not been for a time. He carried no grudges to his grave. But in 1960, just months after I returned from Greece, he departed angry and arrogant to serve a larger parish in Cleveland, Ohio. He was tired, too, and more hurt and vulnerable than he had ever been. He had fought with his parishioners, his wife, and his rebellious teenage daughters for the better part of a decade and now rumors followed him to Cleveland that I was dating non-Greeks. What would his parishioners think?

I returned to Des Moines knowing that my parents had been trying to keep alive in Iowa the Greek life they had known before World War II, a life that no longer existed in Americanized Athens. I saw, too, that their cosmopolitan perspectives had become diluted by those carried from rural Greece by their parishioners and that the Greeks in Athens were far more tolerant and far less afraid of change than the Iowa Greeks. I chose not to rejoin that or any other Greek-American community, to be Greek only in Greece. For a time my naive childhood affection for all that was Greek in the US was replaced by a bitterness rooted in the Greek American village that had become, for me, a confining, parochial island out of place in mid-America. Therein lies an irony. Many of my happiest memories are of this village.

Proposal for Peopling his Majesty’s Southern Colonies on the Continent of America

ARCHIBALD MENZIES

The vast tracts of uncultivated land in America, which have been ceded to his Majesty by the late treaty of peace contain such a variety of soils, as, with proper culture, would supply us with all the materials for our manufactures, that are produced in hot climates; and even with many of our most expensive luxuries.

These materials are, at present, purchased in countries where we are constantly liable to have the price raised upon us by our rivals in trade.

A large extensive dominion, without inhabitants, must be an expence, in lieu of an advantage, to the mother-country; at the same time the utmost attention is necessary, not to nourish vipers in our bosom, by bringing in an improper kind of inhabitants.

As every scheme that may have a tendency to the good of this country, (however unknown the person may be who proposes it) will, I am convinced, be attended to by our present government, which appears to have nothing so much at heart as the public welfare; that consideration emboldens me humbly to offer one for the people of Florida, and the rest of his Majesty’s Southern colonies on the continent of America, with inhabitants fit for the cultivating the natural produce of that country, whose religion will be a bar to their forming connections with the French or Spaniards; and who will readily intermarry, and mix with out own people settled there. The idea which I shall here suggest, occurred to me
during a short residence I lately made in the Levant, where I
had occasion to acquire some knowledge of the characters,
the manners, and the present situation of the people in
question.

The people I met, are the Greeks of the Levant, accustomed
to a hot climate, and bred to the culture of the vine, olive,
cotton, tobacco, madder, etc., etc., as also to the raising silk;
and who could supply our markets with all the commodities
which at present we have from Turky, and markets with all the
commodities which at present we have from Turky, and other
parts. These people are in general, sober and industrious;
and being reduced, by their severe masters, to the greatest
misery, would be easily persuaded to fly from slavery, to the
protection of a free government. The Greeks of the Islands
would be the most useful, and the easiest to bring away, as
they are more oppressed than any others, having the same
taxes to pay as the Greeks of the Continent; with the addition
of an annual visit from the Capiitan Bacha, or Turkish High
Admiral. The sums arising from their exportation of vast
quantities of silk, wine, oil, wheat, tobacco, mastick, cotton,
hardly suffice to satisfy their greedy tyrants, who fleece them
upon all occasions.

It may be observed, that they are excellent rowers, and might
be of great service in the inland navigation of America.

I should likewise humbly propose to bring over some
Armenians, who have long been, and still are, at this day,
reputed an honest, trading, manufacturing people. In
consequence of the late civil wars and revolutions in Persia,
they left their native country in great numbers, and settled
in Turky: where, tho’ they find themselves less oppressed
than at home, yet they still groan under the calamities of a
despotic government.

This frugal and industrious people, would be fond of any
favourable opportunity, to change a country of slavery and
oppression, for one equally rich, where they could enjoy the
invaluable blessings of liberty, and security for their property.
Great numbers are dispersed over the Levant; and the poorer
sort are taken into the service of our merchants, preferable to
any other people; their fidelity being incorruptible. They are
equally expert with the Greeks, in cultivating the vine, olive,
wheat, etc., etc. in manufacturing carpeting, cotton, and silk
stuffs. They might be of great use in carrying on the inland
trade in America, as they would not be so apt to play tricks
with the Indians, as our traders are; their religion obliging
them to live very frugally, and even the greatest part of the
year on vegetables, would enable them to sell their goods
cheaper than either the French or Spaniards. I should add,
that many of them are people of considerable property.

All that, it is presumed, would be necessary to induce them
to come, would be to allot proper lands for them, and to build
and endow a few churches of their sect; as the Priests have
entirely the direction of them, the great point would be to
secure the clergy in our interest.

The Greeks may be induced equally with the Armenians,
by their Priests; as likewise by raising a few companies of
soldiers, to be levied in like manner with theirs in the service
of the Crown of Naples; where a principal Greek obtains
a company, and levy-money, on producing his company compleat at the place of rendezvous.

Great numbers come over daily to Naples, in hopes of getting
into these corps; but as all of them cannot find employment
in the military way, feeling themselves more at ease in the
Neapolitan dominions, than at home, they willingly settle in
the country, and apply themselves to the several occupations
to which they have been bred. They are allowed the exercise
of their religion, on acknowledging the Pope’s supremacy,
tho’ even this condition they complain of; and very little
would tempt them to move still farther from their own home.
With us they would be under no restraint, and would not be
liable to be disturbed, by the Priests endeavouring to convert
them; a circumstance highly disagreeable to their clergy, who detest the Roman Catholic more than any religion upon earth. The bitter animosity subsisting between the Roman Catholics and Greeks, has been one great cause of security to the Ottoman Crown, as each would rather submit to the Turk, than to the other.

The Greek and Armenian women are remarkable handsome. This circumstance would naturally prompt inter-marriages between our people and them, and soon put an end to all distinctions: Most of our merchants in Turkey are married to Christian women of that country. If it should be apprehended, that we should embroil ourselves with the Turks, by spiriting away their subjects, the answer I should humbly offer to that is. That numbers of Greeks leave their country daily; many of whom are employed in different services, but avowedly by the Venetians and Neapolitans. Each of those Powers have constantly Ministers residing at the Ottoman Porte; but I never could learn any complaint had been made to them on that head.

There are great numbers of Greeks settled in Minorca; by their means many of their countrymen might be procured, as they well know how much happier they would be under his Majesty’s government, than under any other whatsoever. I have been informed, that almost all the Greeks settled at Minorca, left that Island on its being taken by the French, in the late war.

It will appear from what has been said, that, by this proposal, it is only meant to induce a few Greeks and Armenians to come over at first; but the good reception they will probably meet with, will make them soon very desirous to invite their countrymen to partake of their happiness.

Megerny Castle, Perthshire
23d October 1763

The Grosse Pointe “Point” System and Greek Americans

Dan Georgakas

Bordering Detroit on its east side are the five Grosse Pointe communities where some of the metropolitan area’s wealthiest and most powerful citizens reside. From 1934 until the mid-1960s, realtors had a point system to keep out “undesirable elements.” Most would-be home buyers had to score 50 points to be acceptable. Immigrants, religious minorities, and ethnic minorities, however, were judged by a different standard. Poles had to score 55, Greeks 65, Italians 75, and Jews 85. Asians and African Americans could not apply. The point system was administered by private detectives working for the Grosse Pointe Property Owner’s Association. The questions included:

1. If not American born, how long have the applicants lived in this country?
2. Is their way of living typically American?
3. Are the husband’s immediate associates typical?
4. Are their friends predominantly typical?
5. Appearances – swarthy, slightly swarthy, or not at all?
6. Accents – pronounced, medium, slight, not at all?
7. What is the husband’s ranking within his occupation?
8. How does the husband’s social position stand with the public?
9. Dress – sloppy, flashy, neat, or conservative?
10. Grammar – good, fair or poor?

When challenged about this system in the late 1960s, Paul Maxon, a veteran Grosse Pointe realtor, speaking for the