. 1.} For this article the author, Judith Puckett,
interviewed some of the Fairfield residents for their recollections. Otis Brach
remembered five-cent sodas and 15-cent milkshakes. “A well-known candy to the rural
people was horehound. Gus hand made the candy by boiling the horehound plant. The
women packaged the candy and cleaned the store.”\footnote{Ibid.} Mr. Brach commented on William
Pappas’ enterprise in comparison to Gus Theofanopoulos’ business suggesting that Bill
Pappas and his Banner Candy Kitchen did not fare as well because Gus was located at the
Greyhound bus stop. Gus also added a second floor to the building and rented out office
space to a doctor and dentist.\footnote{Ibid.}
Mr. Brach worked for another Greek, John Verdulas, during World War II. John Verdulas was not a confectioner, but a wholesale distributor who supplied Gus and other confectioners in the area with cigarettes, soda for the fountain, and eventually beer and liquor—high profit margin items, even though Fairfield was a dry town during the war. Brach recalled that “The Greeks’ at that time was ‘the place.’ Gus had a big trade. Bill (Pappas) and I were buddies….Sophia, George, Jeanie (the children) worked there all the time, behind the counter. Lordy, the work was all he and Helen ever did—the hours and hours they put in. The kids grew up in the store. Gus was everywhere…behind the counter usually.”333 These memories recall those mentioned previously by Constance Contant about her experiences growing up in the Austin Lunch, the restaurant her parents owned, others shared in interviews thus far, and they echo my own in regard to growing up in the Candy Kitchen!

Mr. Brach also mentioned that Bill, Gus’s son, went to Greece while serving in the Army. “He said he couldn’t understand how his mother and dad ever got together. One village was on one side of the mountain, the other village was on the other side. It took them all day with a donkey to walk to the other village in the mountains.”334 Like Mike Poulis in Arcola, Mr. Brach remembered Gus’ wonderful sense of humor and his April Fool’s Day jokes, such as candy with garlic infused. Eventually sons George and Bill became confectioners.335 These great memories corroborate those of many Greek families in the confectionery business; it is fascinating to hear similar stories repeated over and over into the second generations.

333 Ibid., pp. 1, 4.
334 Ibid., p. 4.
335 Ibid.
William Frank is the grandson of Gus Theofanopoulos; his mother was Eugenia, the daughter of Gus and Helen. I began my discussion with Mr. Frank via email and he initially shared that the city of Fairfield now owns the building that housed the confectionery. He also recalled that the village in which his grandmother was born was Stenon. “I believe both [my parents] came through Chicago by way of Boston. My grandfather was a very successful businessman in Fairfield…they (his grandparents) were members of the church in Decatur; however, my grandfather was killed in a car accident at a fairly young age so I didn’t ever meet him.”

Mr. Brach also mentioned Gus’s success, and his unfortunate death. “Gus amassed a fortune. He had a big dairy farm, apartment buildings, the Greek Candy store. Then he got killed in a car wreck. I understand they were going to church. Sophia and George were in the front seat, Helen and Gus in back. They stopped for road construction and got rear-ended. Everybody got out and seemed alright, but I guess it broke Gus’s neck. He keeled over.”

Gus was fifty-six when he died in 1940.

William also referred me to his father, Jack Frank, who married Eugenia. Jack Frank grew up in Centrailia and graduated from the University of Illinois as a civil engineer. He went to work for the Illinois Highway Department and had an office above the Candy Kitchen, where he met Eugenia, who worked occasionally. They fell in love and Jack stated that it was “a big deal” for Eugenia to get married to a non-Greek boy. They were married, however, by the Greek priest from Decatur in the Fairfield Methodist Church, and eventually all was forgiven. He recalls from family lore that Eugenia’s

---

337 Sweet Memories of the Greek,” by Judith Puckett, Wayne County Press, June 27, 2013, Section 2, p. 4.
mother had two brothers in Chicago and Gus went there to marry her. Jack also added to the central Illinois Greek networking/chain migration narrative by discussing how Gus Theofanopoulos first worked in Altamont, a town near Effingham, perhaps with the Peter Granpoulos (Granopulore) family, who owned a confectionery there. He then went to Fairfield with William Pappas. Eugenia’s sister, Sofia, remained single and kept the confectionery in Fairfield going for a while, but the third generation of her family did not pursue the business. Jack did not recall any anti-Greek sentiment and as far as he knew, the whole family was very much an integral part of the community. If the article on the “Sweet Memories” of the Fairfield Greeks is any indication of their fond remembrance and respect, then, indeed, the Greeks were very much an important part of Fairfield’s history.

A brief mention of another small town where Greeks settled before 1920 is Flora, the location of the Flora Candy Kitchen, established in 1918 by Sam Cheorvas and his wife, Panayesta. Sam was born in February 1881 in Frousena, Greece and migrated to St. Louis, where he met his wife. They got married there, and over to Illinois to go into

338 “Peter Granupulos,” and “Tom Granupulos,” 1930 United States Federal Census: Census Place: Altamont, Effingham, Illinois; Roll: 513; Page: 3A; Enumeration District: 0018. Peter and Tom Granupulos were in St. Louis before moving to Altamont. “Peter Granupulos,” and “Tom Granupulos,” 1920 United States Federal Census: Census Place: St. Louis Ward 5; St. Louis (Independent City), Missouri; Roll: T625_949; Page: 1A; Enumeration District: 98.
339 Ann Beck interview by phone with Jack Frank, February 27, 2013.
340 “Sam W. Cheorvas,” United States, World War II Draft Registration Cards, 1942; Registration State: Missouri; Registration County: St Louis, (Independent City); Record Group Number 147.
business for themselves. They had five children who worked in the store when they were old enough to help. The Flora Candy Kitchen was in business for several decades.\textsuperscript{341}

Continuing the journey west toward Springfield, Nokomis and Taylorville were two towns linked by Greek immigrants in surprising ways. In the \textit{Centennial History of Nokomis, Illinois (1856-1956)} there was an entry for the Candy Kitchen indicating that the genesis of that business began in 1919 when brothers George and Phillip Koucheveris and George Ellis (Eliopoulos) joined forces. Mr. Ellis sold his interest in 1921 to the Koucheveris brothers and left Nokomis. Joe Viola, another Greek immigrant to the area, bought the business from the brothers in 1934 since the Koucheverises had purchased a confectionery in nearby Taylorville.\textsuperscript{342} An updated history published in 2006 stated that Joe Viola and his sister, Mary, had worked in the Candy Kitchen since its inception and were joined by their brother, Albert, while he was in high school. Mary married Jeno Collebrusco from Taylorville and he purchased an interest in the business in 1928. In 1938 the partners purchased a building next to the Palace Theater in Nokomis and remodeled the store in 1947, incorporating their existing refrigeration system that had insured the public that their facility was a “modern and sanitary plant.”\textsuperscript{343} The 2006 history relates that the “Candy Kitchen had a soda fountain and made home made candy and ice cream. One could walk into the back kitchen most Mondays and taste a cup of


\textsuperscript{342} 1956 \textit{Centennial History of Nokomis, 1856-1956} (Nokomis, IL: published by the Centennial Committee): 69.

freshly made ice cream poured directly from the ice cream freezer, or nearly, any weekday morning Mary and Lou would be hand dipping chocolates. Jeno once calculated that if all the chocolates hand dipped by the two women were laid end to end the line would reach from New York City to Los Angeles. 344 We should note that the males made the candy and ice cream and the women dipped the chocolates, which reflected the division of labor in most of the Greek confectioneries if the wives or female offspring worked directly in the business. So how did the Nokomis Greeks learn to make candy? It is not always a question that can be answered, but my research indicates that perhaps this time it can be surmised.

It seems that George Ellis (Eliopolis) learned from James Zarafonetis, our Terre Haute connection to the Paris, Illinois Greeks, who moved from Terre Haute to Vincennes, Indiana, where George Ellis worked before he moved to Nokomis. 345 George Ellis married Lena Sanders, a non-Greek woman in Vigo County (where Terre Haute is located) in March, 1919 346 and then they evidently moved to Nokomis. George Ellis had linked up with George Koucheveris in Clinton, Indiana in 1917, 347 where they were both residing, and that may explain the relationship and subsequent partnership between those two. On his draft registration card, George was listed as a self-employed hat cleaner, so it may be assumed that George Ellis taught him to make candy before and/or during their

345 “George Eliopolos,” United States, World War I Draft Registration, June 2, 1917; Registration State: Indiana; Registration County: Vermillion; Roll: 1653180, was employed as a confectioner by James Zarafonetis in Vincennes, Indiana.
346 “Marriages,” Vigo County, Indiana, County Clerk’s Office; Book 50; Page: 70.
347 “George Koucheveris,” United States, World War I Draft Registration Card, June 2, 1917; Registration State: Indiana; Registration County: Vermillion; Roll: 1653180. George and George may have gone to the draft registration together.
brief partnership in Nokomis. In the meantime, brother Phillip Koucheveris was in Chicago.\textsuperscript{348}

Mentor James Zarafonetis has been briefly mentioned in the discussion of Paris, Illinois confectioner Stavros Papadakas, and although Indiana is not part of the focus of research in this study, since he is linked to Nokomis and George Eliopoulos and thus, George Koucheveris, his story is an illustration of some of the major themes in this study: chain migration, networking, and the Greek immigrant entrepreneurial evolution in America. We have already placed Mr. Zarafonetis in Terre Haute, Indiana in 1901, but he immigrated to the United States in 1887.\textsuperscript{349} From New York he migrated to Philadelphia where he was listed with his brothers Theodore and Nicholas in the 1900 census there, where they were employed as fruit dealers and flower dealers.\textsuperscript{350} From those endeavors they moved into baking and are listed as such in the 1900 Philadelphia city directory; thus indicating their short ventures as peddlers.\textsuperscript{351} Then there was the migration to the Midwest, Indiana in particular, and settlement for decades in Vincennes.

The Koucheveris brothers and George Ellis all lived together in 1920 in Nokomis and after Mr. Ellis sold his part of the business to the brothers, he moved to Aurora,

\textsuperscript{348} “Phillip Koucheveris,” United States, World War I Draft Registration Card, Registration State: Illinois; Registration County: Cook County; Roll: 1503988; Draft Board: 78.
\textsuperscript{349} “James Zarafonetis,” 1910 United States Federal Census; Census Place: Vincennes Ward 1, Knox, Indiana; Roll: T624_360; Page 5B; Enumeration District: 0071.
Illinois where he established another confectionery.\textsuperscript{352} The Koucheveris brothers’ time in Taylorville will be discussed as that history is explored.

Before George and Phil Koucheveris established George’s Candy in Taylorville, two other brothers, Peter and Louis Apostle had established the Apostle Bros. Candy and Ice Cream Co., in that city and by all accounts it was a beautiful place.\textsuperscript{353} The Apostle brothers immigrated to America early; Louis in 1902, and Peter in 1905, and were living in Taylorville as early as 1910. Both are listed as retail merchants in a confectionary in that year.\textsuperscript{354} It appears that Louis had moved on by 1912 and another brother, Frank, joined Peter in the business.\textsuperscript{355} Their advertising for the city directory exclaims “Apostle Bros. Candy and Ice Cream Stands for Purity. Comparison is a Never-Failing Test of Value and Prices. Try our Wholesale Ice Cream Department. You will find the finest homemade ice cream that money can buy.”\textsuperscript{356} In the 1920 census, Louis had migrated to Marquette, Michigan and was listed as the proprietor of a candy store in that city. He also had a family by this time.\textsuperscript{357}

\textsuperscript{352} “George Ellis,” 1920 United States Federal Census; Census Place: Nokomis, Montgomery, Illinois; Roll: T625_394; Page: 11A; Enumeration District: 100; and “George Ellis,” 1930 United States Federal Census; Census Place: Aurora, Kane, Illinois; Roll: 524: page: 2A; Enumeration District: 23.
\textsuperscript{353} Post card, 1912, Mary Emerson private collection, Taylorville, IL, Christian County Historical Society.
\textsuperscript{354} “Peter Apostle,” and “Louis Apostle,” 1910 United States Federal Census; Census Place: Taylorville Ward 4, Christian, Illinois; Roll: T624_235; Page: 12B; Enumeration District: 0032.
\textsuperscript{356} Ibid., p. 5.
\textsuperscript{357} “Louis Apostel,” 1920 United States Federal Census; Census Place: Marquette, Marquette, Michigan; Roll: T625_784; Page: 1A; Enumeration District: 231.
It appears, however, that even before 1920 the Apostle brothers had moved on and sold their interest to the Moucoulis brothers, Gust and Johnnie, around the end of 1914. The Apostle Bros. Confectionery transformed into the new Royal Confectionery. Gust Moucoulis had immigrated to the United States in 1906 at the age of sixteen; his father had been born in Belgium and his mother had been born in Greece. In 1910 he was residing in Stonington, Illinois, where he was employed as a laborer on the railroad.358 Later that same year Gust is listed as working in Decatur, Illinois as a driver for another Greek, George Stamatopoulos, a grocer and baker.359 An article in the Taylorville newspaper indicated that the Moucoulis brothers were the new owners of the Royal Confectionery and spending time and money on renovations. “The Royal Confectionery today closed the deal that will, as soon as new fixtures that come to them as a result, arrive, give them the most up to date ice cream parlor in this section of the state.”360 The improvements were to include a new sixteen-foot fountain made of marble and mahogany, two new candy cases of marble and glass and “an artistic mahogany arch that will act as a division between the front or candy store, and the fountain and the back part of their room, which is the ice cream parlor with 18 tables.”361 And, in June of that year the new fixtures arrived and the renovations took place. The cost of the new fixtures, manufactured by the Progressive Mercantile Manufacturing Company in Pana, Illinois, was $7000. “The proprietors of the Royal, Gust and Johnnie Moucoulis and Thomas

360 “Royal Buys New Fountain: Will Have Finest Place In This Part Of State,” Taylorville Daily Breeze, April 13, 1915, p. 8.
361 Ibid.
Orfalos have been in the city but nine months, since purchasing the Apostle store and have made good in every way in that time. The addition of the new fixtures in the front part of the store is the third step of progress made by them since locating here. They first remodeled their front window; later they concreted their ice cream factory in the basement. Cleanliness has been their watchword all the time and with the improvements being made at the present time they need doff their hats to no store in the city.”

It was interesting to note the advent of covering the floor in the basement with concrete and again, cleanliness was emphasized with this business, perhaps not just because they were Greeks but because of the new expectations of sanitation with food and dairy products. In one entertaining advertisement in 1919, The Royal Confectionery proclaims it is “The Most Up-To-Date and Best Ice Cream and Confectionery Parlor,” and they celebrated their new improvements with a poem:

“The Song That Everybody Will Be Singing
For ice cream and candy that can’t be beat
Go to the Royal—the house of sweet.
It’s the place you ought to know
It’s where all the ice cream lovers go.”

Despite all the renovating, celebrating and poetry writing, it seems the Moucoulis brothers evidently had sold the Royal Confectionery by 1926 when records showed that it had new owners, Omer T. and Mrs. Clara Goff. In 1928, F.M. Martin, Jr. took over the
Royal and named it the Mosey-Over. The Moucoulis brothers had simply relocated to another place in 1925, however, and opened what appeared to be a restaurant, the Eureka, which had “Good things to Eat.” In 1928 George Kehias, also of Pana, owns George’s Candy Shop, which has the same address as the Eureka Restaurant presumably owned by the Moucoulis brothers. Perhaps the Moucoulis brothers were managing the business for George Kehias because they were still living in town in 1929.

It is at this point that the Koucheveris brothers enter the Greek confectionery narrative in Taylorville. We discussed how Joe Viola and Jeno Collebrusco in 1934 had purchased the confectionery in Nokomis from George and Phillip Koucheveris because they, in turn, had purchased a confectionery in Taylorville. That same year Gust and George Moucoulis are listed in the Rockford, Illinois city directory as manager and clerk of the Northern Lights Ice Cream Company.

George’s, now owned by the Koucheveris brothers, was “one of Taylorville’s most popular hangout for many years.” Dan Farrimond shared his memories of

368 “George Moucoulis,” and “Gust Moucoulis,” 1929 Taylorville City Directory, Taylorville, Illinois, (St. Louis: R.L. Polk & Co., 1929): 152. George and Gust are listed as confectioners along with George Kehias (p. 130). George, however, had established his Pana confectionery in 1914 as discussed, so perhaps he let the Moucoulis brothers run this store in Taylorville.
370 See the photo of George’s Candy Shop, “Inside George’s,” in Christian County Reunion: A Pictorial History of Christian County, edited by Wild Q. Cooper, Marylee C. Lasswell, Sallie C.C. Traynor (Taylorville Breeze-Courier and the Christian County
George’s on the Taylorville Facebook site sent to me on July 28, 2013. Dan had the opportunity to work there for a year and his hourly rate of pay was 85 cents. George was the chief candy maker and it was made in the basement. Phil was the “out front” man, running the shop and keeping the peace.”371

George’s was extremely popular and both of the Koucheveris brothers were good community citizens and beloved by Taylorville residents. George’s was the confectionery that most everyone I have encountered who lived there during the 1950’s and 1960’s remembered with fondness. So much so that one investor purchased the original building and some of the fixtures several years ago after my sister and I had reopened my grandfather’s store and attempted to reopen the business, but it was only open for a very short time. Interestingly the Koucheveris brothers never married and retired back to Greece. Phil died in Greece in May, 1969 at the age of 76, which was only a few years after the closing of their business.372 George’s, like many of the other Greek confectioneries, was an integral part of the downtown in Taylorville and was missed after the brothers retired and left.

Hillsboro, Illinois, was the next town on the journey from Taylorville to the final stop in this research, Springfield. Hillsboro was the home of the Hillsboro Candy

________________________


372 National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C.; General Records of the Department of State; Record Group; RG59-Entry 5166; Box Number: 71; Philip Kouchiveris died in Athens; his brother, George, was also living there. The death certificate indicated that Phil had not been naturalized until 1967, in Chicago.
Kitchen, originally owned and operated by the Ginos brothers, Spiros, Paul, and Nicholas. We first met them in Mt. Carmel where they operated the Mt. Carmel Candy Kitchen from around 1912/13 to approximately 1918. The Ginos brothers, Zissos, Speros, and Nicholas, were listed in the 1910 census in Hillsboro as confectioners, and we can assume that Zissos remained in Hillsboro while the others migrated to Mt. Carmel and tried to establish another venture there. There was a fourth brother, Thomas Ginos, but he was tragically killed in March 1911 while he was visiting one of his brothers (name not mentioned) in the Lutheran hospital in St. Louis. He was traveling in a car and was struck by a streetcar. In the newspaper account, brother Paul Ginos had returned from the funeral of Thomas, presumably in St. Louis, and the newspaper writer noted that “The sympathy of the Hillsboro people is for Mr. Ginos in the loss of his brother. He had made many friends during his residence among us, by his courteous treatment and honest dealings with everyone.”

In 1926, Nicholas A. Paul D. and William A. Ginos were listed as confectioners in the Hillsboro city directory and Zissis was listed as having a restaurant. All of the

---

373 From ship manifest records, it seems Zissos was the first Ginos brother to immigrate and the others followed. Although we know Zissis is listed in the 1910 St. Louis census, he must have arrived earlier because his one brother, Spyros, named Zissis as his contact when Spyros immigrated to America in 1908. See Spyros Gkinos, “List or Manifest of Alien Passengers for the United States, Port of New York”, Arrival: June 8, 1908, age 18, on the Martha Washington, port of Patras, manifest line 0016, meeting Zissis Gkinos, brother, in St. Louis.


375 Litchfield News Herald, March 6, 1911, p. 2.
brother were married at this juncture. Zissos Ginos himself evidently returned to Greece to marry in 1921 and he returned to Hillsboro with his new wife, Nikoletta.

By 1930, however, Paul Ginos had moved to Brooklyn, New York to continue as a confectioner. Zissis remained in Hillsboro through 1930 where he was still listed in the city directory, but he returned to Greece soon after that and died in Larissa on May 2, 1931; his wife and son, James were in Athens. I could not tell if Zissis determined to stay in Greece permanently or whether they were simply visiting there when Zissis died. There are no further records of Nikoletta or James Ginos from that point.

William and Nick Ginos remained in Hillsboro where they maintained the Hillsboro Candy Kitchen for many years. William’s son, Bill, evidently took over the business after his father died in 1963. Dorothy Bliss, in her book, Hillsboro, A History, recount that her husband Tom Bliss remembers that “Bill and Nick, who operated the family business for years, were generous with their ‘samples.’ Often they called me in to

---

377 United States National Archives and Records Administration; Washington, D.C.; Passport Applications, January 2, 1906-March 31, 1925; Collection Number: ARC Identifier 583830/ MLR Number A1 534; NARA Series: M1490; Roll #: 1498; Zissis Dimitru Ginos, February 18, 1921; and “List or Manifest of Alien Passengers for the United States, Port of New York,” Ship Manifest of Megal Hellas, December 19, 1921, Arrival, New York, New York; Microfilm Serial: T 715; Microfilm Roll: 3057; Lines 17 and 18; Page Number: 27; Zissis Ginos and Nikoletta Ginou, ages 45 and 20 respectively.
378 “Paul Ginos,” 1930 United States Federal Census; Census Place: Brooklyn, Kings, New York; Roll: 1508; Page 4B; Enumeration District: 1113.
379 “Zissis Ginos,” 1930 Hillsboro City Directory, Hillsboro, Illinois (St. Louis: R.L. Polk & Co., 1930): 59; Nick and William were still listed as confectioners in this 1930 city directory. For Zissis and his family and his death, see Report of Deaths of American Citizens Abroad, National Archives and Records Administration; Washington, D.C.; General Records of the Department of State; Record Group: RG59-Entry 205; Box Number: 1745; Box Description: 1930-1939 Greece D-T.
try a treat, especially when they saw my nose pressed against the front window. Their Heavenly Hash was ambrosia." The business ended with Bill.

Near Hillsboro are Virden and Benld, small towns with southeastern European ethnic histories and home to Greek confectioners. At the end of the 1800’s, south-central Illinois had many coal mines, and the workers displacing the early English, Irish, Welsh, and Scottish miners were Italians, Greeks, and Slavic immigrants. There were multiple strikes against the mine owners for higher wages and safer conditions. Mine companies also imported African-American strikebreakers who had earned even lower wages in the South. The United Mine Workers in Illinois, founded in 1890, rose in membership after winning a confrontation against the Illinois Coal Operators Association in 1898. A strike had begun in Mt. Olive and spread to Pana and Virden where African-American strikebreakers from Alabama were guarded by mine security guards from St. Louis for their protection. Gunfire ensued and seven miners and four guards were killed. This resulted in new work rules that gave miners an eight-hour day, a six-day workweek, and a new pay scale per ton. Another skirmish in 1899 in Pana resulted in the deaths of five African-American strikebreakers there and five others in Carterville.\(^{381}\)

The southeastern European immigrants working as miners in the small towns of Benld, Carlinville, Gillespie, Girard, Mt. Olive, Staunton, and Virden, created a new environment in the mines and mining communities that was captured by a story about a young girl moving from Missouri to the Macoupin County around 1910. A family friend

---

told her that she might have trouble understanding the speech of people in her new location.

The child couldn’t comprehend that, but she soon learned. There was a babble of tongues spoken on the streets of most any mining communities in the early 1900’s, and teaching English to all these people was another problem of the period. The men slowly learned to speak it from those with whom they worked, boarded, or did business…Enterprising people, who were anxious to become citizens, often banded together and paid a small fee to some local ex-teacher or other educated person in the community for evening lessons in reading and understanding English material pertaining to the Constitution and government of the United States.\(^{382}\)

How the little town of Benld came to be in 1904 is another fascinating tale. “A local businessman in Benld once said, ‘When they opened the new mine south of Gillespie, a large group of Italians and Greeks came to work there. Gillespie did not welcome us so we built our own city.’\(^{383}\) The Italian and Greek immigrants wanted to honor the local man who had befriended them, Ben L. Dorsey, but they were not keen on naming it Dorsey or Dorseyville because there were some Dorseys who were not supportive of the immigrants, so they took pieces of his name and created Benld.\(^{384}\) Of particular note, the immigrants in Benld, particularly those of Russian descent, built a Russian Orthodox Church in 1907, which at its peak, had a membership of approximately two hundred families. This was significant as the only other Orthodox churches in the area of study are in larger towns: Springfield, Champaign/Urbana, Decatur, and Danville.
For a small town to commit resources and build a church like this was no minor accomplishment.\textsuperscript{385}

In this story on the cathedral, the pastor, Reverend Waters, indicated that because of the dwindling attendance over time, the Orthodoxy was considering utilizing the building as a monastery. He stated that the small congregation was due to second and third generation family members leaving town to pursue professional careers. “Many of the first-and second-generation miners the church served were determined to see their children college-educated,” he shared.\textsuperscript{386}

In this study the Benld, Virden, and Litchfield narratives intersect, beginning with Peter Markos, a confectioner in Virden. From an interview I conducted with a great-nephew of Peter Markos, a Mr. Gene Markos, I learned that the family legend contends that “Uncle Pete” immigrated to America from Greece and first traveled to St. Louis. From there he ventured north to Virden, though for unknown reasons.\textsuperscript{387} From his draft registration in 1917 we know that Peter Markos was working in Virden as a self-employed confectioner.\textsuperscript{388} He was still in Virden in 1920,\textsuperscript{389} but then sold his store to his nephew, George Markos. Pete moved north to Chicago and the family lost track of him.

\textsuperscript{386} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{387} Ann Beck interview with Gene Markos, August 30, 2013, Hillsboro, Illinois.
\textsuperscript{388} “Peter Markos,” United States, World War I Draft Registration Card; Registration State: Illinois; Registration County: Macoupin County; Roll: 1614323; Draft Board: 1.
\textsuperscript{389} “Peter Markos,” 1920 United States Federal Census; Census Place: Virden Ward 4, Macoupin, Illinois; Roll: T625_388; Page: 6B; Enumeration District: 80.
Perhaps Pete returned to his cousin, George Bourboulis’ family in Chicago, his original destination after he landed in New York in 1903.  

George Markos had immigrated to the United States in 1912; his father was a priest in Gastuni, Greece. Eventually George also moved to Virden where he worked with his uncle Pete before purchasing the business from him. According to the family narrative, George helped make the candy canes, taffy, ice cream and sandwiches. After he took over the store, George kept the confectionery going until the Depression years between 1930 and 1932, when he was forced to close. His investments in the local bank disappeared, no doubt along with the savings of other townspeople, because the bank president committed suicide. George had married a local Virden woman who had worked in the store, mostly because he was the only Greek in town and he fell in love with his wife. After the business closed, George worked odd jobs and gravitated toward Litchfield and the Ariston restaurant, owned by another Greek, Pete Adam, whom we shall discuss next. George had evidently loaned money to Pete Adam to help him get started when he was trying to set up a business in Carlinville. Now Pete took George in and helped him. Eventually George became the head chef at the Elks Club in Litchfield.

---

390 “Panajotis Markos,” Manifest List for the S.S. Belgravia sailing from Coulogne on March 22, 1903, Date of Arrival, April 8, 1903, Ellis Island, New York, line 3.
391 “George Markos,” 1920 United States Federal Census; Census Place: Virden Ward 4, Macoupin, Illinois; Roll: T625_388; Page: 2A; Enumeration District: 80; and “George Markos,” U.S. World War I Draft Registration; Registration State: Illinois; Registration County: Macoupin; Roll: 1614323; Draft Board: 1.
Panos, or Pete, Adam of Dirveni, Greece, founded the Ariston Restaurant in Litchfield, a famous landmark still in existence, along the equally famous Route 66, south of Springfield, Illinois. According to the official history of the Ariston, Pete arrived in America in 1900 at the age of twelve. His roamed around the country before finally settling in Litchfield in 1930, and moved the restaurant to its present site in 1935. Pete’s journey to Litchfield was circuitous and revisited similar immigration patterns we have explored in this study. I had the great pleasure of meeting Pete’s son, Nick, for many years now the owner and manager of the Ariston. He shared with me his father’s story with great zeal and pride. According to Nick, Pete was the first son in his family to leave Greece. He made it to Italy, but was turned back for some unknown reason. On a subsequent attempt, Pete managed to get to New York, and from there went to Baltimore where he worked for a padrone as a shoe shiner. Pete then went out west to Colorado to work in the mines, but returned to Greece in 1911-1913 to fight in the Balkan Wars. Pete considered remaining in Greece and opening a café, but he returned to America where he joined his sister who had immigrated to St. Louis after World War I and had married a barber. Pete considered this as a profession but decided not to pursue it. Nick believes that Pete then went to Benld and became a coal miner. Along the way he changed his career choices.

According to the 1920 census, Pete was living in Benld, but his occupation was listed as confectioner, along with a friend, Tom Bouclamon. Nick believes that his

394 “Pete Adam,” 1920 United States Federal Census; Census Place: Benld, Macoupin, Illinois; Roll: T625_388; Page: 7A; Enumeration District: 42.
father and Tom had originally met in St. Louis. These two evidently opened a confectionery for a very short time and also engaged the assistance of an Italian immigrant, Sebastian Avetta, who had been a farmer in Italy, immigrated to America in 1885, and became a coal miner in Staunton, Illinois in 1900. Sebastian moved to Cahokia, Illinois with the mines and then settled in Benld by 1920, where he was listed as a laborer in a confectionery. By that time, Mr. Avetta was in his fifties. Pete then moved out of the confectionery business and became a restaurant entrepreneur. Tom Bouclamon sold his portion to a friend and moved away from Benld.

In 1924, Pete partnered with Chris Chrisakis and opened up a restaurant in Carlinville, Illinois. This relationship lasted for a few years as demonstrated in the 1930 Carlinville census that listed Chris as a candy maker in a confectionery with Panas (Pete) Adam, manager of a restaurant. According to Nick, Pete and Chris got $2000 of funding for their restaurant from a doctor in Carlinville on Route 4. Around 1930, Pete decided to move his operation to Litchfield along the path of the newly constructed Route 66. He ran the food business and also sold gasoline. From 1935 to 1937 Pete partnered with Tom Cokinos, a Greek immigrant also in Litchfield; eventually Pete bought out Tom’s portion of the business. Pete’s Ariston Restaurant is the longest running restaurant

---


\(^{396}\) Ann Beck interview with Nick Adam in Litchfield, Illinois at the Ariston Restaurant, August 8, 2013.

\(^{397}\) “Pete Adam,” and “Chris Chrisakis,” 1930 United States Federal Census; Census Place: Carlinville, Macoupin, Illinois; Roll: 539; Page: 8B; Enumeration District: 0021.
along Route 66. Nick Adam plans to work there “until they carry me out on a stretcher” because he loves what he does and is committed to the tradition his father instilled. Nick also noted that the Greek businessmen were never shy – his father named his restaurant, Ariston, Greek for, the Best.\(^3\)

To fill in the background story of Pete’s former partners, Tom Cokinos remained in Litchfield and opened a billiard parlor according to the 1930 census.\(^4\) In another fascinating example of the interconnectedness of the central Illinois Greeks, Chris Christakis left Carlinville probably around the time Pete Adam moved to Litchfield. In 1940 he was listed in the Mattoon city directory as a candymaker for the Blue Bird Confectionery with Louis Kehias.\(^5\) Moreover, while in Mattoon, Chris registered for the World War II draft registration where his race was recorded as Black.\(^6\) Chris later migrated to Champaign-Urbana and opened his own business, Chris’ Candy Shop on Neil Street. His nephew, Gus, became the manager and worked there for many years. My mother, a master candy dipper, worked for Gus for a short while. Gus Chrisagis (note that the “k” became a “g”) was a contemporary of my father. When he was in his eighties, and only a few months before his death, he came to Tuscola and helped my sister to make candy before we reopened in 2004. He also taught us all a lot about candy and about the

\(^3\) Ann Beck interview with Nick Adam in Litchfield, Illinois at the Ariston Restaurant, August 8, 2013.

\(^4\) “Tom Cokinos,” 1930 United States Federal Census; Census Place: Litchfield, Montgomery, Illinois; Roll: 545; Page: 3B; Enumeration District: 0039.


\(^6\) “Chris Christakis,” World War II Draft Registration Card, 1942, Illinois; M2097; Record Group Number 147.
candy business. In that way, we had a direct connection with the generations of Greek confectioners described in this history.\textsuperscript{402}

Litchfield had already been settled by other Cokinos brothers, who were confectioners. In 1907 John and Stephen Cokinos were listed in the city directory as confectioners; by 1911 they were calling themselves the Litchfield Candy Company.\textsuperscript{403} Gus Skeadas was the next major confectioner to settle in Litchfield. Born in Sparta, he immigrated to the United States around 1913.\textsuperscript{404} At the age of fourteen, Gus made his first trip to the United States and remained in New York City to work as a barber. He migrated to Philadelphia, Boston, and White Plains, New York, where he was a confectioner. He then returned to Greece and married Annie Vapos. They returned to the United States and settled in Litchfield, Illinois. His brother-in-law, Gust Vapos, joined him in the confectionery and they purchased the Litchfield Candy Company from John Cokinos around 1913. In the late 1920’s Gus took his son James to Greece and left him there for over one year. In 1931, he sold his interest in the confectionery and took the entire family to Greece to live for several months. They then returned to Litchfield and Gus bought into the business again, only to buy out the portion of Mr. Vapos a little over a year before Gus died in 1940. A Greek Orthodox priest from East St. Louis conducted


Gus Skeadas’ funeral. Son James managed the business through the 1950’s until it finally closed.

In 1941, the Springfield Greek community gathered with other city and state leaders, including the governor of Illinois to support the Greek war relief. Over two thousand people attended a midnight benefit at the Orpheum Theater and over $1000 was raised. Entertainment provided ranged from radio star “Pappy” Cheshire to first run movies. Governor Green of Illinois and Mayor Kapp of Springfield spoke of their admiration for the courage of the people of Greece; Mayor Kapp stated: “When historians write of the Second World War, certainly the brightest chapter will be the bravery of the Greeks in their fight.” Even Pete Adam of Litchfield displays his support for the Greek cause from his restaurant. “Pappy” Cheshire and his wife were traveling to Springfield for the show and stopped at the Ariston restaurant en route. Upon finishing his meal, Mr. Cheshire went to pay his bill and was recognized by Pete, who said, “‘You’re doing a great thing tonight in Springfield, going up there to help my countrymen,’ said the Litchfield man, and there was a tear in his eye. ‘I’m going to pay for your dinner’”

Two weeks earlier Illinois State Journal staff writer, Joe Belair, wrote about the Greek war with Italy, sharing that the Greek soldiers were defining it as “Another Thermopylae.” This historical reference to the defense of Thermopylae by Leonidas and 300 Spartan soldiers in 480 B.C. against the Persian leader Xerxes, publically linked

405 “Gus Skeadas Funeral Set For Thursday,” Litchfield News-Herald, November 1, 1940, pp. 1, 6.
406 “Over 2,000 Attend Benefit Show For Greek War Relief,” Illinois State Journal Register, March 23, 1941, p. 4.
407 Ibid.
408 “Heroism: City Greeks’ Relatives Fight,” Illinois State Journal Register, March 7, 1941, p. 3.
the Springfield Greek immigrants to this heritage. James P. James of James’ Confectionery reported that his brother, Milton, had his heel shot off during fighting in the Albanian mountains. Milton was termed “a modern Achilles.” 409 A son of James Magas, cook at Gray’s Confectionery, wrote to his father that he was proud to fight and die for liberty. Theodore Gray, proprietor of Gray’s Confectionery had two brothers in Greece who had not yet been called up for service since he had last had contact with them in December of 1940. Basil Caselas, brother-in-law of Alex Karon, proprietor of the Sugar Bowl Confectionery wrote from Greece, “We are fighting for honor, liberty, and family, and if anything happens, remember the children; this may be my last letter.” 410 Basil Spiropoulos, nephew of George Sotiropulos, manager of Diana Sweets Shop was sure the Greeks would win because they had faith in their cause. Gus and Louis Kerasotes, of the Kerasotes Theaters, Inc. had four nephews in the army stationed along the Bulgarian line. Charles Coutrakon of Coutrakon Confectionery had two brothers and two nephews fighting, but he had not heard from them since August of 1940. Steve Cherekos and Frank Houleris, proprietors of Mo Coffee shop had several male relatives fighting but they had not heard from them either, nor had Andrew Lekometros of Nick’s Hat Cleaning and Shoe Shining Shop, who also had two brothers and two brothers-in-law in this war. 411

This listing of major Greek leaders in Springfield provides an excellent context for our discussion of Greek confectioners in our last narrative for this study.

Peter Coutrakon was one of the first confectioners in the city along with Gus Kerasotes, who was first a confectioner before he became engaged in the theater business.

409 Ibid.
410 Ibid.
411 Ibid.
Peter Coutrakon was listed earliest in the 1900-1901 Springfield city directory, and he was joined by Gus Kerasotes in 1902.\(^{412}\) By 1908 there were over twenty confectioneries, not all Greek, in Springfield.\(^{413}\) It was not until 1914 that Coutrakon and Kerasotes were joined by other Greeks, Angel Nases and James Dovekas, who opened the Gaiety Confectionery that year.\(^{414}\) Angel Nases remained in Springfield through the 1920’s and is listed in the 1930 Springfield census, but with no occupation.\(^{415}\) James Dovekas migrated to Decatur and joined Gust Constantopolus at the Empress Confectionery.\(^{416}\) He had relocated to Decatur at least by 1917 as indicated by his World War I draft registration where he was listed as a confectioner.\(^{417}\) In 1926 Dovekas was at the Empress Confectionery in 1926,\(^{418}\) However, by World War II, Mr. Dovekas was residing in Chicago and working for the National Tea Company with a contact person, Basil Varrelas, located on Halsted Street in the heart of Greektown.\(^{419}\)

By 1916, a few more Greek confectioners joined the community. Peter and now Charles Coutrakon formed another confectioner and ice cream parlor, the Buffalo and


\(^{415}\) “Angel Nases,” 1930 United States Federal Census; Census Place: Springfield, Sangamon, Illinois; Roll: 559; Page: 16A; Enumeration District: 0039.


\(^{417}\) “James Dovekas,” World War I Draft Registration Card; Registration State: Illinois; Registration County: Macon; Roll: 1613187, June 5, 1917.


that establishment had followed a 1915 development of Boys’ Candy Shop, run by
Stephen Mastorakas.\textsuperscript{420} From 1917 through 1918 D. Diamond owned the Sugar Bowl,
another new Greek confectionery.\textsuperscript{421} In 1919, J. Theodore Gray took over ownership of
the Sugar Bowl and operated it for decades.\textsuperscript{422} It appears that Mr. Gray had originally
apprenticed with Coutrakon and Kerasotes in 1914.\textsuperscript{423} Mr. Gray was eighty-five years old
when he died, having resided in Springfield for almost seventy years. He also owned
Gray’s Restaurant. Both his wife, who was not Greek, and his son, preceded him in
death.\textsuperscript{424}

Also in 1919, George Sotiropoulos joined Stephen and William Mastorakas at
Boys’ Candy Shop.\textsuperscript{425} George later became started his own business, Diana Sweets, and
ran this until around the early 1930’s when his nephew, Basis, took over the
management.\textsuperscript{426}

Another apprentice of Coutrakon and Kerasotes was Charles Poulos, who worked
for that enterprise in 1908 before moving to Charles Coutrakon’s Buffalo in 1914 as a

\textsuperscript{420} Springfield City Directory, 1916 (Springfield, IL: R.L. Polk & Co., 1916): 1070; and
\textsuperscript{421} 1917 Jefferson’s Springfield, Illinois Directory (Springfield, IL: Jefferson’s Printing
Company, 1917): 1060; and Jefferson’s Springfield, Illinois Directory (Springfield,
\textsuperscript{422} “Sugar Bowl,” 1919 Jefferson’s Springfield, Illinois Directory (Springfield, IL:
Jefferson Printing Company, 1919): no page number, addition at back of volume,
omitted material.
\textsuperscript{423} “Gray, J. Theodore,” 1914 Springfield City Directory (Springfield, IL: R.L. Polk & Co.,
1914): 392.
48.
\textsuperscript{425} “Boy’s Candy Shop,” Jefferson’s 1919 Springfield, Illinois City Directory
(Springfield, IL: Jefferson Printing Company, 1919): 144.
\textsuperscript{426} Jefferson’s Springfield Directory, 1931 (Springfield, IL: Jefferson Printing Company,
1931): 684, listing for Diana Sweets and Boys’ Candy Shop.
clerk.\textsuperscript{427} He remained in Springfield and established the Butterfly Confectionery in 1923\textsuperscript{428} that was in operation through the 1920’s. By the 1930’s, Charles Poulos owned the Sherlock Confectionery and in 1937, the Enos Candy Kitchen.\textsuperscript{429} Sadly, Charles Poulos was killed in a tragic auto accident in August of 1945, when he was about fifty-five years of age.\textsuperscript{430}

As an observation in regard to the listing of confectioners through the 1920’s, there was a range of forty to fifty confectioners listed for any one year and it appeared that the Greeks were pretty consistently represented as comprising approximately twenty-five to thirty percent of the confectioners listed. In 1923, one notable confectioner, not known specifically for his treats, per se, became newsworthy for being brutally murdered.

George Xamis immigrated to America in 1915 and early records found him self-employed with his brother, Gust, as a hat cleaner in Springfield.\textsuperscript{431} They evolved into shoe shiners, a position which George held until 1923 when he became the proprietor of the Princess Confectionery.\textsuperscript{432} Late one evening in October 1924, George Xamis, in a vicious attack, was beaten to death with a two-foot length of gas pipe. According to the

\textsuperscript{428} \textit{1923 Jefferson’s Springfield City Directory} (Springfield, IL: Jefferson Printing Company, 1923): 125)
\textsuperscript{431} “George Xamis,” World War I Draft Registration; Registration State: Illinois; Registration County: Sangamon; Roll: 1642742; Draft Board: 2, June 5, 1917.
\textsuperscript{432} \textit{1919 Jefferson’s Springfield City Directory} (Springfield, IL: Jefferson Printing Co., 1919): 1229; and \textit{1923 Jefferson’s Springfield City Directory} (Springfield, IL: Jefferson Printing Co.): 785.
newspaper account report, Xamis and a young woman had left the Princess Confectionery and noticed that they were being followed by a large touring car. Xamis attempted to divert the pursuer and drove to his own home. As he got out of the car, Xamis was confronted and beaten by a man with the pipe. Evidently none of the neighbors heard the fight. George’s brother, Peter, living in the residence with George, went outside and discovered his brother’s body. The police were called and George’s date described the intruder for the police. In this initial description of the incident, George Xamis was referred to by his nickname, “Shorty” on account of his diminutive build. The newspaper report said Xamis had come to Springfield about ten years before and initially had opened a shoe shining parlor near Fifth and Monroe streets. It went on to say how he had served as an American soldier during W.W. II was and was on of the best known members of the local Greek colony.\footnote{\textit{G. Xamis Is Beaten To Death In His Garage,” Illinois State Journal Register,} October 17, 1924, p. 1.} In what may be posited as intra-ethnic conflict, the alleged murderer was an Italian immigrant who was also dating George Xamis’ girlfriend and became jealous.\footnote{\textit{Hand of Xamis’ Slayer Led by Jealousy, View,” Illinois State Journal Register,} October 18, 1924, p. 1.} Although the evidence was pretty clear as to what happened, it did not appear that the alleged was ever indicted as he continued to live and work in Springfield.

In 1923 George Satiropoulas and the Mastorakos brothers opened the Oaks and a new single confectioner was added to the list, that of James P. James.\footnote{\textit{1923 Jefferson’s Springfield City Directory} (Springfield, IL: Jefferson Directory Co., 1923): 1084 for both businesses.} James had arrived in Springfield in 1906 and had also begun his worklife as a bootblack for several years, first on his own and then in partnership with the Kokenes brothers, before he
became a clerk at the Sugar Bowl Confectionery in 1921. He then ventured out on his own. He retired in 1942 and had been an active member of the St. Anthony’s Greek Orthodox Church and Ahepa. One of his daughters had married Basil Coutrakon; four sisters and a brother were still in Greece at the time of his death.

Other Greek confectioners made their mark on downtown Springfield. Chris Presvelos became a confectioner and moved around within the Greek food community over time, holding positions such as a soda clerk with Gaiety’s in the 1930’s and working in a pastry shop in the late 1940’s. The Kokenes brothers also evolved into the confectionery world in the early 1920’s. Alex Karon was a long-time confectioner in Springfield. He immigrated to America in 1907 and was a clerk in Decatur, Illinois in 1911 with Louis Nichols; he migrated to Vandalia and worked with James Seolas before joining Theodore Gray at the Sugar Bowl by the mid-1920’s. Alex returned to Corinth, Greece, in 1930 to marry Angeline Pappas and they lived with Theodore Gray and his


family for a time. In the 1930’s and 1940’s The Sugar Bowl was a teen “hang-out” along with Coutrakon’s and Diana’s Sweet Shop. Nancy Karon Drake, daughter of Alex and Angeline Karon remembered that her father’s place was a fun place to work, but she started work at the age of ten! An interesting anecdotal story citing Alex Karon was featured in 1949 during an outbreak of polio in Springfield. All of the children in the city under the age of sixteen were ordered off the streets and kept at home. Both Alex Karon and George Kerasotes were interviewed about the impact of this on their businesses. Alex was quoted that it was hurting his business, “But I’d rather lose a thousand dollars than lose a single kid on account of polio.” Mr. Kerasotes seemed not so concerned about the children, but was worried that the quarantine would have a severe impact on his business, suggesting that if the children do not attend the movies, neither do the adults.

By 1955, the remaining Greek confectioneries in Springfield were Boys’ Candy Shop, Coutrakon Confectionery, Diana Sweet Shop, and the Sugar Bowl. Some first-generation Greeks had simply gone out of business, some had opened restaurants, and some retired. After the second generation of Greeks exhausted their efforts, the confectioneries in Springfield lost their homemade heritage as we have seen in most of the study.

It would be remiss to leave Springfield and not highlight the famous Kerasotes family. Gus began a confectioner after all, and seized on a great opportunity to expand his business ventures. In 1908 Gus and his brother Louis started what was to grow into a chain of forty central Illinois theaters. The first was the Royal Theater in Springfield, a nickelodeon. Gus was instrumental in the founding of St. Anthony’s Hellenic Orthodox Church built in 1957 for approximately $75,000. In 1956, he donated the ground and the original building that had been a grocery store. The building fund committee was comprised of George and Louis Kerasotes, Mary Karon, Dr. Aristides Kufdakis, Mrs. Theodore Gray, Constantine Passialis, Harry Xamis, and Gus Xamis. The church was instrumental in coalescing the Greek community in Springfield and the surrounding towns in that part of the state; there was an active AHEPA chapter and it is a busy organization to this day. For example, Nick Adam, in Litchfield, attends when he is able and is happy that he does not have to go to St. Louis for worship.

One of the priests for St. Anthony’s from 1966 to approximately 1981 was Father Vassilios Apostolos. Mary Gherardini, his daughter, shared his story with me, and although he was not a confectioner and within the scope of this study, it is a good archive and part of Springfield’s Greek history. Her father came to America with a sister and went to Boston. This was after World War I had broken out; Mary’s grandmother sent her two sons to Egypt for safety and to escape the draft in Greece and then they immigrated to America. There were ten other sisters left in Lamia, Greece; for the most

448 Ann Beck interview with Nick Adam in Litchfield, Illinois at the Ariston Restaurant, August 8, 2013.
part they ended up with arranged marriages. After Boston, Mary’s father went to another sister in Warren, Ohio, where there was a large Greek community. Her father engaged in the management of a news store there for a time. Mary’s mother was Greek and born in Chicago but grew up in Greece and then returned to the city; her maiden name was Jennie Vlatsios. After marriage, the couple lived in Ohio and Detroit. Her father was ordained as a priest in New York City when Mary was a little girl. The family migrated to Idaho, Montana, where he was the first Greek priest in that state. He traveled all over the western United States and held services in homes or whatever structures were available. By the mid 1960’s Springfield needed a permanent priest and the family resided there before her father retired to Cheboygan, Wisconsin.

Mary remembered that Mr. and Mrs. Karon were good friends and that George Kerasotes recommended she attend Illinois College in Jacksonville. As a second-generation Greek girl, Mary shared that there was some pressure to marry a Greek boy, however her mother encouraged her to go to college, but her father wanted her to be “good and productive and have a family.” At home her parents did not speak much English and her mother learned from watching television. Mary herself did not learn English until she attended public school. Her mother, Jennie, had taught herself to read and write in the village in Greece. She urged her daughter to gain skills in case she needed to support herself, asking Mary to consider the question, “What if your husband died?” So, for Mary to go to college was a big deal at the time. She majored in education and worked at the Illinois School of the Deaf. Later she went to Smith College for women and became a special education teacher. Returning to the Midwest, she married a “nice Italian man” who supported her career. She raised her children with Greek Orthodox
traditions. Her story was illuminating in its gendered aspects of being a second-generation Greek woman and the transitional changes between the first-generation immigrants and their children.\textsuperscript{449}

Of the many small towns and small cities explored with this rural study, despite the amount of research conducted, there is so much more that could be done. These stories can be replicated in every state in America and should be revealed in order to capitalize on the great immigration and networking that the Greek immigrants did in order to carve out lives in rural areas. It has been an honor to share my family’s story and those of the first generation of Greeks in east central Illinois.

\textsuperscript{449} Ann Beck interview with Mary Gherardini, August 15, 2013, Charleston, Illinois.
CONCLUSION

This study began with a newspaper account, written for the 1957 Tuscola centennial celebration, that recognized my grandfather, Gus Flesor, as the longest continuous entrepreneur in the town’s history. But, as we have seen, my grandfather’s ability to remain in business for several decades serves only as an entry point into a much larger story, a micro-history of the first-generation Greek immigrants in east central Illinois.

This micro-history seeks to deconstruct what Paul Spickard has called the “Ellis Island Model,” a formulaic approach to immigration macro-history. In the Ellis Island Model immigrants are poor and oppressed, determined to come to the United States on a one-way trajectory, hoping to find freedom and riches.\(^\text{450}\) That particular model usually focuses upon urban settlement. In this study I have focused on individual male and/or singular family immigrants in a rural environment. This has allowed me to identify common themes in both the urban and rural immigrant experience, but also the differences, and to offer new insights into the Greek immigrant experience outside of the urban enclave. While I have discussed and documented some of the traditional elements of immigration from Greece to America, I have also explored multiple experiential vantage points of that journey, provided clear examples of individual and collective agency, clarified the more ambiguous terminology of “place,” “home,” “space,” “education,” “race,” and “gender,” and in general, moved the immigration story from a

macro-level to a micro-level discourse. This micro-level approach could serve as a model for further studies of the Greek immigration experience in different communities and/or regions outside of central Illinois as well as exploring the experiences of other distinct ethnic groups in small towns. The model could also be utilized to research current immigration to America and the entrepreneurial enterprises and networks more recent immigrants have established in this country. Immigration as a fluid concept incorporating self-efficacy and networking easily lends itself to the discourses of diaspora, transnationalism, and transculturalism.451

As we conclude our journey, some aspects of immigration theory and history can be highlighted. Education, identity, generation succession, and gender are all areas that should be considered for further exploration.

This research as a rural study, instead of an urban narrative, delineates aspects of formal and informal education and the development of entrepreneurial pursuits in the niche occupation of confectioners in small towns. It also traces the wider networks of support and training between and among first-generation Greek immigrants. While Theodore Saloutos’ extensively chronicled the history of Greek immigrants in Chicago, including the rise of the Greek confectioner in that city, it is clear from my study that the urban experience was only half of the story. We must also study the lives of those who left the urban communities and attempted to make their way in the small towns and cities. The first-generation of Greek immigrants in east central Illinois began their journeys along similar paths to those of their urban compatriots in Chicago or St. Louis, but

perhaps because they were more independent, or adventurous, or entrepreneurial, they continued on. It is this last leg of their life’s journey that offers such a unique and rich topic for study, and allowing us, from the vantage point of the immigrant, to study this experience at the local and rural level. Redefining “place” from the sole Greek male or Greek family in a small town, claiming one’s “space” with a newly outfitted soda fountain and candy counter display, and projecting one’s “agency” in the midst of overt Ku Klux Klan resistance are the components that distill the rural immigrant experience into one of daily reality. It is indeed, the creation of a “new space” which transcends the Greek village, the urban transition, and life in central Illinois. It also projects the tension of the shifting patterns of conformity between and among the Greek immigrants and the “majority population,” but also between and among themselves.

The issue of identity has also been one that Greek American historians have frequently considered between and among the generations. Alice Scourby, in particular, addresses the question of what it means for first, second and third-generation Greek Americans to “be Greek.” She suggests that for some, identification with cultural indices, such as music, dance, or food is enough, while for others it is membership and/or affiliation with the Greek Orthodox Church. She quotes George Stephanopoulos, former communications director for President Clinton, who responded to a question about his ethnic identity with the affirmation, “I am American, but I am Greek Orthodox.” As first-generation Greek immigrants claimed identity with their respective villages in Greece, Scourby contends that the second generation would have absolutely aligned itself

with the Greek Church as the defining marker of “being Greek.” How the third, fourth and fifth generations define their ethnicity can be a topic for further research.

Of course, the issue of race and the evolution from the first-generation of “in-between” people to the second-generation’s “white” identity, were also integral components of this narrative. Yiorgos Anagnostou, in his extensive treatise on Greek identity, posits that we look to the past as “a resource for organizing ethnic identity and as a venue of containment and domination.” This requires the observer to assign a hegemonic meaning to the acquisition of cultural practices. Over time, Anagnostou suggests that this effort will contribute to a powerful and dynamic pluralistic society.\(^{453}\) Anagnostou urges researchers to recognize the past as a constructed process, and that the context of its definition assists in the recovery of the past that may have been erased or excluded from public memory. Underscoring the fact that some pasts are more privileged than others, he contends that whiteness studies in particular “have been effective in showing that race talk permeates social discourse even when not making explicit references to race or racism” when it employs the construction of “being white” as opposed to “not being black.”\(^{454}\) This allowed the “in-between” southeastern immigrants to eventually privilege their ethnic identities as being white, despite initial resistance from majority populations and socio-cultural labeling as Oriental, Octoroon, or Black.\(^{455}\) If we accept this argument, we could possibly extend Scourby’s research and further explore the third-generation Greek construct of individual and/or collective identity.


\(^{454}\) Ibid., p. 11.

\(^{455}\) Ibid., p. 14.
The question of my grandfather’s business’s longevity also serves as an entry point into a much larger discussion of why nearly all the old Greek confectionaries eventually closed. What factors might have served to bring about their demise? Based on data taken from the 1980 United States census, Scourby contends that the trend of upward economic mobility across generations among individuals of Greek descent was demonstrated in male movement from being shopkeepers and laborers into more managerial, sales, and administrative occupations. In addition, females also moved into a wider workforce that required more education and different skills than those of the candy store. She argued that within the Greek family structure, the emphasis on education as a vehicle for upward mobility was manifested in the second and third generations. Whether or not higher education was the primary factor in the decline and demise of the existing confectioneries in east central Illinois after the 1970’s is not easily demonstrable, but it is clear that few of the second generation Greeks wanted to remain in the family businesses established by their immigrant fathers.

Of course, the demise and decimation of small city and small town “downtowns” must also be considered as a significant factor in the decline of the Greek confectionaries as well as other retail enterprises. My research shows that by the 1960’s there were only a handful of confectioneries, managed by second-generation Greeks, surviving in east central Illinois. Often with the death of the father, and particularly after World War II, the business closed due to lack of interest on the part of the second generation. Concurrently, with the advent of the interstate highway system, the burgeoning

---

development of malls and “big box” all-purpose stores, downtowns across America began their rapid decline after 1970. Most of the small towns I visited as part of this study had whole blocks of empty buildings that once held thriving unique retail shops serving the community. While some efforts are being made to revive downtowns with governmental and private funding, it has been a slow process. Yet, it is the romance of small-town America that still holds many of us in its grip. Miles Ovell, in *The Death and Life of Main Street: Small town in American Memory, Space, and Community*, posits that despite the reality that “Main Street” has been “battered for decades…the idea of the small town lies at the heart of the American ethos, with a strong and continuing appeal for Americans.” Indeed, particularly after 9/11, the appeal of a neighborhood, that safe place to shop and meet, has continued to resonate with the public, when in reality, there are few of those spaces left in small towns. Jane Jacobs must be cited as the voice from the urban wilderness with her admonition that neighborhoods that are lived in and utilized are “typically strong proponents of peace and order,” and it is the stores and public places close to each other that promote and perpetuate an orderly society.

In a real world experience at the micro level, my sister and I have seen a resurgence of downtown Tuscola as a result of reestablishing our business on the corner of Main and Sale streets. Three other retail businesses have opened in the past ten years bringing local residents and “out-of-towners” to our four-block area. Children can safely park their bicycles at the bicycle rack on the corner and come in for a soda or sundae, knowing they will be greeted by name and listened to when they share stories about their

---

escapades. We hire high school students to work and it has been a valuable experience for most. My sister’s children also work if there are no school activities, repeating the cycle begun by my grandfather. While this life may sound romantically lovely and bucolic, the owning and operating of a business remains hard work.

My sister and I represent the third generation of Greek confectioners, but as female owners and entrepreneurs we also exemplify the changing gender roles that second and third-generation Greek women have experienced. In particular, marriage patterns in the Greek Orthodox Church moved from the traditional Greek-only spousal arrangements to intermarriage among non-Orthodox and non-Greeks by the second generation. As I have also shown, many Greek males, particularly in the small towns in central Illinois, frequently married non-Greek women from their local environment. Among the second-generation Greek women I interviewed, their views on taking traditional Greek husbands varied, from agreeing to an arranged marriage, to making every effort not to marry a Greek man. Educational endeavors, exposure to life outside of their hometowns, and the absence of a nearby Greek Orthodox Church all impacted the marriage unions among first and second-generation Greeks in central Illinois. This was especially true for those residing in small towns whose Orthodox church attendance in relatively faraway Danville, Decatur, Champaign, or Springfield was sporadic and usually relegated to holidays.

The Greek Orthodox Church claims to be “the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church,” and holds a deep reluctance to ascribe to any other church this “ecclesial
Statistics around the year 2000 kept by the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America revealed that two out of three marriages, or sixty-six percent, were “inter-Christian,” which represented a tremendous growth of such interfaith unions over a time span of sixty years of records. Indeed, in the years following World War II, the Greek Orthodox Church in the United States became “American.” A study conducted in 1976 revealed that the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of North and South America had evolved into one that incorporated more “professional” American-trained clergy, the inclusion of English into the Liturgy and church governance, the utilization by some parishes of organ music, and the continued multi-purpose use of church buildings for events other than formal Church services.

In regard to marriage patterns among second-generation Greeks, inter-Christian weddings increased from 407 in 1959 to 3,710 in 1988, reflecting a nine-fold increase. Second-generation Greeks were not as compelled to marry a person of the Greek Orthodox faith as were their parents. As I have shown, there were multiple examples of even first-generation Greek immigrants marrying non-Orthodox women. But my family was more typical. Most first-generation male Greek immigrants returned to Greece to marry or, as in the case of my grandfather, chose from among the Greek immigrant women available locally or from one of the large urban Greek communities. Second-generation Greeks, as my parents demonstrated, began to break away from traditional

---

461 Ibid., p. 217.
463 Ibid., p. 147.
mores and practices and married outside the faith. Even in parishes, such as Astoria, New York, which had a high urban population concentration of Greeks, the rate of “mixed” marriages rose dramatically among second and third-generation Greeks. We should note that in addition to the decline of intra-Orthodox Christian marriages, divorce rates were also on the increase, particularly after 1960. \(^{464}\) Further investigation of marriage and divorce patterns among subsequent generations of Greeks could be another interesting avenue for research.

This study of first-generation Greek confectioners in central Illinois touched on the journeys of hundreds of people, but there are many journeys yet to be uncovered. I hope that this initial exploration into local, rural, and public history will encourage others to build upon my work here, and thereby ensure that the neglected and forgotten, but fascinating lives of other generations of immigrants will be illuminated so that they, too, may be justly remembered.

\(^{464}\) Ibid., p. 148.
MAP: Locations of Greek Confectioneries in Central Illinois, 1880-1930

Locations of Greek Confectioneries in Central Illinois, 1880-1930
BIBLIOGRAPHY

CIVIL RECORDS:

(Information from the following civil records was researched for the years 1880-1930, and later when warranted. In each case, many individual yearly or daily issues or records were missing.)

Census Records (towns):
Allegheny, Pennsylvania
Altamont, Illinois
Alton, Illinois
Aurora, Illinois
Benld, Illinois
Brooklyn, New York
Burlington, Iowa
Cahokia, Illinois
Cairo, Illinois
Camargo, Illinois
Carlinville, Illinois
Casey, Illinois
Champaign, Illinois
Charleston, Illinois
Chicago, Illinois
Cedar Rapids, Iowa
Decatur, Illinois
Defiance, Ohio
East St. Louis, Illinois
Effingham, Illinois
Evansville, Indiana
Flora, Illinois
Greenville, Illinois
Hillsboro, Illinois
Iowa State Census Collection (Collected between Federal Censuses – 1905, 1915, 1925)
Jacksonville, Illinois
Kalamazoo, Michigan
Keokuk, Iowa
Litchfield, Illinois
Marquette, Michigan
Marshall, Illinois
Mount Carmel, Illinois
Nokomis, Illinois
Paris, Illinois
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
South Bend, Indiana
Springfield, Illinois
Staunton, Illinois
Stonington, Illinois
Sullivan, Illinois
Taylorville, Illinois
Terre Haute, Indiana
Tuscola, Illinois
Urbana, Illinois
Vandalia, Illinois
Vincennes, Indiana
Virden, Illinois
City Directories (towns):

- Alton, Illinois
- Burlington, Iowa
- Cairo, Illinois
- Champaign/Urbana, Illinois
- Cedar Rapids City, Iowa
- Danville, Illinois
- Decatur, Illinois
- East St. Louis, Missouri
- Effingham, Illinois
- Effingham and Altamont, Illinois
- Evansville, Indiana
- Henderson, North Carolina
- Hillsboro, Illinois
- Mattoon, Illinois
- Mount Carmel, Illinois
- New Haven, Connecticut
- Owensboro, Kentucky
- Peoria, Illinois
- Phoenix, Arizona
- Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
- Robinson, Illinois
- Rockford, Illinois
- South Bend and Mishawaka City, Indiana
- Springfield, Illinois
- Springfield, Missouri
St. Louis, Missouri
Taylorville, Illinois
Terre Haute, Indiana

High School Yearbooks (towns):
Decanois, Decatur High School
The Echo, and the Signet, Effingham High School
Newton Community High School
The Old Nokomis, Nokomis Township High School

MISCELLANEOUS ARCHIVAL AND OTHER RECORDS:
Effingham, Illinois telephone directories, 1930s
Illinois, Deaths and Stillbirths Index
Kankakee County, Illinois Marriage Index, 1889-1962, Kankakee County Clerk, Kankakee, Illinois
“List or Manifest of Alien Passengers for the United States, Port of New York”
Michigan, Deaths and Burials Index, 1867-1995.
New York Passenger Lists, 1820-1957
People of the State of Illinois vs. Bensen et al., No. 2792, Douglas County (Illinois), Circuit Court, p. 48.
Post card, 1912, Mary Emerson private collection, Taylorville, IL, Christian County Historical Society
Royal Confectionery advertisement, 1919, courtesy of Christian County Historical Association collection
United States, National Archives and Records Administration; Washington, Applications for Headstones for U.S. Military Veterans
United States, National Archives and Records Administration, General Records of the Department of State

United States, National Archives and Records Administration, Passport Applications

United States, Social Security Death Index

United States, World War I Draft Registration Cards

United States, World War II Draft Registration Cards

Newspapers and Magazines:

*American Hellenic World*

*Arcola Record-Herald*

*Boston Daily Globe*

*Champaign/Urbana News-Gazette*

*Charleston Journal-Gazette*

*Charleston Times-Courier*

*Chicago Tribune*

*Coles County Daily Times-Courier*

*Daily Illini* (student paper of the University of Illinois, Champaign/Urbana)

*Dayton Journal*

*Decatur Herald*

*Effingham Daily News*

*Effingham Republican*

*Eldorado (IL) Daily Journal*

*Greek News*

*Greek Star*

*Greenup Jubilee*

*Harrisburg (IL) Daily Register*

*Hellenic Heritage*

*Herrin (IL) Semi-Weekly Herald*
Hoopeston Chronicle
Illinois State Journal Register (Springfield, Illinois)
Kansas City Times
Litchfield News Herald
Loxias
Marion (IL) Daily Republican
Mattoon Daily-Journal-Gazette and Commercial Star
Mount Carmel (IL) Daily Republican-Register
National Herald
New York Times
Newton (IL) Press
Omaha Mediator
Pana News-Palladium
Rantoul Press and Chanute Field News
Saint Louis Globe Democrat
Saloniki-Greek Press
Shelbyville Daily Union
Sullivan News Progress
Taylorville Daily Breeze
The Greek Press
The Outlook
Tuscola Journal
Tuscola Review
Omaha World-Herald
Urbana Daily Courier
Wayne County Press
IN PERSON AND TELEPHONE INTERVIEWS:

Ann Beck interview with Christine Katris Kockler in Lansing, Illinois, August 3, 2010
Ann Beck interview with Peter Lessaris and Sophia Lenardos Lessaris in Champaign, Illinois, June 23, 2011
Ann Beck interview with Peter Tomaras, Pete’s son, in Champaign, Illinois, June 23, 2011
Ann Beck interview with James Vaky in Champaign, Illinois, June 11, 2011
Ann Beck interview with Mark Pelafos in Champaign, Illinois, June 24, 2011
Ann Beck interview with Dr. Robert Arrol in Arcola, Illinois, March 18, 2013
Ann Beck interview with Dean Bartges in Charleston, Illinois, August 22, 2013
Ann Beck interview with Collin Cain in Arcola, Illinois, March 18, 2013
Ann Beck interview by phone with Jack Frank, February 27, 2013.
Ann Beck interview with Mary Gherardini in Charleston, Illinois, August 15, 2013
Ann Beck interview with Diana Vriner Krandel in Champaign, Illinois, November 4, 2013
Ann Beck interview with Gene Markos in Hillsboro, Illinois, August 30, 2013
Ann Beck interview by phone with Jeni Pelafoes Mechalas, September 18, 2013.
Ann Beck interview with Charles Nichols in Charleston, Illinois, March 6, 2013
Ann Beck interview with Mike P. Poulis, Jr. in Decatur, Illinois, March 20, 2013
Ann Beck interview by phone with Pete S. Vriner, October 30, 2013

MISCELLANEOUS PRIVATE CORRESPONDENCE, PRIVATE PAPERS, AND EPHEMERA:


“The Candy Kitchen: An Original 1920s Soda Fountain Confectionery and Diner”


Fred Ross to Ann Beck, private correspondence, April 17, 2010.


“History of the Tuscola, Illinois Masonic Lodge,” Lodge No. 32.” This is a brief, typed, history written by Frank Lincoln, a Tuscola citizen and member of the lodge. Mr. Lincoln gave a copy given to me, along with copies of some records of my grandfather’s membership in the lodge.


Personal letter to Ann Beck from Jean Attebery, July 12, 2013.


SECONDARY SOURCES:


Acel, Ervin S. “The Foreign Language Press as a Dealer’s Medium.” *Advertising & Selling* 29, no. 5 (July 5, 1919).


Ellis, Ann W. “The Greek Community in Atlanta, 1900-1923.” *The Georgia Historical Quarterly* 58, no. 4 (December 1, 1974): 400–408.


Friedman, Jacob. *Friedman’s Common-Sense Candy Teacher: A Most Complete Line of Up-to-Date Formulas, with All Instructions in the Art of Making Candies, Both Steam and Open Fire Work, for the Large Manufacturer Or the Beginner ...* 4th, with an enlarged Supplement. Chicago: Jonas M. Bell, 1915.


Lawson, Michael L. “Omaha, a City in Ferment: Summer of 1919.” *Nebraska History* 58, no. 3 (Fall 1977): 395–417.


