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ARMENIANS OF TAMPA BAY:

A LONG WAY HOME

(THE HISTORY OF THE ARMENIAN PEOPLE AND ITS INFLUENCE
ON THE TAMPA BAY ARMENIAN COMMUNITY)

By:

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INTRODUCTION

An impressive amount of work has been done on the Armenians. Taking into consideration the comparatively modest size of the nation, the results of a random search of library catalogues produced a surprisingly long list of sources. However, there is a stable tendency in the choice of topics in all the literature about the Armenians. What does the word "Armenia" bring up in a person who is only superficially familiar with the history of this nation? Most probably two things: Christianity and Genocide. A lot has been said about the importance of the Armenian Church in the development of Christianity; after all Armenia was the first country to make Christianity its official state religion. There are numerous works dedicated to this topic.

Genocide would probably account for more than a half of all the historical research and literature endeavors that have something to do with the Armenian nation. The events of 1915, when the Turks attempted to eradicate the whole nation, and the preceding massacres of the late 19 century give food for reflection enough for many centuries to come. The accounts of the survivors are filled with terror and dismay; there have not been many events in the history of the past century as appalling or as huge in scale and consequences as the genocide of the Armenian nation.

Apart from killing hundreds of innocent people, genocide and multiple massacres deprived millions of Armenians of their homes and families. Leaving a beloved motherland was very hard, but there was a need to move on. The New World seemed to promise a longed-for peace and prosperity. Armenians loved their land, and their ancestors' ashes were buried there, but the fruits of labor of many generations would never give joy and wealth to their children.

At stake was the survival of the children, families, and quite possibly the whole nation; with this thought hundreds of thousands of Armenians journeyed to their new home in the United States of America.

Although the history of the Armenians in the United States dates back to the nineteenth century, surprisingly few historians have paid attention to the Armenian communities in the US. Part of the reason may be the enormous burden of genocide that has attracted attention of almost every scholar who studied the Armenian nation.

A young lawyer, Vartan Malcom, conducted the first study of the Armenian American community in 1919. In 1983 Robert Mirak published his book *Torn Between Two Lands*. Harvard historian Oscar Handlin directed Mirak's original dissertation on the Armenian community in the United States in 1965.

Two important sources of information on the Armenians in America are newspaper and journal articles. Such sources are especially helpful in studying a particular Armenian community in a comparatively small geographic area. Although there has been some work done on the portrayal of the Armenian-American community in general, there have been no serious attempts to study Armenian society on a smaller scale, such as the Armenians of Tampa Bay area. Immigrant newspapers and web sites sometimes attempt to describe local Armenian communities, but such studies seldom embrace the full range of the ethnic group's life.

The older Armenian communities in Michigan and California have been the subject of numerous studies and dissertations; however smaller communities, such as the Armenians of Tampa Bay, have never been studied systematically.

In this thesis I will try to reveal the reality of life among Tampa Bay's Armenians. Although there are plenty of similarities among different Armenian communities in the United States, there is always something unique that characterizes each particular group. I will focus on the distinctive features of this community. The history of the Armenian population of Tampa Bay dates back only a few decades. While other Armenian communities in the United States were organized in the late-nineteenth or early-twentieth century by the immigrants from Armenia, Egypt, Iran, and other parts of Central Asia and the Middle East, the Tampa Bay Armenians are comparatively young. Another distinct characteristic is that the founders of this community were as a rule second- and third-generation immigrants. For an entity that young, the Armenians of Tampa Bay have successfully developed the sense of national identity and created a rich cultural climate, unique in some of its characteristics. Such uniqueness is reflected in the family values, church role in people's lives, and local traditions, that are discussed later in this work.

It is impossible to analyze any part of the Armenian community without looking at the history of the nation as a whole. This approach is true for every nation, but Armenian people have such a tragic path of history behind them, that without looking into its details, no one can explain how the Armenians ended up where they are now. There are not too many nations on this planet, in which half of the "population" lives beyond its historical borders. This is why it is essential to put the fragments of Armenian history together before attempting to draw a picture of today's Armenians in Tampa Bay. Along with looking into the history of the nation, I traced the contours of Armenian emigration. This research helped me to determine the uniqueness of the Tampa Bay

community, and to understand the conditions that led to creation of this part of the Armenian diaspora.

My research focuses on central works on American Armenians, regional studies, oral history interviews and my own personal experiences as a member of the Tampa Bay Armenian community.

ARMENIANS: WHO ARE THEY?

ORIGINS AND LOCATION

The Armenians trace their history to sixth century B.C.E. Throughout history Armenia has been a battlefield for many invaders, contending empires, and a bridge for many cultures and civilizations. During the past 2,700 years, Armenia was conquered by the Persian Empire, Alexander the Great, the Roman Empire, Byzantium, the Arabs, Seljuqs, Mongols, Tatars, the Ottoman Empire, Safavid Persia, and the Russian Empire.

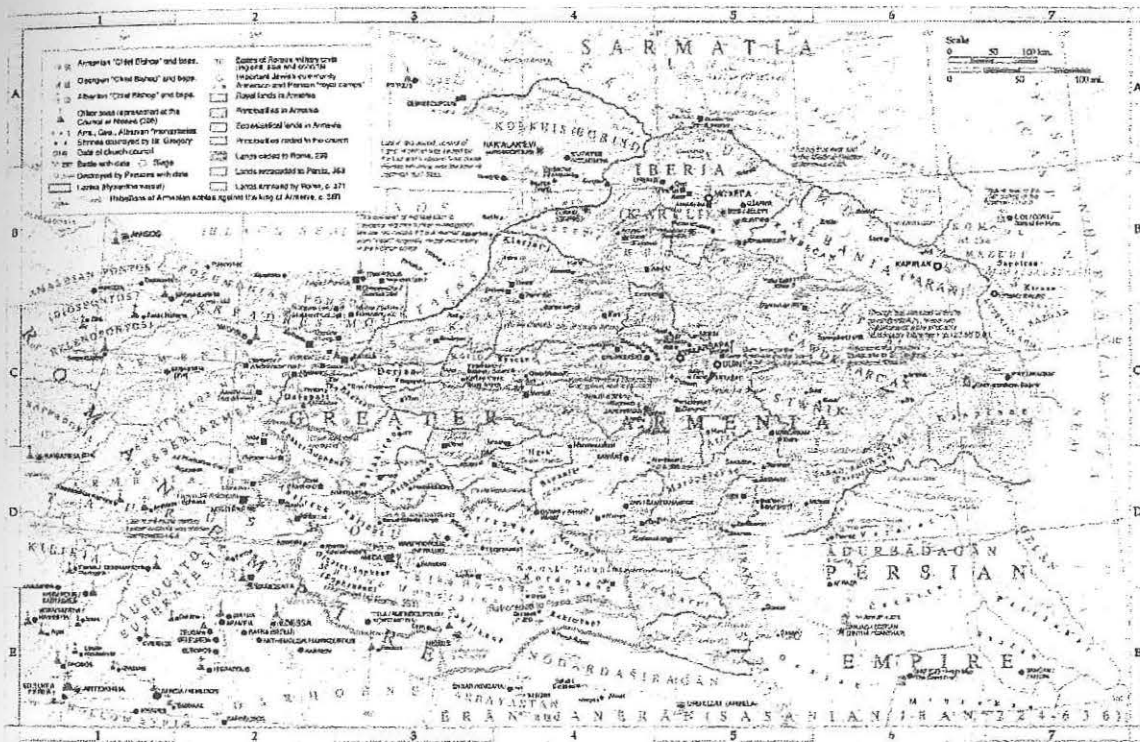
The Armenians are an ancient people that inhabited the highland region between the Black, Caspian, and Mediterranean Seas for nearly 3,000 years. They are noted in Greek and Persian sources as early as the sixth century B.C.E.¹ On a strategic crossroad between East and West, Armenia was sometimes independent under its national dynasties, sometimes autonomous under native princes who paid tribute to foreign powers, and sometimes subjected to direct foreign rule. The Armenians were among the first people to adopt Christianity and to develop a distinct, national culture.

The influence of geography on the course of history has been recognized since the time of the ancient Greeks, but there have been few countries in the world where geography has played a more important role than in Armenia. It would not be an exaggeration to say that the destiny of the Armenian people has been largely predetermined by the location of the Armenian homeland. The frequent invasions, the long periods of foreign domination, the difficulty of uniting against the common enemy: all become clear when seen against the background of the Armenian plateau.

Armenia occupies the central-most and highest of three landlocked plateaus that, taken together, form the northern sector of the Middle East. Although the Armenian

plateau is sharply defined on the east, the northwest, and the south, its natural frontiers are much less clear in the west, where it descends gradually toward Anatolia; in the southeast, where it opens wide toward Iran; and in the north, where the mountains of northern Armenia become those of southern Georgia.

MAP OF ARMENIA IN 4TH CENTURY



Source: Robert H. Hewsen, *Armenia: A Historical Atlas*. Available on-line at <http://www.press.uchicago.edu/Misc/Chicago/332284.html>, Internet.

The historical Armenia is the region located between latitudes 38 and 48 degrees and longitudes 37 and 41 degrees, with a total area of approximately 238,000 square miles. Thus it is a little larger than Great Britain. Its neighbors were the Georgians on the north, the Azerbaijani on the east, the Iranians on the southeast, the Kurds on the south, the Arabs of Syria and Mesopotamia on the southwest, and the Anatolian peoples

long ago conquered by the Turks, who live to the west. All of these peoples have influenced the Armenians and have played a significant role in their history.

ARMENIAN LANGUAGE

Armenian language developed from a combination of Indo-European and non-Indo-European language stock, with an alphabet based on the Greek.

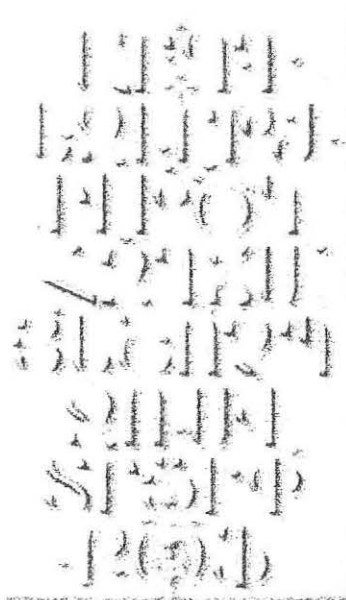
It is remarkable that while the rest of the world calls this country "Armenia," the people of the country call it "Haya-stan." and themselves "Hay."

It is possible that the origin of the word "*hay*" is the result of the loss of an intervocal *-t-*, and comes from an original form *Hati-yos*, ("Hattian"). This indicates that the Armenians adopted the name of the great Hittite nation over whose lands they passed in their eastward migrations from southeastern Europe. Perhaps their migration was even connected to the crisis and decline of the Hittite Empire. This approach to the origins of the root "hay" is usually referred to as "classical."² It was challenged many years ago by Armenian scholars who saw the origin of the word "hay" in the name of the region Hayasa, in northern Armenia, and who regarded the Armenians as the aboriginal inhabitants of the region.

The Armenian language is an independent, one-language subgroup within the Indo-European language family. The Armenian alphabet, which consists of 38 characters, was created around the year 400 A.D. by a monk named Mesrop Mashtots. He was born in the province of Taron in western Armenia and received an education in Greek literature. He entered the royal chancellery and advanced to an important position. However, Mesrop had an inclination to the religious life; abandoning the secular world,

he became an ascetic hermit. After some time he began to attract disciples, initiating the undertaking that would transform Armenia. In the course of his missionary activity Mashtots realized the potential value of having the appropriate religious texts written in the Armenian language. Although the educated clergy used Greek or Syriac for the liturgy, that was of little help to the mass of the Armenian people. Mashtots turned his attention to the development of a native script so that Armenians could have the Christian books in their own language. During one of his visits to Syria, Mashtots worked out a script for Armenian that rendered all the nuances. The first work of literature with the new alphabet was the translation of the Bible from Greek. This translation has long been regarded as a masterpiece by many linguists.³

ARMENIAN ALPHABET



Source: Semerdjian John. *The Armenians*. [on-line book]. Available at

<http://www.hyeetch.nareg.com.au/bookcover.html>, Internet.

TRANSCAUCASIAN REGION IN THE 20TH CENTURY

The three republics of Transcaucasia - Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia - were included in the Soviet Union in the early 1920s after their inhabitants had passed through long periods as separate nations and as parts of neighboring empires, most recently the Russian Empire. By the time the Soviet Union dissolved at the end of 1991, the three republics had regained their independence, but their economic weakness and the unstable political situation surrounding them jeopardized that independence. By 1994 Russia had regained substantial influence in the region by resolving conflicts and by inserting peacekeeping troops. Geographically isolated, the three nations gained some Western economic support in the early 1990s, but in 1994 the leaders of all three asserted that national survival depended on diverting resources from military applications to restructuring economic and social institutions.

Except for about two years of unstable independence following World War I, the Transcaucasus countries remained under Russian, and later Soviet, control until 1991. As part of the Soviet Union from 1922 to 1991, they underwent approximately the same degree and direction of economic and political changes as the other republics of the union.

In the early 1990s, the Caucasus took its place among the regions of the world having violent post-Cold War ethnic conflict. Several wars broke out in the region once Soviet authority no longer muted disagreements that had been fermenting for decades.

The flag of the Republic of Armenia was confirmed on August 23, 1990 by the Armenian Supreme Counsel. It is identical to the first State flag of the Republic of Armenia (1918-1920). The flag consists of three equal horizontal stripes of red, blue, and orange. Each color has its own meaning and significance:

Red - Stands for the blood the brave ancestors of the Armenian people shed on the battlefields, fighting the enemy and sacrificing their lives to save the Armenian nation from annihilation, ensuring their freedom to practice the Christian faith, and the independence of Armenia.

Blue - Stands for the color of the sky and its reflection onto the waters of the rivers and lakes that give life to the country of Armenia.

Orange - Stands for the natural resources and wealth of this rich country, and the industrious nature of the Armenian people. ⁴

ARMENIA TODAY

Today there are six million Armenians all over the world - three million in Armenia and the rest in Diaspora. ⁵

Armenia, in the twentieth century the smallest of the three Transcaucasian republics in size and population, has undergone the greatest change in the location of its borders.

Beginning in the eleventh century, a long series of invasions, migrations, deportations, and massacres reduced Armenians to a minority population in their historic homeland on the Armenian Plateau. Under these conditions, a large-scale Armenian Diaspora of merchants, clerics, and intellectuals reached cities in Russia, Poland, Western

Europe, and India. Today about half the world's Armenians live outside Armenia. Armenian communities have emerged in the Middle East, Russia, Poland, Western Europe, India, and North America, where Armenians have gained a reputation for their skill in crafts and in business. Although accurate statistics are not available, the Armenian Diaspora is about equally divided between the 1.5 million Armenians in the other republics of the former Soviet Union and a similar number in the rest of the world. The postcommunist Republic of Armenia has officially defined the Armenian nation to include the far-flung Diaspora, a policy in accord with the feelings of most Armenians.

MAP OF REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA (PRESENT)



Source: Semerdjian John. *The Armenians*. [on-line book]. Available at

<http://www.hveetch.nareg.com.au/bookcover.html>, Internet.

THE LONG ROAD TO THE PRESENT

ANCIENT HISTORY AND ITS INFLUENCE ON THE PLACE OF THE ARMENIAN NATION IN THE WORLD TODAY

Before any explanation can be presented as to the dispersion of half of the Armenian nation outside its historical borders, it is essential to look twenty-five centuries back and analyze the events that led to the mass exodus of the Armenians from their homeland.

The conditions under which the Armenian nation acquired its initial characteristics were different from the conditions to follow for many centuries. While the initial stage of Armenian history was distinguished by freedom and spacious territory under which the traits of Armenian character developed, the following centuries brought oppression and tyranny. Although the road from freedom to oppression and back to freedom was very hard and lengthy, the Armenian nation managed to survive and preserve its own culture and uniqueness.

The first historical reference to the Armenians appears in the rock-cut inscription of 518 B.C.E. of the Achaemenian Persian king Darius the First at Behistun, on the main road from Babylon to the Median capital Ecbatana (modern Iranian Hamadan). Darius seems to have seized power in a dynastic struggle, during which the various provinces of the newly formed empire took the opportunity to rebel. Armenia was among them. In the Behistun inscription it is called Armina in Old Persian, but Urartu in the Babylonian version cut alongside.⁶ Urartu had been the principle power on the Armenian plateau centuries before.

The Greek historian Herodotus mentions the Armenians as “Phrygian colonists.” In their dress and in their names, the Armenians of his time also had much in common with the Iranian Medes. The later Greek writer Xenophon describes Armenia in detail in his *Anabasis*, or “March Up-Country,” the chronicle of the retreat of a detachment of Greek mercenaries from an unsuccessful campaign involving the Persian royal succession in 402 B.C.E.⁷

These first references to the Armenians are an introduction to the complexity of the problem of Armenian origins, with references to Urartians, Babylonians, Phrygians, Medes, and Persians – some of them neighbors, others inhabitants of the Armenian plateau itself.

With the theory of multiple proto-Armenian Indo-European migrations onto the Armenian plateau as early as the beginning of the second millennium B.C.E., one must consider another hypothesis, advanced in recent years, that suggests the earliest Indo-European speakers themselves were natives of the Armenian plateau; so that in the case of the Armenians no mass migration to their present home from elsewhere took place.

Following Herodotus, scholars have sought to link the earliest Armenians with the Phrygians. A people whose language belonged to the Eastern branch of Indo-European, the Phrygians invaded the Anatolian peninsula from Thrace around the thirteenth century B.C.E. and destroyed the empire of the Hittites. This is the “classical” hypothesis of Armenian origins.⁸

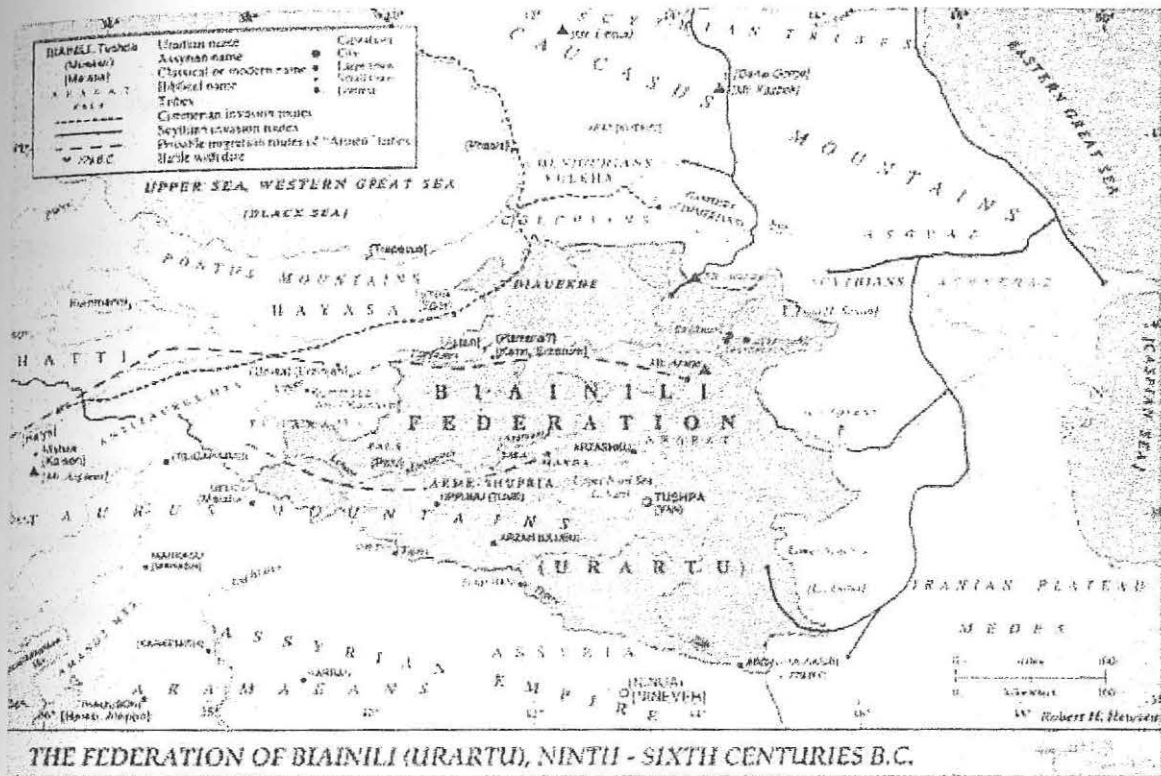
This “classical” hypothesis takes into account the complex picture of Indo-European migration and culture. It was challenged many years ago by Armenian scholars

who detected the origin of the word *hay* in the name of the region Hayasa, in northern Armenia, and who regarded the Armenians as the aboriginal inhabitants of the region.

Whichever theory one accepts, it is, at least, indisputable that there were Armenians in Armenia by the late second millennium B.C.E.E.

The Urartians gradually united the various petty kingdoms of the Armenian plateau from the thirteenth century B.C.E.E. onward. Urartian culture and domination extended also over much of what is now northwestern Iran. Around the eleventh century B.C.E.E., Iranians began migrating westward. One Iranian people, the Medes, begin to appear in Assyrian records of the ninth century B.C.E.; and acting in alliance with Babylon, the Median king Cyaxares conquered and destroyed the Assyrian capital Nineveh. Urartu itself fell around 585, but Median domination was short-lived. In 559, Cyrus the Great, king of the Persians, overthrew the Median king.⁹ With Cyrus, Armenia enters the Achaemenian Empire and the cultural orbit of Iran. Armenian tradition regards the Mede rule as a tyranny, and often attributes the despotic rule of Cyrus to the tyranny of Medes.

Thus, in the second half of the fifth century B.C.E. the Armenian plateau was inhabited by a mixture of people, probably with a predominance of Urartians and Armenians. It is likely that the Armenian-speakers developed the strongest cultural links to the Iranians, becoming the dominant population to which other ethnic groups were gradually assimilated.

MAP OF URARTU KINGDOM, 9TH-6TH CENTURY B.C.E.E.

Source: Semerdjian John. *The Armenians*. [on-line book]. Available at <http://www.hyeetch.nareg.com.au/bookcover.html>, Internet.

But it would seem that some greater diversity persisted on the plateau. A few monuments indicate that Hittite and ancient Semitic culture survived. This sums up both the diversity and the interpretation of linguistic, artistic, religious, and ethnic influences in the region where the Armenian people emerged.

With the disappearance of Urartu and the establishment of the Persian Achaemenid Empire, the knowledge of the history of the Armenian plateau enters into a long period of darkness. When the Armenians finally came to record their own history more than a millennium later, only a dim and inaccurate memory survived of their distant past. Archaeology fails to provide material for the era of the Persian domination, not only in the still-untouched areas of Anatolia, but even in the well-inhabited regions of

Armenia. Thus, the existing sources of information for the earliest Armenian period are represented by a few Achaemenid royal inscriptions, the most important and famous of which is the one set up in 520 B.C.E. at the order of Darius the Great.¹⁰ The far more extensive Greek records of Herodotus and Xenophon do not begin earlier than the mid- to late-fifth century, a century after the Persian conquest.

The fact that the entire Armenian plateau was inside the heartland of the Persian Empire kept it within a single political and cultural sphere and preserved it from the opposite external tensions that were to characterize most of its subsequent history. At the same time the customary tolerance of the Achaemenid authorities toward the various peoples of the empire, as long as the peace was kept and the tribute paid, allowed the development of local institutions that flourished in peace and prosperity.

The internal life of the country during the period of Persian rule is revealed in detail through the account of the Greek general Xenophon who in 401 led the survivors of his army across the Armenian plateau from Mesopotamia to the Black Sea and recorded his experience in a work known as the *Anabasis*. Xenophon observed a subdivision of the Armenian-inhabited area into Armenia, which he called a prosperous province, and Western Armenia, a simple agricultural and tribal society. He noticed that Armenia was relatively peaceful, despite some local strife, and amazingly wealthy for the times. The population lived primarily in strongly fortified villages or in underground dwellings (to protect themselves from the winter cold). The main occupations of the natives were agriculture, rather than trade, and stock raising. The Greeks marveled at the plentiful supplies of the country, and Xenophon does not tire of listing the generous meals served in Armenia.¹¹ The Armenians shared the typical Iranian social structure

based on the tribe, clan, and family. The religion attributed to the Armenians reflected the growing Zoroastrianism of Persia. In spite of its Iranization, Armenia was not merely a docile portion of the Achaemenid Empire. The Armenian people used their own language and their land was identified as a separate unit called Armenia by both the Persian chancellery and contemporary Greek authors.

The advance of Alexander the Great through most of Western Asia and the lengthy struggle of his successors to dominate the Near East had relatively little direct influence on the Armenian plateau. However, as the unity provided by Persian Empire faded, the Armenian lands began to fragment into new units. Greater Armenia east of Euphrates River preserved its unity, but west of the river the lands of Armenia Minor gradually united into a separate kingdom. The surviving evidence shows that Macedonian authority was little respected in this area. By 188 B.C.E. Armenia was firmly in the hands of local rulers and was quite autonomous. The accession in 188 B.C.E. of Artaxias as King of Greater Armenia marked a new era in the history of Armenia. The Artaxiad dynasty was to rule Armenia until the dawn of the Christian era, reaching its zenith in the last century B.C.E. with Tigran the Great. The rule of Artaxias brought prosperity to Armenia: the excavations of the ancient city of Artaxiasata show an amazing level of progress – paved streets, baths, and shops. The considerable amount of Greek coins dating from this period found in the territory of the Armenian Republic testifies to the prosperity reigning in this region.¹²

The political consequences of Alexander's conquests in the East were relatively superficial in Armenia; however, the cultural and economic breaks were a different matter. The Greek traditions shattered the cultural domination of Iran, and Greek

institutions such as the city-state became widespread in Armenia. The closed agricultural economy was transformed by its contact with Hellenistic international commerce, and local coins appeared for the first time in the area.¹³

Hellenization presented no direct threat in the early Artaxiad period, and the combination of Iranian and Greek traditions helped to produce an increasingly complex and sophisticated Armenian culture. Nevertheless, from this time on the Armenians would never find themselves again inside a united peaceful world. The opposing cultural and political pressures of the Mediterranean and Oriental worlds eventually increased creating a constant threat to the unity, identity, and even the existence of Armenia.

FIRST CONFLICTS

CHANGING TIMES

In the first century B.C.E. Tigran the Great significantly expanded Armenia's borders to the west. The far-flung empire of Tigran was not destined to exist for a long time, its magnitude coming from a single person's influence and talent. There was no framework that would hold together such opposite elements as the Greek cities and the eastern provinces with different languages and customs. Nevertheless, the forty-year reign of Tigran the Great provided the interval of peace needed for the development of Greater Armenia and helped preserve the Armenian identity in the troubled years to come.

For the next centuries the Armenian crown became a mere stake in the quarrels of the Roman Empire with the Parthians, and Armenia broke into pro- and anti-Roman parties. It is sad that money and power outweighed the national conscience of the

Armenian leaders. Even so, Greater Armenia developed more rapidly than its neighbors, and succeeded in preserving its identity and institutions as a kingdom with some autonomy instead of being totally annexed by the Romans and gradually assimilated, as it was to be the fate of all the adjacent kingdoms of Syria, Cappadocia, Pontus, and the lands of Armenia Minor.

For about two centuries Armenia was under the rule of the pro-Persian Arsakuni king dynasty. The overthrow of the last Parthian king of Iran broke the compromise peace between Rome and Iran and brought forth centuries of warfare between them. More critically for Armenia, it turned its Arsakuni rulers from kinsmen of the Iranian Parthian royal house into its avengers. The hostility of the Armenian Arsakuni to the Persian tyrants drove Armenia closer to Rome. One of the most important sources of the information about Armenia from that time is the anonymous *Epic Histories*, usually called *History of Armenia*, composed in the late fifth century.¹⁴

CHRISTIANITY IN ARMENIA AND ITS CONSEQUENCES

The conversion of Armenia to Christianity was probably the most crucial step in its history. It turned Armenia sharply away from its Iranian past, stamping Armenia as the first state to adopt Christianity.

Here is how the Armenian tradition tells the story of Christianization: Gregory, the son of Anak the Parthian, was saved from the massacre of his family and brought up as a Christian in Caesarea of Cappadocia. He returned to Armenia as an adult and served king Trdat until his refusal to sacrifice to Anahit led to his prolonged tortures and incarceration. Miraculously saved after a vision was sent to Trdat's sister, Gregory

healed the king who had been turned into a boar for his sins. Gregory preached the true faith to the Armenians, and then was sent back to Caesarea where he was consecrated by the archbishop Leontios during a great ecclesiastical council. Upon his return to Armenia, St. Gregory baptized the king and the nation in the Euphrates and set up churches throughout Armenia.

This famous account is an epic form of the Christianization of Armenia. The date of the event varies from 284 to 314.

Three main aspects dominated the history of Armenia following Christianization. First, there were constant threats by the Persians. The second factor was the conflict between the church and the ruling dynasty. In the attempt to maintain equilibrium in the Roman-Iranian conflict, the Armenian kings usually sided with Rome. Consequently the Arsakuni kings tried to follow the pro-Aryan policy of the Byzantium. This policy brought them into conflict with the rigorously orthodox and anti-Aryan patriarchs of the Gregorid house. The consequences were very tragic up to the king's order to murder St. Gregory's grandson and great-grand son. Third and final characteristic of this turbulent period in Armenian history was the growing clash between the most influential families. The subject of the disputes was either power or money. The absence of a single ruling power, lack of accord among the most influential families, and the aggressive neighbors all led to the partition of Armenia. For the first time in centuries, Armenia found itself without a king. Far to the west, Armenia Minor was divided into Armenia One and Armenia Two. They were treated as the regular Roman provinces; however these territories remained demographically Armenian for a long time. The former Great Armenia was divided into Armenia Interior and Persarmenia. Persarmenia was destined

to be the only part of former Armenia that preserved its culture and religion intact from foreign influence. The relatively neutral situation between Persarmenia and Persia changed when the Roman emperor Constantine the First recognized Christianity as the official religion. From that point on, all the Christians were perceived as the direct enemies of the Sasanian state, and were constantly persecuted. However, as time went by, the controversy between the church of Byzantium and the Armenian Church grew stronger. It reached a point when Armenia became unacceptable in the eyes of Byzantium, and consequently improved its relationship with the Sasanian authorities who no longer feared an Armenian alliance with the Byzantine Empire.¹⁵

ARABIC CONQUEST OF ASIA

The explosive expansion of the Arabs in the middle of the seventh century changed the face of the Near East, and modified radically the history of the Armenian plateau for the next centuries. The total conquest of the Sasanian Empire by the Arabs, and the retreat of Byzantium to a defensive position had a two-sided effect on Armenia. As desperate as the situation may seem for a lonely Christian state surrounded by the Arabic conquerors, Armenia actually almost benefited by the outcome of the Arab expansion. For the first time in many centuries the constant warfare subsided and gave way to a semblance of peace. As a result, practically all of the Armenian territories reunited. However the road to progress was anything but smooth. Many times the Arab army passed through Armenia killing thousands of people. The situation in Armenia worsened during the last decade of the seventh century. Byzantium attempted to conquer Armenia treating it as an enemy state, and it provoked the caliphate to put an end to

Armenia's semiautonomous state. In 701 the struggle for Duin took place, and as a result Armenia was subdued and annexed. An Arab province called Arminiya was created with Duin as its capital. Regardless of the formal annexation of Armenia, the population of the newly pronounced Arab province Arminiya did not assimilate with the Arabic population; it kept its own culture, religion, and traditions. By the end of ninth century, Arabic influence in the Near East had decreased, and, by making an alliance with Byzantium, Armenia was able to declare independence.

The period of Armenian independence did not last long. This time the danger came from the west: from Byzantium. The threat to the Armenian kingdoms was all the greater since the political theory of Constantinople revived under the Macedonian dynasty, and recognized no Christian ruler as equal to or independent of the Byzantine emperor. Thus Byzantium's ultimate goal was the total incorporation of the Armenian territories within the empire. The problem the Armenia was facing for many centuries was its immense decentralization. It was not hard for Byzantium to take over the isolated Armenian kingdoms; thus one by one they became annexed once again, now belonging to Byzantium.

The transformation of the independent Armenia into an ordinary Byzantine province did not represent a totally negative event. The cultural and economic development of Armenia were halted, but not altogether destroyed. However, the destruction of the native medieval kingdoms helped to create a vacuum of power in Armenia.

In the century following the disappearance of the medieval kingdoms, the fundamental religious, social, and cultural institutions of Armenia survived the collapse

of the political system. The Armenian language, the literature, and the Armenians' consciousness of their identity were not lost.¹⁶

ARMENIAN HISTORY IN 11 – 19 CENTURIES

CILICIAN PERIOD, FIRST DIASPORA

During the eleventh to fourteenth centuries, Armenia was subjected to a number of attacks and invasions by Turco-Mongol peoples. During these four centuries, important changes took place in the demographic, economic, and sociopolitical history of the Armenian highlands. If at the beginning of the eleventh century Armenians constituted the majority of the population in many areas, at the end of the fourteenth century there were few areas where Armenians were still the majority. In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries Armenia's economy and trade was to be envied; at the end of the fourteenth century, the Armenian highlands became so unsafe that caravan traffic practically ceased. By the end of the fourteenth century, the conditions of the Armenians were bleak. The Armenian Church was under attack. Thousands of priests had been executed and hundreds of churches demolished. Islam was pushing its way through the Armenian plateau.

In the eleventh century for the first time major events in the history of Armenian people were played out in territories that were never part of the ancestral Armenian homeland, areas where Armenians probably did not even constitute a majority of the population. This is the so-called Cilician period. Cilicia, populated in this period by Greeks, Arabs, and Jews, had been home to Armenians since the eleventh century. After the fall of the Armenian kingdom, the Byzantine Empire, which had controlled Cilicia since the mid-tenth century, assigned many military officials of Armenia to the western

lands, in and around the Cilician plain. Other Armenians emigrated there on their own initiative. All brought with them their households, and, being far from the center of Byzantine authority, they were able to achieve a level of independence in their territories. The fragile peace did not last long for the Armenian nation. In the 14 century the Cilician kingdom fell, leaving Armenians with a cruel disappointment. ¹⁷

ARMENIA AND ITS NEIGHBORS

At the end of fourteenth century, the Near East had three major powers: the Mamluks of Egypt and Syria, the Ottomans in western Anatolia, and the Timurids in Iran. Armenia and the surrounding areas were ruled by a number of Turkmen dynasties.

The fifteen and sixteen centuries are the dark ages of Armenian history. The scarce historical sources reflect the disastrous decline of society and culture under Turkic oppression. During these two hundred years Armenia was never at war, yet it never saw peace. Rival Islamic dynasties struggled to dominate it and, in doing so, exploited its resources. The structure of Armenian life was badly damaged, self-rule became a dream.

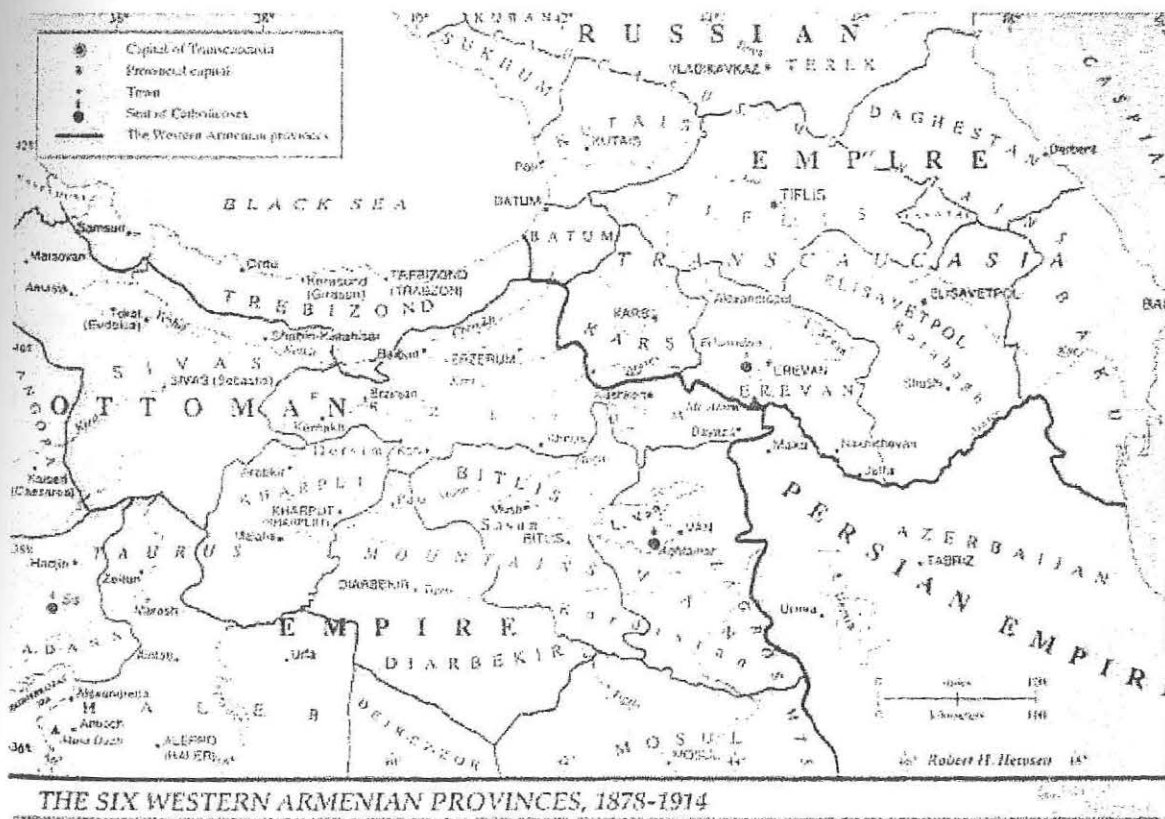
The sixteenth century ended in Armenia with one of the severest famines of a century of famines. Many Armenians chose to escape through migration. Some assimilated to the religion of the conqueror. But on the whole Armenian Christians seemed to have been as fiercely against conversion to Islam as they were against accepting Catholicism.

Yet the nation survived. Armenian continued as the language of the Armenians. Manuscripts were produced and beautifully decorated, even in the homeland, which

foreign travelers described as having become a desert through the destruction of successive wars.

At the start of the sixteenth century, Armenia became the center of conflict between the Ottoman sultans and the Safavid shahs of Persia. After continuous warfare between the two empires, a compromise was finally reached by the Treaty of Zuhab. Under this agreement, the Ottomans recognized almost all of Transcaucasia as being part of Persia.¹⁸ Armenian lands east of the Arpachai River were considered part of Persia, and all lands west of it fell into the Ottoman sphere. For several centuries Armenia was nothing but a battlefield in a war between the Ottoman and Persian empires.

MAP OF ARMENIA IN 19TH CENTURY



Source: Semerdjian John. *The Armenians*. [on-line book]. Available at <http://www.hyeetch.nareg.com.au/bookcover.html>, Internet.

In the early nineteenth century Russia started playing an important role in the affairs of the Near East. After a series of Russo-Turkish wars, part of the Armenian regions became Russian territory. The most important result of the Russian conquest of Transcaucasia was the formation of a compact Armenian majority on a small part of their historic homeland. Here, in Eastern Armenia, the future republics of Armenia – the independent republic of Armenia, the Armenian Soviet Socialistic Republic, and the restored Republic of Armenia would be established. At first the Tsarist government actively helped Armenia to reestablish itself; however, in the last two decades of the nineteenth century, the Russian government turned against the Armenians, as state officials began to see them as a potential danger to the empire. With that policy came the realization that the Armenians should be “Russified” in order to stop being a dangerous entity. Russification did not have much success among the Armenian population. Accustomed to fighting for their language, culture, and traditions, they were not going to submit to Russia.

As much as the Armenians were suppressed by Russia, nothing can compare to the tragic destiny of the other part of Armenia, Western Armenia, which was a part of the Ottoman Empire.

MASSACRES AND GENOCIDE

For more than a quarter of a century, the Armenians in the Ottoman Empire under the leadership of Sultan Abdul Hamid II, and later under the rule of the Young Turk

regime, suffered unspeakable abuse, torture, massacres and persecution. The result was the rape, murder, and deportation of more than 1.5 million Armenians from their historic homeland.¹⁹

Every year, on April 24, Armenians all over the world commemorate the murder of their nation, the murder of 1.5 million innocent and defenseless children, women, elders and men. On this date in 1915 the Turkish government arrested over 200 Armenian poets, intellectuals, religious, and community leaders in Constantinople and imprisoned them in the interior of Anatolia. Most were summarily executed.

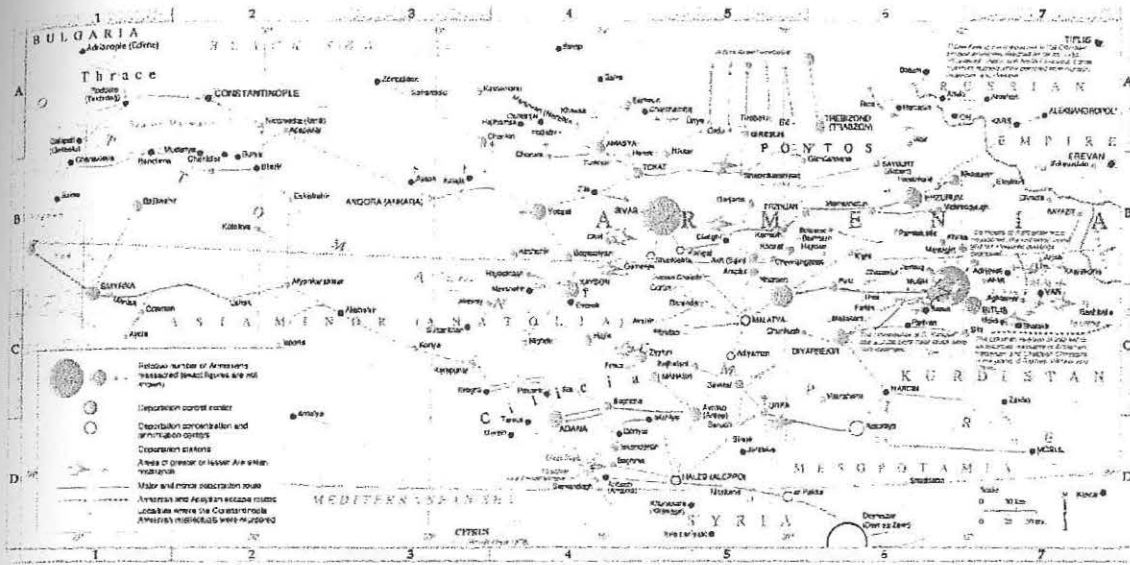
The government of the Ottoman Empire, dominated by the so-called Committee of Union and Progress, or Young Turk Party, turned against a segment of its own population. In international law there were certain accepted laws and customs of war that were aimed, in some measure, at protecting civilian population, but these did not cover domestic situations or a government's treatment of its own people. Only after World War II and the Holocaust was that aspect included in the United Nations' Genocide Convention.

In the early twentieth century, the Moslem population often assembled in the largest mosque in a town and then declared, in the name of the Sultan, that the Armenians were in general revolt against Islam. Their Sultan enjoined them as good Moslems to defend the faith against these infidel rebels. Each operation followed a similar pattern. First the Turkish troops came into town, for the purpose of massacres; then came the Kurdish irregulars and tribesmen for the purpose of plunder. Finally came the holocaust, by fire and destruction, which spread, with the pursuit of fugitives and mopping-up operations throughout the lands and villages of the surrounding provinces.

As noted above, the night of 23-24 April 1915, Armenian political, religious, educational, and intellectual leaders in Constantinople (Istanbul) were arrested, deported into Anatolia, and put to death. In May, after mass deportations had already begun, Minister of Internal Affairs Talaat Pasha, claiming that the Armenians were untrustworthy, offered aid and comfort to the enemy, and were in a state of imminent rebellion, ordered their deportation from the war zones to relocation centers - actually deserts in Syria and Mesopotamia. The Armenians were driven out, not only from areas near war zones but also from the whole Empire. ²⁰

Armenian serving in the Ottoman armies, who had already been segregated into unarmed labor battalions, were now taken out in batches and murdered. Of the remaining population, the adult and teenage males were separated from the deportation caravans and killed outright under the directions of the Young Turk agents. Women and children were driven for months over mountains and deserts. Intentionally deprived of food and water, they fell by the thousands and the hundreds of thousands along the routes to the desert. In this manner, the Armenian people were effectively eliminated from their homeland of several millennia. Among the refugee survivors scattered throughout the Arab provinces and the Caucuses, thousands more were to die of starvation or disease. Even the memory of the nation was intended for obliteration, as churches and cultural monuments were demolished; small children, snatched from their parents, were renamed and given to Turkish families to be raised as non-Armenians and non-Christians.

MAP OF MASSACRES AND GENOCIDE LOCATIONS AND SCALE



Source: Robert H. Hewsen, *Armenia: A Historical Atlas*. Available on-line at <http://www.press.uchicago.edu/Misc/Chicago/332284.html>, Internet.

Estimates of the Armenian dead vary from 600,000 to two million. A United Nations Human Rights Sub-Commission report in 1985 puts the figure at more than one million, but the important point in understanding a tragedy such as this is not the exact count of the number who died - that will never be known - but rather the fact that more than half the Armenian race perished and the rest were forcibly driven from their ancestral homeland. Another important point is that what happened to the Armenians was effected by the will of the government. While a large segment of the general population participated in the looting and massacres, many Muslim leaders were shocked by what was happening. Indeed thousands of Armenian women and children were rescued and sheltered by compassionate individual Turks, Kurds, and Arabs.²¹

From mid-1918 through the end of 1920, the Armenians, emerging from the tragedy of war, genocide, and devastation, strove to create a democratic republic. The

obstacles to creating the first Armenian sovereign state in centuries were enormous, but it seemed that a new dawn might break for the exhausted Armenian people. The short-lived experiment in Armenian independence collapsed late in 1920 as the isolated republic was facing the dual threats of advancing Soviet power and the Turkish Nationalists. Only Eastern Armenia, a small portion of historic Armenia, remained under the control of Armenians at the end of the 1921. At that point Soviet Russia sacrificed the Armenian question to cement the Turkish Alliance. More of the historical Armenian land was given to Turkey, and a new entity, a Soviet Armenia, was created in place of the Republic of Armenia. In the 70 years to follow, the destiny of Armenia was not very different from those of other Soviet republics. There were both good and bad sides of this process. Although the territory that the Soviet Armenia owned was just a small portion of the lands that belonged to Armenia, peace and centralization played a positive role in the revival of Armenia. Still, the Soviet regime did not satisfy millions of people, and Armenia, like other republics, longed for independence. In 1991 the people of Armenia participated in a national vote for independence. The results of the vote were supposed to be announced the same night. The whole nation stayed up waiting for the official results, and that night the most often-heard word in the whole Armenia was "Aya", - yes. The nation voted for independence. The celebration that followed lasted for the entire night, with people dancing in the streets, congratulating each other, trying to believe that the longed-for independence had finally arrived. The new Republic of Armenia, once a powerful empire of the ancient world, would soon experience a great deal of hardship. Still, it survived as a nation and even progressed in some areas despite the continuing poverty and insecurity. The nation that went through the terror of death

and eradication revived, showing the world its wonderful culture and the morale of its people, whose dream of free Armenia had finally come true.

ARMENIANS IN THE UNITED STATES: FINALLY HOME ?

THE MISSIONARIES AND THE FIRST IMMIGRANTS

Although many common traits characterize the Armenian communities in the United States, upon a closer look, numerous differences catch one's attention. There are obvious reasons for these dissimilarities. The age of a community, the country of origin, social status of the immigrants – all play a great role in the development of a community.

Armenians were among the first Europeans to come to America. A man called Martin the Armenian lived in the British colony at Jamestown in the early seventeenth century.¹ Later, to help with the raising of silkworms, two more Armenians were invited to the colony.² However, aside from a few isolated cases, there is no record of other Armenians reaching America until the early nineteenth century, when young men from the Ottoman Empire first appeared seeking an education. Most Armenians who came to America in the nineteenth and early twentieth century came from the Armenian heartland, central and Eastern Anatolia, which had fallen under the Ottoman Empire.³

In the early 1800s, the Protestant churches in America regarded missionary work as their duty. To coordinate their missionary activities, these Churches established the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions in 1812. One of the areas in which the Board decided to work was among the Muslims of the Ottoman Empire. Since it was illegal and dangerous to proselytize among the Muslims, the missionaries decided to work first among the Christians. The Greek Orthodox community showed little interest in what the American Protestants had to offer, but the Armenians, eager for education and a chance for advancement, attended in great numbers the Protestant schools, medical clinics, and churches. Soon the fact that the Armenians were being educated and

socialized beyond their status in Muslim society began to attract the attention of the Muslim authorities. Young students who graduated from the missionary schools often sought to make their way to America to complete their education, primarily in schools of medicine, pharmacy, theology, or engineering. This exodus of missionary-educated young Armenians caused the missionaries to question whether too much education was ultimately harmful to their mission work. Armenians needed to remain in the Ottoman Empire if they were to serve as an example to the Muslims.⁴

By 1854, only about twenty Armenian immigrants could be traced in American records, and by 1870, that number had reached around 70.⁵ Many of these newer arrivals were no longer the elite graduates of the American missionary schools but rather youths with little or no education who belonged to the traditional Armenian Church. At great sacrifice, they came to seek their fortune in the New World. As with other immigrant communities, one person followed another and people from the same village in the old country tended to congregate together in the same American city.

An Armenian merchant Hagop (Jacob) Seropian who came to Worcester, Massachusetts to establish an enterprise found the harsh winters to be unfavorable for his health. He decided to move to Fresno, California, where he and his half-brothers, arrived in 1881.⁶ The climate and agricultural conditions were much like that of historic Armenia, fertile valleys surrounded by mountains, soil which could be made abundantly productive by irrigation. The brothers wrote to relatives and friends in their native city of Marsovan urging them to come to Fresno. Consequently, in 1883, a group of 45 immigrants arrived in Fresno.⁷

Conditions in the Ottoman Empire for the Armenians at the end of the nineteenth century took a sharp turn for the worse, impelling a new, large-scale immigration to America. It was clear that the decaying Ottoman Empire did not recognize the emerging European standards of human rights and political equality for all citizens, particularly for Armenian Christians. Subject to the threat of mass prosecution, thousands of Armenians fled from Turkey to different countries, including America.

Thus, it was during the last decade of the nineteenth century and the first decade of the twentieth century that the largest groups of Armenians arrived in America, including whole families. By this time Armenian communities extended to Midwestern factory towns such as Cleveland, Ohio; Detroit, Michigan; Chicago, Illinois; St. Louis, Missouri; and Racine, Wisconsin. Large groups also made their way to California to engage in agriculture. More educated Armenian Protestants moved to upstate New York to work in the electrical and chemical industries in Troy, Syracuse, Buffalo, and others towns. By 1899 the estimated number of the Armenian immigrants in America was 55,057 people.⁸

THE MAIN IMMIGRATION WAVES

The Armenians in America organized themselves in groups to meet their material and social needs. Most Armenian immigrants knew little or no English and had little money. Patriotic and charitable societies sprung up in almost every town.

In the final years leading up to World War I, the Turko-Italian War of 1912 and the Balkan Wars greatly diminished emigration from the Ottoman Empire. Nevertheless, between 1914 and 1924 about 25,000 Armenian immigrants came to America.⁹ Then, in

1924, the Congress passed restrictive immigration laws, instituting a quota system, which significantly reduced the number of Armenians admitted to the United States during the following years.¹⁰

Armenians fleeing the Ottoman Empire between 1914 and 1925 sometimes went to the Caucasus to be under Russian protection. Others immigrated to Canada, Latin America, Cuba, and Mexico, and a few found places in Europe. The majority, however, came to the United States.

Many Armenians in Eastern Anatolia survived due to the advance of Russian forces and the wise decision to leave with these forces as they retreated into the Caucasus. These survivors were of all ages. The Armenians in central Anatolia were expelled from their homes, massacred in large numbers, and the rest driven on death marches into the Syrian Desert. Armenians were also driven out of Western Anatolia, some transported by train before facing concentration camps in the desert.

Since most of the men of fighting age had already been drafted into the Turkish army and then slaughtered, it was women of all ages, old men, and children of both sexes who were herded toward the desert and into the final death camps. Consequently, it was mostly the hearty children and some young adults of strong constitution or good luck who survived to join Armenians already living in more hospitable Arab countries. Many of the survivors in Greater Syria could attribute their survival to the dedicated workers of the Near East Relief organization from America who established feeding stations, clinics, tent cities, and orphanages for children throughout Syria and Lebanon. It is not surprising, therefore, that most of the immigrants to America who arrived during this period had no family. Most of the families had been broken up during the death marches

and few members survived. The vast majority of those who found their way to America in this period consisted of single individuals, orphans, and groups of individuals who banded together for security and mutual support. To some extent, America became a meeting place for many individuals who had lost track of one another. The Armenian newspapers in America were filled with advertisements placed by people seeking knowledge of the whereabouts, or the fate, of family members and friends.¹¹

After World War II there was a new wave of Armenian immigration from Europe and the Soviet Union, even though some Armenians in the Diaspora (including a few from America) returned to the homeland. While there were no longer many Armenians left in Turkey, there were large numbers in countries overrun by the war, and many of these had lost their homes and families. The United States government adopted a special provision to the immigration law, which allowed displaced persons to enter the country and become legal residents, eligible for citizenship. In this fashion, a large number of Armenians were brought to America. These new immigrants came from Southern and Eastern Europe, where many had been displaced by battling armies as they surged back and forth; from Egypt, Turkey, Greece, and a few from the Soviet Union and Soviet Armenia itself.

The next wave of immigration featured the well established, highly cultured, and wealthy Armenian community in Lebanon during the Lebanese civil war of the 1970s. These immigrants arrived with funds, an excellent education, business experience, and competency in two or three languages, generally French, English, and Armenian. They adapted readily to life in America while at the same time retaining their Armenian culture, which they had preserved in the Middle East.¹²

The 1979 Islamic revolution in Iran caused the exodus of thousands of Armenians from Iran, many of whom were former supporters of the Shah. Generally wealthy, they settled in the greater Los Angeles area, where they purchased large homes and established businesses. Their chief characteristic was a sense of self-assurance and empowerment. The Iranian Armenians, who had lived in Iran in large numbers since the 1600s, had never experienced massacres nor had they faced significant governmental and social discrimination in decades. These immigrants tended to move in their own circles and organizations, in which they spoke the Eastern Armenian dialect, and they did not often mix with Armenians who had migrated to the United States earlier in the century.

A subsequent and substantial wave of immigration consisted of those who were fleeing the Soviet Union. During the Cold War, America's policy was to admit all those who were fleeing Communism, particularly people from the Soviet Union. Most of the Soviet Armenians who came to America settled in the greater Los Angeles area.¹³

Few of these Soviet Armenian immigrants knew any English or any language other than Russian and Eastern Armenian. Their cultural differences made adjusting to American life quite difficult, and they sometimes came into conflict with the authorities. They did not mix well with any of the older immigrations, but rather established their own communities. The old established community, which had by now built a stellar reputation in American circles, opened job training and social service agencies to help these newcomers with their acculturation to the New World. Problems continued to exist, however, but on a much smaller scale. Most of these immigrants by the year 2000 have managed to acculturate themselves, open businesses, and prospered following the path of the earlier immigrants.¹⁴

The immigrants from the Republic of Armenia have brought the total number of Armenians in the Los Angeles area to around one half million. The total number of Armenian Americans is about a million. The new immigrants are rapidly adjusting to the New World, and they are taking an active interest in the Republic of Armenia, seeking to help it economically. Many are involved in fund raising, engineering, and financial planning, and seek to support scientific projects. In fact, the war in Karabagh and the economic plight of Armenia are the issues, along with the historic Genocide, that now serve as common denominators, bringing all Armenian factions and all groups of Armenian immigrants closer together.¹⁵

NEW LIFE IN THE NEW WORLD: TRADITIONS AND CULTURE

The immigrants had no illusions about returning to the old country. America was to be their new home, and they had to accommodate this fact as well as they could. One of the great tragedies of the Armenian Genocide, over and above the dreadful loss of life, was the disruption of Armenian history. The writers, politicians, scholars, artists, in other words, most of the Armenian elite of a whole generation were wiped out. The refugees had only a vague folk memory of the glories of Armenian history and culture, and the generation, which was to educate the new generation, was lost. It took over 50 years and a generation or two before Armenians could establish a rich cultural, intellectual and scholarly life in America. The survivors who came to America had to establish families to survive. Since there were no longer the matchmakers of the villages, or the societal relations of the towns and cities to bring the youth together, the process of finding a spouse was difficult. Matches were made through friends and relatives or even through

newspaper advertisements, but few were love matches, especially in the 1920s and 1930s: when most were marriages of convenience. Many of the women were unequally yoked, forced by circumstances to marry men who were much older or beneath them in education or status. Yet, divorce was almost totally unknown, and it continues to be rare today. Many of the men, unable to find an Armenian bride, married outside Armenian circles.¹⁶

The community as a whole insisted that its members speak Armenian and marry Armenians. Those men who married non-Armenian women often encouraged their wives to learn Armenian and integrate with the community.¹⁷ The non-Armenian spouse, however, was only grudgingly accepted. Being Armenian was the highest status the community recognized.

Fortunately for the health of the community, the old country custom of the rich providing educational, cultural and religious facilities for the community as well as charity for the poor was brought to America. The Armenian community in America for most of the twentieth century was made up of rich and poor, educated and uneducated, and of all social and economic classes. Millionaires and simple workmen in the early part of the century belonged to the same organization and attended the same meetings. As in such closed societies, the richer the man, the more intelligent he was presumed to be and the more worthy he was of giving leadership. While the rich and poor mingled in community activities, the rich occupied most of the leadership positions.

The rich men understood the necessity of building churches and community centers, and in many cases schools. It is to the credit of the community that myriads of scholarships are available to needy students and that the Armenian community has

established eleven chairs of Armenian studies at prominent universities, including one at Harvard University (MA), one at Columbia University (NY), two at the University of Michigan-Ann Arbor (MI), two at the University of California at Los Angeles (CA), two at California State University Fresno (CA), one at the University of California at Berkeley (CA), and one at Tufts (MA). Armenian Americans also established Armenian research centers such as the one at the University of Michigan-Dearborn, the Zoryan Institute (MA), the Zohrab Center (NY), and the Armenian National Institute (D.C.), as well as libraries and museums.

Through the 20th century women have been the backbone of the Armenian American community. They were almost universally the homemakers in the early days, keeping the house, shopping, cooking, nurturing the young, and instilling traditional values. The women also formed the auxiliary organizations for the churches, schools, and the political parties. They taught in the schools, organized cultural and artistic programs, and prepared for the periodic great picnics and indoor festivals. Today most Armenian women are well educated and some are successful professionals.

One of the major questions faced by the community was whether it was a colony of the old country or an Armenian entity in the new. Would the immigrants ever return to the old country or were they destined to remain in America? Should they attempt to Americanize or stay aloof in their own groups to preserve their own language and culture? As we shall see, some of these questions were answered, but others remained open.

CHURCH STRUCTURE AND CONFLICT IN THE AMERICAN DIASPORA

Protestant Armenians found initial refuge in the American churches of their own denomination, usually Presbyterian. Placing their religion above their nationality, they were ready to become Americanized and integrate into the new society. Their welcome, however, was not always warm. Therefore, Armenian Protestants began to form their own churches, with their own Armenian pastors, relating to the larger national organization of the denomination. Later, they formed the Armenian Evangelical Union of North America (AEU) and the Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA) as national organizations, which united them.¹⁸ The Protestants, generally being educated on their arrival, moved into the professions, becoming doctors, dentists, pharmacists, lawyers, engineers, and professors. They frequently changed their names and sought, during the early period, to be assimilated.

The Armenian Apostolics at first had to make do with irregular priests who moved from town to town to perform baptisms, marriages, and funerals. They also performed the Divine Liturgy, offered absolution, and gave Holy Communion. Finally, in 1891, the first Armenian American Church, the church of the Holy Savior, was built in Worcester, Massachusetts, with money contributed by Armenians from 25 cities in America.¹⁹

The Armenian Patriarch of Constantinople, who had provided the first priests for America, decided it prudent for political reasons to transfer responsibility for an American diocese to the Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of all Armenians in Etchmiadzin. The road to diocesan organization and church building would not always be an easy one. Political, social and clan factions vied with one another to achieve

hegemony. These pointless quarrels were all the more destructive and meaningless because they had little reference to the actual needs of the community and objective circumstances.²⁰ What was significant for the Armenian people as a whole, however, was the money collected by the immigrants in America to send back to the Old Country for transportation of relatives, humanitarian relief, or for political activism.

The main cause of the future disharmony within the Church, over and above the inclination in many people to seek their personal gain rather than the good of the community, was the catastrophe of the Armenian Genocide of 1915-1916 and the subsequent fall of the first independent Armenian Republic in 1920, which had been established by the blood, sweat and tears of the Armenian survivors of the Genocide and the indigenous Caucasian Armenians.

The disaster in Armenia had its consequences in America. Many Armenians in America believed that the Armenians in Armenia, the overwhelming majority of whom were mere involuntary victims, had somehow been stained with Bolshevism. Since the battle had been lost in far away Armenia, the fight was continued in America. Since the real enemy could not be reached, the Armenians in America began to fight among themselves. Those who felt it necessary to accept the new reality and to find a way to live within it were accused of being soft on Bolshevism. The other side accused the opposition of abandoning an Armenia in need.

It was in this context, then, that Archbishop Levon Tourian was assassinated in Holy Cross Church in New York during Christmas Eve services in 1933. The Armenian Church in America, which began to be fragmented at the time of the Soviet occupation of Armenia, was now to be totally split in two. Parish turned against parish, congregation

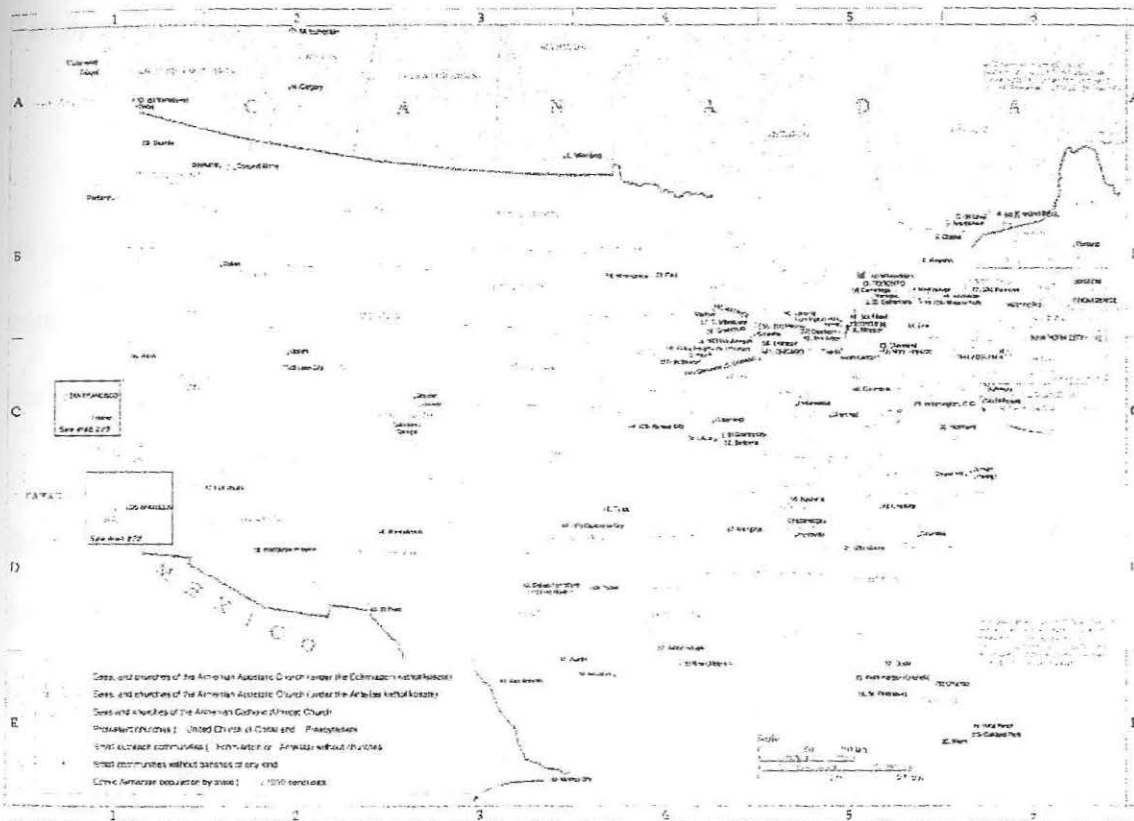
against congregation, family against family. The parishes, which broke off from the Diocese, accused the churches of the Diocese of being pro-Communist; and the Diocesan churches accused the others of being irresponsible nationalists. Each group took on a different path over the years, the Diocesan churches more readily integrating into American society, and there was little interrelation among them. Armenian would not speak to Armenian. Marriage between the two groups was almost nonexistent.

Eventually the Diocesan churches began to consider religion more important than nationalism, abandoning the use of Armenian in public gatherings, they tended to concentrate on American education and upward economic mobility. It was only in 1988 that the two sides began to come together. Two dramatic events triggered the union: the terrible earthquake in Armenia in 1988 and the independence of Armenia in 1991.²¹

Before the earthquake of December 7, 1988, Armenians in America were relatively unknown. No one, it seemed, had ever heard of them. On December 8, 1988, for the first time in decades, the word Armenia was on the front page of the New York Times and other American newspapers. The terrible earthquake has shattered the heart of Armenia. With the outpouring of worldwide sympathy and aid, the Armenians of America responded with great enthusiasm, collecting money and relief supplies to send to Armenia. An effort of this magnitude, which consumed all the energies of the community, brought Armenians from all sides together in a common cause. Furthermore, assimilated and semi-assimilated Armenians made contact with the community, for the first time in years, to support the effort. Many in the community were surprised to discover so many Armenians in high and influential places in American society.

The second great event which broke down community barriers was the fall of the Soviet Union and the declaration of Armenian independence in 1991. Armenia was now a free and independent republic, and once more Armenians of all beliefs in America organized to give support and aid to the reviving republic.²²

MAP OF ARMENIAN POPULATION IN US AND CANADA



Source: Robert H. Hewsen, *Armenia: A Historical Atlas*. Available on-line at

<http://www.press.uchicago.edu/Misc/Chicago/332284.html>, Internet.

All in all, the Armenians are well established in America and show signs of success in almost every field: finance, education, construction, manufacturing, industry, law, art, music, composing, literature, opera, film making, acting, design, advertisement and politics.

THE ARMENIANS OF TAMPA BAY

Different Armenian communities in the United States share the same origins and many characteristics. However, nothing is more descriptive and brings more life into a narrative, than studying one particular community with its unique traditions and mini-culture. My hands-on experience with the Armenian-American community took place in Tampa Bay.

MY FIRST ENCOUNTER

My personal acquaintance and relationship with the Tampa Bay Armenians had an unusual beginning. Since I probably would not be writing this thesis if my memorable contact with the Armenians of Tampa Bay did not occur, I feel obligated to tell in short the prelude of my Tampa Bay Armenian experience.

Saint Petersburg, Florida became my second home after I moved away from my family in Russia two and a half years ago. For the number of people that live here (about 250,000) St Petersburg has amazingly kept the atmosphere of a small resort town. There is a feeling of integrity here: I do not know if it is the welcoming sun, the tranquil sound of the waves caressing sand on the beach, or something else that makes everyone who lives here feel a special connection with the surroundings.

There are no boundaries between the neighborhoods in Saint Petersburg – we do not have China Town or Little Italy. That is probably why I, half Armenian, did not even try to look for any traces of people of my nationality. St Petersburg looked so consistently American to me.

It was one of those beautiful September sunsets in Florida. The sun was slowly disappearing behind the endless horizon, caressing the water, gently kissing the pelicans

goodnight and promising to be back the next morning. Santa Madeira Restaurant was not busy that night, so I (who worked there at that time) could watch the sunset in all its beauty. I noticed an elderly couple walking in, and there was something special about them that attracted my attention.

Armenian people look different from most other people – it probably sounds snobbish and pretentious but I will try to explain what I mean. The history of the Armenian people is sad, it is soaked with the blood of innocent victims of the massacres and genocides. These people never wanted to fight, all they wanted was to keep their land and be left in peace to bring up their children and pray to their God. However, the conditions were not “favorable” for this country situated in the middle of the constantly fighting world.

Mass killings forced Armenians out of their homes. Those who survived the genocide were leaving with hearts covered with scars, eyes swollen from crying for the dead, and memories following them like shadows. And now, more than 80 years after the last genocide, you can still see the suffering, the endurance, and the invincible will to survive in the eyes of every Armenian.

That is what I saw in the eyes of Ida and Carl Varadian, the first Tampa Bay Armenians that I met. On that day I became a part of an Armenian community in Tampa Bay.

HISTORY OF THE TAMPA BAY ARMENIANS

Compared to other Armenian communities in the United States, the largest of which are in California, Michigan, and Massachusetts, the Tampa Bay Armenian community is very young.

Here, in Tampa Bay, Armenians as an organized group began their existence in 1974 through the efforts of the Protestant minister, Charles Vertanes. The first Divine Liturgy ever held on the West Coast of Florida was celebrated by Reverend Diran Papazian on December 27, 1974 at St. John's Episcopal Church, Clearwater. His Eminence Archbishop Manoogian, Head of the Supreme Spiritual Council of Etchmiadzin, Armenia, delivered the sermon.¹ This occasion marked the beginning of the Armenian American Society in Tampa Bay, which brought the Armenian community together for more than twenty years of social, cultural, and religious activities.

Several events caused the founding of the Armenian Community in Tampa Bay. First of all, the Seventies were a time when Florida became an object of the countrywide commercials advertising the paradise-like tropical life. The pictures of worry-free living became appealing to many Americans, including some of the Armenian immigrants. Most of them have partially assimilated to American life; at the same time they had experienced the advantages of having their own Armenian community. Florida greeted the newcomers with the warm climate, sunny beaches, beautiful flora, but no Armenian community and neighbors with which to spend the leisure hours. The migration of Armenians to Florida was not organized and did not follow any systematic pattern. Families simply decided to move, picking the new homes according to what they could afford. This relocation was different from the immigration waves that flooded California,

Michigan, and several other states. Since the Armenian immigration to Florida was, so to say, spontaneous and not clan-oriented, the Florida Armenians ended up spread over quite a large territory. These families did not feel isolated in Florida, and they fit into the general population quite well, which is explained by the fact that they relocated from the other parts of the United States. Time went by, the relocated families got used to the new surroundings, the feeling of novelty went away, and at that time the feeling of nostalgia crawled into the souls of the Armenian Floridians. They came to the realization that they needed some kind of a social entity to preserve their identity, to allow their children grow up as Armenians. The survival instinct of the nation that refused to be wiped out in much worse conditions worked out again. With the support of local families and the Armenian Church, Rev. Vertanes managed to organize the American Armenian Society of Tampa Bay.

There were only a few active families that comprised the society back in 1974. However, as the time went by, more and more families got involved in the community life, people were telling each other about it, and church members in other states made sure that their parish members were aware of the community if they decided to move to Florida. Finally the efforts of all the Armenians of Tampa Bay gave fruit, and in May 1985 His Eminence Archbishop Torkom Manoogian, the Primate of the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America, visited several Armenian communities in Florida. He came to St. Petersburg and formed a mission parish, naming it St. Hagop Armenian Church in honor of the long time leader and deacon, Hagop Janoyan. In May of 1988, 4.75 acres of land with two houses were purchased by the Armenian community of Tampa Bay. Many generous contributions and a donation of \$85,000 from the Armenian

American Society allowed the community to start dreaming about building a church. The land is situated in a picturesque and peaceful location in Seminole. Tall pines serve as the barrier between the church property and Belcher Street. The land was purchased along with two small buildings. These buildings were renovated to provide headquarters for many picnics, meetings, lectures, a Sunday school, a temporary church building, and a community center. In September of 1990, a significant meeting took place at which the Armenian American Society and St. Hagop Armenian Church merged. They could now work as one body to achieve their future goals. The Parish Council was able to purchase additional acreage in 1992. In 2002 the community has 10 acres of land on which the construction of the new Armenian Church has begun.²

There has been an enormous amount of controversy about building the Armenian Church in Tampa Bay. Some members of the community preferred to see the contributions spent on helping the troubled Republic of Armenia, others insisted on building the church. Rev. Nersess spent much time and effort trying to consolidate the community and find a compromise for all the members of the community.³ Finally in December 2001, the Armenian Community came to consensus and adopted the design of the new church. Although this initiative is very difficult and challenging for such a small community, people believe in its feasibility. Currently the funds are being raised, and the construction is supposed to start very soon. Fortunately, active members of church realized that having your own church is not a luxury; on the contrary, for national identity it is a means of survival. For many centuries Armenian people managed to preserve the cultural uniqueness living thousands of miles from their historical homeland. For all these

years religion was always a unifying element in the community life. It is very encouraging that the construction is under way now.

TAMPA BAY ARMENIANS TODAY: DISTINCT CHARACTERISTICS

The Armenian Community of Tampa Bay has a fairly large number of families living in the area nowadays. Most Armenians in the Tampa Bay are immigrants from Egypt, Israel, Lebanon, Syria, Turkey and other countries in the Middle East. There are at least 1,200 Armenians scattered in Clearwater, Tampa, St. Petersburg, and Sarasota. ⁴

Upon a closer look I found out that there are several distinct characteristics that make the Tampa Bay Armenians unique. I look at this phenomenon from the following perspective: is there a difference between the Tampa Bay Armenians and other Armenian communities in the United States, and if yes, what it is.

So what is so special about the Armenian community as compared to other immigrant communities in US? The tragic history of the Armenian people provided for the means of survival that are rarely found in other nationalities. Since the eleventh century such an entity as the Diaspora came to life. It was the Armenian way of conserving the culture of their motherland while living in other countries. It gave the Armenians who lived abroad a chance to make new homes in other countries while preserving the lifestyle of their past.

MARRIAGES

Time went by, and the Armenian Diaspora accommodated to the different countries in which they lived, meanwhile developing their own mini-culture. There probably was no other way of existence for a people whose existence as a nation was at

stake. One of the reasons and sources of the nation's survival is the organization of the family life. Although family life in Tampa Bay Armenian Diaspora is undergoing some changes, it still has the very distinct characteristics of a typical Armenian community. Let's look at the marriages for example. It has been traditional in the Armenian community for the parents to "arrange" marriages. It is understandable as a part of a survival plan of a nation stranded in different parts of the world. However, by the early 1980s an increasing number of young men and women were discussing marriage plans with each other before doing so with their parents. There are still marriages, referred to as "arranged." Most often this means that the idea comes from one side, usually the young man's, and has been discussed between the parents before it is suggested to the possible bride. At the point of suggestion, either the man or the woman has the opportunity of stopping the process. If both agree, they arrange to meet, and once they meet, a decision is reached fairly quickly because it is understood from the start that marriage is the objective. Some young women in Tampa Bay still have a difficult time persuading their parents to allow them to go out with a man alone until they are engaged. Surprisingly, the young generation usually looks benevolently on their parents' attempts to find them a spouse. As Carl and Ida Varadian were telling me, they tried to find an Armenian bride for their son, Tigran. It was exactly the way they themselves met many years ago, and have been married happily after. But all their attempts to find an Armenian bride for their son failed. Carl recalls with a smile how hard their son tried to please his parents going to the blind dates they arranged for him. "We tried our best", says Carl moving his arms in a helpless gesture, "but Tigran found his happiness with an American woman, and we are happy for him."⁵ I had a fair share of this kind of attention myself

when I started going to St Hagop church in St Petersburg. My new acquaintances never failed to bring a new "candidate" for every dinner they invited me, and, even though their attempts to "prearrange" a marriage for me felt strange to say the least, taking into account I lived in the United States in 21st century, I could not help myself smiling at their innocent attempts to keep their community as Armenian as they could. Although intermarriages are not encouraged in the Armenian community of Tampa Bay, the attitude towards "mixing blood" is fairly benevolent compared to other communities in the United States. If an Armenian marries a person of another nationality, the Tampa Bay Armenians practically always welcome the non-Armenian spouses, trying to make them as assimilated to the Armenian culture as possible.

INTERACTION WITH DIFFERENT ETHNICITIES

Nowadays young people find fewer outward differences between themselves and non-Armenians than their parents and especially grandparents saw in their time. Once during a traditional coffee hour after the Sunday morning service, I asked Michael Gregorian and Anna Keshikian, both in their late teens, what difference they saw between themselves and young people of different origin. Michael said that there is little difference between his Armenian and non-Armenian male friends. However there is a difference with which an Armenian teenager treats an Armenian girl compared to other girls. Michael explained that if you go out several times with an Armenian girl, the whole community would think that you are going to get married, and the girl's parents would expect you to be responsible and serious about your intentions. That is why, clarifies Michael, Armenian teenagers do not often go out with the girls of their own

nationality.⁶ Anna agreed with him, but she also added that the situation is changing, and her dad would not act like that if she went out.⁷

FAMILY STRUCTURE

The difference between the family structure in Diaspora and in Armenia itself reflects the conditions that led to the mass emigration. Traditionally, Armenian families are highly patriarchal both inside the family and outside. However, as the result of the genocide, women were left alone with their children and the task of surviving in the strange countries. The will and passion of the Armenian women that lived long after these difficult times were over, are a great support for the community. One of the traits that make the Tampa Bay Armenian community unique is the close interaction of its members regardless of the fact that the Armenians of Tampa Bay are spread over a quite large territory. There is no "Armenian area" like there is one in California or Michigan. In Tampa Bay, Armenians are spatially integrated into the American population. Most of the Armenians in this area are not first generation immigrants. They are second or third-generation American Armenians who have adjusted their lives to being "different" Americans.

During my visit to the house of Carl and Ida Varadian, who moved to Seminole from Detroit, I was trying to find the right house, and had no hesitations left when I saw a funny sign in the parkway saying "Parking for Armenians Only." It is remarkable that Carl, a political science professor who was born and raised in USA, and who speaks Armenian with a great difficulty, still considers himself an Armenian and is proud of his origin. If you were to meet Carl and Ida outside their community life, they would appear

to be part of an American society. This changes, however, when Sunday comes, and all the Armenians in the Bay area gather for the service and a coffee hour afterwards. Coffee hours are treated with respect by all the Armenians. It is as sacred and integral part of any Sunday as the service itself. Usually a woman who is hosting the coffee hour on a particular Sunday leaves the church building couple minutes earlier than the rest to brew coffee and set the tables. There are always delicious traditional deserts there, and everybody looks forward to tasting them. During my first "Armenian"-style Sunday, I was surprised to notice that after the service people did not have their coffee and deserts right away. As it turned out later, everybody waits for the priest, Father Nersess, to finish the service, greet everybody, and talk to anyone who needs his advice, only then does he bless the tasty treats for the parish. Walking through the groups of people enjoying their snacks, I heard more languages spoken than I would expect. English was mixed with all the possible dialects of Armenian and here and there a phrase in Russian reached my ear. This is probably the only way to develop in accord with the country you live in, and at the same time preserve your uniqueness, and teach your children about their roots not from the books, but from the real life. Even those who cannot speak Armenian are encouraged to greet each other in Armenian, and say simple Armenian words during the service. People speaking different languages do not represent a problem in the Tampa Bay community.

Ordinarily an Armenian community is quite close, not welcoming people of other origins into its life. Being a part of Tampa Bay Armenians, I was pleasantly surprised to see, that it is a unifying element for any person who wanted to be a part of this society. While the Armenians attend the service in the morning, other members of the community

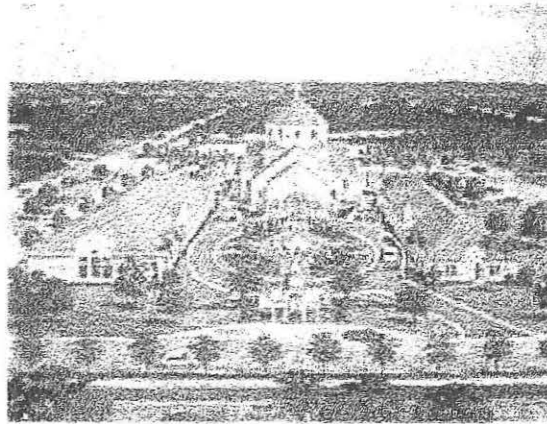
socialize in the clubhouse, waiting for the rest to join them for the coffee hour. The majority of these people are Russians and Georgians, who feel somewhat related to the Armenians from the times of the Soviet Union, and who are always welcome at the gatherings of the Tampa Bay Armenians. As a matter of fact, when I first started going to St. Hagop church, my friends introduced me to the "Russian part of the Armenian Community" so I would feel more comfortable since I did not speak much Armenian myself.

THE ROLE OF CHURCH IN THE LIVES OF TAMPA BAY ARMENIANS

Without any doubt, church serves as the most important link holding the community together. St. Hagop Armenian Church was established in 1985 thanks to the efforts of more than 140 families.⁸ Now it serves as a center for the local Armenian social life. Even though the services are held in a tiny chapel, where at times it becomes so hot, that the priest has to ask the deacon to switch the fans on, there is a strong emotional tie that this little room imposes on you. Everybody knows each other by name, Ida Varadian is always there to help you find a seat and hand you the book with the words of the prayers in both English and Armenian, and Mrs. Charlotte who is over 80 years old flips the page numbers on the board, so everybody can follow the service, and not feel bad about peeping into a neighbor's book trying to find the right prayer. It is symbolic that when the priest reads the confession, altogether about 6 paragraphs, he reads one paragraph in English, then the next one in Armenian, without repeating the same content in both languages. To me it represents the community's belief and hope

that even though the home is in America now, the native Armenian language is still alive and understood during the most important moments of one's life.

FUTURE ST. HAGOP CHURCH IN ST. PETERSBURG, FLORIDA



Source: Armenian Community of Tampa Bay official web-site. Available on-line at <http://www.geocities.com/armeniansofflorida/tampabay.html>, Internet.

LANGUAGE

One sunny Sunday during the coffee hour, I sat down to talk to Mrs. Charlotte who has been the heart and soul of the Tampa Bay Armenian Community for many years. She was telling me that very often when she talks to the children of non-Armenian origin, she still calls them Anoushig (sweetie) or Horis (dear). She explained that certain emotions can only be expressed through a person's mother tongue. I agreed with Charlotte telling her how I sometimes feel like a word in Russian is worth more than a hundred words in other languages. Mrs. Charlotte smiled broadly and shook her head: "No, your mother tongue is Armenian, and you will realize it as the time goes by." "Well..." stated I. "Is your mother Armenian?" asked Mrs. Charlotte, "See, then your mother tongue is Armenian, and you will use it too," she insisted.⁹

What does “mother tongue” mean? While many Armenians in Tampa Bay would not probably totally agree with Mrs. Charlotte, most believe that Armenian is the mother tongue of all Armenians, regardless of where they live. The “mother tongue” links all Armenians in not just an obvious, communicational way, but also with an internal meaning to it. Even if an Armenian person’s family had not known the language for a number of generations, Armenian is still that person’s mother tongue. Today about half of the members of the Tampa Bay Armenians speak Armenian, the rest just listen to it. This proportion is quite impressive considering the fact that most families have been in America for more than one generation. One of the peculiarities of the Tampa Bay community is that it is constantly renewed with more immigrants from Armenia. These waves do not let the community grow old and “Americanized.” At the same time, there is no visible social division between the newcomers and the “old school” Tampa Bay Armenians. They interact, creating the unique Armenian community in Florida.

The priest, Father Nersess is an indispensable part of the community life. He knows everybody by name, finds the time to talk to everybody after the service, asking how the things are going, and giving the advice for those who seek it. Once during the service a little 3 year old was getting bored and a little loud; Father Nersess stopped the service for a moment and talked to the little boy, impressing him so much that he remained quiet for the rest of the service. However, children are not seen in the chapel very often. They have their own agenda. Thanks to the efforts of Women’s Guild of the Tampa Bay Armenians, a Sunday school was opened on the premises of the future church building, right by the chapel. While the parents attend the service, their children learn Armenian language and history in the classroom. After the service comes the traditional

coffee hour. One of the members of the Women Guild usually sponsors the hour by bringing the delicious traditional pies and cookies and brewing aromatic coffee for the parish. Long after the service is over, most of the parish is still at the church premises: men playing backgammon, women discussing the latest fashion trends, and children playing in the church backyard.

The Tampa Bay Armenians are very protective of their own people. If a family happens to go through a particularly hard time, the friends are there to help. Wedding, births, and birthdays are celebrated together.

The Church publishes its own newspaper, and even though it officially is a church newspaper, it serves the purpose of a general community paper. The Illuminator tells its parish about the upcoming events, holidays, and the progress of much talked-about new church. Since by the will of history Armenians are accustomed to finding their homes in different parts of the world, their continuous efforts are aimed at creating the conditions of life as close to the authentic Armenian life as they can. And since the Armenian Church has always been the unifying and supporting element of the Armenian community, every Armenian community strives to have its own church. A beautiful traditionally looking Church means a lot for the Armenian heart. It means that home is here now, and in joy and despair there is a place to come and find the people that understand you and share your beliefs. That is how a comparatively small community of Tampa Bay Armenians has come up with the determination, funds, and support to build the Armenian Church in Seminole, FL. This has been an important decision, and the members of the parish were excited to agree on the design of the future church. Its

construction is under way now, embodying the dreams of the Tampa Bay Armenians and promising them a beautiful future in a country that gave them peace and stability.

CONCLUSION

The dispersion of the Armenian people and the crushing loss of millions of lives underlined the fragility of life and created a deep feeling of insecurity in the early part of this century. In Tampa Bay, the struggle to heal the wounds brought forth the rebuilding of the families, of the community, and of the important pieces of culture. During this process some traditions and customs proved to be more durable than others. By some form of consensus, a message was formulated among the Armenian people: the homeland is lost, the people have been killed; let us work to repair and retain what we can.

Before I launched on the journey of observing and describing the Armenian community of Tampa Bay, I asked myself a question and hoped to find an answer to it at the end of my research. The question was "Are the Armenians of Tampa Bay different from other Armenian communities throughout the United States; and if they are, how and why?" After studying the material that has been already collected on different Armenian communities in the United States, and personally participating in the life of two of them: in Tampa Bay and Michigan, I came to the conclusion that there are several characteristics, or, rather, the amalgam of them, that makes Tampa Bay Armenians unique.

First of all, the majority of Tampa Bay Armenians are second- and third-generation immigrants. Thus, the conflict that took place where the first-generation immigrants tried to adapt to the conditions of a new country did not appear in Tampa Bay. The integration of the new-comers with the indigenous population of Florida went smoothly, while the older communities in California and Michigan faced quite a few problems trying to occupy their place in the society. Another controversy that the

Diaspora Armenians in the US faced was the internal split between Armenians on the political and religious grounds. This controversy never occurred in Tampa Bay, the reason for it being the young age of the community. By the time Tampa Bay Armenians identified themselves as a unity, the political and religious split was no longer an acute question.

One of the unique traits of Tampa Bay Armenians is the large territory that they are spread on. Even though Sarasota is not considered to be Tampa Bay, the Armenians living there consider themselves "Tampa Bay Armenians". Longer distances do not prevent the members of the community from communicating and sharing a common social life.

Due to the fact that the Armenian community of Tampa Bay consists of the later-generation immigrants, it is not very strict in preserving the original atmosphere of the Armenian life. The marriages to people of other nationalities are not looked down upon. Rather, all new members are welcomed to the community regardless of their origin. These conditions of "melting pot" made English the preferred language inside the community. Although the Armenian language is used in church, taught in school, and is extremely respected and valued, the informal conversations tend to happen in English.

I outlined the main differences between the Tampa Bay Armenians and other branches of the Diaspora in the United States. These are the factors that give this community its unique character, and Tampa Bay Armenians are proud to say that their efforts led to building a strong community. The Armenians of Tampa Bay are a unique social entity that reflects the changes both in Armenian and American cultures. It is a synthesis of both, which gives the Armenians in Tampa Bay their uniqueness. There is

still much more to be said about this part of Tampa Bay life. My attempt was not to cover every sphere of their life, but to let people know that there is such a community as the Armenians of Tampa Bay, and it is flourishing under the favorable conditions of the area's culture, politics, and climate.

ENDNOTES

Chapter 1

¹ Richard G. Hovannisian, ed., *The Armenian People from Ancient to Modern Times* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997), 20.

² *ibid*, 26.

³ *ibid*, 200.

⁴ John Semerdjian, *The Armenians*. [on-line book]. Available at <http://www.hyeetch.nareg.com.au/bookcover.html>, Internet.

⁵ Christopher J. Walker, *The Survival of the Nation* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1990), 372.

⁶ James Russel, *The Formation of the Armenian Nation* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997), 19.

⁷ Nina Garsoian, *The Emergence of Armenia* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1992), 37.

⁸ Walker, *The Survival of the Nation*, 21.

⁹ George Bournoutian, *A History of the Armenian People* (Costa Mesa, Calif.: Mazda Publishers, 1993), 53.

¹⁰ Russel, *The Formation of the Armenian Nation*, 20.

¹¹ Hovannisian, ed., *The Armenian People from Ancient to Modern Times*, 41.

¹² *ibid*, 57.

¹³ *ibid*, 45.

¹⁴ *ibid*, 82.

¹⁵ *ibid*, 81.

¹⁶ *ibid*, 195.

¹⁷ Paren Kazanjian, *The Cilician Armenian Ordeal* (Boston: Hye Intentions, 1989), 74.

¹⁸ Hovannisian, ed., *The Armenian People from Ancient to Modern Times*, 118.

¹⁹ Vahakn N. Dadrian, *The History of the Armenian Genocide* (Oxford: Berghahn Books, 1995), 195.

²⁰ Hovannisian, ed., *The Armenian Genocide* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1992), 42.

²¹ Donald E. Miller and Lorna T. Miller, *Women and Children of the Armenian Genocide* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1992), 153.

Chapter 2

¹ Vartan Malcom, *The Armenians in America* (Boston: The Pilgrim Press, 1919), 51.

² Dennis Papazian, "Armenians in America," *Het Christelijk Oosten* 52, No. 3 (2000): 311.

³ Malcom, *The Armenians in America*, 61.

⁴ *ibid*, 77.

⁵ Dennis Papazian, "Armenians in America", 312.

⁶ Berge Bulbulian, *The Fresno Armenians* (Fresno: The Press at California State University, 2000), 17.

⁷ Dennis Papazian, "Armenians in America", 314.

⁸ Malcom, *The Armenians in America*, 72.

⁹ Dennis Papazian, "The Changing American View of the Armenian Question: An Interpretation", *Armenian Review* 39, No. 5 (1986): 56.

¹⁰ James Tashjian, *The Armenians of the United States and Canada* (Boston: A Publication of the Armenian Youth Federation, 1947), 19.

¹¹ Hovannisian, ed., *The Armenian People from Ancient to Modern Times*, 250.

¹² Anny Bakalian, *Armenian-Americans: from Being to Feeling Armenian* (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1993), 11.

¹³ *ibid*, 427.

¹⁴ *ibid*, 22.

¹⁵ *ibid*, 26.

¹⁶ *ibid*, 370.

¹⁷ *ibid*, 371.

¹⁸ *AMAA at a Glance* [on-line document] (accessed 15 November, 2001); available from <http://www.amaainc.org/ataglance.html>; Internet.

¹⁹ Bakalian, *Armenian-Americans: from Being to Feeling Armenian*, 113.

²⁰ *ibid*, 111.

²¹ *ibid*, 162.

²² *ibid*, 165.

Chapter 3

¹ *Armenian Community of Tampa Bay* [on-line document] (accessed 15 August, 2001); available from <http://www.geocities.com/armeniansofflorida>; Internet.

² *ibid*.

³ Interview with Rev. Nersess Sarkissian, 12 September 2001, St. Petersburg, FL.

⁴ *Armenian Community of Tampa Bay* [on-line document]; Internet.

⁵ Interview with Carl Varadian, 17 October 2001, Seminole, FL, interview with Ida Varadian, 17 October 2001, Seminole, FL.

⁶ Interview with Michael Gregorian, 25 August 2001, St. Petersburg, FL.

⁷ Interview with Anna Keshikian, 25 August 2001, St. Petersburg, FL.

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