

KALPAKIAN FAMILY HISTORY

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Clark

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Lovingly compiled by their daughter, Betty Kalpakian Bown, from bits and pieces of information told to me over the years. Helen Kalpakian has read and made necessary corrections to this composition.

PART I

HELEN KALPAKIAN AND
HER FAMILY

"THIS IS YOUR LIFE" - HELEN KALPAKIAN

nee - Haigouhi Koolaksezian
In America - Helen Clark Kalpakian

Helen Kalpakian's parents, Elizabeth and Asdoor Koolaksezian, were both born in Marash, a small mountainous town in the backwoods part of the country. (Turkish part of Armenia) In 1895, her father went to Adana to get established and then sent for his family. (They left Marash in 1895 because of a Turkish massacre). Adana had a population of about 50,000 people and had a climate similar to Southern California.

Elizabeth and Asdoor had 6 children--two died in early life. Arthur was the oldest, then Doodoo, then two who didn't survive (a boy and a girl), then Haigouhi, and Haigaz. Haigaz is three years younger than Haigouhi.

Elizabeth Mitilian Koolaksezian
She was a hard worker in the church.
She had 2 sisters and 2 brothers.
One brother's name was changed to
Najarian, which means carpenter.

Asdoor Koolaksezian
He was a farmer. He
had 1 brother and 1
sister who both lived
in Boston.

THEIR CHILDREN

1. Arthur Clark - Came to America in 1907 with sister, Doodoo. They
Died: 1940 lived first in Polsboro, Washington (near Seattle)
and then moved to Venice, California in 1920. He
lived with his sister until he married his first
wife, May Clark, in Venice. After her death, he
married Martha Young Clark. -- NO CHILDREN
2. Doodoo Clark - Came to Polsboro, Washington with brother Arthur in
Died: 1939 1907. Here she married John Boyd and they owned a
drug store. They moved to Venice, California in 1920.
TWO CHILDREN: Gladys (Married Clyde Brown)
Haig (Two marriages)
(John's sister, Osanna, was a teacher of the
blind in Washington state.)
3. Helen Clark - Born 1901, February 5th, in Adana, Turkey. Married
Harry Kalpakian in 1917. Came to America in 1923.
(sponsored by sister Doodoo and John Boyd)
FOUR CHILDREN: Angagh (Married George MacKellar)
Peggy (Married Bill Johnson)
Betty (Married Finley Bown)
Harriett (Married Alan Donnell)

4. Haigaz Clark - Born in 1906.* Came to America in 1923 with sister Helen and Harry Kalpakian. Married Martha Hallaian.
-- NO CHILDREN

Haigouhi (Helen) went to the Congregational Protestant Elementary school and then to Miss Grace Towner's Seminary for Girls in Adana. She was 13 years old when starting as a boarding student at:

"Adana Seminary For Girls"
(Miss Towner's School)
Founded in 1884 by the American Board
(Congregational)

This school was located in Adana, Turkey, the town where Helen was born. There were 12 girls in Helen's graduating class in April, 1917. There were three Greek girls, one Turkish girl, and the rest were Armenian. Helen attended this school for three years--from age 13 to 16 when she got married. (After completing her own studies there, she served as a teacher to repay her debt to the school.) Miss Grace Towner, an American, was a teacher and principal at this school for 40 years. The school was in a two-four story building and had 200 boarding students and 300 day students. The top floor was one big dormitory--each girl had one cot and one locker.

When she was 14 or 15 years old, Helen learned a lesson about food she never forgot. At the boarding school they were served mush for breakfast with cotton seed oil on it, and she didn't like it, so she did not eat it. At each successive meal, the same mush was brought to her until she was so hungry she finally did eat! This took a total of 3 days. Later, as a mother, Helen used this same strategy on her own children. (Me! How well I remember!! B.B.)

Both of Helen's parents were Protestant. Her father rarely went to church. He would fall asleep in church when he did go, and his wife had to poke him to keep him awake! She was a very ardent worker in the church.

When Helen was in school, all the girls lined up and marched

* 1906 WAS DATE FOR PASSPORT PURPOSES. Real birth year was 1904.



Pilgrim Place, Claremont,
California, May 28, 1961.

Our family visiting Miss
Grace Towner, retired
principal of the Adana Seminary
for Girls in Turkey where
Helen was a boarding student
as a girl.

(like soldiers) to church on Sundays, with one teacher at the head of the line and one teacher at the foot. (To the Congregational Church)

In elementary school, the children were taught Armenian letters but Turkish words (or language). You were not allowed to speak Armenian in public (and it could not be heard anywhere.) When Helen was growing up, Christian Armenian Churches were allowed but they had to follow Turkish regulations.

When Helen's older brother, Arthur, was 15 years old (approximately) he wanted to go to the town of Mersin (seaport) to work. His sister, Doodoo, was sent with him to keep house for him because young men in those days did not "batch" it like they do here. Later he and Doodoo returned to Adana where he decided to go to school. Uncle John Boyd was his English teacher. It was when Boyd visited his pupil, Art, that he met Doodoo. He told her he was going to America and that he would send for her. In America, he first went to New England states, attended college and became a pharmacist. He then moved west to Seattle, Washington where he opened a drug store. In 1907 he sent for Doodoo.

Doodoo was free to leave for America, but her parents couldn't let a young girl go to America alone, so they sent her brother, Arthur, with her. The Turks would not allow a young man of military age to leave the country. So--through bribery, etc. Arthur "flew the coop" in the middle of the night and boarded the boat Doodoo had already gotten on. Once aboard, he was safe from the Turks.

However, the family suffered at the hands of the Turks. The Turks sent police to search their family home and gave them trouble when they discovered Arthur had escaped. Six-year-old Helen spent the day and night with the wife of the Congregational minister while the Turks were searching the house, etc. Helen does not remember where

three-year-old Haigaz stayed, but she remembers staying with the minister's wife that day when she was 6 years old. (It was very fortunate that the Turks did not massacre the family.)

Helen said that Miss Towner's School spared her from death and harassment by the Turks. While she was living at this school, both of her parents were exiled to the Derzor Desert (where all the Armenians were exiled) and never returned. Younger brother, Haigaz, was captured and given to the Kurds first and then to the Arabs as a shepherd boy and slave. One night, after not letting on that he had learned their language, he overheard them say they were going to kill him. So, during that night he ran away. He was about 9 years old at the time. Helen said somehow he eventually turned up at a foundling home in Doartyol. The home published a list of all the orphan's names. One of Helen's girlfriends saw the list and showed it to her, and when Helen saw Haigaz's name, she sent for him. This was in 1919. Haigaz then lived with his sister and her family, and also moved to America with them.

OTHER INFORMATION:

Margaret Koumjian of Hollywood, California, (Alice and Rose's mother) was Helen Kalpakian's only blood relative in the USA except for her brother, Haigaz. (After the death of Arthur and Doodoo)

People did not know much about politics in the old country. No media to keep them informed. Only news they got was by word of mouth. They did not know what their country was doing politically.

NAMES:

Koolaksezian - - - - -	means "without ear"
	Name changed to "Clark" in America
Kalpakian - - - - -	means "Hatmaker"
Boyajian - - - - -	changed to "Boyd" in America
ian - - - - -	means "son of"

In the old country, family names were generally acquired by the person's occupation. Many years back, the Koolaksezian name was EKIZIAN. This meant, "twins." (The family had many twin babies) Later, when Helen's father's grandfather's ear had been cut off by pirates, the family became known as KOOLAKSEZIAN, (without ear).

HELEN'S GRANDPARENTS:

Helen remembers only one grandparent, her mother's mother, Yughaper Mitilian, who lived in Marash. When Helen was 9 years old, she went from Adana to Marash on horseback to visit her grandmother Yughaper.

BATHING IN THE OLD COUNTRY:

If bathing at home, the family would have to burn wood for the fire to heat the water, and then pour it into a round tub for a bath.

Members of the family often went to the Turkish bath--the women and girls together, and the men together. There were separate hours for men and women: (since they all used the same facilities)

Women: Afternoons from 12:00 - 5:00 p.m.

Men: Evenings from 8:00 to midnight or
mornings from 8:00 - 11:00 a.m.

As a girl, Helen went to the Turkish bath every Saturday afternoon. The only place where hot water was available was in these Turkish baths. (She did not go to the Turkish bath after she was married.)

The Turkish bath building was large and consisted of two large domed rooms--one was the outer dressing room, which had a counter all around it, and the other was the inner bath room which consisted of bathing stalls. All the floors, counters, and benches were made of marble since marble was plentiful here.

- Procedure:
1. Each person paid an entrance fee (maybe 10¢)
 2. Then you put your blanket on the floor in the dressing room while you sat and got undressed.
 3. Each woman wears a cloth serong and then goes into the inner bath room carrying her own soap and a pan to pour water on herself. She sits and washes herself in a stall. The water came out of a wall pipe in each stall. (3 people could fit in one stall)
 4. Then she goes back into the outer dressing room where she had left her towel and her clean clothes, and gets dressed. (She carried towel, clean clothes, etc. to the bath in a "zerar")

THE CITY OF ADANA *

(Information taken from Fodor's Travel
Guide, Turkey, 1978-79)

Adana, with over 350,000 inhabitants, is Turkey's fourth largest city (after Istanbul, Ankara, and Ismir) and the center of its cotton industry. Various different personages have been credited with its founding--the two sons of Uranus (Sarus and Adanus); the Hittite King Asitawandas, and some authorities associate it with the Hittite empire of Kizzuwatna, the capital of which was Danunas. This provides a wide range of choice for the layman, who is apt to find himself already floundering somewhat in this epoch. The Assyrians are also supposed to have had a finger in the pie. In more recent times, Adana was occupied by the French, in the wake of World War I (December, 1918). On January 5, 1922, it regained its status as a Turkish city, which it had been in reality ever since 1517.

Adana is situated on the banks of the Seyhan River. In the second century, Emperor Hadrian gave the city a bridge, the Taskopru, which was restored by Justinian in the sixth century. It is over 1,000 feet long, and 14 of its original 21 arches are still in place. The bridge also possesses considerable historical significance--it was the sole passageway towards Syria and Palestine. Godfrey of Bouillon and his Crusaders crossed it on the way to Antioch.

The ruling family of the Ramazanoglu left the most lasting mark on the city. They built the Akca Mescit (lovely doorway and pulpit), the Kucuk Mescit, the Ulu Cami, and the Eski Cami (the latter's minaret was recently restored). All except the last two of these mosques are post-16th century.

Like Istanbul, Adana boasts an ancient covered market, the Kapali Carsi. The Bazar Hamam dates from the 16th century as does also the Irmak Hamam. Visit the Archeological Museum whose Greek and Roman exhibits are complemented by rich neolithic, chalcolithic and Hittite finds from the excavations at Yumuktepe and Gozlukule. At the end of the 19th century, clock towers were all the rage in Turkey: Adana's is from 1882.

Adana is the capital of Seyhan province which includes the fertile plain of Cilicia, now called Cukurova. The construction of the Seyhan dam, 10 miles north of the city, has formed a vast artificial lake, a favorite picnic area, and made possible intensive cultivation through irrigation. The main crops are early vegetables, citrus fruit, bananas, tobacco, sesame and flax, but above all cotton, of which over 70,000 tons are produced annually. Although industrial development is in full swing, the area is afflicted by what economists term "diminished productiveness" because of the intense heat. ...

Two large lagoons frame Karatas, the beach of Adana, 31 miles south. The present fishing village stands on the site of antique Hagarusus.

* Helen Kalpakian was born in Adana on February 5, 1901, and her daughter, Angagh, was born in Adana on December 26, 1918.

PART II

HARRY KALPAKIAN AND
HIS FAMILY

HARRY KALPAKIAN

ne - Haroutune Kalpakian

Harry Kalpakian was born in the Biblical city of Caesarea (Kayseri), Turkish Armenia, on December 12, 1887. In 1896 his family moved to the seaport city of Mersin (Celicia). In Mersin, Haroutune attended Armenian school where he learned Armenian, French, and Turkish. Since his father's health was not good, Haroutune quit school in February, 1903, at the age of 15, to work in his father's business. He worked with his father, learned the business, and also read widely and educated himself.

Haroutune's mother, Meribe, was from a wealthy family and from her dowry, (at the time of her wedding) she later sold some of her jewelry to start her husband out in business. She also provided funds to build the family a beautiful home in Mersin.

Haroutune's father, Hagop, was a poor man when he married Meribe, but he was very well educated. Because he could read and write and because he had gone to Istanbul to study as a young man, (this was very rare) Meribe's parents allowed the marriage. Hagop was a wholesale merchant in the metal import business.

Meribe Gumushian Kalpakian

She was born in Caesaria, in Turkish Armenia. She had one sister, Dikranouhi Gumushian Chimchirian, and three brothers. One brother, Levon Gumushian, asked Haroutune to go to Russia to open a branch of his dry goods business. The three brothers and their mother Gumushian moved to Manchester, England.

Hagop Kalpakian

He was also born in Caesaria. His sister married a very wealthy man. He owned half of the town of Mersin (and they lived in Mersin). His name was ZELVEYAN. She was the mother of Mercedes Ashjian, Haroutune's cousin, who is a piano teacher and a widow now living in Montebello, California.

Mercedes has a daughter, whose maiden name is Sosig Ashjian.

CHILDREN OF MERIBE AND HAGOP KALPAKIAN

1. Mannig Kalpakian
(Oldest) - She married VAUGHN FRENKIAN. They had one child named SATENIG FRENKIAN.
2. Haroutune Kalpakian
(1887-1963) - Married HAIGOUHI (HELEN) KOOLAKSEZIAN. They have four children: ANGAGH, PEGGY, ELIZABETH (BETTY), AND HARRIETT MERIBE.
3. Garabed Kalpakian - Was married and divorced. Information unknown. Had one daughter, ALICE KALPAKIAN.
4. Zabelle Kalpakian
(Born 1895) - Married KHATCHADOOR KRAKIRIAN. He was a very wealthy banker and spoke 7 languages. Had four children: VAROOJAN (lives in Syria), ANAHID, SERARPI, AND HAGOP.
5. Nishan Kalpakian - Married NEVART. Had 2 children, HAGOP KALPAKIAN and ANAHID KALPAKIAN. Hagop is the only boy to carry on the name of Kalpakian. (Nishan was a bookkeeper in a department store in France. His son, Hagop, now lives in Lyons, France.)

In 1915, the Turks arrested sister Zabelle's husband, Khatchadoor Krakirian, in Mersin and put him in jail in the city of Adana. (like the county seat). Her husband was a wealthy banker and all rich executives were the first ones to be exiled in 1914. He was to be tried in court trials. Haroutune and his mother went to Adana too, to be with Zabelle and help her while her husband went through the trials, etc. Zabelle was only 19 years old at the time. (She was born in 1895.)

Zabelle's family helped her husband get released from the prison through much bribery--that was the only way, no justice otherwise. After being released, he was not allowed to leave Adana. So Zabelle's whole family moved to Adana, and the Turks confiscated their beautiful family home in Mersin.

Haroutune's father, Hagop, couldn't work or go into business in Adana because every Armenian was considered a suspect. So his son, Haroutune, got a job in a German Department Store, OROSAY DE BACK, as

a clerk. It was here in Adana in April, 1917, that he met Helen when she and her girlfriend from Miss Towner's School went to his store to buy some ribbon. They became engaged on October 2 and were married on October 18, 1917.

The young couple got married in the groom's parents' home. The Turkish government had abolished all churches because of war, so the Armenian Apostolic priest came to the Kalpakian family home and married them. There was no such thing as a honeymoon in those days. According to custom, they just got married and then began living with his folks. (They lived with them for 9 months--couldn't take it any more so they moved to a rented apartment in Adana.) When Haroutune and Haigouhi got married, there were a total of 13 people all living in the Kalpakian family home at the same time! They were:

- Haroutune's parents - 2
- Brother Garabed - 1
- Sister Mannig and husband - 2
- Brother Nishan - 1
- Sister Zabelle, husband and son - 3
- Zabelle's mother-in-law and sister-in-law - 2
- Haroutune and Haigouhi - 2

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Marriage Customs in the old country:

1. The oldest girl in the family must be married first. (before the brothers, even if they are older.)
2. Boys bring brides home to live with his family. Girls must leave first.

After Haroutune and Haigouhi moved out, the Kalpakian family lived in Adana until 1921. They then moved to Bucarest, Romania, where they later died a natural death--not massacred.

OTHER INFORMATION:

When Zabelle was pregnant, her parents wanted her to go to a doctor connected with the American School that was part of the American Center where Miss Towner's School was. (In Adana)

Meribe Gumushian's sister was DIKRANOUHI GUMUSHIAN. (Haroutune's Aunt)

"She was a jewel!" A wonderful person!
She married CHIMCHIRIAN and moved to
Istanbul. They had one son, Vahram.
Later she became a widow who lived with
her son. They lived in Istanbul many
years.



Haroutune's Cousin - VAHRAM CHIMCHIRIAN and his wife became
very wealthy. His wife's maiden name was
ISSAKOOLIAN and one of her brothers had
an Oriental Rug Business in N.Y. This is
where the Kalpakians had their trunks sent
when they came to America. Vahram and his
wife had two children, a boy who lives in
N. Y. and a girl who lives in South America.
Vahram owned property including a 40-unit
apartment building in Istanbul which the
Turks confiscated from him as recently as
1957.

After many harassments by the Turks,
Vahram came to N.Y. in 1963, at the age
of 74 or 75. Helen received a Christmas
card from him in N.Y. stating that he
was "here to stay"--a refugee at 75!

MARIE PILOBOSSIAN of Los Angeles is also a first cousin of Vahram
Chimchirian on her mother's side. Marie visited Vahram in Istanbul
at one time, while she was traveling abroad.

PART III

THE MARRIED LIFE OF
HARRY AND HELEN KALPAKIAN

THE MARRIED LIFE OF HARRY AND HELEN
KALPAKIAN

When Helen was still at Miss Towner's School in Adana, one of her aunts, Mrs. Najarian, arranged for her to meet an eligible bachelor she knew. The aunt thought the man was a good one for Helen because he was nice looking, hard working, and had a good job. (He was a foreman where the aunt worked.) The proper procedure was followed--inviting both the bachelor and his mother and his sister to visit the young Helen. According to custom, the young girl was supposed to cook Turkish coffee for the future mother-in-law, and if the mother-in-law said, "This is good coffee," then that meant the girl was accepted. This procedure was followed with this young man and Helen was accepted! However, the wise young woman said to her aunt, "He is a nice young man but I have one question--can he read and write? When the reply was negative, Helen said, "Forget it!"

Harry's parents also had a young woman in mind for him to marry, and he thought she was all right. But, on that memorable day in April, 1917, when Helen and her girlfriend had come into the German department store where he worked in Adana, he said to himself-- "Here is the girl I am going to marry!" He stood firm with his parents, and although they were not too happy about it, Harry married the girl of his choice!

Before the wedding could take place, Harry and various members of his family went to Miss Towner's School several times with an excuse to see Helen. (They told Miss Towner that they knew some of her parent's relatives.) After Harry had convinced his parents that this was to be his wife, he had to go to Miss Towner himself and ask for her hand in marriage, since Helen had no parents now. Miss Towner said there was one technicality that must be concluded before she could give her

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consent: Helen still owed the school \$50.00 in back tuition. Helen had worked her way through school since her family was poor, and also served as a teacher when she finished her studies to help pay the balance of her debt. So, Miss Towner said, "If you pay our school the \$50.00 Helen still owes, you may marry the girl--if not, the deal is off!" Although that was a rather high fee for a marriage license, Harry willingly paid it. Thus, on October 18, 1917, 29-year-old Harry and his 16-year-old bride were married in the Kalpakian family home in Adana by an Armenian Apostolic priest. (Because of the war, World War I, the Turks had abolished all churches.)

As was the custom, the young couple lived with the groom's parents (along with 11 other family members!) After nine months, in July, 1918, they could not take it any more and moved to a rented apartment in Adana. Their first daughter was born on December 26, 1918, and she was named Angaghoughi, which means Independence, honoring the independence of Armenia which occurred at the close of World War I, on November 11, 1918, with the signing of the Armistice. In 1920, the family was reunited with Helen's brother, Haigaz, who had been captured by the Turks, and he lived with them now, too.

As refugees from the Turks, in November, 1921, Harry, Helen, Haigaz and Angagh left Adana by train and went to Alexandrett (Iskenderun), Syria. (It was no longer safe to live in Turkey when the Kemal Attaturk government came into power.) Iskenderun was a French mandated city. When the French army pulled out, again the family was no longer safe, so they moved again, having lived in Alexandrett, Syria, for only four months.

They traveled by boat on the Mediterranean Sea and on March 21, 1922, they arrived in the international city of Constantinople (Istanbul). This was only one week before their second daughter,