

THE EMIGRATION OF THE ARMENIANS TO THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA AND THE FORMATION OF THE ARMENIAN COMMUNITY

(Beginning of XVII Century till 1924)

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A thorough study of the history of the origin and development of the largest and most organized Armenian community in the United States of America is timely and of primary importance as a link in the whole chain of the studies of the history of the Armenian Diaspora and of the American ethnic groups.

Under various historical circumstances, the Armenians were compelled to leave their native land and to emigrate to different countries of the world, including the USA, for individual, educational, economic, political, cultural, religious and other reasons.

Historical reliable documents reveal that a few Armenians were among the European settlers in North America in the beginning of XVII Century. Thus, in 1618, the first Armenian (from Persia), John Martin (John Martin the Armenian), set foot in the newly-formed American Colony of Virginia and became a tobacco-dealer, and later, in 1653, two Armenians were invited from Izmir (Ottoman Empire) to restore the silkworm-breeding of the Virginia Colony suffering a major setback and to communicate their skill to the native people. One of them is referred to as George Hay (George the Armenian).

Very scanty, often conjectural pieces of information have been kept about the Armenians emigrated during the subsequent years to America. In the period covering XVII–XVIII Centuries, Armenians arrived mainly from certain European countries having rather active relations with Great Britain (particularly from Holland), as well as from India, and were resettled in the various newly-created colonies (Virginia, Massachusetts, South Carolina, Georgia). Thus, the first Armenian who settled in Massachusetts in 1682 was the Hungarian-Armenian scientist Stepan Zadori (possibly a variant of the Armenian surnames Zadourian,

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Assadourian or Astvadsatourian); then the clergyman, Reverend Fr. Peter Toostian (possibly Petros Doostrian) and a member of his diocese, Jacob Sadouri (possibly a variant of the Armenian names-surnames Hakob Sadourian or Assatourian or Astvadsatourian), who settled in South Carolina in 1719; subsequently, there is mention of the cultivator Stepan Tarrian (or Teryen, Tarryen, possibly Terian), who settled in Georgia in 1738¹.

Thus, it is obvious from the scrappy pieces of information available about the first few Armenians who emigrated to America during the period of the British colonialism that their majority were the Armenians (or their alienated generations) scattered in the different European countries owing to economic and historical circumstances. These emigrants, being connected with Great Britain in trade and in other spheres, had, for various and mainly individual motives, moved to a newly-formed colony and were drawn into the diverse fields of its economic and spiritual life.

It is difficult to determine the exact number of Armenians emigrated to America during the given period of the British colonialism, since no documents have been preserved about the registration of newcomers, including those of the Armenians, till 1820.

It should be noted that the settlement of these few Armenians in America at that period is not connected with the intentional emigration to USA from the various Armenian-inhabited regions in the subsequent years; they were merely individuals within the main stream of emigrants².

Later, the main stream of the Armenian emigrants to the USA started in the first half of 19th Century as a result of the educational-illuminative activity developed by the American Protestant preachers in the Ottoman Empire. The American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, which had the object of "spreading the Bible throughout the world"³, built, through the Armenian Mission founded in 1831 in the Bebek district of Constantinople evangelical churches, schools and colleges where courses on a European and American educational level

¹ **Malcom V.M.**, The Armenians in America. Boston, Chicago, 1919, pp. 52, 56–57. **Tashjian J.H.**, The Armenians of the United States and Canada, Boston, 1947, pp. 3, 7–12. **Wertsman V.**, The Armenians in America. 1618–1976. A Chronology & Fact Book. New York, 1978, p. 1.

² **Ավագյան Բ.**, Ամերիկայի Միացյալ Նահանգների հայ գաղութի պատմությունը (սկզբնավորումից մինչև 1924 թ.), Ե., 2000, էջ 17:

³ **Ճիզմեճեան Մ.Գ.**, Խարբերդ եւ իր զաւակները, Ֆրէզնո, 1955, էջ 103:

were organized. Worthy of remembrance are the Robert College (1862, Constantinople), the American University (1864, Beirut), the Girls' College of Constantinople (1873, Constantinople), the College of Central Turkey (1876, Ayntap), the Euphrates College (1878, Harpoot), the Girls' College of Central Turkey (1882, Marash), the Anatolia College (1836, Marzvan), the St. Paul Institution (1888, Tarson), etc.⁴ These institutions, which were "the means of peaceful penetration"⁵ of American ideas, have also greatly contributed to the formation of the western outlook of the Armenian students. At the same time, the significance of the enlightening activity promoted by the American Protestant preachers in the national, spiritual and conscious awakening of the Armenian people groping in the centuries-old backwardness and the patriarchal customs prevailing in the Ottoman Empire is undeniable.

The evangelical sermons of the American preachers and the knowledge communicated by them, which had found, on the whole, a positive acceptance among the Armenian population, as well as the inspiring talks about the New World could not leave the philomathic Armenian youths living a spiritual renaissance indifferent and who, attending American schools and colleges, fixed gradually their gaze on the country of freedom and of large opportunities beyond the ocean to study modern professions (mainly theology, medicine, technology and science) in the higher institutions there and to serve their nation on their return home. notaben

Encouraged by the American preachers, the sixteen-year old alumnus of the Missionary School in Constantinople, Khachatur Oskanian, became, in 1834, the initiator of the migratory movement of the Armenian students to USA. Graduating from the New York University, he became later a well-known journalist in the American and Armenian press. Being the first Armenian intellectual in the USA and promoting a nation-supporting activity, he published the book entitled "The Sultan and His People", in English which introduced the American community to the history and culture of the Armenians. He also held a number of posts in various American institutions (clerk at the New York Custom-House, head of the

⁴ Ճակատագրական դեպքեր հայ պատմության մեջ, աս.տ., աս.թ., էջ 83:

⁵ Ամերիկյան դեսպան Հենրի Մորգենթաուի հուշերը և հայկական եղեռնի գաղտնիքները, Ե., 1990, էջ 55:

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Law Library at the Columbia University, member and later president of the New York Press Club, consul of the Ottoman Empire in New York)⁶.

During the subsequent year, a group of Armenians left for the USA chiefly for educational purposes. Thus, in 1837, Senekerim Ter-Minassian, an alumnus of the Evangelical School of Constantinople, went to the USA and studied for two years at the Princeton University, first in the branch of theology and then in that of medicine and returned to the fatherland to put into practice the latest achievements of medicine⁷.

In the given period, the Armenians emigrated to the USA also as valets of Protestant preachers. One of them, for instance, Tadevossian, emigrated in 1841 as the valet of the preacher H. Dwight, but later, he was engaged in the manufacture of “rahat lokum”, which he named “fig halva”. In the same year, Harutyun Vehapetian went to the USA and attended the Union Theological Seminary and later he accepted the post of Patriarch in Constantinople and in Jerusalem. The first Armenian who adopted Protestantism under the influence of American preachers in the Ottoman Empire, Hovhannes Ter-Sahakian, attended the same seminary of Theology in 1842 and later studied at the Universities of Yale and Andover and also returned to Constantinople to hold the post of a Protestant preacher⁸.

Christapor Ter-Serobian, who emigrated in 1843 and specialized in chemistry, medicine, pharmacy and other fields, became the first Armenian-American inventor and rendered an important service to the American state by inventing the specific black and green dyes used, up to this day, in the manufacture of the currency bill (dollar) of the country and not liable to counterfeit. Ch. Ter-Serobian's invention was estimated by the American government as a “Divine Gift”, inasmuch as it put an end to the large-scale counterfeiting, and the author of the invention was awarded a bonus of 6000 dollars. Ch. Ter-Serobian returned subsequently to the Ottoman Empire and officiated at the Sultan's treasury till the end of his days⁹.

⁶ Ավագյան Ք., op. cit., p. 18. Tashjian J.H., op. cit., pp. 13–14. Մուշեղ Եպիսկոպոս, Ամերիկահայ տարեցոյցը, Ա տարի, Պոստոն, 1912, էջ 16–18:

⁷ Մուշեղ Եպիսկոպոս, op. cit., p. 22.

⁸ Ibid, p. 23. Arpee L., A History of Armenian Christianity from the Beginning to Our Own Time, New York, 1946, p. 266.

⁹ Մուշեղ Եպիսկոպոս, op. cit., pp. 23–24.

One of the first Armenians to emigrate to America was the brother of the Very Reverend Father Ghevond Alishan of the Mkhitarist Congregation of Venice, who, beginning from 1845, lived for some time in Washington and then in Boston. In the years 1848–1850, Sargis Khachaturian from Constantinople arrived in the USA and studied dentistry in Boston. He later returned to his birthplace and founded a dental clinic named “S. Khachaturian and Son” in the district of Pera, Constantinople¹⁰.

Since the initial activity of the American preachers was confined to Constantinople and its environs, consequently the first above-cited Armenian students, a little more than a dozen in number, were from Constantinople and became specialized mainly in theology, medicine and other branches of science. For these people, the USA “had been only a station in their lives and a period of studentship”¹¹, after which many of them returned to the home country.

In addition to the fact that the American preachers put the education system of the Armenians in the Ottoman Empire on new modern grounds, they also spared no effort to improve and perfect the skill of handicraftsmen having as a fundamental goal to check the gradually increasing emigration from the country by creating favorable labor conditions there. The well-known preacher, the founder of the Robert College, Cyrus Hamlin played a great and invaluable role in that field by opening various workshops adjoining the schools, where modern methods of production were taught. He was of the opinion that “the only way for keeping that laborious people in their country was to teach them handicraft, consequently handicraft should be taught them along with education”¹².

None the less, the stream of Armenians to America did not come to a stop. The prospects of attaining economic prosperity, as well as the hope-giving state of their fellow-countrymen in the new world encouraged not only the Armenian students, but, beginning from the 50s of XIX century, also the handicraftsmen and the merchants. The greater part of the latter soon returned to the native land. Some of them, however, met with propitious economic conditions and settled there and, not breaking their relations with the fatherland, established occasional trade relations, rendered material and moral assistance to their fellow-countrymen and contributed to the organization of ecclesiastical, educational and cultural lives of

¹⁰ Ibid, pp. 24, 26, 31–43.

¹¹ Ibid, p. 30.

¹² Ibid, p. 27.

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their native cradles. Such were the merchant from Khasgyugh, the first Armenian-American benefactor, Sargis Minassian and later, the wealthy Aslan Sahakian from Tigranakert and many others. Hakob Matevossian imported to Constantinople the largest in the Ottoman Empire printing-house supplied with the newest equipment, while Minas Karapetian introduced the contemporary methods of furniture-making¹³.

The first few Armenians, who had received their education and had found their security in the New World, participated in the Civil War (1861–1865) waged for the unification of the USA, supplying the Northern Army with 30 volunteers and one enlisted private soldier, while the ambulance surgeons Simon Minassian, Karapet Galoustian and Paronik Matevossian devotedly provided their services in the hospitals of Philadelphia. The lawyer and preacher Thomas Corvin from the State of Ohio, a Hungarian-Armenian in origin and descending from one of the oldest American families, was among the outstanding and influential orators who fought for the unification of the country and for peace and who held various high civil posts (Secretary of the State Treasury of USA, governor of the State of Ohio, representative of that same State in the Congress for a long period, Ambassador of the USA in Mexico in 1861)¹⁴.

At that period, representatives of the female sex also emigrated to America for educational purposes.

In the middle of XIX Century and particularly after the Civil War, the awakening started in the American economic, public and political life favored the increase in the number of Armenians departing to the USA. Thus, if there were about 55 Armenians in the USA in the years 1850–1870, their number attained 70 in the beginning of the 70s.¹⁵

Following the enthronement of Sultan Abdul Hamid II in 1876 and the Russian-Turkish War of 1877–1878, the persecutions started against the Armenians, and the economic collapse, as well as the expansion of the spiritual, educational and economic activities of the American preachers in the large Armenian-inhabited centers gave an impetus to the subsequent emigration from almost all the regions of the country, embracing not only the students,

¹³ Ibid, pp. 26, 28.

¹⁴ Tashjian J.H., op. cit., pp. 12, 15, 55. Մուշեղ Եպիսկոպոս, op. cit., pp. 26, 28.

¹⁵ Malcom V.M., op. cit., p. 59. Tashjian J.H., op. cit., p. 15. Մուշեղ Եպիսկոպոս, op. cit., p. 33. Buxton N., Buxton Rev. H., Travel and Politics in Armenia, London, 1914, p. 220.

handicraftsmen and merchants, but also peasants burdened by heavy taxes and destitute workmen. Their majority, not having the intention of settling there, endeavored to work temporarily and, after gaining a certain amount of money, to return to the native cradles with a view to improving the financial situation of their families. However, the favorable labor conditions offered to the new immigrants, when they earned in one day what they earned in the Ottoman Empire in one month or in one year, urged many of them to settle there for good.

If, up to that time, the Armenians looked for jobs mainly in Izmir, Constantinople, Adana and the neighboring countries to improve their living conditions, they directed thereafter their gaze to distant shores, where “America promises everything. ...Fabulous stories are related here of the rapidity with which wealth is obtained there...”¹⁶ A great number of Armenian youths who had studied in American educational institutions also left for “the country of great opportunities” and were drawn there into business enterprises. Whereas the wealthy Armenian merchants, who had already extended their commercial activities in the European markets, abstained in the given period from emigrating to the USA, the smart “middle-class” dealers started their businesses in the New Land. Hence, that new emigration of the Armenians to the USA was stipulated by the grave economic conditions rather than the political situation.¹⁷

Beginning from the eighties of 19th century, when the educational-illuminative activity of the American evangelical preachers (foundation of churches, elementary schools, high-schools and colleges and other cultural centers) developed and spread nearly in all large centers of the Ottoman Empire, the emigration of the Armenians (mainly bachelors), almost from all the provinces and particularly from Harpoot, increased, inasmuch as the plain of Harpoot, which was “the richest country and the most inviting and promising missionary field” in the Ottoman Empire, had become, beginning from 1852, the center of activity of the American preachers in Eastern Turkey; at the same time, there was also the well-known Euphrates College founded in 1878, which “became a large institution of

¹⁶ Աշճեան Ա. Քինյ., Վիճակացոյց եւ պատմութիւն առաջնորդական թեմին Հայոց Ամերիկայի. 1948, Նիւ Եորք, 1949, էջ 17: **Mirak R.**, *Torn Between Two Lands. Armenians in America, 1890 to World War I.* Cambridge, 1983, pp. 36, 40, 41. **Buxton N., Buxton Rev. H.**, op. cit., p. 220.

¹⁷ Ավագյան Ք., op. cit., pp. 21–22.

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enlightenment for decades”¹⁸. Nevertheless, the stream of Harpoot Armenians to the New Land had also economic motives.

The Armenians also departed from other Armenian-inhabited regions subjected to the influence of American preachers, for instance, Moosh and Bitlis, from where a considerable number of Armenians had left for America in 1864, barely three years after the foundation of the evangelical missions¹⁹.

The preachers worried in the 1880s about the increasing number of emigrating Armenians in which the percentage of the educated stratum was not negligible, regretfully noted that the Armenian students and youngsters were leaving to “cash in on the present “Boom” in Southern California; and in the estimation of our poor, down-trodden people here, have amassed fortunes, or are obtaining incredibly large wages. Glowing reports encourage emigration among the young, and teaching the young men English only abets this “unfortunate movement””²⁰. Promoting, in this respect, the rise in the educational level of the philomathic Armenian youth in the American higher institutions, many of the Protestant preachers were, at the same time, interested in and anxious about the return to the mother country of the Armenian youths who had received a first-rate education in the American higher educational institutions, regarding them as the followers of their mission in enlightening the new generations in the Armenian-inhabited territories of the Ottoman Empire, consequently, they frequently laid obstacles to avert the emigration of students, by refusing to teach them English or hindering their departure to the United States²¹.

Though it was difficult for the youths who had had a higher education and had studied at the universities of New York, Princeton, Yale, Andover, Boston, Troy, Amherst, Clark, Wisconsin and other renowned institutions, who had bright prospects and liberal ideas, to adapt themselves anew and work under the conditions of conservative and reactionary customs, none the less, the greater part of the Armenians who had acquired a specialty, returned home to put their knowledge and skill in the service of the mother country.

¹⁸ **Mirak R.**, op. cit., p. 40. **Մարտիրոսեան Լ.**, Ամերիկահայութիւնը երէկ եւ այսօր, Պէյրութ, 1973, էջ 8: **Deranian H.M.**, Worcester is America. The Story of Worcester Armenians: The Early Years. Worcester, 1998, p. 43.

¹⁹ **Mirak R.**, op. cit., p. 42.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid, p. 37.

Near the end of the 1880s, the United States, where already 1,500 Armenians lived, had also become a political asylum and a field of free activities for the leaders of the Armenian revolutionary parties (Hnchakian, Dashnaktsakan), who, being naturalized there as American citizens, entered the Ottoman Empire without any difficulty and promoted revolutionary activities among the Armenians. That is why, the Turkish state, which had, until then, no definite policy with regard to the Armenians emigrating to the USA, began soon to introduce restrictions and, at times, to completely hamper the emigration of Armenians to America, with a view to avoiding the danger of penetration of revolutionary ideas from abroad²².

Till 1908, the Ottoman Empire did not officially recognize the right of its subjects to emigrate, hence it created obstacles not only to individual Armenian emigrants, but later, also to their families wishing to leave for the USA. In 1900, the Sultanate of Turkey was obliged, under the pressure of the American government, to acknowledge, in fact only formally, the right of the kinsfolk (wives, children and others) of its former subjects, who had been naturalized American citizens, to emigrate freely to the USA. After being neglected for three years by the Turkish officials, this agreement was implemented starting from 1903, when, by the command of the American higher representatives, a group of needy Armenian families who had the protection of the American consulate in the Ottoman Empire, were transferred to the USA under the guidance of bodyguards. That practically put an end to all the restrictions to the emigration of the families of the Armenian-Americans who had stayed behind in the motherland, though the difficulties persisted²³.

Thus, beginning from the eighties of XIX Century, the emigration of the Armenians from nearly the whole territory of the Ottoman Empire to the USA attained considerable dimensions, embracing numerous tradesmen, artisans, peasants, people looking for employment, as well as students and political refugees; the "American fever" was mainly spread among the unmarried youths (95%²⁴), who left their kinsfolk and their properties in the motherland and emigrated to foreign lands with the hope of finding success, wealth and freedom,

²² Ավագյան Ք., op. cit., p. 23. Mesrobian A.S., "Like One Family": The Armenians of Syracuse. Ann Arbor, 2000, pp. 24, 25.

²³ Mirak R., op. cit., pp. 42, 43, 151.

²⁴ Մուշեղ Եպիսկոպոս, op. cit., p. 211.

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so that, returning in 1–2 years to their native cradles, they could pay their debts, buy a house, land and animals and be able to lead a decent life.

There were many among those who emigrated to the USA, who, having success in manufacture or other domains, returned to their native dwelling-places bringing with them modern machine tools, factories and other equipment with the object of developing the backward local economy.²⁵

Finding economic, political, cultural and religious freedom and prosperity in the USA, many of these emigrants settled in the New World, thereby reducing the number of people returning to the homeland; moreover, these new settlers promoted the emigration of new fellow-countrymen to the USA by sending them encouraging letters and financial aid: "...When the first Armenian sent a *cheque* of fifty pounds home from America, the hearts of those who saw or heard it melted with joy ... and since then every Armenian wished to come to America to restore his wrecked economy. And thus, the emigration from the country to America began. In those days, the talk for every Armenian was:

If there is a priest, why should a *sin* exist?

If there is America, why should a *debt* exist?

And gradually, the enthusiasm in those wishing to go to America was around to such an extent that the Armenian Patriarchate of Constantinople and the Sublime Port got horrified..."²⁶

The immigrant Armenians, who had come toward the end of XIX century "in search of good luck", settled permanently in the US and gradually spread from the north-eastern states of the country to the central and western states. In the first decades of XX Century, the Armenians had already settled nearly in every state of the vast country. The successful, educated and practical Armenians who adapted themselves to the American life prepared all the necessary conditions to give material and moral assistance to the thousands of fellow-countrymen who were compelled to emigrate in the following decades due to the pressing historical circumstances, as well as to rally and to become organized as a community²⁷.

It is difficult to determine the exact number of emigrated Armenians to the USA until 1899, since all the immigrants entering the USA up to that date (from 1820 to 1898) were registered by the corresponding bureau not according to their

²⁵ Mirak R., op. cit., 1983, p. 13.

²⁶ Ասպարէզ: Յիսնամեակ. 1908–1958, Ֆրէզնո, ա.թ., էջ 393:

²⁷ Ավագյան Ք., op. cit., pp. 24–25.

national origin, but according to their geographical provenance, that is, to their country of emigration. Thus, those who had emigrated from the Ottoman Empire until 1868 had been registered as emigrants from “Turkey in Europe”, while those who had emigrated after 1869 had been registered as well as emigrants from “Turkey in Asia” or from “Armenia”. Consequently, the number of Armenians entering the USA in the given period is extremely relative. It is only after 1899 that the emigrants were registered according to their national origin, thus making possible to define the exact number of the Armenians emigrating to the USA.²⁸

On the whole, if there were around 500 Armenians in the USA in the beginning of the 1880s, then at the end of that same decade their number had attained about 1,500 (971 among them being from “Armenia” and 450 from “Turkey in Asia” and from “Turkey in Europe,” which formed a considerable part of the total of 4,242 emigrants arriving from the Empire). Besides, according to the American statistical data, the new-comers were mainly males (92% from “Armenia,” 85% from “Turkey in Asia”)²⁹.

The stream of Americans to the USA attained rather large proportions beginning from the 90s of XIX century. As a result of violence and massacres perpetrated against the Armenians in the Ottoman Empire, the former individual departures of the Armenians to the USA turned into a mass emigration. Among the emigrating Armenians, who evaded the danger of physical extermination, were a great number of cultivators, artisans and workers of the towns and boroughs from all the Armenian-inhabited regions of the Empire: Harpoot, Svaz, Erzroom, Trapizon, Bitlis, Cilicia, etc. Compared to the former years, the stream of the denizens of Harpoot had again attained large proportions.³⁰ “In the years 1884-1895, nearly every family in the Harpoot province had an emigrant in America”³¹.

Prompted by the threat of being deprived of the capable, diligent and talented Armenians, the Turkish government threw obstacles, in 1892, in the way of the Armenians, in general, and of the denizens of Harpoot in particular, to stop their emigration to the USA. Thus, for instance, the transport from the Black Sea to

²⁸ **Մանկունի Ն.Լ.**, Ամերիկահայ գաղութի պատմությունից («Պատմա-բանասիրական հանդես», № 1, 1962, էջ 95): **Mirak R.**, op. cit., p. 288. **Malcom V.M.**, op. cit., p. 66.

²⁹ **Զազմագճեան Յ.Յ.**, Ընդարձակ պատմություն հայոց սկիզբէն մինչեւ մեր օրերը, Պոսթըն, 1917, էջ 665: **Mirak R.**, op. cit., pp. 44, 290.

³⁰ **Mirak R.**, op. cit., p. 46. **Մանկունի Ն.Լ.**, op. cit., p. 104.

³¹ **Ճիզմէճեան Մ.Գ.**, Պատմություն ամերիկահայ քաղաքական կուսակցութեանց (1890-1925), Ֆրէզնո, 1930, էջ 1:

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Constantinople was permitted only on Turkish ships, something which reduced the safety of the journey for the Armenians and increased the possibilities of plunder. The Armenians were no longer able “to throw themselves on board of the European ship and embark for America”, since those who applied to foreign ships were arrested and persecuted. Despite the obstacles created by the Ottoman state, “people *fled the hell* at the risk of their lives”³². Not long after that, in the years 1894–1896, when mass massacres of the Armenians were realized by Sultan Abdul Hamid II, emigration from the country was generally prohibited, though many were able to escape and save themselves. However, the emigration of the Armenians slowed down for a while.

Thus, in the period between 1834–1894, about 4,000 Armenians emigrated to the USA. This constituted approximately half of the total number (9,472 persons) of emigrants entering the United States from the Ottoman Empire during the given period of time. Subtracting from the cited number about 1,000 Armenians who had returned to their native cradles during that period, it becomes obvious that, in 1894, there were about 3,000 Armenians in the USA. In the period between 1891–1895, 5,500 Armenians had emigrated from the Ottoman Empire to the USA, of which 2,909 from “Armenia” and 2,668 from “Turkey in Asia”. That constituted 40% of the total number of emigrants, 11,000, departed from that country³³.

According to the statistical data of the US Immigration Commission, if the number of immigrants from “Turkey in Asia” was sharply reduced until 1894, then it abruptly rose in the years 1895–1898, amounting to 15,913 persons. Besides, it is beyond doubt that the majority of the emigrants from the said territory during the given period, more than 10,000 persons, were Armenians saved from the Hamidian massacres. Already in 1900 there were 15,000 to 20,000 Armenians in the USA and, according to other sources, even 25,000 Armenians. If we add to this the tens of thousands Western Armenian refugees saved from the massacres of the 1890s, who were deprived of the possibility to return to their native cradles, had taken refuge in the Balkan counties (Greece, Bulgaria), in Egypt, as well as in the Caucasus, the Crimea and elsewhere and had emigrated to the USA from the

³² Չազմազգեան Յ.Յ., op. cit., p. 666. Mirak R., op. cit., p. 46. Ասպարէզ: Յիսունեակ, էջ 393:

³³ Malcom V.M., op. cit., pp. 61, 64, 76. Mirak R., op. cit., p. 289.

Black and Mediterranean Seas, then, with rough estimates, about 45,000 Armenians lived in the USA in the autumn of 1902³⁴.

Although the American, European and Armenian benefactors and the International Red Cross had allocated large allowances to the Armenians left shelterless and helpless in the Armenian-inhabited regions of the Ottoman Empire as a result of the massacres, nevertheless, the emigration of a great number of Armenians from the country continued due to the absence of political and economic freedom, as well as prompted by the threat of new massacres.

The Armenians who had been saved from the Hamidian massacres and had taken refuge in the USA enjoyed the sympathy and the compassion of the American community; the ownerless immigrants were provided through the church and the charitable organizations with food, clothing, dwelling, jobs, etc.³⁵

The generosity of the American people and the “miracles” of the New World were described by the Armenians who had improved their living conditions in their letters sent to the native cradles, encouraging further emigration to the country of “gold and honey”. Rev. Joseph Gafafian-Thomson has written the following, comparing the Armenian emigrants departing to the USA as a consequence of the massacres accomplished by the Ottoman government to the first American settlers: “In the true sense of my words, the Armenians are not emigrants, but they are like the pilgrims who came, in 1620, to America for religious liberties”³⁶.

The USA became a permanent place of residence also for numerous Armenians arriving from the Russian Empire, who had been informed about the New World from the Dookhobors and the Molokans (Christian sects in Russia – K. A.) exiled to the Caucasus (and settled mainly in the Shirak plain, Eastern Armenia) from Russia following the religious persecutions in XIX Century. Many of the Molokans who had settled in Winnipeg (Canada) and Los Angeles (USA) encouraged their Caucasian friends and the neighboring Armenians with their reassuring letters to emigrate to the same towns.

In the course of time, a group of Eastern Armenians settled in Canada moved to Los Angeles, starting the emigration of the Armenians from the Russian Empire

³⁴ **Malcom V.M.**, op. cit., pp. 65, 66. **Antreassian J.**, The Armenians in America: A Personal Viewpoint (Richard Hovannisian, ed. The Armenian Image in History and Literature. Malibu, 1981, p. 255). **Մանկունի Ն.Լ.**, Ամերիկահայ մարդահամարը (Թէոդիկ, Ամէնոն տարեցոյցը, 20-րդ տարի, Վենետիկ, 1926, էջ 585).

³⁵ **Mirak R.**, op. cit., p. 49. **Malcom V.M.**, op. cit., p. 77.

³⁶ **Mirak R.**, op. cit., p. 61. **Malcom V.M.**, op. cit., p. 77.

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to the USA, which was very scanty in the beginning: on the whole, only 15 Eastern Armenians had emigrated to the USA until 1898³⁷.

At the beginning of XX Century, the forerunners of the Eastern Armenian emigration to the USA were the Moosheghians from the Shirak plain who departed in 1904 from the village of Gharaghala (Kars region), having a comparatively wealthy population. In the subsequent years, nearly all the population of the village followed their example. A considerable number of Armenians left also from Alexandrapole and the adjacent villages, Duzkend, Ghazarabad, Sivaniril, Aghzolu and others. The first man who emigrated from the Alexandrapole area to the USA and settled in Los Angeles was a young denizen of the village of Ghazarabad, Bagrat Harutyunian, who was a relative of the Moosheghians. This, in fact, was the start of the stream of the Shirak-plain Armenians to America, which included, in the beginning, young men aged 18–35, and, later, elder Armenians as well. Leaving their families, they went away for 2–3 years in order to earn a certain amount of money and, on their return home, to be in a position to improve their and their kins' economical situation. Along with the hard-working toilers, there were also a certain number of educated people in the row of Caucasian-Armenian emigrants³⁸.

In the beginning of XX Century, the economic and political crisis prevailing in the Russian Empire and the Caucasus had expanded the emigration of the Eastern Armenians to foreign lands, embracing also emigrants from Igdir, Koghb, Tiflis, Gharabagh, Yerevan and other localities. These emigrants had settled mainly on the Western coast of the USA, in the city of Los Angeles in California. The stream of Eastern Armenians to America attained large dimensions especially after 1908 and decreased at the outbreak of the First World War³⁹.

Only a small number of people in this stream composed for the most part of poor Eastern Armenians had the necessary sum to pay their fare, which was around 500 rubles, consequently “some sold their farm animals, others sold their furniture and jewels. Some were compelled to borrow money. Few people traveled with their own means”. The Eastern Armenian emigrants reached by train the

³⁷ Ասպարէզ, 20, 27.6., 4.7.1913.

³⁸ **Գալօեան Ս.**, Շիրակի հայերի գաղթը դէպի Ամերիկա, Լոս Անջելէս, 1950, էջ 65, 70, 76, 77: Ասպարէզ, 27.6.1913:

³⁹ **Mirak R.**, op. cit., p. 58. **Գալօեան Ս.**, op. cit., p. 101. **Bulbulian B.**, The Fresno Armenians: History of a Diaspora Community. Fresno, 2000, pp. 46, 47.

Black Sea port, Batumi, or the ports of Riga and Libau on the Baltic Sea where they were lodged in special inns and waited there for the assistance of their kins and relatives to pay for their journey to the USA⁴⁰.

According to the testimony of an eyewitness, “those who had money, did not wait long, they departed in a few days, but there were people who waited for the assistance of their relatives in America. That assistance arrived rather late, and the emigrants met with many difficulties, they even went hungry. In that case we made use of our national love and unity and lent a helping hand to many people through the good offices of those coming from the New World”⁴¹.

The stream of emigrants from Eastern Armenia (Russian Empire) to the USA reached a lower level compared to that from Western Armenia (Ottoman Empire) due to milder national persecutions and comparatively better economic conditions prevailing in the Russian Empire. Thus, in the years 1900–1905, 50 Eastern Armenians had emigrated to the USA, in 1905–1910 – about 300, in 1910–1913 – 1,200 and the total number of Russian-Armenians entering the USA till the First World War did not exceed 2,500. This stream was reduced during the war years and was increased, to a negligible extent, as a consequence of the chaotic political situation prevailing in the Russian state in 1917. Thus, in the years 1920–1924, among the 20,659 Armenian emigrants to the USA only 168 had come from Russia.

On the whole, more than 3,500 Armenians left the Russian empire for the USA during the years 1899–1924 according to the data of the US Immigration Bureau.⁴²

Before the reforms realized in 1908 by the Young Turks, the departure from the Ottoman Empire was connected with serious difficulties, since, up to 1896, emigration was possible solely by the Sultan’s sanction, and beginning from October 1896, only after renouncing Turkish citizenship, signing a letter of guarantee to maintain peaceful relations with the country and never again to return to the country and witnessing the signature by the Armenian Patriarch. In 1899, Sultan Abdul Hamid II, not objecting to emigration, had even expressed his

⁴⁰ Գալօեան Ս., op. cit., pp. 78, 79. **Mirak R.**, op. cit., p. 60.

⁴¹ Գալօեան Ս., op. cit., p. 80.

⁴² Ասպարէզ, 27.6.1913. **Mirak R.**, Armenians (S. Thernstrom, ed. Harvard Encyclopedia of American Ethnic Groups. Cambridge, London, 1981, p. 139). **Minasian Ed.**, The Armenian Immigrant Tide. From the Great War to the Great Depression (Recent Studies in Modern Armenian History. Cambridge, 1972, p. 111). **Մանկունի Ն.Լ.**, op. cit., p. 586.

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willingness to pay the fare of needy Armenians, on condition that they would not return to the Empire anymore. Pursuing the policy of depriving historical Armenia of Armenians, the Turks tried, at the same time, to guard against the penetration into the country of Armenian national political men having acquired American citizenship, consequently also, political inviolability⁴³.

The Armenians frequently obtained the journey-pass by means of bribery, paying instead of the usual 2 dollars ten times or more the price or by forging the documents. The emigrants paid also through their noses for the invitation (visa) and the ship-ticket, the average price of which was 50–60 dollars. This sum, which was equivalent to the artisan's three-year savings, was, on the whole, unaffordable for the majority of the emigrants, therefore many of them, bribing the managers of the European ships, entered there illegally and often found shelter in the funnels. Some of them procured the necessary sum by doing odd jobs, as a result of which their departure was delayed⁴⁴.

The Armenians' emigration to the USA diminished, but did not stop in 1908 after the coming to power of the Young Turks and the proclamation of "democratic liberties" in the Ottoman Empire. On the other hand, hundreds of Armenians, responding to the call "Let's go to our Homeland!" of a group of Armenian Revolutionary Federation (Dashnak) Party public men who cherished hopes for the Young Turk Constitution of 1908, sold their property and returned to their native places. Thus, 4,500 Armenians returned to their birth-places in the years 1908–1914. Their majority had no definite trade or were elderly people. As a general rule, the youths felt no enthusiasm for going back⁴⁵.

None the less, many, who had no confidence in all this, took the opportunity, when the obstacles for the voyage had been eliminated and the high payments of the journey-passes ("teskeré" – in Turk.) had been reduced, and continued to emigrate to foreign lands with their kith and kin. If, until 1908, mainly peasants and unskilled workers emigrated from the Ottoman Empire, then, at this period, skilled artisans, students and professionals also departed from the country due to economic hardship. Young women also left mostly with the intention of getting married. Few people emigrated to get reunited with their families and some went

⁴³ **Mirak R.**, op. cit., p. 61.

⁴⁴ Ibid, p. 62.

⁴⁵ Ibid, p. 140.

away because emigration to America, at that time, was “in style” in certain Armenian regions⁴⁶.

The dreadful massacres organized by the Young Turks in Adana, in 1909, definitely dashed to the ground the hopes of the Armenians with regard to the authorities declared as “democratic”, and prompted them to flee the country for unknown horizons. Although the massacres had taken place in Cilicia, the Armenians departed nearly from all the Armenian-inhabited regions of the Empire, since the fear of the occurrence of an analogous situation at any moment was extremely great in those places.

The comparative study of the statistical data of the Armenian and European emigrations to the USA from the nineties of XIX Century till 1914 has shown that the emigration of the Armenians to America in the 1890s was the largest stream of people to that country on a Pan-European level, while during all the international, economical and political events, these two migratory streams have proceeded commensurate to one another. On the whole, the number of Armenians emigrated to the USA in the years 1899–1914 constituted 51,950 persons, among them 50% were those who had left their families in the motherland, 37% were bachelors and 13% were those who had come with their families.⁴⁷

Up to 1911, the Armenians in the Ottoman state departed to the USA from certain regions. The emigrants from the Western Armenian territories took the ship from Samsun, the principal port on the Black Sea, while those departing from the Cilician territory embarked from the Mediterranean ports of Alexandrette and Beirut. In the subsequent years, these last two ports, where control was comparatively loose, served as a point of departure to the USA for many Armenians escaping from the Turkish policemen. The Armenian emigrants reached these ports either on foot or by coach in caravans.

As a general rule, the Armenians, like the other foreign emigrants, entered America through the New York port-station called Castle Garden, which was replaced in 1892 by an unsightly building constructed on Ellis Island, resembling an ancient battleship. That station was identified in the imagination of thousands of

⁴⁶ The Armenians in Massachusetts. Boston, 1937, p. 32. **Malcom V.M.**, op. cit., p. 79.

⁴⁷ **Malcom V.M.**, op. cit., p. 65. **Mirak R.**, Outside the Homeland. Writing the History of the Armenian Diaspora (Recent Studies in Modern Armenian History, Cambridge, 1972, p. 120). Արշալոյս պատկերազարդ տարեգիրք, պատրաստեց Ա. Մելիքեան, Գ տարի, Ֆրեզնո, 1922, էջ 47:

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Armenian emigrants, languishing in poverty for decades, with the gate leading to the “Promised Land”, through which, however, not everybody had the good fortune to pass. There they were registered, subjected to a medical inspection and a thorough interrogation. According to the requirements of the American government, the emigrant should have at least 25 dollars or the guarantee of a close relation living in America, otherwise they were kept for days on end in dirty and humid halls or else they were separated from their families and sent back. That is why the immigrants often called that island “Island of Tears”⁴⁸.

In the years of the Italo-Turkish War (1911–1912) and the Balkan War (1912–1913) and particularly the following First World War (1914–1918), a very small number of Armenians succeeded in emigrating to the USA in consequence of the re-established obstacles with respect to emigration from the Ottoman Empire, as a result of which the number of illegal emigrants and of those emigrating with the assistance of relatives having American citizenship grew. On the whole, if 7,785 Armenians emigrated to the USA in 1914, then, in the subsequent years, their number was sharply reduced, constituting, all in all, 3,620 persons during the years 1915–1919, who were mainly survivors of the Armenian Genocide having lost their kins, decimated families and orphans. At the end of the war there were nearly 78,000 Armenians in the USA⁴⁹.

After the war and the armistice of Mudros (1918), the rise of the Kemalist nationalistic movement, started in the Ottoman Empire (1919–1921), which was accompanied by unending massacres organized with the object of ridding Turkey of the Christian nations, including also the Armenians, as well as the fall of the First Republic of Armenia in the Transcaucasus (1918–1920), gave a new impetus to the emigration of Armenians to the USA, constituting 2,762 persons in 1920 and 10,212 persons in 1921. The latter was the highest index recorded compared with all the preceding years⁵⁰.

If, until 1919, a considerable part of the Armenian emigrants to the USA, about 76%, were men and only 24% women, then the number of women grew, on the contrary, after 1921. This last contingent was mostly composed of widows as a

⁴⁸ **Mirak R.**, op. cit., pp. 60, 491. **Մուշեղ Եպիսկոպոս**, op. cit., pp. 155, 156. **Մանճիկեան Ք.**, Տոնական օրերու եւ այլազան նիւթերու պատմականը, Լոս Անճելոս, 1986, էջ 91:

⁴⁹ The Armenians in Massachusetts, p. 32. **Malcom V.M.**, op. cit., p. 65. **Մանկունի Ն.Լ.**, op. cit., p. 585. **Bakalian A.**, Armenian-Americans: From Being to Feeling Armenian. New Brunswick, London, 1993, pp. 9–10.

⁵⁰ **Մանկունի Ն.Լ.**, op. cit., p. 585.

result of the periodic massacres when the number of males was greatly reduced. The average age of the emigrants was 16–45, and they departed chiefly with the purpose of joining their families. The number of emigrants having an age above 45 was comparatively small, due to difficulties connected with immigration laws. Women constituted 52%, men – 27% and children – 21% of the total number of emigrants. Among them were Armenian survivors collected from Turkish harems, from non-Christian families, from camps and orphanages by Armenian and American relief organizations, as well as by western preachers. In the years 1917–1924, 1,507 Armenian widows (as a consequence of the periodical massacres) emigrated to the USA⁵¹.

By 1920, about 100,000 Armenians were living in the USA.⁵²

The qualitatively new political relations, created in the international sphere following the First World War, urged the American authorities to periodically reconsider the US immigration laws, something which sharply limited also the Armenians' emigration. Thus, according to the First Quota Law, about 350,000 persons could emigrate to the USA in 1921, among them only 2,757 Armenians. That constituted a 3% part for each nation living in the USA according to the Census of 1910. Simultaneously, a certain additional part was allocated by the US authorities for the Armenians roaming about the Middle East as an exceptional humanitarian act⁵³.

The National Origins Law of 1924 marked a new epoch in the American immigration law, which stipulated a new reduction in the number of immigrants entering the USA. It allowed only 150,000 persons to enter annually the USA, that is, a 2% part for each nation living in the USA according to the Census of 1898. Only 124 Armenians could emigrate annually to the USA according to that law. Simultaneously, the Armenians departed to the USA also by the quotas assigned to the countries of their residence. The decision to grant, by way of an exception, to the Armenian orphans and refugees had been abolished. Thenceforth, they had to emigrate with Nansen passports belonging to the League of Nations. In the years

⁵¹ Ibid. **Minasian Ed.**, op. cit., pp. 111, 112. **Mirak R.**, *Armenians*, p. 139.

⁵² **Mirak R.**, *Torn Between Two Lands*, p. XVIII.

⁵³ **Danilov D.P.**, *Immigrating to the USA*. Canada, 1983, p. XVIII. **Yeretzian A.S.**, *A History of Armenian Immigration to America with Special Reference to Conditions in Los Angeles*. A Thesis. California, 1923, p. 18.

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1914–1924, 32,064 Armenians emigrated to the USA. By 1924, the total number of Armenians living in the USA amounted to more than 125,000 persons⁵⁴.

On the whole, according to the calculations of Nazaret Mankouni and Robert Mirak, 141,229 Armenians had entered the USA, beginning from the first Armenian who set foot on the New Land (1618) till the National Origins Law (1924), that is, in the course of more than 300 years; while 90, 229 Armenians had entered the USA from the moment of the emigration of the Armenians launched as a result of the activity of American Protestant preachers (1834–1924), that is, in the course of 90 years.⁵⁵

Summarizing the results of the present study, we would like to point out that the emigration of the Armenians (mainly bachelors, students, tradesmen, artisans, farmers and workers) to the USA, which, at the beginning bore a temporary character and was impelled by educational and economic reasons, was subsequently transformed into a mass exodus following the periodic massacres and the Genocide perpetrated in the Ottoman Empire against the Armenians (1894–1896, 1909, 1915–1923). This mass emigration involved tens of thousands Armenians of both sexes, of various ages and social groups from the entire territory of their native cradles deprived of the prospects of a safe economic, political, cultural and religious life.

As time went by, the Armenian immigrants in the US spread throughout the whole country and settled in nearly all the states, especially in those regions where larger Armenian communities existed (New York, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Illinois, California, Michigan, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Connecticut, Wisconsin and other regions). There was, among the Armenians, a tendency to migrate within the US, especially from the eastern states to the western ones, which took place according to a certain pattern: at first, beginning from 1834, young bachelors and males who had left their families in their Homeland and hoped to return back there, settled in the educational (mainly New York city) and industrial (mainly Worcester city) areas. Subsequently, in particular from the 1880s, as a result of the increase in the number of immigrants in the US and the decrease in job opportunities in the eastern states and the arrival of wives and children, the Armenians gradually moved to the north-eastern, northern, central, central-

⁵⁴ **Minasian Ed.**, op. cit., pp. 107–108. **Մանկունի Ն.Լ.**, op. cit., p. 585. **Mirak R.**, Armenians, p. 139.

⁵⁵ **Մանկունի Ն.Լ.**, op. cit., p. 589. **Mirak R.**, op. cit., p. 290.

western and western (particularly to the agricultural state of California) regions of the US⁶⁹.

Taking advantage of the wide and multifarious opportunities and freedom, the Armenian settlers in the US were engaged in different professions and occupations, corresponding to their possibilities, abilities and preferences, and devotedly contributed, with all their physical, mental and spiritual capacities, in the service of the fields of activity they had chosen and thereby they contributed to the progress of the host country.

Thanks to their painstaking work of many years, to their moderate and frugal mode of life, the Armenian-Americans achieved considerable success, gained a fair amount of property and essentially improved their economic situation and life conditions, gradually adapting themselves to the new life style and customs, not losing, at the same time, their national structure and character.

As the Armenians settled and increased in number in the New Land, their spiritual and cultural life developed and became gradually more organized; factors having an important role and significance for the preservation of the nation were organized, such as the church (the first, Armenian Evangelical prayer-house and the Armenian Apostolic Church of Our Savior were established in Worcester in 1881, by Dr. Minas Kirakossian and Hovhannes Yazijian, and 1891, by the Very Reverend Hovsep Sarajian, respectively), the periodical press (the first Armenian-American newspaper "Aregak" ("Sun") was published in Jersey City in 1888, by the founder-editor Haykak Ekinian) and the school (the first Armenian-American Vardookian School was established in New York in the late 1880s, by Barsegh Vardookian, from Everek), definitively forming the Armenian community of the United States of America⁷⁰.

A large number of different unions, organizations, parties, societies and clubs were created and promoted a great nation-favoring activity with the purpose of rallying and organizing the Armenian refugees and the emigrant survivors in the new country, of keeping alive the Armenian spirit and consciousness, the language and the customs in the assimilating American environment, as well as of rendering the ties with the native cradle and the native people more effective and long-lasting

⁶⁹ Ibid, pp. 47-49.

⁷⁰ Ibid, pp. 124, 127, 139, 160.

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(the first Armenian-American organization, the Armenian Union, was established in New York in 1886)⁷¹.

Compared with the other ethnic groups in the US, the level of literacy of the Armenian settlers was much higher, since they always had attached great importance to education; consequently the community became more and more viable thanks to the growing number of qualified scientists, professors and teachers.

The favorable social and moral atmosphere prevailing in the New World greatly fostered also the formation and development of the Armenian-American distinctive cultural life from the beginning of XX Century and enhanced the self-manifestation of skillful and talented people in different fields of art (literature, performing arts, music, painting and photography).

During the years of the First World War and the following years which were disastrous for the Armenian people, the Armenian community of the US, assembling its entire intercommunal intellectual, financial, public and political resources, has assisted the Motherland and its people by all the possible diplomatic, political, military and human means and has taken part in the enterprises aiming at the defense of the Armenian Case in Europe and in the USA.

The unstable and calamitous political situation created in the Ottoman Empire and in Czarist Russia following the First World War, as well as the loss of confidence in the Allied States destroyed the sacred dream of returning to the Homeland cherished in the abysses of the soul of thousands of Armenians, and they definitively established in the New Land of their adoption.

ՀԱՅԵՐԻ ՀՈՍՔԸ ԱՄԵՐԻԿԱՅԻ ՄԻԱՑՅԱԼ ՆԱՀԱՆԳՆԵՐ ԵՎ ՀԱՅ ԳԱՂՈՒԹԻ ԿԱԶՄԱՎՈՐՈՒՄԸ (XVII դ. սկիզբ – 1924 թ.)

ԱՎԱԳՅԱՆ Բ.

Ամփոփում

Դարերի ընթացքում հայ ժողովուրդը հարկադրված է եղել հեռանալ իր բնօրրանից և գաղթել աշխարհի տարբեր երկրներ, այդ թվում նաև ԱՄՆ՝ անձնա-

⁷¹ Ibid, p. 90.

կան, կրթական, տնտեսական, քաղաքական, մշակութային, կրոնական և այլ հանգամանքներից ելնելով:

Նոր աշխարհում հայության թվի ստվարացումով և այնտեղ աստիճանաբար հաստատումով ստեղծվել են օտարության մեջ ազգապահպան կարևոր դեր ու նշանակություն ունեցող կառույցներ. 1881 թ. Ուստրում հիմնվել է ամերիկահայ առաջին աղոթատեղին՝ Ավետարանական Մարտիրոսաց հայ ժողովական եկեղեցին, 1891 թ.՝ Առաքելական Սուրբ Փրկիչ եկեղեցին, իսկ 1910 թ. Նյու Յորքում՝ հայ Կաթողիկե առաջին եկեղեցին, դպրոց՝ 1880-ական թթ. վերջին Նյու Յորքում հիմնվել է ամերիկահայ առաջին Վարդուկյան վարժարանը, ինչպես նաև պարբերական մամուլ (1888 թ. Ջերսի Սիթիում լույս է տեսել ամերիկահայ առաջին պարբերականը՝ «Արեգակը»): Հիմնվեցին բազմաթիվ ու բազմաբնույթ միություններ, կազմակերպություններ, կուսակցություններ, ընկերություններ և ակումբներ (1886 թ. Նյու Յորքում հիմնվել է ամերիկահայ առաջին կազմակերպությունը՝ Հայկական միությունը): Այս ամենի արդյունքում վերջնականապես ձևավորվեց Ամերիկայի Միացյալ Նահանգների հայ գաղութը:

ПРИТОК АРМЯН В СОЕДИНЕННЫЕ ШТАТЫ АМЕРИКИ И ФОРМИРОВАНИЕ АРМЯНСКОЙ КОЛОНИИ (с начала XVII в. по 1924 г.)

АВАКЯН К.

Резюме

На протяжении веков армяне в силу различных исторических обстоятельств вынуждены были покидать свои исконные земли и эмигрировать в различные страны мира, в том числе и в США. Это было обусловлено рядом причин – экономических, политических, культурных, религиозных и других.

В связи с возрастанием численности армян в США и в целях сохранения армянской национальной идентичности здесь открывались церкви: первые церкви – Евангелическая (1881 г.) и Апостольская (1891 г.)

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– были открыты в Вустере, Католическая – в Нью-Йорке (1910 г.)). В конце 1880-х гг. в Нью-Йорке была основана армянская школа Вардукян.

В жизни армянской колонии США важную роль играла периодическая печать, в частности, газета «Арегак» («Солнце»), освещавшая животрепещущие для армян вопросы (издавалась в Нью-Джерси, в 1888 г.).

Было создано также множество союзов, организаций, партий, ассоциаций и клубов (к примеру, организация Армянский Союз, основанная в Нью-Йорке в 1886 г.), которые в целом способствовали формированию армянской колонии Соединенных Штатов Америки.