

## **Greeks in Kansas and Western Missouri 1900-1940**

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At the turn of the century, two industries—the railroads and the packing houses—drew thousands of Greek laborers to the agricultural states of Kansas and Missouri. Many in this first wave of young, transient workers eventually returned to Greece or found greener pastures elsewhere. Some, however, remained in the heartland to raise families and to lay the foundations of a Greek community continued by their descendants to the present day. With its main center in metropolitan Kansas City, this community once embraced hundreds of Greeks who operated cafes, hat works, and confectioneries in small towns throughout Kansas and western Missouri. Relatively few in numbers and geographically dispersed, Kansas' Greek immigrants surmounted early hostility toward foreigners to achieve both acceptance and economic success. At the same time, they managed to instill a strong Greek identity among the second generation growing up in America

### **Years of Struggle and Conflict, 1900-1914**

The thousands of Greeks who passed through Kansas and Missouri between 1900 and 1914 came from small villages mired in poverty. Most of the immigrants were young (some only 12 or 13), male, itinerant, and unmarried. They hoped to earn money to pay family debts and support their parents and sisters in Greece; some planned to return home to their



villages within a few years. The railroad was the magnet that drew more adventurous Greeks to the Midwest, often after they had labored for a time in eastern mills and factories.<sup>1</sup> The Santa Fe, Union Pacific, and other rail lines operating in Kansas needed a steady supply of workers to fill their section gangs. Operating under a foreman or boss, these unskilled laborers maintained assigned sections of track or sometimes laid down new branch lines.

Among the first wave of Greek workers to arrive in Kansas was Elias Kapnistos, who left his native island of Ikaria at 14. After a stint in a Pittsburgh steel mill, he joined his uncle in Madison, Kansas, in 1904. Kapnistos' uncle worked for a section gang on the Santa Fe Railroad, residing in a company box car and paying living expenses of \$3.76 a month. Meals included rabbit meat and Greek bread baked in mud pits along the tracks. At first, Elias relied on his uncle's charity, but soon he found a job carrying water to other workers, earning \$1.25 a day for 10 hours work.<sup>2</sup>

Section gang work was often seasonal. Laid off during the winter months, Greek section gang workers from across Kansas congregated in Kansas City, Missouri. Kapnistos and his uncle, wintering there in 1904, found residents less than receptive to the presence of the Greek workers. Neighbors pelted their rental house with rocks, causing them to seek refuge at the Giokaris Brothers Establishment at 216 West Fifth Street.<sup>3</sup>

In his memoirs, Kapnistos describes George Giokaris and his brother, Nick, as "the fathers, advisors, protectors and labor agents to the entire Greek immigrant population" of the city.<sup>4</sup> George Giokaris had departed Tripolis for America in 1895, getting his start in Chicago as a fruit peddler. With his profits, he went to Kansas City and opened a coffee house that became the meeting place for Kansas City's Greek community and the first destination of newcomers.

The Giokaris brothers served as the unofficial bankers

and postmasters for the Greek laborers. Railroad workers brought in their pay slips; the Giokarises banked the money, sent portions back to Greece and rendered the balance to the workers at the end of the season. George Giokaris also operated a bakery that supplied breads to the Greek boarding houses and the railroads. By 1906, Giokaris was prosperous enough to return to Tripolis and bring a bride back to Kansas City. His wife, Vasiliki, was one of the first Greek women in the city. At that time, the few Kansas City Greeks who could afford to marry usually chose American brides.<sup>5</sup>

By 1910 Kansas City's Greek district, nicknamed "Athens," filled an area of several blocks. Lodging houses were built over the coffee houses, shops, and saloons where the workers passed their idle time. The *Kansas City Star* observed that

All within five or six years something like five thousand of these Greeks have come to Kansas City. From Fifth and Wyandotte streets west for six blocks they have driven other nations out and written signs across the windows that none but the Greeks and certain classical scholars can understand. In another five years there will be ten thousand of these people here.<sup>6</sup>

The *Star* went on to assure its alarmed readers that the Greeks were an industrious people who, like previous immigrants, were bent on quickly improving their lot. Although the extent of anti-Greek sentiment in Kansas City is difficult to gauge, hostility toward Greeks and other foreigners flourished throughout America at this time. Greeks, who worked for the lowest wages, were especially resented by the established workforce.<sup>7</sup> In Kansas, this sentiment was no doubt inflamed by reports of the use of Greek contract labor by the railroads and packing houses, sometimes in violation of federal law.<sup>8</sup>

Labor tensions helped fuel a violent attack in 1909 on the Greeks of South Omaha, 185 miles north of Kansas City. The day after a Greek man shot a local policeman during a dispute, frenzied citizens rampaged through South Omaha's Greek



town for nine hours. Many of the city's 1,200 Greeks were beaten, their businesses looted and dwellings burned. Also swept up in the attacks were Turks, Hungarians, and other innocent foreign workers. Days later, reports of the South Omaha riot triggered a violent anti-Greek demonstration in Kansas City, Kansas.<sup>9</sup>

Like Omaha, Kansas City, Kansas, was a major center for the meat packing industry. Greek railroad workers often found temporary jobs in the city's packing houses. These newcomers met with stiff resistance from the more senior workers. According to the son of a Greek packing house worker, "In the meat industry, at that time, the Irish were predominant....Why, you had raging battles that used to take place [between the Irish and the Greeks]....This was in the early 1900's, 10 or 12....They [the Greeks] were at the bottom of the rung at that time."<sup>10</sup>

To accommodate the influx of packing house workers, a new Greek district developed in Kansas City, Kansas, just across the state line from Kansas City, Missouri. Greek coffee houses, cafes, and rooming houses stretched along several blocks of Kansas Avenue in an area of the city known as Armourdale. Located in the humid river bottoms, the Armourdale district afforded the immigrants lodging within convenient walking—and smelling—distance of the slaughterhouses, railroads, and soap factories. It was home to wage laborers from a host of nationalities, including Serbs and Russians.<sup>11</sup>

One of the early Armourdale Greeks was Andrew Valiatzas, who arrived in Kansas City, Kansas, in 1910. Born in Volos, Valiatzas had left school at 14 and worked for two years as a grocer's delivery boy. Lugging a heavy basket several miles each day, he earned a mere 100 drachmas (\$20) a year. Valiatzas soon joined the exodus of young Greek men to America, borrowing 400 drachmas from his uncle for the journey.<sup>12</sup>

In Kansas City, the 18-year-old Valiatzas found a temporary home with the brother of the neighbor who had accompanied him from Volos. The quarters they shared with seven or eight other Greeks were "bare to the wood without any furniture other than our sleeping cots. There was no electricity, no gas, no water, no toilet, no shower, no bath.... We bathed once a month when we went to the barber to have our hair cut."<sup>13</sup>

Valiatzas quickly found work in a packing house. "My job was to cut the heads off the lambs after they were butchered. I was working six days a week from six o'clock until 11 or 12 at night and my salary was 10 cents an hour making for weekly salary at the most \$3.50...." He concluded that the Greeks were "literally slaves." Higher income might be obtained at a factory job; however, one had to be lucky enough to find an opening and willing to work "seven days a week and 10 hours a day."<sup>14</sup>

In his memoirs, written in 1975, Valiatzas confessed that conditions at first seemed so unbearable that he contemplated suicide:

While I was in Greece, we were all told of the land of plenty and how easy life would have been in America. We had come as the original pioneers hoping to find a small paradise and it turned out to be hell. I was so despondent and sad that one day I decided to terminate my life. I went to [a]...bridge...with the purpose of jumping into the river.... At the last moment I found the courage to hold back....<sup>15</sup>

After three months in the packing house, Valiatzas learned that the Union Pacific was hiring in the small town of Emmett, Kansas, some 100 miles to the west. The railroad furnished the workers with box cars, free coal for heating, and relatively inexpensive food. Although still earning only 10 cents an hour, Valiatzas was able to save \$100 in six months. He proudly sent half this sum home to his mother in Greece.<sup>16</sup>

The other section gang members in Emmett—mostly



English, Germans, and Irish—viewed Valiatzas and his fellow Greeks with disdain. “They were very eager to consider us second rate citizens and to show contempt and insult us,” he recalled. Even more distasteful was the attitude of the German gang master who “looked at us as if we were animals and not human beings.”<sup>17</sup>

Along with the economic factors, hostility toward Greeks also stemmed from a common perception that their lifestyle violated the mores of Protestant society. A petition circulated before the 1909 South Omaha riot typifies such sentiments, accusing Greeks of attacking women, insulting pedestrians and openly maintaining “gambling dens and many other forms of viciousness...that threaten the very life and welfare of South Omaha.”<sup>18</sup> More than one Greek rail worker in Kansas ran afoul of the state’s prohibition laws. Arriving in an unnamed Kansas town in 1912, Edward Steiner discovered that six Greek men were being detained indefinitely in the county jail:

They had been arrested in September, it was now March, and were charged with the heinous crime of having gone to the unregenerate state of Nebraska, where they purchased a barrel of beer which they drank on the Sabbath Day in their camp by the railroad.<sup>19</sup>

Such encounters prejudice may have been discouraging, but they did not prevent the immigrants from moving quickly up the ladder of success. Within five to ten years of their arrival, many were already leaving the ranks of the day laborers to become tradesmen and entrepreneurs. The *Kansas City Star* could observe in 1910 that

The Greeks have...proved that their strongest instinct is for trade. They have left the streets and the packing houses and the railroad jobs as soon as they could get money together to buy a “stand” or shop or store in a good business location.... Fifteen hundred of their countrymen are in trade

or working at occupations other than day labor.... good enough proof that the Greek is not slow to adapt himself to new conditions.<sup>20</sup>

Among the early Greek success stories was Elias Kapnistos. After wandering for five years between railroad and quarry jobs in Kansas, Utah, and California, he earned a two-year accounting degree at a Swedish college in Lindsborg, Kansas. Upon graduation, he hired on as a teller at a Kansas City bank, becoming department manager after he returned from fighting in the 1912 Balkan War. He later left his position to try various business ventures such as a restaurant in Newton, Kansas, a laundry service, and eventually the grocery that he operated in partnership with his son-in-law until his retirement.<sup>21</sup>

More typical was the career of Andrew Valiatzas, who escaped the grind of railroad and factory work in 1914 by learning the hat blocking and dry cleaning trade. He got his start as an assistant at a Greek-owned shoe shine shop in Ottawa, Kansas. Six months later, he began cleaning and blocking hats for the customers of another Greek shine parlor in Kansas City, Kansas, earning an astonishing \$70 his first week. He would pursue this trade, first with a partner and then on his own, for the next two decades.<sup>22</sup>

By the 1920’s, the complexion of the Greek community in the region had shifted, becoming more prosperous and less transient. The immigrants now turned their attention to the establishment of families, Greek Orthodox churches, and Greek schools. They also organized in the face of a new wave of hostility, this time from the Ku Klux Klan.

### **Putting Down Roots: Greeks in the Twenties and Thirties**

By the twenties, the Greek population of Kansas City, Missouri, had shrunk considerably from its peak in 1910.



Immigration slowed after the war and the railroads no longer employed thousands of transient workers. A rather rosy 1925 estimate placed Kansas City's Greek population at 3,000, with "200 Greek families and 500 Greek-owned businesses."<sup>23</sup> At the other extreme, the census, notorious for under-reporting Greeks immigrants, found only 803 Greeks residing in Kansas City, Missouri, in 1930. Another 293 were reported to live in Kansas City, Kansas.<sup>24</sup>

The mention of "Greek families" in the 1925 *Greek American Guide* (whatever the actual figures may have been) reflects the shifting demographics of the immigrant community. The *Guide* mentions few women by name, but photographs of Greek wives and children appeared next to snapshots of proud proprietors and their gleaming lunch counters. The number of Greek women in Kansas City had grown steadily after World War I as men found brides in Greece through relatives and matchmakers in Greece. In their new-found prosperity, grooms paid their fiancées' passage to America or even traveled home themselves to marry and escort their brides to Kansas City. One father managed to locate Greek husbands for his five daughters from among his fellow packing house workers. After sealing the marriage deals, he brought the girls over from Greece, one by one.<sup>25</sup>

As for businesses, the *Greek American Guide* confirms that Greeks in Kansas and Missouri shared their countrymen's strong preference for the restaurant trade.<sup>26</sup> Cafes and lunch counters dominated the 88 Greek-owned businesses listed for Kansas City, Missouri, while confectioneries ranked second. Hat works, which sometimes combined hat blocking with clothes cleaning and/or shoe repair, were equally popular. The directory also listed a smattering of groceries, pool halls, laundries and two wholesale restaurant suppliers, the Missouri Pie Company and the Mecca Coffee Company. Two immigrants boasted of professions (a doctor and lawyer) while another handful claimed employment by banks or

government offices.

Another development in the twenties was the migration of Greeks from urban Kansas City to the many smaller towns scattered across the region. Nearly every Kansas town of any size had a Greek-owned restaurant.<sup>27</sup> Wichita, soon to become the largest city in Kansas, boasted 30 or 40 Greek enterprises, with one, Cero's Candies, in continuous operation since 1885.<sup>28</sup> Greeks also ran hat works, candy stores, and shoe repair shops in towns such as Lawrence, Topeka, Parsons, Coffeyville, Horton, and Independence, Kansas. In western Missouri, Greek businesses thrived in St. Joseph, Kirksville, Sedalia, Jefferson City, Joplin, and a host of other towns. Often, Greek businesses were located next door to or within close proximity of one another.<sup>29</sup>

A majority of the Kansas and Missouri businessmen featured in the *Greek American Guide* hailed from the Peloponnesus. Among these Southern Greeks, villagers from two states, Corinthia and Arcadia, composed by far the largest group. Given the prominence of Tripolis native George Giokaris, it is not surprising that his fellow Arcadians gravitated to Kansas City. Other Peloponnesian immigrants listed their origins in Ileia, Olympia, Mantinea and Laconia.

Next in overall prominence, after Corinthia and Arcadia, were immigrants from Messinia in central Greece and Macedonia in the north.<sup>30</sup> (Although blue-collar workers are not represented in the *Guide*, Macedonians were also prominent among the Greek packing house workers in Kansas City, Kansas.<sup>31</sup>) A survey of Wichita's early Greek immigrants indicates that they came mainly from Corinthia or the island of Kythera.<sup>32</sup>

Regional affiliations played an ongoing role in the social fabric of the Greek community. Andrew Valiatzas stated that an old classmate from Greece was able to locate him easily by stopping at a coffee house frequented by Greeks from Thessaly.<sup>33</sup> Immigrant funerals were often reunions of those



from the hometown of the deceased. Greeks from Kansas City would travel hundreds of miles to attend the funeral of a fellow villager.<sup>34</sup> Although they had never set foot in Greece, American-born children often carried on their parents' regional ties.

My folks had people [fellow villagers] from Junction City, from Hutchinson, from Wichita, and all the surrounding towns in Kansas. They would all congregate during the year, either in a small town or here [in Kansas City]. And they stayed very, very, very connected. It was so important to them....We [the second generation] knew what it meant to the folks, and I guess we inherited that feeling of closeness.<sup>35</sup>

Formal organizations created by the immigrants were usually broader in scope. The first Greek association in Kansas City was the Greek Beneficial Society, begun in 1901.<sup>36</sup> It was similar to the Pan-Hellenic Union, which also had a Kansas City branch for a time and provided burial expenses and payments to the sick and injured. In the 1920s and 30s, Greeks and other immigrants found an additional safety net in the political machine of Kansas City boss Tom Pendergast. An Irishman, Pendergast earned Greeks' support by helping them land city jobs, obtain business permits and feed their families during tough times.<sup>37</sup> Reportedly at Pendergast's request, Greeks formed a new political organization, the Greek American Democratic Club. The club members met at a coffee house and probably helped deliver Greek votes for the Pendergast machine.<sup>38</sup>

The most significant and enduring Greek institution, however, was the Orthodox Church. In 1907, a seven-member committee wrote to the Holy Synod of Greece asking that a priest be sent to serve the immigrants. Rev. Hariton Panagopoulos arrived in Kansas City later that year, just in time to conduct Holy Week services. Land for a church building at 1423 Broadway was purchased in 1908

for \$9,000.<sup>39</sup> To fund church operations, the newly-chartered community set membership dues at \$4 a year, payable in six-month installments. "Regular members" were those within the greater metropolitan area of Kansas City, Missouri, and Kansas City, Kansas. The "sustaining member" category encompassed those Greeks living in distant towns. These members could vote, but were ineligible to hold parish office.<sup>40</sup>

For more than a dozen years after it opened, the Greek Orthodox Church of the Annunciation served Greeks in both Kansas and Missouri. In 1926, the community split as a result of the Royalist-Venezelist controversy then raging in both Greece and Greek America. The Royalist faction organized a second Greek Orthodox church, St. Dionysios. Located in Kansas City, Kansas, the new church found its main base among the blue-collar Greeks working in the Armourdale packing houses.<sup>41</sup>

Over time, the split between the two churches became primarily one of geography rather than politics, although disparities in wealth and status persisted. Greek families living in Kansas City, Missouri, and in the small towns of western Missouri generally considered Annunciation as their parish.<sup>42</sup> Greeks on the "Kansas side" and those up to one hundred miles away in eastern Kansas affiliated themselves with St. Dionysios.

In 1927, a Wichita, Kansas, paper announced that the city's 250 Greek residents, "whose children attend Sunday Schools elsewhere but are not satisfied," were planning to acquire a building for an Orthodox church.<sup>43</sup> A full-time priest arrived to serve the community in 1933, with services conducted at the AHEPA hall. Like the parishes in Kansas City, Wichita's Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church attracted members from a vast geographic area. When the long-awaited church was finally built in 1944, the parish credited the assistance of "every Orthodox family in Newton, Hutchinson, Salina, El



Dorado, Coffeyville, Independence, Junction City...in fact, the entire state of Kansas."<sup>44</sup>

Priests from all three of the region's churches traveled regularly to serve parishioners in the outlying towns. They performed weddings, funerals, and baptisms in private homes, rented halls or the sanctuaries of other Christian denominations.<sup>45</sup> Because of the distances involved, Greek families outside Kansas City and Wichita attended church services only rarely. On Holy Friday in the 1920's, Greek homes in Kansas City were packed with out-of-town relatives staying over to celebrate *Pascha* the next day.<sup>46</sup> Cut off from regular church services, Greek families in the rural areas visited each other's homes for name day celebrations that could last three days.<sup>47</sup>

Growing up in the small central Missouri town of Moberly, Jennie Sallas remembers traveling to church with her family "six or seven times a year" in the late 1920's and 1930's. The arduous journey to St. Louis or Kansas City began at 2 AM when the family boarded the train in Moberly. Arriving at the church four or five hours later, the children then stood through the three-hour service. At home, their mother gave them instruction in the Greek language, using books that Sallas' father ordered from the Atlas Company. Although she received much of her religious education at Moberly's parochial school, Sallas never questioned her adherence to the Orthodox faith.<sup>48</sup>

When they moved to Lawrence, Kansas, Despoina and Aristoteles Provatakis were advised by the Kansas City priest to send their offspring to the Episcopal Church for religious training. Their mother reinforced the children's Orthodox faith by censuring the house every evening and praying nightly with them before the icons. So anxious was Despoina for her children to receive an Orthodox upbringing that she insisted the family move back to Kansas City after St. Dionysios Church opened in 1926. Her husband gave up the ice cream

wagon he operated with his brother in Lawrence and started over as an hourly worker in Armourdale.<sup>49</sup>

Beginning in the 1920's, most Greek children inside Kansas City proper also attended Greek School. Greek School classes at St. Dionysios Church met daily from 4:30 to 8:30 pm. "The Greek School was the priest," recalled former student Fannie Maduros. "Lord help him, he had some ornery Greek kids....When we got out of American School, we had to go to the Greek school! We didn't have much time to play."<sup>50</sup> Students at Annunciation's Greek School studied Greek grammar, reading, and "Greek history—fighting the Turks all the time."<sup>51</sup> To celebrate Greek Independence Day, Greek School children dressed in blue and white paraded through the downtown while their approving parents looked on. In Wichita, Greek school was more sporadic, but youngsters participated in Greek Independence Day programs held at the AHEPA hall.<sup>52</sup>

Although they attended public schools and enjoyed non-Greek friends, Kansas City's Greek children nevertheless found themselves immersed in the rhythms of Greek life. Social activities often revolved around the feast days and sacraments of the Orthodox church. For their parents, outsiders in a strange land, the church was not only a religious bastion but also the social equivalent of a "country club."<sup>53</sup>

They [our parents] were just totally connected to the church, so that our lives were centered around Sunday school, going to church, Greek school, the choir and then our picnics. Every opportunity that came up, they'd have a picnic. Many of them were held at Swope Park, and they would roast lamb....Then of course all the social events, like the weddings and baptisms—it was another gathering where everyone was so excited to go be there and dance.<sup>54</sup>

Even as the immigrants fostered a strong Greek identity among their children, they faced attack as undesirable "foreigners" from a resurgent Ku Klux Klan. Infiltrating



Kansas in 1921, the Klan's anti-foreigner, anti-Catholic stance found widespread sympathy. An estimated 40,000 to 200,000 Kansans joined the Klan in the 1920s. A Klan-backed candidate won the 1922 governor's race and the group also claimed credit for electing several Kansas legislators and local officials. Pro- and anti-Klan candidates battled again in the 1924 gubernatorial election, with Pulitzer Prize winning journalist William Allen White entering the race as a staunch Klan opponent.<sup>55</sup> The Klan was even more active in the former Confederate state of Missouri. In 1922, they campaigned against the election of political novice Harry Truman as Jackson County judge.<sup>56</sup> With its strong Klan base, Kansas City even played host to the 1924 national Klan convention.<sup>57</sup>

Klan members often employed boycotts as a strategy to drive Greek entrepreneurs out of business or force them to sell at a loss. In Junction City, Kansas, the Klan harassed a Greek billiard hall owner so severely that he quit business. Restaurateur John Maduros was also subjected to Klan intimidation after he served a black customer.<sup>58</sup> In Herington, Kansas, George Stavropoulos watched trade at his once-prosperous bakery drop to a trickle over the course of a few months. The immigrant changed his surname to the more American-sounding "Paul" but was eventually forced to abandon his business. He started over as a cook at a Greek-owned restaurant in Abilene. It took years before his finances recovered sufficiently to allow him to open another establishment, this time a restaurant in Salina, Kansas.<sup>59</sup>

Kansas City Greeks responded to the Klan threat in 1925 by forming a chapter of the new American Hellenic Educational and Progressive Association (AHEPA). Wichita followed suit, creating its Air Capital Chapter of AHEPA in 1928. Both AHEPA chapters included on their membership rolls many small-town Greeks who, like George Stavropoulos, lived isolated from their countrymen and sources of moral

support. Even after the Klan's influence began to wane in 1925, AHEPA continued to function as an educational, social and charitable institution for Kansas and Missouri Greeks. The chapters held meetings in English to improve members' fluency and assisted them in the process of becoming American citizens. The annual AHEPA banquets and picnics in the 1920's attracted large crowds of Greeks. Especially in the 1930's, the group often raised funds for various charitable and patriotic causes.<sup>60</sup>

Most importantly, AHEPA worked to foster a positive image of Greeks within the wider community. By offering free meals to reporters and newsboys, Wichita restaurant owner and AHEPA officer Chris Stathis secured frequent press coverage of AHEPA events. Wichita papers praised the growth of the "progressive" Greek business community.<sup>61</sup> In 1931, AHEPA members from across Kansas filled the steps of the Statehouse in Topeka as they presented a Greek flag to Kansas lawmakers.<sup>62</sup> A year later, the Wichita chapter inducted Kansas Governor Harry Woodring into AHEPA, a signal that Greeks now enjoyed wide acceptance.<sup>63</sup> The Kansas chapter's most cherished moment came in 1946, when President Harry S Truman was inducted as a member. Truman maintained a close relationship with the Kansas City AHEPA after he retired to his hometown of Independence, Missouri.

### Postscript

By World War II, Greeks in Kansas and western Missouri had become well-established. As they moved further into the mainstream, the old Greek neighborhood near Annunciation Church in Kansas City, Missouri, gradually disappeared. The process accelerated after the church at Fourteenth and Broadway burned in 1938 and a new church was built farther south. Greek families moving into suburban neighborhoods



sometimes encountered opposition from neighbors, but any hostility was usually short-lived.<sup>64</sup> In Armourdale, the old Greek neighborhood persisted until Greek homes were destroyed by the Kansas River flood of 1951. By the time urban renewal forced St. Dionysios Church to relocate some two decades later, many of its parishioners were now living in affluent Overland Park or other suburbs.<sup>65</sup>

The Great Depression spelled an end to the more marginal Greek-owned businesses, particularly in the smaller towns. The number of Greeks (and other ethnic minorities) living outside Kansas City and Wichita declined steadily from the thirties onward. When small town proprietors retired or sold their concerns, they often relocated to the city in order to be closer to Greek friends and relatives.<sup>66</sup>

Growing numbers of second-generation Greeks began to attend college, particularly after the war. Finding little incentive to take over small shops or restaurants, they moved on to join the ranks of urban professionals. Yet many retained a strong loyalty to and appreciation for their Greek heritage. "We have the best of both worlds," stated the daughter of a 1912 Greek immigrant. "Our parents made us feel so lucky to have known their heritage, and...we still hold onto it and hope our children will."<sup>67</sup>

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Helen Papanikolas, *An Amulet of Greek Earth* (Athens, OH: Swallow Press/Ohio State University Press, 2002), 88, 98-101.

<sup>2</sup> Nicoletta M. Economy, "The American Odyssey of Louis N. Kapnistos," in *The Herald*, Greek Orthodox Church of the Annunciation, Kansas City, Missouri (1982), 1-2.

<sup>3</sup> Economy, op. cit., 2.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Katherine Eliopoulos, interview, Overland Park, Kansas, 25 August 2002. Eliopoulos is George Giokaris' daughter.

<sup>6</sup> "Foreigners in Kansas City – Greeks," *Kansas City Star*, June 26, 1910.

<sup>7</sup> Papanikolas, op. cit., p. 92.

<sup>8</sup> John G. Bitzes, "The Anti-Greek Riot of 1909—South Omaha," *Nebraska History* 51, no. 2 (1970): 201.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 210-211, 200.

<sup>10</sup> Chris Vedros, interview, Overland Park, Kansas, May 21, 2001.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Andrew Zacharias Valiatzas, "Biography of Andrew Zacharias Valiatzas written by Andrew Zacharias Valiatzas himself," Kansas City, Kansas, n.p., (1975), 11-12.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 13-14.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 14.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 15.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 15-16.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 16.

<sup>18</sup> Bitzes, op. cit., 199.

<sup>19</sup> Edward Steiner, *From Alien to Citizen* (1914), reprinted in George J. Leber, *The History of the Order of AHEPA 1922-1975* (Washington DC: The Order of AHEPA, 1972), 99.

<sup>20</sup> "Foreigners in Kansas City – Greeks," *Kansas City Star*, June 26, 1910.

<sup>21</sup> Economy, op. cit., 2-3.

<sup>22</sup> Valiatzas, op. cit., 25-28, 31. Still disillusioned with his American odyssey, Valiatzas returned to Greece in 1936 with his wife and American-born daughters. After World War II, Valiatzas moved back to Kansas City, Kansas.

<sup>23</sup> C. Kanelos, *Greek American Guide*, Milwaukee, Wisconsin (1925), 53.

<sup>24</sup> Paul Koken, Theodore N. Constant and Seraphim G. Canoutas, *A History of the Greeks in the Americas, 1453-1938* (Ann Arbor: Proctor Publications, 1995), 237.

<sup>25</sup> James Hrones interview, Overland Park, Kansas, May 21, 2001.

<sup>26</sup> Papanikolas, op. cit., 92.

<sup>27</sup> Phil Stathis, interview, Topeka, Kansas, February 22, 2003.

<sup>28</sup> Stathis, op. cit.

<sup>29</sup> Kanelos, op. cit., 53-164. The locations of Greek businesses are also



recorded in the city directories from the time period.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Vedros interview, op. cit.

<sup>32</sup> The Wichita-Sedgwick County Historical Museum preserves short biographies of some two dozen of the city's early Greek immigrants. Written by local families, they were displayed as part of an exhibition for the City's centennial.

<sup>33</sup> Valiatzas, op. cit., 25.

<sup>34</sup> James and Jennie Sallas, interview, Kansas City, Missouri, 28 October 2000.

<sup>35</sup> John and Angie Kapnistos, interview, Lee's Summit, Missouri, 24 March 2001.

<sup>36</sup> Nick Giokaris, letter, n.d.

<sup>37</sup> James Sallas interview, op. cit. Katherine Grampsas, interview, Kansas City, Missouri, January 18, 2003.

<sup>38</sup> "Overview of the Greek Community in Kansas City," n.p., n.d.: 6. After Pendergast's reign ended, the Greek American Democratic Club continued to function as one of the last Greek coffee houses in Kansas City. See "Kaffenion Keeps Custom Alive," *Kansas City Star*, December 29, 1965.

<sup>39</sup> Nicoletta M. Economy, "Legacy of a Vanishing Breed," in *The Herald*, Greek Orthodox Church of the Annunciation, Kansas City, Missouri (June 1982).

<sup>40</sup> "Historical Annunciation Parish By-laws of the Greater Kansas City Area, approved August 10, 1910," translation from Greek to English, n.p. (1995).

<sup>41</sup> "Community History" in *The Consecration and Golden Anniversary of St. Dionysios Greek Orthodox Church*, Overland Park, Kansas (1977), 5.

<sup>42</sup> Jennie Sallas interview, op.cit.

<sup>43</sup> *Wichita Beacon*, March 10, 1927.

<sup>44</sup> "History of Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church," *Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church Consecration*, Wichita, Kansas (1986): p. 11-12.

<sup>45</sup> Frances Calys, telephone interview, 21 August 2001; Don Kallos, interview, Topeka, Kansas, February 16, 2003.

<sup>46</sup> James Sallas interview, op. cit.

<sup>47</sup> Jennie Sallas interview, op. cit.

<sup>48</sup> Jennie Sallas interview, op. cit.

<sup>49</sup> Fannie A. Maduros, interview, Kansas City, Missouri, January 7, 2001.

<sup>50</sup> Maduros interview, op. cit.

<sup>51</sup> James Sallas interview, op. cit.

<sup>52</sup> Chrysoula Kyriazis, interview, Kansas City, Missouri, 18 January 2003. Photographs of Greek Independence Day celebrations in Kansas City and Wichita are available in the collections of the Kansas State Historical Society under accession numbers 2003-219.01 (Wichita) and 2001-275.01 (Kansas City).

<sup>53</sup> Maduros interview, op. cit. John Kapnistos interview, op. cit.

<sup>54</sup> Angie Kapnistos interview, op. cit.

<sup>55</sup> Charles William Sloan, Jr., "Kansas Battles the Invisible Empire: The Legal Ouster of the Ku Klux Klan from Kansas, 1922-27," *Kansas Historical Quarterly*, 40, no. 3 (1975): 393-409. Accessed at <http://www.kshs.org/cool2/klan.htm>.

<sup>56</sup> Michael R. Gardner, *Harry Truman and Civil Rights: Moral Courage and Political Risks* (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 2002).

<sup>57</sup> "Official and Departmental Reports," 2<sup>nd</sup> Imperial Konvokation, Kansas City, Missouri, (1924).

<sup>58</sup> Susan Lloyd Franzen, *Behind the Façade of Ft. Riley's Hometown: The Inside Story of Junction City, Kansas*, Pivot Press (1998), 97-99.

<sup>59</sup> John Stavropoulos, telephone interview, August 2, 2002. Mary Dormer, interview, Topeka, Kansas, April 6, 2003.

<sup>60</sup> George J. Leber, *The History of the Order of AHEPA, 1922-1972* (Washington DC: Order of AHEPA, 1972), Stathis interview, op. cit.

<sup>61</sup> Stathis interview, op. cit.

<sup>62</sup> Calys interview, op. cit. A photograph of the event is archived by the Kansas State Historical Society, 2002-027.01.

<sup>63</sup> Leber, op. cit., 275.

<sup>64</sup> Angie Kapnistos interview, op. cit.

<sup>65</sup> Vedros interview, op. cit.

<sup>66</sup> Calys interview, op. cit.

<sup>67</sup> Angie Kapnistos interview, op. cit.