

Assyrian Diaspora

THE ASSYRIAN DIASPORA
A RESEARCH PROJECT
BY EDWARD A. AND IRENE KLISZUS
1999

Assyrian International News Agency
Books Online
www.aina.org

Assyrian Diaspora

PREFACE

When our grandchildren asked us about our backgrounds for a genealogy project at their schools, we realized we knew almost nothing about our parents' lives pre-America.

The following pages on Assyria and Assyrians try to answer some of those questions.

This project is dedicated to Elisha and Mary Yohannan Aurahan, David and Juan Yohannan Jacob, William and Margaret Sargis Yohannan, and

Absolem and Hannah Yohannan.

Edward and Irene Klisszus
August 1999

Assyrian Diaspora

SOURCES/REFERENCES

Armenag's Story, by Arthur and Phebe Gregorian; Lower Falls Publishing Company, Newton, Massachusetts 02162.

Christians in Persia: Assyrians, Armenians, Roman Catholics and Protestants, by Robin E. Waterfield, New York, Barnes & Noble 1973.

History of the Persian Empire, by A. T. Olmstead The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, IL 1948. Lafayette College, Easton, Pa. Library

Princeton Theological Seminary, Luce Library - Archives and Special Collections, Box 111, Princeton, NJ 08542-0111

Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Office of The General Assembly, Department of History, 425 Lombard Street, Philadelphia, PA; Correspondence dated January 3, 1997

Psalms and Song of a Persian, by the Rev. Mishael S. Naby; Copyright 1964 by Mishael S. Naby: A Lyceum book, Carlton Press, New York, NY

The Assyrian Tragedy, Annemasse (Anonymous) February 1934; Livre Anonyme, 1934 Fevrier Annemasse

The Distant Magnet, European Emigration to the U.S.A. by Philip Taylor, 1971 Eyre and Spottiswoode Publishers Ltd. Great Britain

The New York Times, July 23, 1996, Inscription at a Philistine City

The Tragedy of the Assyrians, by Lt. Col. R.S. Stafford; London, George Allen & Unwin Ltd., Circa 1933-3

Mrs. William (Margaret) Yohannan; Atlanta and Savannah, Georgia, Eyewitness accounts, Correspondence 1996 and 1997

Mr. Ephraim Yohannan; Elizabeth, New Jersey and Turlock, California; Eyewitness accounts, Correspondence 1996 and 1997

Audio Tape, Jack Badal--Some time in the 1980's; New Britain, Connecticut, Supplied by relatives.

Assyrian Diaspora

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Preface.....	2
Section I - The Assyrians.....	5
The Claims Of The Assyrians Before The Conference Of The Preliminaries Of Peace At Paris, 1919	8
Conclusion	13
The Middle East In The Post-War World.....	15
Section II - Life In Urumia Before World War I.....	19
Transcript Of A Tape Jack Badal.....	19
New Britain Connecticut.....	19
Excerpts From Psalms And Song Of A Persian.....	23
Section III - Introduction Of Presbyterian Work And Its Significance.....	24
American Board Of Commissioners For Foreign Missions	24
Urumia 1871	25
The Nestorians	28
A Century Of Mission Work In Iran (Persia) 1834-1934.....	34
Urumia 1910-1920.....	34
General Assembly Of The Presbyterian Church In The U.S.A. 1917	35
Excerpts From The Presbyterian, In House Organ Of The Presbyterian Church.....	35
General Assembly Of The Presbyterian Church In The U.S.A., Reports Of The Boards 1899-1917.....	38
American Presbyterian Missionaries At Urmia During The Great War.....	39
Conclusions.....	47
Section IV - The March To Hamadan And The Turkish Massacre.....	49
Excerpts On The March To Hamadan, Persia	49
Excerpts From The Tragedy Of The Assyrians	50
Circa 1933.....	50
Eyewitness Accounts Of March To Hamadan -- 1918.....	52
Section V - Memories Of Life In America.....	55
Memories-Sylvia Aurahan Weidemann.....	55
Memories-Irene Aurahan Klizsus.....	56
Sundays At South Beach.....	57
Memories-Danette Benita Christensen	58
Mama Mary Yohannan Auraham	61
Growing Up In An Assyrian Family.....	61
Section VI - Genealogy.....	64
Sylvia Aurahan Weidemann	64
Irene Aurahan Klizsus.....	64
Danette Benita Aurahan Barth Christensen	65
Joseph David Jacob.....	65
Dr. Jack D. Jacob	65
Y. Pete Jacob.....	65
Julie Jacob Golpashin	66
Section VII: Correspondence From February 3, 1997-April 26, 1999	67
Section VIII □Assyrian Recipes	92

Assyrian Diaspora

SECTION I - THE ASSYRIANS

Did you know that the Assyrians were the world's super power in the seventh century BC? In the first article about Ekron, a Philistine City, was once part of a far-flung Neo-Assyrian Kingdom. The author notes the amazing military, political and economic strength of the empire. Assyrian kings ruled from Nineveh, a city situated on the Upper Tigris River in what is presently Northern Iraq. The Assyrians, circa 650 B.C., controlled Egypt, Syria, Iraq, parts of Turkey and Iran. Their influence extended west toward Carthage, Sicily and Iberia, and as far East as Afghanistan and India. In 612 B.C. Babylon conquered Nineveh, marking the end of the Assyrian empire.

BACKGROUND NOTES ON EARLY ASSYRIA FROM THE NEW YORK TIMES

JULY 23, 1996

ARTICLE TITLED: INSCRIPTION AT PHILISTINE CITY SHOWS;
THIS IS THE RIGHT PLACE
AUTHOR: JOHN NOBLE WILFORD

Archeologists dream of turning over a temple stone and finding an inscription saying this is the place you are looking for. For a team of American and Israeli archeologists, the dream came true early this month.

Since 1983, they have been excavating the ruins of an ancient city at a site called Tel Miqne, 20 miles southwest of Jerusalem. They had good reason to think this was the Philistine City of Ekron, mentioned in the Bible and Assyrian annals. The geography was right; where the coastal plain of ancient Philistia met the hill country of Judah. All the artifacts seemed recognizably Philistine.

On the assumption that this was Ekron, archeologists and other scholars examining the decorated pottery and evidence for advanced town planning concluded that contrary to the age-old slander, Philistine culture was no oxymoron. They could also see that this must have been one of the major industrial cities of the far-flung Neo-Assyrian empire in the seventh century B.C. That gave them important insights into how the Assyrians forged a new imperial ideology based on mercantile principles, creating what some scholars consider the first "world market."

But the archeologists could not be absolutely sure that this was indeed Ekron until Dr. Seymour Gitin, director of the Albright Institute of Archeological Research in Jerusalem, turned over a large block of stone found near the entrance to a colonnaded building at Tel Miqne. His expectations were low because nothing with writing had been found there yet.

"I had been getting tired of this," Dr. Gitin said last week in a telephone interview from the dig site. "Nothing ever showed up."

When the caked dirt was cleared away, though, he let out an unscholarly exclamation: "Oh, my God!" He saw a five-line inscription written in Phoenician script, and some of the 69 letters spelled out the name Ekron and the names of two of the city's known kings, Achish and his father Padi. The inscription recorded that Achish had built a temple here dedicated to a goddess.

"We always felt this was Ekron, but to find the inscription makes the identification 100 percent," Dr. Gitin said, "This you don't find very often in archeology."

In fact, he said, this is the first time the name of a biblical city and a list of its kings has ever been found on a site where its historical context is clear. No other such monumental inscription has been found in Israel from the biblical period. Other scholars agreed.

"It's a very exciting find," said Dr. Gary A. Rendsburg, a professor of Near East studies at Cornell University.

For one thing, the inscription could give scholars the first strong evidence of the language of the Philistines. They were descendants of the enigmatic Sea Peoples, originally from the Aegean Sea region, who arrived in large numbers on the coast of Canaan soon after 1200 B.C. Canaan was a land that included much of present-day Lebanon and Israel.

Whatever language these people first spoke, Greek or something else, in time the Philistines apparently adopted a Canaanite tongue, for the Bible portrays them as having no trouble communicating with the Israelites. Phoenician and Hebrew were dialects of the Canaanite language.

Assyrian Diaspora

But scholars have never found any unambiguous example of the writing of the Philistines, early or later.

A preliminary analysis of the inscription, Dr. Gitin said, showed that not only was the script Phoenician, but probably the language was as well. But it may have been a variation of Phoenician used by the Philistines, with differences on the order of those between British and American English.

A closer study of the inscription is being made by Dr. Gitin and Dr. Trude Dothan, an archeologist at Hebrew University in Jerusalem who is the other leader of the Tel Miqne-Ekron project. They are being assisted by Dr. Joseph Naveh, a Hebrew University epigrapher, who was one of the scholars who originally suggested that the ruins might be those of Ekron. The publication of the entire inscription is planned for the fall.

Dr. Gitin said the inscription had already confirmed the close link between Ekron and the Neo-Assyrian empire, which in the late eighth century B.C. and most of the seventh century B.C. was the super power of what was then considered the known world.

Ekron was one of many vassal city-states in the empire and, as current excavations are revealing, must have been one of the largest industrial centers of any kind in the ancient Middle east in the seventh century B.C.

The name Achish in the text established the linkage for archeologists. Achish was the name of a Philistine king mentioned in the Bible in the books of 1 Samuel and 1 Kings during the time of King David and King Solomon of Israel. But he is not the Achish referred to in the inscription. Instead, the Achish in the text, archeologists have determined, corresponds to the same Ikausu, who is mentioned in Assyrian annals of the seventh century B.C. as the King of Ekron.

Ikausu, scholars noted, was 1 of 12 kings of the Mediterranean coast called upon by the Assyrian king in the first quarter of the seventh century B.C. to provide building materials and their transport for the construction of a palace at Nineveh. Ashurbanipal, the successor, ordered the vassal kings of the Philistine cities, including Ikausu of Ekron, to support his military campaigns against Egypt.

The other name in the text - Padi, the father of Achish or Ikausu - is referred to in Assyrian documents at the time the empire's army conquered Ekron, which had been under the control of neighboring Judah. The Assyrians restored Ekron's status as a city-state, though now subservient to Nineveh, and reinstated Padi as its king.

The inscription thus documents a critical period in Ekron's history--its embrace by the Neo-Assyrian empire and the expansion and apparent prosperity that followed.

The stone itself attests to the city's newfound wealth, for it celebrated the construction of a new temple on the west side of a stately palace, a building of Neo-Assyrian design and one of the largest structures of its kind to be excavated in Israel. Other digging in the past 13 years has shown that Ekron in the seventh century B.C. grew rapidly from not much more than 10 acres to a city of 85 acres, complete with an elite quarter in the center of an industrial zone containing more than 100 olive-oil processing plants.

These excavations are part of an ambitious study of the Neo-Assyrian empire, especially its influence in the provinces and vassal city-states. The project is directed by the Albright Institute in Jerusalem, affiliated with the American School of Oriental Research, and Hebrew University and also involves a consortium of 22 North American and Israeli universities and research centers.

The discovery of the inscribed stone, Dr. Gitin said, "is going to allow us to write with a great deal of assurance the history of the Neo-Assyrian empire and its revolutionary economic developments."

Through military might and political maneuvers, as well as innovative economic practices, the kings in Nineveh, the Assyrian capital on the upper Tigris River in what is now northern Iraq, controlled territory as far south as Egypt and across present-day Syria, Iraq and parts of Turkey and Iran. The empire's Phoenician traders, operating out of the ports of Tyre and Sidon, extended a Syrian influence as far west as Carthage, Sicily and Iberia. Other economic links reached east into Afghanistan and perhaps India.

In their quest for raw materials and manufactured goods, as well as new sources of silver for use as currency, the Assyrian kings created a new supranational system of political and economic power, leading to 70 years of widespread growth of urban centers, transforming cottage industries into mass production and encouraging specialization in manufacturing. The heartland of the empire was extensively explored in the 19th century by European

Assyrian Diaspora

and American archeologists who uncovered city ruins and royal documents. At the site of Ekron and in other research, scholars are concentrating on the view of the empire from the periphery, and Dr. Gitin is convinced that this is yielding a telling picture of the empire's dynamics.

In a report on his interpretation of Ekron's imperial role, published last year by the Archeological Institute of America, Dr. Gitin wrote that the Philistine city "was apparently chosen as a focus of Assyrian economic activity because of its geographic and topographic advantages, with its proximity to sources of raw materials, land routes and Mediterranean harbors." In addition, the city had escaped serious damage in the Assyrian conquest and was a politically stable environment.

Archeologists were particularly impressed by the extent of Ekron's olive-oil industry. In detailed excavations of only 3 percent of the city's area, they uncovered 105 olive-oil installations, containing stone presses, ceramic storage vessels and other artifacts.

When two such factories were reconstructed, researchers tested their output and determined that Ekron's estimated overall annual production of olive oil could have reached 1,000 tons, or 290,000 gallons. This is the equivalent of 20 percent of Israel's current level of export olive-oil production.

Before this time, archeologists said, there is no evidence of olive-oil production in Ekron and very little elsewhere in the region, most of it for local consumption.

"This is a prime example of the innovative policy of industrial specialization and mass production which concentrated large-scale industrial activity in one center," Dr. Gitin said.

Other artifacts at Ekron pointed to a significant textile industry and to extensive foreign contacts, presumably through trade. Among the ruins are goblets and bottles from Assyria, ceramics from Greece and Carthage, and Israelite and Phoenician religious objects. And there are hoards of silver in small ingots and jewelry.

Another of the Neo-Assyrian innovations, it seems was the wide-spread use of silver as a currency to supplement and, in some cases, replace conventional modes of payment by goods and services. In Spain, new silver mines were opened to meet the increased currency demands.

At the Ekron site, archeologists came upon four large collections of silver, some hidden in cooking jugs buried beneath the floors and others found in a hole in a large stone -- perhaps an early form of a wall safe.

Dr. Michael Notis, a metallurgist at Lehigh University, is analyzing the silver to determine its origin.

Other scholars praise the comprehensive excavations at Ekron and have generally endorsed Dr. Gitin's assessment of the innovative dynamics of the Neo-Assyrian empire, but they cautioned against possibly exaggerating the role of Ekron in the empire, just because the research is new and in some cases surprising. Other cities, like Tyre and Sidon, were probably more important to the empire, they pointed out.

Ekron's time of prosperity was fleeting, as was the Neo-Assyrian empire's. In the late seventh century B.C., first Egypt and then Babylon broke away from the empire, Babylonian forces conquered Nineveh in 612. Ekron itself fell to the Babylonians of Nebuchadnezzar in 603, and the entire city and its grand palace with Achish's designatory stone became ruins.

Then the Philistines largely disappeared from history. The Neo-Assyrian empire, which scholars consider the first of the classical empires, was followed by the Babylonians, Persians, Greeks and Roman.

Assyrian Diaspora

THE CLAIMS OF THE ASSYRIANS BEFORE THE CONFERENCE OF THE PRELIMINARIES OF PEACE AT PARIS, 1919

1. THE ASSYRIAN PEOPLE

The Assyrians are better known by their three Ecclesiastical designations representing the three main religious bodies of the people. Of these three main divisions.

(A) The Nestorians have predominated in the Kkur-distant mountains, inhabiting Barvar, Tayari, Tkhooda, Baz, Jeloo, Gavar etc. with Koodchanis as their patriarchal See.

(B) The Chaldeans predominate in the province of Mosul, abounding also in the various locations in lower Mesopotamia down to the Persian gulf, with Mosul as their patriarchal See.

(C) The Jacobites prevail in the province of Dearbeker, abounding also in Syria proper, and in other localities in the former empire of Turkey, with the city of Mardin as their patriarchal See.

A careful examination of the various statistics compiled by the European experts as to the Assyrian population shows, that the resources from which they were compiled to draw were entirely erroneous and misleading. This error in all probability is largely due to the fact, that a very large number of the Assyrians lost their mother tongue and speak Turkish, Arabic and Armenian, and the Armenian speaking Assyrians became identified with the Armenian people and were counted as the Armenians. Thus during the so called Armenian massacre and exile, fully 175,000 Assyrians perished, and were listed under the Armenian atrocities.

Exclusive of the three main Assyrian divisions mentioned above, there are also;--

(D) The Assyrian Maronite element. The Maronite Assyrians became identified with their Syrian co-religionist and are erroneously named to the present day as the Syrians.

(E) The Persian Assyrian. Before the war broke out, the city and district of Urmia alone claimed 82,000 Assyrians who occupied 112 villages. The small district of Salmas claimed 10,000 Assyrians. Settled in the various cities and localities on the western boundary of Persia, immediately adjoining Turkey, there have lived about 150,000 Assyrians.

(F) The Assyrians in Russia. Driven by the mohammedan oppression, large numbers of the Assyrians had left both Persia and Turkey to settle in the various parts of south Russia. Some 30,000 to 40,000 of these sojourn now in the district of Iravan, Caucasia. A similar number is at the present time in the city of Tiflis and its environs, in Caucasia. Other Assyrians formed temporary settlements in the various towns situated on the Black Sea. During the first Russian withdrawal from Azarbaijan, about 40,000 Persian Assyrian refugees managed to escape to Russia, and have remained there since. All told there are not less than 100,000 Assyrians in Russia, and 95 percent of these are ready to return to an autonomous state, freed from former oppression, and protected by some mandatory power.

The most conservative figures will place the Assyrian population at not less than 600,000 (not including India and Egypt Assyrians). And while there three main Assyrian bodies are separated from each other by certain areas occupied by the non-Assyrian elements, they nevertheless are living in a proximity sufficiently close to form a separate state protected by some mandatory power.

(G) The Islamic Assyrians. Like unto the ruins which tell the story of a past catastrophe, the moslemized Assyrians constitute a living history of the persecutions to which the Assyrian people for centuries have been subjected. Within the areas still occupied by the Assyrians, or in the immediate vicinity of all such areas, there are Moslems which are distinctly of the Assyrian origin. Perhaps one or two examples should suffice, not only to reveal this fact, but also to show the justification of both the Assyrian claims and the Assyrian aspirations.

In a portion of the Kurdistan mountains, immediately west of the Persian boundary, there has lived a Kurdish tribe of considerable size, known by the name of "Shakkak" who themselves admit their Assyrian nationality, and to the present day they address the Nestorian patriarch in the most reverent manner, calling him by an endearing designation of "Uncle."

In the district of Sapna, immediately above the district of Barvar, in upper Mesopotamia, there are bodies of Kurds, still retaining

Assyrian Diaspora

sufficient characteristics to prove their Assyrian origin.

The Yezidies of the Shangar mountains, numbering now more than 300,000 souls, are of the Assyrian blood, and their departure from the Christian fold is of a comparatively recent date.

It is not necessary to make mention of similar bodies in other localities; but the leaders of the Assyrian people have always looked for the day of the opportunity, to reclaim their lost nationals back into the Christian faith, and also into the national fold. And indeed with this end in view the Assyrian National Associations have been organized, not only in the United States and Canada, but also elsewhere. Funds have been collected, and national treasuries have been created with sufficient resources to establish national schools, not only for the Assyrian people, but also for those of their brethren in flesh and blood who are now lost to them in the fold of Islam. And surely, history shows, that the Assyrians, when given an opportunity, are capable of the achievement.

II. The Assyrians and the War

After the entry of the Russian forces into Persia, and immediately before the declaration of war by Turkey, the Turkish government sent official emissaries to Mar Shimon, the patriarch of the Nestorian branch of the Assyrian people, and offered the late patriarch large sums of money in gold, on the condition that the patriarch and his people should remain neutral. Of the three Assyrian patriarchs, Mar Shimon alone was in a position to strike against the Turks with the Assyrian independent tribes of Tyari, Tkhooma, Baz and Jeloo. In the meantime, Mar Shimon's brother who was studying in Constantinople, was kept as a hostage by the Turkish government, and threatened with a horrible death, in case Mar Shimon refused the Turkish offer and went over to the side of the allies. This intelligence was officially communicated to the head and the leader of the Nestorians. The patriarch, however sent envoys to the Russian military authorities in Urmia, Persia, by whom he had previously been approached, and from whom he had received a promise of 25,000 guns, and informed the latter, that he had decided to declare war against Turkey.

In addition to the Turkish offer, the German consul in Mosul, sent agents to Mar Shimon, guaranteeing the absolute security of all the Assyrians in the Turkish empire on the condition of the patriarch's neutrality. Even this German offer was refused, and the hostilities commenced between the Turks and the Nestorian Assyrians.

Thus from the time of Turkey's entry into the war, the Assyrians have fought incessantly as a distinct unit in the group of the Allied nations. The victories credited to the Russian forces in Kurdistan were in reality won by the Assyrian forces in that front of battle. The Kurds, who were a perpetual menace to the Russian operations, were absolutely cleared from those valleys by the army of Mar Shimon. And had the Russians fulfilled their promise of supplying the patriarch's forces with rifles and a few cannon, the capture of Mosul by the Assyrians would have been an easy possibility.

However, surrounded on all sides by vastly superior numbers, short of guns and ammunition, face to face with total extermination because of their siding with the Allies, sacrificing thousands on the field of battle, and losing tens of thousands through actual starvation and disease, the Assyrians never faltered. Through all the vicissitudes and the turning tides of the war, and even after the collapse of Russia, the Nestorian Assyrians remained loyal to their Allies, and endured all for the sake of the freedom for all the Assyrians.

The independence which they now seek, they do not ask as a charity, they demand it by appealing to the sense of justice and equity. They have fought for it; they have purchased it with the streams of their own blood shed on the field of battle. In Kurdistan, in Turkey, in Persia, in Russia, in Poland and in France, lay the graves of the Assyrians, which stand not only as splendid monuments to their valor, but also as a tremendous price paid for the restoration of their lands, and for the independence of their people. Even the late patriarch himself laid down his life upon the altar of his people's freedom.

A nation that has lost nearly one third of its numerical strength because of the part it played in the world war, must surely be entitled to recognition and independence, especially in the presence of those political declarations which have repeatedly proclaimed the inauguration of a new era wherein the principle of self determination was to be recognized as a sacred and inherent right of mankind.

III. The Territorial Claims of the Assyrians

The original land of the Assyrians embraced an area of 250,000 square miles. Islamic power seized the land, and planted Islamic elements in the newly confiscated territory. The name, however, with whatever dialect pronounced, stands as an eternal deed, showing that the house belongs to the Assyrians. And no tribunal of justice can overlook this fact. The Assyrians, however, do not pretend to claim all this original territory. But they do claim that portion of upper Mesopotamia, where they abound in large numbers.

Assyrian Diaspora

This portion of the land embraces naturally an area which stretches from below the lower Zaba, up to, and including the province of Dearbaker, where the Assyrians vastly outnumber the Armenians; and also from Euphrates in the west, to the mountains of Armenia in the east. Added to this, the Assyrians naturally desire an access to the sea.

The Assyrians realize, that in all probability, the Kurdish elements which reside in the area claimed by them, may present a sort of problem that will command attention. Against such a possible observation we feel that we must present the following memorandum:

1. Morally there cannot be a discrimination between the Kurds and the Turks. The Kurd proved himself just as an efficient a tool for the aspirations of an imperial Germany, as did the Turk, while the former vastly exceeded the latter in ferocity and brutality against all the Christians, and particularly against the Assyrians. The crime of one is the guilt of the other.
2. To place an enemy element, which happens to be dwelling in the area claimed by the Assyrians, on the same level with a people that has suffered, and suffered gladly and so heavily in the Allied cause, would be, to place the criminal on the same level with the innocent, and it would mean lasting injustice to the Assyrians.
3. While it is perhaps just, that even the Kurds, as a race, are entitled to the benefits of the principle of self determination if they so desire; but to permit their claim to expand and infringe upon the exclusive right of the Assyrians, is to place a premium on plunder, murder and massacre.
4. So long as there exist religious bigotry and religious fanaticism and the word "Gavoor" (heathen) is not eliminated from the vocabulary of the Turk or of the Kurd, this Islamic element can never be trusted by the Assyrians. The wild beast is now caged by defeat and not tamed by culture. In order to free the Assyrians from the repetition of the former barbarities to which they have been subjected for centuries by the combined hatred of the Turk and the Kurd, and in order to save their position from being exposed to the previous perils, the reasonable area thus claimed by them, even though including some Kurds within its bounds, must be created into an Assyrian state, under the protectorate of some mandatory power.
5. It would be decidedly to the moral, educational and spiritual advantage of those Kurds who will thus remain in a newly created Christian state, to receive the benefits of those educational and industrial enterprises which the Assyrians themselves have undertaken to establish.
6. It will be decidedly in the interest of peace, at least in that portion of Asia as well as to the advantage of the power holding the mandatory authority in the land, and also to the moral and spiritual advantages of all the non-Christian and heterogeneous elements of the entire Mesopotamia, to grant to the Assyrians the new state they desire and embracing the area they claim.

Has the agony of the war given birth to the rights of mankind? If so, the awful sacrifices made, meet their equal compensation. Anything short of the righteous and reasonable claim of a people, no matter how weak or how small, is bound to bring another day of retribution. Heaven with sorrow witnessed the tragedy of the war; it now hearkens with yearning to the cry of the small nations, and looks with longing for the enactment of justice to the oppressed people. Therefore, immeasurably greater than the crises of the war, are those which now hang upon the treatment accorded to the weak and the deserving.

IV. The Claims of the Assyrians for Reparation

A ruthless slaughter of innocent women and children cannot be condoned. A deliberate crusade, to exterminate one whole nation, cannot be concealed under the cover of an unconditional surrender. If Turkey failed to exterminate the remainder of the Assyrians, and confiscate their property, she did so, because she failed in her war. She perhaps can never pay for all the material and other losses suffered by the Assyrians under her most oppressive rule for centuries; but for the losses inflicted upon the Assyrians during the war, both Turkey and Germany should be compelled to make reparation. Fully 200,000 Assyrians of the Kurdistan valleys and plains are absolutely deprived of everything they owned, and their homes are left in ruins. In order that they may be able to rehabilitate themselves, they should be compensated for their entire material losses. And likewise, we believe ourselves entitled to reparation for all the Assyrians who resided in the interior of Turkey.

The Assyrians in the district of Dearbaker, including Orpha, Harpoot, Mardin and Midiat have passed through a literal deluge of blood. The Assyrian population was put to the edge of the sword by the regular troops of Turkey. The villages including those in the district of Bohtan were totally destroyed. Altogether, more than 486,000 men women and children were massacred, 84 Jacobite churches and 44 monasteries were razed to the ground, and 186 Assyrian priests were killed in the most barbarous manner.

Assyrian Diaspora

The brave Assyrian city of Midiat stood the onslaught of the Turkish troops for a period of six months. The city at last had to surrender on account of the lack of ammunition, and the Turks besides killing the Assyrian defenders, bayoneted every woman and child within the walls. The Assyrian city of Midiat is a heap of ruins now.

V. The Claims of the Persian Assyrians

The Assyrian atrocities in Azarbaijan have equaled, if not surpassed, those inflicted upon their brethren in Turkey. While the Russians were still in Urmia, the local mohammedans had caught the echo of Turkey's proclamation of the "holy war" and they were then seeking an opportunity to pour out their vengeance upon the defenseless Assyrian Christians. This opportunity presented itself, when immediately after the first withdrawal of the Russian forces from Urmia, the entire mohammedan population arose, lifting up the banner of the "jehad" and determined to exterminate the entire Christian population of Urmia, Sooldooz, Margavar and Targavar. The Assyrians of the last three named districts had already escaped into Urmia from fear of the approaching Turkish forces. The Assyrians, from all directions naturally endeavored to reach the city of Urmia, where they might seek the protection of the American and the French flags, which were flying over the buildings of the two respective missions. The Assyrians, however, who had left all their possessions behind, were intercepted by their armed mohammedan neighbours, and killed in the most brutal manner. Old men and women, who were unable to undertake the journey, were either thrown alive into the wells and covered with dirt, or else burned alive in their homes which were set on fire. Little girls, 6 and 8 years of age, were assaulted on open Bibles, and on the pulpits of the Christian churches. The leading Assyrians were grouped together, placed in rows, and then either shot by rifles, or beheaded by the sword. The murderers, in a number of instances, actually licked the blood off their swords and daggers, to appease their hatred and satisfy their thirst for the blood of the Christians. About 30,000 to 40,000 managed in a most miraculous way to reach the city, where they found the American and the French mission buildings open to receive them. Here they were obliged to remain for several months in a state of siege, and thousands of them perished from contagion and disease.

After the return of the Russian forces into Urmia, the Siberian regiments, as they beheld the atrocious deeds perpetrated upon the Assyrians, they actually shook with emotion and prepared to bombard the city and avenge the blood of the innocent people. It was again the Christians who interceded with the Russian officers and persuaded them not to return evil for evil.

After the collapse of Russia, the mohammedan population of Urmia, unmindful of the forgiving spirit shown them previously by the Assyrians, and of the desire of the latter for peace and harmony in spite of their losses, rose up once more, this time assisted by the Persian Kurds and the mohammedans of Salmas. Fortunately, some of the mountain Assyrians, under the leadership of the late Nestorian patriarch, were now in Urmia. The Nestorian patriarch at this time sent two letters, one to the governor of Urmia and the other to the governor general of Azarbaijan at Tabriz, informing them that the Assyrians had absolutely no evil designs, that they were friendly to the Persian government; and begged the governors to prevent the mohammedan uprisings, and also to allow the Assyrians to remain temporarily in Urmia, till God in His mercy showed them a way of escape, either to Caucasia or to Baghdad. Instead of heeding this request, the two governors mentioned had themselves planned the uprising as it became evident later, and were determined on the extermination of the Christian population. The subsequent assassination of the late Mar Shimon, was also a plot which was originally laid in the city of Tabriz. We have the most conclusive proofs to show that the responsibility for the Assyrian massacres and losses in Persia, rests absolutely upon the Azarbaijan authorities of Persia. Fully 112 Assyrian villages were burned to the ground or otherwise destroyed. The homes of all the Assyrians in Urmia were plundered, and the household effects, together with the cattle of the Assyrians can be found in the possession of Urmia mohammedans. The proofs of this responsibility have already been submitted by the leaders of the Assyrian people to the legations of the allied nations in Teheran. Fully 50,000 Persian and mountain Assyrians perished because of these fanatical uprisings, and about 4,000 Assyrian women are now kept in bondage in the homes of the moslems. And during their last exodus from Urmia, on their way to Baghdad, the Assyrians were pursued and shot down by a Majid-el-Saltana, a general in the Persian army.

For the shedding of innocent blood, and for the material losses they have suffered, the Assyrians present their claim for indemnity against the Azarbaijan government of Persia.

If we were to figure at the shocking rate of 250 Toomans which was the standard price allowed by the courts of Urmia for the killing of a Christian by a mohammedan, the Azarbaijan government should be held responsible to the extent of 12,500,000 Toomans as an indemnity for the deliberate plan to exterminate all the Assyrians, and for the actual loss of 50,000 men, women and children.

Indemnity for the Assassination of the Nestorian Patriarch

The assassination of the late patriarch Mar Shimon was a most cowardly deed perpetrated by the instigation and conspiracy of the two Persian governors to whom we have alluded. The governor General of Azarbaijan, showing apparently compliance with the request of

Assyrian Diaspora

the Assyrian patriarch as contained in his official letter, sent messengers to the latter, asking him to meet the Persian envoys in Salmas, to which place the said envoys were coming from Tabriz. Mar Shimon accompanied by 200 of his men and intensely desirous of harmony, left for Salmas. Here in the city of Deliman he met the Persian envoys, entirely ignorant of the fact that their apparent friendship was a mere mask for murder. Most cordial greetings were exchanged and the negotiating parties apparently came to a mutual understanding. At the conclusion of the interview, the patriarch prepared to depart for Urmia. The Persian envoys, however, suggested that he should also meet a Simkoo, a Kurdish brigand and chieftain of a notorious Kurdish tribe, who was also residing then in Salmas. The patriarch replied that Simkoo did not represent the Persian Authorities and he was not even a law abiding Persian subject, and therefore, he could have no dealing with him. The Persian envoys, however, appealing to the patriarch's desire for peace and tranquillity, and under the pretense of wishing to calm the disturbances in the entire district, insisted that Mar Shimon should visit the notorious Kurdish chieftain. In a spirit of meekness and humility and with a desire to please the Tabriz authorities, the patriarch consented to do so. In the meanwhile, Simkoo, with the full knowledge and deliberate planning of the Tabriz envoys, had his sharp shooters placed in advantageous points on the roofs of the houses adjoining his residence. So when the interview with the Kurdish brigand was over, and as the patriarch emerged from the house into the court yard where his men were waiting for him, he was received with a rain of bullets, and only six of his wounded attendants managed to escape to tell the story of conspiracy and murder.

Justice demands that the Azarbaijan government should pay an indemnity of one million Toomans for this cowardly betrayal of trust, and for this deliberate plan of assassination and murder.

For the material losses of the Assyrians in Urmia, Salmas, Sooldooz, Targavar and Margavar, the Assyrians demand an additional and a most reasonable indemnity of 18,000,000 Toomans, making a total of 31,500,000 Toomans, which they justly claim from the Azarbaijan government of Persia.

The Assyrians desire further to make known the following facts;--

1. The districts of Targavar and Margavar, immediately west of the district of Urmia, are almost exclusively inhabited by the Assyrians, while their very names are indicative of Assyrian origin.
2. In the district of Urmia about 112 villages are almost exclusively inhabited by the Assyrians.
3. In the small district of Salmas nearly 30 villages, are inhabited by the Assyrians and the Armenians mixed.
4. In Somoi and Bradost, immediately north of the district of Targavar, both the Assyrians and the Armenians abound, while part of the Kurdish element in the valley, even though mohammedan by religion, is of Assyrian blood and origin.
5. The remainder of the population both in Urmia and in Salmas districts, is not of Persian blood but of Turkish or Afshar origin.
6. Because of the ill and bitter feeling created, first by the pre-war oppression of the Assyrians and then intensified by the fearful outrages perpetrated against them during the war, the interests of peace and harmony can perhaps be best served by an exchange of those districts for some other place which falls within the zone claimed by the Assyrians, and which could be more desirable, and of decidedly greater advantage to Persia.

The Assyrian delegates would be willing to debate their claim with the Persian delegates, or to enter into negotiation with them for a satisfactory solution of the problem.

VI. The Capabilities of the Assyrians

The prospect of a people can best seen in the light of its retrospect. Entirely indifferent to the imperial grandeur of the by-gone ages, we simply make mention of those capabilities which are essential for the promotion of civilization and which in their free operation, they contribute to the uplift of mankind at large. The successive ages of oppression, and an existence of actual bondage, accompanied with perpetual fear, to be sure, closed the passage of progress to the Assyrian people, and they inevitably ushered in a long period of deterioration and comparative illiteracy, of which we are most sensitively conscious; and yet in the midst of Islam's perpetual fire, the ratio of such illiteracy among the Assyrians, has always been kept many degrees lower than among their ruling masters. History shows that either during the regime of the Persian or of the Tartars or of the Challifs or of the Turks, the Assyrians became the eyes and the brains of the powers that ruled over them. Even at the present time the sons of Assyrian hold most responsible positions in the various departments of the governments of which they are subjects.

Assyrian Diaspora

The memories of Orpha, and of Nisibin, and of Ctisphon, and of Babylon, have always lingered in the mind of every succeeding generation; while in this day of new opportunity, those memories have already given to the people a fresh inspiration and a united determination, to rebuild the ruined structures of their old institutions, and to resume the initiative they once had in enlightening the peoples and the races with whom they are destined to come in contact. The Assyrians are still the same people of whose heroism and achievements when Gibbon writes, he does so with a the trembling pen, and with an admiration that becomes an inspiration even to a skeptical historian Thus providentially endowed with spiritual gifts and attainments, and as the faithful custodians of the earliest Christianity, the Assyrian people are destined to play once more the old apostolic role and become a blessing even to their former enemies.

Educational Preparation. Unconscious of the events, the impending aspect of which was surely concealed from the knowledge of man, guided nevertheless by a gracious providence, the Assyrians as if in the possession of a prophetic vision, have for the last 25 or 30 years, taken advantage of the opportunities presented to them by the educational institutions of both America and Europe, and have developed talents for an Assyrian National University which has long been in contemplation. The spirit of the great Assyrian educators is still alive, and the Assyrians throughout the world are prepared to establish their own national schools, the doors of which will be thrown open to every tribe and race that may be found living in their midst.

The Industrial Possibilities. In the line of industry even though crushed by injustice and robbed by tyranny, the Assyrians have always excelled their persecuting enemies.

The greatest part of the new Russian Caucasian Railway, which runs from Tiflis to the Persian frontier, was built by the Assyrian engineers and Assyrian skill.

Wherever and whenever they have found themselves in the possession of equal rights, the Assyrians have become contractors of renown, as in Russia and in America. The foundation of a new and most prosperous city in the United States was laid by Assyrian hands, and Assyrian contractors.

Agriculture has always been a specialty of the Assyrian people. But they have specialized in the new development of scientific agriculture; and a movement is already in motion to introduce modern tools and modern methods for the awakening of the fertile soil of Assyria from its long lingering slumber.

Manufacture. Whether it be silk or cotton or wool, the Assyrian mechanics and weavers are prepared to plant and to run Assyrian factories.

The Assyrians may need foreign capital but they certainly do not need foreign skill for the development of mineral resources.

Commerce. In the line of commerce, the Assyrians made such strides as to arouse the jealousy of their enemies both in Turkey and in Persia. In the centers where the Assyrians are found, both import and export business has gradually been passing into their hands. Undoubtedly this, their success, has indirectly been responsible for a hatred that has now poured the vengeance of their persecutors upon them

Such are the capabilities of a people who ask for justice and in the name and in the interests of justice they ask to be created into a state under a mandatory power. In the choosing of such a power, the wishes of the Assyrians in America are naturally for the United States while those of the patriarch Mar Shimon are for Great Britain. The question of the mandatory power, however, we voluntarily submit to the judgment and the discretion of the supreme council.

CONCLUSION

1. The Assyrians as a historic people both in the interests of history and for the perpetuation of that history, should be created into a separate state.
2. Their achievement in the past, and their large contribution for the uplift of mankind, both in the educational endeavor and in the spreading of those pacifying influences which are the real backbone of civilization, entitle the Assyrians to a recognition of their claim.
3. A nation that has persisted through centuries of persecution in the declaration of her faith, and has sacrificed vast numbers of

Assyrian Diaspora

martyrs upon the altar of that faith, finds her greatest right to a recognition of her claim in her consciousness of moral and spiritual responsibilities, and also in the knowledge of her capability to resume the discharge of those humanitarian and self sacrificing obligations.

4. After the manner of the figure beheld by Moses, the fire of the Assyrian affliction has been terrific; but they have not been consumed. The historic nation has still a remnant left, sufficiently large to be created into a separate state.

5. As a belligerent people who have risked more and sacrificed proportionately more, fighting on the side of the Allies, they are entitled to a realization of their claim for a separate state.

6. As a belligerent people who entered into the war on the side of the Allies, in spite of the alluring inducements offered them by the Turkish government, the claims of the Assyrians for indemnities and reparation are entitled to the very first consideration. The very plight of their refugees calls for immediate attention.

7. We have the most conclusive proofs to show that the Assyrians were urged by the official representatives of Great Britain, France and Russia, to enter into the war on the side of the Allies, and were induced into a state of belligerency with the most solemn promises of being given a free state. The Assyrians, therefore, having risked the very existence of their nation, and having made such appalling sacrifices upon the altar of freedom, demand that these promises of the allied governments should now be honorably redeemed.

8. The outrages perpetrated upon the Persian Assyrians should be indemnified, and all their material losses should receive full compensation from the authorities directly responsible for the Assyrians' loss of life and property.

9. In the interest of future peace and tranquillity, some plan should be devised whereby Salmas and Urmia including Targavar and Margavar where the Assyrians abound, could be exchanged for some other place that would be perfectly satisfactory to the Persian government.

10. The Assyrians demand a state bounded roughly by Tikrit (below Zaba) in the south, and the province of Dearbeker in the north; and by a straight line running parallel with the banks of Euphrates in the west, to the mountains of Armenia in the east.

11. The Assyrians realize that at least for 25 years hence, they will be incapable of self government and therefore they desire the supervision of a mandatorial power.

(These claims are in perfect accord with the wishes of Mar Shimon and men of war and the leaders of the Assyrian nation as expressed through the cables transmitted through the Department of State in Washington to the President of the Assyrian National Association of America.)

Joel E. Werda

President: Assyrian National Associations of America

Cap. A.K. Yoosuf M.D., Representing the Assyrians of America

Simon Ganja, Lazar George, Lazar Yacoff: Delegates representing Assyrians in Persia, Caucasia and Kurdistan

-----Imp.Ph.Rosen,32-31 rue de Richelieu, Paris
(9/30/97)

* * * * *

Assyrian Diaspora

THE MIDDLE EAST IN THE POST-WAR WORLD
NATIONAL AND RELIGIOUS MINORITIES AT NEW YORK UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF EDUCATION
JUNE 6, 1947

THE ASSYRIANS BY DR. DAVID B. PERLEY

It is difficult in these difficult days, to be an Assyrian. Sometimes people seem to know nothing about him, although he is a very aged gentleman who has seen nearly ten thousand years roll over his head, and still he presses on. However, in all frankness, one must acknowledge the admission of the Editor of the NEAR EAST AND INDIA, who has crusaded against the Assyrian cause for years as the instrument of the Colonial Office, that "there is no finer human material in the whole of the Middle East than the Assyrians"

Be that as it may, no cause is so symbolic of the state of national and religious minorities in the Middle East as that of the Assyrian. That cause will show how solemn promises have been cynically broken and will illustrate why British prestige in close to its nadir at this moment by reason of the pursuit of her game of Power Politics despite the fact that she has just emerged victorious from a great political convulsion; at the same time, it may serve as a pointer or a warning to our country that has just come into the scene of the Middle East.

ORIGIN OF THE ASSYRIANS

The present Assyrians are the descendants of the ancient Assyrian Empire, the oldest heart from which emanated the fire of civilization. They are Christians, who claim an unbroken spiritual descent from the early Apostolic Church. Speaking Aramaic, in which the Gospel was originally written, they were the first, as a people to adhere to the new Faith and the first to convey it to non-Aramaic speaking peoples. Thus it was that in the early Christian centuries, they were famous missionaries who evangelized the entire East as far away as China, Burma, and India as testified to by the Nestorian Monument in China and by the Nestorian Tablet in Madras.

Prior to 1914, they lived as hardy Highland clansmen in the Mountains of Hakkari, Kurdistan, in the north of what is now Iraq and in the southeast of Turkey but within the Turkish Empire. Here they led an autonomous existence from time immemorial as a millet or nation under the supreme rule of their Prince-Patriarch, the Mar Shimun, who was recognized as both the temporal and spiritual head of his Christian Millet by the Persian Emperors, by the Arab Khalifs, by the Mogul Khans, and by the Ottoman Sultans.

IN WORLD WAR I

When World War I broke out, the Assyrians joined the Allies after the Patriarch had been urged to declare war upon the Turks from the heart of the Turkish Empire by the Eastern Committee of the British War Cabinet by reason of the magnificent fighting qualities of the Assyrians as well as the extremely important strategical position of their homeland in the neighborhood of Turkish, Persian, and Russian frontier. Mr. J. S. Ward, stated in the London Daily Telegram of November 10, 1933:

**It was we who invited them to rise against the Turks,
and promised them their independence if they would
do so.**

Believing in the promises, the Assyrians poured every man into the ranks of the new armies. The British Government has generously recognized the great contribution made by the Assyrians to the Allied cause, but the plan ended in disaster for the Assyrians; for, by the end of 1915, they were totally driven out of their hills and forced to flee into Persia. And by the time they made contact with the British troops in Mesopotamia, they had lost two-thirds of their numbers. As soon as the war was ended, all the promises to the Assyrians were forgotten, and to the utter amazement of all the non-Arab population in the Middle East, a new Arab state was erected in Mesopotamia under the name of Iraq. The Assyrians were then left in refugee camps in the land and told that the problem of their settlement must await the making of peace with Turkey. That peace took four long year, and when it was finally made, the question of Hakkari (the former home of the Assyrians) was left open and referred to the League. The League sent out a Commission to study the problem, and accepting the report of that Commission, it gave Hakkari to Turkey, but made Turkey surrender important territory north of Mosul with the understanding that it was to be an autonomous home for the Assyrians with all their ancient rights under their Patriarch subject to a mandate to Great Britain to administer the whole for a period of 25 years dating from 1923.

Assyrian Diaspora

THE MOSUL CONTROVERSY

The Mosul Controversy presents an excellent example of the sordid game of Power Politics in the Middle East. Kemalist Turkey argued before the League that geographically Mosul was an indivisible part of Turkey. Britain alleged, on the other hand, that it belonged to Iraq and fortified its claim by the moral force of the plausible argument that there are Assyrians who as Christians need protection from the Turks, as if Oil Politics could be satisfied with a partial violation of the moral and humanistic sentiments! At any rate it helped the greatest Christian Empire to be victorious in her struggle for oil.

An exceedingly curious situation arose on May 21, 1924 at the Conference of Constantinople which dealt with the preliminaries of the contest over the Vilayet of Mosul. It was the contention of Fethi Bey of Turkey that no cession of land to the Assyrian Territory was a necessity as the Assyrians could still find in Turkey the tranquillity and prosperity which they enjoyed for centuries. To this, Sir Percy Cox replied that Fethi Bey's assertion did not square with the Assyrians' own views and that they had the most vivid memory of the treatment they had suffered in the past at the hands of the Turks, which they could neither forget nor ever forgive - as if Sir Percy was authorized to speak for the Assyrians and as if these "refugees" had an invincible army and navy.

Now all these may sound very unimportant in these tremendously important days. The fate of a little people is of small moment in view of the greater injustices which have been done to people everywhere. But curiously enough, the treatment of the Assyrians has done more to undermine people's trust in British promises and justice (and that of the entire West for that matter) than any other single incident since 1914. The Assyrians stand out, and are constantly quoted, as perfect examples of British diplomacy and commercial greed by most of the leaders and agitators in the Middle East. Who has not heard Arab, Kurd, Lebanese, Hebrew, and Druze leaders murmur in bitter sarcasm whenever British good-faith is in question, the words: "Remember the Assyrians?" Remember the Assyrians is both a watchword and a reproach. The Arab world believes that Britain is concerned only with commercial greed and that all illusion of the selflessness of the West has long since departed in the face of the proof of usury and double-dealing that the West has given so often, and in no case more callously than in that of the Assyrians.

THE ASSYRIAN LEVIES

In 1920 there was insurrection in Iraq. Britain again organized the Assyrians into what is known as the Assyrian Levies to police the troublesome, turbulent Moslems. But this very task was bound to foment bitter hatred against the unfortunate Assyrians. Nevertheless, the Assyrians, firmly believing that the power of Britain would never desert them, proved loyal soldiers of Britain. In the words of Lt.-Col. Sir Arnold Wilson, the then Civil Commissioner:

They saved the British Army from utter disaster in 1920

and that:

**It was the Assyrian Force that saved the swamping
of the British rule in the Arab revolt of 1920**

THE TERMINATION OF THE MANDATE

After negotiating (in 1930) the Anglo-Iraq Treaty of Alliance and the Finance Agreement which placed the main oil fields and railways in the control of the British, Britain decided to terminate the Mandate without provision or qualification. The Permanent Mandates Commission was very apprehensive about the future of the racial and religious minorities in Iraq, but Britain urged the unconditional entry of Iraq in the League upon the following undertaking:

**His Majesty's Government realizes the responsibility
in recommending that Iraq should be admitted to the
League should Iraq prove herself unworthy of the
confidence placed in her, the moral responsibility
must rest with His Majesty's Government--**

The Statesmen (Sir Francis Humphrys and Lord Cecil) who issued this undertaking forgot the most common rule of International Law that no state can interfere with the internal affairs of another sovereign state.

That is a perfect example of the verbal claptrap which has made Britain a laughing-stock and scorn through the Moslem lands. The Assumption of Moral Responsibility sounds magnificent, but the Iraq question was--what does it mean? Nothing at all. And its evil

Assyrian Diaspora

lies in the pompous self-deception of its phrasing, as much as in the desire to deceive others. Gibbon rightly laughed at the statesmen of rotting Byzantium for their high sounding titles and phrases. They are symptoms of national decay.

That Declaration has been written in Arabic, Turkish, Kurdish, Hebrew, Druze and Armenian characters on every marked-place wall throughout the Middle East. It would scarcely be exaggerating to say that many of the British troops who fell in the Iraq rebellion of 1941, the invasion of Syria or who died on the road to Palestine would never have perished if the sorry farce of the abandonment of the Assyrians had not been clothed in such high-sounding and pompous hypocrisy of self-justification. The Arab understand force. He even appreciates slick double dealing. But he despises the weakness of snuffling hypocrisy under the mantle of piety.

Influenced by this absurd by solemn Declaration and after carefully emulating Pilate's washing of his hands, the Commission reluctantly recommended Iraq's admission in 1932, whereupon the Iraqis immediately celebrated their independence by a massacre of the Assyrian Christians. A British eyewitness exclaimed:

**I saw and heard many terrible things in the War,
but what I saw in Semel was beyond human
imagination!**

And on the record, Sir John Simmon shook hands with murder, when he stated in Geneva: "Apportionment of blame is a barren proceeding." Some 12,000 of the victims of that massacre were moved from Iraq to stagnate in the pestiferous valley in Syria immediately after these massacres.

WORLD WAR II

In 1941, as the Nazi-inspired Iraq Army rose in revolt against the British Forces stationed in Habbaniyah at a time when the Nazis had seized Syria it was again the Assyrian Levies that saved the situation for the British and the Allies; for, had the Iraq rebellion succeeded, the British flank would have been completely turned in the Middle East. Capt. A.M. Hamilton stated in May, 1945:

The British Empire, and indeed all the Allied nations, owe the Assyrians a heavy debt following their key-victory at Habbaniyah in 1941, which checked German expansion to Asia Minor and stopped a rapidly growing danger of linkage in force with Japan via the Persian Gulf at a time when the latter was posed for attack. But for the Assyrians' historic stand at Habbaniyah, Rashid Ali and Nazism would certainly have controlled Iraq; the Allies would thus have been split at a critical phase of affairs before they had mustered their strength and the vital oil region would have been lost - as probably would have been the war itself--for both India and Russia would have been isolated and the Mediterranean outflanked.

The late Philip Guedalla, who was commissioned by the British Air Ministry to write the story of the air war in the Middle East, declared:

They (The Assyrians) have saved Iraq and the whole position in the Middle East. Indeed, they have saved something more. For three weeks later the Germans went to war with Russia, and they had saved the road through Persia, which was now vital for the transit of Allied aid to the USSR. If that was to be safeguarded, Iraq must be in sure hands; and by strange conjunction of events, Habbaniyah had helped to save the Kremlin.

But what is the condition of the Assyrians today? Worse than before the massacres of 1933. Listen to Mr. Guedalla:

Assyrian Diaspora

Few communities have shown more courage than the Assyrians --- and their gallantry was duly rewarded by a long alternation of massacres and migrations.

And this despite the fact that they were Allies in two World Wars.

SOLUTION

Will America unjustly enrich herself, as the British, at the expense of this "Forgotten Ally" by allowing them to find their abject and ignoble defeat in their glorious victory of 1941? This anomalous situation constitutes the greatest challenge to the Atlantic Charter and to the principles of the Declaration of Independence. The racial and religious minorities in the Middle East are starving for decent, free existence. Here there is no racial problem between the Assyrian, the Kurd, the Hebrew, the Yazidi and the Arab. Nor is there any deep-seated conception of democracy or communism. The problem is solely one of Power Politics, and unless that problem is controlled, the issue will become one of ideology - and this, to the discomfiture of democracy.

The Middle East was the home of civilization. It is now the nerve center of our problem. We dare not permit it to become a hell of power politics. Another massacre of the Assyrians took place only last December-February in the Iranian Azerbaijan during which time some twenty-four Assyrian towns were completely annihilated.

There is but one solution to this explosive political situation--the realization of the natural aspirations of all the native elements. If a federated independent community, comprising all the racial and religious minorities were to exist, like the Swiss Cantons, it would act as a great stabilizing influence in the Middle East. With such an organization, the majority states would find it easy to collaborate, forming an eventual great Semitic Federation. They have lived together since the beginning of times; and before the advent of alien agencies, each has respected the culture and the aspirations of the other.

Other participants In the symposium:

Dr. Habib J. Awad--Formerly member of FCC: spokesman of Lebanese Christians

D. Tarakhat Das--Author, visiting professor of NYU

Prof. Abraham I. Katsh--School of Education, NYU
Dr. D.J.R. Thorbecke--Former Netherlands Ambassador to China to and So.Africa

Assyrian Diaspora

SECTION II - LIFE IN URUMIA BEFORE WORLD WAR I

TRANSCRIPT OF A TAPE JACK BADAL NEW BRITAIN CONNECTICUT

The following is a transcript of a tape sent by Kevin Sargis, grand-nephew of Margaret Yohannan, widow of William Yohannan, of "Uncle Jack" made sometime in the 1980's.

The interviewers are relatives of Margie and are probably Kevin, his father, who is Marge's brother Saul's son. "I" will signify the interviewers and "J" will be Jack.

I. Tell us a little about the history of Assyria to your best recollection.

J. Assyria is what is Iraq now. Between the Euphrates and Tigris Rivers, those two rivers. They were a warrior nation. At that time I think they were the first civilized people of the time in that section of the world.

I. How far back?

J. About 400 years B.C.

I. Before the Armenians?

J. Before the Armenians. Armenians came later. There was no Armenia then. What I am saying is, I said 400, could be 350 (laughter) to my recollection. Of course we know through these diggings that they have been doing, many years ago, the English, the French, they dug some from cities like Nineveh, the capital of Assyria and Ashur that is in Upper Iraq.

I. When did it not become Assyria?

J. History doesn't have the exact time when these people are recognized but from our old books that were written the Assyrians were the first people that turned to Christianity...and from one king they turned just the opposite. They were mercenaries--the kings turned to Assyrians when they wanted soldiers to punish countries--swords into plows--they threw down their arms and turned to follow Christianity. I read something, about China, when Marco Polo went there and a Chinese princess heard him talk about Christianity, she said they knew about it.

J. My mother said that after becoming Christians when they dropped their arms they became missionaries and went as far as China and Japan so Marco Polo wasn't the first to go to China.

In National Geographic it says the princess said they already knew about Christianity..there are some statues. I have a book about the provinces of China.

Professor Lemsah said that there were so many people who had gone from Assyria to China and they figured out there should be about 2 million descendants. I sent National Geographic

a book about China when we lived in Iran (Persia).

We lived in Urumia. Actually UR means Ur of Chaldea.

I. A state or a place?

J. Ur is a place. Mia is water in Assyrian. We have a lake. Lake Urumia.

I. What does Urumia mean?

Discussion about meaning of names.

J. Ours was Urumia because if you look at the map where our country was in Iraq, if you come through the Turkish mountains through Urumia. It is much shorter. When we went from Urumia in 1918 to Baghdad, we couldn't go through the Turkish mountains because the Kurds were not hospitable. They said that Urumia used to be a summer palace for the Assyrian kings. That's why the name: Ur meaning place and Mea, meaning water is Lake Urumia.

I. What does that look like?

J. Salt water

I. How about the area around it?

J. There are towns around it. The water was very salty.

I. What was the vegetation where you lived?

J. It was agriculture.

I. How about your house? Was it air conditioned (laughter) What was the climate like?

J. The climate we had was good climate. Summers were summer and winters were winter.

I. What about snow?

Assyrian Diaspora

J. Yes, we had snow. Each season was perfect. Compared to Connecticut-- not this extreme. Winter was winter, spring was beautiful.

I. You were all farmers?

J. We were all farmers. That's why in the winters then our people would migrate to Russia to earn cold cash. They had a word for it. The majority of people were farmers.

I. When they went to Russia what kind of work did they do?

J. They learned to paint and some were very fancy painters.

I. Did you learn your trade over there?

J. I was too small.

I. What was your house like?

J. Our house had walls all around the house. Every house had walls around it. It was two stories.

I. How high?

J. Some were part of the house and then you have a door, gate to get into the yard. No fence--a wall was a part of the house. We had a yard.

I. Did you all sleep in one bedroom or didn't you have bedrooms?

J. We each had a bedroom. We had bedrooms upstairs and down below was the barn where the animals were kept. We had a big room we called the citra (?) the winter room and in that room was a tanura (open fireplace). The fireplace was about four feet deep in the center of the room. It was open and as wide as this table, and all around it was from this pottery--clay--you made a fire in there and used it to cook and on top was an opening for the smoke. Then we had a shish with an angle on it and put kettles and pots and pans on the fire and cooked. This fireplace was for cooking and heating in the winter. In the winters we all would have our feet dangling, when the fire cooled down a little, and we put a small table on top and we would have blankets and in the evening we would eat nuts, grapes, raisins.

Laughter.

J. We used wood and buffalo chips - animal chips to light up the fire.

I. There was no heat in the bedrooms?

J. In the bedrooms we had, like a habichi--stoves.

I. Did you have beds?

J. No we had beddings...you'd have a mattress and pillows and they would wrap those up in the day and put them away and they would be back rests. We used to sit on the floor on the Persian rugs.

I. Upstairs was used only to sleep during the night?

J. Yeah.

I. Who kept the fire going?

J. The women.

I. Was there more than one family in the house?

J. Yes, my father, mother, us and my grandmother.

Discussion on grandmothers. Name Leah is mentioned. Leah was Marge's mother.

I. How many children in your family? Were you the only child?

J. No, I had two other brothers and they died when we were running away.

I. Before you ran away, what did your grandmother cook?

J. We cooked the same things we cook here: ru-za (rice), Khou-ish (stew), dolma (stuffed grape leave or cabbage); cha-da (flat bread), mesta (yogurt), jajik (cottage cheese and cream cheese with dill and coriander).

I. Where did you get all this?

J. We had a cow. Great grandfather was a butcher. That's where we got our meat. We had a bekta (garden), we had fruit trees. Away from the house.

I. What did your father do for a living and were you well off like middle class?

J. My mother's family were very well off. Actually they owned the village. They were educated. Their name was Badal also.

I. A Badal married a Badal?

J. My father was a happy-go-lucky kind of guy. Before he was married he lived with his mother and in the morning she would milk the cow and make butter and he would tell her about some need and take butter and milk to others he knew were in need. He was the most-liked man over there. He could never marry my mother because he wasn't in her class. When you wanted to marry someone you sent a matchmaker to talk for you. He sent his uncle to ask for her hand in marriage. His uncle said "if you don't approve of my

Assyrian Diaspora

nephew, I have a son." When my father heard that, he wasn't happy and since my father had been to America several times, he decided to ask her himself, which was not proper. But he did and she accepted. He used to tell us afterward every village had a town square where young people would gather. My mother would come with her pail to a brook and fill the pail with water and dump in the well several times just so she could go by him and see him in the square.

Laughter.

I. Did your father work? What did he do?

J. In the old country, father was a painter. His grandfather was a butcher. Every Saturday the butcher would sell his meat in the town square. My father used to help him and they had vineyards.

I. Your mother really did have the money?

J. Yes, she was a teacher--a seminarian.

I. Why would they want to come here?

J. He came here first - 1905 or maybe 1903.

I. How old were you?

Somebody: he wasn't born yet.

J. First he went to Russia as a painter with Joe Averdis' father.

I. No kidding?

J. He was a real artist. My father was an apprentice in Russia.

I. Why did everybody go to Russia?

J. Because we were close to Russia and we needed cold cash.

I. Was that the place to go?

J. That was the nearest place you could go.

I. How far were you from Russia?

J. They would walk about three days until they got to Araxes--the river between Russia and Persia. From there to Tiflis (Tbilisi)--they used to go and somebody had already got to Tiflis so they used to go back and forth.

I. Was it 100 miles. Three days walk?

J. They would walk for three days and you would take your chadda and drink.

I. Tea?

J. No tea, just spring water.

I. How did you get around - walk?

J. No, they had horses.

I. Camels?

J. No, water buffalo--your grandfather, Moshe, used to use one.

I. I still want to know how they came to this country.

J. Why did everyone else come to this country. For a better life.

I. But your mother's family was well off.

J. But my father was not and he wanted to come. He came before and he worked in Landers Dairy in New Britain.

I. Why would he come here?

J. . I told you before, because other people were here.

I. My father landed first in New York, he came to New Britain.

J. You had to land in New York and they knew people here. The first time he came he was happy-go-lucky. He came here and made enough money to go back and everyone who came back from America brought money, but my father, on his way back stopped at a city and he said he had only one gold piece and said to bring wine, and so he came home drunk as a lord and the only thing he had was an old pair of shoes and rubbers for the shoes. His father said everyone brought money from America, but his son brought back shoes inside shoes.

He was teased so much and he came back and became a baker here. Besides the dairy job, he had a horse and buggy and a lot of our people lived together. Maybe 8 to 10 men living in one place and they used a lot of bread and he brought baskets of bread and was asked who is going to eat all this.

(Discussion on somebody's marriage.)

I. You were how old when you came to this country?

J. I was 16.

Assyrian Diaspora

I. And your father?

J. The second time he came to this country he had a brother that I'm named after. His name was Moshe. Robbi Moshe was a teacher. So he was bringing him back here and at that time you could get on a boat and come here and they would examine you and if you didn't pass the exam, they would send you back. My father read that Mayor Fiorello LaGuardia, as a U.S. Senator, he thought, had that rule changed so that you could be examined where you took the boat. Some of our people went to Vladivostok in Siberia and came here.

Some of our people also went to Japan because of the quotas because their quotas weren't full there. So he and his brother went to Ellis Island. He said something got in his brother's eye and it was red and watery. Your eyes had to be good so they sent him back and they went to Liverpool, England, and he left Moshe with Presbyterian missionaries to look after him until his eye got better and to send him back to America. My father came here and he never found him again. He went back to Liverpool, he never found him or the missionaries.

I. Was he a younger brother?

J. Yeah. Then my father came back in 1911. He went back and forth and I was born in 1912. The war started in 1916 and he returned and brought back eight thousand dollars. You know 17 Main Street in New Britain--an Irish lady--he lived in that house and the owner had a daughter she wanted my father to marry. She owned almost all of Main street, which was a cow path. He said no, he promised his mother he wouldn't get married in America and went back to marry my mother.

I. How did he get eight thousand dollars?

J. He was a hard worker. Then when he came back, the war started and he bought wheat with his money because the Russians were coming to Iran. But when the war started, they looted the warehouse and he lost everything.

I. Which war?

J. In 1918--that's when the war came to Persia.

I. When did you meet my father? (this was Saul, Margie's brother)

J. I met him in 1918, you were 6 or 7 years old.

I. My father must have been 12 or 13.

I. The Turks were part of this war or just Assyrians and Armenians?

J. There were more Armenians and more of them got killed. In our village the Turks killed 100 people and took the young men and shot them.

I. 100 out of how many?

J. Maybe a couple of thousand.

I. They were killing the males and taking the young females?

J. Before that, we ran away. You know, we had that thing in the winter house and a smaller one - fire pit - for snacks. So when everyone was running away, you could hear the guns. I was 6 years old--my grandmother, and my father was home and he wasn't feeling well, - she was making bread in that fire pit and who came by but Uncle Ephraim's brother Eshoo--the oldest one--he was a husky lad. He said, "Auntie, what are you doing?: She said, "I'm making bread and he took the shinda (dough?) and threw it into the fire and he said "get up, the looters are coming." So he went and we had a pair of oxen and he tied them to the wagon and loaded sacks of flour and the gellion (water pot) because there were three kids - we had two other brothers and they died when we were running away - and my father was not feeling too well and if it wasn't for him (Eshoo) they would have come and massacred us because we were the last to leave the village.

I. Where did you go?

J. We were just running away - for two months. I remember running away.

I. Was Saul with you at that time/

J. I don't remember. I just remember running away.

Discussion on who ran away. Jack talks about Arnold was in this country in the U.S. Arnold's grandmother and his father and Auntie Margie and Auntie Shalam were fleeing the same, as you know, and your mother and your family. I don't know, we were the last ones that probably left.

(Discussion on guns.)

I. Where did they get the weapons?

J. They had guns there. They made guns.

Assyrian Diaspora

Further discussion on sons and daughters; marriages between cousins; interviewers talking at same time.

J. Cousins married cousins because we were an agricultural country. Everyone owned something. The main reason they didn't allow a girl to marry outside the family was because if we married from another village, the girl had to take her share and they would break up the land and they forced them to marry cousins to keep the land together.

The second reason was that we lived in a Moslem country and Moslem and Christians do not mix and Moslem law is if a girl marries a Christian boy, he had to turn to be a Moslem.

Tape ends with interviewers and Jack laughing and talking.

Transcribed January 13, 1997

Irene Kliszus.

EXCERPTS FROM PSALMS AND SONG OF A PERSIAN

By The Rev. Mishael S. Naby

"I became a prisoner of the Turks in my native town.
I had not been cruel to Moslem neighbors as others had.
My Moslem friends testified that I had helped them as I could.
The first words of a Turkish captain to me were, My son, do not fear.

It happens that guilty and not guilty both are in prison.
I saw prisoners dead in heaps from starvation and sickness.
My Lord helped me and showed me how to escape.
He gave me courage to walk two hundred miles for refuge.

I cannot forget my experience in my native town of Urumia
It was here I met the saintly Rabi Pera Amrikhus
Who taught me more about the power and wisdom of the Cross
His spirit of self-sacrifice to glorify Christ strengthened me.

I learned from Presbyterian missionaries how to spend my life
Saints like Cochran and Shedd sacrificed their lives for Christ
We Assyrians without missionaries could not have such education
They raised saints such as Sa' id Khan and Rabi Pera, the real saints.

I was glad to hear about the Russian Revolution of 1917
I assumed the cause of it was to help the poor and needy
I was sorry when I learned the poor had no real freedom:
More sorry when I knew the revolutionists hate God and His church.

The Rev. Naby was an Assyrian Persian, born in Rizaieh, Iran. After graduating from the Presbyterian Mission College in his native country, he was taken prisoner by the Turkish Army. After his release, he became a teacher, and in 1934, a pastor.

He was the pastor of the Assyrian-Persian Presbyterian Mission Church in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Mr. Naby also administered relief aid in Hamadan under the British. Mary Aurahan said he served with integrity and honesty in all his dealings and never defrauded nor became rich as a result of his service to the refugees.

Assyrian Diaspora

SECTION III - INTRODUCTION OF PRESBYTERIAN WORK AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE

Mary Yohannan Aurahan, her sister Juan and brother William, were born in Gulpashan, on the Urumia Plain of Persia. They were the descendants of the ancient Assyrian empire. Their grandfather, Joseph Yohannan, was the pastor (Kasha) of the Gulpashan Presbyterian Church. Their great-grandfather was a bishop in the Nestorian Church. He was also the translator for

Justin Perkins and rode out to meet the first wave of Protestant missionaries from America circa 1835.

The closest urban city was Tabriz. In 1834 Tabriz was the most important city in Persia and the location of all foreign embassies. It was still a walled city and the walls with their eight gates were still in a reasonably good state of repair. It was an important commercial centre for the exchange of goods between Persia and Europe, and it had a population of about 80,000.

The religion of most Assyrians in the 19th century was Nestorian Christian and they lived nestled among those of the Mohammadan faith. In 1830 Presbyterian missionaries from America began an active mission work in Persia; changing in many ways the religion and lifestyle of the Assyrians. In 1833, the Presbyterians formed the West Persian mission. They built schools and hospitals. The first couple to reach the mission field were the Rev. Justin and Mrs. Perkins who reached Tabriz in 1834. Justin was 29 when he reached Tabriz.

Perkins, with the help of Mar Yohannan, reduced the spoken Syriac language to a systematic form, which could be printed. The colloquial language was a different dialect and not just a debased form of Church Syriac and it had numerous Persian and Turkish words in it. By using it for their prayers and hymns, Perkins and the other missionaries gave it a standing which has enabled it to become the medium of modern Syriac writing.

* * * * *

AMERICAN BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS FOR FOREIGN MISSIONS

The following information was taken from the files of the Presbyterian Church (USA) Department of History, 425 Lombard Street, Philadelphia, PA 19147--Telephone 215-627-1852

The Presbyterian Church U.S.A.'s Board of Foreign Missions assumed responsibility for the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions' mission station at Urumia, Persia in 1871. The Persia Mission was then divided in 1883, at which time Urumia and Tabriz were organized as the West Persia Mission.

The Board of Foreign Missions--Iran (Persia) Mission Secretaries' Files, 1881-1968 contain personal and station reports, as well as correspondence of the West Persia Mission during 1914-15 which may be helpful.

* * * * *

Iran (Persia)

American Protestant missionary efforts in Persia began in 1829 when Eli Smith and Timothy Dwight were sent by the ABCFM (American Board Commissioners Foreign Missions) to explore the regions of north-western Persia. Upon their recommendation, the ABCFM established a mission to the Nestorian Christians at Urumia in 1834 and appointed Justin Perkins as its first missionary. In 1871, the ABCFM's Mission to Persia was transferred to the PCUSA, thus formally commencing Presbyterian work in Persia.

Within a decade the PCUSA's Persia Mission had expanded to include new stations at Teheran (1872), Urumia (1873), Tabriz (1873) and Hamadan (1880).

Due to the vast differences between stations, the Persia Mission was divided in 1883 with Urumia and Tabriz organized as the West Persia Mission while Hamadan and Teheran constituted the East Persia Mission. The latter was later to include the new stations of Resht and Kazvin (1906), Kermanshah (1910) and Meshed (1911). The East and West Persian Missions were later reunited in 1931 and were known as the Persia and after 1935, the Iran Mission.

The PCUSA's work in Persia was evangelical, educational and medical in nature. Numerous local congregations were organized and eventually served by native ministers of the Central Evangelical Church of Iran, organized in 1934. Medical work began as early as 1835 and progressed during the latter half of the nineteenth century. Formal hospitals were built in Kermanshah (1882), Teheran (1890) and Tabriz (1913) with similar institutions established in Meshed, Hamadan and Resht.

Assyrian Diaspora

Numerous schools were established, many of which developed into multinational institutions such as the Alborz Foundation (Armaghan Institute), Iran Bethel (Damavand) College, the Community School of Teheran and the Mehz Jordan Schools.

The Iran Mission was formally dissolved in 1960. Since then, the UPCUSA has worked with the Evangelical Church of Iran, providing both personnel and financial support requisite to maintain certain medical and educational institutions.

2/97

Urumia 1871

On Wednesday, February 19, 1997, Edward and Irene Kliszus and Laura Keyser went to Philadelphia to the Department of History of the Presbyterian Church USA, 425 Lombard Street - known as the Presbyterian Historical Society. The purpose was to review missionary reports from Urumia, Persia from the 1800's to 1919-1920.

The Presbyterian Church's Board of Foreign Missions assumed responsibility for the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions' station at Urumia in 1871. The Persia Mission was then divided in 1883, at which time Urumia and Tabriz were organized as the West Persia Mission.

The name most associated with this mission is the Rev. J. H. Shedd. The following pages are copied directly from his original letter to the mission board, reporting on the work in Urumia and Persia dated sometime in 1871.

His son was the Rev. Dr. William A. Shedd who succeeded his father in the mission field in Urumia and is the Dr. Shedd whom most of the survivors of the Turkish Massacre knew.

THE MISSION TO PERSIA

The enterprise is not a small nor feeble one. There is a mission at work, with all the appliances and parts, to perform all the functions of an aggressive Christianity in the heart of Asia. There is the press, issuing half a million of pages yearly; the training schools for young men and young women; a band of over 50 native pastors and evangelists, many of them earnest and able preachers and laborers in work and doctrine; an aggregate of over 80 congregations organized into ecclesiastical bodies, and in process of training to carry forward the work among the masses around them.

The results already reached are great, not so much in themselves as in their bearing upon the future. It is under the responsibility and aim of reaching the whole people, that our helpers have been reared and our congregations gathered. And we are just beginning to realize this ultimate aim. The field already explored and reached more or less directly, by the influence of our outstations, tours, colporteurs and books, is twice as large as New England, covering nearly the boundaries of Ancient Media and Assyria. And the region which we are called upon directly and at once to evangelize is larger still, with a population of four or five millions at the least.

It covers the very oldest centre of the human race, touching Mount Ararat and the Caspian on the north, bounded on the west and south by the Tigris as it sweeps by the site of Nineveh and Babylonia, embracing the capitals or their ruins of nearly a dozen ancient and modern empires, with the tombs of Cyrus and Darius, of Daniel and Esther, and abounding in the most wonderful antiquities, and rock inscriptions of the East. On this original hearth-stone of mankind, the sons of Shem, Ham and Japheth--the Semitic, Turanian and Arian races are co-mingled and fully represented in the peoples and languages of our day. For the full prosecution of our missionary work, six different languages are demanded; Syriac, Armenian, Turkish, Persian, Koordish and the dialect spoken by the Jews. In races and religions our field covers, two Christian sects, the remnants of the Jewish captivity, all the divisions and secret sects of Moslems, and some relics of the Ancient Pagan and Magian religions. Let us glance at each.

1. The Syriac-speaking population embraces all that is left of the Ancient Nestorian Church, after the massacres of Tamerlane, and the centuries of Mohammedan oppressions since. The Nestorian portion are about 100,000 in number, with 40,000 or 50,000 more who have united with the Church of Rome, and call themselves Chaldeans.

Among the purely Nestorian portion, our work has met with its success up to the present time. There remains a great work still to be done, in fact, more than two hundred villages to be evangelized, chiefly among the mountaineers, and the Chaldeans on the plains of the Tigris. The large body of Chaldeans are, at present, very much disaffected toward the Pope, and the past two years hundreds of copies of the Scriptures have been sold among them, and at this time, two or three of our best pioneer preachers are abundant in labors in Ancient Assyria.

Assyrian Diaspora

The work needs to be pushed on with increased energy from our station at Oroomiah, as every year there are broader openings, and larger demands for the Gospel. There is great encouragement to labor for the Nestorians also as a missionary people. Nestorian evangelists are now among the Armenians and Persians, in Tabreez, Hamadan and Isfahan, and among the Malakans of Russia, and there is good reason to hope that some now alive will traverse, as their fathers did, but with a purer faith, the 2,000 or 3,000 miles, lying between us and the mission stations in India and China.

2. The Armenians. In our mission field there are two distinct centers of this enterprising race. One of these is Tabreez, the commercial metropolis of Persia. There are about 25,000 Armenians in this city and scattered over the province of which it is the capital. In the city, and in half a dozen villages, the Gospel already has gained a hold, and is striking its roots deeper and deeper. Still more broadly light is diffused. Preparatory work is done, and the great want today is for two American missionaries to take up and develop the work begun.

The other center is about 400 miles further east. The Armenians there are the remnants of a captivity as ruthless as any recorded in history. In the year 1605, under Shah Abbas the Great, the Armenians about Mount Ararat were forcibly driven from their homes, and after incredible sufferings, they were settled in the province of Irak.

These colonies have had a history of tragic interest, and they now appeal to the Christians of America, who are doing so much for their brethren in Turkey, to carry to them also, the Gospel in its purity. They occupy the large cities of Teheran, Isfahan and Hamadan, and about 70 villages in the intervening regions, and they are as accessible, and as needy, as the Nestorians were thirty years ago. Nothing should prevent us from extending our assistance to them at once, by planting a missionary station at Hamadan.

With proper effort, and the promised blessing of God upon that effort, a few years of labor would be crowned with many souls saved, and Churches gathered. A company of brethren in Hamadan form already a hopeful nucleus, if but properly taught and trained, for a reformation in Central Persia. Two of their young men are now under instruction, in Oroomiah, for the work. Thus the Master is leading the way, and the appeal from that body of nominal Christians, arising from their past history and present condition, is peculiarly affecting. It is the stronger if we consider their position, in the heart of Persia. They are the seed grain of the Kingdom, for the millions of Mohammedans around them.

This Armenian field in Persia, in its wants and relations to the future, challenges the attention of the best of our students and young pastors. It offers a peculiar sphere of usefulness, where souls are perishing for lack of vision. "Lift up your eyes and look on the fields, for they are ripe already to the harvest."

3. The Persian Mohammedans. These form the great mass of the population. They are Sheahs, which means sectaries, as they dissent from the Sunnee or traditional faith, professed by the Turks, Arabs, Koords, etc.

They differ from the Sunnees in rejecting the first three Caliphs, Abu Beker, Omar and Osman, and in regarding Ali as the only legitimate successor of Mohammed. Ali, the cousin of the prophet and the husband of Fatimah his daughter, is the hero of their faith, and no bound is set to the veneration and fanaticism of which Ali is the object. He possesses super human excellence and miraculous power, and the constant testimony is to render him divine honors.

Ali is the hero-god of Persia, and his wife, Fatimah, is exalted as no other female in Mohammedan lands, and his sons and descendants, the twelve imaams are the personages, about whom cluster their traditions in the past, and their hope for the future. The Persians in ages past have changed their religion oftener than any other people in the past.

By natural disposition, they are far more tolerant than the Turks, and while legally, death is the penalty for apostasy from Islam, practically, a very wide liberty is given to religious discussion and belief. It is a great thing to find a people who are ready to hear the missionary, and to argue the matter with him. This the Persians are willing to do, and still more, there is evidence to those who are looking for the coming of the Kingdom of our Lord in that land, that God is working.

In fact, we stand amazed at the change in the temper of the Moslem population, in the past few years. They seem to invite the native preachers and the missionaries to religious conversation, and in every effort we have made, the opportunity has exceeded expectation.

With the past year, scores of men have come privately and repeatedly, to the religious teachers. In fact, beneath the outward conformity, there is a seething fermentation, and secret sects and societies are unsettling in the faith of multitudes. The Gospel, to a considerable extent is read. Henry Martyn's translation is doing its work in the palaces of princes, and in the shops of artisans, and an

Assyrian Diaspora

earnest English missionary in the spirit of Henry Martyn, is boldly proclaiming Christ, in the east of Persia.

Some are believing; a few are asking for baptism, many we may hope are in the attitude of seeking the Lord, if happily they might feel after him, and find him. We do not mean, that any large numbers are positive inquirers. The death penalty stares every one in the face but we do believe that God is working on the hearts of men. The opportunity for preaching Christ is wonderfully enlarged, and it should be embraced. Even though the faith of some be sealed in blood, it will but hasten the triumph of the Gospel.

In the west of Persia the Mussulman population to the number of at 2,000,000 speak a dialect of the Turkish, and for them a separate version of the Bible is much needed. Our missions have made a beginning in supplying this great want. But to complete the work, the time of one missionary should be fully given to it for years to come.

4. The Heretical Moslem Sects. Here is the next opening and demand for Christian effort. The two prominent sects are the Babees and Ali Illahees. The former of these are the adherents of a new religion of fiery zeal and fanaticism, in fact, one of the most remarkable religious developments of the East.

This sect, though apparently suppressed by the sword is not dead, nor is its history ended. Its martyrs have been numerous, and if put to the test, thousands today stand ready to endure torture and death. The great advantage to the Christian cause from the Babees, is to weaken the dominant faith, and shake the general confidence in the old religion. Thus among the Babees themselves, and among the multitudes, who are in a state of doubt through their influence, there is an immense field, open for the seed of Christianity.

The Ali Illahees, are a population numbering hundreds of thousands, who are no more Mohammedans, than were their Pagan fathers. They outwardly bow the neck to the Mohammedan yoke, but really they keep the superstitions and secret rites of their ancestors. They are sunk in utter ignorance, and the masses confess that they are without light or knowledge. They and the Babees, both are prescribed sects, both admit in a sense the divinity of Christ, and hence they are tolerant and open to the plainest proclamation of the truth.

5. The Koords are an aboriginal race, in their mountain homes, between Turkey and Persia, and numbering at least 1,000,000. They are Moslems of the Sunnee or orthodox faith. Our native helpers and Christians mingle among them, and have diffused considerable light.

One Koordish Mullah professes himself a sincere believer, and in a few cases whole villages have asked for instruction. Deacon Tamo, a Nestorian brother, well versed in ancient Syriac, Hebrew and English, and having perfect command of the idiomatic Koordish, is engaged in translating the Bible into their tongue.

Among the Koords, is the strange sect of the Yesidees, some 20,000 or 30,000 strong. Their faith consists in extreme reverence for Satan. They have no books, no readers, and their religion is falling into decay. No direct effort has been made for their evangelization. How soon we do not know, but surely, the time is coming when they, and all the Koords are to have the Gospel preached unto them, and when their patriarchal system of clans and tribes will be a powerful aid in bringing them to Christ.

6. The Jews. We must not forget the lost sheep of the house of Israel, for we are commissioned" to the Jew first, and also to the Gentiles." Scattered over our field, from the Tigris to the Caspian, in more than one hundred towns and villages, to the number of 50,000 or 60,000 souls, are remnants of both the Assyrian and Babylonian captivities, dwelling by the same "rivers," and in the same "cities of the Medes," where they were originally placed as captives.

These Jews are as favorably situated for Christian effort, as any Jews in the world, and they are as needy. Upon them the curse has come to the uttermost, and they are most deeply oppressed, debased, and sadly sunken, especially their females, in a pitiable and corrupt state of ignorance and sin.

And for these Jews, the time of blessing and salvation is drawing near. The missionary is regarded by them as a friend, and is sometimes invited to teach in their synagogues. They are accessible, and many of them listen with attention, to the claims of Jesus of Nazareth. In a few cases, that same Jesus has been accepted, as the Messiah, and at the present time there is, in Oroomiah, a band of inquirers. We should pray and labor in faith, believing that a remnant according to the election of grace, shall be saved.

Such are the principal features of our field and work in Persia. No thoughtful reader can avoid the conclusion that the providence's and commands of our Lord, alike call upon us to go forward. It is the deep conviction of every missionary, and earnest native laborer in the field, that the time has come, to strike boldly out, and open new centers, and enter on more active and aggressive efforts.

Assyrian Diaspora

The results already accomplished are preparatory, and the means now employed are such as only need increasing and repeating, to carry the Gospel over the immense expanse of Central Asia that lies before us.

The obstacles are many, but none are so mighty, that they may not be overcome by God's truth and Spirit. Our name has been changed from "Mission to the Nestorians" to "Mission to Persia," in view of the broad fields of Persia, now ripe to the harvest. And just at this juncture, the re-united Presbyterian Church receives the work, and is to meet the new demands on its devotion and liberality.

Not from failure but from success comes up the urgent call for a re-enforcement. In our field today with its multiplied forms of labor among Armenians, Mussulmans, Nestorians and Jews, with its demands of the press, its training schools, its translations, the care of the churches, the peculiar responsibilities of superintending numerous helpers, the calls for touring, visitation of out-stations, requiring journeys in one direction, of twelve days, to the west and in the other direction, of fourteen days to the southeast - to meet all the duties and demands, there is but one mission station, that at Oroomiah, and but three clerical missionaries, and one missionary physician.

The missionaries on the ground are Rev. J. G. Cochran, who has labored since 1848 (his wife and family are in this country) Rev. G. W. Coan and wife, all in the work since 1849; Rev. B. Labaree and wife, since 1860; Dr. T. L. Van Norden and wife, since 1866; and Miss N. J. Dean since 1868. By the last mail the news came that Messrs. Coan and Labaree were both ill, over-burdened by care of labor, and they and Mr. Cochran also may soon be compelled to leave the field. So there is real danger that the mission collapse while all Persia is open before us.

Says the annual report, prepared by one of these brethren last May: "We are almost discouraged, as we view the necessities of the field, and our inability to meet them. Have no hesitation in saying that Tabreez and Hamadan should be occupied at once, by full corps of missionaries. No amount of force at this station can meet the growing work of those important outposts. Of both these places the facts presented speak for themselves.

"Here in Oroomiah, our present force is utterly inadequate for the growing demands upon our time and strength. Mr. Shedd was absent from the station last year, in tours with and without his family, three-fourths of the year, and now he is leaving for a visit to America.

"On his return, another must probably leave. We ask how is it possible for us with our reduced force, to meet the wants of our field, or the expectation excited by the new name "Mission to Persia" Scores of thousands of immortal souls are waiting to be taught by us, the way of life. God is unmistakably answering the prayers of His people in behalf of this dark kingdom, and now His providence call the Churches, to take up the work He has prepared for them. Will the friends of Christ at home come forward, and furnish us the men and means to plant the standard of the cross among those waiting peoples, or will they bid them still to sit in darkness and death?"

February 1997

THE NESTORIANS

The Rev. J. H. Shedd

Missionary to Persia

The Presbyterian Church

Urumia, Persia

1871

In the last number of this magazine we gave some account of the present condition and wants to the "Mission to Persia." In this number we would record a little of what the Lord has wrought among the Nestorians. The difficulty is that the record of faith, toil and success is too long a one to be compressed into a sketch like this.

1. Who are the Nestorians, and where do they live? Their home is the border land between the two great empires of Turkey and Persia, and the two great Mohammedan sects the Sunnees and the Sheahs. It is a mountain region, consisting of seven or eight lofty ridges running parallel, full of torrents and deep ravines, of rocky summits, abrupt and almost inaccessible, containing but few passes, and those seem narrow and easily defensible. Secure, moreover, owing to the rigor of the climate, from hostile invasion for more than half the year, it has defied all attempts to effect its permanent subjugation, whether made by Assyrians, Persians, Greeks, Parthians, or Turks.

Nature seems to have constructed it as a nursery of hardy and vigorous men, and a stumbling-block to conquerors, a thorn in the side

Assyrian Diaspora

of every powerful empire which rises in this part of the great eastern continent. The vastness of such a region are the last resort of the persecuted, and here is found the persecuted remnant of the most ancient and most eastern of the Christian sects.

The largest portion of near 80,000 souls dwell in the center of Koordistan, in the midst of a million of Koords. An eastern branch of near 30,000 has extended over the Persian frontier and into the sunny plains about the Oroomiah lake, and a western branch of near 40,000 is found on the slopes of the mountains and valley bordering the Tigris. These 150,000 souls are doubtless the descendants of the ancient Semitic inhabitants of Assyria and Chaldea.

Their ancestors received the Gospel from the apostles or the disciples of the first century, and in the language which Christ Himself used in his tours through Galilee, and in which in his dying agony he cried in a loud voice, "Eloi! Eloi! Lama Sabachthani!! My God! My God! Why hast Thou forsaken me!" The present language is properly called the Syro-Chaldean, and the people call themselves Suriye, i.e. Syrians, or Kaldani, i.e. Chaldeans.

Without entering into the history of the ancient councils, or the process by which this oldest of the sects separated from the church of Constantinople and Antioch, and received from western writers the name of Nestorians, it is enough to say, that they have an early record of which they may well be proud, they count their army of martyrs by hundreds of thousands, and from their training schools missionaries were sent eastward preaching the Gospel, says Gibbon, "to the Bactrians, Huns, Persians, Indians, Pers Armenians, Medes and Elamites.

Their zeal overleaped the limits which confined the ambition and curiosity of the Greeks and Romans, and they pursued without fear the footsteps of the roving Tartar.

Their missionary spirit continued for centuries, and while Europe was locked in the slumber of the dark ages this church of the far east was engaged in grand aggressive efforts. From the seventh to the fourteenth centuries they planted the standard of the cross on the Himalayas, in the depths of Tartary, and among the millions of China. But alas! they taught no longer the pure faith and piety of the apostles, but a formalism which proved unequal to the day of trial.

The inward life of the church departed before its outward glory. The whole structure fell before the persecutions and wars of the Tartars. Especially Tamerlane seems to have followed these Christians with a relentless fury, and to have put to the sword all who did not escape to the recesses of the mountains. But a wreck of the ancient church remained. The patriarch fled from Baghdad to Mosul and Elkosh and thence for greater security to the inaccessible mountain village of Kochanis, where he now resides. The fragment on the west of the mountains in the Tigris Valley yielded to the intrigues of the Jesuits, and united with the church of Rome. Those in the mountains and in Persia for the most part remained faithful to their patriarch and church, but were much harassed by papal emissaries when they were first made known to the Protestants of America.

About the year 1827, that erratic adventurer and converted Jew, Dr. Joseph Wolf, in traveling through the east, made a flying visit to the Nestorians of Persia. A paragraph quoted from his writings led Dr. Anderson of the American Board to direct Messrs. Smith and Dwight in exploring the Armenian field to extend their tour to Oroomiah. This was in 1831, and these two missionaries were the first Americans to penetrate western Asia. As they stood face to face with that remnant of Christians, hidden away for so many ages, and resembling the Waldenses somewhat in their history--as they saw the purity of their creed and the simplicity of their worship, found them possessed of a singular reverence for the Scriptures, and rejecting oracular confession and priestly absolution, they felt that a mission should be begun among them.

The mission they so strongly recommended was fairly begun in 1835. Its various stages of progress may be designated as follows: 1. Preparatory 2. The ingathering 3. The organizing 4. The expanding. We will glance at each.

1. The preparatory work. When Messrs. Perkins and Grant reached Oroomiah they found a people entirely accessible. In fact, their arrival was one general welcome.

Mar Yohannan rode forth at full gallop to meet them, and in their excursions to the villages, the simple-hearted peasants flocked about them as the common people about the Savior, and sometimes came out with drums and fifes to greet them.

But like the Jews, it was a temporal kingdom the people wanted. As the missionaries became more familiarly acquainted with them the hopes of speedy success vanished. "The valley was full of bones, and there were very many, and lo! they were very dry."

Civilly and socially the people were ground to the earth by their feudal Mohammedan lords. Morally they were more deeply degraded,

Assyrian Diaspora

little, if any superior to the Mussulmans, among whom they dwelt. The Bible was venerated as a relic, and the few copies existing were wrapped in endless folds of cloth, and laid away in the dingy churches to be brought out on great saints' days to be kissed not read, and as the highest authority by which to take an oath. To touch the ancient filled them with superstitious awe; to understand or obey it, was a thing unknown.

All were enslaved by onerous fasts. Sin for fifty weeks, and atone for it by fifty days of fasting, was their practical creed. Water baptism supplied all they knew of regeneration. Lewd dances formed their most popular social intercourse, and beastly drunkenness was so common as to excite no comment. The condition of the female sex still more impressively told how low the people were fallen. Mohammedanism is a religion of lust, which degrades women to be the tempter and slave of men, and the Nestorians shut in by this religion, and imbibed its spirit, if not adopted its form.

"What is a daughter!" exclaims the father when told that a female child is born to him. All births take place in the stable, where woman resorts in her hour of sorrow, where she often dies. The house of a Nestorian peasant consists of a single apartment, built round with walls of earth and with earth floor, while the roof is a mass of the same material, supported by beams and pillars.

The tendour or oven, is a deep hole in the center, where all the cooking is done with dried manure for fuel. The acrid smoke fairly glistens on the wall. A hole above answers for chimney and window. In this one room all work, eat and sleep, usually three or four generations under a patriarchal system, the efficacy of which consists in oaths and blows. How can a mother's or sister's, or wife's affection be cherished in such a place? Man is the tyrant, and woman the drudge of all, doing the hardest work without sympathy or love, in the midst of frequent brawls, expecting beatings, and ready, whenever the opportunity offers, to return bitter oaths and reviling, and even to fight and scratch, or, if not able to do this, she returns crushed or embittered to the stable or the fields.

The domestic state of Christians in Persia everywhere reveals the serpent's trail. We usually turn away from its details, behind the scenes, with sickness of heart. Thirty years ago the Nestorians truly sat in the region and shadow of death.

The first formal work was to prepare a series of cards in the common language. This language had never before been reduced to writing. The first school was begun in a cellar, in January 1836 with seven small boys. This was the germ of the male seminary, which since has sent forth scores of pious and well furnished preachers and teachers. About two years later, Mrs. Grant succeeded in collecting a few little girls, the germ of the female seminary.

In untidiness, disorder and mischief, every little girl was a Topsy, but it was the beginning of great results. Some of these same girls have become through grace and education, renewed and refined women, laboring faithfully to elevate their sex and to honor Christ. In the first year of missionary residence, three village schools were opened. This number increased till over seventy such schools were in successful operation in less than ten years. Sabbath-schools followed, and as the language was sufficiently at command, stated and itinerant labors at preaching the Word.

Many difficulties arose from the government, which is a jealous and intolerant despotism, but deliverance always came. A serious obstacle in the first years was sickness. Of the first three years they say "an average of one half of our number have been sick half the time." At one time five of the children were removed by measles in as many weeks. The first death in the missionary band was that of Mrs. Grant. She was called away at the early age of twenty-five. Saying to the Nestorians about her, "Christ is my all. If I have one desire to live, it is for you and your people. For myself, I am ready to depart."

Her life of love and labor and her triumphant death made a solemn and deep impression, and doubtless prepared some hearts for the Spirit's influence. The bishops said, "We will bury her in the church where none but holy men are buried, and we will dig her grave with our own hands."

After a few years' residence in the town a health retreat became indispensable. Providence directed to Seir, a mountain hamlet, a thousand feet above the level of the town, and over five thousand feet above the ocean. Here is the male seminary, and here the little cemetery which encloses our precious dead. By this change of residence for part of the year, and by living in the second story, the health of the mission has been as good as the average health in this country. The force of laborers was increased by several able men--Holladay and Stocking in 1837; Dr. Wright and Mr. Breath, the printer in 1840, and Mr. Stoddard and Miss Fiske in 1843.

In 1840, the printing press arrived, an event of great interest and wonder to the people. The Scriptures were so far translated that portions were at once struck off. Some of the ablest of the clergy had aided in the translation, and the contents of their rare ancient manuscripts were given back to them in a language which all could understand. They stood in mute astonishment and rapture to see their language in print; and as soon as they could speak the exclamation was, "It is time to give glory to God, since printing is begun

Assyrian Diaspora

among our people.

exclamation was, "It is time to give glory to God, since printing is begun among our people."

In these various methods a great preparatory work was done. Privately and publicly, and by teaching, preaching and printing the seed was sown broadcast. Hundreds had learned to read. Scores of the ecclesiastics had been under instruction. The people were friendly. The missionaries prophesied to the dry bones; but there were few if any signs of movement or of life.

2. The in gathering. After the lapse of ten years of faith and toil the harvest came. The year 1844-45 was a year of trial. Clouds of persecution and trouble were thick and heavy. All the village schools were disbanded. Mr. Stoddard was at the head of the male seminary and Miss Fiske of the female; but the prospect was discouraging, and hearts of some began to fail.

In December 1845, the first unmistakable indications of the Spirit were observed in the boys' school, and early in January, two girls asked Miss Fiske for a day to set apart to seek their Savior. A missionary servant was anxious, and soon hopefully changed. This was all. But on the 19th of the month the Spirit came down in both schools with wonderful power.

Says Mr. Stoddard: "From that time the interest rapidly increased, until two days after, as I was going to preaching service with one of the brethren, we heard the voice of prayer intermingled with sobs on every side. After exercises of the deepest solemnity we closed the meeting, but no one moved from his seat. When at last they left, they flocked to my study, and it was filled overflowing with anxious inquirers. Then, with emotions that I can never describe, I unfolded with faltering tongue the Gospel of Jesus Christ, to one company after another, till near midnight.

The morning light brought with it a repetition of similar scenes. Rising very early from troubled sleep, I found inquirers waiting to be guided to JESUS."

Thus the work with deepening power continued for about two months in the two schools. At the close of that time fifty of the pupils had been hopefully converted. It was not long before the influence was felt in the mission premises. The teachers, several of the priests and deacons, the printers, some of whom had been exceedingly depraved, were reached.

Thence the work spread into several of the villages, making such triumphs of grace as awakened devout wonder and thanksgiving. Such cases as Deacon Gruegis, of Tergawar, are among the remarkable conversions of the world, recalling almost the miraculous change in Saul of Tarsus. Indeed, this first revival among the Nestorians was a season of Pentecostal power and fruits.

It entirely changed the face of our missionary work into fertility and beauty. Other revivals of even greater power followed, forming the special feature for years in the history of the mission. In the next twelve years, there had been eleven such visitations of grace in the male seminary, and twelve in the female. Many of the pupils, both male and female, had meanwhile gone out as teachers and laborers. Two of the bishops and numbers of the lower ecclesiastics were obedient unto the faith. Thus scores and hundred of souls were converted, congregations were fathered, the nucleus of churches formed, and a general enlightening and elevating influence of un wonted power went forth among the masses of the people.

Revivals are the great hope of our work among the Nestorians. Thus far, no year has passed without some portion of the field being blessed. Some of these times of refreshing the last few years, have been of thrilling and pervading influence, reaching large congregations, for weeks at a time. In scores of villages, the one great need is the power of the Holy Spirit. At times it has seemed as if a cloud of blessing was ready to burst over our whole field, and convert thousands of hearts, who are already more or less fully convinced.

The opportunities for the most earnest and direct labor in congregations, in families, and in groups of inquirers, is limited only by the willingness of spirit and strength of body of the missionaries and native brethren. Will not Christians pray that we may be aided from on High to meet these great responsibilities, and that God will grant His Spirit for the great ingathering yet to come?

3. Organizing and training. To come down from the very presence of Jesus on the mount - the glory and rapture of revivals - to the matter-of-fact duty of training the weak and tempted converts is often a very hard duty. It is an important part of the missionary work that follows the conversion of any considerable number. To develop a spirit of manliness and self-respect among a people long crushed by civil and religious oppression, to bring them to a cheerful support of the Gospel, in their great poverty and covetousness, to teach them to witness for Christ amid manifold temptations, to foster true independence, and yet guard against license, extravagances and errors - in short, to plant apostolic churches, and to set their members to work for Christ and souls, and to bind these churches into

Assyrian Diaspora

proper relation and union with each other, is the problem and ultimate aim.

Otherwise, as a permanent influence, the work is a failure. The revivals brought some hundreds of converts thus to be trained and organized under rather difficult circumstances. There was an intolerant government, an old church, and a people of much innate weakness and character. The training began something as Wesley's classes in England, with no intention of disturbing the old establishment. The converts were invited to join with the missionaries in their communion, and the missionaries examined the candidates, and exercised needed discipline.

As the number of communicants became too large for a single gathering, it was divided, and after a time the native ordained preachers assumed the fuller duties of pastors, and took part in the ordinances and discipline. By this process of training and growth, the time came at last for organizing fully the local churches, and giving the control of their own affairs into their own hands.

A few such churches have been organized, with their pastors, and elders, and deacons, they assuming among their duties to support the Gospel, and the Mission giving them grants in aid to supplement their own efforts. Several other congregations have sufficient numbers and strength very soon to follow. They must take up the burdens, set out from our patronage, and show completed missionary work.

In a larger number of congregations, the work of self-support is begun; but they need to grow in ability and activity, before they can assume full responsibilities as churches. The immediate and pressing work is to carry these forward, till, by God's blessing, they are self-supporting, self-propagating churches, and to plant new congregations continually, through the appliances of missionary tours, faithful colporteurs, and evangelists, educating pious young men, and helping the followers of Christ, wherever they approve themselves as earnest and needy.

For the proper relation of these congregations to each other, and for their proper control and discipline, there have grown up the ecclesiastical bodies or native Presbyteries, called *knooshyas*, i.e. assemblies. These have now their "Book," with confession of faith, rules of discipline, and guidance in ordination, ordinances, pastoral and church work, etc.

There are four such local assemblies working efficiently, and promising well for the future. They sometimes meet together in a Synod. The position of the missionary in these bodies is that of a working member except in voting. He thus has a post of greater moral influence, and the native members feel a better responsibility than if he cast his vote.

The aim and hope in the early years of the Mission, was to revive the old church. But experience has shown this impossible. The old church is a fossil. It is the grave of piety and Christian effort. It never can be reformed. Hence, for our Christians to live at all, they have been compelled to leave it.

In part, they have been driven out, in part they have left it; and now the separation is complete. Yet the intolerance of the government, and the peculiar relations of the converted ecclesiastics, and laymen too, and the strong desire to retain influence with the whole people have rendered the process a slow and cautious one, and much charity and patience essential to true success.

4. Expansion. And now, who can doubt God's design in preserving the Old Nestorian Church? How different would have been the prospect, if the Nestorians had been utterly exterminated.

By them an entrance has been gained into the very heart of Mohammedanism, and among them a living Church has been planted, and in some measure inspired with the lofty purpose of conquering the Far East for Christ. The results thus far are chiefly among the Persian wing of the Nestorians.

But their brethren of the mountains are every year more accessible, and some of our best outpost and most sterling Christians are among the mountaineers. Especially in the far western district of Bootan, we have seen, in the last four or five years, one whole village evangelized, and many more asking for the Gospel. Among the 40,000 or 50,000 nominally papists on the plains of the Tigris, the way is opening for great labors. The Council of the Vatican has thrown them into open dissent, and greater results await the missionary than Layard achieved in exhuming the buried remains of ancient Nineveh.

Then, as a direct result of the seed sown, the Providential call is urgent for embracing at once within our efforts the Armenians and Mussulman sects of Northern and Central Persia. There is the city of Tabreez of 150,000 souls, with only a single Nestorian preacher, and the harvest ripe and perishing about him.

Assyrian Diaspora

There is Hamadan, of 50,000 and more pressing demands, equally destitute. The next twenty years are to be missionary years in Persia of greater toil and greater success than anything we have seen in the past. The statistics of our work for the past year show, that in the district of Oroomiah, the reformation has so far advanced, that in 23 of the villages the old churches are occupied by evangelical congregations a portion or the whole of the year, and but few of the villages refuse to open their ancestral places of worship to the Gospel. It is believed that, in many villages, over half the population is reached yearly by preaching and visitation; and in the whole field, the number of persons brought under the immediate influence of the Gospel, in its various agencies, reaches from 12,000 to 15,000.

But what are these to the multitudes remaining? The population in our mission field, as bounded by the lines of our touring and outposts, is estimated something as follows:

Syriac speaking -----near	150,000
Armenians	60,000
Jews	50,000
Yesidees	15,000
Persian Sectaries	500,000
Sheah Mussulmans	2,500,000
Sunnee	1,500,000
Total	4,775,000

This population is dependent entirely on our agency for a knowledge of the Gospel. Not an agent of any other society than ours is in the field. This field has been explored, and a great preparatory work done.

I have personally, within the last eighteen months, traveled over it nearly from end to end; and I speak the words of deep conviction in saying, that expansion in our work is imperative. Events are hastening, and the conflict with the false religions of Persia is deepening every month.

The work already begun, and yet more to advance, among the Nestorians and Armenians, furnishes us the prop on which to rest the Gospel lever for overturning the whole system of the false prophet. The long end of this lever is in the hands of the Christians of America--it is intrusted to the Presbyterian Church. Will they hold on, and bear down, praying, giving from their ample resources, sending their sons and daughters, till the consummation is reached and Persia is converted to Christ?

February 24, 1997

Assyrian Diaspora

A CENTURY OF MISSION WORK IN IRAN (PERSIA) 1834-1934 REPORT OF THE BOARDS--PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH USA A CHRONICLE OF MISSION WORK IN PERSIA

The name earliest associated with Protestant missions in Persia is that of Henry Martyn, who came from India to Shirz in 1811. Thus his visit does not fall within the century of our chronicle, but to every missionary in Persia in all these years his name has meant inspiration.

Martyn was in Shiraz only about ten months but toiling amid heat and dust in weakness of body and with many enemies about him, he completed his Persian translation of the Psalms, begun in India. A few months later he died alone at Tokat in Turkey on his way home.

Then twenty years after Henry Martyn's death, the American Board, after a preliminary visit to Urumia by two of its missionaries from Turkey, decided to establish a new mission to the Nestorians. Just as the first missionaries for this work were reaching the field in **1834**, the American Board also sent out the Rev. J. L. Merrick as a missionary to the Mohammedans of Persia. He reached Tabriz in October **1835**. The following year he made an extensive tour of Persia reporting to the Board that under existing conditions, a direct mission to the Mohammedans was premature. An evangelical church later developed and the first conference of the Assyrian Evangelical Church of Urumia met in **1871**.

By **1914** missionary work in Urumia represented a magnificent achievement. It had influenced the whole Christian population of the Urumia plain and touched many of the mountain people. The church was strong and able leaders were abundant. Then almost immediately the tide of war flowed back and forth across the Urumia area and five years later the missionaries had been deported and several of them had died, all buildings were destroyed or wrecked, the Assyrian population had been killed or widely dispersed and the church was apparently ruined. These and later years were years of persecution, massacres, pestilence, famine, deportations, flights, death and destruction.

By **1922**, exiles began to creep back to Urumia and in the following years a brave effort was made by missionaries and Assyrian Christians to re-establish the church and mission work. New schools, hospitals and missionary homes were built with better equipment than before the war. The renewed work was carried on by some of the pre-war staff and a number of new recruits, 18 in all.

There were many difficulties but fine progress was being made when the Persian government decided in **1933**, largely for military reasons that it was no longer wise for

American missionaries to reside in Urumia, now called Rezaieh.

The government bought all the missionary property and offered to cooperate in founding new stations elsewhere. The last missionaries left the city in **July 1934**, most of them transferred to other existing stations. The evangelical church, still weak from the terrible experiences of the World War (I) and with a scattered membership of only about one thousand, was left to carry on with God's help, the Christian enterprise of a century.

URUMIA 1910-1920

The decade of **1910-1920** reflects the strain and stress of the Great War. The entire Christian population of the Urumia district fled before the invading Turks in **July 1918**.

Decimated by gunfire, famine and plague they finally reached Hamadan, Kermanshah and Baghdad. The arrogant Russian church with all its numbers and political support had already collapsed with the revolution in Russia and now was totally obliterated. Like a meteor in the sky, it had shot forth in brilliant glory and in exactly 20 years had passed into utter oblivion. The Persian section of the old Nestorian church, which had disappeared with the coming of the Russians in **1898**, now reappeared but its ministry was sadly depleted.

The Evangelical Church also suffered tremendous losses. Its numerous leadership, both clerical and lay, was of unusually high caliber, a number of its men having received college and seminary training in America. The majority of these were lost either by death or by their emigration to America. Yet the Evangelical Church was better able to sustain these great losses than were the other churches, for its membership in general was well educated and was able to maintain its religious life both individually and in groups.

Gradually after **1920**, as the government expelled the Turks and established safety west of Lake Urumia, the refugees returned. The

Assyrian Diaspora

Christians found their homes, church and schools in ruins and patiently set about rebuilding them.

Christians who had gone on to America during the war now sent back money for this work of reconstruction and gradually 16 churches and 6 manses were rebuilt. Two of the former thirty ordained ministers returned and a Nestorian pastor now turned to the Evangelical Church and brought most of his congregation with him.

There were also a few un-ordained preachers and a larger number of elders, deacons and deaconesses. All these leaders ministered generously to the entire Christian community and won the admiration of members of all denominations. Hundreds of Nestorians turned eagerly to the Evangelical Church for instruction and inspiration. Leaders' conferences, enrolling nearly a hundred and lasting for a week, were conducted by the Mission and did much to revive and strengthen the church in this period of reconstruction.

In other parts of Persia also, the churches felt the strain of war times. In Tabriz most of the missionaries were forced to leave and those who remained were put in jail by the Turks. Nevertheless, the church carried on courageously many of its members spending themselves freely in the service of the ten thousand refugees who had come to Tabriz from all parts of Azerbaijan and the Caucasus. In Hamadan, Teheran and South Persia also, the church was faced with famine problems and suffered and served accordingly.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN THE U.S.A. 1917

REPORTS OF THE BOARDS

URMIA STATION (WEST PERSIAN MISSION)

1915

Fiske Seminary, Syrian Department. Total enrollment boarders 58; day pupils 51, total 109. Recently we had the pleasure of accepting a 200 toman gift, the proceeds of which are to be used as a scholarship for some worthy girl. It comes from one of the leading native physicians, Dr. Jesse Yonan, and is given in memory of his wife.

1917

The new year began with fear and trembling, no one knowing when it would be necessary to pack and take the road again in flight from the Turks. Three times during the winter, the women sat up at night baking bread for an early start in the morning. A few church buildings were re-roofed, some others were refitted with doors and windows and where that was not possible, the congregations were gathered where they could be gotten together anywhere in the village.

Up the River

In the whole of the Barandoos River district we had but one place of worship left out of nine and one worker left out of six. This district was the most completely destroyed. Kasha (minister) David of Ardishai has served the whole river, baptizing, marrying, burying, giving the sacrament and preaching.

Dr. Packard reports: the plight of the hospital a year ago was a sad one. The assistant physician and druggist had gone with their people. All the medical students had fled. The cook, washer woman and cleaners, as well as all of the caretakers, both men and women, save for one man and one woman were gone as were also household servants. There was not a single physician left in the city. All had fled.

1918

Two years ago we wondered if our work would ever again assume normal proportions. The missionaries were, with few exceptions, convalescing from typhoid or typhus; the schools, the press, and the city church had been closed because of the crowds of refugees. The hospital had been submerged with sick; the villages were in ruins, and the country was in a state of anarchy.

* * * * *

Excerpts from THE PRESBYTERIAN, in house organ of The Presbyterian Church

From the library of the Princeton Theological Seminary, Princeton, N. J.

January 15, 1913

The Turks-Balkan Question

Assyrian Diaspora

The conference between the Eastern Contestants has come to a standstill. The Allies while awaiting a proposal from the Turks have held an informal conference among themselves and agreed on three propositions substantially as follows:

1. If the proposal of the Turks was arrogant, they would close the conference and continue hostilities,
2. If the proposal was courteous but the terms unacceptable, they would suspend the conference,
3. If the proposal of the Turks was courteous in form and satisfactory in terms they would meet in an agreement after required yielding on some minor details.

The Turks made the proposal which was courteous in form and the terms retained the Aegean Islands and Andrianople to Turks and yielded Crete to the Greeks and all west of Andrianople to the Balkan allies.

This came under number two and so the conference was suspended.

The Powers of Europe are now urging Turkey to accede to the terms of the Allies and the matter rests at this writing.(The Powers: Germany and Austria-Hungary)

January 22, 1913

The Balkans

The Turks have failed to meet the ultimate proposal of the allies. Negotiations have been indefinitely suspended. The Powers, through their ambassadors, have prepared a note for the Porte (Turkish governing group) commenting that the Turks would have to accept the conditions of the allies as the fortunes of war. All the governments of Europe have endorsed the ambassador's note to save Germany. The allies are criticizing this nation for causing delay when, as the note is presented to the Porte if the concessions proposed are not granted, the allies will again take up arms and the war will go on.

February 28, 1918

Dies to Save Others

Our Board of Foreign Missions has just received word from East Persia of the death of the Rev. C. A. Douglass of typhoid fever due to terrible famine conditions, which the missionaries are striving to relieve.

A message from the New York Committee on Armenian and Syrian Relief says "We can never replace men like Mr. Douglass, nor can we, in the U.S. ever make a sacrifice, financial or otherwise commensurate with what these missionaries and other relief distributors are making in Asia.

March 18, 1918

Women Spies

An alleged Turkish female spy, moving under the name of Madame Despina Storch, was arrested at the Biltmore Hotel, New York on March 13. She has two other female companions, supposed to be French women. They are young. The Turk supposed to be 23 years of age, having been married to a Frenchman by the name of Storch.

They had certain male companions, bearing the title of Count or Baron. The Turk passed under various names in various cities. She is said to be beautiful save for her Turkish nose and she sought and won the attentions of prominent men, even army officials, from whom she sought in every way to obtain information.

She was well supplied with money and after being trailed for three months, she is to be deported to France with her companions where they will doubtless receive the due reward of her deeds.

This Turk with her companions of various times has been carrying on her schemes since 1912.

Assyrian Diaspora

April 4, 1918

That Chaldean Fake

A band of fake Chaldean priests have been arrested in New York City thereby uncovering an extensive fraud. Among their victims have been numbers of high church officials and even Chiefs of Police.

Thirty-five of these priests have been deported to Kurdistan and Persia. Others are still under arrest awaiting deportation and when they sail it will be with from 5,000 to 15,000 dollars per man sewed into canvas jackets. This fraud has been carried on all over the world. It centered in the U.S., with headquarters in New York.

The scheme professed to be collecting money for churches operating orphanages in Kurdistan. They presented credentials with the forged signatures of Chaldeans arch-bishops with official looking seals made in America. The scheme was brought to the attention of the authorities by a young Chaldean John de Pasha.

The Chaldean in this country was anxious for the exposure of this fraud for the protection of the good name of their country.

May 30, 1918

The Fame of the American Missionary

A newspaperman, recently returned from a world-girding trip, was a guest of a company of men in an American City.

He told a marvelous story of war and revolution from Peking to Petrograd. But nothing touched the heart so much as the account of the misery of the Armenian and Assyrian and the relief work carried on by the American missionaries and American money.

He paid a glowing tribute to these missionaries.

He said their names are written on no roll of fame; they wear no khaki; and will win no medals but they are worshipped by the grateful remnant of the race to which these are the sole bit of evidence that there is a God above who cares and whose Son once came into the world to tell men in the Syriac tongue which is the mother language of these people that all men are brothers.

America is the name conjured within all these wasted lands. These people never speak of this Republic as the land of the almighty dollar, but as the people with the kindly heart.

ADDENDUM

Events leading to World War I:

1912-1913: The First Balkan War

Montenegro, Bulgaria, Greece and Serbia are at war with Turkey. The war ends with the Treaty of London

May 30, 1913

The Treaty of London is signed ending the first Balkan War. Turkey abandons claims to Crete; status of Albania and Aegean Islands is undetermined.

June 28, 1914

Assassination of the heir to the Austrian throne, Archduke Francis Ferdinand and his wife, the Dutchess of Hohenberg at Sarajevo, Bosnia, by agents of a secret terrorist organization.

July 28, 1914

Assyrian Diaspora

World War I begins, and the story of the tragedy of the Assyrians begins.

2/12/1997

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN THE U.S.A., REPORTS OF THE BOARDS 1899-1917

1899-Church Work in the Urmia Plain

There have been 250 additions to our churches, the largest number being in Gulpashan, Heiderlui, Dustellan and Tabetan. The first is one of our largest churches, which has grown steadily and rapidly during the past two years.

Last year's statistics showing a total membership of 2,232, a net gain of 137 in spite of losses to the Russian movement.

The contributions were about 80 cents per member.

Relief Work: The money at the disposal of the mission for relief of the homeless and starving refugees from Turkey has been only one-third of those received the preceding year while the need among the villages of the Urmia Plain and in Tergawar has continued to grow.

2,000 returned to Persia last summer but the winter of 1898-99 has borne a special severity upon those who remained. Many have lived on roots and food of animals and many have starved for the want of bread for the body and the Bread which is Christ's Flesh.....

The Rev. Dr. William A. Shedd--1918

Two years ago we wondered if our work would ever again assume normal proportions. The missionaries were convalescing from typhoid or typhus; the schools, the press and the city church has been closed because of the crowds of refugees. The hospital has been submerged with the sick; the villages were in ruins, and the country was in a state of anarchy.

* * * * *

The Rev. William A. Shedd, Missionary of the Board in West Persia from 1892 to 1918.

Dr. Shedd was born in Urumia in 1865. His father and mother were missionaries and went to Persia in 1859. Dr. Shedd was ordained in June 1892 and sailed for Persia in the fall of that year. Dr. Shedd died of cholera on August 7, 1918 as he was accompanying a party of refugees from Urumia to Hamadan.

1919

The last four years of the War with the alternating armies of Russians and Turks sweeping over north western Persia with famine, misgovernment, and Kurdish outrage; disease and pestilence has borne down on the inoffensive Syrian people with a weight which scarcely any of the belligerent nations had to bear.

During the five months of the Turkish occupation in 1915 and during the times of disorder culminating in the successful struggle of the Christians for existence against the Moslem elements of the City in January and February and then in the utter flight of the entire Christian population upon the collapse of the Persian and Armenian resistance and the re-invasion of the Turks, Dr. Shedd has been a people as a great rock in the midst of a stormy sea.

Dr. Shedd left Urumia on July 31, 1918 as a rear guard to the 80,000 Christians fleeing southward over the mountains to Hamadan, without food, or transportation, through a barren country without grain or fuel or roads, leaving a trail of death and disease behind them. Those who came last died by the thousands.

Dr. Shedd was following his flock to shield and protect it when at Sainkala, a little village north of the Urumia Lake, he fell victim to Cholera and died on August 7, 1918.

Urumia was evacuated by missionaries in October 1918.

DURING THE MONTHS FROM MAY 30 TO AUGUST 18 (1918) CABLES REACHED THE PRESBYTERIAN BOARD

Assyrian Diaspora

THROUGH THE STATE DEPARTMENT

Tabriz, Persia May 30, 1918: Arrival of Kurds. Consuls, including USA and all Europeans leaving tonight. All the Tabriz missionary ladies and children are going to Kazvin and probably to Hamadan...Urumia missionaries safe and all, with the exception of doctors and their wives, will accompany native Christians if forced to flee.

The Associated Press reported Tabriz had been attacked by the Turks on July 14 and the Presbyterian Hospital had been looted and the American consulate sacked.

July 16, 1918--from Kazvin...Giffords, Gillespie, Johnson, Crothers going to Hamadan.
Signed: Gifford

State Department, Dated August 15, 1918

Rev. W. A. Shedd died of Cholera at Sainkala, August 7. Nearly all the Assyrian and Armenian refugees from Urumia to the number of 80,000 had passed Sainkala by the 5th .

State Department, Dated August 18, 1918

40,000 Christian refugees from Urumia have passed Bijar en route to Hamadan and their followed 40,000 more. Epidemics and hunger cause many deaths. Turks have given up their pursuit but rear parties have been robbed of everything.

* * * * *

TABRIZ: On the 10th of June about 10:30 a.m. the long caravan with over 14 nationalities left Tabriz. There were about 20 large furchoons, each drawn by 4 horses and resembling the old Prairie schooners, 16 doshgas or Russian carts drawn each by 1 horse, several vehicles of a non-descript nature, a number of men on horse back, more on donkeys, 20 or more loaded camels, 10 or more load horses, an escort of 110 Persian Cossacks officered by a Russian, and including 40 mounted men and 2 machine guns.

20 days later, we arrived at Kazvin.

The Turks occupied the English and American consulates and all of our hospital property in Tabriz. Then there was begun a systematic looting of our hospital property; the Pullman home and the house formerly occupied by Dr. Lamme.

2/21/97

* * * * *

AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN MISSIONARIES AT URMIA DURING THE GREAT WAR

MICHAEL P. ZIRINSKY

HISTORY DEPARTMENT
BOISE STATE UNIVERSITY
BOISE, IDAHO 83725-1925
USA

INTERNATIONAL ROUND TABLE ON

□PERSIA AND THE GREAT WAR□

Sponsored by

L Institut Francais de Recherche en Iran
and

The Institute for Political and International Studies
Tehran, 2-3 March 1997

AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN MISSIONARIES

Assyrian Diaspora

AT URMIA DURING THE GREAT WAR

Michael Zirinsky

Introduction

This paper focuses primarily on American Presbyterian missionary activity at Urmia, western Azerbaijan, during the years 1914-1919. Although American missionaries began as neutrals in the Great War, with good intentions toward all, they became embroiled in wartime public events and inadvertently roiled an already turbulent situation. The subject is fascinating in part because it marks the interaction of several separate histories which normally are considered only in isolation from each other. These topics include American social history, Christian Church history, and the history of twentieth century international politics, as well as modern Iranian history.

American Presbyterian Church archives, the most important source for this paper, detail the domestic and international history of Iran during the Great War because Presbyterian missionaries were interested observers and meticulous record keepers. At regular intervals, they were required by their Board of Foreign Missions in New York to report on local conditions and on their own activities. In addition, they wrote regular, formal letters to the churches and individuals in America who sponsored them and paid their expenses and salaries. The Presbyterian archive also contains collections of private papers (letters, diaries, photograph collections and other personal materials), which have been made a part of the historical record by retired missionaries and their families. All of these records are carefully preserved by a Church which understands the study of history to be one way human beings can try to know the will of God on earth.

From my perspective as a secular historian, Presbyterian missionaries at Urmia seem to have had more worldly than religious impact. They worked in the world, as doctors and nurses, as educators, even as agronomists. They themselves called democratic self-government and patriotic love of community. Indeed, the government of the Presbyterian Church, which emphasizes democratic local control and election of higher authorities by individual self-governing congregations, is one of the Puritan origins of the secular American system of representative government.

Presbyterian missionaries in Iran consequently helped to stimulate the development of modern national feeling among Iranians, including several minority groups. An intriguing example of this is the brief career of Howard Baskerville, a young short-term teacher at the American Mission Boys's School in Tabriz. During the Constitutional Revolution Baskerville became so caught up in Iran's struggle for freedom that in 1908 he resigned from the Mission to join his students in the Democratic armed forces. He died for Iranian Constitutional liberty. Another example is the career of Ahmad Kasravi, arguably the first modern Iranian historian, both in his use of primary sources to recount the past "as it actually occurred" and in his Iranian secular nationalism. In this regard it is important to recall that Kasravi had been a teacher in the Mission's Tabriz Boys' School, where he also studied English.

Despite their beneficent and peaceful intentions, however, during the war their actions made worse existing conflicts among communities which were religion-based. They became involved in a struggle which came to take on some of the aspects of a Crusade against a Jihad. The Great War in Iran has been obscure in written history. In western Europe its dates are clear enough, from 28 July 1914 to 11 November 1918, but in Iran they are less precise. It began with Ottoman Turkish attacks on established Russian positions in Iranian Azerbaijan in October 1914. After years of chaos, the war ended only with the reestablishment of order by Reza Khan sometime after his February 1921 coup d'état. This new order was signaled most clearly by Reza's deposition of the Qajar dynasty in 1925.

Although these Iranian events have largely been ignored by western historians of the Great War, they were of vital importance to Iran itself. Russian, Ottoman, British, French, and German military forces ranged freely over the country despite Iran's nominal neutrality. The war destabilized Iran's already weak political structure and led directly to the establishment in 1926 of the Pahlavi dynasty, which dominated the country until 1978. Destabilization took the form of the rise of minority autonomist movements, tribal, confessional, and national - the Kurds and the Assyrians for example.

One of the most powerful aspects of destabilization was the high mortality imposed by the war and resulting struggles for power among various groups in Iran. In addition to people killed by violence, the Great War interrupted food and energy supplies, ripped people from their homes, and spread epidemic diseases. Perhaps one-quarter of the population died of starvation, exposure, dysentery, typhus, typhoid fever, cholera, smallpox, malaria or influenza. All of Iran was affected by the war, but mortality was highest in the north, worst of all in western Azerbaijan, site of intense American Presbyterian missionary activity.

The American Presbyterian Mission

Assyrian Diaspora

American Protestant missionaries first came to Urmia in 1834 to work with Assyrian Christians. As elsewhere, these missionaries were responding to early nineteenth century evangelical revival, which called on American Protestants to preach the Gospel to all humankind. At first the work was supervised by the Congregational, Boston-based American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions. In 1871 the mission was transferred to the New York-based Presbyterian Board which sought to minister to Jews and Muslims as well as Armenian and Assyrian Christians. The Presbyterian Board also expanded the Mission throughout northern Iran: stations opened at Tehran in 1872, Tabriz in 1873, Hamadan in 1880, Rasht and Qazvin in 1906, Kermanshah in 1910 and Mashad in 1911. In 1883 the Presbyterian Board reorganized the Iranian field into two separate missions. Urmia and Tabriz constituted the "West Persia Mission" and the remaining Iranian stations were called the "East Persia Mission". The two jurisdictions were not reunited until 1931.

After half a century of American Protestant missionary work in Iran, the growing numbers of missionaries created need for the United States to establish diplomatic relations with Iran. S.G.W. Benjamin, himself the child of Protestant missionaries in the Ottoman Empire, arrived in Tehran as the first US Minister in June 1883. US consulates were established at Tehran and Tabriz, but elsewhere American missionaries continued to depend on Great Britain for consular assistance. Until the expansion of US activity following the Second World War, the Presbyterian Mission remained the most important American interest in Iran.

Growth brought the American Mission into contact with many European missionary societies active in Iran. These included a large French Catholic Mission (the Congregation of the Mission, popularly known as the Lazarists, established first in Urmia in 1839), and several English groups, notably the Church Missionary Society (CMS, established at Isfahan in 1875, with other stations later created at Kerman 1897), Yazd (1898) and Shiraz (1900) and the Archbishop of Canterbury's Assyrian Mission (AAM, established at Urmia, 1884-1914). There were also a small German Lutheran Orient Mission (established at Sauj Bulaq (Mahabad) in 1905 and transferred to American Lutheran control in 1911) and a highly political Russian Orthodox Mission.

In order to avoid the twin dangers of unwanted duplication of missionary efforts and conflict between societies with similar aims, the Presbyterians negotiated a comity agreement with the English Church Missionary Society in 1895. The boundary between the two missions would be

a line drawn from Khorramabad, Luristan, to Kashan, thence along parallel 34 degrees N. to the Afghan frontier. Khorramabad to remain in the American sphere of influence and Kashan in that of the Church Mission Society.

The phrasing of this agreement as well as the division itself foreshadowed the 1907 Anglo-Russian political partition of Iran.

This agreement and a similar one with the Lutheran Orient Mission aside, American Presbyterian relations with other Christian missions in Iran remained in a state of rivalry until the outbreak of war in 1914. Despite the American Mission's original intention to improve the indigenous Assyrian Church, the development of an "American Church" as a schismatic off-shoot of the Assyrian "Old Church" provided a challenge to other missionary groups. The American Mission was seen as wealthy and powerful by its French and British rivals, who both marveled at American ability to build imposing schools and hospitals and criticized American work as tantamount to buying adherents.

The Lazarist mission was militantly Catholic; in the context of French history, this often meant hostility to Protestantism and secularism, and French Catholic rivalry with American Protestants is amply represented in the Lazarist archives. However, even after the formal separation of the French State from the Catholic Church in the early twentieth century, the French government saw the Catholic mission as an important French influence in Iran.

The Archbishop of Canterbury's Mission ostentatiously distanced itself from other missionary enterprises, denying any expansionist ambition and declaring a purpose to revive the Old Church "from within," i.e. by education. In the 1888 words of Archbishop E. W. Benson, the mission "will not proselytize - not baptize, communicate, or ordain any member of that Church into the Church of England." This position brought the English mission into conflict with American, French and Russian missions, which sought to build Presbyterian, Catholic and Orthodox Churches among the Assyrians. The AAM focused its attention on the hierarchy of the Assyrian Church, trying to assure a good, English-style of education to the priests and bishops. When the Iranian Assyrian Church nevertheless joined the Russian Orthodox communion following Russian military occupation of western Azerbaijan, the AAM withdrew from Iran in 1914. The impression is left, even more than with CMS in the south, that there was close connection between this mission and the British government.

Assyrian Diaspora

American Presbyterians shared the disappointment of the Archbishop of Canterbury's Mission at Russian success in converting the Assyrian Church. However, the Presbyterians chose to remain at Urmia and to work with Russian civil and military authorities, as they had worked with Iranian authorities before the 1907 Russian occupation. The outbreak of war in 1914 effectively ended intermission rivalries. Under pressure of wartime hysteria, all Christians in Urmia came to perceive the war as a conflict between Ottoman-led Islam and Russian-led Christendom. Consequently American missionaries allied with other Christian groups and saw the Russian Army, and its locally recruited Assyrian and Armenian levies, as "our army."

Who were the American missionaries, and what did they do? Analysis of personnel records indicates that they came from prosperous middle class families, mostly from the northeastern United States. They were highly educated. Two-thirds of them were females. They tended to be assigned in families (siblings serving in the same field, children assigned as missionaries to their parents' field, and so forth). Most missionaries declared a vocation for the missionary life as adolescents. Typically they stayed in Iran until retirement, only returning to America on furlough after every seven years on the field.

The West Persia Mission was large and wealthy. On the eve of the war there were 21 Presbyterian missionaries at Urmia, plus their children. In addition, there were perhaps a dozen missionaries in Tabriz. As early as 1895 the Mission had established 117 schools in the Urmia region, enrolling 2,410 mostly Assyrian or Armenian students. The Mission also maintained a teaching hospital in Urmia.

The senior Presbyterian missionary at Urmia during the Great War was the Rev. William A. Shedd, D.D. He was born at Urmia in 1865 of missionary parents, John H. Shedd and Sarah Jane Dawes of Ohio; he returned to Urmia as a missionary himself in 1892, after his education at Marietta College (Ohio) and Princeton Seminary (New Jersey). He was well connected; his first cousin, Chicago banker Charles G. Dawes, later became Vice President of the United States. Before the outbreak of war, Shedd acted informally as US consular agent at Urmia, registering births and deaths, renewing passports, etc., on behalf of US consul Gordon Paddock at Tabriz. In 1914 Paddock urged him to accept an official commission as honorary vice consul at Urmia, but Shedd demurred. "Besides the work it might involve" he wrote, "an objection to my being a regular agent here is the misunderstanding that might arise to our political position. People here are apt to consider missions as political agencies." The war, however, was to change Shedd's mind.

In times of crisis, missionaries tended to drop all normal activity and engage in "relief work." For medical workers this was a continuation of normal work, but under much more extreme conditions. Evangelists and educators were faced with new and unfamiliar tasks as buyers and distributors of food, financial agents, organizers of refugee camps, sanitation workers, and buriers of the dead. During the Great War in Iran, crisis loomed large. The Presbyterian Mission at Urmia rushed to meet it.

The Great War in Iranian Azerbaijan

From the viewpoint of Urmia, the Great War in Iran may be divided into six phases, briefly sketched below. This conflict came to have a religious-national structure, and it took on genocidal proportions. It came thoroughly to involve the American Presbyterian Mission.

1. Between the Ottoman Empire's entering the war against Russia in late October and the end of 1914, there was extensive skirmishing between Ottoman and Russian forces along the border west of Urmia. Much of this activity involved probing actions by irregular Kurdish forces operating from Ottoman territory, a prelude to the massive invasion which followed.

Russian forces in occupation of Azerbaijan since the 1907 Anglo-Russian partition of Iran, reacted to Ottoman attacks by reinforcing their army, largely with Georgian and Armenian conscripts from the Caucasus. They also armed Iranian Assyrians and organized them into a military force. The newly armed Assyrians attacked Muslim villages near Urmia, even as Russian authorities hanged Iranians suspected of corresponding with the Turks, including members of the ulama. Thus the quality of relations between Muslim and Christian communities sharply declined even before the Ottomans invaded.

2. During the winter of 1914-1915, the Ottomans launched a major offensive against the Russian Caucasus. In the final analysis, this attack was a disaster for the Ottomans, but in the short term they achieved local successes. Urmia fell to them on 2 January and remained under their control until 24 May. They took Tabriz on 8 January, holding it only three weeks.

This brief Ottoman occupation of Iranian Azerbaijan led to horrors. A large portion of the Christian population fled as refugees to the Caucasus, along with the Russian army. Most of the Christians who remained took refuge in the American and French mission yards. Kurdish irregular forces preceding the Ottoman army sacked Urmia and its villages, taking food, money, rugs, clothing and jewelry where they found it, killing or wounding those who resisted their plundering. American missionary sources also record extensive

Assyrian Diaspora

□massacring□ □outraging of women□ and abduction of women and children to Muslim □harems□for the purpose of forced conversions to Islam. Once the Ottomans were firmly in occupation of Urmia, however, their officers ended these depredations. Although the Ottomans honored Mission sanctuaries, where 15,000 sheltered under American and 10,000 under French protection, the first five months of 1915 were horrible. About twenty percent of all refugees died from disease. The American Mission alone buried 3,000 of the 15,000 people in its care.

3. From late May 1915 until 1917, Azerbaijan again was under Russian control. The Ottomans remained on the defensive, even as Russia disintegrated. Before its collapse, however, Russia carried a genocidal war into eastern Anatolia, killing as many as eighty percent of the Kurdish population. Revolution ended Russian army discipline, and soldiers looted civilian property. By late 1917 the Russian army in Azerbaijan virtually ceased to exist.

During this time too, perhaps as many as 50,000 armed Assyrians from Hakkari (Jilus, led by their primate, Mar Shimoun) and Armenians from Van descended on the Urmia plain as refugees. Because of their wartime experiences they were wretchedly poor and bitterly anti-Muslim. By culture they were pastoralists, and they had little understanding of agriculture or urban life. Thus they destabilized life in the plain, taking food without payment, pasturing animals in grain fields before harvest, and cutting fruit trees and vines for firewood, thereby destroying the local economy and causing famine. Also, local Assyrians encouraged the Jilus to shift their destruction to Muslim properties, adding to inter-communal tensions.

4. The situation in Azerbaijan grew worse as revolution broke out in Russia and its army disintegrated. As the Rev. Frederick N. Jessup wrote in his annual report for 1917, □the troops feel compelled to live off the country, and (consequently) in some places actual famine conditions prevail.□ As the Russian army disintegrated and withdrew from Iran, responsibility for Allied defensive positions on the Azerbaijan front came to fall increasingly on Assyrian and Armenian Christian forces, originally established and armed by Russia but now under tenuous direction by Great Britain. The British had no significant armed forces near Urmia, however. Therefore they sought to use the American Mission there as their agency, as leaders of the Assyrian-Armenian Army. This stage of the war lasted until the Urmia front collapsed, at the end of July 1918.

In February 1918 civil violence erupted among Iranians, Assyrians and Kurds. A Muslim effort to seize control of Urmia was suppressed by the Assyrian army. The subsequent assassination of Mar Shimoun by Ismail Agha, Simko, chief of the Shikkak confederation of Kurds, further bloodied the already nasty situation. Assyrians believed that Simko had been induced to act as he did by Iranian government officials, and in reprisal they carried out a □reign of terror□ against Muslims. Iranian nationalist historian Ahmad Kasravi claimed that □nearly ten thousand innocent people were killed....□ Nothing seen in missionary or diplomatic archives suggests Kasravi exaggerated.

5. From 1 August 1918 until the signing of the Mudros armistice at the end of October 1918, Azerbaijan remained under Ottoman control. The presence of their army did nothing to alleviate the famine and epidemic disease stalking the land. Missionary sources for this time are chaotic, but the broad outlines of what occurred seem clear.

The bulk of the Assyrian and Armenian Christian fighting force was drawn away in a bungled attempt to link up with British forces at Sain Kala. When the Ottomans pushed into Urmia during the night of 31 July - 1 August 1918, the vast majority of the Christian population fled in panic, accompanied by a senior American missionary William Shedd and his wife. Along with thousands of others, Dr. Shedd died along the way of cholera.

Those Christians who remained at Urmia again sought refuge in the walled mission compounds. Again the Ottomans honored US neutrality and the American Mission was able to provide sanctuary. The French Mission, however, fell to a crowd of looters. Six hundred people were murdered there, and the French mission was stripped of all its valuables.

After the worst damage was done at Urmia, the Ottomans interned the American missionaries and took them to Tabriz. There they were held under relatively luxurious conditions until the war ended, when they were all released.

6. After Ottoman forces withdrew from Azerbaijan, Iran sank further into anarchy. The British Army's North Persia Force sought to bolster anti-Bolshevik elements in the Caucasus. It faced Iranian opposition, notably in Gilan from Mirza Kuchik Khan's Jangalis. In the mountains tribal forces such as Simko's Shikkak Kurds expanded their authority. In Tehran, British officials made and unmade governments at will. They obtained the appointment of Vosuq al-Dowleh as Prime Minister in hope that he would support an agreement transforming Iran into a British protectorate. In February 1919, Vosuq sent the Cossack Brigade, under the command of Russian Colonel Starosselsky, against the Jangalis. Britain supported this action, carrying out □purely coercive measures to further political ends□ in support of □Starosselski's reign of terror in Gilan.□

Assyrian Diaspora

Despite the unsettled conditions at Urmia, the American mission nonetheless sought to reestablish itself there. In early 1919 Dr. Harry P. Packard visited twice, the second time bringing his family and intending to stay. Soon afterwards, a riot broke out. Although initial fighting seems to have involved an Iranian government attack on Simko and a Kurdish reprisal attack on Urmia, Iranian rioters attacked the American mission grounds, looting it as thoroughly as the French mission had been stripped the summer before, murdering some 270 people. Packard and his family survived, rescued from the crowd by Iranian government forces.

This riot was the climax of the American Mission's experience of war in western Azerbaijan. In some ways it was the result of growing popular Iranian perception that Americans were associated with Assyrian and Kurdish attacks on Iranian Muslims. This riot ended the Presbyterian presence at Urmia until 1923. It also was a prelude to the end of the Mission at Urmia, imposed by Reza Shah in 1933.

The Presbyterian Mission During the War

Having surveyed the war from the viewpoint of Urmia, let us now look specifically at American Presbyterian missionary involvement during the six phases of the conflict outlined above.

1. 1914 During the opening months of the Great War, American missionaries sought to be neutral and even-handed. At the onset of hostilities, Germans took refuge from the Russians with neutral Americans. As best they could, the missionaries maintained amicable relations with Russians, Iranians, Assyrians, Armenians and Kurds. Because these groups fought each other, however, American neutrality became increasingly difficult to maintain. Faced with inter-communal conflict, the Mission was forced to take sides.

As from before the war, the Rev. William Shedd, senior American missionary at Urmia, acted unofficially as U.S. consular agent. In this capacity he reported on political and military conditions, knowing that US Consul Paddock in Tabriz shared his information with British, French and Russian colleagues. While the indigenous Christian population of Urmia panicked on hearing of Russian withdrawal on 2 January 1915, many thousands fleeing to the Caucasus, the American missionaries remained. They trusted in their neutrality, gave sanctuary to fifteen thousand Christians, and tried to protect their property.

2. January-May 1915 With the coming of the Ottomans to Azerbaijan in January, the American Mission was plunged into the heart of the war's darkness. At first the Mission simply sought to alleviate distress. A vivid example of this was Dr. Harry P. Packard's dramatic ride to the village of Geogtapa. Dr. Packard was born in Illinois in 1874, and he graduated from high school in Pueblo, Colorado and took degrees from Colorado College (A.B. 1898) and the University of Denver (M.D., 1901). Before becoming a missionary at Urmia in 1906, he served with the Colorado Militia during the Cripple Creek mining troubles. In Hugh Muller's words, "Dr. Packard was a big man with a big voice, and on horseback he looked like a general." Displaying a US flag to emphasize his neutral and extra-territorial status, Packard rescued hundreds of besieged Assyrian Christians at Geogtapa from what he characterized as imminent massacre by invading Kurds. Packard knew the Kurdish leaders as their physician, and he was able to persuade them to let the Assyrians walk away from Geogtapa to refuge in Urmia, if they would give up their arms. Equally important to the peaceful outcome of this incident, Packard was able to persuade the Assyrians that they would be safe under American protection at Urmia.

The American Mission made its yards at Urmia a refuge for Assyrian and Armenian Christians who feared massacre at the hands of the Ottoman Turks and their Kurdish allies. To make room for this mass of people, ultimately numbering some 15,000, the Mission annexed to its own compounds adjacent Christian properties. These properties included the yard of the Archbishop of Canterbury's Mission, which had been left in charge of the Rev. Y. M. Neeson, as Assyrian priest who had taken Episcopalian holy orders in America, where he also acquired US citizenship. Order was maintained in the mission yards by an unarmed Assyrian police force under the command of the Rev. Hugo A. Muller, who also was in charge of mission finances during the occupation.

To signify the neutral, extraterritorial, status of the Mission under the Capitulations, the Presbyterians flew the Stars and Stripes, the flag of their neutral nation. However, missionary faith in the flag appears to have been curiously naive, as if Old Glory were a talisman to ward off evil. As Hugo Muller wrote about this time, "The person who has never been far away from his country cannot well realize the emotions that steal over one at the sight of the Stars and Stripes in a strange land. It is like a rose in a desert." The flag, he continued, "symbolized two great causes, and united them, the cause of Christ and the cause of America...very many of the persons who came within the influence of this flag regarded it the symbol of Protestant Christianity quite as much as they did (as) the symbol of America."

The mission also protected Christian property, including the entire cash assets of the Urmia branch of the English-owned Imperial Bank of Persia. American missionaries acquired and doled out food and clothing for Christian refugees, using the property deposited

Assyrian Diaspora

with them for safe-keeping to this end. They also withstood Ottoman efforts to confiscate from them the assets of the English Bank and to impose a war levy on them. However, they did pay ransom for individuals held hostage by the Ottoman authorities.

In the course of the five months' occupation of Urmia by the Ottomans, Presbyterian missionaries acted as caretakers for 15,000 Christian refugees, sheltered within their walls. They obtained food and water from the Muslim-dominated city and countryside, and did their best to maintain sanitation. Despite their best efforts, approximately 3,000 people under American care died, mostly of filth-bred epidemic diseases (dysentery, typhus, typhoid fever and cholera). Virtually all the missionaries themselves became ill. Several Americans died, including Dr. Shedd's wife, Louise Wilber Shedd, and the Rev. Hugo Muller's newborn baby boy.

These experiences politicized the Mission and made it explicitly pro-Entente. In the course of the suffering they endured and witnessed, American missionaries came to see 'pan-Islam,' i.e. the Ottomans and their allies and sympathizers, as their foe. Embittered by their own experiences, they were more willing than in 1914 to commit themselves to the Entente cause, which they now saw as 'Christian'

3. May 1915-December 1917 During the period of renewed Russian occupation from late May 1915 through 1917, the American Mission worked increasingly closely with Allied military authorities and their local, Christian clients. The Mission had always worked well with Britain, as the historic reliance on British consular assistance and the comity agreement with CMS demonstrate. Under pressure of war and in the context of a common Protestant Christian faith and language, the American Mission found it natural to work even more closely with Great Britain and its allies.

During this period, too, the Mission came to see the war more clearly as a crusade. They had worked intimately with the Assyrians for 80 years, and also with the Armenians. More often than not they tended to accept at face value the horror stories of Turkish massacres. Perhaps more to the point, they sympathized deeply with the suffering of the refugees from eastern Anatolia and sought to alleviate their distress as well as that imposed by them on the peoples of the Urmia plain.

The American Mission enthusiastically embraced the April 1917 US entry into the war against Germany and Austria-Hungary. Although the US did not declare war on the Ottoman Empire, missionary cooperation with British, Russian and French officials in Azerbaijan grew even closer. Especially as discipline began to break down in the Russian army, the Mission became ever more closely involved with the administration of Christian defense. The leading role in this action was taken by the Rev. William Shedd.

4. January-July 1918 In order to protect the community at Urmia, in January 1918 Shedd accepted an official commission as US consul there. Many of his missionary colleagues were dubious about thus breaking down the separation between their church and the US government, but they accepted his advice that this was the best course of action in a difficult time. Shedd was an active consul, conferring regularly with Allied leaders as well as Iranian Muslims. To the Christians defending Urmia he was a sage whose advice was always sought - perhaps in part because of the relief funds he controlled.

One aspect of the Mission's work is that 'relief' provided by New York came as money, not as food which, thus, had to be bought locally. American Relief consequently added inflationary pressure to local food prices. When obtaining food became difficult for the mission, it doled out money instead, the Mission thereby came to subsidize men of the Assyrian and Armenian Christian fighting forces as well as local Muslims, women, and children. Although intended for food, some of this money may well have been spent on arms.

Shedd was quite aware of what he was doing. Writing to the Armenian and Syrian Relief Committee in New York on 21 July 1918, Shedd claimed,

that the safety of the whole community and the possibility of doing relief work at all depended on the defeat of the Turkish attempt to take this place and that we were not only justified in aiding the Syrian and Armenian military forces but were compelled to do so. Accordingly we have done so and the amount of help given is large amounting to forty or fifty thousand dollars. We have reason to believe that this will be refunded by the British Military authorities, although we have no guarantee that this will be the case. However that may be, there was no other source from which money could be had to supply the men who were fighting with food and we did so. The reasons for it were the same as those that led me as honorary American Vice Consul to abandon a position of neutrality for one of active participation in military affairs.

Because of his unneutral action, Shedd came to be seen by Ottomans and Iranians as a belligerent, even as leader of the enemy, Allied, Christian army.

Assyrian Diaspora

Shedd's second in command during this conflict was Dr. Harry Packard, who acted as head of the armed Assyrian police. Together with other missionaries, Packard arranged for the maintenance of order by buying food and distributing it or money to the needy. His police also arrested thieves and murderers and punished them, although not frequently or harshly enough for Shedd's taste.

The American Mission clearly supported the "Assyrian-Armenian Army" on behalf of the Allied war effort and at explicit request of the British Army. After the war, the British Foreign Office tried to avoid repaying funds thus expended on behalf of Great Britain. However, on being given documentary evidence of the assurances made by Captain Gracey (who had come to Urmia during the siege as an official representative of the Allied high command in the Caucasus), the British government paid. As one British Legation official in Tehran put it in a June 1919 memorandum to British Minister Sir Percy Cox, "Capt. Gracey doubtless talked rather big in the hopes of putting heart into the Syrians and holding up this front against the Turks. (Consequently). We have met all the orders issued by the late Dr. Shedd which have been presented to us and a very large number of Assyrian refugees are being maintained at Baquba, chiefly at H.M.G.'s expense."

5. August-October 1918 During the second Ottoman occupation of Azerbaijan, the American mission was interned and had little opportunity to undertake war-related activity. Nevertheless, they cared for about 450 Christians in their yard. Half of these refugees, including almost all of the children, died in the few weeks before the Ottomans evacuated the missionaries to Tabriz.

On 8 October, on two hours' notice and over protests of missionaries who wished to stay, the eighteen remaining Americans were deported from Urmia to Tabriz. The American Mission was thus separated from its remaining proteges at Urmia. At Tabriz they were kept in "the splendid garden of the Russian Bank people where we stayed till our release. We were quite comfortable and could get good food. In ten days (on 22 October) we were informed that we were free..." Ottoman negotiations with the Allies for an armistice, signed on board H.M.S. Agamemnon at Mudros on 30 October, already had begun.

6. 1919 Some of the worst mortality and atrocities occurred during this period. Starvation and epidemic disease stalked the land, and American missionaries participated in relief efforts along with other members of the foreign community in Tabriz, including consular and British military officials and French missionaries. At Urmia the small remaining Assyrian population were without American leadership, but Mrs. Judith David, an Assyrian leader in the "American" Church, gathered refugees in the American mission and organized their care.

In spring 1919, contact was established between the American Mission at Tabriz and Assyrian refugees at Urmia. The bulk of the surviving Assyrian community was under British supervision near Baghdad and wanted to return to their pre-war homes as soon as possible. Because of unsettled political conditions in the vicinity of Urmia - this phrase also covers British indecision as to whether or not they intended to establish an autonomous Kurdistan - British authorities refused permission for Assyrians to return home. Iranian government authorities also sought to keep Assyrians and perhaps their American protectors as well, away from Urmia.

In February 1919 Dr. Packard nevertheless made a brief inspection tour and argued it was essential for him to return to Urmia, in order to encourage Assyrians to get on with spring planting. In April he went to Urmia with his family. After a few weeks of apparent peace, all hell broke loose.

On 24 May 1919 a riot destroyed the American Mission at Urmia. Amidst a famine so severe that highwaymen were reported to be laying in wait for travelers to cook and eat, a crowd of Iranians overwhelmed the Mission's Kurdish guards and looted the food, gold, guns, and other valuables stored there. The crowd hacked to death some 270 of almost 900 Christian refugees sheltered in the mission yard, beneath the Stars and Stripes.

In retrospect, Dr. Packard's return to Urmia seems to have made the situation worse. The Iranian population may well have worried that his presence encouraged Assyrians to establish an independent position in Urmia, under British protection. Also, Iranians may well have been alarmed by Packard's hiring of Kurds as guards for the mission, by his paying caution money to other Kurds, and by his doling out food to needy refugees in the town. Indeed, under the conditions of privation then existing - Iranians believed Kurds had turned to cannibalism in order to survive - one might speculate that doling out food to Kurds seemed likely to attract many more refugees from the surrounding mountains to the American mission yards.

Packard was aware of the dimensions of the problem, if not of the threat it posed. On 10 April he wrote to US Consul Paddock that "some of the Kurds have come to visit me..(and) avow that they are ready to do just as I command them." Packard expressed hope that there would soon be a permanent British representative Urmia and that Ernest Bristow, British Consul at Tabriz, would soon come

Assyrian Diaspora

“to see some of his new subjects, as they call themselves.” Packard was especially critical of Iranian government relations with Kurdish chief Ismail Agha, Simko. “A great farce this,” he wrote, “but it is very hell for the subjects that have to live under such a government. A few days later, Packard wrote specifically about Iranian concerns.

The Governor complains of our helping Kurds. Moslems of city complain also. The Moslems are afraid of the Kurds and have been opposed by them. They say the Kurds have taken everything and they need nothing. Neither side has any idea of fairness to the other, and in this sea of confusion we cannot please anyone. The net result will be dissatisfaction on all sides. The first requisite here is some force, but the relief need is so great that we shall with greatest difficulty compass only a small part of it.

Four days after Packard verbalized these concerns, violence again erupted. The crisis began with a bungled effort to assassinate Simko by means of a bomb disguised as a present to him from the Iranian governor of Urmia. Simko escaped without harm, but his brother was killed by the device. In retaliation, enraged Kurds attacked Urmia on the morning of the 24th but were repulsed by the town’s defenders and a hastily assembled militia. After the Kurds were driven off, the crowd turned on the American mission, looted its valuables, and killed almost three hundred refugees. This riot of 24 May 1919 essentially ended the Presbyterian presence in Urmia until after Reza Khan had reestablished central government authority.

Conclusions

Since its beginning in the 1830s, the American Mission at Urmia had inadvertently mingled religion and secular matters, preaching the good news of America as well as the gospel of Christ. As Hugo Muller noted in his wartime pamphlet, to the missionaries and their clients the Stars and Stripes symbolized and united two great causes, “the cause of Christ and the cause of America...” Muller claimed that many of those who saw the flag “regarded it the symbol of Protestant Christianity quite as much as they did (as) the symbol of America.” Mixing of religion and government, confounding Christian religion with American nationalism, affected the Mission’s work in Iran. Thus from the start, and without being conscious it was doing so, the American mission encouraged secular national aspirations: Assyrian, Armenian, Kurdish, and Iranian.

The Great War in the Middle East came to take on the aspect of religious nationalism, of a Crusade in the face of a Jihad. Despite sincere and repeated statements of beneficent intentions toward people of all creeds, Muslims included, under the pressures of war American Presbyterian missionaries came to see the Allied cause as Christian. They believed pan-Islam to be their foe. On the other side, there seems little doubt that the Ottoman government sought to use Islam as a political weapon, proclaiming Jihad and seeking to mobilize all Muslim’s against the Russians and their allies. Iran, of course, was at an early stage of its 20th century political development, but we can see beneath the secular nationalism of many Iranians, such as the pro-German Democrats, a popular nationalism which did not distinguish between Iran and Islam. This reality is echoed in the American missionaries’ own phraseology, where “Persian” meant “Muslim” as well as “Iranian,” as in one missionary’s statement about his early days in Azerbaijan, “Before I learned Turkish, I needed a translator to talk to the Persians.”

It is not just Iranian nationalism which is involved here; there is a broader context. The Great War exacerbated many sorts of modern national feeling, often with exceptionally nasty consequences. In the Russian Empire, for example, the rise of Bolshevism obscured the rise of many competing nationalisms. These national conflicts now, in 1997, seem more durable than Communism itself. Similarly, in central Europe the war encouraged the rise of German racial nationalism, which in turn provoked the Second World War. This in turn helped to create the Cold War. In the Middle East, the rise of Turkish, Arabism, and Zionism all are partly consequences of the vast upheaval of the Great War. Awful as the Great War was, in many places it led to even worse consequences. Any discussion of Iran at this time must take this broader context into account.

The Great War in northwestern Iran set off waves of mass murder of civilians, carried out by ill-disciplined combatant forces and by civilians angry at what had been done to them in the past and fearful of what might be done in the future. Overall mortality from starvation, exposure, and diseases as well as violence was awful. For Assyrians and Kurds it reached the proportions of the Holocaust. 80% died. In 1997, this might well be called “confessional cleansing.”

American missionaries at Urmia were caught in the crossfire. They believed they could not stand aside passively and let events occur. They believed they had a moral duty to alleviate suffering and to work for justice. Consequently, they took sides in the struggle, on the side of right as they saw it. In this context it is important to remember that the metaphor of the Church was often military, as in the words of the popular hymn, “Onward Christian Soldiers, Marching as to War, with the Cross of Jesus, Going on Before.” It is impossible to know what might have happened had American missionaries not worked so hard for the Allies, but one wonders if it could have been worse for the population of western Azerbaijan than what actuality did occur. Inaction, however, was not the

Assyrian Diaspora

Presbyterian way.

The American Mission's role in the post-armistice chaos seems mixed. It is hard to fault their desire to feed the starving. However, efforts by Dr. Packard to resume an American presence at Urmia in May 1919 seem to have inadvertently contributed to a renewed outbreak of violence. Because of his wartime activity in Urmia on behalf of Assyrians, Packard was not well-regarded by the Muslim population. His renewed subsidy of Kurdish refugees in May 1919 and his hiring of Kurdish guards for the mission was politically naïve. In the context of a famine so severe that episodes of cannibalism were being reported, in the minds of the "Persian" population Packard's presence and actions at Urmia may well have seemed to foreshadow a renewed terror. He had only beneficent and peaceful intentions, of course, but it seems clear that his presence in Urmia helped to cause a riot which killed 270 Christian refugees and destroyed the Presbyterian mission.

How to assess the role of American Presbyterian missionaries at Urmia during the Great War? Their purpose for being there was to minister to the physical and spiritual needs of individual human beings. They sought to preach the Good News of Christ, they sought to bring enlightenment to those who hungered for western knowledge, and they sought to alleviate human pain and suffering. What is wrong with that? Given who they were, what else could they have done? Whatever their intentions, however, what they experienced and in some measure caused, could well be described as hell on earth.

Dr. Packard rescued William Yohannan when his grandmother threw her body over him to protect her from the sword of the enemy, who chased her over the courtyard and killed her with his sword.

Assyrian Diaspora

SECTION IV - THE MARCH TO HAMADAN AND THE TURKISH MASSACRE

EXCERPTS ON THE MARCH TO HAMADAN, PERSIA

TAKEN FROM: THE ASSYRIAN TRAGEDY

ANNEMASSE, FEBRUARY 1934

Pages 16 and 17

Probably "The Massacre" as experienced by Mary Yohannan and her family from Urmia to Hamadan as a result of becoming refugees. 1917-1918

See also: Eyewitness accounts Margaret Yohannan and Ephraim Yohannan

Basile Nikitine, Ancien Consul.
29 rue George-Sand, Paris (16 e)
January 31st, 1934

I certify that Captain Gracey, committed for Armenia and Kurdistan, of the British Military Mission, attached to the General Staff of the Caucasian army, came from Van at the end of the year 1917 and held in Urumia a special meeting of the Assyrian and foreign representatives and invited the Assyrian people to take up arms. He solemnly promised them financial and political assistance of his Government, both during the War and after the final regulation of the peace.

Requested by Captain Gracey, I attended the meeting in my capacity as Russian Consul and together with the other Foreign Representatives, I declared that if the Assyrians took up arms against the enemies, they could count after the war on making them obtain their independence which they would have well merited.

Sd. Basile Nikitine

16. After Capt. Gracey making his declaration, flying officer Pennigton (British) visited the Assyrians in 1918 for the same object, promising them finance and war material which never reached them. The Assyrians were told that they could join the British in Sain Qala. An Assyrian force of some 1,000 strong forced their way through, arriving at the promised place which was evacuated by the British some few days earlier. The Assyrians after another attempt were able to locate the British when they all returned to Sain Qala and it was here that the rest of the nation joined the English, since owing to lack of ammunition they were no longer able to hold their own against overwhelming odds. They did not reach Sain Qala, however, without more fighting on the way.

Some ninety thousand persons, including some Armenians, left Urumia closely followed by the enemy troops through hostile territory, traveling day and night, with practically no food and no water for several days. Some thousands perished in this exodus through starvation, disease and massacre. Others were taken in captivity. As a result of this terrible journey which lasted 25 days, 7,000 more Assyrians died after their arrival in the British camp at Ba'qubah, despite the care taken of them.

Nevertheless, everybody, English and Assyrian, withdrew from Sain Qala to Hamadan in southern Persia when a strong Assyrian contingent was raised as narrated by Col. McCarthy and was used in Kurdistan, north of Iraq, to uphold the British authority over that area.

The families of the people were taken to Ba'qubah in Mesopotamia (now Iraq), and no doubt they were well cared for about a year--for which the Assyrians have never failed to express their gratitude.

On the other hand, the British Government recognized the services rendered by the Assyrians as it will be seen from the following letter written by the British High Commissioner, Iraq, for the information of the Assyrians

NOTE: Refer to eyewitness accounts of Margaret Sargis Yohannan and Ephraim Yohannan. They were very young children but this trip to Hamadan from Urmia is the defining moment of their lives as it was for all the survivors of that dreadful journey.

Mary, Joan and William Yohannan had been orphaned in Urmia when the Turks murdered their father Joseph, grandfather, and grandmother Miriam. William (Bill) recounted how his grandmother, Miriam, threw herself over him as the Turks slashed her to her death. Shalem and her infant son had died earlier of the deadly Spanish Flu

Assyrian Diaspora

Mary was about 13, her sister was younger, and her brother was about 6 years of age. On a very few occasions, Mary would tell us about The Massacre and how she and others were attacked by the Kurds or Turks and she faked death as she lay among the dead

It was a very painful subject for her and so only heard bits and pieces.

February 1997

* * * * *

EXCERPTS FROM THE TRAGEDY OF THE ASSYRIANS
BY. LT. COL. R. S. STAFFORD
GEORGE ALLEN UNWIN LTD.
MUSEUM STREET, LONDON
CIRCA 1933

Lt. Col. Stafford was Administrative Inspector in Iraq for six years 1917-1923

"History, which is indeed little more than the register of the crimes, follies, and misfortunes of mankind." Gibbon, *DECLINE AND FALL OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE*, CHAPTER II.

* * * * *

Just north-east of the present-day boundary of Iraq and within the borders of Turkey there is situated a tangled mass of mountains, generally known as Hakkiari. Before the War (I), the tribes who lived there were largely composed of Assyrians.

They had as neighbours Kurdish tribes as savage and as uncivilized as themselves, while to the north in the direction of Van the Armenian settlements began, people who if less warlike were perhaps a little more versed in the arts of business and agriculture. To the east runs the Persian-Turkish frontier, a series of high and desolate peaks culminating in Mount Ararat, some seventy miles to the north. To the west, also in broken mountainous country lived Kurdish tribes. These Kurds, though by race and religion the opposite of the Assyrians, were in other respects not unlike them.

Besides the Assyrian mountaineers, who were Turkish subjects, other Assyrians lived in the plains to the west of Lake Urmiah. (Note: The Assyrians who lived in Lake Urmiah (Urumia/Urmia) are the Assyrians to whom this ethnic history is dedicated. They were Presbyterians. These mountaineers, called "Shop-in-eye" by the Urumia Assyrians were considered uncultured and primitive)

These mountain Assyrians acknowledged the Patriarch Mar Shimun as their paramount chief and their ecclesiastical head. These Assyrians are sometimes known as Nestorians after Nestorius, Patriarch of Constantinople. Their spoken language was Syriac, directly derived from the Aramic, the language which Christ spoke and which is still used in their church services.

The Assyrians are convinced that they are the descendants of the rightful heirs of the ancient Assyrian Empire, which with its capital at Nineveh flourished during the second millennium B.C., until 600 B.C. and which is familiar to schoolboys at any rate of an earlier generation, from Byron's famous verse of Sennacherib.

The Assyrians of that empire were a Semitic people who had migrated from the south of Mesopotamia after the fall of Ur about 2000 B.C. They were the founders of the first military empire in history, and their power was felt all over the Middle and Near East. They spread their conquests far afield, but the heart of their country was the Tigris plain between Nineveh and Assur, the modern Shergat.

This great empire fell in 606 B.C., when the Medes and the Persians swept westwards and blotted out all traces of the great capital, destroying it so utterly that when Xenophon and his Ten Thousand passed that way less than three hundred years later, they did not even know that they had passed one of the most famous sites of antiquity.

But though the Assyrian Empire was thus destroyed, there is no reason to think that the Assyrian people disappeared. Rulers and princes would, of course, be killed or taken into captivity, and the fighting men would be slaughtered in large numbers, but the women and the young children would survive, and even with the admixture of races that normally follows a successful invasion, the Assyrian stock must have remained very largely unchanged, in the way that the common people do remain through conquest after conquest.

They were indeed to become accustomed to a series of conquests and invasions, as their part of the world has been one of the great cockpits of history. The Greeks swept eastwards under Alexander, driving out the Medes and Persians. When the Hellenic grip

Assyrian Diaspora

relaxed after Alexander's death, the Parthians and the Persians in succession surged westwards, but still the common people would have maintained their stock fairly pure and probably invigorated rather than otherwise by such admixtures as had taken place.

With the development of Roman political power in the last century B.C., continual wars were fought between the East and West, the boundary line moving backwards and forwards according to the varied fortunes of the wars; wars which in the end so exhausted both sides that they fell an easy prey to the fresh forces of Islam.

The clash between the Roman and the Orient was much more fundamental than the conquests of Eastern peoples which had preceded it--the Hellenic influence brought by Alexander and his generals was too fleeting to count--for it was a clash of ideas and civilizations as well as a clash of arms, but throughout all these wars the tillers of the soil remained unchanged.

They suffered and at times were even actively oppressed, but there was no persecution such as would destroy them or even alter their characteristics. In many cases the conquerors were found to make use of their conquered enemies, who often rose to high though not dominant positions in the state. All this time, too, it should be remembered the country of the Two Rivers (Tigris and Euphrates) remained one of the richest lands in the world.

It was indeed a garden from Samarra, fifty miles north of Baghdad to the Persian Gulf, though the tradition that a squirrel could then journey from Samarra to the ocean without ever having to come to the ground must have been more fanciful than accurate. A remarkable irrigation system had gradually been evolved, the trace of which can even now be seen in the arid and treeless plains of Iraq. The fighting races which one after the other conquered the country were content to leave the peasantry alone. From them they took tribute, and from them they obtained their supplies of food.

And so it was following the advent of Islam. The Arabs did not, any more than their predecessors, destroy the people of the country. They granted to those who did not accept Islam a protected though inferior status. It is clear that from the fall of Nineveh six centuries before Christ to the time of the coming of the Mongols and the Tartars, eighteen centuries later, the people of Northern Iraq must have changed but little. The seventh and eighth centuries were the peak of Christian missionary activity still farther east in Central Asia and China and the impulse came from the Church of the East of which the Patriarch had his residence in Baghdad.

The essential elements of the ancient stock survived. The southerly portion of the country was laid waste by Hulagu Khan, who sacked Baghdad in 1256 and put the whole population to the sword. One hundred years later, the arch destroyer, Timur the Lame, swept his tide of destruction across the Mosul plain, which was the scene of one of the greatest massacres of his bloody record. With his death in A.D. 1404 the Mongol tide receded.

When the next conquerors, the Ottoman Turks came in, they found the survivors in the Mosul plain an admixture of races: the pure Arab, the pure Kurd, the Yezidi, the Jew, the Persian, the Parthian, the Mongol as well as the ancient Assyrian. They exist with the complication of numerous Christian sects. Nestorians, Jacobites, Chaldeans, Roman Catholics with a few Protestants.

The Assyrians claim that their Church is the survival of the ancient Eastern Church. When the political power of Rome fell to pieces before the onslaughts of the barbarians from Central Europe, and Christianity, that new religion, began to take its place as one of the great factors in the development of European civilization, the Church in the East began to exert political influences.

According to tradition, Christianity was introduced into Mesopotamia in the first century A.D. by St. Adai (Thaddaeus of the New Testament and his disciple St. Marai.) St. Thomas had already passed farther east into India. There was a flourishing Christian community in Babylon as early as A.D. 80 and it appears that Christianity spread even more rapidly farther north.

History is silent about the Assyrians during 1400 to 1550.

In 1886 a Mission was established by the Archbishop of Canterbury in the mountains. Similar Missions had already been established by Americans in the comparatively civilized towns of Mosul and Urmiah.

The numbers of the Assyrians in the mountains just before the war (I) appears to have been about forty thousand. Others, perhaps fifteen thousand or twenty thousand in number, listed in the plains to the west of Lake Urmieh in Persia. To them the Orthodox Church of Russia had sent a Mission, as had the American Presbyterians. The Dominicans maintained a Mission there as well as in Mosul but in Urmiah they do not appear to have made converts.

When the Great War began, an existing Anglo-Russian Agreement meant that for all practical purposes Persia was an allied base--

Assyrian Diaspora

British in the south and Russian in the north.

EYEWITNESS ACCOUNTS OF MARCH TO HAMADAN -- 1918

Eyewitness accounts of the massacre of Assyrians from Urumia, Persia en-route to Hamadan, Persia where refugee centers were established in 1918.

Margaret Sargis Yohannan, widow of William Yohannan. William Yohannan was the younger brother of Mary Yohannan Aurahan and Joan Yohannan Jacob, and uncle of Sylvia, Irene, Danette Aurahan and Joseph, Jack, Peter and Julie Jacob.

In 1996 the Turkish government is still denying the massacre of the Assyrian and Armenian populations in Urumia. In her letter dated July 1, 1996, Margie writes as follows:

"Naturally, the Turks are going to deny the massacre of our people. Like the Germans never knew what was going on. In our day, there were no TV following us, or radio. My Father read about the flight of the refugees, but didn't know we were alive until my mother cabled him from Hamadan, the first town where churches had set up stations to feed us and find our people.

My uncle, who had been an interpreter for the British Army, was there ahead of us and took us in. After being on my mother's back for I don't know how long, my aunt had to soak me off Mama's back. She had been afraid to put me down for fear I would be trampled by horses.

I'm disappointed that our people are forgotten. We don't have movie producers, playwrights or other writers to keep our plight before the public. Never a week goes by that we don't see or hear about the Holocaust. Our people were Christian martyrs--they wouldn't turn Mohammeden to save their necks. Believe it--I'm a survivor, not many of us left. Please don't forget what your uncle and mother told you about it." 7/1/96

And again in her letter of 9/23/96 when asked about how the families emigrated to the United States:

"Most of the husbands, fathers, stayed in America after their last visit home. They used to come to America to work and send money home every two-three years. I think they left Urumia about 1916. My father suspected trouble, so he told my mother, if trouble starts, take the children and leave. So when the men found out we were alive, they started to send us money via American Express.

"Every city we came to, money was there for us. All the families, Martha, Hannah, traveled that way. Terrorists were going to cut Johnnie's and Eppo's throats, on their mothers' knees if they didn't give them their money. Someone came to their aid and prevented the killing. The men, of course, sponsored their families. I was a minor as was my older sister, so we were in our father's citizenship paper before we set foot on American soil.

I don't know what happened but your mother didn't have a sponsor so your father went to France, married her and brought her to America. Mary Careb's mother got your mother, Aunt Joanne and Uncle to stay with her. She didn't want them in the orphanage. When Joanne was 14, she married her to David. When Bill got old enough to go out on his own (16) he became a chauffeur, driving Moslems to Mecca and other jobs Your mother got a domestic job somewhere. This is as much as I can remember.

* * * * *

Eyewitness account of Ephraim Yohannan, son of Absalom and Hannah Yohannan. Ephraim is the Eppo to whom Margie refers. Hannah was the sister of Joseph Yohannan, who was the father of Mary, Joanne and William.

Correspondence dated January 27, 1997 to Irene Kliszus, in response to her request for information.

"Responding to your specific questions: remember that these are my personal views although mostly I will try to be objective. The typing as such is terrible. I was never a typist but, the scribble is much worse

"Question: Was My Father in America? Absalom was my father. He had been in Yonkers, New York at about 1907; worked in the sugar factory as most Assyrians (unskilled) did. He returned to Urumia and later married my mother.

His father was rather wealthy in that he owned many acres of vineyards. The grapes were dried into raisins, transported by mule to Tiflis, Georgia, USSR. There the funds were converted to sugar and brought back on the same mules. The sugar was frequently used as barter for other necessities. It was

Assyrian Diaspora

about a three to four day journey to Tiflis by mule.

Question: How did we get to Hamadan? I have to go back a bit. I must have been about 3-1/2 years old (1918 when the English/Turks/Muslims/Iranians) had disagreements resulting in the massacres. In the beginning the Muslim neighbors (some) hid us until it was inevitable that we would soon be discovered. In that situation, we as well as they and their entire families would also be executed.

Thus, we left. Wandering, my mother and I with your mother, Joan and Bill were together. My mother saw a soldier nearby and we all went to him. Mother reached under her outer garments and took out a small box (containing her jewelry) and gave it to the soldier, even though neither could speak the language of the other.

The soldier accepted the box and we followed him. He could have killed us on the spot, but, by God's Grace, he took us to a temporary safe haven. Later we were put on a barge and taken across a lake to a large refugee center. We stayed there for about a year. The "WAR" was over, my father rejoined us. I don't know all the details. The plan was to go to the U.S. He obtained a job as a supervisor of snow removal on the main road crossing the mountain passes. The British used the roads as their main source of communications. You must understand that this area is 100% muslim country and to a muslim, especially then as now, non-believers are a no-no.

However, my father was able to obtain lodging among them. He got the job because he was literate in his language and knew Farsi and some English. He successfully recruited and had crews clearing the snow for almost two seasons. He had saved enough to finance our trip to the U.S.

Unfortunately, it was not enough for all. Thus, your mom, Joan and Bill were left. A very unfortunate fact of life. Their father had been killed early in the war as had happened to my grandparents, etc.

We had been living in Tabriz. We traveled from Tabriz by mule and horseback in a judre (phonetic spelling) a small frame to hold canvas or blanket to shield the person on the animal's back from the very cold blasts and snow on the way to Hamadan..

Then on to Basra and Bombay. The book I asked the Davids to send you details this trip better than I am able to do. It is priceless--the basis for my feeling that the book is a treasure.

We were in Bombay, India about two months. My father became the leader of about 23-25 persons coming to the U.S. Most were probably relatives of varying degrees.

We booked passage on the Canadian Fabre Ship Line to Providence, Rhode Island, U.S.A. Our passage was steerage. We supplied most of the meals ourselves. Because my mother was very frail and my father's status as the dilmunge (?) the ship's personnel let us use an unused cabin to the consternation of our fellow travelers.

We arrived around the 21st of June 1921. Because we did not have the papers to enter we were not allowed off the ship for about 10-14 days. Such were the restrictions then. My father somehow obtained assistance from a SOMEONE who contacted the White House in Washington, D.C., and soon President Warren Harding sent approval for our group (all 23) to enter the United States legally.

Question: My Father and Mother's marriage: Your Father was a very honorable man. He was well respected and well liked. He was honest, hard working and temperate. I always liked him for being self-sustaining, especially under difficult circumstances. He owned and operated a restaurant on Third Street next door to the bakery at the corner of Livingston Street in Elizabeth, New Jersey.

My parents knew him and appreciated they had something in common. He was looking for a wife and they had two nieces. So a deal was struck (you perhaps know all this) Your Father (Elisha Aurahan) sent Mary sufficient funds to come to France where they met with the previous understanding that if either did not wish to go through with the tentative plan, Mary would return to Iran. It must be assumed that both agreed since they were married and came to the U.S.

You Must Understand This is Repeated for Emphasis: Your mom came from an academic high cultural background while your father was industrious and hard working. Except for compelling circumstances, they would never have met. Your father was a good--very good provider. He usually worked for large institutions, once married, and usually lived at his place of work and came home weekends. Your mom had the very first refrigerator, washing machine in the Assyrian community.

Assyrian Diaspora

Her home was always open, chiefly to her relatives from New Britain and elsewhere with no complaint from your father. Shortly after WW II he was working for Phelps Dodge in the Elizabeth, N. J. plant. The strike forced workers to get there via NYC and a boat. Prior to his coming home weekends you kids would have a path worn out to the tracks to greet your father. He was always very generous to you all. Later, when Paul Byrnes and Mary (neighbors from the Bond Street era. Eppo married Rose Byrnes) were married at the Carteret Hotel at East Jersey Street in Elizabeth your father was the chef. At the time when the wedding cake was ready to be cut, your father was summoned and was given much honor on that occasion. He was very well liked, indeed.

When your father's health became a problem and he could not work as he once did, at about that time your mother became employed at the ladies' garment factory. Her success and his poor health had a deleterious effect on their relationship. Your mother's attitude was changed and his health became worse. Obviously one consideration may be that they did not have the opportunity because of the long periods of separations to meld together, so essential for a successful marriage.

I always loved your mother and I also always highly respected your father. Now, May they rest in peace.

Addendum: The above wasn't easy to put together even though it may seem rambling. It is actually a very large part of my life. It is so easy to look back and find the "answer", but the context is vital and often a major player in decisions.

The concept of the word penumbra comes to mind--our families then especially lived in a shadowy haze. We were struggling to make life work - too busy with the finer details that many today are more concerned about - as they should.

Thus, it is important to appreciate that the decisions made then were not easy but we must appreciate that context.

Ephraim Yohannan, Turlock, California ----January 1997

Assyrian Diaspora

SECTION V - MEMORIES OF LIFE IN AMERICA BY PROGENY OF THE REFUGEES

MEMORIES-SYLIVIA AURAHAN WEIDEMANN

When I was 18 years old and my sister Irene was 16, we were going to a basketball game followed by a dance at the Singer Recreation Center, located on Trumbull Street, in the Elizabethport section of Elizabeth, accompanied by my friend Sophie Gianetta.

We were fortunate to get a ride home from a friend of Sophie's sister Angie. When we got in front of our house, we spent a few minutes talking and thanking the driver who was in the Navy. Suddenly, I saw my mother approaching the car in her night-clothes. We made an immediate exit and ran upstairs. My mother started yelling at me for taking my "baby sister" with me. She ended her sermon by throwing a can of Fuller's Earth at me. All this took place in the bathroom, which was a very large room.

I might add, we lived in a four room coldwater flat on Bond Street on the third floor. The bathroom, however, was the warmest room in the "apartment" We spent a great deal of time in there.

During the summers, we would either go to Bristol, Connecticut or Mom's cousin Jennie (Careb) would come to our house with her children. We children slept on the floor in the living room. Mom and Jennie were in the bathroom on this particular occasion chit-chatting while Jennie was taking a bath. Suddenly fire alarms and sirens broke the silence of the night. Our neighbor, George Folmer, who lived across the hall, came running into our house and headed for the front porch to see what was going on outside. Mom and Jennie started screaming. George swore up and down that he didn't see a thing and scooted out of our house.

When I graduated from Battin High School, World War II was still in progress. Since Battin was an all girls' school, I didn't know any boys. I had to ask one of my school mates if her brother would take me. He, too, was in the Navy. He was able to come home for the evening. Unfortunately, we had to go to the prom on a bus and return the same way. It was held at the Masonic Temple in Elizabeth, N.J.

In November 1948, we moved to Union, N.J. Mom and Pop bought a house on Shearer Avenue. We all had our own beds for the first time.

I remember the day Mom brought Dede home from the hospital. She was so red and ugly I told Mom to take her back. I was 9 years old at the time (1936). I also remember asking her where did babies come from. My father told me to mind my own business. So much for sex education.

A month before my nephew Ed Kliszus Jr. was born (1954) a dear relative of ours passed away at age 33. Jennie and another relative came for the funeral. Dede and I slept in Pop's room. He slept downstairs on the couch. They stayed in our room. We had single beds.

Jennie decided to take a bath. Jennie was a large woman and she was unable to get out of the tub. Mom said we would call Rip (Ed Kliszus Sr) to help, but Jennie refused because she was afraid he would be frightened. Finally Dede got in the tub and managed to get her out. She wanted to try out the bed before saying her prayers. No sooner did she put her head on the pillow when we heard a loud noise. One of the slats holding the mattress cracked in half. Her feet went up--her head went down. It just so happens, Irene had a parakeet who decided to fly upstairs and perched himself on Jennie's forehead and started pecking.

Mom loved rearranging furniture. Unfortunately she was limited because of space. She did manage to change the position of our bed. (on Bond Street). Irene and I slept together. She placed the head against the kitchen wall. The dish closet was on the other side. Irene and I would lie on the bed facing the front of the bed and bang the wall with our feet. You could hear the dishes rattling in all the rooms. So ended her desire to rearrange.

I would like to describe our "apartment." It consisted of four rooms in a square. the living room was so cold in the winter, Mom had to put towels on the windowsill to keep the cold and snow (yes snow) from entering. She also placed a throw rug in front of the door.

Back in 1945, Mom's Uncle passed away. This was Jennie's father who lived in Gary, Indiana. Mom went to the funeral alone, but returned with three people in the middle of the night. We were told to get out of bed so that her guests could sleep. One of the guests was a woman. She told Mom not to move the children out of their bed. Mom replied that it was okay, "they never sleep."

We spent the remainder of the night in the bathroom. This was our playroom. If I remember correctly, it was the size of Renee's

Assyrian Diaspora

(Lander) kitchen.

Mom used to send me to the library to bring back books written by Grace Livingston Hill and Faith Baldwin. When books were not available, she would read TRUE STORIES (romance stories) and hide them under the bed.

Mom had purchased a blackboard that she kept in the hall on the steps leading to the roof. We would play school and she of course was the teacher. Mom knew a little English before she came to American. She had been taught by the missionaries.

I guess you know that Mom's marriage had been arranged by her Aunt Hannah (Yohannan). At the time, Mom was still in France hoping to come to the U.S. Pop was a boarder at the home of Benjamin and Bathsheba David. Their family consisted of Teddy, Joseph, Bennie Jr., who everyone called "Little Bennie" Arthur, who became a dentist then a plastic surgeon. The David's lived next door to Aunt Hannah on South Park Street, Elizabeth. Pop owned a little luncheonette on Third Street and was considered a good catch by Aunt Hannah. She wrote to Mom and made the necessary arrangements. Pop went to France and married Mom New Year's Eve 1925. They arrived in America in February 1926. In France you had to be 21 years old to marry and Mom had just turned 21 in November 1925.

Incidentally, Pop came to America with his brother John (Esa) in the early part of the century, between 1912 and 1914. Uncle Esa joined the army in the first world war. Can't tell you too much about him except that he was twice married. Both wives died; the first one in a mental institution. Uncle Esa died in 1944, I think, of a heart attack. He was working at the St. Elizabeth Hospital in Elizabeth as a chef at the time.

MEMORIES-IRENE AURAHAN KLISZUS

An Assyrian Christmas-Circa 1937

This story is about how Christmas was celebrated at 330 Bond Street, Elizabeth, New Jersey. Cast of Characters: Mother Mary; Father Elisha; Sister Sylvia; Little Sister DeeDee, and Yours Truly, Irene

I observed that Christmas in non-Assyrian homes had a whole different rhythm. Since we lived in a four-room tenement there was no fireplace mantle on which to hang stockings. And no sugar plums danced in anybody's head. In fact, because Christmas arrived in December, the "parlor" was closed due to the fact that a cold-water flat didn't have the capacity to heat all four rooms and consequently that room was very cold. That room, however, did have a Persia carpet!

But since it was, after all, Christmas, the door was left open for that special occasion. The Christmas/Easter dinner was prepared--it was called "har-e-sa" and its ingredients were chicken and some kind of milk soup or was it some kind of barley???

Of course, we did hang our cotton stockings somewhere in the parlor and hoped for the best.

Christmas morning came and lo and behold, guess what was in the stockings, hung by the chimney with care--we called them "khuha-damones" which today I finally know are chick-peas. An orange and an apple were included.

Even at the age we were then, somehow it didn't seem to be a real American Christmas. I mean, where was the stuffed goose!

I must say that in writing this in 1996 I have more sympathy for my mother and father. They both worked very hard and really didn't have time to read "Twas the night before Christmas" and act accordingly. Don't forget too, American culture was alien to them in 1937.

Anyway, I think it was that year that an Assyrian gentleman named Elea Chalabie, who lived on and off with us, gave me a Christmas present of a bed doll, who had no arms or body since its purpose was to decorate a bed. The doll had an Asian face. I sure did love that doll. It certainly was a lot better than chick-peas.

By the way, Mr. Chalabie and scores of others such as he, came in and out of our lives. Everybody who came through Ellis Island seemed to find their way to our house and spent time sleeping in our parlor until they could move on. We kids used to call the parlor "The Dormitory." Of all these guests, Elea was the most enduring of all.

After Christmas I vaguely remember the doll disappeared. Lo and behold I found the doll in a bottom dresser drawer in the "front

Assyrian Diaspora

bedroom." Of course, since it was in the dresser drawer along with Mom's beaded wedding gown, I knew it was off limits for me. I do have memories of myself opening the drawer on secret occasions, removing the contraband and admiring it until I felt it wasn't safe to have it out of its hiding place. The doll went back into the drawer until the next time it was safe to admire said doll.

Don't ask me why Mom felt she had to hide the doll. My theory is that one should not have ready access to specific items whose destiny was to be saved "for good." I don't remember ever asking why the doll was kept hidden in a drawer but I do remember sneaking peeks.

The interesting fact about this doll is that I found out in recent years that Sylvia used to go into the drawer and have her secret peeks. She told me that she used to pull the beads out of the wedding dress. I never saw her in the hallowed drawer; we must have passed like the proverbial ships in the night.

SUNDAYS AT SOUTH BEACH

Life wasn't all that grim in Elizabeth. In fact, some of the pleasant memories were the occasions on summer Sundays we would pile in the Yohannan delivery truck and go off to South Beach.

The Yohannan Brothers, Joseph, David and Absolom owned a grocery store. They were a success story among the Assyrian community. They were related to Mary Yohannan Aurahan through her father Joseph. Absolom's wife, Hannah, was the sister of my grandfather Joseph. It seems he was killed at the hands of Turks in The Massacre of 1918. His wife, Shalem, had died earlier at a very young age of the Spanish Flu, which was pandemic. Her new-born son also died at the same time.

We couldn't afford to shop in their store because they were too expensive for us Aurahans. But sometime at Easter, David would drop off some candies.

Anyway, back to summer Sundays. We all took off from Greystone Presbyterian Church in the summer and were off to the beach. Uncle Joe would pack all the food and as many of us who could fit in the truck piled in and off we went to the ferry landing off East Jersey Street enroute to Staten Island. The fare for a vehicle was twenty-five cents and ten cents if you traveled as a passenger.

Later on, we would drive across the Goethals Bridge. When we were across and in Staten Island, we followed the route to South Beach and spent many, many lovely Sundays with the Assyrians who came on their own. The water was polluted then, especially when the tide was in or out, but it was fun to be there. At that time, I could still understand the Assyrian language and if someone wanted to say something none of us children could understand, they had to speak Turkish.

This same group also had an annual summer picnic at a Flemington farm. The farm was owned by an Assyrian who had married an "American" and who had red-headed sons who would sell eggs to our families in Elizabeth. That was about the only time I saw cows or cucumbers growing in a garden. Flemington seemed so far away from Elizabeth.

My fondest memories of being young involve the camaraderie of like-minded people, Sundays at South Beach, Sunday at the Flemington farm, Saturday nights at the rented Russian Hall with a larger group of Assyrians from Philadelphia and Yonkers with mid-eastern music resounding.

* * * * *

The Early Years

Irene Aurahan

This section will be a brief background history of my life as Irene Aurahan: 1929 to 1948.

Irene Aurahan was born March 22, 1929 in Elizabeth General Hospital, in Elizabeth, New Jersey. My mother was Mary Yohannan Aurahan and my father was Elisha Aurahan.

Both were immigrants from Persia, known now as Iran. They had three daughters: Sylvia born 1927, also named Selby for my father's mother; Irene and Danette Benita known as DeeDee, born in July of 1936. The one thing I remember about my "little sister's" birth was that it was on July 6, 1936 and we were in the midst of a terrible heat wave. In later years, that July of 1936 was listed as the hottest month and day of statistical weather reporting.

The information on my parents' emigration to America is sketchy because neither of them talked much about it. However, I think my father and his brother John left Persia together. My father was about 16 at the time. Somewhere I heard references of walking

Assyrian Diaspora

through Russia because my father did seem to speak a little Russian. Elisha and John (Esau) were Assyrians whose family lived in Gavilin, Iran.

Mary Yohannan lived in Gulpashin, Urumia, Persia near Azerbaijan, which was in the north-west section of Persia, near Turkey. My great-grandfather, Joseph Yohannan was the minister of their local Presbyterian Church; uncles were doctors.

The Turkish Army invaded Azerbaijan Province to massacre Armenians whom they considered infidels. This was during the first World War, or WW I, or The Great War. The Turks also used the Kurds to perform heinous crimes among the Armenians and Assyrians. They captured Urumia in July 1918 and murdered Miriam, my great-grandmother, with their bayonets. Miriam threw herself over the body of her grandson, William, and he did escape. Mary, Joan and William were being raised by their grandparents because their mother, Shalem, had died earlier of the flu that was pandemic in the world. Her infant son also died when she did. In the eyewitness account of my cousin, Ephraim Yohannan, he said Miriam, Joseph, the minister and Joseph, the father of Mary, Joan and William were killed by the Turks. Mary was about 13 at this time (1918) and her siblings were younger.

The story isn't too clear from this point because my mother, Mary, only very, very rarely spoke about it. She did say though that she feigned death in a ditch while others were stabbed to death around her. This particular event and the years spent as refugees had a profound influence on the whole rest of her life.

It is necessary to read the eyewitness accounts of Margaret Yohannan and Ephraim Yohannan for their collective lives as refugees .

Elisha, at this time, was already in the United States. He was about 7 years older than Mary and met Absolom and Hannah Yohannan in Elizabeth. (See Eyewitness: EPHRAIM YOHANNAN) The Assyrians who were in the United States at this time had their own network in Elizabeth and Hannah arranged for Elisha to meet Mary in France to see if they wanted to marry each other. Of course, they did because I wouldn't be writing this.

We lived in a tenement in Elizabeth, by the railroad tracks. I remember myself as a little girl who spent a lot of time reading books, attending Greystone Presbyterian Church, going to school 13 in Elizabeth, Grover Cleveland Junior High School and Battin High School, all in Elizabeth. I graduated high school in 1946 at age 17 and went to work in New York City in a Protestant Publishing House on Fifth Avenue.

My father worked as a chef in hospitals and Mary eventually worked in the garment industry, a euphemism for a sweat shop.

Growing up, recreation was Saturday matinees at the Gaiety where the head usher would empty the theater after each show or we would all sit there forever. Sometimes in order to get the admission fare we scrounged the neighborhood for empty bottles and cashed them in for deposit money. In the summer, there was the Dowd Pool located on the waterfront which was free in the morning and 10 or 20 cents after 1:00. A very uneventful life. And on Sundays in the summer we would pile in the Yohannan delivery truck and go off to South Beach in Staten Island for the day.

In 1945 I met my future husband, your A. Father B. Your Grandfather, C. Your Great-Grandfather.....he went off to serve in the U.S. Navy from 1946 to 1947. We were married February 5, 1949.

MEMORIES-DANETTE BENITA CHRISTENSEN JUNE 30, 1999

The following may not be 100% accurate but it's how I remember it. I'm sure each of us will view our childhood differently and I'm anxious to read what Sylvia and Irene Write.

On July 6, 1936, Danette Benita Aurahan came into the world. I don't remember anything about the day but I'm sure it must have been a hot one. We had a cousin, Susie, who was a teacher and she is the one who suggested my name but everyone called me "Dede." I think at one time my hair was very long and my mother cut it. I think people tried to discourage her from cutting it but it was cut anyway.

I remember sleeping in a crib in my parents' room and then I graduated to a cot in the living room. I loved to play with paper dolls and would draw clothes for them, cut them out and dress up my dolls. I know I didn't like Santa Claus because he always brought me clothes. When I got older I would get books and my favorites were Grimm's Fairy Tales. I think my sisters bought them for me. If I'm not mistaken, there was a landing outside our door (we lived on the third floor of 330 Bond Street, Elizabeth, New Jersey), with

Assyrian Diaspora

steps leading up to the roof. I seem to remember that the Christmas tree was on the landing. Our family had a friend, "The Tea Man" and he lived up to his name—he drank lots of tea in a glass. One night my mother and father were out and either one of my sisters or perhaps both should have been home to watch me. Well, they didn't. There was a knock at the door and since I was alone, I was scared to death. I said "who is it?" and there wasn't any answer. There was another knock, I repeated the question and still no answer. I grabbed a large butcher knife, opened the door and to my shock, it was "The Tea Man" He was as surprised to see me with the knife in my hand as I was to see him. I never heard what happened to my sisters, or who was supposed to stay with me that night, and I've often wondered if they ever left me alone after that. I can't imagine that it was much fun for them to have a baby sister to look after.

When I was about four or five years of age, my father had to get up about 4:00 or 5:00 am to go to work. He would make oatmeal and coffee for breakfast and if I'm not mistaken, he paid me 5 cents for each cup of coffee I drank with him. I think he wanted the company and I probably wanted the money. Whatever the reason, to this day I still drink coffee and enjoy it. If I'm not mistaken Pop worked for Phelps Dodge as a chef. I think the company was on strike and Pop carried a nightstick. I vaguely remember two men bringing him home from the plant. I remember a car with a rumble seat but I'm not sure if it was my father's car. My father was involved in an automobile accident. A bus hit his car and I remember being scared that he would die. The warmest room in the house was the bathroom. The hot water heater was in there and that was the place you wanted to be in the wintertime. I think one of us got burned on the "ishta" from the heater. The laundry would be hung in the bathroom. Either Sylvia or Irene's bras were hanging on the line and they had both left for the day. I used to take one of their bras, put it on, stuff it with toilet paper, wear it to school, and before they got home I would hang it back on the line. Since I didn't have anything to fill the bra with I must have used lots of paper. (Since we lived on Bond Street at this time I was younger than 12 years old).

Even to this day I can still picture Elea and my father sitting on the porch outside our apartment. I had a girlfriend who lived two or three houses from our house, she and I would stand on the sidewalk, look upstairs, see my father and Elea on the porch and ask them for money to buy ice cream at the candy store. They would always throw money down to me. Whenever Elea and my uncle Bill would come to visit, they would sleep on the couch and I would sleep on the cot in the living room. Elea would yell at my uncle Bill because he would pull the covers off him and Elea wouldn't have any. Uncle Bill did other things that made Elea yell at him but I won't mention them. I will say this though: Elea would get really mad at Uncle Bill. I used to look forward to their visits and was always sad when they left. Mom loved her brother and was always so happy when he visited us. When Elea was there he would ask me where I wanted to eat. My answer was always the same: White Castle. He always knew what I wanted to order but he asked me anyway. My answer was always hamburgers and Pepsi Cola. If Elea didn't like someone, he or she was a "communist."

I attended the Eggolf (I think the spelling is correct) Day Nursery and Sylvia would take me there before she went to Battin High School. We would take the bus and she would always hold my hand to keep them warm. I can't say I liked the nursery because they gave us medicine. We would have lunch, give us pills, probably vitamins, and I would put them in the pocket of my dress and on the way to school throw them down the sewer drain. I think they were chocolate covered because for some reason I remember brown spots on the pocket of my dress.

When we lived on Bond Street the landlord lived on the first floor. You had to pass his door in order to go up the stairs and I was afraid of him. I would walk pass his door very quietly and as soon as I could, I would run up the stairs to our apartment on the third floor. When I was about four or five I was very sick. I was throwing up and my parents called the doctor. When he didn't come, they called him again. Finally, he came. It seems the landlord told the doctor we didn't live there. I was taken to the hospital, had my appendix removed and someone brought me a little plastic telephone filled with candies. Another time I was riding on the back of a sled, and we were riding down the hill next to the railroad tracks. I wasn't supposed to be doing that, but I did anyway. We rode into the fender of a car that was parked at the curb. I tore my leggings and had a very bad cut on my right knee. I remember being taken to the emergency room and I was so scared that I wet myself on the examining table. I ripped the knee of my snowsuit and I wouldn't be surprised if that was the last time I rode on a sled down the tracks.

Mom and Pop played poker Saturday nights with other Assyrians. We would go to a different home each Saturday night and it was my job to serve tea, "jajik" and crackers and probably clean the ashtrays. But I always went home a winner because I would get a quarter from each pot. I'm thankful I grew up surrounded by so many Assyrian families. Everyone was like family. Once we went to someone's house and I was asked if I wanted to eat. I remember something about string beans. My mother said I wasn't hungry because we had already eaten and that I didn't like string beans but I said I was hungry and loved string beans. I probably didn't like them because Mom was always saying, "Eat, Dede, eat" I hated to eat, especially spinach. I would still be at the kitchen table, long after everyone else was finished. My father was wonderful though. When my mother would leave the kitchen he would motion for me to push my plate toward him, he would eat all the food still on my plate and then push the plate back to me. By the time my mother returned to the kitchen, my plate was clean. I don't know if we fooled her but it sure worked for me.

Assyrian Diaspora

My father wasn't any different than other fathers. When he was a child in Persia he walked to school 10 miles in the snow, barefoot, uphill, both ways. But he gave the best baths. The word I remember is "bishi bishi" I only hope it means "bath". He would be so gentle but my mother would scrub and scrub until you thought your skin would come off. I must have gone to camp and I was very tan. Mom scrubbed and scrubbed, thinking it was dirt. I much preferred Pop's baths.

When I was 12 years of age we moved to Shearer Avenue in Union. In order to get into the front door of our new house we had to walk on planks. I can still smell the newness of the wood and our first dinner was eggs and corn niblets. My mother worked for Jack, making lingerie. I would have to help her count her "bundles" which determined how much money she earned. We would sit at the dining room table and tally them. She made slips for us too and they never wore out. I used to wish they did and wanted to be able to buy one from the store. She made nightgowns also, and they never wore out either. I wish I had them now. When the kids were little she loved to tease them. She would hold a dollar bill in her hand and ask them for a kiss. Even though the grandchildren didn't like to kiss, the money was a wonderful incentive.

It was also my job to sit at the kitchen table and peel the apples for apple pie. Mom's cooking instructions consisted of "Dede, get me the sugar. Now put the sugar away and get me the flour, and so on" I still think about her directions for making rice pudding. After all the ingredients are added, just "stir until it's not too thick and not too thin" Mom never used a recipe, at least not that I remember. We would go to the market each Saturday but it was wonderful when we got home because we could eat fresh bagels and butter. Mom was a wonderful cook and I can still hear her baking chadah. It was golden brown, filled with butter and mouth watering. I'm glad we didn't know about cholesterol in those days. If we did, I never heard of it.

One year mom went to California for a vacation. Elea and Pop took care of us and did the cooking. They went to the store and bought so much food that someone would think they were cooking for an army instead of three girls who didn't eat much. I think we even had a case of green grapes under the bed because there wasn't room for it any other place.

Sylvia and I would dance in the living room. She would play records and use me as her partner to improve her dancing skills. To this day when I hear music from that era, I can still picture us dancing. Our favorite Christmas carol was Joy to the World. I sang alto and she sang soprano. Now I would never deliberately lie about anyone but I have to say this. I think Irene and Rip married soon after we moved to Union but I do remember one thing in particular about her. When anyone talked to Irene in the morning, she snarled. She gave new meaning to the question, "What's the matter? Haven't you had your coffee yet?"

Sylvia and I cleaned the house every Saturday. One week she would clean upstairs, I would clean downstairs, and we would change floors the next week. I knew that when Sylvia cleaned our bedroom she did such a good job that when it was my turn, I didn't have to move the dresser. The only problem was that when you walked up the stairs you could see under the dresser and of course see the dust. I got caught every time and had to move the furniture and dust under it. (I don't remember if it was Mom or Sylvia who always caught me.) After our cleaning was finished we would go to Florence Neesan's beauty shop. Sylvia would have her hair done and if there was enough hot water left and Florence had time, she would do my hair also.

I was Renee's baby-sitter. She cried a lot and had to be rocked in the carriage or walked constantly. An evening with Renee gave a person lots of exercise. When she cried, you could hear her a mile away. Rip would take me to White Castle for hamburgers on the way home.

We had wonderful times at Mom's house when we were all together for Sunday dinner or one day during the week. Mom would never sit down, just go back and forth from the kitchen to the dining room, with a towel hung around her arm, bringing us food. We would all take home enough food to have at least one or two more meals. I'm thankful for the example of hospitality, not only in our house, but in the homes of other Assyrian families as well.

Assyrian Diaspora

MAMA MARY YOHANNAN AURAHAM BY IRENE LANDER

I often rode beside my mother in the car slowly driving to the other end of town to visit Mama. My mother often wore a dress with a billowy skirt and I was aware of her legs on the gas pedal. She often drove me to my grandmother's house, but I barely remember why the two of us would visit her alone.

I do know that on Sundays my father drove our whole family, two adults and three to four children, to Mama's house for dinner. When I was six years old, my grandfather Elisha was still alive, and I remember him sitting in the kitchen chair. I noticed small tablets of saccharin on the table that I think were his. I remember a small alarm clock loudly clicking in his bedroom and his feet pressed against my stomach lifting me over his body, a game I guess we enjoyed.

By the time I was ten years old, Elisha was gone, and Sunday dinners continued for many years at Mama's house: a box-like center-hall colonial with a large living room, adequate dining room and kitchen. Mama served a repetitive but delicious menu consisting of grilled or barbecued lamb, stuffed cabbage leaves (dolma), delicious rice, meatballs with a sauce made gritty by barley, and lamb stew (kurish). I never grew tired of the food that was seasoned well with spices I now know to be dill, parsley and maybe cardamom. Sometimes she served chada, a rich buttery pastry that melted in my mouth and was served with tea.

I rarely spoke to my grandmother directly and felt she was always a stranger to me in spite of the familiarity of her presence and the family dinners. She worked hard, lifting large pots of rice with her hefty arms and stirring things on the stove. Her house was clean and beautified by Persian rugs. I think she liked to watch television, especially CBS and a show called Tattletales. Her countenance lifted when she sat among friends and relatives who spoke to her in Assyrian. Then I would see her laugh and talk about things I knew not what. I suppose my grandmother mentally lived in the old world even though she had already been in the USA for many years before I was born.

Because of my grandmother, I learned about an Assyrian heritage far removed from my day-to-day existence and the public schools and by-ways of suburban America. Through her many friends and connections, I attended Assyrian picnics, dances and conventions. Her friends and relatives were warm and provided a beautiful backdrop to my young American life. However, when she died along with many of her friends, my participation in all groups Assyrian ceased to exist. My mother is currently gathering the elements of this heritage in order to preserve it for her children and grandchildren. I am thankful to mom for preserving our Assyrian past, especially the traumatic uprooting of Mama and her generation from their comfortable lives in Iran to an American society far different from the stable agricultural and village communities of their upbringing.

GROWING UP IN AN ASSYRIAN FAMILY BY GRACE YOHANNAN COTTO

I did not grow up in a "traditional" home; I began my life in a household completely full of adults. Mom, Dad, and I lived with my grandparents, whom I called Nanny and Grandpa, at 728 Jersey Avenue, in Elizabeth, New Jersey. Dad says he and Mom named me for "the grace of God." That's a pretty important moniker to have to live up to.

Uncle Jim, my father's younger brother, was part of the household. Uncle Ephraim, Dad's older brother, and his wife, Aunt Rose, lived nearby so that I saw them quite frequently.

Grandpa passed away when I was only seven years old, so I don't have many memories of him, but the ones I have are pleasant, and they are in my poem "Grandpa." He had reddish hair and was very tall and very strong. I have two distinct memories of him: the first is hiding under the coffee table in Nanny's living room, while everyone was having glasses of chai. Grandpa would reach into the sugar bowl, knowing I was under the table, and would pass me a cube of sugar for my sweet tooth! The other memory is of Grandpa taking me for a ride in my green wagon about two blocks to the Grand Union food market and getting me a miniature loaf of Wonder Bread and a balloon that were being given away as a promotion. Even today, freshly baked bread reminds me of that little excursion we shared.

Nanny, though, is a completely different story. Much of whom I am today was shaped by her influence as the matriarch of our family. Even when Mom and Dad bought their own home several miles away in Roselle, N.J. Dad stopped by Nanny's house every night on his way home, especially after Grandpa died. While freshly baked bread reminds me of Grandpa, it is mothballs that remind me of Nanny. She had them scattered everywhere under her Persian rugs; their smell permeated the entire house. And oh, she loved her rugs.

Assyrian Diaspora

I remember her taking me to a department store in Newark, N.J. and riding us all the way to the top floor, which meant riding a wooden escalator two floors, all the way to the Persian rugs. I had a sense of family history when we walked among rows and rows of brightly colored, individually handwoven rugs from far away

I guess as the oldest of only three grandchildren, I became the recipient of the family history. Whenever I visited Nanny, even as part of a family visit, she would always take me aside and tell me a bit about the family's history, as if she didn't want anyone to ever forget what she and her family had been through because of their faith.

When I think of my Assyrian heritage, it isn't the same as people of Italian or Irish or German heritage think of their ethnicity. Being an Assyrian is completely tied into Christianity. After all, we were among the first to convert when the disciples spread the Good Word. And my great-grandparents were among those massacred in Urmia, Persia, because of their Christian faith.

The Assyrian Diaspora story is one I learned by heart before I went to kindergarten. It made me wonder what everyone talked about when they mentioned the holocaust that occurred in Europe; we Assyrians were and still are suffering a holocaust because of our religion.

Don't get me wrong. I loved Nanny's cabbage leaf dolma and her kipte (please check spelling). And every once in a long while, Aunt Nano in Chicago would send some chaddah — oh, that was better than candy! And then there was Nanny's rice! Mom is the only person I know who can come close to Nanny's rice. And her rice pudding was to die for! I loved Assyrian cooking — just not the grape leaf dolma, which Nanny made especially for Mom. We would be taking a family ride to New Britain, CT, or even to Bloomfield, NJ to see Aunt Leah, and Nanny would have plastic bread wrappers in her handbag. Whenever she would see some wild grape leaves growing beside the road, she would have Dad stop the car so she could get out and pick the best of the leaves. Oh, and there was one other thing: we didn't stop at restaurants when we traveled. Nanny made some of her famous hamburger sandwiches, laden with dill and —tole—tarragon. What I wouldn't give for one of those cold hamburger sandwiches today.

Nanny was extremely smart and educated. She often talked to me about the responsibilities of being a teacher, a charge I carry today in a renewed educational career teaching students with disabilities at Apopka High School here in Apopka, Florida. I had been a teacher of English on the senior high and junior college level for many years and had earned an M.A. in English. Now, as of December 1999, I will have an M.A. in Varying Exceptionalities. I know Nanny would be very proud of my educational accomplishments.

Nanny's favorite game shows were those that challenged her mind. She enjoyed Wheel of Fortune, but she positively loved Jeopardy. I would sit in amazement as she would give the correct answers before the contestants did. She valued education and knew it was an important tool for success. I always was proud of my grandmother and the terrible obstacles she overcame to get to the United States. When the killing against Christians began, she was on her way home from church, with my infant Uncle Ephraim in her arms. Suddenly, a man with a gun looked menacingly toward her and forced her into a room full of Assyrians. Just as suddenly, gunfire broke out. The first hail of bullets killed a tall man in back of Nanny. He fell on Nanny who had the sense to put her hand over Uncle's mouth so he wouldn't cry out, and they lay as if dead until all the killers left. With a —strength from God,—Nanny was able to lift a man three to four times her weight as if he were a feather, and she and Uncle Ephraim escaped out the door. She was walking toward her home when some Muslim neighbors saw her and hid her because of the vendetta against the Christians. All the Christians — her fellow Presbyterians and the Catholic congregation — all were dead or being hunted down. As I understand the story, Grandpa was in the hills or somewhere out of town. The neighbors hid Nanny until he returned, and they began a seven year exile throughout the Middle East. Before they left the Urmia area, Nanny bribed some guards with jewelry to rescue some young cousins whom she shepherded to safety singlehandedly. Nanny, Grandpa and Uncle Ephraim wound up in Bombay, India., where the Red Cross helped her find a sewing machine so she could make some clothes. They helped the refugee family get to Marseilles, France, where a ship was waiting to take them to America. At the last minute, Nanny's youngest and dearest brother Teddy was discovered to have tuberculosis and wasn't allowed to accompany them.

Through the dead of winter, the refugees huddled in the hold of the Canada, bound for Providence, Rhode Island. Nanny was in the last trimester of her pregnancy with my father. When they arrived in R.I. the quota for Assyrians had been filled for the year 1920, but when the immigration officials discovered Nanny spoke and read Aramaic, Farsi, Assyrian, and English and was a teacher, they let the family into the country. They made their way to Elizabeth, NJ, in the —port—section where they lived in a fourth-story cold-water flat, where my father was born in January 1922.

My grandmother suffered many hardships. She lost her entire family, crossed a stormy Atlantic Ocean in her last trimester of

Assyrian Diaspora

pregnancy, and gave birth to a son who developed severe pneumonia and wasn't expected to live. The doctors didn't count on my grandmother's tremendous will. Years later, the doctors told her my father would have died if anyone else had been his mother.

Several years later, tragedy struck the struggling family once again. My father's younger brother, James, was born healthy, but the hospital nurses forgot to put special drops in his eyes, and he was declared legally blind. Despite his handicap, my grandmother tried to make his life as normal as possible.

After Grandpa died, Nanny moved to Roselle, about two blocks from us. It was fun to ride my bike over to her house and watch her scoop out cucumbers to stuff with dolma ingredients. I was over at her house a lot. She wasn't the kind of person to hug and kiss and show her affection, but I could tell she liked me. She always took time to tell me about our family. She always tried to be forgiving of others, but she also let me know others weren't as forgiving of her. I didn't understand her words then because I was so young, but years later, my mother told me a sad story. All of us belonged to First Presbyterian Church in Roselle. We walked to church on Sunday when Dad was working, and we walked to choir practice on Thursday nights and fellowship on Sunday nights. I didn't know how highbrow the church was; I always felt happy there, especially in the white chapel which wasn't as imposing as the darker, larger sanctuary. Several times a year, the ladies of the church put on a tea after the second service. It apparently was a great honor to be asked to pour the tea. But before the tea was poured, the ladies had a meeting to review what they had been doing so far. One day, the president of the ladies' association wanted to honor women for their commitment to Christ and asked for the ladies who had been members of the "church" for more than 25 years to stand be recognized. When Nanny started to stand up, the president said, "No, I meant only those who have been in this church." If I had been there, I would have been embarrassed for Nanny and then angry at those snooty women. I still remembered that rebuke of someone who was more a Christian and who knew what it was to suffer as a Christian when I married for the first time. I married in my college's church, not in such a church where all Christians weren't considered equal. I grew up a lot after that experience.

Nanny was exacting, a tough but compassionate teacher. Sometimes, when I look at photos of me in her arms or photos of her with her clotheslines (they always seemed to get in outdoor pictures), I don't think she's very far away. She was tough because her life's circumstances demanded that she be tough. But she could love equally as well, and I was glad she loved me even when I was two or three years old and disobeyed and put the needle of her treadle sewing machine into my finger! After I began to drive, I enjoyed taking her on errands, except to the grocery store. I have to admit I was somewhat embarrassed when she would be oblivious to everyone else standing in line and proceed to rearrange all the groceries in the bags to her satisfaction. "If a job is worth doing, it is worth doing right" was her response.

I know the soul is energy, and that energy cannot die: I like to think Nanny's soul is very close to me, hovering over me, reminding me not to be too hard on my students with disabilities but not to be too easy on them, either. She was a scholar and a teacher, she was my friend and my grandmother, and I am thankful to God that he shared her with me for so many years and that my own children got to know her. She was unique. She was Hannah A. Yohannan.

Assyrian Diaspora

SECTION VI - GENEALOGY

SYLVIA AURAHAN WEIDEMANN

Selby (Sylvia) Aurahan born April 14, 1927

Parents: Mary Yohannan and Elisha Aurahan, Born Persia (Iran)

Sylvia married Theodore Charles Weidemann, January 16, 1965

Children: Adopted Daughter Tina Marie: granddaughter of Ted Weidemann
Tina married Edward Castro, Jr.

Amber Renee Weidemann-Castro born to Tina Weidemann April 10, 1999
5/99

IRENE AURAHAN KLISZUS

Irene Aurahan born March 22, 1929, Elizabeth, New Jersey

Parents: Elisha and Mary Yohannan Aurahan

Parents born in Persia - (Iran) Aurahan married Edward Anthony Kliszus on February 5, 1949

Four children as follows

Irene Mary (Renee), born February 16, 1951

Edward Anthony Jr., born August 8, 1953

Laura Ann, born September 7, 1954

Amy Louise, born August 16, 1961

Renee married Dr. Russel Jackson Lander February 7, 1975

Four children:

Peter Hawkins, born June 17, 1977 in Philadelphia, Pa.

Allison Claire, born September 7, 1979 in Overlook Hospital, Summit, N.J.

Susan Irene born August 6, 1981 in Overlook Hospital, Summit, N.J.

Bonnie Elizabeth born November 30, 1983 in Overlook Hospital, Summit, N.J.

Edward Jr. married Joyce Ljungquist August 21, 1976

Two Children:

Erika Ann, born July 22, 1981, in Overlook Hospital, Summit, N.J.

Jeffrey Edward born October 14, 1982, in Overlook Hospital, Summit, N.J.

Laura Ann married Thomas Keyser on April 5, 1980

Two Children:

Melissa Katherine, born on April 28, 1982 in Pennsylvania somewhere

Thomas Edward, born on October 5, 1984 in Pa.

Amy Louise married Martin Rowshandel on June 11, 1993 in Cambridge, Mass.

Two children:

Alexandra M., born February 13, 1994 in Boston, Massachusetts

Michael Simon Rowshandel, born October 3, 1995, in Boston, Massachusetts

Assyrian Diaspora

DANETTE BENITA AURAHAN BARTH CHRISTENSEN

Parents: Mary Yohannan and Elisha Aurahan, born in Persia (Iran)

Danette (DeeDee) married James Barth Sr. in 1954--divorced
DeeDee married Browning N. Christensen (Chris) October 1979 - no children

Children: Two sons: James Thomas Barth Jr. born September 4, 1954, Michael Steven Barth, born September 27, 1955

James Barth married Glenda--divorced

James Barth Jr. married Gail on August 21, 1987/no children

JOSEPH DAVID JACOB

Joseph D. Jacob, born 13,1923, in Rezaieh, Iran

Parents: David and Joan Yohannan Jacob
Parents born in Rezaieh, Iran

Joseph married Grace Careb on June 21, 1952

Two Children:

David Ephraim, born April 21, 1956 in Gary Indiana

Mark William, born December 28, 1957 in Gary, Indiana

Mark married Elizabeth Gauja, July 5, 1991

Mark and Liz have a daughter, Abby, born on July 14, 1993
Mark and Liz are expecting a son: February 1999

11/15/98

DR. JACK D. JACOB

Born March 21, 1929, Rezaieh, Iran

Parents: Juan Yohannan and David Jacob, born in Persia (Iran)

Jack married Nora Badalianan in July 1966 in Tehran, Iran

Twin children as follows:

Joy and Roge Jacob, born August 30, 1967

Joy married Bill Sheldon in Denver, Colorado on September 6, 1998

Roge married Sharon in San Jose, California: one child

Olivia Nora Jacob, born January 3, 1999 - 7 lbs.6 oz--20"length

Y. PETE JACOB

Pete Jacob, born January 16, 1934, Rezaieh, Iran

Assyrian Diaspora

Parents: David and Joanne Yohannan Jacob
Parents born in Persia - Iran

Pete Jacob married Dorothy Combs on August 8, 1959 in Gary, Indiana

Two children as follows:

William (Bill) Peter, born August 7, 1963
Joseph (Joe) John, born May 8, 1966

Bill married Carolyn Williams, March 14, 1987 in Uniontown, Pa.
Two children:

David Peter, born September 21, 1994 in Columbus, Ohio
Laura Claire, born July 23, 1998 in Columbus, Ohio

Joe married Marisol Lugo, October 17, 1998 in Tampa, Florida
11/19/98

* * * * *

JULIE JACOB GOLPASHIN

Julie Jacob born July 3, 1941 in Rezaieh, Iran
Parents: David and Joanne Yohannan Jacob
Parents born in Iran (Persia)

Julie Jacob married Dr. Sargon S. Golpashin on July 21, 1965 in Germany

Two sons:

Albert, born October 12, 1967 in Herne, Germany

Edmund , born August 11, 1971 in Herne, Germany

Edmund married Nancy Benjamin November 1, 1997

Albert, single and eligible

12/10/98

Assyrian Diaspora

SECTION VII: CORRESPONDENCE FROM FEBRUARY 3, 1997-APRIL 26, 1999

Letter from Grace Yohannan Cotto, granddaughter of Hannah Yohannan, aunt of Mary Yohannan Aurahan, Joan Yohannan Jacob and William Joseph Yohannan, in response to packet of Assyrian research sent her at bequest of her Uncle Ephraim Yohannan, son of Hannah. Hannah had three sons: Ephraim, John and James.

February 3, 1997

Dear Cousin Irene:

What a pleasant surprise to open your warm and friendly and informative letter! I am glad to hear you are well, as I hope your entire family is.

I guess Uncle Eppo gave you a copy of the material I pulled off the Internet, but in case he didn't I am enclosing a copy for you.

Five months ago, there was hardly anything on the Net about Assyrians; now, there are 78 websites! It was so exciting to pull up information about my family and my heritage; it is very sacred to me, as is the memory of my grandmother and grandfather.

Thank you sending me some information about our family.

Of your mother, I remember her setting out the charcoal-filled samovar on a Persian rug in your back yard and surrounding it with a big plate of chadda - my favorite.

Of your father, I remember Mom telling me he was a cook or a chef. I remember he taught me how to stack a deck of cards so I would win at solitaire every time! It's funny what children remember, isn't it?

Of Cousin Sylvia, I remember her playing Scrabble with Mom in our back yard; she was a frequent visitor, and I remember Mom enjoying spending time with her. It must have been nice to talk to an adult instead of three demanding children.

I don't know if Uncle Eppo told you, but I visited him and Aunt Rose and Uncle Jim in Turlock four or five years ago, when my work took me out to Sacramento. He and Aunt Rose drove to the airport and drove me back to their house where I spent a three day weekend. Uncle Jim and I walked several miles along the canals that run down the middle of the streets to irrigate their vineyard.

I moved down here to Florida seven years ago this past November. I could not take the cold and winter of NJ any longer, especially rising in the dark, driving in the snow and ice, and driving home in the dark. I bought a three bedroom, two bath house here in a new subdivision in Apopka, about 30 miles northwest of Orlando International Airport.

I met my husband Henry two years ago on a hot, muggy August night when he came to fix my broken air conditioner. He wound up staying and marrying me last January 20th. He is very creative like my dad, and he gets along very well with Mom and Dad as well as my children Douglas who is 26 and just received his M.A. in Russian Studies from Georgetown University and my daughter Jennifer (who likes to be called Jenna because she thinks Jennifer is "ordinary") who received her B.A. in May from Skidmore College and is engaged to a terrific fellow named Kevin who is in the U.S. Army at Fort Drum (where Uncle Eppo used to go on summer maneuvers, believe it or not); they are going to be married in November.

My sister Rosemarie lives about 200 miles west of here, about an hour south of Tallahassee. We write occasionally, but we are not as close as I would like us to be. Her husband Don is a bit of a hermit.

My brother Johnny lives in Astoria, NY. He is battling cancer. He and I are very close and we write each other and phone a lot. He is very close to Jennifer; it's as if when she was born, he and she shared a very special connection - sort of like a private party line.

I am hoping eventually Mom and Day will move down here. Henry and I are looking for property to build another house on, one where Mom and Dad could put a modular home when they move down. Henry enjoys my dad's eccentricity and my mother's sense of humor and her enjoyment of an occasional beer with him. We have a small boat they enjoy cruising on with us on the St. John's River.

Cousin Irene, it was really wonderful to hear from you. I hope we will keep in touch. I think it is very important our children and the

Assyrian Diaspora

rest of the world learn of the massacre our people suffered in the name of Christ so that it, like the Jews' Holocaust, never happens again. We may be a minority, but it's quality that counts, not quantity.

Do you have e-mail? My address is above. Zenda sends its weekly online magazine to me so I can read about other Assyrians. I am hoping to find some here in Central Florida. I would like to learn to make chadda, and I would love to learn how Nanny made that wonderful cabbage leaf dolma and rice of hers!

Take care. I am glad you took the time to write.

Love, Grace

February 12, 1997

Dear Grace:

Thanks so much for your letter of February 3rd. It was great hearing from you. And especially thanks for all the data you sent. No, I don't have E-mail or am on the WWW. When I worked, I was on the computer every day and only use the computer for word processing. Just can't get interested in pounding the keys any more. My son, Ed, lives 15 minutes away and when I need to research, he does it. In fact, when I started last year, he got on the web and you are so right, we only found one site, which is where we found Nabu books in Chicago and started me off with Lt. Col. Stafford's book.

Here's an interesting thing about your brother Johnny--quite a few years ago, the comedian Jackie Mason had a late-night talk show, which for some reason I was watching. A young man from the audience spoke who introduced himself as John Yohannan!! I can't imagine he wasn't OUR John Yohannan. I remember he was quite articulate. I am very sorry to hear he is ill. I remember seeing him as an infant. And what I remember about Rosemarie is that she and my daughter Renee were baptized the same Sunday at Greystone Pres. Church. Renee was born in 1951.

This project of mine began when our grandchildren began asking my husband me questions about our backgrounds and we both found out then that we knew next to nothing. Thus began what we presumed would be a short narrative took on a life of its own. My husband, Edward Klizus, is from a Lithuanian background and we're also working on that. We are making tentative plans to go to Chicago in April to a museum of Lithuania culture and genealogy and research their files. We also got in touch with some of his relatives and have family trees. On the internet, we found some historical information too.

Whenever we're finished, we are thinking about having our manuscripts printed so that our progeny in the next century will have a sturdy copy of their history. What we want to do is in addition to the begets, is present a picture of our lives as children, young adults, and "mature" citizens. We want to present a human face.

Grace, enclosed is a picture my son found in my mother's album which somehow he had in his possession. It is a picture of your grandmother's brother Teddi, of whom she always spoke. When I saw it, I instantly knew he was Teddi Yohannan because he is the image of your father as a young man.

Your grandmother, the indomitable Hannah, would be thrilled to know your children are academics. I mean, what else would we expect from the Yohannans!!!

Finally, excuse me for rambling on, enclosed are copies of Assyrian recipes given me by my Swedish daughter-in-law. Bon Appetit.

Love,

February 18, 1997

Dr. Michael Zirinsky
Department of History
Boise State University
1910 University Drive
Boise, Idaho 83725-1925

Dear Dr. Zirinsky:

Assyrian Diaspora

Thank you very, very much for your letter of February 11, 1997 and your paper "American Presbyterian Missionaries at Urmia During the Great War".

I've read the paper twice and get a very eerie feeling reading about Urmia, (Ur-me) Tabriz (Taw-ris), Kurds, (punctuated with great contempt) and Hakkari (Shop-in-eye) since all my life those words were regularly spoken by everyone in my "then world".

This project started when my husband and I bought a video camera last year and filmed landmarks of our youth in Elizabeth, N.J., then followed by a short, short narrative, which was so short, we realized how little we both knew, which led us to our son's house and the Internet, where we found one site each for Assyria and Lithuania, which led to Nabu Books and the Lithuanian Gen. Society in Chicago, Presbyterian Archives, etc. etc.

Over the past year, I've been contacting my various relatives: Aunt Marge, Cousin Ephraim who are survivors, which led me to a Network of interested kinfolk. Therefore, I've enclosed some of my discoveries. Our old printer decided it would only "print screen" so the computer stuff is what I could get printed. Am transferring the data to our up-graded computer but thought you might be interested in reading what is available. The newest information is on the new computer.

Would it be possible for you to mail copies of your paper to the names highlighted on the Network Page? I don't have the facilities to make copies. Those names are the cousins with whom I have had the most personal contact. If not, I'll manage something.

Husband Ed and I are going to Philadelphia tomorrow to research my grandfather's Presbyterian Church. Our daughter, Laura Keyser, will meet us there--we invited her because she is so good at that kind of paper work. In April, Ed and I are planning a trip to Chicago to the Balzekas Museum and Genealogy Society.

I do have one question for you: how did you get interested in the massacre of a small minority in a country hardly anyone ever heard of until the hostage crisis at the American embassy in Tehran, and in Boise - no less!!

Belvidere is about an hour and a half from Lombard St in Philadelphia and it would be a pleasure and honor the both of us to meet you.

Sincerely yours,
Irene Klisuz
43 Sarepta Road Belvidere, N. J. 07823
908-475-2134
Enclosures - A lot

March 3, 1997

Dear Sylvia:

Hi, I've spent the last six months working on the Assyrian Research Project and yesterday we printed everything. I thought you would like the three sections enclosed. The Nestorians has a surprise!

The other stuff is some basic history. Rip and I have been to the Princeton Theological Seminary and the Presbyterian Historical Society in Philadelphia with Laura. She's a good researcher. I even have a "Network" now, including Grace Yohannan who is living in Florida with her second husband.

This research has given me a more sympathetic view of our mother and father. You always said mom was unhappy and how right you were.

We're also working on the Lithuanian side and according to the Balzekas Genealogical Society in Chicago, Klisuz is the Polish spelling, not Lithuanian. In Lithuanian, it Klisius with a mark over the g the h sound. We're thinking about taking a trip to Chicago to research there. They're having some kind of event in April and since Rip is now a member, we'll probably be extended an invitation.

In December, just before Christmas, Rip had a tear in his left eye and had to have laser surgery. That was a big surprise. The Doctor saw him on the Sunday before Christmas in the office. We did appreciate how they responded to the emergency. He went back every day except Christmas and the day after, he had to go to the Hospital for the surgery.

Assyrian Diaspora

How did your colonoscopy, or whatever it was, turn out?

It's now 10:30 p.m. and I think my electric blankets warmed the sheets.
Happy reading.

Love,

March 7, 1997

Dear Cousins: (cousins are Elisha Aurahan's nephew and living in Germany)

Thank you very much for your Christmas card. I wasn't able to send you one because I couldn't find your correct address but it was very nice to hear from you. It seems so long ago we met but I always remember what a good time we all had.

In the past year, I've been writing about my father and mother's life in Persia. There is more information on Mary but I hardly know anything about Elisha, my father. I do think that he and his brother Esau walked across Russia to come to the United States. His brother had no children and they were both here by World War I because we have a picture of them in uniform. I know, of course, that your mother was their sister but beyond that, I know practically nothing.

Would it be possible for you to send me information how we are related. I know our grandmother's name was Selby...what was our grandfather's name? Were there other sisters or brothers? Anything you could tell me about our cousins in Persia would be much appreciated.

I hope you like living in Germany. Is your whole family together in Germany?

I look forward to hearing from you and filling in the gaps of the Auraham's.

Love,

March 15, 1997

Dear Dottie and Pete,

For the past year I've been researching our mutual Yohannan heritage and have compiled a pamphlet of sorts. This was begun because my grandchildren were doing papers in school on their backgrounds and asked me questions for which I had no answers.. So, have been reading and researching here and there and enclosed is the listing of the assortment of the topics.

If you are interested in any of this material, let me know and I'll be glad to send you copies. It would be very helpful, Pete, if you would send me a paragraph or two about your mother's life when she, Mary and Bill were eventually separated.

My mother spoke very, very little about those years and after reading The Tragedy of the Assyrians and Lt. Col. Stafford's book and others, I can understand why.

We have had a cold and wet winter here on the east coast and am looking forward to the re-appearance of the sun aka unidentified flying object!

Love,

Irene
43 Sarepta Rd
Belvidere NJ 07823
908-475-2134

Assyrian Diaspora

June 11, 1997

The following is a letter written by my cousins Gourgiv and Issavi, AM Hennsee Sa, 60386 Frankfurt, Germany, in reply to my letter of March 7, 1997 requesting information on my father Elisha Auraham. Gourgiv is his nephew, son of his sister Magdlita Abndsy:

May 25, 1997: Dear Irene: We were so happy to receive your letter and to now that you are going well. You asked about the life in Germany: Actually, to tell you the truth the only sad thing is the bad weather condition; it has too much rain and less and less sunshine!

Here is the story about how your father came to the states from Russia: First of all, our great-grandfather was Odishou and our grandfather's name was Auraham.

Auraham was married with Salby (Selby) our grandmother, they had four children as follows: Esau, Khoushaba, Magdlita and Elisha.

Elisha and Esau were in fact in Russia around World war I. But Esau has to leave Russia because of some big vexation in business with some unpleasant people over there, and the things were going from bad to worse for him. He brought later your father Elisha to the states. Esau was an officer in the states during the World War, that's the reason why they wear uniforms in your picture.

And now, the end of this letter is near, so I would like to wish you happiness and I'm going also to add some information about the chart of our relations on the back side of this paper beginning with our great-grandfather Odishou.

We are hoping to hear from you in the next few years as it's so funny how time slips and runaway!

God bless you and your family.

Your sincerely, Cousins German, Almass, Antoine from Germany. Gourgiv and Issavi AM Hennsee Sa, 60386 Frankfurt, Germany
Tel: 69-416158 or 69-5690957

The chart that shows how we are related

Odishou Auraham and Salby (wife) Elisha Magdlita Abndsy
Irene & Sylvia
German Gevargiz (Gourgiz) Sarsho + Almass Issavi (Wife)
Antoinette (living in Persia) Lidia (living in the States) and Antoine, living in Germany

June 12, 1997

Dear Sylvia:

I'm pretty much finished with my Assyrian Research and thought you would be interested in a copy of a letter from our cousin German. I wrote and asked him if he could shed any light on his side of the family and this is his answer.

How do you like the "vexation" in Russia for our uncle Esau!! He was always kind of a smooth operator. I wondered how he and Pop got to the U.S. without any money but I have a feeling our uncle had some stashed away from his vexation friends.

I also called Margie to see how she was and she told me that Uncle Bill was supposed to be the next Mar Yohannan and that was why he came to America to go to Princeton. She said he said that he was the inheritor of the Mar position but he fell in with the wrong crowd. She also told me our great grandmother was hacked to death by the Moslems because they wanted to know where the gold was buried. Margie said that the gold to this day is still buried somewhere.

Our great, great grandfather was the Mar Yohannan who was the translator to the first Presbyterian missionaries. He was the Nestorian mentioned in the missionary paper, our great grandfather was next; our grandfather was killed and our uncle fell in with the wrong crowd in America.

Assyrian Diaspora

We went to see Rosemary Clooney at Rainbow and Stars and the reservations were hard to come by but what a waste of money. She hobbled on stage--she has a plate in her knee--she only sang a couple of numbers and gave little chats in between about Louie Armstrong or Prima. The room was full of her fans. Then guess who was singing there with her, none other than Dolores Hope, Bob's wife. She was wearing a wig and she looked like she could hardly make it to the bandstand. But believe it or not, she sang better than Clooney. They both disappeared at the stroke of 11 and were never seen again.

That's about it. It's 10:00 PM now and I'm on my way to bed. I surely hope you are in good health.

Love,

June 23, 1997

Dear Eppo:

It was very nice to hear from you. Your farm products sound delectable. We buy asparagus in seasons from a local farm and the taste of fresh harvested vegetables is beyond comparison to anything the local super market has to offer. Don't be too surprised at us living here in Warren County. If you could see Union Township and Union County today you'd be heading for Belvidere too. We traveled all around New Jersey for two years looking for a place to live. The shore is wall to wall malls and wall to wall people. The Garden State Parkway is just that - a giant parking lot. Rt. 22 is filled with stores on the left, the right and in the middle and Morris Avenue is still the only road going east to west and everybody is on it at the same times of day.

Dede is living very happily in Colorado with her second husband. Her address is 8453 Norwich Street, Westminster Colorado 80030. Her name is Mrs. B. N. Christensen and she works in Denver. As a matter of fact, her birthday is July 6th at which time she will be 61. I refuse to believe that my little sister is 61.

I'm about done with my Assyrian research and have enclosed a letter from my father's nephew for your perusal. Also enclosed is a picture of Mar Yohannan that my daughter Laura sent me. She got very interested in her Assyrian heritage and especially the work of the Presbyterians and has been reading books in the Philadelphia Library. She wrote a poem about the events of her grandmother's life and is on the Web with others - like Grace is. Margie told me that this Mar Yohannan is the head of the Nestorian church and he was the missionary's translator back in 1834 or so; the second Mar Yohannan had to be my great-grandfather; and my grandfather, Joseph died in the massacre. Margie said Bill was sent to America to go to Princeton to be the successor but said he always said "I got in with the wrong crowd" It's been very nice to correspond with you over the past year. Please give my regards to Jim. Rose is blessed to have you as her husband.

Love, Irene

July 10, 1997

Mr. and Mrs. J. Jacob
2315 Cambridge Drive
North Brook, Illinois 60062

Dear Joe and Grace:

Found your name and address on the Internet. I do hope you both are who I think you are!!!!

Because I've been using your Family Tree extensively over the past two years while researching our mutual heritage, I thought you might be interested in some of the results which are enclosed.

In THE NESTORIANS, our great great-grandfather, Mar Yohannan, was the translator for the Rev. Justin Perkins. Aunt Marge and Ephraim Yohannan also wrote me of their memories which have been included in the text of what amounts to quite a few pages.

Assyrian Diaspora

The valiant worthies encountered in this research have left me quite humbled.

Sincerely,
Irene Kliszus
43 Sarepta Road
Belvidere, NJ 07823Enclosures

Dated July 17, 1997

Dear Cousin Irene:

Thank you for the papers which you sent me. The results of your labor in digging the archives of your or our ancestors. I'm so glad that you have found interest in your background. It is funny that when we get old, we remember our old heritage. There was a time when we did not want to be known as anything but American. Times have changed too.

Anyway, none of what you have discovered is new to me. I have read many books on the subject and of course have heard many of these stories. However, there are a few questions. The story of Mar Yohannan, our great-great-grandfather -- have you heard it (word of mouth) or read about it? Because, I had heard the same thing but it was my great-great-grandfather (Paternal). The story was that American missionaries on their way from Tabriz to Urmia stopped in Gavilan. That is where they met Kasha Yohannan. They learned the Assyrian language from him. Then they proceeded to Urmia. Later they translated the Bible in Assyrian and later printed it and other books in Assyrian. He could be your grandfather too.

Secondly, you wrote "American Mission to Iran from 1834 to 1934." It is interesting to know that after one hundred years missionaries contract in Urmia expired. The mission had to leave Urmia and turn in all their buildings to the Iranian government - not sold. This was the year that I was going to the American school at second grade--ten years old--had to go to government school. We did not study Persian so what do they put us at the first grade.

One more point that I object to in Dr. Shedd's notes: he keeps mentioning over and over, "we had so many converts of Assyrian Nestorians." Before Dr. Shedd knew what Christianity was, Assyrian Nestorians were Christian and they were evangelizing Christ as far as China.

Anyway, I thank you again for remembering us. Keep up the good works and be proud of your ancestors. Regards to all.

Sincerely, Cousin Joe: Joe and Grace Jacob, 2315 Cambridge Dr., Northbrook, IL 60062PS Forgive any misspellings (if any) and the paper that this is written on.

July 25, 1997

Dear Joe: (Joseph Jacob, Chicago)

Thanks for your letter. I am going to incorporate the information you sent in the final text as a counter balance for the letter from Dr. Shedd about the Nestorians.

Thought you might be interested in the enclosed paper by Dr. Zirinsky. The Historical Society of the Presbyterian Church sent me his name as a source of information. It's from a secular viewpoint and I found it very enlightening.

For the past year we've been working on the Lithuanian genealogy and we have found the church records the most reliable. We've been researching the Census records of 1900, 1910 and 1920 and have located quite a lot of Lithuanians. In our researching, only found 4 Assyrian families in all those years. The bulk of the Assyrians seem to arrive after 1920. The 1930 census records are not available until 70 years have lapsed--don't know if the year 2000 will find me rolling microfilm at the Archives!!!!

Nice to hear from you. Regards to all.

Your cousin,

43 Sarepta Road

Assyrian Diaspora

Belvidere, NJ 07823

August 26, 1997

Mr. Ephraim Yohannan
550 N. Daubengerger Road
Turlock, CA 95380

Dear Eppo:

We went to the Elizabeth Public Library yesterday. They added an extension in 1967 which houses all kinds of microfilm, references, etc. Was very impressed. When we went to the New Jersey Archives in Trenton last month, we were unimpressed. It was their new office and it was so cramped that you could hardly turn around. The Elizabeth Library was user-friendly and includes free parking in the back. Anyway, we went through the Elizabeth City Directories from 1899 and up and found the enclosed from the 1937 volume. Thought you might like a copy.

I just finished reading BLACK DOG OF FATE, by Dr. Peter Balakian. He is Professor of English at Colgate University. It's a memoir and "is a brilliantly written, poetic, and personal growing-up-American story, which becomes a story about the Armenian Genocide...."

Your time seems to be at a premium, but if your interested it's a Harper Collins publication, 1-800-242-7737 and the cost is \$24.00 plus S&H.

We're still working on our genealogy and it gets more interesting as lives unfold via the various sources available.

Wish you and Rose well and say hello to Jimmy.

Love,

August 31, 1997

Mr. Joseph Jacob
2315 Cambridge Drive
Northbrook, IL 60062

Dear Joe:

We've been taking pictures of the Assyrian headstones for our booklet. We've noticed the Assyrian written on these two graves and no is left in N.J. who can read Assyrian.

Would it be asking too much to ask you to translate for our edification? Would appreciate it very much.

I just finished reading BLACK DOG OF FATE by Dr. Peter Balakian. He is Professor of English at Colgate University. It's a memoir and "is a brilliantly written, poetic, and personal growing-up-American story, which becomes a story about the Armenian Genocide...."

I ordered it from HarperCollins at 1-800-242-7737 at \$24.00 plus Shipping, Handling & Tax.

Regards to all.

Sincerely,

September 12, 1997

Assyrian Diaspora

Dear Joe: (Joseph Jacob, Chicago)

Thank you very much for the translations and the information on History of the Amer.Presby.Mission to Iran. Found Nabu Books two years ago on the Internet and ordered two books written in 1931 on the plight of the Assyrians. Thought they might be able to find a copy of History.

We're compiling a genealogical history for our progeny so in the year 2015 they'll be able to know something about all of us. The pictures we took in the cemetery will be included. We also made a video of landmarks of our childhoods and interviewed our children and their children. They all make fun of us but I think sometime in the next century, someone will be interested!!!

We're spending most of our time now on the Lithuanian heritage. We've been to the Balzekas Museum of Lithuanian Culture and Genealogical Society in Chicago on 6500 South Pulaski Road. They have quite a collection of Lithuanian History and I wondered why don't the Assyrians have an equivalent depository--or do they? The Genealogical Society serves as a clearing house for research and welcomes information from all Lithuanians. We sent them a picture of Edward Sr's Confirmation class at St. Peter and Pauls R.C. Lithuanian Church taken I think about 1941.

Thanks again / your cousin.

September 12, 1997

Evergreen Cemetery
PO Box 312
1137 North Broad Street
Hillside, N. J. 07205

Sirs:

My husband and I recently came to your office to research my Uncle John Auraham's grave. Your office was very helpful and we were able to take pictures of his unmarked grave and graves of others who were my parents' and Uncle John's peer group.

We found my parents' graves - Aurahan - and took pictures of two graves with Assyrian inscriptions which we were unable to translate. The names are John Alamsha and Shamam Alamsha: and Pera, Ruel and Asyet. Thanks to the good services of my cousin Joseph Jacob, the inscriptions in English read as follows:

John Alamsha	Pera
Babajan Gasha Eesho of Aliabad was born 1888 Died 1934	1875 Ruel 1968
Shaman Alamsha 1884-1963 Asyet Daniel 1881-1938 She died because Adam sinned She lived because Jesus died	

Since Evergreen is on the register of National Landmarks, it seems only fitting that these translations be recorded.

Thank you again for your courtesy to us.

Yours truly,

Edward and Irene (Aurahan) Klizus
43 Sarepta Road
Belvidere, N. J. 07823

October 22, 1997

Assyrian Diaspora

Jeannie Careb
15 Cedar Spring Road
Burlington CT 06013

Dear Jeannie:

When Sylvia told me you had written her I asked for your address because I wanted to write you about a project of mine. Over the past two years, Rip and I have been doing genealogical research and the first year was spent on our Assyrian side.

The best information was found in the records of the Historical Society of the Presbyterian Church, located in Philadelphia. I found an original letter from a missionary talking about meeting Mar Yohannan, the Patriarch of the Nestorian Church. Mar Yohannan helped the missionaries translate the Bible into Assyrian. The missionary during our parents' lives was the Rev. Dr. William A. Shedd, born in Urumia. His father was the Rev. J. H. Shedd, whose original letter we found in the archives.

Anyway---that was the beginning and I've found other sources of information regarding the incident that changed our parents' lives. Also, my Aunt Marge and Cousin Eppo sent me their first-hand accounts, which I've included. I also got a tape of Jack Badal discussing his memories. All of this material will be incorporated in a booklet we're assembling for our progeny in the next century.

So, this letter is to ask you if you would be so generous as to send me your recollections of your dear mother's memories. One day that I was there, when Amy was still in college, she talked to me about how a Persian hid her in the barn to escape the marauding Turks.

I've enclosed some materials that might be of interest to you. Have more, as you can see from the Source sheet.

Please give my regards to all the Carebs. Rip and I have very fond memories of our visits to Connecticut with my mother. Mary and Jennie really loved each other and until I began this project I just never, never appreciated how much they meant to each other.

Hope to hear from you.

Love,

The following is a reply from Jeannie Careb:

October 24, 1997

Dear Irene:

How sad that no one thought of this project while our mothers were still with us. What a story they could of told. I regret not taping them.

The few things I remember were the atrocities they saw while young children.

A man had seven sons and the Turks put each son on the father's knee and beheaded each one. The man begged to be killed but they let him live and he eventually went insane. Or how when they were running away in 1918, the elderly and very young were left on the mountains to die because they could not walk any farther. My grandmother and Uncle Johnny were taken prisoner and one of the Turkish guards recognized them because he was a servant in their home before the rebellion. He helped them escape. I could go on and on but I really don't know if this is what you are looking for.

My Aunt Esther (my mother's sister) has more details. She is the Historian of the Solomon and Yohannan clan. She can tell you about Goolpashan, their home town in Persia.

Mrs. Esther Payne, 8717 Pine Avenue, Miller, Indiana 46403

Hope all is well with you and your family. Sheila and Glenn bought a house about a mile away from us. Jerry and I babysit Jennifer (Jenny) 3 years old and Joseph, 4 months old. Sheila went back to work full time. I retired in 1994, the company downsized me after

Assyrian Diaspora

24 years. Your mother used to say each child is worth a million dollars. I miss them so much. They were priceless and can never be replaced. Imagine after all they went through to get her, they arrive with nothing but the clothes on their backs, not knowing the language, etc. That is why they appreciated this country so much.

Give our love to all,
Jean

November 4, 1997

Jean Careb
15 Cedar Spring Road
Burlington CT 06013

Dear Jean:

It was great to receive your letter. Your account of the incident in Persia was very, very moving. I'm going to incorporate it with the accounts from Aunt Marge, Eppo and Jack Badal. What I'm trying to do is not just to give facts but to present a human face to all the suffering. Anything you would want to be included, just send to me. I don't edit anything but let the words speak for themselves.

The one thing really good about CIGNA's downsizing is that it has given you an opportunity to babysit. Sheila is very very fortunate to have you available. Her children couldn't be in better hands.....they are always safe, secure, well-fed, well-clothed and loved loved loved!!!!!!

I'm going to write to your Aunt Esther. One of the problems I have is untangling the Solomons and the Yohannans. I use Joe's family tree but still get confused. From what you say, Esther can unravel the S's from the Y's.

Our mothers really did love each other. I miss them too. Sometimes I think in my head "I better call my mother" and then I remember.

Our grandchildren range from 20 year old Peter to 2 year old Michael--for a total of 10--4 boys and 6 girls. Two are in college and Michael is still in diapers.

Keep in touch.

Love

Irene
43 Sarepta Rd
Belvidere NJ 07823

November 4, 1997

Mrs. Esther Payne
8717 Pine Avenue
Miller, Indiana 46403

Dear Esther

:

Jean (Careb) gave me your address and told me you were the family historian. I had written her to tell her about a project my husband and I have spent the last two years researching: our ethnic backgrounds. I asked Jean to send me some reminiscences of Jennie to include. Aunt Marge and my cousin Eppo Yohannan sent me first hand accounts and Margie's nephew Kevin sent me a tape of Jack Badal being interviewed. We went to the Presbyterian Historical Society in Philadelphia and researched missionary letters one hundred years old and found Mar Yohannan's name as the Nestorian who rode out to meet the missionary. That was my great-great

Assyrian Diaspora

grandfather.

Don't want to just include "just the facts" but want to present a human face. The ultimate aim is to leave behind two genealogies: one Lithuanian and one Assyrian. And to include personal information for our next generation. We're kind of patronized about it but I tell our 4 children that their 10 mutual children, sometime in the year 2010,20,30 etc. will find great value in what we did in the dark ages of the 20th century.

Therefore, I'm writing to ask you if you would be willing to share some information with me to add to my section. For instance, I can never keep the Solomons straight from the Yohannans. Did Kasha Yohannan, my mother's grandfather, have more than one wife? Who were the Solomons in relation to the Yohannans? Joe's chart doesn't list my cousins Elizabeth (Ezzo), Mae and Lorrie. But they were Yohannans. Related how?

My husband and I were in Chicago in April to visit the Balzekas Museum and Genealogy Society on So. Pulaski Street. We were impressed with their exhibits and the information they supplied regarding the Lithuanians in Lithuania and America. They have data on Lithuanians supplied by others from the U.S. and sent us names of others who are researching the same names we are. We corresponded with them and even though they were not related to his father or mother, the information reveals another layer of discovery. I asked Joe whether we had such a clearing house for Assyrians and if not, why not.

We just got an e-mail address and wanted an address no one else could POSSIBLY have - chada4@juno.com. Can you imagine, there were 3 other chada addresses. Maybe I'll contact them and say - you Assyrian?

Hope I didn't bore you too much. Am really looking forward to hearing from you.

Your cousin, Irene Aurahan Klizsus, 43 Sarepta Rd, Belvidere NJ 07823 908-475 2134

Letter from Esther Solomon Payne, 8717 Pine Ave., Miller Beach, Indiana 46403 dated November 13, 1997 in reply to letter from Irene:

Dear Irene:

I met and saw you at least 56 years ago when I was about 16 years old - am 72 years old now. I hear from Sylvia every Christmas and saw DeeDee about 25 years ago at a convention in Chicago when your Uncle Bill was there.

Your mother, Bill and Joan were my father's sister's children. Her name was Shalem Solomon (Yohannan), our grandfather (Shalem's father) was married twice - not their grandfather the minister - my father was their uncle and our first cousins.

Your Aunt Marge was a Yohannan through marriage, period. She and Jack Badal know nothing about our side of the family or history and Marge could have cared less about Bill's relatives when he was alive.

Three brothers, Absolem, Joseph and David Yohannan were cousins to my family on my father's side - and cousins to Mary, Bill and Joan on their father's side. Elizabeth, Mae and Lorraine (Lorrie) are David's children, which were related to your mother on her father Baba Yohannan's side.

So you see if my aunt Shalem Solomon had not married a Yohannan there would not have been Mary, Bill and Joan. Got it? I hope so.

In our family there were 5 girls and 1 boy. All of the girls kept Solomon as their middle name on our Social Security cards in honor of our dad and your mother's uncle who you mother and Bill adored. There is just my darling sister Mary and me left. She used to send your mother cards all the time when she was ill.

If a person looks closely they can really see the halo and wings - she is an angel of God in every sense of the word.

Your mother used to come once in a while to visit us in Chicago and keep in touch with my mother, her aunt. Bill used to call me quite often but my brother would go and see him when he could. Bill gave my sister away when she was married in place of his Uncle, my dad in 1949.

Love, Esther Solomon Payne

Assyrian Diaspora

November 18, 1997
Mrs. Esther S. Payne
8717 Pine Avenue
Miller Beach, IN 46403-1442

Dear Esther:

Thank you very much for your letter. It cleared up all my questions. I used Joe's Tree and your letter and finally understood who was who. I confused my grandmother Shalem's family with my grandfather's Yohannans. But now it's all straight in my mind.

I'm enclosing a picture of my great great-grandfather Mar Yohannan, Bishop of the Assyrian Church that my daughter Laura Keyser found in the Philadelphia library about Christians in Persia. When I was at the Presbyterian Historical Society in Philadelphia with my husband Ed and daughter Laura, who lives in Pennsylvania, she found an original letter from the missionary who mentioned his first sight of the Kasha as he galloped on his horse to greet him.

When my mother was in the nursing home, I used to read Mary's letters to her. Mom was very happy when she received those letters. She felt that she hadn't been abandoned. I visited her daily because I selected a brand new nursing home near my office and went on my lunch hour. Sylvia visited her on the weekends and her very young grandchildren were brought to visit her also.

Thanks again for your letter. I'm including all letters in the Assyrian portion of our research without any editing on my part. The letters tell their own story.

Love,
Irene (Aurahan) Kliszus
43 Sarepta Road
Belvidere NJ 07823

January 4, 1998
Dear Cousin Irene:

I just wanted to let you know how much I appreciate your passing on anything you can find on our family history.

I know my grandmother was not a saint and sometimes did things that unintentionally hurt others or upset situations, but she was my grandmother and, as the oldest grandchild, I felt very close to her and still do. I know my sister was afraid of her, and I don't think my brother really related to her at all.

If you have a Mormon church near you, they can access their Salt Lake City databank of information from there. Although I only found the ship's manifest of passengers when Nanny, Grandpa and Uncle Eppo came over, I know they have copies of the U.S. Census and other records stored there. I would like to know when Grandpa came over the first time; Mom seems to think he worked in Connecticut.

I have found some new websites on the Internet. One has to do with the Assyrian Holocaust. Thanks to Zenda, the online Assyrian weekly newsletter, I am aware these atrocities still continue in Iraq. I have met some nice Assyrians over the Internet too. They are interested in adding our family history to their databanks.

I am back teaching. This time, I am teaching special education science and social studies in our local high school. I spent the summer working for a Saudi Arabian businessman and his family, and I will be helping one of the princes when he arrives for a visit this spring. It is interesting work. I am still writing articles and recently was published in PR Herald in Budapest.

Thanks again for all your interest and sharing. Love, Grace
(Grace Yohannan Cotto)

January 8, 1998
Dear Malcolm:

Assyrian Diaspora

It's always very nice to hear from you during Christmas. The latest news on my Assyrian research is the inclusion of recipes. Someone gave me pages from a cookbook that the ladies in Yonkers wrote and they have now been included.

I do have a favor to ask of you. Marge and Ephraim Yohannan have written some of their memories of the trip to Hamadan and Jack Badal's family gave me an oral tape of his memories.

Jack's is enclosed. Would you be able to write about your family life in Iran? I gave my grandchildren a copy of these personal recollections and they enjoyed them very much. It would be a wonderful addition to my project. We want to include as much first-hand information as possible instead of just historical facts. For instance, in the recipes for lulu ka bobs, I adapted my mother's adjustments and refer to them as Mommaburgers!

We are having a warm December and January here on the East Coast.

Regards to all.

Irene
43 Sarepta Rd
Belvidere, NJ 07823

January 8, 1998

Dear Cousins: (To Pete and Dottie Jacob)

In the process of updating our Christmas list, I notice that you asked about our research project. As a matter of fact, we've been thinking about having a "book" published if the price is not prohibitive. Otherwise, we'll just make computer copies for our progeny.

We have a lot of material on both Iran/Assyria and Lithuania. We've written to the National Archives of Poland and Lithuania and are waiting for their replies. They say it will take several/many months for them to respond because they are swamped with requests.

Right now, we're using the Lafayette College library and perusing microfilm of the New York Times from the early 1900's. We haven't found any reference to Assyrians or Armenians yet. Imagine the British papers would be the place to search.

Regards to all.

Love,

January 10, 1998

Grace Yohannan Cotto
672 Whitetail Loop
Apopka, Florida 32703-3123

Dear Grace,

It's great to hear from you. Our latest venture is trips to Lafayette College in Easton PA to research the New York Times microfilm from 1900-1918. We were there last Thursday and found in the 1918 microfilm the enclosed articles. Had to copy these on our fax copier and I apologize for the quality. Didn't want to wait until I could make better copies.

With regard to the entrance year of our relatives, we found that the Census records of 1920 showed only about 3 Assyrian families in Elizabeth, N. J. The next release date of the 1930 census is the year 2000. The records are released 70 years after each census. In the year 2000, probably most of the Assyrians we mutually know will be listed and the year of entrance/immigration is asked. . My father came to NYC before 1914 because he served in the US army, Sylvia was born in 1927 in Elizabeth, so he would be living in New Jersey before the 1930 census as would the other Yohannans. Make a date, Grace, to roll the microfilm in that year. Since I'm already 68, don't know if I'll be around or if I'll be able to roll film. By the way, as you roll the microfilm your eyes get bleary and your head whirls so you have to look away for a while. It's slow going but we plan to go to Lafayette at least twice a month because the NEW YORK TIMES is a treasure trove of our history.

"Enta Khannah" was revered by my mother and Uncle Bill. I never could figure out why until I began this research. According to

Assyrian Diaspora

Uncle Eppo, she escorted him, Mary, Juan and Bill, with no husband, all the way to Hamadan under the most dreadful conditions. She's entitled!!!!!!

Congratulations on your talent. Since our forebear Mar Yohannan was the Bishop of the Church, it comes as no surprise. I also have a feeling you have very bright children.

Now that I know that you're very interested, I'll keep you up to date.

Love,

February 25, 1998
Mr. Jos. Jacob
2315 Cambridge Drive
North Brook, Illinois 60062

Dear Joe:

Can't find anyone who has a copy of John Elder's book on Iran. However, the Department of History and Records Management Services of the Presbyterian Church, Philadelphia, sent me the enclosed:

From Susan J. Sullivan, Assoc Librarian for Information Services:

Here is a copy of the finding aid which describes the materials here on deposit about the Elder family. I hope you find this information useful. Dated 2/18/98

Elder Family Papers, 1925-1979--Finding Aid to Record Group 189

Biographical Statement: John Elder (1894-1983) and Ruth Roche Elder (1899-) were appointed by the Board of Foreign Missions to the East Persia Mission in 1921 and arrived on the field in 1923. Throughout their 42 years of service, they were engaged in evangelistic missionary work, initially in Kermanshah (1923-1934), the Hamadan (1934-1937) and finally in Teheran (1938-1964). Dr. Elder served as the pastor of the Persian-speaking congregations in each city. In 1935, he was Moderator of the newly formed Eastern Presbytery of Iran and was elected Moderator of the Synod of Iran in 1947 and 1960. In addition to numerous other activities, Dr. Elder wrote diverse articles, pamphlets and books that were published in both English and Farsi. The Elders retired from missionary service in 1964.

Scope and Content Note: This collection consists mainly of John and Ruth Elder's correspondence, reports, photographs and other miscellaneous items, 1935-1979. The correspondence represents "home letters" and annual newsletters that are primarily outgoing. The reports include annual missionary labor reports for both John and Ruth Elder. The photos, most of which are identified, reflect the Elder's missionary service in Persia. Record Group 189 is arranged accordingly:

Series I John Elder, 1925-1979 Box 1 Folders 2-4

Series II Ruth Roche Elder, 1927-1960 Box 1 Folders 5-6

Series III Miscellany, c.1920s-1970s Box 1 Folders 7-8

Series IV Photographs, 1923-1970s Box 1 Folders 9-15

Notes to Researcher: Additional photographic material was received in September 1987 and to accommodate that addition the photographic series was revised.

Collection processed and finding aid prepared: 1984

Frederick J. Heuser, Archivist

Finding aid revised: September 1987

Kristin L. Gleeson, Assistant Archivist

Finding Aid to Record Group 189

Assyrian Diaspora

Box One

Folder 1 Finding Aid to Record Group 189

Series I: John Elder, 1925-1979

- 2a A Brief History of the Iran Mission
- 2 Correspondence / reports, 1925-1979
- 3 Newsletters, 1948-1963
- 4 Newsletters, 1955-1958

Series II: Ruth Elder, 1927-1960

- 5 Correspondence, 1942-1957
- 6 Reports, 1927-1960

Series III: Miscellany, 1920s-1970s

- 7 Clippings, 1950s (?)
- 8 Miscellaneous items, 1920s-1970s

Series IV: Photographs, 1920s-1970s

- 9 Mission/Workers Conferences, 1923-1935
- 10 Mission/Workers Conferences, 1937-1960
- 11 Interchurch Christian Literature Bldg. 6 and Staff, 1938-63
- 12 Harsin/Palestine, 1920s-1970s, 1923
- 13 Kermanshah/Hamadan/Teheran, 1920s-1970s
- 14 Iran Mission Slides, 1932, 1951-52, 1958
- 15 Miscellaneous Photos, 1920s-1970s

Our research stopped last December when Ed was diagnosed with Prostate Cancer. He had a biopsy, bone scan, body scan, gave 3 pints of blood over a month's time for his own use if needed, and had the operation on Feb.11. They also found a hernia so he also had a hernia operation. Very invasive. He's been home for two weeks and it is very strange to find him ill. The only other time he was in the hospital was tonsils at age 10. He was even born at home.

Anyway, when he recovers, we'll resume our genealogy research. Just thought you would like the information from the Archives.

By the way, I e-mail our network of children and grandchildren at college everyday with updates on the health of their 1. father 2. father-in-law and 3. two college students. It saves a lot of phone calls.

Regards to Grace, Your cousin.
Irene Klizus
43 Sarepta Rd., Belvidere NJ 07823

March 2, 1998

Dear Irene:

How is our Historian doing? Sylvia wrote and said that you are really working hard tracking the Assyrian history. You were always the smart one of the clan. If you end up writing a book, I will be the first to buy a copy.

How is Rip? I pray to God the surgery went well and that he will be up and around very soon. All those grandchildren need a grandfather.

Assyrian Diaspora

We are very busy babysitting like I told you before and looking forward to Spring. It has been very mild here, very little snow and not one day where the temperature went below zero.

Elmer finally retired this year but every bodyshop in town wants him to work for them part time. I really don't think he can sit home. The only TV he watches are cartoons. He just never grew up. He and Connie live with Cathy and Les. Cathy is working in sales at The Hartford (insurance company). Dorothy has two children and works for the phone company in Hartford. Bebs and Betty are good. Linda is still living in L.A. She loves that lifestyle. Matt just got his broker's license. He is working for a mortgage firm. He is brilliant. (takes after Betty).

There are a few Assyrians that we know in New Britain. The only ones left in Bristol are the Benjamins. I don't know if you remember them. The mother and father have passed away, Mary and Mike, and only Benny and Mop are living. They come over occasionally. Susie cooks Dolma and Assyrian food for them. She cooks real good, just like Mom. She even makes Chada.

I'll let you get back to your books. If you have a chance let me know how Rip is doing.

Miss you all very much. Wish we could turn back the clock. We didn't have material things but what we had was priceless.

Love you and God Bless. Jean

March 6, 1998

Dear Jean:

It was great to hear from you. My fondest memories of being young were our trips to New Brit-ian and Bris-tol and the nice times we all had together. Never even knew we were "not affluent" but only knew we had a bunch of cousins we really liked.

Rip went to the doctor this week and the doctor said his operation was "text book" and all indications were that the cancer was localized. His lymph nodes were examined by the labor during his operation and showed no movement of the cancer; neither did his early bone and cat scans. It's now three weeks, two days since the operation on 2/11 and he just went to the bowling alley to visit his Friday night Senior Bowling Leaguers.

The history stuff we've been researching for almost three years has grown into three clothes baskets and it's getting beyond filing. But the stuff is all on the computer and I would be glad to send you a copy of everything I have right now. You won't have to wait for the publication of the best seller of no year. The reason I haven't sent the stuff out is because nobody seems to really want to read all of it. But it would be my pleasure to copy and send you everything. I included your letter also as part of the historical data. Just let me know.

Also, we've been working on the Lithuanians (Kliszus) and just got information from the National Archives in Vilnius, Lithuania listing 21 genealogical listings for Rip's family. There were a lot of children - most died in infancy or two years old and the only known survivors were the three that came to America. An Uncle Andrew, who is Rip's father's half-brother (Andrew's mother died at 32/33), Antanas Klisius, father of Edward and Florence and his sister, Magadeline. Andrew and Antanas came in 1911 as young men and, as is the custom, saved money and sent for their sister Aunt Maggie. The

Lithuanians have a genealogy society in Chicago, which serves as a clearing house for Lithuanians and I haven't found an equivalent service for the Assyrians in America. The Catholic Church has been very, very, very valuable in this research. They have the records of births, deaths, weddings, etc. The Turks did a good job in Urmia because nothing is left of our paper work.

Glad to hear you're all doing well. I'm not surprised Matt is bright--he takes after the Urmia Assyrians!!!!

Love,

Irene

June 18, 1998

Dear Marge:

I've been meaning to write you but quite a bit has happened over the past couple of months. Ed found out in December he had prostate cancer. He was having his annual checkup and had the PSA test. He had a biopsy and had an operation in February. Now he's having 30 radiation treatments in the Easton, Pennsylvania Hospital. We leave at 7 each morning to be there at 8 and they "nuke" him for 90 seconds and we go home. So it takes a couple of hours for a couple of seconds of treatment. He had no symptoms before and doesn't even have any now but the PSA test is the critical indicator. Anyway, the doctors actually use the word "cure" when it comes to this type of cancer. No guarantees. Right now he's bowling.

I'm back to genealogy and have found the Internet very useful. I'm enclosing some Social Security Death Results which is on the

Assyrian Diaspora

Internet. Thought it might be of interest to you. I have a gigantic file drawer with all the stuff accumulated over the past three years and there seems to be no end in sight.

Otherwise, we're ok. By the way, Peter is 21 years old today. He is starting his senior year at the Peabody Conservatory at Johns Hopkins in Baltimore and found himself a nice girlfriend who plays the oboe. Wow - do I feel old.

Always, always think of you.
Love from all of us,

July 29, 1998

Dear Marge:

Thanks for your letter. Ed's family also has a cancer history: his aunt Mary at 36; his mother at 42, Mary's son Eugene at 18 and his grandmother at 72. He just finished 33 radiation treatments and has an appointment in September for a PSA test, which will determine, if the count is down, that the cancer cells are gone - I guess for now anyway. It's the twilight zone because nothing is the same any more.

Anyway, the Assyrians have an on-line magazine called Zenda which is posted once a week from California. I'm enclosing this week's because it has an interesting article about John Yohannan's daughter, Grace Yohannan (Catto). You might have seen Zenda and if so, can another copy hurt!!!!

Our grandchildren are really getting old. Peter is 21 and has a girlfriend, Lara and the youngest is Amy's son Michael Simon, who is 2-1/2. Some range. Amy and Renee's family were down the Jersey Shore last week and we spent sometime with them. It was very nice for us to see so many grandchildren at one time.

Take care of yourself. ALWAYS think about you.
Love,

August 19, 1998

Mr. Paul Lewis

The New York Times

229 West 43rd Street

New York, New York 10036-3959

Re: "Too Late to Say "Extinct" in Ubykh, Eyak or Ona"

Mr. Lewis:

This letter is written in response to your article in the NYT on Saturday, August 15, 1998 describing "thousands of languages...endangered."

Please be advised that the Assyrian language is not extinct. Assyrians don't need to tumble a handful of stones to hear the Assyrian language spoken, nor do you have to look under stones to find remnants of the Assyrian civilization.

In fact, we have a couple of web sites. ZENDA is a weekly on-line Assyrian magazine (<http://www.assyrianinfo.com/Zendahome.html>) and there is also ASSYRIA ONLINE (<http://www.aina.org/aol.>) and in addition a couple of others. Try Nineveh.

The Assyrians are having their annual Assyrian-American convention Labor Day Weekend at the Sheraton in Waterbury, Ct. Perhaps you would like to attend and hear the language of that ancient civilization spoken by very civilized people.

Yours truly,
Irene Kliszus

43 Sarepta Road Belvidere, N. J. 07823

Assyrian Diaspora

September 8, 1998

Dear Dottie and Pete:

It was very nice to receive an invitation to Joey's wedding in Tampa. We used to go to Clearwater every year when Ed's father was still living and did the tourist thing in Tampa. I remember it was a very handsome city.

It would have been very nice to attend and take a picture of all of you for our project. But since Ed's operation and radiation treatments, we don't make plans that far in advance.

Thanks for remembering us.

Sincerely,
Ed and Irene

September 18, 1998
Dr. Eden Naby
Harvard University
Center for the Study of World Religions
Cambridge, Mass

Dear Eden aka DinDin:

My husband, my mother Mary Yohannan Aurahan, and I were at several picnics at the home of your Aunt Nellie in New Jersey. On several occasions, your father and mother were there and it was a blessing to be in their company.

Your father presented me with an autograph copy of his book PSALMS AND SONG OF A PERSIAN along with a sentence in Assyrian--which of course, I can't read.

In this week's ZENDA, I saw the article you had written and that is why I'm writing you.

Over the past three years, my husband and I began to research our respective genealogy. Our grandchildren had asked us about our backgrounds for projects at their schools and we discovered we knew nothing of our parents' lives before coming to America. For my part, we visited the Department of History of the Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia as a first step. I discovered more about my mother's life than I had ever known and now I have a giant drawer full of findings about Urumia. I remember Mom telling me that your father was so honest and had so much integrity, that he never benefited financially from the refugee program he helped to administer. She always spoke very highly of him and your mother--especially since your mother was from Urumia!

Anyway, I've enclosed a source sheet of references, which also includes a paper by Dr. Michigan Zirinsky of the History Dept at Boise State University entitled AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN MISSIONARIES AT URUMIA DURING THE GREAT WAR. along with a sample of our research.

This reference data is invaluable but it is very important to include personal histories and so my humble request is for you to write a few words describing your parents' life in Urumia, your father's ministry, and some background on the massacre, the tragic trip to Hamadan, perhaps even information on my grandfather's church in Urumia. I want to leave my grandchildren and their progeny a feeling of history; an appreciation of the spiritual lives of the Assyrians, and the gallant missionaries who suffered with them. My eldest daughter Renee (Joey's age) is a historian and told me she would like to assemble the research and develop a project based on the Assyrians of Urumia.

I look forward to your reply.

Sincerely,
Irene (Auraham)Kliszus
43 Sarepta Road
Belvidere, N. J. 07823
908-475-21

Assyrian Diaspora

November 6, 1998

To: Joe, Jack, Pete, Julia

From: Me

Re: our heritage

Cousins:

Our genealogy project is winding down and we may be able to "publish" next year. We bought a scanner and will include pictures. I have pictures of our grandmother and grandfather, Joseph and Shalem. They appear to be wedding clothes. There's another picture of Shalem later. There is also a picture taken either December 1904 or early 1905 of Shalem holding a infant, Mary, my mother with a group of other people. I also think I have a description of the group. I remember asking mom to name names and somewhere in the files I'll find the list. Anyway, I would like to include all of you and your progeny and so this letter is to ask if you would send me your individual groupings.

If I don't hear from you, I'll assume you're not interested and will finish up with the data I do have.

As you well know, it's been difficult to find any records of our ancestors. We've had better luck with the Lithuanians because they came earlier in the century and appear in the census records of 1900, 1910 and 1920. I think we found about 3 Assyrians in Elizabeth, N.J. They were primarily single men. The census of 1930 will be available sometime in the year 2000 and most of the Assyrians I would recognize came about 1924-5 - I think.

The Lithuanians also lived in the neighborhood of their church and so we found them in the Elizabeth N.J. city directories and especially records of that church.

Our historical data was found in the Presbyterian Historical Society in Philadelphia and Princeton Seminary. We also perused through microfilm at Lafayette College and found a little information there. It was mostly about Russia's influence in Iran and only a few references to the 1918 massacre.

Don't want to bore you but I will look forward to anything you send.

Your cousin

Irene Kliszus, PS: Am sending Julia's to Dottie and Pete

November 11, 1998

Department of Near Eastern Languages and

Civilizations

Harvard University

6 Divinity Avenue

Cambridge, MA 02138

RE: David B. Perley Memorial Assyrian Fund

NELC:

A request by NELC for "books, photographs, documents" relating to Assyria and I presume Assyrians in America.

For the past three years, my husband and I have been researching our ancestors and mine are the Assyrians of Persia. My mother's family were attacked in 1918 by the Kurds and Turks in what became known in our home as "the massacre"

Enclosed is a Source/Reference sheet which is self-explanatory. Also enclosed is a picture of my great great grandfather, Mar Yohannan with Dr. Grant, the first missionary doctor.

I have in my possession an old book, written in what I think is Assyrian. Someone wrote a little legend in English which says "This book treats of: Poems and Plays on various themes- home, nationalism, dramas and comedies--written in Assyrian"

My cousin Joe is the only person I know who can read and write Assyrian and I was thinking of sending him a few pages to get a clue as to the contents.

Assyrian Diaspora

This letter is therefore written to you to say that if you are at all interested in an amateur's collection of research, including old photographs taken in Urumia in 1904-1909ish, please let me hear from you.

Yours truly,

Irene Klizus
(Mrs. Edward A.)
43 Sarepta Road
Belvidere, N. J. 07823
908-475-2134
e-mail: berthama@epix.net

Enclosures: Picture: Grant/Yohannan&Sources

November 14, 1998

Dear Joe:

Thank you very much for your genealogy sheet. You have David and Mark both born in 1956...

The Assyrians have an on-line weekly magazine ZENDA. My cousin John's daughter Grace let me in on it. I don't know if you're familiar with ZENDA but I read it each week and send Sylvia a copy. Must say the Assyrians they write about are alien to me. The only Assyrians I'm familiar with are those from Urumia and members of our distinguished great, great-great and grandfathers' family. Anyway, enclosed is a letter I wrote in response to a request in this week's edition.

I asked my daughters Renee and Laura to oversee the stuff accumulated over the past 3-4 years and they said "make sure you back it up" But I think if Harvard is at all interested it would be a great place to store our heritage. We've been sending the Lithuanian data to the Balzekas on So. Pulaski in Chicago and they eagerly accept family archives because they make it available for root-seekers.

We still haven't got the hang of the scanner! We're going to grab Eddie one whole day if that's possible and chain him to the computer and make him scan, scan, scan.

We wish all of you a very fine holiday season.

Your cousin Irene

PS: do you want to read a couple of pages of the book to which I refer?

11/19/98

Dear Sheila:

Am still working on our Assyrian Genealogy but think it's winding down now. I was reading letters in my files and re-read the one where you told me you had a tape of your mother's recounting of how they came to America.

If you would be willing to send me the tape, or a copy, I would like to transcribe it and include it in the section called "eye witness accounts" Right now we're working on including old pictures: samples enclosed.

Hope that you are all well. Sylvia told me you've had physical problems and it is my sincere wish and hope that they have been resolved. My husband Ed spent the last year having an operation and radiation treatments for prostate cancer. It's been the most horrible year we've had together. We'll be married 50 years in February and we're hoping we can have some kind of family gathering but we measure our lives by his prostate blood tests and the next one is due in December. If the number stays the same or goes down, we think we'll start planning.

I liked it better when all we had to worry about was money.

Happy Thanksgiving to all of you.

Love,

Assyrian Diaspora

43 Sarepta Road
Belvidere NJ 07823
908 475 2134
e-mail: berthama@epix.net

To Assyrian Research Network: Margaret Yohannan, Ephraim Yohannan, Jean Careb
Sheila Aivas, Arnold J. Sargis, Kevin M. Sargis

From: Irene Kliszus
Re: David B. Perly Memorial Assyrian Fund
Date: November 23, 1998

Enclosed are copies of e-mail in response to my letter to the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations at Harvard University, which are self-explanatory.

If you are interested in submitting any archival material, please contact Eden Naby.

The Assyrian On-Line magazine, ZENDA, printed the request in the November 9, 1998 issue.

November 25, 1998
Ronald J Careb
14 Lamberts Lane
Stonington, CT 06378-2906

Dear Ronnie:

I know you don't remember me but my mother was Mary Aurahan and my sister is Sylvia. The last time I saw you was in Connecticut when Eddie's Sweet Shop was still serving those banana splits.

Having said that, my husband Ed and I have been doing genealogy research over the past 3-4 years and we're now in the process of scanning pictures to include. I went through my mother's album and found a couple of pictures of your family. In the meantime, Harvard U is planning an exhibit on Assyria in March 99 and I will be sending them archival papers of my mother and father, including the pictures from the album.

Is it ok to send the picture I have of your mother and father, copy enclosed? I've enclosed a copy of my original letter which was answered in a positive way.

Sincerely yours,
Irene Aurahan Kliszus
43 Sarepta Rd
Belvidere NJ 07823
908-475-2134
E-mail berthama@epix.net

To: Margaret Sargis Yohannan, widow of William Joseph Yohannan
March 9, 1999
Dear Marge:

We went to Harvard on Sunday. It was very cold and very windy and it didn't help that we had to walk around Harvard Square until we found the right building.

There was a lecture entitled Syriac From Script to Print. Dr. Coakley showed slides and spoke for an hour on the development of the language, especially the printing methods. Then we were served chada and chai from a samovar and went to another library for the actual exhibits. Assyrians were there from some local group and I actually heard and understood some of the Assyrian, which I haven't heard for a long time. I did understand "let's sit here"

Assyrian Diaspora

Amy was with us and since her son was sick at home we only looked at one exhibit and to our surprise, it prominently displayed the pictures of Shalem and Joseph--the ones you gave us and included the Solomon family tree Joe made. There were pictures of the Fiske Seminary and a few other pictures plus a time-line of the Assyrian civilization.

Harvard may only accept the brightest and best but they sure don't trust them--we had to pass security into the library and when we were leaving we got lost and a couple of exit doors had signs saying "doors armed"

Am enclosing the program.

Irene

March 9, 1999

To: Joe, Pete, Julie

Ed, Amy and I went to "The Assyrian Experience" at Harvard Sunday and I'm enclosing a copy of the program. There was an hour lecture on from Script to Print that was very interesting but it was a lot to absorb. The professor was fascinated with the printed word.

After the lecture, Chai and Khada was served by a local Assyrian group and the samovar was set up. I also heard some Assyrian I could still understand, such as "let's sit here"

They introduced Joseph Nimrod, from Chicago I think. Also, during the lecture we learned that there was a bevy of printing activity in Chicago in the early 1930's or so.

I think somebody from the Assyrian Universal Alliance was there too, unless he was Joseph Nimrod. Can't remember.

After all of the above, we went to another library to view the exhibit. Since Amy's son was home sick, we only viewed the exhibit on the main floor. But what an exhibit: Pictures of our grandfather and grandmother--Joseph and Shalem--were prominently displayed along with the family tree Joe made. There were other items there also, such as a picture of the students of the Fiske Seminary but of course, the pictures of our grandparents was the piece de resistance for us.

We bought the catalogue of Sources for the Study of the 19th and 20th Centuries which contains "From the Holdings of the Harvard University Libraries" and in the Acknowledgments, listed me as one of the donors--with my name spelled wrong!

We had to pass security checks in and out and some of the doors were marked "doors armed"--guess even the intelligentsia of Harvard is suspect!

Your cousin,

March 12, 1999

Dr. Michael E. Hopper
Middle Eastern Division
Harvard College Library
Cambridge, Massachusetts

Dr. Hopper:

On Sunday, March 7, 1999, my husband and I, along with our daughter Amy Rowshandel, who works in Cambridge at DSS, attended the Mishael and Lillie Naby Assyrian Inaugural Lecture. It was my pleasure to have known The Rev. and Mrs. Naby. My mother, Mary Yohannan Auraham, regarded them very highly and told me that when Mr. Naby helped administer aid at Hamadan, he was exemplary in his conduct. Mom was a victim of "The Massacre."

It was fascinating for me to hear WASP Boomers waxing eloquent about the Assyrian civilization, culture and writing.

I bought your catalogue and as I was perusing it this afternoon, I did notice that my name was spelled incorrectly in the Acknowledgments. It is spelled Irene K l i s z u s and pronounced K L I S H U S. With regard to the Items on Exhibit in Case 2, 1. Yosep & Shalim Yokhannan - these are my grandparents. Mom always spelled their surname as:

Y O H A N N A N. Her version was that her mother Shalim had died of the flu that was pandemic, along with an infant son, before the invasion. It was her grandmother, who was chased through the courtyard by the Turks, who threw her body over her grandson

Assyrian Diaspora

William. I don't know how Joseph died. He may have been murdered at the same time.

Would it be possible for me to buy a picture of Case 2 and also a separate copy of the Assyrian time-line? We're preparing a genealogy book for our 4 children and 10 grand-children and would very much like to include these. In addition, we're hoping to return to Harvard to view the exhibit again.

It was very pleasant to work with Dr. Naby and she did me a great service by translating the messages on the backs of my mother's pictures. She is a great asset to your department.

Cordially yours,

Irene Auraham Klizus
43 Sarepta Road, Belvidere, N. J. 07823 - e-mail: eiklizus@fast.net

April 26, 1999
Re: Esau (John Auraham/n)

Dear Eden:
This letter has the following enclosures:

Pictures numbered 1 to 9 about the life of my paternal uncle: Esau (John) Auraham. Descriptions - to the best of my knowledge - of who is in the pictures.

Social Security Death Index Results for: Elisha Aurahan, my father; Mary Aurahan, my mother; Elizabeth Auraham and Elsie Aurahan. Uncle Esau was married twice and had no children. I am therefore presuming these are his wives, from whom he was divorced.

A letter dated August 20, 1997 to the Veterans Administration inquiring, which is self-explanatory. The V.A. did answer my letter and sent me a copy of his discharge papers from what they call "alternate records source" also enclosed.

John's World War I ribbon issued by the State of New York.

A little booklet entitled "The Claims of the Assyrians before the Conference of the Preliminaries of Peace" as well as a paper delivered by Dr. David B. Perly entitled "The Assyrians" These are probably redundant.

Finally, a thumbnail sketch of what I knew of Uncle John.

Sincerely,
Irene Klizus
43 Sarepta Road, Belvidere, NJ 07823

A SHORT SKETCH OF THE LIFE OF ESAU (JOHN) AURAHAM/N FROM A VAGUE MEMORY BY HIS NIECE, IRENE AURAHAN KLISZUS
(APRIL 1999)

John Auraham was born in Gavelin, Persia in 1889 and died on August 9, 1943 and was buried in Evergreen Cemetery, Hillside, New Jersey. His brother Elisha (my father) took care of the arrangements because our family knew nothing of the whereabouts of his two wives.

John and Elisha emigrated together and settled in New York City - at the lower end of Park Avenue so that they could say they lived on Park Avenue. They had left Persia and went to Russia for sometime before they came to America. Since Elisha did speak Russian, I presumed they stayed there for some time.

John was tall and a bon vivant and as you can see from his pictures, he wore fine clothes and drove a Studebaker. He was the exact

Assyrian Diaspora

opposite of my father Elisha. When I was growing up, he was working as a chef in New Jersey at the St. Elizabeth Hospital. He always wore a straw hat and spats.

On several occasions he lived with us - he was probably between wives or jobs. Uncle John was an avid gambler and most of what I remember about him is that he would drive some of his Assyrian cronies to our house where they and my father, played cards all night and I mean all night. One morning my mother had enough and she took her broom and ordered them to leave. Was I glad!!!!

He had a heart attack and died at age 54. My parents arranged his funeral and buried him as a Protestant. Since he was a Catholic and worked for nuns at St. Elizabeth Hospital, they did not attend his funeral. He is buried in an unmarked grave in Evergreen Cemetery.

Assyrian Diaspora

SECTION VIII □ ASSYRIAN RECIPES

Included in this memoir are the following recipes which were familiar fare in a typical Assyrian-American home. Am calling them by their phonetic names.

These recipes were compiled by Assyrian women in the Yonkers, New York Assyrian-American Association.

Assyrian Baked Rice

1 lb. long-grain rice - Recommend Basmati Indian Rice. Has a wonderful aroma and taste.
1 stick melted butter 3 tablespoons salt

Cover rice with cold water, rinse and soak. Soak overnight if desired. Boil 3 quarts of cold water. Drain soaked rice and add to fast boiling water. Boil for approximately 5 to 7 minutes, or until one kernel of rice tastes half-cooked, but not soft. Pour rice into colander and rinse with cold water. Preheat oven to 325 degrees. Use some of the butter for bottom of roasting pan with cover. Pour rice over butter. Add remaining butter. Cover, bake 3/4 hour, shaking roasting pan twice during baking to mix butter with rice. Serves 4.

Addendum from recipe from Mary Yohannan Aurahan (Momma)

Peel about 2 potatoes, or enough when sliced to cover bottom of a large frying pan, or equivalent. Melt some butter in the pan, add sliced potatoes and brown. Remove from heat for a moment, add rice, add blobs of butter, cover with wax paper and steam until rice is separate.

ASSYRIAN □ RICHTA □ NOODLES

5 lbs. flour 7 cups lukewarm water 7 Tablespoons salt

Pour flour into large mixing utensil. Add salt and water and knead until dough has the appearance of a sponge when cut. Divide dough into 11-13 balls. Cover with plastic and blanket overnight. Roll each ball into 18 x 24-inch oblong thin sheets. Cut with knife or pasta cutter into 1/4-inch wide strips. Use plenty of flour to roll and lengthen strips. Hang on clothes line overnight until dry. Remove and brown in a 325 degree oven. Store and use as needed.

These noodles are added to rice that is steaming in the oven method of cooking.

SHURWA (STEW)

2 lbs. lamb or beef in chunks 1 can tomatoes - 16 oz.
1 large onion, chopped 1 tsp. salt
1 green pepper, cubed 1/4 tea. pepper and 1 tbl. paprika
4-5 med. potatoes, peeled

Place meat in saucepan and cover with water. Cook until almost tender and water evaporates. Add chopped onions, black pepper, paprika and salt. Mix thoroughly. Add tomatoes and potatoes. Let simmer until potatoes are cooked. Add green pepper and simmer for 5 minutes. Optional: one small eggplant, cut into chunks.

ASSYRIAN KURUSH (KUR ROOSH)

4 lbs. long-bone roast, cut up for stew 1 large onion, chopped
1 can 16 oz tomatoes, crushed 1- 8 oz can tomato sauce
1 lb. fresh string beans 2 large green peppers, cut into chunks
4 med.-sized onions, wedged 1 lb. fresh mushrooms, left whole if small
1/2 stick butter 1/4 tsp. black pepper, 1 tbl. paprika salt to taste

Cook meat in an 8-quart saucepan with little water until tender. Add chopped onions, black pepper, paprika and salt. Mix well. Add tomato sauce. Cook for 15 minutes under medium heat. Add beans and cook for 10 minutes. In a frying pan saute green pepper,

Assyrian Diaspora

onion wedges and mushrooms together with butter. Cook only half way, do not overcook. Pour into pot and mix carefully. Simmer for 10 minutes and do not overcook. Serve with and over Assyrian rice. 8 servings.

For some reason, pickles go with Kur-roosh

ASSYRIAN HAMBURGERS - ALSO KNOWN AS MOMMABURGERS

2 lbs. lean ground chuck	1/2 tsp. salt - to taste
1 large onion, chopper	1/4 tsp. black pepper
1/4 c. chopped green pepper	1 egg

Mix all ingredients thoroughly in large bowl. Make patties according to desired size. Grill, bake or fry according to desire. Comment: this is recipe used at picnic and hamburgers are grilled, served with chopped dill, fresh coriander and scallions. Serves 6. Also: you can roll Mommaburgers in fine crumbs and fry in butter on the stove.

LU-LA-KABOB

2 lbs. lean ground chuck	1 tsp Season All
1 large onion, chopper	1/2 tsp. salt
1/4 c. chopped green pepper	1/4 tsp. black pepper
1/4 c. chopped fresh dill	1/4 tsp. Accent

Mix all ingredients very well. Take about a cupful and squeeze on a skewer (called Sheesh in Assyrian). Keep working meat on skewer for 5 minutes, or until meat stays on skewers. Cook on grill or on gas stove over medium flame. Served with baked Assyrian rice, chopped greens, dill, scallions and fresh coriander. Serves 6.

SHISH-KEBOB

1 five lb. leg of lamb	1/2 c. vinegar, or juice of 1 lemon, or red wine
2 large onions, sliced	
1 tbl. salt	
1/4 tsp. black pepper	

Remove all fat and gristle from lamb and cut into 1-inch squares. Mix thoroughly with remaining ingredients. Let stand several hours or overnight in refrigerator. Put meat on skewers and cook over charcoal fire or gas broiler until meat is crisply brown on all sides. If desired, alternate pieces of tomato and green pepper with meat. Serve with finely chopped green vegetables such as scallions, parsley and green pepper, fresh dill and fresh cilantro. Serve while hot.

Note: Ask the butcher to bone the meat for you or buy boneless lamb. It's easier to cut into squares for grilling.

JAJIK - A CROWD PLEASER

16 oz. cottage cheese, small curd	1/4 c. finely chopped green pepper
1 - 8 oz. pkg. cream cheese	1/2 c. finely chopped fresh coriander (optional)
1/2 c. finely chopped fresh dill	
1/2 c. finely chopped celery	

Cream cottage cheese with cream cheese together until smooth and free of lumps. Add remaining ingredients, blend well. Serve with crackers or French bread.

Jajek lends itself to double and triple dipping.

MESTA - AKA YOGURT

1/2 gallon whole milk	4 tbs.. plain yogurt
-----------------------	----------------------

Scald milk. Let cool until it no longer burns your little finger (about 110 degrees). Add yogurt for culture. Stir. Pour into crockery

Assyrian Diaspora

bowl, cover with several dish towels. Let it set overnight or all day in a warm place. It keeps for 2-3 weeks in refrigerator. A constant in an Assyrian home was rice soaking and mesta setting.

CABBAGE - DOLMA

3 lbs. boned lamb or beef cut into small pieces -- actually tiny pieces
1/2 c. partially cooked rice 2 stems celery, diced
1/2 bunch fresh dill, chopped 1/2 green pepper, chopped
1/2 bunch coriander, chopped 1 tbl. paprika
2 tbs.. dry sweet basil salt to taste, 2 med. onions, chopped

Stuffing directions: cook meat with a little water until tender. Add black pepper, paprika and one chopped onion. Simmer for a few minutes. Remove from heat. Add rice, dill, coriander, celery, green pepper, salt, sweet basil and remainder of onions. Mix all ingredients together well.

2 heads cabbage, about 6 lbs.

Core cabbage. Pour boiling water over cabbage leaves and cook for about 5 minutes. Break leaves apart or until partially cooked. Do not overcook. Cut each leaf in half lengthwise and cut away the thick center. Place on heaping teaspoonful of stuffing in the center of each cabbage leaf and roll up to cover stuffing. Place in large casserole or roaster. Place each stuffed cabbage in rows, then in layers. Repeat until all stuffing has been used.

Juice of 2 lemons 1--32 oz. bottle catsup

Baking directions: Pour boiling water over dolma until visible, but not covering the top layer. Cover with foil and bake approximately 1-1/2 hours. Remove foil and pour mixture of catsup and lemon juice over top. Continue baking for 1/2 or 3/4 of an hour, until leaves are tender and rice is cooked. If water evaporates, add a little boiled water when pouring in catsup mixture.

Recommendation: Decrease the recipe and make a smaller batch first. This large recipe is very good for a large gathering. Cook a batch of rice, serve with a large green salad and bread. I think the word for cabbage in Assyrian is "Cha l me" . Variations include stuffed tomatoes dolma, stuffed grapeleaves dolma, stuffed eggplant dolma, stuffed grapeleaves dolma. (Grape leaves are "dur-pea" in Assyrian)

HARESSA

1 lb. whole wheat - shelled 1 large fryer or 1 medium capon

Wash and soak wheat in water overnight. Cover chicken with water, cook over medium heat for 1/2 hour. Cool. Skin and debone chicken. Place soaked wheat in a 10-quart pot. Add water to fill 2/3 of pot. Cover and cook over medium heat for 3/4 hour. Stir occasionally. Add boiled water as needed. Add deboned chicken and broth to the wheat. Add enough boiled water to fill 2/3 of pot. Cover. Place in preheated oven at 250 degrees. Bake for 3-4 hours, stirring and beating occasionally with a wooden spoon. Hareesa is ready when chicken and wheat are blended together and have the consistency of oatmeal. Remove from oven. Use electric hand mixer and beat for about 15 minutes. Salt Hareesa when serving. Serve with hot melted butter and ground roasted coriander seeds if desired.

Note: Many of these recipes are used for certain times of the year. Hareesa was an Easter or Christmas meal.

BUSHALA

Bushala is another "calendar" meal. Easter or Christmas.

1/2 gallon yogurt 1 green pepper, chopped
1/2 gallon water 10 c. Swiss chard, chopped or 10 c. fresh
1 egg spinach, chopped
1/4 c. rice
1/4 c. flour 1 bunch fresh coriander, chopped
3 c. chopped celery 1 tablespoon salt

Assyrian Diaspora

2 hot banana pepper

Recommendation: make less than above

Place yogurt and water in an 8-quart pot. With whisk beat in flour, egg and rice.

Add peppers and celery, and place over high heat. Stir constantly until mixture comes to a boil. (stirring keeps yogurt from curdling).

Add Swiss chard or spinach. Keep stirring until vegetables are tender. Turn off heat and add coriander and salt. Stir occasionally.

Keeps well in refrigerator. Can be served hot or cold.

KHIPTI (KIP TEA)

Sauce: 1 cup cracked wheat (Med #2) or 3/4 c. rice 1 large green onion, chopped

1-16 oz can tomatoes - crushed 3/4 stick butter

1 large onion Salt to taste

1 tbl. paprika

Meatballs:

1-1/2 lbs. ground chuck

1 med. onion chopper

1/4 tsp. black pepper

1 tsp. summer savory

1/2 tsp. salt

2 tsp. sweet basil, crushed

1/4 c. raw rice or cracked wheat (fine #1)

3 hard boiled eggs, cut in half

Cover cracked wheat with 8 cups water. Cook for 40 minutes. Add water if necessary. Add tomatoes and simmer 20 minutes. Prepare meatballs by mixing meat, 1/4 tea. black pepper, salt, rice, onion, summer savory and sweet basil, and form into 6-8 meatballs. (if using hard-boiled eggs, wrap meat around 1/2 of an egg and form meatball) Drop meatballs in n sauce and simmer 30 minutes. Stir frequently. Saute onion and green pepper with butter until only glossy. Add salt, 1/2 tea. black pepper and paprika, and stir. Pour into meatball sauce. Simmer 5 minutes. Stir and remove from heat.

EASY KHIPTI/CHIPTI

2-8 oz. cans tomato sauce

1 lb. ground beef

1/4 c. uncooked rice

1 tsp. salt

5 c. water

1 egg

1 small onion, chopper

1/2 c. bread crumbs

1 tbl. butter

Saute onions in butter until transparent. In medium pot combine tomato sauce, water and rice. Stir well and add onions. Place over low flame. In mixing bowl combine meat, salt, egg and bread crumbs. Mix thoroughly. Make 4-6 meatballs according to desired size. Place in tomato mixture and cook about 1 hour over medium flame. Serve with French bread, pickles or tourishye.

TOURSHIYE - TUR SHE A (PICKLED VEGETABLES)

6 cups water

Pickling spices - optional

1/2 c. salt

Suggested vegetables: carrots, celery, banana

Clove of garlic in each quart jar

peppers, cauliflower, cucumber, Jerusalem

1/2 c. sugar

artichokes

Dill

3-1/2 c. white or cider vinegar

Wash vegetables and place in jars. Vegetables can be sliced. Boil water and add vinegar, salt and sugar. Mix thoroughly. When brine is cooled, pour over vegetables in jars. Add garlic, dill and pickling spices to each jar. Note: jars must be washed and sterilized before pickling process begins

SHEE-LED KHULVA (RICE PUDDING--KHULVA IS MILK)

1 cup rice

pinch of salt

Assyrian Diaspora

2 qts milk
2 tablespoons sugar.

1 tea. vanilla
2 beaten eggs

Wash rice in clear water; place in saucepan. Add one quart milk; cook over low flame, stirring until milk is warm; gradually add second quart of milk. Cook rice in this milk. When rice is cooked and mixture thickens, remove from flame and stir for 2 minutes. However, it is urgent that you stir the rice until the mixture is "not too tick, not too tin" You will probably have to stand at the stove, stirring for at least 20-30 minutes. The secret in the pudding is its consistency. Remove from burner, take 2 beaten eggs, mixed with some milk and stir into the rice. Add sugar to taste.

THE PIECE DE RESISTANCE (CADDI AKA CHADDA)

No Assyrian gathering would be complete without a cup of chi (tea) and a piece of chadda.

DOUGH

1 lb. butter
7 cups flour
2 cups milk
1/2 cup sugar

5 eggs
1 tbl. salt
1 tbl. baking powder
3 cakes yeast - 1 oz. each

Directions for dough: Mix flour, salt and baking powder in large bowl. Cut butter into dry ingredients as you would for pie crust. In small bowl mix sugar and yeast and let stand. (This will get syrupy). Bring milk to a boil and then cool to lukewarm. In another bowl beat eggs well and add to lukewarm milk. Add yeast-sugar mixture to egg- milk mixture and mix well. Pour liquids into dry ingredients and blend well. Cover and let rise in a warm place (use heavy blanket over it) for 2 hours. Press dough down and let rise again for one more hour. Divide dough into 5 round balls (let rise for 20 minutes.)

FILLING:

1-1/2 lb. butter sticks 7 cups flour

Directions for filling: Melt butter slowly, add flour and mix constantly until mixture starts to soften, about 40 minutes. Mixing at this point is very important as it burns quickly. The filling can be made the day before.

Baking Directions: Sprinkle flour on table and roll the ball out into a long narrow strip 5 x 20 inches. Spread one cup of filling on half of strip and bring other half over to cover, pinch edges together firmly.

Then roll out until strip is about 3/8 inch thick--4 inches wide by 30 inches long. Cut strips into 10 pieces 4 x 3 inches. Brush pieces with eggs which have been beaten. Sesame seeds could be added to egg mixture if desired.

Place on cookie sheet and let rise for 15 minutes. Bake in 400 degree oven - 15 minutes on first rack, 3 inches from bottom, and then on a higher rack to brown. Be sure to prick caddie before baking. Makes 50 pieces.

Recommendation: On your first try, make a smaller batch. Also, Momma Aurahan shaped her chadda like a pizza--it was one large round pie, filled with the butter filling. This chadda burns readily so keep alert!! Momma used to sit on the kitchen floor and knead, knead, knead.

THIS SECTION CONTAINS A PICTURE ALBUM 1900-1999

Page

Left: Dr. Asahel Grant, the first American Missionary Doctor and Mar Yohannan, Bishop of the Assyrian Church and friend of Justin Perkins

Gulpashan Assyrian Church. The minister, Kasha Yohannan, is the paternal grandfather of Mary, Juan, and William Yohannan, father of Shalem Solomon

Assyrian Diaspora

Yohannan. Picture taken by Sylvia Aurahan Weidemann when she visited Iran in ?

Shalem Solomon: wedding picture to Joseph Yohannan: circa 1900

Joseph Yohannan, wedding picture to Shalem Solomon: circa 1900

Shalem Yohannan, Gulpashan: circa 1900

Gulpashan: The Solomon Family: circa 1904:

Back Row, Standing Left to Right: Abraham Solomon; Martha Solomon; Shalem Yohannan holding daughter Mary; Eshoo Solomon
Seated, Left to Right: Aunty Asiat (Babilla--Sophie's Mom); Grandfather Solomon, holding Nano (Careb Sheila's mom), Step-grandmother Subba holding her daughter Gozel; Aunty Miriam (Careb) with her son Jonathan (Uni.) Not in picture Esther Karem

Top Left: William Yohannan; Right: Standing left to right: Uncle Mooshie Yohannan and Yuel Zia, cousin of Joseph Yohannan. Lower Left: Shalem Yohannan (duplicate). Right, Tabriz, circa 1923: Left to right, standing: Emma, daughter of Dr. Lincoln; Mary Yohannan. Seated left to right: Victoria, daughter of the Rev. Joseph Ulmas Cleabal; next: name unknown but is the sister of the Rev. Michele

08 Tabriz, Circa 1922: Back row, standing, Sarah, unidentified; Schmeul, Christiana, Malcolm, Ludia, Almas: center, left to right: Another Ludia, unidentified, Maki, Baba, Ludia, Yoel, Mary Yohannan. Seated, left to right: Yoel, Shushie, Florence, Mary (Careb), unidentified
Bottom: Picture of students at their school in Gulpashan. The teacher standing left unidentified but the teacher on the right, standing, is Hannah Yohannan, paternal aunt of Mary, Juan and William. Circa: 1907-8.
First row seated, left to right), Nano Abraham (cousin of Hannah), Juan Yohannan (Jacob) Jennie Solomon (Careb); Esyet Solomon (Babilla), another Jennie, Khunah, who is no relation.

Second Row, standing, left to right: Nano Solomon (Careb), Narkis, Mary Yohannan (Aurahan); teacher; Esyet Badal, Shalomet Rual (Andrew's sister), Rachel Sargis-deceased, so advised by Mary Aurahan when she identified children to her daughter □1970□.

Standing, third row, left to right: Gozel Solomon, (Mary Yohannan's maternal aunt), 3 unidentified boys; Andrew Raul, Joshua Elia, Isaac Sargis, Freddie Babilla (Shadrack's brother) Gozel died in 1999..
.Back Row, Standing: Esther David, Miriam (Zia's daughter-he was the principal), two unknown boys; Shushie Elia; Khunah, Unknown, Shadrack Babilla (Sophie's first cousin)

09 Top, Family of David and Juan Yohannan Jacob, Urumia, Circa 193?
Standing left to right: Juan, Jack, Joseph. Seated: Unidentified man holding Julie, David Jacob holding Yuash (Peter)
Bottom Picture: Juan and David in Center, with friends from Gulpashan. Probably Yukhana and Maryam Odisho □ 1962

10 Top Left: Teddi Yohannan, brother of Joseph and Hannah, Circa 1915. Teddi was not allowed into the US because of his health. He remained in France.
Top right: All others on page unidentified

11 Standing Right: William Yohannan, others unidentified, circa 1924

12 Top right: Juan in center, others unidentified. Probably Presbyterian Church Gathering in Tehran
Center: Tehran, 1958, Family with Kasha Polus Sada, The minister of the Presbyterian Church, Tehran
Bottom Left: Kenneth Shlimun
Bottom Right: Jacob family taking tea at Urmia House: Seated, Left to right: Jack, Lily, Juan, Yoash (Peter) Standing: Julie

13 Top: David, Juan, Anna from Gogtapeh, Joseph, Julia standing with David
Center Left: 2 unidentified women
Center Right, top: Juan and Margaret Dooman Mirza (Moqaddam) 1950□, Urmia

Assyrian Diaspora

Bottom Right: October 27, 1946 □ See page 14

14. October 27, 1946: enlarged of page 13: Standing Rear: Joseph, Shushie, Agnes, Malcom's wife, Malcolm, Stella, Shushie daughter, Juan, Katherine, Shushie's daughter. Bottom children, left to right: Hilda, Malcolm's daughter, Billy, Shushie's son, Esther, Lillie's daughter, Lillie, Julie Jacob.
15. Enlarged picture of children: Tabriz 1946: Left to Right: Julie, Juan's daughter; Esther, Lillie's daughter, Hilda, Malcolm's daughter, Billy, with braids, Shushie's son.
16. Top Left: Abadan, 1946, Juan with cousins; Center: Shushie with her niece Baby Shamie, age 8 and one-half old; son Billy taken by Pera in his own yard
Top right: man, woman and child, also see page 15 □ man in that picture also.
Center: Left, Lillie Karam, sister of Malcolm; duplicate; Bottom Left Abadan 1946; Joe Jacob □ on his right, Stella, left Aunt Lillie; Bottom center: Joe Jacob in
Center with friends, one is Charles Sayad before his abduction in 1945? Bottom Right: Duplicate
17. Top Left: Gulpashan, vineyard of Rabi Jurusha (Naby orchard walls in background. Standing, left to right: 2 sons of Amma, Julie; daughter of Amma, Sons of Soroyshe, and Muslin work hands. Seated: Amma, her mother Jurusha, Juan Jacob; daughter/wife of Lincoln. Top right: Juan and Julie at grape harvest time in Gulpashan vineyard (in Assyrian word for vineyard is Chir-man-ee);
Center Left: Gulpashan friends, Juan and other Assyrians, 1950's. Center right Julie in Gulpashan, possibly with Jaku, Naby neighbor. Bottom: Joe Jacob standing, left to right: Agnes Karam, Katherine, Shushie's daughter with her dog Teddy and Katherine's brother Billy
18. Left, Unidentified baby; Right, Joseph Jacob, below unidentified woman, Dr. Jack Jacob
19. Top left: Joe Jacob 1925 with sacrificial lamb; Juan and David, unidentified friends; Center bottom: Gulpashan, see also ? Bottom right: Juan with Jack and Julie, Peter standing
20. Top Left: John (Esau) Auraham with unidentified man. Right; John and his younger brother, Elisha, 1917. Bottom left: Esau, rear left with friends.
21. Esau Auraham
22. Esau Auraham 1917, private in US Army
23. John (Esau) and Elisha Aurahan
24. Mary Yohannan Aurahan and Elisha Aurahan, wedding picture, 1925 Marseillie, France
25. Esau and one of his two wives, New York City
26. Wedding of Rose and Absolom Careb □ others unidentified
27. 1929 New Britain, Connecticut. Mary Aurahan holding daughter Irene, Nano Careb standing behind her. In background, Absolom Careb (Eddie's Sweet Shop, Main Street, New Britain, Connecticut
28. Margaret Sargis and William Yohannan wedding picture 1936. Connecticut
29. Margaret Sargis wearing karakul hat, circa 1930's
30. Top Left: left to right, Elizabeth, N. J. circa 1927-Sarah Isaac and Mary Careb with their children Right: left to right, seated Elisha Aurahan, Sarah Isaac, Neweya Isaac, children left to right: Irene and Sylvia Aurahan, Susan Isaac, Lincoln Isaac seated in front. Bottom left: Lincoln and Susan Isaac, CA 1933; Bottom Right, New Britain Connecticut: left to right: young man probably Ronnie Careb, Rose Careb, unknown, Mary Aurahan, Absolom Careb, In rear maybe Richard Careb. Young

Assyrian Diaspora

woman not identified

31. Elizabeth, New Jersey, outside Greystone Presbyterian Church, left to right: Lorraine Yohannan, Sue Isaac, John Yohannan, Mae Yohannan, Sylvia Aurahan. Circa 1940
32. USA, standing Elea Chalabie with William Yohannan
33. South Beach, New York, circa 1940, left to right, unidentified guest, Joseph Yohannan, Mae and Lorraine Yohannan, Irene Aurahan, Evelyn Isaacs, wife of Lincoln, and David Yohannan, father of Elizabeth, Mae and Lorraine.
34. William Yohannan, U.S. Navy 1944
35. Gary, Indiana, circa 1927 Top:Left to Right: Mary Careb, Nano Careb with their children Grace and Walter (Walter deceased as a young boy-leukemia)
Bottom: Tabriz, circa 1922 Standing l to r: Yoel, Schmucl, Nickali, Baba, Youtam, Not identified.
Seated l to r: Bulbul (Mary Careb), Ludia, Mary, Yohannan, Shushie
36. Union, New Jersey, 1950 Top -left to right: Jennie Careb, Sarah Isaac, Mary Aurahan. Bottom: standing Albert (Babs) Careb with girlfriend Betty (became wife) seated left to right: Jennie and Sue Careb, Mary Aurahan, gentlemen on right, Neweya Isaac (husband of Sarah)
37. 1955 Malcolm and Family just arrived to USA from Iran: Left to right
Lincoln Isaac, Malcolm Karem, Mary Aurahan holding Laura Kliszus (her granddaughter) Agnes Karem. Two children: Hilda and Carol Karem. Union, NJ
38. Union, N. J., 1955 left to right: Dee Aurahan Barth, holding James Jr., Sylvia Aurahan, Hilda and Carol Karem. Seated left to right: Agnes Karem, Mary Aurahan, Malcolm Karen, Irene Aurahan Kliszus holding Laura, Standing by carriage, Ed Kliszus, Ed Jr. in stroller.
39. Gary, Indiana 1969, top, left to right: Mary Careb, David Jacob, unidentified woman, Mary Aurahan, Mark, Joseph and Grace Jacob
Bottom left to right:David and Grace Jacob, Mary Careb, unidentified woman, Mary Aurahan, Mark and Joseph Jacob
40. Top, left to right, Union, N. J., Grace Careb and Sylvia Aurahan. Right, Mary Aurahan and Mary Careb ca. 1960
Bottom left: Standing: Unidentified woman, Grace Careb, left to right, David and Mark Careb with Joseph; Bottom right: February 1949: Decatur, Georgia, left to right: Marge Sargis Yohannan, Ed Kliszus, Claire Sargis
41. Top left, Union, N. J., left to right: Mary Aurahan, Grace Careb, unidentified woman. Right: Elea Chalabie and Dee Aurahan; Bottom left, Bristol, Connecticut, Jennie and Sam Careb; Right: Mary Aurahan in her garden, Union, N. J. ca. 1960
42. Idelwild Airport-Kennedy, New York City, left to right: Mary Aurahan and family waiting for arrival of her sister Juan, whom she hasn't seen for almost 40 years. Left to right: Laura Kliszus, Mary, Irene Kliszus, Sylvia Weidemann and Dee Barth. Three boys, left to right: Ed Kliszus Jr., Michael Barth and Jim Barth Jr. Arrival: Mary and Juan embracing, William in background. Woman on left is Sarah Isaac.
43. Left to Right: William, Juan and Mary Kennedy Airport, NYC; Right: Sylvia Weidemann, Juan, Mary, Irene Kliszus
44. Left to Right: Union, N. J., home of Mary and Elisha. left: Dee Barth, Juan, Nanijan Neesan from Elizabeth, N. J. Right: Nanijan, William, Juan
45. Reunion: Left: Absolem and Rose Careb; Right, Peter Jacob, William Yohannan, Absolem Careb, Juan and Rose Careb
46. Union, N. J., William Yohannan and Sylvia Weidemann, Right: Juan and Mary and unidentified woman

Assyrian Diaspora

47. Left: Lincoln Isaac and Juan, Right: Dee Barth and William, Joe Jacob in background
48. Left: Joe Jacob □ Right: Dee Barth and Pete Jacob
49. Left: William Yohannan and Laura Klizsus, Peter Jacob in background, Right- Babs Careb
50. Union, N. J. left to right: Renee (Irene)Klizsus, Laura and □Uncle Vilo□ right:left to right: Renee, Dee, Uncle, Laura
51. Left to Right: Jim Barth Jr., Renee, Laura, Uncle holding Amy Klizsus, Ed Klizsus Jr and Michael Barth
52. Left to Right: Juan, William and Mary Yohannan reunited
53. Grace Careb and Joe Jacob wedding picture. June 21, 1952
54. Irene Aurahan, Elizabeth, N. J. 1939
55. Irene Aurahan, Elizabeth, N.J. 1940-41
56. Roselle, N. J. Left to Right: Sylvia Aurahan Weidemann, Mary Yohannan Aurahan, Dee Aurahan Barth, Irene Aurahan Klizsus-1970□
57. Cuba, 1946□ U.S. Navy□ □ME□is Ed Klizsus
58. February 5, 1949, Union, New Jersey. Wedding picture. Elisha and Mary Aurahan with bride, Irene and Groom, Edward Anthony Klizsus
59. Christmas, 1953, Union, N. J. Standing, Florence Klishus (Klizsus) Toth, Sylvia Aurahan, Ed Klizsus Sr., Irene Aurahan Klizsus, seated; Mary Aurahan holding Ed Klizsus Jr., Janice Toth; seated in front: James Barth Sr., Dee Barth holding Charles Jr. and Renee Klizsus
60. February 5, 1974. 25th wedding anniversary of Edward and Irene Klizsus at the Towers, Springfield, N. J. Standing left to right: Renee (Irene), Edward, Laura Seated: Amy, Ed Sr. and Irene Klizsus
61. On January 1, 1999, Mr. and Mrs. Edward Klizsus of White Township, N.J., invited their three daughters, one son, four grandsons, six granddaughters, two sisters, one nephew, two first cousins, two enduring friends, and all the various spouses to brunch at Windows on the World, on the 107th floor of the World Trade Center in New York City, to celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary. A jazz trio, led by their son Ed. Jr. performed for the guests. Ed and Irene were married on February 5, 1949 at Greystone Presbyterian Church in Elizabeth, New Jersey. Mr. Klizsus retired in 1991 from Union County Technical Schools in Scotch Plains, N.J. where he taught Machine Trades. Mrs. Klizsus worked as a secretary for the Summit,NJ Board of Education. She retired in 1993 when they moved to White Township.
62. Renee's family: Dr. Russel Lander, Susan Irene, Allison Claire, Peter Hawkins, Renee Klizsus Lander and Bonnie
63. Ed Jrs. Family: Joyce Ljungquist Klizsus, Ed, seated, Jeffrey Edward and Erika Anne
64. Laura's family: standing, Thomas Edward (Ted) and Melissa Keyser; Thomas and Laura
65. Martin and Amy Rowshandel wedding picture, June 1993, home of Ed and Joyce Klizsus, Washinton, N. J.
66. Michael Simon and Alexandra Rowshandel. Framingham, MA 1998
67. Children of Gilbert Solomon, son of Eshoo and Lily Solomon, San Francisco,

Assyrian Diaspora

California, 1957. Top: Barbara, Jean , Mark; Bottom, Jean on left, 10 yrs.and Barbara, age 13.

68. Marge and William Yohannan, Roselle, N. J. ca 1970

69. Obituaries of Elisha and Mary Aurahan