

*To Ergun Acehan...*

OUTPOSTS OF AN EMPIRE: EARLY TURKISH MIGRATION TO PEABODY,  
MASSACHUSETTS

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## **ABSTRACT**

This thesis examines early (1890s-1920s) Turkish immigration to Peabody, Massachusetts. It is a case study which argues that the most prominent factor driving early Turkish migration to Peabody was economic. Thus the migration movement constituted a “brawn drain” from Anatolia to the “streets paved with gold.” As was the case with some European peoples who immigrated to the United States at the same period, the Turkish immigrants in Peabody, Massachusetts, did not intend to stay in the United States. They only wanted to earn money and return to the homeland as soon as possible. More importantly this thesis argues that the Turkish immigrants were part of a larger Ottoman migration to the United States. The Turks in Peabody were part of a chain of migration that included Armenians, Greeks, and Sephardic Jews. They, together with the Armenians, Jews and Greeks constructed an Ottoman microcosm in Peabody essentially recreating the *millets* of the Ottoman Empire in which inter-communal support helped the Turks contend with the strange new environment. By the early 1930s most of the Turkish immigrants in Peabody had returned to their homeland. Overall, this thesis provides new insight into the Turkish and Ottoman diaspora that challenges popular conceptions of continual strife between the Turks and members of the other Ottoman *millets*. Additionally, it shows that this early Turkish immigrant community was, in some ways, strikingly similar to later twentieth century Turkish immigrant communities, such as those in Germany during the 1960s.

**Key Words:** Migration/Immigration, ABCFM, Harput, American Missionaries, *Tanzimat*, U.S. Censuses, 20<sup>th</sup> century

## ÖZET

Elinizdeki tez, Massachusetts, Peabody şehrine ilk Türk göçünü (1890-1920) inceliyor. Peabody'ye ilk Türk göçüne neden olan başlıca etkenin ekonomik olduğu görüşünü savunan bir vaka incelemesi niteliğini taşıyor. Bundan dolayı, meydana gelen göç dalgasının, Anadolu'dan "altınla döşeli" sokaklara bir "kas göçü" özelliği taşıdığı görüşünü savunuyor. Aynı dönemlerde ABD'ye göç eden Avrupalıların aksine, Türklerin Peabody'ye yerleşmek ve yeni bir yaşam kurmak gibi bir amaçlarının olmadığını, mümkün olduğu kadar kısa bir sürede para kazanarak, anavatana kesin dönüş yapmayı hedeflediklerini iddia ediyor. Bu çalışmanın vurguladığı en önemli noktalardan biri, Peabody'ye göç eden Türklerin, Ermenileri, Rumları ve Yahudileri de kapsayan, büyük bir Osmanlı göç zincirinin halkalarından biri olması, Osmanlı milletlerinin anavatandaki sosyal yaşantılarını Peabody'de yeniden kurmaları ve aralarındaki ilişkiler ağı sayesinde yabancı bir dünyada ayakta kalmayı ve yaşamlarını sürdürmeyi başarmalarıdır. Sonuç olarak, nüfus sayımlarına dayanarak Peabody'deki ilk Türk ve Osmanlı toplumuna yeni bir soluk veren bu çalışma, bir yandan Türkler ve diğer Osmanlı milletlerine mensup kişilerin arasındaki düşmanlığın anlatıldığı popüler yazına meydan okurken, bir yandan da Peabody'deki ilk Türk toplumu ve 1960'larda Federal Almanya'daki Türk toplumu arasındaki çarpıcı benzerliklere dikkati çekiyor.

**Anahtar Kelimeler: Göç/Göçme, ABCFM, Harput, Amerikan Misyonerleri, Tanzimat, ABD Nüfus Sayımları, 20. Yüzyıl**

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## INTRODUCTION

When I started searching for the Turkish immigrants in Peabody, Massachusetts, I knew none of them. The first time I saw a Turkish name on the U.S. census microfilm, I was really very happy, I felt as if I had saved one life. Then, gradually I found myself walking on every street in Peabody with the census taker, smelling this “leather city”, entering the boarding houses, hearing the immigrants’ halting voices, seeing the tired looks on their faces, and coming to understand the desperate life that was lived there. They were not simply names on hundreds of census sheets. They were breathing, eating, walking, laughing, thinking human beings who were born, lived some time and then died as does every being. What made them different was that they were people who ventured to leave their countries and lives behind, and journeyed thousands of kilometers to the “Golden Door” of the United States in search of something better. But, then wheels began to turn in my head. Who exactly were these people? Why did their names seem so different from what they actually were? Why did they choose to leave? How did they manage to reach the United States and under what circumstances? How were they able to live in a totally strange world? What happened to them? Did they return Turkey or remain in Peabody? I decided to work as if I were a detective searching for a group of lost people. These people were dead, I could not talk to them, and it was

impossible to find their families. The only way to achieve my goal was to collect as much evidence as I could. Then, taking a blank canvas as the background, I would put my immigrants in a painting one by one, and in the end create a picture of their lives and the challenges they faced. This painting has two sides: One shows them in the Ottoman lands, and the second in Peabody. First, we will see the Ottoman side of the picture and then across the Atlantic.

At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, during the “Great Wave” of migration, the United States became a destination for migrants from all over the world who were lured by stories of riches and job opportunities waiting for them. Capitalism, which became a great global force beginning by the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, functioned both as a push and pull factor in U.S. immigration. While the economy of the Ottoman Empire deteriorated, the United States witnessed a great economic shift with the growth of industry. American growth catalyzed migration from different parts of the world to the “Golden Door”. Within that stream of immigrants, there were also Ottomans, most of whom were from the Christian and Sephardic Jewish *millets* of the Ottoman Empire. The Ottoman Muslim *millets*’ migration to the United States, which has not been studied until recent times, also occurred at this time and was large enough to form communities and neighborhoods in a number of American cities. From the 1890s until the outbreak of World War I, Anatolian Turks, almost all male, journeyed to the United States along with other Ottoman migrants. The Muslim Turks who migrated to the United States were mainly from the villages and

towns of Harput, Dersim, Malatya, Siverek, Rize, Samsun, Giresun and Elazığ. Stories of opportunity in America could easily have spread among the *millet*s of these towns and villages. As Frank Ahmed points out, “the United States, it was referred to as ‘Amrika’ came to represent hope, the possibility of achieving the impossible, instant wealth, economic security and relief from a life of abject poverty.”<sup>1</sup>

The United States’ immigration records show that a total of 291,435 immigrants whose “Country of last residence” was Turkey, entered America between the years 1900 and 1920. Those who left the Empire first were its non-Turkish citizens, the Greeks, Jews, Armenians and Syrians. News of their success and wealth did not take long to spread among the peoples of the regions they left.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, the American missions and consulates, although they were for Christians, contributed to a considerable degree to the decision to move to America among all the *millet*s of the Empire. Shipping companies involved in the lucrative business of carrying migrants to the United States also contributed to the great wave of Turkish migration. Moreover, policies of both the United States and Ottoman Empire, which will be dealt with later, played an important role in Ottoman migration.

Immigrants, once reaching the port of New York, would move to industrial urban areas where work might be found.<sup>3</sup> In New England, especially in the industrial cities of Massachusetts there was a great need for laborers in

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<sup>1</sup> Frank Ahmed. *Turks in America: The Ottoman Turk's Immigrant Experience*. (Columbia: Columbia International, 1993),xvi-xvii.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*, xvii-xviii.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid*, 29.



the leather industry and these places became a destination for unskilled Ottoman immigrants until the outbreak of World War I. Peabody, Massachusetts, was one of these “leather cities.” It experienced a considerable Turkish migration, especially from eastern Anatolia during this period. Job opportunity in leather factories of Peabody attracted many unskilled laborer immigrants from all over the world as well as from the Ottoman Empire. In order to have a deeper understanding of the factors which triggered the Turkish migration to the United States, we need to review the changing circumstances in both the Ottoman Empire and the United States.

**CHAPTER I:**

**PUSH AND PULL FACTORS IN THE EARLY OTTOMAN  
MIGRATION TO THE UNITED STATES**

In order to understand population movements, it is important first to understand the “push” and “pull” factors which paved the way for a change in the existing population. Economic, social, political and other factors will be analyzed as both push and pull factors. Emphasis will be placed on the push factors and conditions in the Ottoman Empire at the time the Turks emigrated. The lives and history of the Turkish immigrants in Peabody can only be appreciated through knowing about their lives in Turkey before they left.

**Life and Population in the Ottoman State**

The first significant number of Turks migrated to the United States during the last years of Sultan Abdul Hamid II’s reign (1876-1915), the last sultan with any meaningful power. The Ottoman state was composed of various different ethnic and religious elements, and interaction between the Ottoman *millet*s at the last decades of the nineteenth century must be understood in order to understand their reconstruction and interaction in Peabody.

It is very difficult to imagine what kind of a life it was with today's mind. As the reviewer of Sir Harry Luke's *The Making of Modern Turkey* explains "in the days of the Sultans, Turkey was less like a country than like a block of flats inhabited by a number of families which met only on the stairs." But when the middle of the nineteenth century was reached, "the walls of the flats had crumbled leaving the *millet*s in a large hall exposed to each other's curious looks."<sup>4</sup> Ottoman nationality can only be comprehended within the Ottoman context of that time. Religion was the most significant identifier of an Ottoman nationality unlike the nations of today whose most obvious identifier is a common history and language. The Ottoman Empire developed a system of government based on dividing its subjects into religious groups, each of which had autonomy to some extent within itself. All public facilities were provided for them by the state. In the Balkans, for example, "although there were many religiously mixed villages and neighborhoods in cities," as Justin McCarthy points out "co-religionists tended to live and work together."<sup>5</sup>

The walls of the flats began to crumble with the Tanzimat which introduced a Western idea of state: "the state was to do for its people what they needed and wanted but could not do for themselves."<sup>6</sup> When Sultan Abdülmecit proclaimed the Hatt-ı Humayun on 3 November 1830, he triggered a new phase in the overall structure of the Empire. A series of reforms by the

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<sup>4</sup> Kemal H. Karpat. "Millets and Nationality: The Roots of the Incongruity of Nation and State in the Post-Ottoman Era." *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Empire*, Benjamin Braude and Bernard Lewis eds. (New York: Holmes and Meier), 162.

<sup>5</sup> Justin McCarthy. *The Ottoman Peoples and the end of Empire*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 39.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid*, 16.

Tanzimat slowly began to reshape both government and society. Administrative, educational, and economic reforms paved the way for the different outlook of the state. The reforms in the area of education were of great importance for its peoples because they would come to play major roles in triggering migration. The Tanzimat reforms of 1839 led to the construction of a public education system which was based on the training of teachers who trained students and teacher trainers in return. Although this was slow to affect the population in general, the most critical effect of the change in the educational system was the government's support for foreign, especially American missionary schools. It was a sincere effort of the government, as McCarthy points out, because "it supported them, despite the fact that they benefited only Christians and sometimes became recruiting centers for separatist movements. Some 23,000 students were enrolled in the schools of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions in 1913."<sup>7</sup> These mission schools, as we will see later, became a source of information about life in the United States.

The *Tanzimat* reforms brought about a new understanding of citizenship. With them, the Ottoman government "tried to develop a common secular sense of political belonging." In order to achieve this goal, "it adopted first, after the *Tanzimat* reforms in 1839, the concept of Ottomanism—that is, the idea of regarding as Ottoman subjects all individuals living in Ottoman

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<sup>7</sup> *Ibid*, 19.

territories regardless of their faith and language.”<sup>8</sup> The authority of the government was extended through these reforms and the rights and freedoms, which were inherent in the *millet*, were extended but now derived from the government rather than the *millet*. With the Nationality Law of 1869, a secular kind of Ottoman citizenship was born.<sup>9</sup>

### **Economic Factors**

During the last half of the nineteenth century, many economic changes took place both in the Ottoman state and the United States, and became important “push” and “pull” factors for the Ottoman immigration. One of the most drastic changes in the Ottoman state was the shift of the traditional economy “to a primitive form of dependent capitalism that came to rely almost entirely on agriculture.”<sup>10</sup> Between the years 1792 and 1853 as a result of epidemics and wars the population of the state decreased. Because of the demographic loss, especially in Anatolia and Rumili, the Ottoman government pursued a policy of encouraging immigrants from Europe, attracting them by methods such as tax exemptions. On 9 March 1857 a decree by the high council of Tanzimat was issued considering migration and settlement. The decree declared that “migration into the Ottoman state was open to anyone who was willing to give his allegiance to the sultan, to become his subject, and to respect the country’s laws.” Furthermore, “the government promised to give

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<sup>8</sup> Karpat, “Millets and Nationality,” 162.

<sup>9</sup> The matter of Ottoman citizenship will be treated later in the chapter.

the settlers, without any charge, the best arable lands owned by the treasury and to exempt them from all taxes and military service for six years, if they settled in Rumelia, and for twelve years, if they settled in Asia.”<sup>11</sup> However when, instead of European immigrants, millions of Muslim refugees from the Balkans and the Caucasus began to pour into the Ottoman land contrary to expectations, it resulted in a reverse of the liberal immigration policy.

The Muslim refugees were settled on uncultivated state-owned lands. As a result of the European demand for agricultural products a “mini-revolution” in the Ottoman agricultural economy took place “stimulating the cultivation of cash crops and turning certain farm sectors toward a market economy.” As a consequence of this development, large areas both in Anatolia and Syria began to be cultivated for cash crops. However, while some coastal areas with relatively rich agricultural hinterlands or suitable ports prospered, the interior parts did not benefit because of the lack of transportation and other causes. While in some parts of Anatolia and Syria many of the immigrant Bosnians, Circassians, Cretans, and Turks prospered, the natives, who could not adapt to the new methods, did not. Some of the immigrants shared their fate because of their slowness in adapting to their new home.<sup>12</sup>

These developments in the Ottoman economy had a dual effect. While the increased economic activity in the port cities led to new employment opportunities, at the same time the cities became home to many of the

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<sup>10</sup> Kemal Karpat, “The Ottoman Emigration to America, 1860-1914.” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 17 (1985), 176-7.

<sup>11</sup> Kemal Karpat, *Osmanlı Nüfusu (1830-1914): Demografik ve Sosyal Özellikleri*. (İstanbul: Türkiye Ekonomik ve Toplumsal Tarih Vakfı, 2003), 62.

unemployed. The rapid occupational transformation in the state led to unemployed craftsmen and professionals in the cities where their skills were no longer useful in a changing society. This general change in the economic condition of the whole state was the most important factor in Ottoman emigration, particularly in areas such as eastern Anatolia and Syria where traditional craftsmen and professionals were left unemployed in their native cities. In the interior cities, where there was a lack of transportation and conservative farmers who could not easily adopt the new agricultural methods, the economic situation became worse. Many of the Ottoman immigrants in Peabody, as well as in other parts of the United States, were farmers who left their lands and served as unskilled laborers in the United States.<sup>13</sup>

The economic “pull” factors in the United States were far more powerful than those “push” factors in the Ottoman state yet both had their roots in capitalism. Immigrants to the United States were children of capitalism, as John Bodnar puts it, who “transplanted” to America in the century of industrial growth after 1830: “They were products of an economic system and, indeed, a way of life which penetrated their disparate homelands in particular parts of the world at various stages throughout the nineteenth century.”<sup>14</sup> After 1860, the deterioration of economic conditions which affected various groups of the Ottoman population coincided with the growth of American industrial

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<sup>12</sup> Karpas, “The Ottoman Emigration,” 176-7.

<sup>13</sup> See Karpas, “The Ottoman Emigration”. Syrian immigration to the United States was result of the same economic considerations: “The desire to escape from a condition of poverty or to remedy one’s deteriorating economic situation by moving to a place that offered the possibility of bettering oneself was a powerful one.”

<sup>14</sup> Bodnar, *Transplanted*, 1.

capitalism. The lure of jobs in America became the most powerful attraction for the Ottoman emigrant. The rapid growth of American industry beginning in the 1880s was accompanied by technological innovations in America's iron and steel, boot and shoe, rubber textiles, building and mining industries. The subsequent need for highly skilled manpower and an unskilled labor force for mass production in the factories of the United States were the most important ingredients in economic pull factors. Robert Mirak provides a very good example of this change in American industrial system:

The boot and shoe industry, which came to employ many Armenians, was a classic example of technological change. Although the sewing machine and the metal fastener had been invented by 1885, as of that date Yankee cobblers in Lynn, Massachusetts, still arduously nailed heels and sewed buttonholes by hand – a skilled nailer could fasten only 100 to 125 pairs of heels per day. After 1903, however, there were important improvements in nailing machines which permitted a semiskilled laborer and an apprentice to nail over 1,080 pairs of heels in a mere three hours, and this saved the wages of 48 additional shoe workers per day.<sup>15</sup>

Although Mirak's focus is Armenian immigrants, all of the ingredients of the economic forces which pulled them can also be applied to the Turkish immigrants in Massachusetts, particularly to those in Peabody, who lived together and worked together at the same places with their Armenian neighbors. The similarities between employment of the Armenian and the Turkish immigrants will be discussed in later chapters.

How did news about the availability of employment reach the Ottoman state? The ways were the same for all the *millets* of the Ottoman state. It was



mostly based on hearsay—news came through the immigrants who departed earlier. Additionally, there were requests for immigrants addressed directly to the Ottoman Foreign Ministry. Kemal Karpat provides the following story:

For example, Paulo Duval, a landowner of Sao Paulo, Brazil, asked permission to bring large numbers of immigrants to work on his lands. He wrote that he was particularly impressed with “the activities, sobriety, and facility of adaptation of oriental workers, among whom the Armenians, it seems to me, appear to embody the qualities necessary for agricultural labor”.<sup>16</sup>

When such emigrants returned to their homes from the Americas with considerable wealth, including money to build large houses, and with their tales about the riches and availability of employment, even those who had money were tempted to move to the New World in search of better opportunities and wealth. Moreover, there were various immigrant groups who functioned as de facto employment agencies.<sup>17</sup>

The immigrant press which advertised jobs in factories promising excellent working conditions and wages became another device to attract the fellow Ottoman immigrants after 1899. For example, Dr. Bedros Torosian of West Hoboken tried to attract his fellow Armenians and urged them to settle in a New Jersey Town (population 15,000) which was “attractive, clean, and healthy” and wanted Armenian laborers to work there.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Robert Mirak, *Torn Between Two Lands: Armenians in America 1890 to World War I*. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1983), 78.

<sup>16</sup> Karpat, “The Ottoman Emigration”, 179.

<sup>17</sup> Mirak, *Torn Between Two Lands*, 80.

## **Social and Political Factors**

By the middle of the nineteenth century the Ottoman state was no longer “a block of flats inhabited by a number of families which met only on the stairs.”<sup>19</sup> There was a growing discontent among the non-Muslim *millet*s of the Ottoman state. The Serbian and Greek revolts in 1804 and 1821 respectively started as protests of social discontent and later took the form of political and national uprisings. The Ottoman government responded to these developments with a series of reforms whose intent was to strengthen the power of the central government. The central government also tried to soothe the problems with its non-Muslim *millet*s by trying to create a secular sense of political belonging, the concept of *Ottomanism* after the *Tanzimat* reforms. However, this sweeping nationalism put its mark on the nineteenth-century Ottoman state. It is hard to delineate the word “nation” in the context of the Ottoman Empire, which was based on religious identification of peoples, but nationalist movements created a tremendous change and a point of no return for the Empire during its last decades. The concept of being a nation will not be discussed here but the story of nationalist movements in several *millet*s needs to be discussed in order to understand them as driving forces behind early Turkish immigration to the United States.

Revolutionary nationalism, which drew great support from the Western Europeans and Americans, became a powerful ingredient in the push factors

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<sup>18</sup> *Ibid*, 81.

for the immigration of Armenians as well as other Christians to the United States. The Ottoman government's decision to accept foreign schools as a part of improvements in reforms of education by the *Tanzimat* period opened the door to internal nationalist aspirations. Justin McCarthy points out this development in the educational system: "The Ottoman government was willing to accept foreign schools, even those that educated only Christian minorities, in the hope that improved educational methods would filter through the entire society." For example, "missionaries from the American Board, mainly Congregationalists, increased from 2 in 1819 to 34 in 1845, 146 in 1880, and 209 in 1913. By 1913 they were educating 26,000 students in 450 schools, mainly Armenians in Anatolia."<sup>20</sup>

American missionaries thus were put in contact with the most vulnerable part of the Ottoman state. Their influence on its Christian *millets*, although consequences were unforeseen at the beginning, had a tremendous impact on the concept of nationalism and catalyzed the Ottoman emigration to the New World. In eastern Anatolia an antagonistic separation of the Muslims and Armenians became more visible by 1880. Rising Armenian nationalism was in large part linked to religion, the key to the identity of the Ottoman *millets*. Armenian contacts with Russia, whom they saw as a brother Christian state, aided the Russian conquest of Transcaucasia beginning in the late eighteenth century. (The Russians called the region across the Caucasus

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<sup>19</sup> Quoted in Kemal Karpat, "Millets and Nationality: The Roots of the Incongruity of Nation and State in the Post-Ottoman Era." *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Empire*, Benjamin Braude and Bernard Lewis eds. (New York: Holmes and Meier), 162.

<sup>20</sup> McCarthy, *The Ottoman Peoples and the end of Empire*, 69.

Mountains from Russia “Transcaucasia,” which is a Russo-centric term). Many Armenians fought against the Ottoman and Persian empires for the benefit of Russia. While they acted as spies for Russia, the Muslims of Transcaucasia and Anatolia were on the side of the Ottomans and served as spies for the Empire.<sup>21</sup>

In 1855 and 1877, Ottoman Armenians helped the Russians in invasions of Anatolia. However, as a result of the peace treaties, the Russians were forced to abandon some of their conquests and tens of thousands of Armenians followed them as they left the Ottoman lands. A population exchange took place when Muslims, coming from areas retained by Russia, replaced these Armenians. Armenian separatists, who had envisioned the creation of an Armenian state to be created after the Russo-Turkish War in 1877-78, were disappointed when they came up empty handed after the treaty of San Stephano in 1878. As a result, they began to see revolution as the means to create an Armenia within the Ottoman lands.<sup>22</sup>

Armenian nationalism thus was a factor to be considered by the American missionaries looking for converts in the Ottoman state. When the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions sent its first missionaries to the Middle East in 1819, they saw that neither Muslims nor Jews could be converted. Moreover, most of the Orthodox Christians refused to adopt Protestant beliefs.<sup>23</sup> Despite strong opposition from the hierarchy of the

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<sup>21</sup> See McCarthy, *Ottoman Peoples and the end of Empire*, 66-8 for more information.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>23</sup> The Muslims’ refusal to adopt Christianity appears to have changed because by the end of the nineteenth century it was reported that there were Muslims who converted to Protestantism because of their need for the money offered by the missionaries. See Erdal Açıkses, *Amerikalıların Harput’taki Misyonerlik Faaliyetleri* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 2003), 288-

Armenian Gregorian Church, Armenians were the only group who could be converted in large numbers. Receiving a superior education at missionary schools and being trained with improved American teaching methods, Armenians rose above the other peoples in the Empire. American missionaries also sponsored Armenian students in America and then promoted Armenian migration to the United States. The missionaries who were against violence, unfortunately helped plant the seeds of an Armenian nationalist revolt.<sup>24</sup>

The reason for the rise of Armenian nationalism was not only the nationalist movements that spread among all the Ottoman *millet*s but also concepts of liberty, democracy, and equality brought by the American missionaries. Americans were a people who had declared their independence from a king and who were free from the power of any monarch, king, or Pope. The missions scattered around the Ottoman Empire were symbols of these concepts on which the United States was constructed. Thus they not only functioned as representatives of a religion but also they stood for the epitome of American ideals. The effects of these ideas, which the missionaries brought

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9 for further information. However, converting to other religions from Islam would be punished with death according to Islamic law. Moreover, according to the law passed in 1834 Christians could not change their sects. Later in the nineteenth century England tried to get the Ottomans to change this law claiming that it was against religious freedom. In the end, after the Crimean War, with the efforts of the British Ambassador Stradford de Redcliffe, the Ottoman government adopted a more benevolent attitude towards the American missionaries. Moreover, in 1844 with the continuous efforts of the Lord Canning, the British Ambassador to İstanbul new measures by the Ottoman government were taken to remove the death penalty for conversion from Islam replacing it with a penalty of imprisonment. *Islahat Fermanı* and the Treaty of Paris in 1856 secured religious liberty to the *zimmîs*. In 1874, there were instances of Muslims who said that they were Christians in order not to be enlisted to the army. See Gülnihal Bozkurt, *Alman-İngiliz Belgelerinin ve Siyasî Gelişmelerin Işığı Altında Gayrimüslim Osmanlı Vatandaşlarının Hukukî Durumu (1839-1914)* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1996), 130-9 and Emrah Şahin, "Errand to the East: A History of Evangelical American Protestant Missionaries and their Missions to the Ottoman Istanbul During the Nineteenth Century," (M.A. thesis., Bilkent University, 2004), 60.

with them across the Atlantic, probably were unforeseen at that time. However, the search for a land free from any omnipotent ruler would be a powerful attraction for the Armenians educated by the American missionaries.

### **Other Factors Peculiar to the Ottoman Migration**

Among the other factors which triggered the Ottoman migration to the United States was the problem of army service. Members of the non-Muslim millets traditionally would not be conscripted in the army and in return they would pay a tax called *cizye*. However, with the air of equality brought by the *Tanzimat* reforms, it was decided that non-Muslims would be conscripted in the Ottoman army. The decision to conscript non-Muslims to the army was a part of the Ottomanization process which was envisioned to be prevailing all among the Ottoman millets. By 1843 army service became compulsory for both the Muslim and non-Muslim *millets* of the Ottoman Empire in all regions except the autonomous Christian states. However, both the non-Muslims and Muslims, who did not want to fight shoulder to shoulder, objected to this decision. Although a new decree brought about some changes regarding military service, in the end the government did not succeed in recruiting non-Muslims to the army. However, on 7 August 1909, the Constitutional change brought an end to this confusion and it was decided that all millets of the Empire would be subjected to conscription.<sup>25</sup> When soldiers were needed for

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<sup>24</sup> See Erdal Açıkse, *Amerikalıların Harput'taki Misyonerlik Faaliyetleri*, 225-92.

<sup>25</sup> See Gülnihal Bozkurt, *Alman-İngiliz Belgelerinin ve Siyasî Gelişmelerin Işığında Gayrimüslim Osmanlı Vatandaşlarının Hukukî Durumu (1839-1914)*, 120-9.

the army during the Balkan Wars, some of the non-Muslims began to flee to the United States in order to escape service.<sup>26</sup>

Another factor that led to the Ottoman migration was the business of emigrant transportation which resulted in a competition among European steamship companies for business. French shipping companies, which had an interest in the trade of hazelnuts and other goods carried between France and the Black Sea soon became involved in carrying passengers, first to Istanbul and then to Marseilles. The tales of shipping agents about the riches of America encouraged many Ottomans to leave for the United States. They “eventually became the most successful travel agents for that period of Turkish immigration” beginning in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>27</sup>

### **The Harput Mission and Harput American Consulate**

Although there were various missions scattered all around the Ottoman state, the Harput mission, which opened in 1855, had a unique place among all because of its role in Ottoman migration to the United States. As was stated earlier, *Tanzimat* reforms made it easier for missionaries to diffuse among the Ottoman millets and carry out their activities. Harput was an ideal location as it was the home of many Armenians with a prospect of conversion to Protestantism. The first ABCFM missionaries in Harput were George W. Dunmore and his wife, who lived in İzmir until 1851 and then were sent to the

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<sup>26</sup> Leland James Gordon, 1932 (Cited in Rifat N. Bali, *Anadolu'dan Yeni Dünya'ya: Amerika'ya Göç Eden Türklerin Yaşam Öyküleri*. (İstanbul: İletişim Yayıncılık, 2004), 298-302.

interior places of Anatolia. Serving in Diyarbakır first, they were sent to Harput in 1855 because of the hot weather and threat of epidemics such as cholera in Diyarbakır. Besides the mission, an American consulate in Harput opened eventually requested by the American missionaries for their own safety and because Harput and Erzurum had a great number of inhabitants. After a long debate between the Ottoman government and the American government, the American consulate opened in Harput in 1901.<sup>28</sup>

The year the consulate was opened, there were, according to a report written by the consul, sixteen American citizens in Mamuratül-Aziz *vilayet*, (Elazığ) and two hundred and sixty Ottoman Armenians who had become American citizens lately. Furthermore, in Diyarbakır, which was within the mission's territory, there were twenty four Armenian American citizens. From Harput year by year there was a rising migration of Armenians to the United States. After the establishment of Fırat College at the Harput mission in 1878, the number of migrants reached even higher levels. Ottoman officials tried to restrict this uncontrolled migration but failed. Eventually the Turks joined the Armenians migrating to the United States. The number of migrants from Harput to the United States exceeded those from other parts of Turkey such as İstanbul, İzmir, or Diyarbakır. As Erdal Açıkses points out, the immigrants, who went from Harput to cities such as New York and Boston, eventually reached 3000 per year and that number constituted 25 percent of the whole

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<sup>27</sup> Ahmed, *Turks in America*, xxi.

<sup>28</sup> For further informaton see Açıkses, *Amerikaluların Harput'taki Misyonerlik Faaliyetleri*, 58.



number of immigrants from the Ottoman state in one year.<sup>29</sup> Within the U.S. the immigrants' needs were met by Firat College's students and alumni who already resided there. With the organized efforts of both Firat College and the Association of Protestant Armenian Churches the number of people who migrated from Harput reached the highest level among all areas which sent migrants to the United States.<sup>30</sup>

The most striking thing about the Harput missionaries' and consulate's role in the migration movement from Harput is that they not only helped Armenians but also some Muslims who were prospective converts. Emigration of Muslims was officially prohibited in the spring of 1888, but Muslims continued migrating secretly to the New World. An Armenian immigrant, Tophaneliyan, wrote a letter in 1892 in which he also mentioned the condition of these Muslims. He wrote that American missionaries deceived some Muslims in Anatolia by promising them a job, made them migrate and then converted them to Christians. When this news reached *Bab-ı Âli*, an investigation was conducted in America by the Ottoman government. In 1892 the Ottoman legation in Washington sent a report to the Ottoman Foreign Ministry (Hariciye Nezareti) stating that still there were some 200 Muslim Turks in the United States and noting that these people were poor and unskilled laborers who came for the purpose of earning a considerable amount of wealth. The report states that these Muslim Ottomans were to be found in

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<sup>29</sup>This information is given in Açıkses, *Amerikalıların Harput'taki Misyonerlik Faaliyetleri*, 197 and is derived from Joseph Grabill, *Protestant Diplomacy and the Near East Missionary Influence on American Policy, 1810-1920* (Minneapolis, 1971). The reliability of this information is questionable.

Massachusetts, Michigan, and St. Louis, Missouri. “It noted particularly that 10 Muslims from Kharput had recently come to Worcester, Mass., and that one of these was an *imam* (religious leader) who had come to work with his sons already in the country.” It also provides a fascinating insight about the identity of these immigrants.<sup>31</sup> It mentions that,

in many cases Muslims preferred to pass as Christians – particularly as Armenians whose living habits were similar to those of other Anatolians and who often spoke Turkish as a first language – in the hope of gaining easier acceptance in the U.S. and of avoiding trouble with the Ottoman government.<sup>32</sup>

This concern over the emigration and possible conversion of members of the Muslim millet was one of the factors that caused the Ottoman government to reexamine and change its emigration policy. Its liberal migration policy was reversed completely in the period 1900-1903.

### **Ottoman Migration Policy and Legal Status of the Emigrants:**

The history of the Ottoman policy toward immigration and citizenship is complex, but essential to the story of Turkish immigration to the United States. First, it must be noted that the Ottoman government did not adopt any firm policy about migration. Thus, the lack of a firm policy regarding

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<sup>30</sup> Açıkses, *Amerikalıların Harput'taki Misyonerlik Faaliyetleri*, 195-7.

<sup>31</sup> This information is taken from *Osmanlı Belgelerinde Ermeniler Kataloğu*, Vol. 11, No: 57, Date: January 26, 1892. (From Washington Legation to the Foreign Ministry No: 6139/16). It is mentioned in Erdal Açıkses, *Amerikalıların Harput'taki Misyonerlik Faaliyetleri*, 286. The same information is given in Karpat, “The Ottoman Emigration to America, 1860-1914,” 182 and is taken from AFM, fol. 473 (*Idare*), letter of 20 November 1892, signed by Mavroghenii, an Ottoman Greek.

<sup>32</sup> Kemal Karpat, “The Ottoman Emigration to America, 1860-1914” [*International Journal of Middle East Studies* 17 (1985)], 182.

migration undercut the effect of any ban on emigration. Two considerations were at the heart of the Ottoman diplomatic controversy over the issue of migration from Syria, Anatolia, and Egypt: travel documents and citizenship. Certificates of travel (*mürur tezkeresi*), which was introduced during the last years of Mahmud II (1808-1839), could be used by travelers outside of Ottoman territory instead of passports. If it was not stamped as “reserved for the interior”, foreign governments would honor the *tezkere*.<sup>33</sup> The Empire’s liberal policy of emigration allowed unlimited freedom of return to all Ottoman subjects without any kind of discrimination and provided the returnee with financial help.

However, this liberal policy reversed drastically in the period between 1900-1903 to a conservative emigration policy. Emigration had been forbidden beginning by the 1880’s not only because of the potential loss of tax income and population but also because the government’s belief that the poor immigrants would damage the Ottoman prestige abroad. For example, Turkhan Bey, who was a consul in Barcelona at that time, was a prestige-conscious, elitist-minded individual and expressed his views about this issue: “The prevailing view in Ottoman official circles in 1888 was that many emigrants belonged to the ‘proletarian classes’ and intended to become beggars in Americas.” Also the Ottoman government was concerned about the negative image of the immigrants as they appeared in the U.S. press. The same anxiety about the condition of the Turkish immigrants can be seen in the letter of

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<sup>33</sup> Karpas, “The Ottoman Emigration to America, 1860-1914,” 189.

Mavroyeni Bey which is addressed to the U.S. Secretary of State James J. Blaine which pointed at the miserable condition of the “Turkish” immigrants who were ignorant of English and who suffered from “the alleged failure of American authorities to assist them from the perils of fraud on ‘their arrival in a strange land’.” Even some 150 Armenians in the United States tried to stop further immigration of their fellow Armenians in 1889. They requested the Turkish legation in Washington to ban Armenians migrating to Worcester because “hundreds of them were idle and without any prospect of getting work.”<sup>34</sup>

Although emigration was prohibited officially by the Ottoman government, it continued clandestinely because of the officials who took bribes from the emigrants and showed no efforts to stop the traffic. Denial of passports to would-be emigrés, although adopted as a policy to prevent emigration, was turned upside down and paved the way for a conspicuous business of middlemen, transport companies, and others who worked for defeat of the ban. As Karpat points out, “Beirut and (to a lesser degree) Izmir and Alexandria harbored a multitude of agents who prospered by recruiting emigrants and arranging their passage.”<sup>35</sup>

The Ottoman government was also concerned about Armenian revolutionary planning taking place in the United States and the possible return

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<sup>34</sup> Karpat, “The Ottoman Emigration to America, 1860-1914,” 186.; James J. Blaine to Mavroyeni Bey, Washington, June 7, 19, 21, 1889; W.F. Wharton, Acting Secretary of State, *Notes to Foreign Legations in the United States from the Department of State, 1834-1906*, Record Group 59, National Archives Microfilm Publication, M99, Roll 96, (Cited in Mirak, *Torn Between Two Lands*, 43-4).

<sup>35</sup> Karpat, “The Ottoman Emigration to America, 1860-1914,” 187.

of those individuals to the Empire.<sup>36</sup> When the government realized that its efforts to bring emigration movement to an end did not succeed, the officials decided that Armenians could migrate but only with the condition that they would sell their immovable properties and cut their relationship completely with the state.

Also at the heart of the U.S.-Ottoman controversy about immigration to the United States were the two different concepts of citizenship and individual rights: “the Ottoman State adhered to the principle of *jus sanguinis*, which denies the citizen the right to expatriate himself without government permission, while the U.S. accepted the doctrine of *jus soli* with the right of expatriation.”<sup>37</sup> With the Ottoman nationality law of 19 January 1869 (Article 5), it was decided that when former Ottoman subjects, whose nationality had been changed by emigrating with the permission of the Ottoman government, returned home, they would be considered as foreign aliens. The problem with this law arose when claims of inheritance or property were at stake.<sup>38</sup> The United States adopted a policy different from the European governments, such as England and France, which honored the Ottoman Nationality Law and did

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<sup>36</sup> The Armenians set up a political structure in the United States called the Social Democratic Hnchagian Party which was founded first in Geneva in 1887. The Hnchags published their journal named *Hnchag* in Geneva. Mirak asserts that “the objective of the Hnchags was to overthrow the Ottoman Empire and then usher in a socialist Armenian republic in which Armenians from Turkey, Persia, and Russia would all join. To achieve such ends the Hnchagist leader Nazarbeg and his colleagues in Geneva planned to employ propaganda, terror, and assassination against Turks, Armenian traitors and spies. At the same time they would ignite a far flung insurrectionary movement among all of Turkey’s disaffected minorities, including Cretans, Macedonians, and Albanians.” Beginning in the 1890s passionate meetings were held in cities such as Worcester, Massachusetts, and money was for firearms and other things needed for a revolution in the Ottoman Empire. Mirak states, that by 1894, Garabedian, who was one of the party’s founders, had raised \$10, 000 in the United States. Mirak, 207.

<sup>37</sup> Karpal, “The Ottoman Emigration to America, 1860-1914,” 189.

not extend privileges or protections to those who were Ottoman subjects before and naturalized as their citizens upon their return to the homeland. Contrarily, the U.S. government extended protection to those who remained for 5 years in America and who had been naturalized as American citizens.<sup>39</sup>

Thus, when Armenians involved in political turmoil fled to the United States and then tried to reenter the Ottoman state with their American passports, a decision was taken and approved by the Sultan. According to this decision those who came back to the state, despite having American passports, would not be accepted.<sup>40</sup> When conflict between the Ottoman government and the Armenians, whom the government believed were using and abusing the privileges and protection they attained from the U.S. government upon their naturalization, became more acute, the Ottoman government sought to solve the problem with a treaty. As pointed out by Roger R. Trask, “between 1900 and 1924 about seventy thousand such persons returned to Turkey from the United States.”<sup>41</sup> Being naturalized as American citizens, they would not be subjected to Ottoman law. Although a new draft of a treaty was prepared by the Ottoman government according to the objections raised before on 8 January, 1889, it was still refused by the U.S. government and as a result the issue of nationality was left unresolved. It also remained a hot issue at the beginning of

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<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 190.

<sup>40</sup> This information is taken from *Osmanlı Belgelerinde Ermeniler Katoloğu*, Vol. 15, No: 124, Date: 24 September 1883, Page: 280 and used in Açıkseç, *Amerikalıların Harput'taki Misyonerlik Faaliyetleri*, 280.

<sup>41</sup> Quoted in Karpas, “The Ottoman Emigration to America, 1860-1914,” 191.

the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>42</sup> Lacking a treaty, the Ottoman government decided to deal with the matter by itself. The imperial decree of 9 October 1896 was designed to bring a solution to the problem of Armenian nationalists who returned to the Ottoman state after being naturalized as American citizens. The decree liberalized emigration under certain conditions but made the legal return of such emigrants almost impossible.<sup>43</sup>

By 1902/03, as emigration from Albania and Macedonia increased, the provisions of the decree became more strict. As the French Ambassador in Istanbul reported, by 1907 emigration began to affect even the Ottoman provinces in the interior. For example, he noted that 1,000 Greeks and 100 Armenians from Bursa migrated to North and South America and Russia. Most of these migrants were composed of “young men: craftsmen and artisans such as carpenters, shoemakers, blacksmiths, tailors, tanners, pastry makers, etc., who found easy employment in the cities of North and South America.” There were also peasants who could be easily employed in mining industries. The

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<sup>42</sup> *Ibid*, 190.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid*, 191. The provisions relevant to this problem are as follows: “All who desire to leave the country must sign a document and also have a solvable guaranty, confirmed by the patriarchate, that they will not return to Turkey. This declaration must be accompanied by the likeness of the emigrant, and it will only be after fulfilling such formalities that emigration will be authorized. The passports delivered to these emigrants will state that such persons will not be allowed to set foot again on Ottoman territory.” The explanation in question, as well as a declaration that the emigrants have lost Ottoman nationality, will be duly inscribed in the register of the commission *ad hoc*, in the archives of the competent department, as well as at the chancellery of the Armenian patriarchate. A delay of a month and a half, and in cases of plausible hindrance, two months’ delay, commencing from today, will be granted to those who have gone abroad without authorization from the Imperial Government to return to their homes. In the event of their design to stay where they are, they must make a declaration to this effect in the Turkish embassies or legations abroad. Emigrants of this category will, nevertheless, lose their nationality as Ottoman subjects, unless they return to Turkey within the above named period. Ottoman Armenian subjects who have emigrated under false names and, yet, by diverse means, have returned to Turkey with foreign passports will not be recognized as foreign subjects, nor will they be allowed to live in any part of the Empire.

wave of migration not only caused a drop in production of goods but also affected the structure of the various religious communities in a negative way. While emigration from several parts of the Ottoman state continued, emigration of Muslim refugees from the Balkans and the Caucasus caused a drastic change in the overall fabric of the Ottoman Empire.<sup>44</sup>

### **Transportation of the Emigrants**

As was stated earlier, the transportation of emigrants became a lucrative business for European maritime companies. Their tales about the riches of America and their encouragement of people to leave had a great effect on emigration of Ottomans from various parts of the state. However, the way to America was not an easy one and the prohibitive costs of traveling across Turkey, and then reaching Europe, and finally sailing to New York served to limit the number of immigrants. Migrants from eastern Anatolia would usually go either to a Black Sea port such as Samsun or to the Mediterranean by time-honored wagon caravan. Bribery became common for taking the certificates of travel (*mürur tezkeresi*). One's obtaining certificates of travel was as expensive as one's sailing from Turkey to America. The bribes for the tezkere were between \$20 and \$30, or ten to fifteen times the legal fee for permission which was \$2. The average sum for a visa and a steamship ticket was \$50 to \$60. This meant a year's wages for a journeyman in Turkey, or three year's savings for an artisan. While some emigrants bribed boatsmen to stow away on board

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<sup>43</sup> *Ibid*, 191.



European vessels, others journeyed from Turkey to the United States in two or three stages and earned money on the way. Passengers for North America usually would go through Marseilles. The road to America was a process of suffering for migrants from all *millets*. William Saroyan recalls:

the journey from Bitlis to New York took almost two years, for it was necessary for my grandmother Lucy, who was in charge of the journey, to halt several times while she and her daughters...and her son...worked to earn money for further passage.

They spent three or four months in Erzeroum, a month or two in Marseilles, and almost six months in Havre. My uncle...then eleven or so, learned French and acted as interpreter for many Armenians on their way to America. The women knitted stockings which... [he] sold to small shopkeepers.<sup>45</sup>

The journey to Marseilles was a nightmare for these immigrants who were “herded into steerage, packed together in extremely close, often unclean, quarters.”<sup>46</sup> Exploitation of immigrants, which started at the very beginning of their journeys, continued throughout their way to the New World. For example, those who bought expensive “through tickets to America” found themselves marooned in Naples the actual destination of their tickets. In Marseilles, immigrants, composed of both Armenians and Turks ignorant of English, were at the mercy of Armenian *smsars* (agents). They often ended up “in dilapidated, vermin-infested boardinghouses where they were overcharged and forced to room with a large number of other unfortunate victims of the Armenian *smsars*.” In Marseilles, French authorities tried to bring the exploitation of the immigrants to an end by informing passengers before they

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<sup>44</sup> *Ibid*, 191-2.

<sup>45</sup> William Saroyan, “The Bicycle Rider in Beverly Hills,” in *Saroyan Reader*, 469. (Cited in Mirak, *Torn Between Two Lands*, 62).

landed that they had the liberty of staying at any boardinghouse. However, these precautions did not work because passengers from Turkey were alien to the world and language in Marseilles. They had to leave themselves to the “caring” hands of the Armenian *smsars*.<sup>47</sup>

Once in Marseilles, passengers bought trans-Atlantic tickets and then journeyed to their destinations.<sup>48</sup> Their journey across the Atlantic was more comfortable compared to the one from Turkey to Marseilles. However, their suffering was not over. There were legends of horror stories of people whose entries were barred on Ellis Island, in other words “Heartbreak Island”.<sup>49</sup> The medical teams examined and found those with communicable diseases such as favus, a scalp disease, and trachoma, a contagious eye disease, marked by inflammatory granulations at the eyelids, and capable of causing blindness if left untreated. Trachoma was very common in the Middle East and 40 percent of all Turkish Armenians were trachoma victims.<sup>50</sup>

According to U.S. legislation of 1897, a steamship line would be fined \$100 each time it carried a trachoma victim to the United States. As a result, medical inspection stations were established at European ports to examine

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<sup>46</sup> Ahmed, *Turks in America: The Ottoman Turk's Immigrant Experience*, xxi.

<sup>47</sup> Mirak, *Torn Between Two Lands*, 62. It seems probable that the Turks also used the assistance of the Armenian *smsars* because they too did not know English and came on the same ships with the Armenians en route to the ports of the United States.

<sup>48</sup> See Karpat, “The Ottoman Emigration to America, 1860-1914,” 187-8.

<sup>49</sup> Ahmed contends that most of the immigrants including Turks entered the United States through the Port of Providence Rhode Island. The United States did not place an overall limit immigration before 1917 except the series of laws passed by Congress in 1882 debarring the entry of Chinese laborers, the 1907 Gentlemen's agreement restricting Japanese immigration and exclusion of “any convict, lunatic, idiot, or any person unable to care for himself or herself without becoming a public charge.” Some health measures were taken in order to stop the undesirable elements and those with contagious diseases entering America as were measure barring known radicals.

would-be emigrants before they started their journey to America. For example, the United States Public Health Service's physicians in Naples, medical officials of the British Board of Trade at Liverpool, and physicians of the steamship companies in other places examined emigrants. This policy led to various kinds of abuses by quack doctors and charlatans.<sup>51</sup>

At Ellis Island those who could not pass the medical examination would be sent to hospitals or wards in order to be kept under control. After the medical examination, the immigrants would form long queues according to the number of their ship manifests to be questioned by inspectors of the Immigration Commission. If the immigrant did not know English, he was questioned by the help of a translator. The first question was name of the immigrant. Those who wanted to change their names and gain a new identity at the very beginning of his experience in the United States would give the name they wanted to have.<sup>52</sup> The 1917 legislation, which demanded all adult would-be immigrants to be literate, brought about the first significant general restriction on immigration. However, if the immigrants came as a family, the husband's literacy was enough for the family to enter the United States.<sup>53</sup>

Another problem that the immigrants faced was money. They needed to possess a minimum of \$25 in order to enter the United States. For example,

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<sup>50</sup> Mirak, *Torn Between Two Lands*, 63.

<sup>51</sup> See Mirak, *Torn Between Two Lands*, 64.

<sup>52</sup> Bali, *Anadolu'dan Yeni Dünya'ya*, 38-46.

<sup>53</sup> Therefore, by 1917 immigration to America was restricted in seven major ways: Restriction on immigration of Asians (except Japanese immigration); persons who failed to meet moral standards; criminals; persons with various diseases; paupers; assorted radicals; and illiterates. Roger Daniels, *Coming to America: A History of Immigration and Ethnicity in American Life*. (New Jersey: Harper Collins Publishers, 1990), 278-9.

between 1899 and 1915 among those 2,356 Armenians whose entries were denied there were 577 trachoma or other disease victims; 929 were “paupers or persons likely to become public charges,” in other words, without having \$25, and 257 “undesirable persons.”<sup>54</sup>

One can easily appreciate the difficulty of the decision to leave the mother country and travel thousands of kilometers to a foreign land and an alien culture, from a religious empire to a secular world. However, at the turn of the century push and pull factors, which were mainly based on economics, were so powerful that many decided to take the risks of this long and difficult journey. The first Turkish migration to the United States was a labor migration and thus must be considered with modern analyses of international migrations.

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<sup>54</sup> U.S. Commissioner General of Immigration Reports, 1899-1914. [Cited in Robert Mirak, *Torn Between Two Lands*, 65-6.]

## CHAPTER II:

### THE ROAD TO PEABODY, MASSACHUSETTS

Turkish immigrants did not depart simply for the United States but for a specific industrial city in the United States where they could find jobs, homes, and earn enough money to support themselves and to send to their families. Therefore, the Turkish migrant did not have the United States in his mind when he decided to journey but, for example, Peabody where he knew he could find a job, a place to stay, and money. As Nermin Abadan-Unat points out, the Turkish migrants (the Turkish laborers) do not have a tradition to migrate to set up a new life.<sup>55</sup> The Turkish migrants who went to Peabody were composed mainly of unskilled workers from rural areas looking for employment. Thus, the early Turkish migration to Peabody must be considered in the context of labor-related issues in Peabody at the time of migration, issues that are closely related to the history of Peabody.

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<sup>55</sup> Nermin Abadan-Unat, *Bitmeyen Göç: Konuk İşçilikten Ulus-Ötesi Yurttaşlığa* (İstanbul: Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2002), 37. Abadan-Unat analyzed Turkish migration to the Federal Republic of Germany in the 1960s. There are many similarities between the Turkish migrants to Peabody in the 1900s and those who went to Germany in the 1960s. Therefore, some of Unat's findings about the Turkish immigrants in Germany will be referenced in order

## **Peabody**

Peabody was settled as early as 1626. It was originally a part of Salem known as Brooksby Village. Tanning businesses, which had been well established by 1668, became central to its industry. Brooksby separated from Salem in 1752 and formed Danvers town. South Danvers became the town of Peabody in 1868, named after George Peabody, a famed philanthropist and banker who was born there. In 1916 Peabody was large enough to be designated a city, the 37<sup>th</sup> in Massachusetts. By 1919 Peabody was recognized as the world's largest producer of leather.<sup>56</sup>

By 1855, tanning and preparing leather became the main industry of Peabody.<sup>57</sup> The work was carried on by native laborers until the Peabody tanneries experienced two major strikes in 1863 and 1886. The leather industry laborers, most of whom belonged to the Knights of Labor, went on a general strike for a new price list for splitting and other tasks within the industry. They also wanted a ten hour working day. However, the manufacturers refused these demands and as a result many workers left their work. Therefore, "shops were abandoned with hides in lime, without a hand to save them except the owner." The manufacturers then began to bring non-union help from Maine and Canada. The new immigrant laborers, who could take the place of skilled labor with careful supervision, became the new work force in the leather industry. By the late nineteenth century the leather industry was largely dependent on an

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to understand the general characteristics of unskilled Turkish labor migration to the industrialized countries as a whole.

unskilled immigrant labor force.<sup>58</sup> Thus by 1910, the town had become a “melting pot” of all nations. The Irish constituted the majority of the immigrant population. By the early 1900s Armenian, Turkish, and Greek immigrants became the newest components of an increasingly multicultural community.

When the places of the former laborers began to be filled with the first Turkish, Armenian and the Greek newcomers, an Ottoman migration network evolved in Peabody. For example, a laborer working for \$1.50 per day in a Peabody leather factory in 1901 would be asked by a foreman if he knew other Turks who would work in the same job at the same wage. The immigrant would write a letter to his homeland and relatives and/or friends who would migrate not simply to the United States but to a leather factory in Peabody.<sup>59</sup> This is reflected in ships’ manifests. For example, “Hassan, Ahmed Oglu” notes that his final destination is Peabody where he will join his brother. Bikaael, Ahmed Oglu living on Central Street, whose calling is “shoe maker”.<sup>60</sup>

Peabody’s proximity to Boston, in which the headquarters of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions was located, was perhaps the key factor in leading Turkish immigrants to the city. As noted

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<sup>56</sup> John A. Wells, *Events in Peabody’s History 1626-1972*. (Salem: Essex Institute, 1972), 426.; Peabody official website

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid*, 426.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid*, 323-47.

<sup>59</sup> This example is given for the Armenians in Mirak, *Torn Between Two Lands*, 80.

<sup>60</sup> “List or Manifest of Alien Passengers for the United States Immigration Officer at Port of Arrival,” <[http://www.ellisland.org/EIFile/popup\\_weif\\_5a.asp?src=%2Fcgi%2Dbin%2Ftif2gif%2Eexe%3FT%3DK%3A%5C%5CT715%2D1533%5C%5CT715%2D15330193%2ETIF%26S%3D%2E5&pID=101407030198&name=Ahmed+Oglu%26nbsp%3BHassan&doa=August++++14%2C+1910&port=Marseilles&line=0004](http://www.ellisland.org/EIFile/popup_weif_5a.asp?src=%2Fcgi%2Dbin%2Ftif2gif%2Eexe%3FT%3DK%3A%5C%5CT715%2D1533%5C%5CT715%2D15330193%2ETIF%26S%3D%2E5&pID=101407030198&name=Ahmed+Oglu%26nbsp%3BHassan&doa=August++++14%2C+1910&port=Marseilles&line=0004)> January, 2005.

earlier the missionaries had fostered the movement of Armenians to the United States and then the Turks and other *millet*s of the Empire followed them.

### **The Ottoman Millets in Peabody**

#### **Armenians**

The first among the Ottoman millets to migrate to the industrial cities of New England were the Armenians who were sent to the area by the American Board missionaries for education. The first Armenian student sent to the United States was Khachadur Osganian, a pupil of the missionaries at the Bebek School near İstanbul. He came to the United States in 1834. In the 1880s, a different group of Armenians who came from the poorer and rural parts of Anatolia joined him. It was this group that eventually triggered the migrations of the Muslim Turks from the same areas. Most of the rural Armenians were from Elazığ, Harput, and Diyarbakır. The first emigrant from Harput to the United States is said to be one “Garo” who went there accompanying Reverend George Knapp in 1867. Serving at first at the Reverend Knapp’s home, he made his way to work in the wire mills in Worcester, Massachusetts. He wrote “enthusiastic letters” to his home, and friends and relatives and initiated the mass movement of people from poorer classes.<sup>61</sup>

In 1885, the “American fever” among the Armenians in Harput grew to the point where it worried the missionaries who wanted to educate and convert them while they were within the Empire. For example, a missionary report

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<sup>61</sup> Mirak, *Torn Between Two Lands*, 36-44.



from Harput station in 1885 stated “large numbers of young men are starting for America in search of work... The impulse of those who are ambitious is to leave the country altogether.” That worried the American teachers.<sup>62</sup> In late 1888, Reverend James Barton, the President of Firat College in Harput Mission, informed Oscar Straus, American Minister to the Sublime Porte, about the situation of the migrants:

From this immediate ward of... [Kharpert],<sup>63</sup> which constitutes less than one sixth of the whole city, 105 persons are at present either on their way to or in the U.S. I have not the figures for the whole city, but judge above to be a fair proportion. From Husenik, a good sized village one half mile away over 200 are now in the U.S. and fully as many more are ready to start as soon as this (the Ottoman) government gives full liberty of immigration.<sup>64</sup>

Between 1820 and 1892, the U.S. government used the categories of “Turkey in Europe” and “Turkey in Asia” to enumerate all immigrants from the Ottoman Empire. Between 1834 and 1868, a period in which only the category “Turkey in Europe” was used, (in 1869, two new categories, “Turkey in Asia” and “Armenia” were added) there were 253 Ottoman immigrants. Mirak concludes that perhaps 100 of that total or 40 percent were Armenians. Armenian immigration to the U.S. totaled approximately 66,000 by 1915. The

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<sup>62</sup> Kharpert Field Station, Report, 1889, ABCFM 16.9.7., VOL. 6. (Cited in Mirak, *Torn Between Two Lands*, 41).

<sup>63</sup> “Kharpert” is Harput in Turkish. Robert Mirak refers to it as “Kharpert” and I am quoting his sentence without changing the name to Harput.

<sup>64</sup> Barton to Straus, Kharpert, August 4, 1888, enclosure, Pendleton King, Chargé d’Affaires, Constantinople, to Secretary of State Bayard, September 25, 1888, RG 59, NA, M46, Roll 49. (Cited in Mirak, *Torn Between Two Lands*, 41. Mirak asserts that Barton’s statement serves to heighten the emphasis on the difficulties of leaving the Empire, getting to the United States and gaining entrance to the U.S. However, as Mirak concludes, only a small number of these Armenian immigrants succeeded in entering the country.

chart below shows the number of Armenian immigrants during selected periods.<sup>65</sup>

Table 2.1. Total Volume of Armenian immigration to U.S.	
1834-1890	1,500
1891-1898	12,500
1899-1914	51,950
Total	65,950
<i>Source: Robert Mirak, Torn Between Two Lands, 1983.</i>	

According to the Peabody censuses, there were 32 Armenian immigrants from Turkey in 1900, 14 in 1910, 4 in 1920, and 102 in 1930 residing in Peabody.<sup>66</sup>

### **Jews**

In around 1906 a group of Sephardic Jews from Turkey, who were composed of five families, came to Peabody. In 1919 about 15 more families came to Peabody from Turkey. They along with the earlier arrivals formed their own community and maintained their own customs and Hebrew dialect. Among the early settlers were the Eskenas, Gibely, Leon, Havian and Bencangi families.<sup>67</sup>

### **Greeks**

According to Theodore Saloutos and Louis James Cononelos, many Greek immigrants from Turkey who left before 1912, left for political rather

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<sup>65</sup> Mirak, *Torn Between Two Lands*, 290.

<sup>66</sup> *U.S. Federal Census Schedules* (microfilms) Peabody, Mass. 1900, 1910, 1920, 1930.

than economic reasons. After 1903 because of the growing tension among the Bulgars, Turks, and Greeks, many farmers were afraid to go to the fields and do their work. Finally, with the adoption of the new constitution in 1908, which required all Muslim and non-Muslims of the Empire to serve in the Ottoman army, Greeks began to search for new homes.<sup>68</sup> According to Peabody censuses there were no Greek immigrants, whose birth place was Turkey, in 1900, in 1910 there were 221 Greek immigrants from Turkey. In 1920 there were none from Turkey, and in 1930 there were 77 Turkish Greek immigrants residing in Peabody.

### **Turks**

Most of the Turks in Peabody, Massachusetts came from specific Turkish cities, primarily Diyarbakır, Harput, and Elazığ. However, some of the Turkish immigrants did not give the name of the cities they came from, and were

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<sup>67</sup> Irving M. Herbster; Avrom J. Herbster. "Peabody: Memories of a Jewish Community," <<http://www.jhsns.net/Peabody.html>>, February, 2005.

<sup>68</sup> Theodore Saloutos, *The Greeks in the United States*. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1964), 33.; Louis James Cononelos, *In Search of Streets Paved With Gold*, 53. Cononelos asserts "some Greeks living in the Ottoman Empire left rather than serve in the Turkish army." Both of them seem correct when one considers the Peabody Greeks' immigration dates to the United States. However, it must be kept in mind that economic consequences of military service were also very important considerations for potential Ottoman emigrants. While the non-Muslim Ottoman *millet*s prospered by not losing time with the military service the Muslim *millet*s lost years while serving the army when as civilians they would learn skills. As Âli Paşa asks in the report he gave to Abdulaziz, what will young boys, who were taken from their villages when they were in their best physical condition, and then who spent 7 or 10 years struggling with the most horrible contagious diseases which were to be found in the barracks, do upon his return to their home? (Bozkurt, *Alman-İngiliz Belgelerinin ve Siyasî Gelişmelerin Işığında Gayrimüslim Osmanlı Vatandaşlarının Hukukî Durumu*, 123). Therefore, when the Muslim soldier returned home after his military service it was hard for him to start a new life without having any skill. Also some of the Greeks from Greece left for the United States in order to avoid military service in the Greek army during the Balkan Wars. For example, according to the *Repouli Report* of 1912, from the minister of foreign affairs, "emigration from Greece was mainly a movement of the young, and that among them were many who were anxious to avoid serving with the Greek army." During the Balkan War of 1912-1913 thousands of Greeks migrated to the United States because of this problem. Therefore, Greeks

simply categorized as coming from “Turkey in Asia” or “Turkey in Europe.” Given their dates of immigration, it is probable that they came from the same regions of Turkey. Some of them had familial relationships; they belonged to the same family, the same household or the same group who had cultural ties with each other.

**Table 2.2. 1920 Census: Turks in Peabody According to the Place of Birth**

Place of Birth	Number	Percentage %
Askam Turkey	7	3
Calvet Turkey	15	5
Constantinople Turkey	2	1
Dyerbaker Turkey	16	6
Gaze Turkey	2	1
Harpoot Turkey	191	67
Hassa Turkey	7	3
Turkey Asia	32	11
Turkey	5	2
Turkey Europe	2	1

*Source: U.S. Federal Census Schedules (microfilms) Peabody, Mass. 1920. (See Appendix B)*

The fact that the Armenians led the Turks to Peabody is attested to by Ahmet Emin Yalman, in an article he wrote after his studies in the United States.<sup>69</sup> He talks about the Turks “imitating” the Armenians, who lived in the same cities and villages of Anatolia and migrated to the United States and the fact that Armenian migration encouraged their decision to move. Yalman’s observation goes to the heart of Turkish migration to Peabody and the United States because, as the “network theory” points out, the existence of a network

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did not leave Turkey for national considerations but for economic reasons. Louis James Connelos, *In Search of Streets Paved With Gold*, 52-3.

<sup>69</sup> Ahmet Emin Yalman, “Amerika’daki Göçmen Türkler.” Naki Konyalı, trans. (*Toplumsal Tarih* (2001)).

reduces the risks taken by the new immigrant entering to a foreign world. This network encourages the emigrant in his decision to move by promising him accommodation, a job, and assistance that might be needed in some cases. The first immigrants to a particular place, deprived of such a network, were open to all the abuses and dangers that the new world offered. However, those who come later would find such hardships lessened.<sup>70</sup>

The Armenians were the first in assuming the risks that the New World would offer. Then, letters to families, relatives and friends telling them about the job opportunities and riches in the United States provided important information about the New World, such as the routes to travel and the preferred shipping lines. Within a year many such immigrants were able to send a prepaid ticket to the family. The stories told in the letters sent home did not take long to reach the other millets of the region. This then resulted in a chain of migration among all the Ottoman millets.<sup>71</sup>

Ahmet Emin Yalman's conversation with a Turk he met in Peabody during his visit in early 1900's details this inter-*millet* connection. The Turkish laborer, who worked in one of the tanneries of Peabody told Yalman

Most of us are from Harput. There are also Turks from Sivas, Malatya and Elazığ among us... We observed that Armenians from our homeland were going to the United States for commerce. We thought we could also try commerce because we were in trouble at that time. As soon as the newcomers found jobs, they invited the relatives and friends. And Turkish society became larger day by day.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> See Abadan-Unat, *Bitmeyen Göç*.

<sup>71</sup> See Mirak, *Torn Between Two Lands*, 51-2.

<sup>72</sup> Yalman, *Yakın Tarihte Gördüklerim ve Geçirdiklerim* (1888-1918). İstanbul: Rey Yayınları. (Cited in Bali, *Anadolu'dan Yeni Dünya'ya*, 288).

Sabiha Sertel also tells about the beginnings of the migration chain among the Turks:

Armenians, who went to the United States and then came back, told that everybody in the United States became rich and it was easy to find jobs there. When they were going to the United States again, they persuaded many Turks to come with them. Some of the Turks decided to migrate because of the letters they received from their friends in the United States.<sup>73</sup>

Those Turks came as groups of sometimes three, sometimes four people. According to her, the migration movement in Anatolia began especially in the cities such as Van, Erzurum, Sivas and then scattered among the other towns and villages.

Most of the Turkish passengers destined for the United States including Peabody were going to meet their fathers, relatives, or friends. For example, Hassan Oglu Harahim from Harput, who sailed on the *S.S. Rochambeau* in 1911, was destined for Peabody to join his cousin Mongour Oglu Hussein.<sup>74</sup> Those people would guarantee them a place to stay, help in cases of need, and perhaps a job. A few years after arrival and working in the leather factory these new Turks would find themselves instructing their countrymen who came after them. As Frank Ahmed recalls, “each new arrival would look to someone from his village or a member of his family for security, guidance and assistance in finding employment.” These Turkish workers did not consider their fellow

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<sup>73</sup> Sabiha Sertel, *Roman Gibi*. (İstanbul: Belge Yayınları, 1987), 46-7.

<sup>74</sup> “List or Manifest of Alien Passengers for the United States Immigration Officer at Port of Arrival,” <<http://www.ellisland.org/search/shipManifest.asp?MID=13542995870251130304&LNM=HASSANE&PLNM=HASSANE&RF=11&pID=101242070203>> January, 2005.

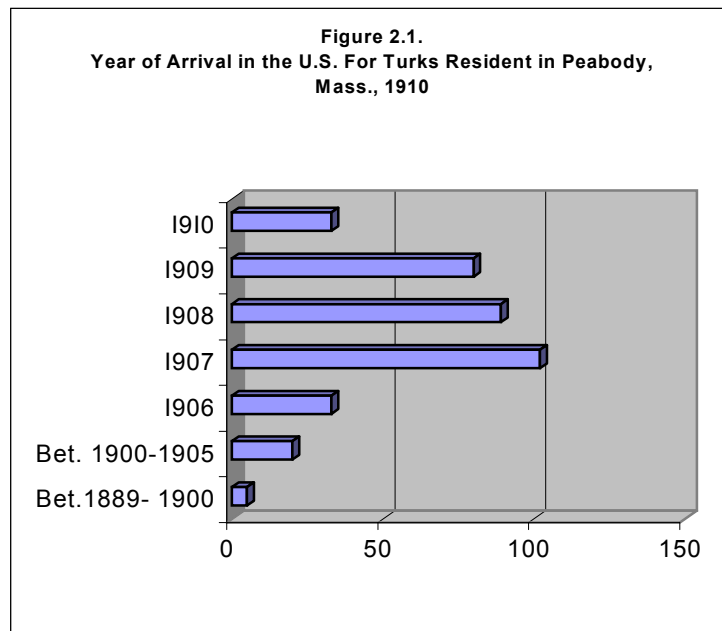
people as a threat to their place in the factories and helped each other.<sup>75</sup> Such networks could be quite extensive. For example, Yalman describes a national assistance network run by Hasan Efendi, who lived in Manchester, New Hampshire and who had become rich after he came to the United States. This allowed him to give assistance to Turks throughout the United States. For example, if one of his countrymen in Chicago was in trouble, Hasan Efendi went there as soon as possible. When he heard that one of his fellow Turks was unemployed and becoming an alcoholic, he went to Lowell, Massachusetts, to help. If a newly arrived Turk was having trouble at Ellis Island and was not being allowed to enter the United States, he worked with the immigration officials.<sup>76</sup>

### **Date of Arrival in America**

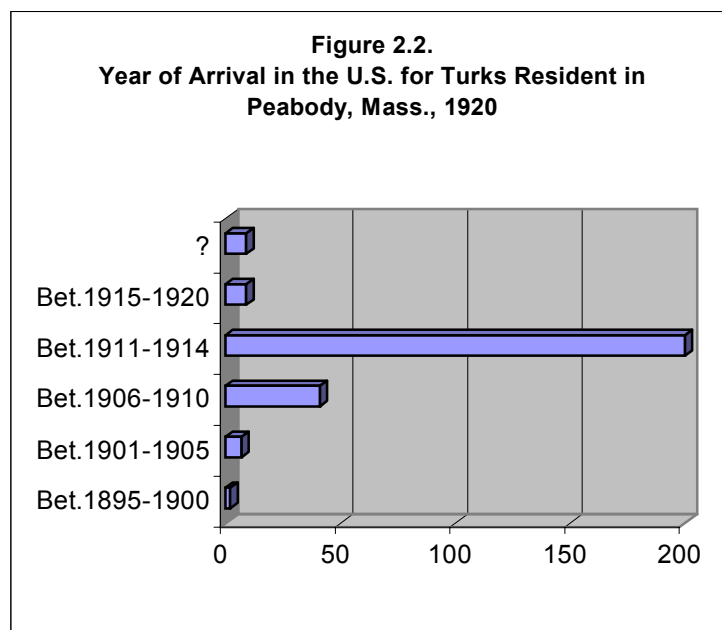
The census records for Peabody show that the earliest arrival date for any Turk was 1892. However, a review of all arrival dates indicates that large scale movement to Peabody or the US (it is impossible to determine if Turks resident in Peabody during any census had lived elsewhere in the US before) peaked in 1907 and then continued at a high level until 1915. Indeed, the number of Turkish immigrants in Peabody, who entered the United States in 1907, is very striking. The number of arrivals in 1907 is nearly twice the total of the Turkish immigrants who had come in the preceding years.

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<sup>75</sup> Ahmed, *Turks in America*, 71.



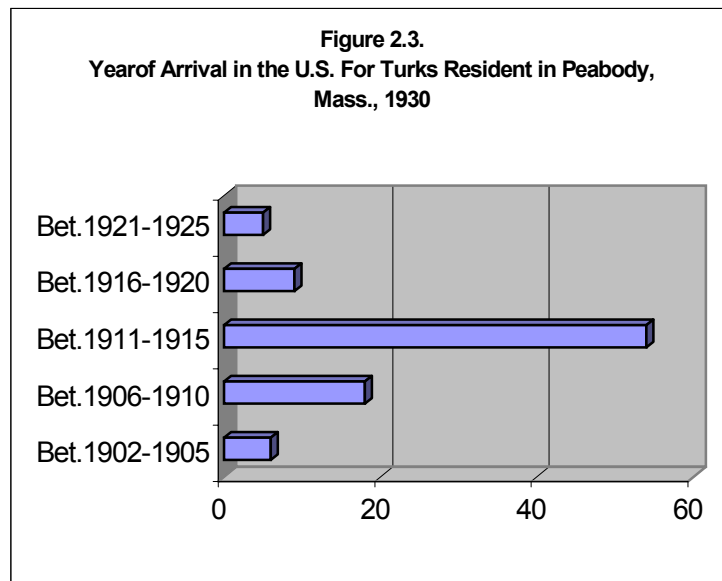
*Source:* U.S. Federal Census Schedules (microfilms) Peabody, Mass., 1910.



*Source:* U.S. Federal Census Schedules (microfilms) Peabody, Mass. 1920.

<sup>76</sup> See Yalman, “Amerika’daki Göçmen Türkler”.





*Source:* U.S. Federal Census Schedules (microfilms) Peabody, Mass. 1930.

### **Number of Turks in Peabody**

Differing figures are given for the number of Turks in Peabody in three separate, non-statistical sources. Wells asserts that by 1906 there were more than 400 Turks employed in the tanneries and in 1910 there were 644 Turks. Furthermore, he notes that at one time there were over 2,000 Turks in Peabody, Salem and Lynn.<sup>77</sup> Ahmet Emin Yalman asserts that there were nearly 1,000 Turks in Peabody when he visited there in 1911.<sup>78</sup> When Mehmed Fuad visited Peabody in 1923, he calculated the number of Turkish workers in Peabody at around 600. However, the census records provide far lower numbers: 351 in 1910; 280 in 1920; and 98 in 1930.<sup>79</sup> This confusion can first be considered a

<sup>77</sup> Wells, *Events in Peabody's History 1626-1972*, 386-7.

<sup>78</sup> Yalman, *Amerika'daki Göçmen Türkler*, 29.

<sup>79</sup> Turks were identified in the census schedule by three main criteria: birth place, Muslim-Turkish names, and language.

result of memory which fades as the time passes. Mehmed Fuad's book was published in 1925, two years after he visited Peabody and Yalman's article in 1918, seven years after his visit to Peabody. Secondly, Yalman, Mehmed, and Wells do not mention their source of information or how they calculated the population of Turks in Peabody which makes their information less reliable. Thirdly, the census figure may be low because some Turks were not enumerated. Also, the figures given by Yalman and Mehmed details the years between the censuses, times when there were, perhaps, more Turks in Peabody. Additionally, it is possible that Wells, who seems unfamiliar with Ottoman culture, may have included Armenians, Albanians, or even Greeks within his numbers. Although it is impossible to determine the exact number of Turks in Peabody with the information now available, the figures in the census should be considered the most reliable and thus good enough to give a general portrait of the Turks in Peabody. The chart below<sup>80</sup> shows the number of Ottoman nationalities in Peabody:

Table 2.3. The Number of Immigrants from the Ottoman Millets in Peabody				
	1900	1910	1920	1930
Turks	-----	351	280	98
Armenians	32	14	4	102
Greeks	-----	221	----	77
Jews	-----	-----	16	11
Albanians		31	24	7
<i>Source:</i> Source:U.S. Federal Census Schedules (microfilms) Peabody, Mass. 1900, 1910, 1920, 1930				

<sup>80</sup> There are five missing people in the 1910 Census. Their birth place is Turkey but rest of the columns are unreadable.

## **Work in the Leather Factories**

Ahmet Emin Yalman first visited Peabody in 1911 and observed that the Turks were working in terrible conditions. They were working in the tanneries doing the heaviest jobs, ones that the other workers were not eager or willing to do. They were paid approximately \$5 or \$6 per week. The wet and foul conditions in the tanneries led to health problems. They complained to Yalman about their condition and were concerned about getting sick in a foreign country. All they desired was to make money and then return to their homeland.<sup>81</sup> They did manage to reduce their health risks by continuing their tradition of a rich diet consisting of a wide variety of foods including meat.

Peabody's tanneries, where almost all of the Turks worked, were very different from today's modern leather factories. Frank Ahmed describes these tanneries:

They were three to five stories high, wooden, usually with only a single wooden fire escape at one end of the structure, even if the factory covered a full block. They were without any emergency aid stations, or health provisions.

Working conditions in these tanneries were terrible. They were filthy and wet, and because of this environment, many Turkish workers suffered from various diseases despite all their attempts to avoid illness while abroad.<sup>82</sup> When Dr. Mehmed Fuad visited Peabody in 1923, while he was collecting donations for orphans in Turkey, he was taken on a tour of the leather factories. He noted

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<sup>81</sup> Yalman, Amerika'daki Göçmen Türkler, 29.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid*, 29.

that most of the workers in those factories were Turks who worked in a foul atmosphere.<sup>83</sup> The skins were processed in the following manner:

They arrived at the factories in large wooden barrels, preserved in a foul smelling liquid. These heavy wet skins would be lifted out of the barrels, placed on racks to be dried. Then cut and polished to their marketable high. They had first entered the “Beam House”, this is where the Turks would usually begin their introduction to work. It was a wet, heavy hard labor, requiring a substantial degree of strength to move the skins. Each floor would be another element in the leather’s movement through the factory. The skins were dried and grade selections were made on the top floors. The leather would then be loaded on wagons and driven to shoe or other leather product factories.<sup>84</sup>

The beam house employees were mainly shepherds and farmers from Eastern Europe and the Ottoman lands. Neither skill nor a common language was needed in these beam houses; they demanded only “strength, a strong work ethic, and ability to adapt to heat, steam and foul air.”<sup>85</sup>

### **Emergence of a Segmented Labor Market in Peabody**

As Kemal Karpat points out, the early Ottoman migrants to the United States belonged to low income groups. They were only concerned with working “for a number of years in any job, without becoming a part of the country, and to save money to buy land and houses upon returning to their homeland.” Because of this reason, the number of those Turkish immigrants who returned to their homelands is very high.<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> Fuad Mehmet, *Amerika'da Türkler ve Gördüklerimiz*. (İstanbul: Vatan Matbaası, 1925), 70.

<sup>84</sup> Ahmed, *Turks in America*, 71-2.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid*, 72.

<sup>86</sup> Kemal Karpat, “The Turks in America.” [*Les Annales d L'Autre Islam* 3 (1995)], 235.

Kemal Karpat asserts that about one third of the Christians and probably more than half of the

Anthropologists and historians contend that people work not only to earn money but to gain prestige among family, friends and the social group to which they belong. As a result, occupational hierarchies evolve. Therefore, native laborers work to gain prestige within their society and seek to elevate themselves to the top of the occupational hierarchy. Immigrant workers, who do not have such a motivation (because many of them do not feel that they belong to the society in which they live but to the society they left behind), are therefore highly desirable for business owners who often must contend with workers seeking a higher status. The immigrant worker will gain his/her prestige with the money he/she brings back to the homeland.<sup>87</sup> The Turks had only the motivation to earn some money, to take their share of the riches of the United States, and then to return to the homeland. As is stated by Wells, they “came to this country with the explicit purpose of making money so they could return to their homeland and live comfortably for their remaining years.”<sup>88</sup> It was believed that a Turk could live comfortably with an income of few hundred dollars in his homeland. Therefore, when he returned home he would be regarded a rich man among his people.<sup>89</sup> The Turkish immigrants in Peabody did not strive for a place in the occupational hierarchy. They remained

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Muslims returned to their homes to spend the rest of their lives despite the difficulty of readjusting to the old world. See also Thomas Archdeacon, *Becoming American: An Ethnic History* (New York: Free Press, 1983).

<sup>87</sup> Abadan-Unat, *Bitmeyen Göç*, 11.

<sup>88</sup> Wells, *Events in Peabody's History 1626-1972*, 388.

<sup>89</sup> Ahmed, *Turks in America*, 38.

at the bottom level jobs at the tanneries and leather factories and helped to keep the balance between the immigrants' aspirations and those of native laborers.<sup>90</sup>

Michael J. Piore, one of the ardent supporters of the "segmented labor market" theory, asserts that the "labor-based" and "capital-based" sectors constitute two sides of the segmented labor market.<sup>91</sup> While immigrant laborers constitute the "labor-based" sector and do the unsophisticated jobs which do not need any skill, the native laborers in the "capital-based" sector are given jobs that are complicated and which need skill and sophistication. This theory is also valid for the sectors in Peabody where the unskilled work demand was supplied to a large degree by Turkish and Greek immigrants. The Turkish worker from Harput in Peabody, mentioned earlier, told Ahmet Emin Yalman:

...But none of us think to stay here. Our goal is to save some money, return to the homeland, and come together with our children. You see, none of us came with our families and think to live here... We try not to learn this country's language only not to allow any thought of living here. We disregard those who try to learn the language and we try to stop their efforts. Our job is to work in tanneries. It is a filthy, difficult job... There is not much demand for this job, and for this reason they are trying to keep us, so we have never been left hungry. We are cooking together, we are trying to save money, and send it to the homeland.<sup>92</sup>

Piore asserts that transnational population movements result from the chronic unskilled labor demands in the host country and not from "push factors" in the native land. Peabody, which experienced a large Turkish immigration at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, attracted many immigrants from

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<sup>90</sup> Those Turkish immigrants who remained in the United States after most of their companions had returned home would eventually achieve a higher status, but it took much time. For example, Ahmed's father became a foreman in a leather factory after 20 years of hard work.

<sup>91</sup> Abadan-Unat, *Bitmeyen Göç*, 10-4.

many countries because of its chronic need for a docile and unskilled labor force in the tanneries and leather factories. As the work in the tanneries was a “filthy and difficult” business, native workers would generally not accept such work. As a result, the only way to continue this business, on which Peabody’s economy was heavily based, was to use immigrants to fill the gaps resulting from the lack of native workers. As Frank Ahmed recalls:

It was into this industrial vacuum that the immigrant workers materialize as the pivotal very crucial ingredient of the work force. Indeed, they were one of the critical elements in the tanning industry of New England. Their presence was also necessary in the wire mills of Worcester and the automobile factories of Detroit. They were assigned the unskilled tasks of lifting materials, rolling barrels of wet skins, the hard, back breaking, dirty work that the domestic worker avoided if he was able.<sup>93</sup>

Yalman notes that initially, the Turks did not join any labor unions in their respective cities and they also did not form into a group themselves. He says nearly all the Turkish workers in the cities he visited, including Peabody, were generally lower in status than the immigrant workers from all other countries.<sup>94</sup> The Turks of Peabody seem to have remained in the “immigrant labeled” jobs and did not move to the upper levels of employment. Thus they

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<sup>92</sup> Yalman, *Yakın Tarihte Gördüklerim ve Geçirdiklerim*, (Cited in Rifat Bali, 288)

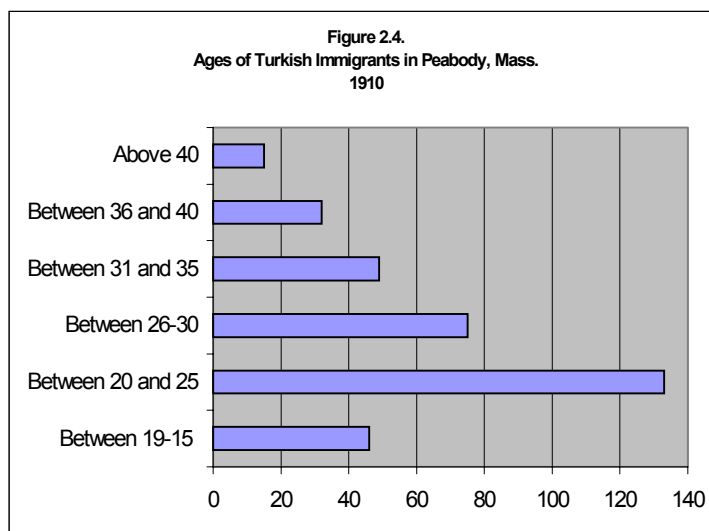
<sup>93</sup> Ahmed, *Turks in America*, 69.

<sup>94</sup> Yalman, “Amerika’daki Göçmen Türkler,” 28. Yalman published the article in 1918. Sabiha Sertel, who was studying labor unionization while a student at Columbia in 1919, decided to carry out her research on the Turkish immigrants in New York and also attempted to organize the Turkish workers in the United States. She knew that she could accomplish this task by working with the Turks in New York’s coffeehouses, in which the Turkish workers spent most of their leisure times. She succeeded in forming a labor union called “Türk Teavün Cemiyeti” among the Turkish workers in New York, but similar efforts in Detroit were problematic as the Kurdish workers in the Ford factory in Detroit did not join the union. Sertel tells that a survey showed that most of the Turks in the US were working in New York, Detroit, Worcester, Lawrence, Youngtown, Pittsburgh, and Philadelphia. She does not mention the Turks in Peabody.

fit Piore's theory of segmented labor quite well. Then too, they had (as will be discussed later) a reluctance to learn English and that lack of language would have hindered their abilities to undertake more complex jobs which probably demanded a good knowledge of English

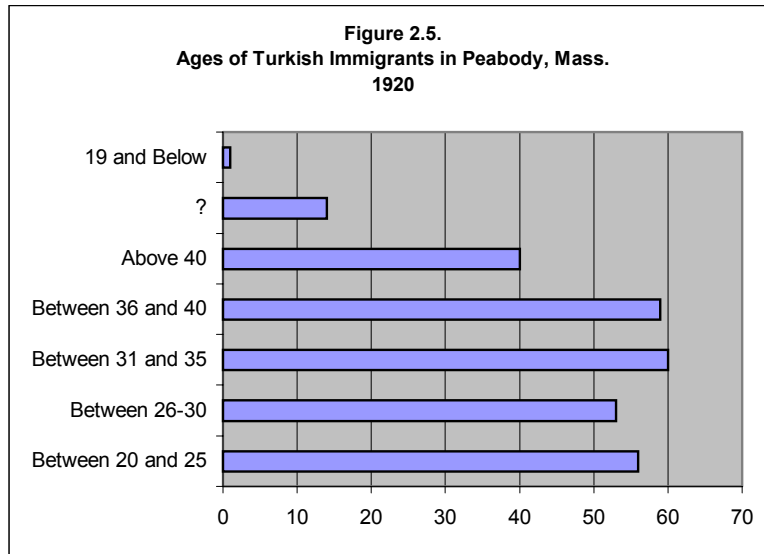
### **Who were the Turks in Peabody?**

Almost all of the Turks in Peabody were composed of males in their most productive years. Most of their ages ranged between 20 and 25.



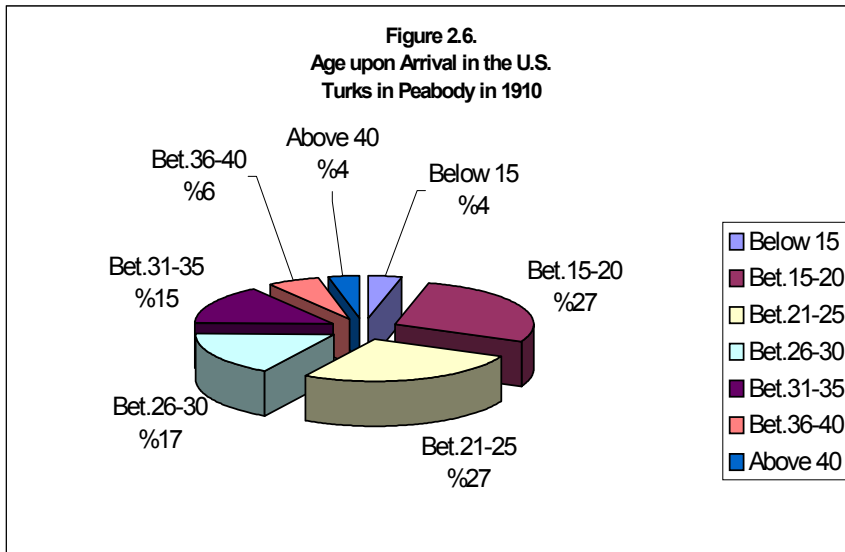
*Source:* U.S. Federal Census Schedules (microfilms) Peabody, Mass., 1910.



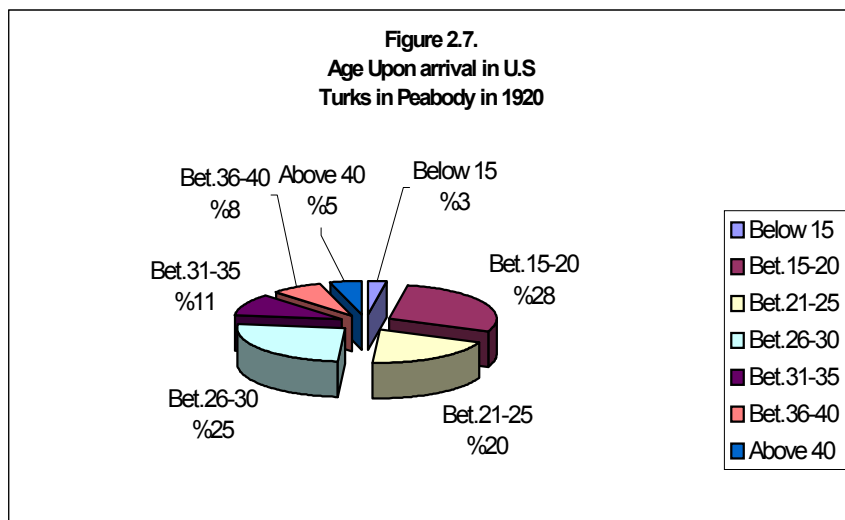


*Source:* U.S. Federal Census Schedules (microfilms) Peabody, Mass., 1920.

The first figure shows that ages of the Turkish immigrants in Peabody does not show any consistency and are mostly between 40 and 20. Most of them arrived in the United States between the ages of 15 and 30. Because none of the Turkish immigrants in Peabody arrived in the United States after 1925 and the number of those, who arrived between 1920 and 1925, is only 6, the 1910 and 1920 censuses are the most useful in reviewing age upon arrival date. Among the Turkish immigrants, there were almost no children below age 15 and very few adults over 40.



Source: U.S. Federal Census Schedules (microfilms) Peabody, Mass., 1910.

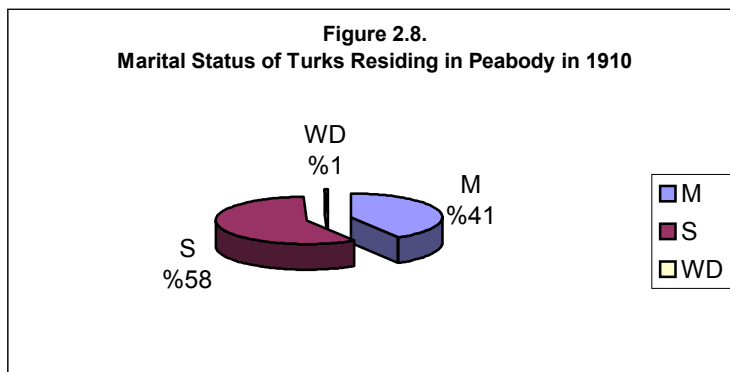


Source: U.S. Federal Census Schedules (microfilms) Peabody, Mass., 1920.

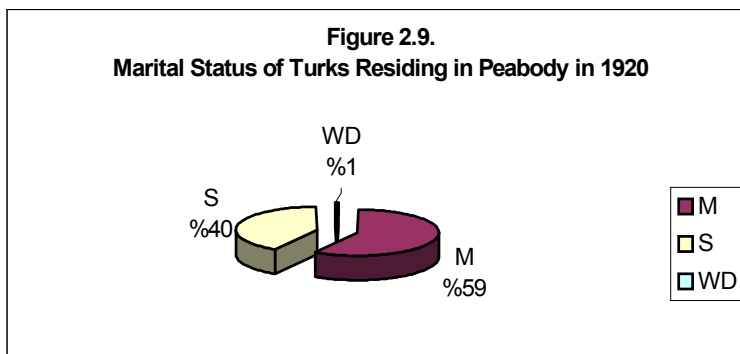
The graphs above show the arrival ages of Turkish immigrants living in Peabody. It can be concluded that the majority of the Turkish workers in Peabody came during the most productive years of their life, between 15 and 25. Most had spent around 5 years in the United States prior to enumeration. It

is, at this point impossible to determine whether they came first to Peabody or some other city in the United States.

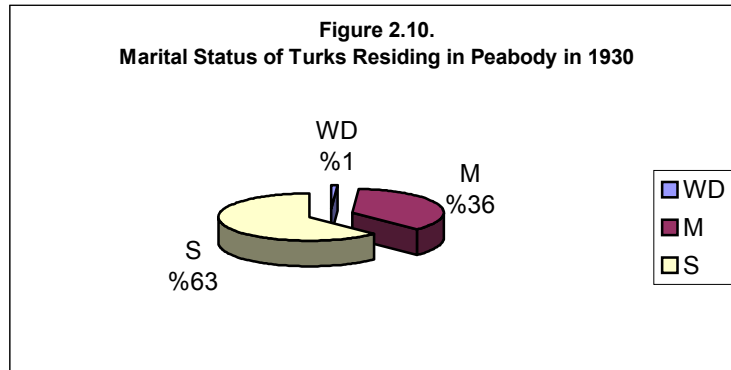
As can be seen in figures 2.5., the Turkish population of Peabody was getting older by 1930. This is due to the fact that only 6 Turks living in Peabody came between 1921-1925 (figure 2.3.) and that immigration from Turkey was essentially closed by the Quota Act of 1924.



Source: U.S. Federal Census Schedules (microfilms) Peabody, Mass., 1910.



Source: U.S. Federal Census Schedules (microfilms) Peabody, Mass., 1920.



*Source: U.S. Federal Census Schedules (microfilms) Peabody, Mass., 1920.*

Although the Turkish community of Peabody was totally male, many of the immigrants were married, having left wives, and often children in Turkey. The three figures above show the percentages of married, single and widowed Turkish immigrants in Peabody. The percentage of single and married are very close in 1910 and 1920. This data should not, however, be interpreted as a total lack of a family structure as there were, sons and fathers, or brothers living together at the same boarding houses.

Some Americans who misunderstood the immigrants' culture saw this lack of women as a cultural matter: "they were not allowed to bring their wives or women to this country."<sup>95</sup> However, the reason was different. As indicated earlier, the Turkish immigrant generally did not come to the United States in order to begin a new life. Rather his motivation was to meet his basic

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<sup>95</sup> Wells, *Events in Peabody's History 1626-1972*, 387. He asserts that their inability to bring their wives with them "resulted in many undesirables visiting Peabody, followed by numerous police raids." The same problem occurred in Germany among many Turkish workers in the 1960's. Because of the fact that they did not know German and had very little contact with

needs while in the United States, save money, and then return to his home and in many instances to his wife and children.<sup>96</sup> Some men did, however, marry and remain in the United States. Their spouses were not Turkish but, as Frank Ahmed points out, first and second generation Irish, Italian, and French Canadian.<sup>97</sup> The 1930 census lists four Turkish immigrants who had married foreign wives. One of wives was born in Rhode Island and was a second generation French Canadian. Another was from Massachusetts and a second generation Syrian. The third was from Rhode Island, and the fourth from Massachusetts and second generation English.

## **Occupations**

As was stated earlier, most of the Turks in Peabody came from low income groups and worked at lower level jobs in the tanneries as laborers. The charts below show the distribution of jobs among Turks in Peabody in 1910, 1920, and 1930.

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German families, their relationship with women centered on sexual relationships with prostitutes.

<sup>96</sup>Moreover, a Turkish immigrant, who was trying to save money, had little incentive to spend money for a house and therefore would not bring his wife to the cheap, dirty, male-dominated boarding houses.. Wives and families would also raise their basic cost of survival while abroad. Furthermore, even today the traditional Turkish man will not bring his wife to a place where he is going for the first time and about which he has uncertainties and questions about its security. Married Turkish workers living single abroad can also be seen in Abadan Unat's research on the Turkish workers in Germany in the 1960s and 1970s. She notes s that "although a great number of Turkish workers are married, many are living single."

<sup>97</sup> Ahmed, *Turks in America*, 52-7. See also Karpat, "Turks in America", 235. He notes that the total number of Turks who married and settled in the United States between the years 1910 and 1930 is around 300 out of 18,884 Turks who, according to the United States immigration authorities, entered US between 1895-1924. Thomas Archdeacon, *Becoming American: An Ethnic History* (New York: Free Press, 1983) Table V3.,118-19 gives a higher figure of 22,021 for the period 1889-1924. John J. Grabowski notes that 25,000 is a more accurate number based on his work in reviewing census schedules and other statistics. Therefore, 300 out of

<b>Table 2.4. 1910 Occupations of Turks in Peabodys</b>	
Baker	1
Brusher	2
Buffer	1
Dyer	1
Farmer	5
Beamster	193
Colorer	6
Cook	19
Glacier	5
Laborer	60
Section Hand	1
Odd Jobs	4
Roller	5
Seasoner	9
Staker	3
House Keeper	5
Machinist	1
Coffeehouse Proprietor	1
Boarding House Proprietor	2
Restaurant Proprietor	1
Putter Out	1
Salesman	1
Setter Out	2
Trimmer	3
Heel Maker	2
None	14
Finisher	1
?	2
<i>Source: U.S. Federal Census Schedules (microfilms) Peabody, Mass. 1910.</i>	

<b>Table 2.5. 1920 Occupations of Turks in Peabody</b>	
Baker	1
Beamster	17
Cellar-Hand	6
Cook	7
Flesher	3
Glacier	4
Hanger	8
Laborer	163
None	2
Roller	5
Washer	4
Yard Man	1

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25,000 Turks were married and these numbers presents a very sad story about the Turks in the United States.

<b>Table 2.5. (cont'd)</b>	
Wheeler	7
Tacker	1
Waiter	1
Barber	2
Shufferer	1
Binder	1
Brusher	1
Buffer	2
Dealer	1
Dish Washer	1
Hesker	1
Manager	1
Mixer	1
Seasoner	1
Packer	1
Puller Out	1
Foreman	1
Grocery Store Owner	1
Carrier	1
None	2
?	3
<i>Source: U.S. Federal Census Schedules (microfilms) Peabody, Mass. 1900, 1910, 1920, 1930</i>	

<b>Table 2.6. 1930 Occupations of Turks in Peabody</b>	
Aligner	1
Baker	1
Barber	1
General Work	2
Dyer	1
Iron Work	1
Lumper	1
Wheeler	2
Beamster	4
Staker	1
Shaver	1
Retail Merchant	1
Restaurant Proprietor	2
Store Keeper	1
Cook	3
Glacier	4
Laborer	52
?	1
<i>Source: U.S. Federal Census Schedules (microfilms) Peabody, Mass. 1900, 1910, 1920, 1930</i>	

As can be seen from these three tables, the vast majority of Turks in Peabody worked in the tanneries. They held a variety of jobs in the tanneries, but the largest number worked either as laborers or as “beamsters” which was one of the most physically demanding positions in the business. The beam house was where the skins were first treated. They were placed in a rotating barrel, treated with foul smelling chemicals and after a certain length of time, usually overnight, removed, wet and heavy and placed on a drying pole. From there, they were, hours later, moved once more by hand, to a drying and treatment room where they were stretched and processed depending on the grade, and the condition of the skin. The beam house was an entry position; all that was needed was a strong back. The work was explained by another Turk or a non-Turk, by using hand instructions. It was the bottom rung of the ladder.<sup>98</sup>

Almost all of the Turkish laborers worked in the leather factories. Most of the occupations noted in the charts were carried on in the leather factories during the process of turning hides or skins into leather. There were some Turks, however, who worked outside of the tanneries. Their occupations, such as barber, baker, dish washer, waiter, as can be seen in tables 2.4., 2.5., and 2.6., essentially were service jobs that helped support Turkish community life in Peabody.



## **Everyday life of the Turks in Peabody**

In 1919, Peabody was recognized as the world's largest producer of leather.<sup>99</sup> The more its leather industry grew the larger a foreign labor force it needed. Most of the foreign laborers settled in boarding houses which offered a bed, meals, and the lowest rents. Boarding houses seem to have been a long standing feature of the city. An 1877 "birdseye" view of Peabody, depicts about 150 boarding houses.<sup>100</sup> When the Turks came to Peabody they also usually lived in the boarding houses, along with the other immigrants from the Ottoman Empire and other countries: "their bachelor dormitory-style living accommodations gave the Turks security."<sup>101</sup> Wells tells that one boarding house on Lower Main Street was called "the house of the 101 Turks." Usually they slept on the floors, in the hallways, or any place they could find. The boarding houses also helped them to save their money by providing a commune-like life. The process of settling in these boarding houses would begin when an enterprising immigrant rented a house and then arranged for his fellow countrymen, as well, at times, as other immigrants to live with him. He would charge them two or three dollars per month for room and board. For example, a Turk would rent the house and rent its rooms to his fellow Turks. He arranged for food and cleaning at a very low price; only a few Turks lived in single rooms. They ate as they did in their homeland: plenty of bread, tea,

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<sup>98</sup> Frank Ahmed, <frahmed@earthlink.net>, "Re: Your Expertise is needed," private e-mail message to Işıl Acehan, 18 March 2005.

<sup>99</sup> Wells, *Events in Peabody's History 1626-1972*, 428.

<sup>100</sup> 1877 Birdseye view of Peabody.

<sup>101</sup> Ahmed, *Turks in America*, 29-87.

salads, soups and, of course, lamb, a Turkish staple. A cook would be employed to provide culturally familiar food. There was always hot food available consisting large pots of pilav, lamb, vegetable dishes and cabbage rolls kept warm on the stove for the Turks who worked irregular schedules on day and night shifts. For their breaks in the leather factories, each would carry a lunch consisting of bread, scallions, fruit and perhaps some hot tea in the winter. Because of the heat in the leather factories they could easily warm their food and tea by placing them on one of the hot machines.<sup>102</sup> Life in the boardinghouses, although it provided these advantages, also had very dangerous effects on their health because of the ease in communication of contagious diseases such as tuberculosis. These diseases resulted in death or an early return home. For example, the majority of the 51 Turks buried in Cedar Grove Cemetery of Peabody died because of tuberculosis in one year, 1917.<sup>103</sup>

The Turkish immigrants led an “exterritorial” life in Peabody. The Turkish immigrants’ way of life in Peabody was common to that of the Turkish workers in other industrial cities in the United States. Sabiha Sertel notes that the Turkish workers in New York and Detroit could not set up families because of their religion and language. They also worked 10-15 hours a day in the Ford factory which left little time for other activities.<sup>104</sup> The gap between the

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<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.* Ahmed notes that on August 6, 1913 a story appeared in the *Salem Evening News*, which was a Salem, Massachusetts, daily newspaper, referred to these boarding houses as large, rambling, old fashioned homes normally rented for \$10 or \$12 per month if rented to an American family but which would bring between \$50 and \$60 when rented to immigrant workers.

<sup>103</sup> Ahmed, *Turks in America*, 29-83. Wells, *Events in Peabody's History 1626-1972*, 387.

<sup>104</sup> Sertel, *Roman Gibi*, 47-8. It seems like the attitude of the Turkish workers did not change over time while residing in another Christian country. Abadan-Unat notes that a survey conducted among the Turkish workers in Germany in 1963 showed that most passed their

languages, religions, along with the long working hours and the Turkish workers' unwillingness to integrate into the host society, were the factors that led them remain in their own microcosm. As Frank Ahmed points out, "from 1905 until the 1920's most Turks were passive about leaving their Turkish environment." The outside was strange and insecure for their Muslim culture. Usually they would not go outside of the boarding houses, factories or the neighborhood coffeehouse. When they did travel, it was to a culturally familiar location. For example, Peabody Turks would sometimes go as a group to Boston by train and meet the other Turks in a coffeehouse.<sup>105</sup>

### **Language**

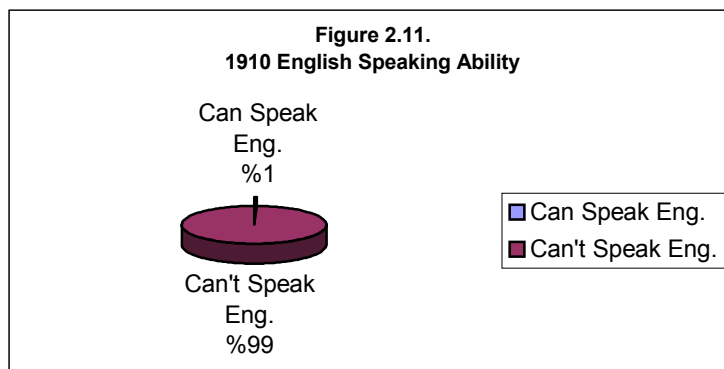
The Turks in Peabody thought that they did not need to learn English because they would soon return to their homeland and because the language was not necessary to their work as unskilled or semi-skilled laborers.

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leisure time with "soft" passive activities. They were criticized by the directors of the dormitories that they lived in for not participating in the activities that were designed for them (music rooms, Ping-Pong tables, sewing courses, etc.) but rather passed their time in bed. However, as Unat explains, the Turkish worker, who worked 40-45 hours a week, had only 2-3 hours of leisure aside from their compulsory resting hours. Thus if workers like those in Germany, who labored approximately 7- 7.5 hours a day, could not find time for leisure, then the Turks who worked 10-15 hours a day at the factories in U.S. in the early 1900s had little opportunity to do anything other than passive activities such as sitting at the coffeehouses. The dormitories, at which the Turkish workers lived in Germany, were similar to the boarding houses in which most of the Turkish workers lived in Peabody. Unat notes that the workers counted the years passed away from home as akin to military service, and for this reason only a few (17 percent) were interested in learning German in the language courses that were offered. Moreover, The Turkish workers regarded their dormitories as a kind of homeland (like their boarding houses and neighborhoods in Peabody) and they refrained from integrating into the German society. Seventy-seven percent of them had never visited a German family. See Abadan-Unat, *Bitmeyen Göç*, 108-9.

<sup>105</sup> Ahmed, *Turks in America*, 36-8.

Interpreters provided the basic instruction they needed.<sup>106</sup> However, this changed over time as some Turks stayed longer in Peabody and eventually learned some English. Although in 1910 only 1 percent of the Turkish immigrants in Peabody could speak English, by 1920 English speakers had risen to comprise 64 percent of the Turkish population.



*Source:* U.S. Federal Census Schedules (microfilms) Peabody, Mass. 1910.

Language constitutes a great problem in the integration of an immigrant into the society of the host country, because it leads to a cultural identity crisis that grows out of the difficulty of communication with the host society. The initial reluctance of the Turkish immigrants in Peabody to learn English also resulted because of the huge differences between the English and Turkish. Some official and technical terms, for example, defied translation from English to Turkish and thus possibly added to a sense of humiliation and insecurity among the Turkish workers. The Turkish workers in Peabody nevertheless

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<sup>106</sup> *Ibid*, 70. In Abadan-Unat's survey, most of the first Turkish immigrants in Germany explained that they did not need to learn German because they would return to Turkey. See Unat, 36-7. But today they still do not have to learn German, Unat continues, because everywhere in Germany "little Turkeys" are built up.

attempted to find solutions to such problems. When Ahmet Emin Yalman visited Peabody first in 1911, he was amazed with what he saw there:

When we got out of the train, we felt as if we were in a Turkish town. All the signs in the train station and the civic instructions which were hung on the walls were written in both English and Turkish. It was obvious that the Turkish population within the town's population had a considerable place, so they needed to tell the instructions related to the public life not only in a language which they didn't understand, but in their own language.<sup>107</sup>

As Yalman points out, the Turkish immigrants in Peabody did not try to learn and even resisted learning English. This was because, as was stated earlier, most of them did not intend to start a new life in the United States. Resistance to learning English went even to the extent of setting up a control mechanism within the community. For example, one of the workers that Yalman met in Peabody, as stated earlier, told him that they tried not to learn English for fear that learning the language would make them decide to remain there. Moreover, these Turkish workers were upset by those who were learning English and tried to stop their efforts. What the Turkish immigrants said shocked Yalman and his traveling partner Ahmet Şükrü Esmer. Both were upset by the ignorance of the Turkish immigrants. Yalman was troubled because the lack of English skills would keep them from advancing and leaving inferior jobs. This seemed a shame given the struggle and self-sacrifice they made just to get to the United States.<sup>108</sup>

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<sup>107</sup> Yalman, *Yakın Tarihte Gördüklerim ve Geçirdiklerim*, (Cited in Bali, 288).

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*

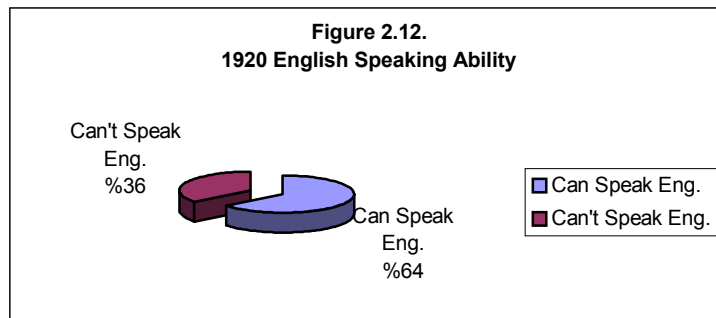
The Turkish workers also resisted physical integration into the Peabody community. As is pointed out by Wells, “they lived in colonies where they retained the manners and customs of their native lands.”<sup>109</sup> They had no families; they cooked by and for themselves, and washed their own clothes. Yalman found that they were not interested in the world around them; they did not try to understand it and they tried to keep their communication with their non-Turkish neighbors to a minimum. For example, they would not buy something that they needed from a strange shop that might be located on a nearby street on their own, but would instead request help from an Armenian. At the time of Yalman’s first visit the Turks themselves operated only one market and a bakery.<sup>110</sup>

Over time though, circumstances forced the Turks to learn more English. The figure below shows percentage of the Turkish immigrants speaking English in 1920.

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<sup>109</sup> Wells, *Events in Peabody’s History 1626-1972*, 386.

<sup>110</sup> The 1910 Peabody Census does not show any shop owned by a Turk. Therefore the market and the bakery must be newly opened shops when Yalman went there on his first trip in 1911.

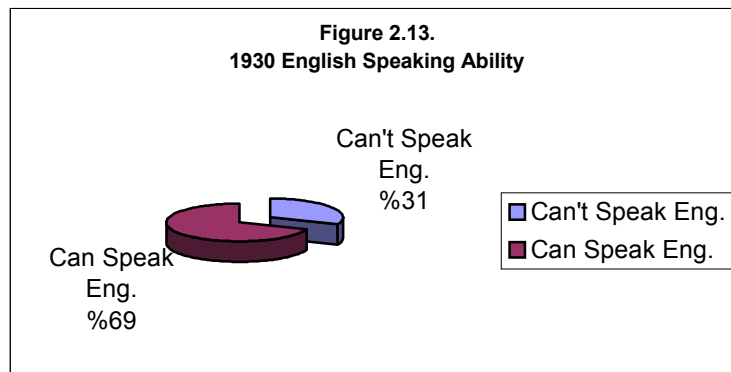


*Source:* U.S. Federal Census Schedules (microfilms) Peabody, Mass. 1920.

As the figure indicates, there was a considerable increase over 1910 (when only 1 percent spoke English) It is likely that they learned at least some English in order to have an easier life in their neighborhood and also to communicate in the leather factories with other immigrants including Poles, Hungarians, Bulgarians and a few Chinese. This is assuming, of course, that members of these groups also had achieved some minimal skill in English.<sup>111</sup> Also, by 1920, some of the Turks had spent a number of years in Peabody and thus would have been able to acquire more skill in the host language. But that explanation is somewhat challenged by the fact that the percentage of Turks who spoke English had not increased appreciably some ten years later according to statistics derived from the census of that year and presented in the chart below.

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<sup>111</sup> Ahmed, *Turks in America*, 69.



*Source:* U.S. Federal Census Schedules (microfilms) Peabody, Mass. 1930.

### **The Coffeehouse Culture in Peabody**

The coffeehouse was the cultural center for the Turks and Greeks in Peabody. They generally passed their leisure time by meeting at the coffeehouses or sitting under trees. At first the Turks gathered together in Greek-owned coffeehouses. Yalman notes that although there were approximately a thousand Turks in Peabody in 1911, they at that time had not opened their own coffeehouses but used those of the Greeks. Although they opened coffeehouses later, there always seemed to be cooperation with the Greeks in this particular enterprise.<sup>112</sup>

The coffeehouses, which must have seemed exotic to the native Peabody population, were concentrated on Walnut Street which was regarded as “Ottoman Street.” Walnut Street was called the “mecca for coffee houses”

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<sup>112</sup> Yalman, “Amerika’daki Göçmen Türkler”, 29. Although Yalman reports one thousand Turks in Peabody in 1911 his numbers must be exaggerated as the 1910 census lists approximately 400. Even given errors in the census and the difficulty, at times of determining who is a Turk, it appears that Yalman’s figures are too high.



or the “Ottoman recreational center of New England.”<sup>113</sup> Here Turks, Greeks, and Armenians could drink strong coffee and play cards. Gambling at the coffeehouses led to many police raids on Walnut Street.<sup>114</sup> Frank Ahmed tells how a coffeehouse seemed at that time:

The coffeehouses were usually on the ground floor. They had large store front type windows so one could see out and others could look in at activities. There were small tables, where two or four could sit. Here men were hunched over playing backgammon or cards, gambling for a silk shirt or money, slamming the “stones” or the winning card on the table, shouting at each other as they threw the dice and moved the stones. They played with the same fervor and vitality at they manifested at work, all the while looking for endorsement from those watching. Some would sit and smoke a water pipe “Nargile” or snack on some Turkish food and have yet another cup of strong Turkish coffee as they watched their countrymen gamble and shout.<sup>115</sup>

There were also groceries, restaurants, barber shops, and bakeries owned by the Greeks, Armenians and the Turks in the vicinity of the coffeehouses. Walnut Street was sometimes filled up with horse-drawn wagons which sold vegetables and fruits. On Walnut Street Turks, Greeks, and Armenians could be found playing backgammon or leaning back in their chairs smoking their water pipes and talking to each other.<sup>116</sup> Peabody, by the early 1900’s was its own small version of the Ottoman world.

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<sup>113</sup> Wells, *Events in Peabody’s History 1626-1972*, 387. Ahmed, *Turks in America*, 66-7.

Ahmet Emin Yalman tells that later some coffeehouses imported female musicians and served alcoholic drinks as a result of the efforts of some educated young Turkish people.

<sup>114</sup> Wells, *Events in Peabody’s History 1626-1972*, 387. Also Yalman notes that although many of the Turkish workers were hard working and saved their money, others were caught up with the ills in Peabody such as gambling and alcohol. He further notes that the Turks took few if any measures against such problems.

<sup>115</sup> Ahmed, *Turks in America*, 66.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid*, 66-8.

Table 2.7. The Ottoman and Greek Inhabitants of Walnut Street in 1910	
Nationalities	Numbers
Greeks (From Turkey and Greece)	90
Turks	29
<i>Source: U.S. Federal Census Schedules (microfilms) Peabody, Mass. 1900, 1910, 1920, 1930</i>	

## Changing Attitudes

However, as the time passed the Turks in Peabody were changed by the atmosphere that surrounded them in the United States. The increase among those who knew English has been noted earlier. Additionally the Turks also became more aware of their rights as workers. When Yalman visited Peabody again in 1913 he found striking changes that surprised him. Upset by the ignorance of the Turkish workers in Peabody when he first went there in 1911, he returned to find that the first Balkan War had begun to break the Turk's lack of interest in outside events and challenge their focus only on jobs and money. Two Turkish youngsters from Midilli, who had received senior high school education, lived for some time among the Turkish workers and published a newspaper which communicated new ideas to them. As a result, their conservatism began to diminish as did their resistance to understanding the society in which they lived.<sup>117</sup>

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<sup>117</sup>Yalman, "Amerika'daki Göçmen Türkler," 29. It seems that Turkish immigrants keep a keen interest in their homeland although they are far away. For example, the survey among the Turkish workers in Germany showed that any bought transistor radios and tried to listen to broadcasts from Ankara.. Also 73 percent of them reported they were reading Turkish newspapers. Some of those newspapers were sent to them by their families in Turkey others were purchased in Germany. . The Turkish newspapers cost 1 DM at that time and Unat

There was a museum of Peabody in which were displayed many different kinds of goods that the captains from Salem harbor had brought from various countries over the past several centuries. There was also a Turkish room in the museum. Although workers of different nationalities visited there many times on Sundays in 1911, as Yalman tells, none of the Turkish workers were coming to the museum at that time. However, in 1913 he observed that the Turkish workers had a considerable place among those visiting the Peabody museum on Sundays.<sup>118</sup>

Attitudes toward unionization also were changing. Turkish workers in Peabody constituted a considerable part of the non-union labor force in Peabody. However, as time passed, they became more aware of the importance of a union and the benefits that it might offer. When Yalman visited again in 1913, that changes were under way. He found the Turks beginning slowly to stir as a result of the lectures on workers' rights given by a young Anatolian Greek. The factory owners, who were troubled about losing such hard-working and enduring workers, increased their wages immediately.<sup>119</sup>

This awakening of the Turkish workers is further evidenced by the *Salem Evening News* on June 29, 1917 which reported that thirteen Turks had been arrested by the Peabody police and were charged with loitering and obstructing the street after about fifty Turks and "Curds" (Kurds) had left the Beam House department on strike. They were demanding an increase in their

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concludes that they showed great devotion with buying these newspapers despite their small incomes. . . Abadan-Unat, *Bitmeyen Göç*, 109-10.

<sup>118</sup> Yalman, "Amerika'daki Göçmen Türkler," 29.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid*, 29.

wages, a raise from \$18 to \$20 which they received in return for 54 hours of work (some wanted \$25). It was understood by the leather companies that the Turkish workers would be difficult to challenge as they would support each other because of their traditions and ethnic solidarity.<sup>120</sup> Eventually, the Turks in Peabody were “regarded as good workers and strong union men.”<sup>121</sup>

## **Religion**

Religion was one of the most powerful ingredients in Turkish identity and therefore a central issue and problem during their lives in a Christian world. It governed various aspects of daily life and, perhaps most importantly, the manner in which their deaths would be handled. The Turkish immigrants resisted eating pork products and such meat as they ate had to be butchered according to the Islamic tradition (helâl meat). Frank Ahmed tells how Islam stood strong among his family members:

I find myself better able to appreciate how much our family life was a reflection for Turkish culture and Islamic traditions. This was particularly true in what we ate, in addition to what meats we ate, no pork items at all, all meats had to be freshly butchered in the Judaic, Muslim religious tradition. The animal was killed by having its throat cut and the blood allowed to drain. I remember how we kept some livestock in our large backyard, chickens, turkeys, and occasionally a sheep. The sheep was for a special religious holiday. It fell to my father to perform the butchering of the food. Whatever meats we bought had to be from a store here the butcher knew of our special needs. The safe meat purchase would be made at a kosher butcher shop because my father would then know the meat was “safe” to eat.<sup>122</sup>

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<sup>120</sup> Ahmed, *Turks in America*, 73.

<sup>121</sup> Wells, *Events in Peabody's History 1626-1972*, 387.

<sup>122</sup> Ahmed, *Turks in America*, 79.

The Turks in Peabody, like Turkish immigrants in other Christian countries, held strongly to Islam and their traditions. However, it must have been particularly difficult for the Turkish workers, who worked in hot and wet factories for long hours to keep to a Muslim diet and find enough to eat in order not to lose their health and strength. Common meals in largely Turkish boarding houses helped a great deal. Fasting during Ramadan also presented a problem because there was no letup in the demanding factory work whereas self-directed agricultural work in Turkey would make fasting easier for them while in their homeland. When Mehmed Fuad visited Peabody in 1923 he went to a Turkish restaurant in order to have *iftar* (the dinner that is eaten after fasting) organized by the Turks in Peabody where he shared the meal with those Turks who maintained the fast.<sup>123</sup> One of the Turkish workers in Peabody told Yalman that their biggest fear was to eat pork by mistake or eat something that was cooked in a saucepan in which pork had been cooked before. “For this reason”, he continued, “we do not eat in the American restaurants and cook our own food.”<sup>124</sup>

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<sup>123</sup> Mehmed, *Amerika'da Türkler ve Gördüklerimiz*, 68. The same concerns about pork and helâl meat can be seen among the Turkish workers in Germany in the 1960s. Most of the Turkish workers longed for the mosques in the homeland but they also had difficulties in fasting during Ramadan. Although long working hours and, the heat in the mines stopped their fasting, they continued to resist eating pork and regarded it as “haram”. In the survey conducted among the Turkish workers, 80 percent said that they had never eaten pork and their resistance to pork resulted in their having health problems. Thirty percent of them also gave up eating any meat for the belief that it was not helâl. This led them to have a one dimensional diet based on bread, onions, eggs, cheese, and pasta, and resulted in their suffering from diseases such as tuberculosis after one or two years after they came to Germany. The striking thing is that in many cases Armenian and Greek Turkish citizens, who were working together with the Turkish workers, did not eat pork in order not to disturb the group solidarity. See Unat, 114-6.

<sup>124</sup> Yalman, *Yakın Tarihte Gördüklerimiz ve Geçirdiklerimiz*, (Cited in Bali, 288). After a heated conversation regarding pork, the Turkish worker invited Yalman and his friend to a saloon to get them cold beers. Although both alcohol and pork are prohibited in Islam, it is not an unusual situation because today there still are many Muslim Turks in Turkey who drink

The Turks in Peabody received much help from their Jewish neighbors who also would not eat any food that contained pork. The existence of a Jewish community helped the Turks in two ways: First, many Christians already knew of the dietary laws of the Jews, and secondly the Turks could eat in the same places as the Jews and be sure that the food served was safe. If the Turks did not slaughter animals by themselves, they could purchase meat prepared by the Orthodox Jews.<sup>125</sup>

Burial of the dead also created a problem for the Turks in Peabody as it did for other Turks in the United States at that time. When Sabiha Sertel conducted her research on the Turkish workers in New York during the early 1920's, she talked a group who told her that their most important problem was not having a graveyard in which they could be buried according to Islamic tradition. One of the old Turks stood up and said:

Every nation here has a graveyard of their own. We are scattered all around like pebbles. They are burying our dead in the Christian graveyards... We are going to the other world without our belief in God, as *kafirs*. Please save us from this shame.<sup>126</sup>

In Peabody, as in every city that the Turks lived, there were countrymen who had earned a reputation as religious leaders. They worked at the same

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alcohol but have never eaten pork and are strictly against pork. It is an irony, an unexplainable part of the culture and for most Turks eating pork seems like losing one's religion.

<sup>125</sup> Ahmed, *Turks in America*, 78.

<sup>126</sup> Sertel, *Roman Gibi*, 45-6. Sertel thought that they would gain their confidence and would be successful in organizing these workers if she could solve the problem of a Muslim graveyard. She told them that she would find them land if they could find money. After one week she was successful in finding the Turks a graveyard, a piece of land in Brooklyn (she is not sure about the place) which was bought for the Turks and surrounded by iron fences. She tells: "Poor people... While they are suffering from joblessness, hunger, and poverty in some place of the United States, they say that their most important problem is to be buried in a Christian graveyard."

places with their fellows and were not distinguishable from them except for their literacy and knowledge of the Quran for which they were respected. Their duty was to lead the Friday prayers, prepare the dead for the burial and read the Quran. This role was filled by Baker Abraham and Mehmet Abraham for the Turkish community of Peabody, Salem, and Lynn. Like Sabiha Sertel, Frank Ahmed also points out during the early years of immigration the Turks feared and worried about dying and being buried away from home in a Christian country. They wanted their bodies to be sent home but as the expenses were very high for such a burial, most had to be buried where they died. The Turks, who died in the North Shore of Massachusetts were buried at the Cedar Grove Cemetery in Peabody.<sup>127</sup>

Beside the question of a place to be buried, Islamic traditions that are followed during the burial were very important for the Turks in Peabody. The dead had to be buried before sundown on the day he died or, if he had died late in the day, he could be buried the following day. The tradition of a modest casket and burial of the dead at the same day is shared by both Muslims and Jews and while some funeral homes did not make any adjustment for the Turks and Jews who lived in Peabody, the Conway Funeral Home founded in 1894 and Cedar Grove Cemetery made special arrangements for both Turks and Jews and allowed them to bury their dead whenever one of them had to be buried. Moreover, Francis L. Conway, his son and grandson supplied the Turks a special room to wash the body of the dead and to prepare it according to the

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<sup>127</sup> Ahmed, *Turks in America*, 80.

Islamic traditions. They also provided those special linen sheets (kefen), needles, thread, soap, and oils which were needed in the process of preparing the body. American headstone carvers also managed to write what the Turks wanted on the headstones. They were able to carve in Arabic script by imitating the handwriting of the Turks. Frank Ahmed notes that the script was a bit crude but legible. There would also usually be a Turkish flag on the headstone. As per tradition, a reception would be hosted by a relative in honor of the deceased after the burial. The places for such receptions were usually the coffeehouses where Turkish dishes, coffee and some beer would be served.<sup>128</sup>

Circumcision of the male children was not a problem at the time of the first immigration because the Turks did not bring their families with them. However, when some of them decided to remain in Peabody and married foreign wives, the children had to be circumcised. Here again the Turks were assisted by the Jews. A Mohel from the Jewish community would perform the surgery. This ceremony would take place at the boy's home.<sup>129</sup>

Although the absence of a mosque was not a particular problem for the Turks in Peabody the lack of one probably did have symbolic consequences. Ahmed notes that in the 1940's they prayed together on the grounds of Emerson Park in Peabody when the weather was warm. The community would turn their faces to Mecca and be led by an educated Turk, in most cases by

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<sup>128</sup> *Ibid*, 80-1.

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid*, 79.



Mehmet Abraham or Baker Abraham. In the winter they would pray together in the hall of the Turkish Orphan Society.<sup>130</sup>

### **American Perceptions of the “Others”: Cultural Identity in Peabody**

An ad with a headline “FOR TURKISH LABOR” that was placed in the *Salem Evening News* on May 11, 1914 by a Turk named Mahmad Effendy represents an early attempt to help Peabody’s residents understand the inarticulate Turkish immigrants, the “others” who were now among them:

Having been in Peabody for the past ten years, I am in a position to talk intelligently about my countrymen who live in this town. I was told before coming to America of the good customs which are obtained here and since my residence I have come to know the liberality shown by the American people. I have found the Peabody people willing to give respect to all law-abiding citizens and as a storekeeper here for seven years I have but words of praise for the treatment accorded me. Some citizens think Turks are uncivilized. The Turks in Peabody do not represent all of my country and there is both good and bad in all nations. My position in the community permits me to recommend my countrymen to employers of labor. I am also able to supply the desired information regarding my people and I will cheerfully give any information asked. Call on me.<sup>131</sup>

For most of the Christian peoples in Peabody, Turkish culture remained complex and mysterious. Because of the fact that the first Turkish immigrants intended to return to the homeland, they, as noted earlier, made

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<sup>130</sup> *Ibid*, 83. The use of the hall dates from 1942 when it was established. Ahmed provides no information about the location for prayers during the times before 1942. The survey of the Turkish workers in Federal Germany in the 1960’s showed that 39 percent of them thought that the mosque is a very important social and individual need, and that 24 percent said that it was an “important absence”. Both immigrants from urban and rural areas of Turkey deeply felt the absence of a mosque. See Abadan-Unat, *Bitmeyen Göç*, 115.

<sup>131</sup> Quoted in Ahmed, *Turks in America*, 72.

little attempt to become a part of the society in Peabody. The retention of cultural elements, including language, social values, traditions, religion, and leisure time activities, worked against the integration of the Turks. Living in their own Ottoman microcosm in Peabody, they became exotic and seemingly dangerous aliens or “others” to the citizens of the city.

Even on shipboard, Christian immigrants viewed these Turks as the most exotic of passengers.<sup>132</sup> When they settled in Peabody, they had to struggle against the image of the “terrible Turk” and deal with the strange looks in the eyes of Americans upon their first encounter with these “oriental, exotic” people. Their different looks and habits, and the “warfare” between the Greeks and Turks during the times of Balkan Wars and WW I, resulted in Americans labeling Walnut Street as “Peabody’s Barbary Coast.”<sup>133</sup>

This encounter of Americans with a large community of Turkish men without spouses also had orientalist sexual overtones. Had the single men among them wanted to marry, this image, the lack of Muslim women, and their own conservative approach to dating made it hard to establish families in Peabody. Also the perception of the Turks by the women of the town made it difficult to approach them.<sup>134</sup> For example, a librarian told Frank Ahmed about the time she walked along the Walnut Street where most of the Ottoman immigrants lived:

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<sup>132</sup> See Ahmed *Turks in America*.

<sup>133</sup> See Wells, *Events in Peabody’s History, 1626-1972*, 1972. See also Ahmed, *Turks in America*, 1993.

<sup>134</sup> The survey among the Turkish immigrants in Germany in 1963 showed that the conservative Turkish workers perceived dating with Muslim women as against their religion and traditions.

She could feel herself and others being eyed by “these fearsome-looking men.” No one ever spoke to her or caused her any trouble; actually they would move aside to allow her to pass, but she always felt they were watching her and her girl friends. She said, “the air over Walnut Street was so masculine, it could have been a locker room.”<sup>135</sup>

The Turks’ appearance also set them apart. Wells describes the Turks in Peabody as follows:

The Turks were famous for their long mustaches, which gave them a stern look. The mustaches were never shaved off, since it was against their belief. They were regarded as strong union men, who came to this country with the explicit purpose of making enough money so they could return to their homeland and live comfortably for their remaining years.<sup>136</sup>

This quotation shows both the perceived distinctiveness of the Turks and the degree to which they were misunderstood within a society that was ignorant about the cultures and religion of the Turks. It was also believed that beards were part of their religious practice. This stereotyped image of a Turk lingered many decades.<sup>137</sup> Of course, many American observers were also ignorant of the ethnic divisions within the Ottoman immigrant community. Differences between the Turks, Kurds, and Armenians were not discernable to the American or European eye. For example, Wells in his history of Peabody notes only the Turks and never mentions the Armenians or Kurds in the city.

Factory managers also perceived the Turks as “the most unconventional and complex” of all the immigrants they employed. Their language and religion were very different from the other immigrants and therefore isolated

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<sup>135</sup> Ahmed, *Turks in America*, 67.

<sup>136</sup> Wells, *Events in Peabody’s History 1626-1972*, 387-8.

<sup>137</sup> Ahmed, *Turks in America*, 39.

the Turks from the other Western European immigrants and put them at the bottom of the hierarchy of the leather factories. After being given rudimentary training, generally in sign language, they would be employed in the most backbreaking tasks of the factory. As Frank Ahmed points out “they lived in American imagination only in the form of a few vague, ethnic stereotypes.”<sup>138</sup>

The rural background of the Turks, which shaped their cultures, social and traditional attitudes and perceptions, was the main reason for most of these problems. Almost all of the Turks in Peabody came from rural parts of the Ottoman Empire and therefore they were different from the small number of educated Turks who lived in or visited the United States during the first decades of the twentieth century. For example, Sabiha Sertel tells about the two kinds of Turkish immigrants in the United States: one of the groups was composed of educated people, such as electricians, technicians, and engineers, who lived separately from the larger group of uneducated Turkish immigrants for whom they had no concern.<sup>139</sup> The Turkish workers in Peabody, like the others in the United States, could not be understood or their culture comprehended even by their fellow countrymen. For example, when Ahmed

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<sup>138</sup> Not only did the the factory managers in Germany placed foreign laborers in ill paying, unwanted jobs which were filthy and backbreaking, but they also failed to provide occupational training which had been agreed to between Germany and Turkey .

<sup>139</sup> Ahmed, *Turks in America*, 70. Also Hikmet Feridun Es tells about the “issue of mustache”. He notes that the Turks were distinguished from many other immigrants by their mustaches when they entered the United States. He tells that one day when Henry Ford was passing through a street with one of his factory managers he saw a Turk named “Hasan Baba” and asked the manager who this man with a mustache was. He complained: “I tried to have a mustache several times but it did not fit me well. Look! How his mustache fits him!” The manager told Ford that his name was Hasan Baba, that he worked in Dearborn and he was a very nice and honest man. Also he was excellent in his work. Then, Ford remarked: “it was obvious from his nice mustache.” The day after this event, the manager told Hasan Baba about

Emin Yalman visited Peabody in 1911, he and his friend were wearing hats made of woven straw while the Turkish immigrants wore felt hats. Yalman says that as it was summer, they thought that these woven straw hats would be appropriate for them but he was shocked by the ignorance and bigotry of these Turkish immigrants when one of them said:

We see that you had come here (to U.S.) in order to take education. But how can you admit wearing such hats which are the *gavur*'s (infidel) inventions?

Yalman asked them why they wore felt hats and the answer was that they were used to them and that they could not get used to the woven straw hats.

As this example shows, sometimes it is difficult to understand cultural and traditional attitudes of different groups even if they come from the same general cultural background. Concepts of *günah*, *sevap*, shame, for example had sharp differences between rural and urban societies in the late Ottoman period. The Turks in Peabody, complex even to some of their fellow countrymen, must have been much more confusing to the non-Turkish inhabitants of the town.

As far as can be determined, the European immigrant and American inhabitants of Peabody did not make any effort to understand Islam. They seem, during the period from 1900 to 1930, to have been indifferent to people of this very different culture. It is probable that the ethnic stereotype of the Turk was a very important element working against the Turks' integration into

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the conversation with Ford and that he was told to assign him to a better position. Hikmet Feridun Es, "Amerika'da Türkler" Article Series in *Hürriyet*, 1948.

<sup>139</sup> Sertel, *Roman Gibi*, 43.

the community. However, if one looks closely at the roots of this “Turkish puzzle” one can see other, different reasons for the separation of the Turks from the other inhabitants of the town. First, people, who come from a rural life, would be slow in adopting new ideas in an urban society. Also working against their integration was the fact that the Turks intended to return home, and distrusted or hesitated to accept help offered by the Americans. They, thus, in part, helped create the environment that caused them to remain alien in their new, albeit temporary home. Their late nineteenth, early twentieth century Anatolian rural background also almost guaranteed what might be called backwardness. Poor education and the difficulty of transmission of ideas within Anatolia had important effects on the lives of the immigrants in Peabody. Although the immigrants from the cities of the Empire, which had ports and were thus more cosmopolitan, adapted themselves quickly to the new world, those from the eastern provinces of Anatolia could not. Moreover, while the other European and Canadian immigrants, many of whom came with their families, could more easily integrate into the society in Peabody, the Turks could not because of their single life style. One of the surveys conducted in 1910’s among the immigrants in the United States showed that the children and wives of the immigrants could much more quickly and easily adopt the new life than the husbands and as a result the family would integrate into the society via the children and the wives. On the other hand, the survey showed that

single immigrants who lived with their fellow people remained alien to their environment for a long time.<sup>140</sup>

In conclusion, there wasn't any single reason that inhibited the Turkish immigrant's integration into the other inhabitants of Peabody but multi-layered problems that stopped them being a part of the society. However, it seems like having a rural background, which shaped all their perception of the world around them and their social and cultural attitudes, was the most prominent factor in making integration more difficult. Most of the Turkish immigrants did not have any intention to become a part of this New World. He could have undergone a complete alienation and isolation if he hadn't carried his village in his heart wherever he moved.

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<sup>140</sup> See Yalman, "Amerika'daki Göçmen Türkler".

## **CHAPTER III: SETTLEMENT AND THE DECISION TO RETURN TO THE HOMELAND**

### **Settlement and Interaction of the Ottoman *Millets* in Peabody**

The Ottomans took their world overseas to Peabody and there created a new life of their own. Being very different in the sense of religion, language, and culture from the European immigrants in Peabody, the Ottoman *millets*, although they sometimes were in conflict, at other times helped one another in this new and very strange foreign world. Despite pressures created by the breakdown of the relations between the millets in the empire, the common language, cuisine, and culture of the Ottomans in Peabody bound them together more closely in Peabody.

This relationship is attested to by the fact that the various Ottoman groups often lived in proximity to one another, creating a world of common language and culture, if not religion. Besides Walnut Street, most of the millets were concentrated on Main Street which was close to the tanneries they worked in. Frank Ahmed notes that within this general community all the Turks, Greeks, Armenians, and Syrians lived in small groups of their fellow nationals. Therefore, “the Turk would know that his house was all Turkish and



further that the food was clean, would not contain any pork and that the animals were butchered according to Muslim requirements .”<sup>141</sup>

Though the millets lived close to one another, the common perception of these new immigrants was one of inter-millet conflict. *The Salem Evening News* could not avoid referring to conflict within a story entitled: “Men of Many Nations at Work in Peabody Tanneries; Difficulties of Handling Them.” The article presents an image of the Turks as a puzzle to many employers as their language and customs are so different from the Americans. But the article also referred to inter-millet conflict: “Many of them appear to be Mohammedans. They hate the Greeks” The article noted that the Greeks and Turks would fight with a slight provocation: “to put Greeks and Turks at work together would be almost as bad as mixing powder and matches.”<sup>142</sup>

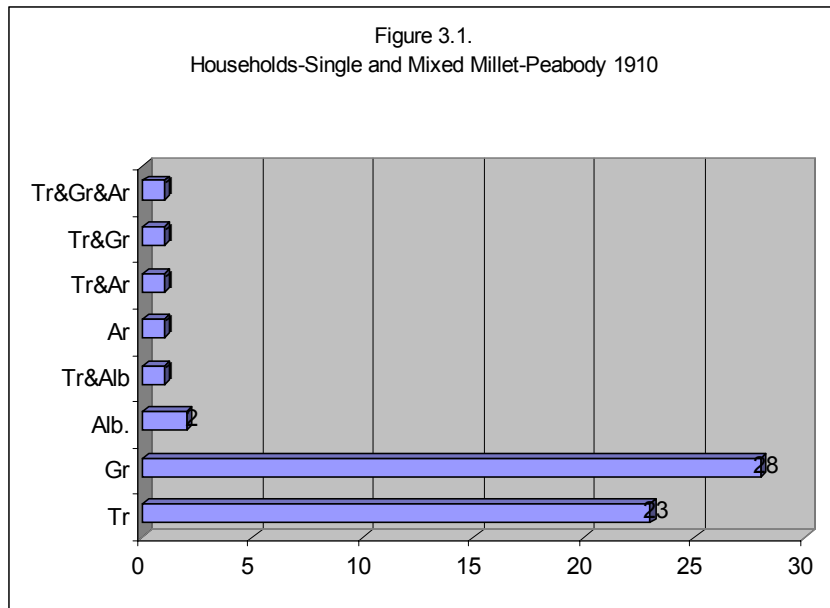
Wells asserts that “there were always been ill-feelings between” the Greeks and Turks. Whenever one of the groups was disturbed by the other, or if a member of one of them was murdered by the other, it would lead to alarm of an open warfare in the town.<sup>143</sup> However, the fact remains that Greeks and Turks, along with Armenians, lived in close proximity to one another. Streets contained mixtures of single-*millet* boarding houses and residences, which often were situated next to one another. More importantly, although many lived in separate households as noted by Ahmed, there were also some mixed households in which Greeks and Turks, and/or Armenians and Turks, and/or

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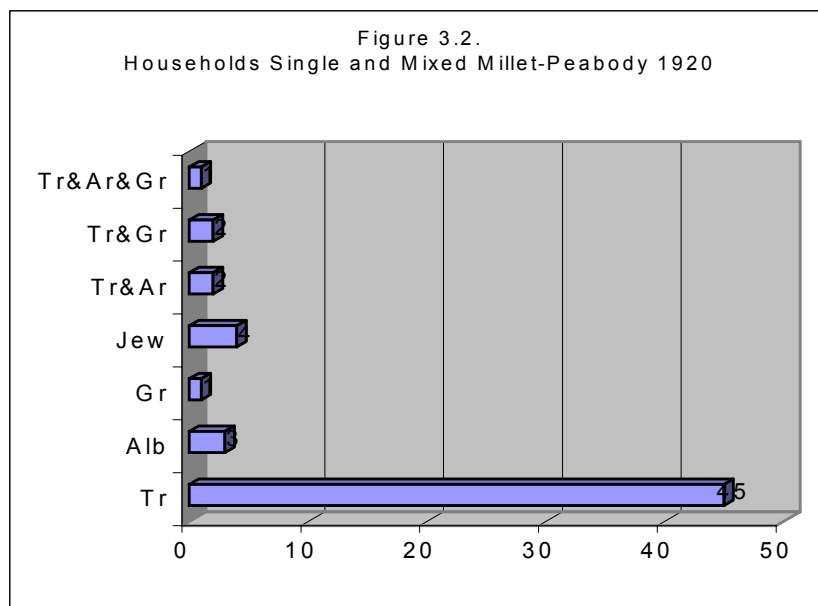
<sup>141</sup> Ahmed, *Turks in America*, 30. It seems, like in the example of Turkish, Greek and Armenian workers in Federal Germany that was given before, they did not eat pork in order not to disturb the group’s solidarity.

<sup>142</sup> *Ibid*, 38.

three of these Ottoman millets lived together in a single residence. The following graphs, derived from the 1910, 1920, and 1930 Federal censuses show that residential intermixing of the *millets* something occurred.

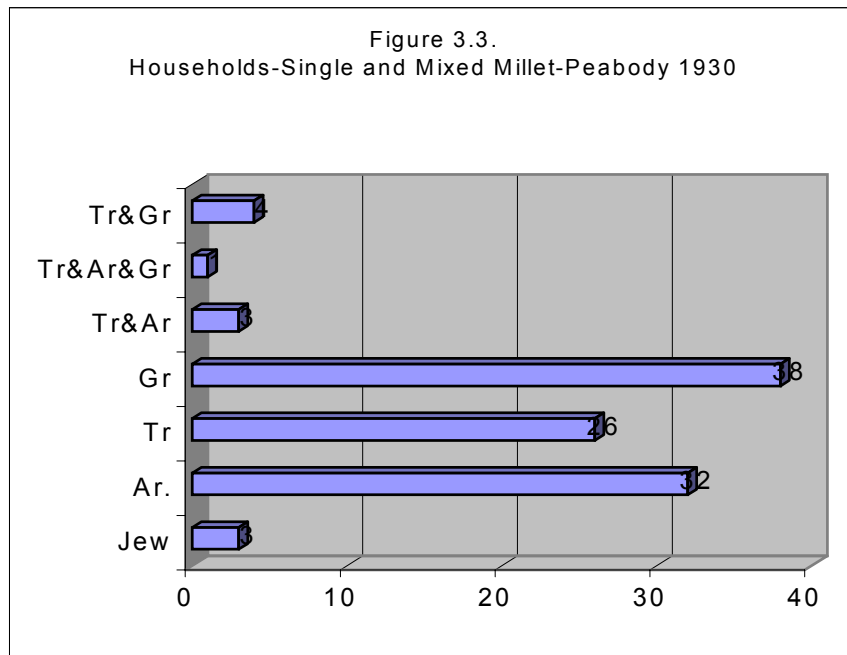


Source: U.S. Federal Census Schedules (microfilms) Peabody, Mass. 1910.



Source: U.S. Federal Census Schedules (microfilms) Peabody, Mass. 1920.

<sup>143</sup> Wells, *Events in Peabody's History 1626-1972*, 387.



Source: U.S. Federal Census Schedules (microfilms) Peabody, Mass. 1930.

More critically, it continued over two decades, periods in which inter-*millet* strife was sometimes increased by news of inter-millet conflict abroad. There were 5 mixed out of 58 households in which the Ottoman nationalities lived in 1910. Again in 1920 there were 5 mixed households among 58 households that the Ottoman *millets* lived in. In 1930, 8 out of 107 households were mixed.<sup>144</sup> In 1910, there were 9 streets that the Ottoman nationalities lived together as neighbors or at the same households. These streets were Darley, Foster, Galler, Lowell, Main, Munroe, Midway, Walnut, and Winter Street. In 1920, they lived together in 5 streets: Chestnut, Foster, Lowell, Main, and

<sup>144</sup> The rise in the households is because of the Greeks who came from Greece to Peabody in the 1920's.

Walnut. In 1930 they were residing together on 9 streets: Aborn, Beaver, Central, English, Foster, Lowell, Main, Walnut, and Warren.<sup>145</sup>

Peabody was not a big city and its streets were not too long, thus mixed millet residency was fairly intimate. For example, Walnut Street, on which many of the Ottoman *millet*s lived, was approximately 2361 feet or slightly less than a half-mile long. Main Street's length was nearly the same. Central Street was 2007 feet. Some areas were quite compact. Elm Street was 825 feet, Aborn Street 480 feet and Galler 826.<sup>146</sup> Given the lengths of these streets, one can see that the Ottoman *millet*s, whether or not resident in the same boarding houses, lived very close to each other. The mixture of *millet*s within boarding houses or streets is quite interesting. For example in 1910, Greeks and Turks constitute the "*millet*" population of the boarding houses on Walnut Street. There were no Armenians on the street. In 1920 the "mixed" boarding houses contain either Greeks and Turks or Turks and Armenians. However, there is no boarding house that occupied only by Armenians and/or by Greeks. It is also interesting that none of the Greeks or Armenians can be found in any of the censuses sharing a boarding house without the presence of a Turk in the same place; perhaps the Turks played the role of glue between the other Ottoman *millet*s.

Narrative sources help support this image of interdependence and cooperation. The interaction of Jews and the Turks in Peabody and their close relationship has been dealt with before. Besides their relations with the Jews,

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<sup>145</sup> 1910, 1920, 1930 Censuses.

the Turks also received much help from the Ottoman Greeks and Armenians within the community they established in Peabody. As was noted earlier, Armenians who knew English helped Turks in their entrance into the United States and in their daily lives. The Ottoman Greeks also collaborated with the Turks in establishing the coffee house, which was one of the most important parts of their culture. For example, in the 1930 census there is a Greek coffeehouse owner named John J. Trioneis and the Turkish cook of this coffeehouse was named George Koganoglou (George can stand for Yakub, “Kogan” is not clear but “oglou” means “son”). They were living together at the same boarding house.

Although there were a visible collaboration between all the Ottoman millets in Peabody, there were, as noted above, periodic conflicts between these ethnic groups. Their physical proximity may have proved a negative factor during these times. For example, Frank Ahmed says that the closeness of the houses the Ottoman millets lived in would lead to some struggles among themselves. The cultural baggage they carried with them from the Old World held both the good and the bad:

A careless word or threat, real or imaginary, particularly if it was directed at one’s family or national origin, could fill the street with fighting men. Whenever there was a cry that a Turk was under attack; the Turks from all their houses would pour into the street, usually armed with a large piece of wood or any handy heavy object, prepared for battle. Although these altercations were common they were generally confined to the police daily report.<sup>147</sup>

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<sup>146</sup> These measurements are extracted from 1884 Peabody fire insurance map.

<sup>147</sup> Ahmed, *Turks in America*, 30-1.

Conflict between the Turks and Armenians in Peabody was noted by Mehmed Fuad who visited there in 1923. He was met by over 200 Turks when he entered the city. One of them, from Dersim, began to cry when he saw him.

He said:

You have given us a great pleasure with your coming here. We did not know how we had lived, how we had walked around until this time. Wherever we went, damned Armenians appeared before us, had fun with us, made our lives unbearable. Because of their propagandizing among the Americans, we could not get into contact with the Americans. Because of them we were insulted by the Americans. Today, thanks God, we are taking our revenge from them with your coming here. If you paid attention, in the places you visited the shops which closed its curtains belong to the Armenians. They do not want to see our happy day, and therefore they hide themselves into the interior parts of their shops. From this time on, today is our day. The great Anatolia did not only save Anatolia itself, but also saved us, live long!<sup>148</sup>

Then, the Turkish immigrants from Dersim began to cry again and Mehmed Fuad responded by saying that the snakes, whom they fed for a long time, had hurt his people with their poison.

These two stories seem to tell a tale of continual strife and hatred among the Ottoman millets in Peabody. It was as if the Turks, Armenians, and Greeks were living in separate streets and households; saw each other rarely and at that time that they did see one another immediately found themselves in a battle.<sup>149</sup> Indeed, there were conflicts, but the degree of conflict could possibly have been overstated by the observers. Mehmed Fuad's observations, for example, were mainly based on his nationalistic views. Also it seems like

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<sup>148</sup> Mehmed, *Amerika'da Türkler ve Gördüklerim*, 68.

<sup>149</sup> See Appendix B.

the European and American inhabitants of the town, who were largely ignorant of the culture of the Ottomans, may not have been able in some instances to tell a Turk, from a Greek or, an Armenian. Also, whatever perception they did have of “Turkey” was one created by the media of the time, and that media focused on the conflicts that beset the Ottoman Empire from the 1870s through the 1920s. It could be speculated that the people of Peabody expected the Ottomans among them to fight, and each fight they saw was given exaggerated importance.

An article in the *Salem News* appeared on October 21, 1912 with a banner headline: “Peabody Greeks and Turks had a miniature battle.” The subheadings continued to alarm the people:

Evidently sought to import the wars of their several countries and fight it out with knives; several wounded in Saturday night’s affair on Wallis Street and were placed under arrest. It is a question whether guns were used but some report hearing shots at the scene of the melee.<sup>150</sup>

In one way they were correct in this opinion, because it does seem that the instances of actual conflict paralleled events in the old world. For example, strife between the Greeks of Anatolia and Greece and the Turks in Peabody seems to have occurred during the Balkan Wars of 1912-1913 and the Greek invasion of Turkey in May 1919. The wars charged the atmosphere within the Ottoman community of Peabody. As noted earlier, the Turks were aware of what was happening for Yalman discovered in his 1913 visit that the Turks were no longer ignorant of foreign events. In that year, at the time of the

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<sup>150</sup> Ahmed, *Turks in America*, 31.

Balkan War, the Turkish immigrants' had subscribed for İstanbul newspapers and held meetings for communal readings of those newspapers.<sup>151</sup>

Similarly, the conflict between the Armenians and Turks seems to have arisen after the deportation of Armenians from the interior provinces of the Ottoman Empire in 1915 following Armenian support of the Russian invasion of Eastern Turkey during the early phases of World War I. At that time, some local officials in Anatolia condoned and perhaps took part in the murders of large numbers of innocent Armenians, especially on the Black Sea and in the Harput area from where most of Peabody's immigrants had come. Moreover, the conflict in the Ottoman lands also involved the Kurds. Kurdish villagers in Van were killed in great numbers by the Armenians and then in turn, the Kurds took revenge by slaughtering equally defenseless Armenians.<sup>152</sup> Given the presence of newspapers in Peabody, the Turks, Kurds, Armenians, and Greeks living in the city were well aware, if not accurately aware, of what was happening in the homeland. Bad feelings and conflict were the result. It was this conflict that seems to color the accounts of Wells, Fuad, and even Ahmed.

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<sup>151</sup> Yalman, "Amerika'daki Göçmen Türkler," 29. It seems like the Turkish immigrants keep their interest in their homeland at the highest level although they are far away. For example, the survey among the Turkish workers in Federal Germany showed that the workers bought a transistorized radio and tried to listen to Ankara radio. Also %73 of them told they were reading Turkish newspapers. Some of those newspapers were sent to them by their families in Turkey or they bought the Turkish newspapers themselves in Germany. The Turkish newspapers cost 1 DM at that time and Unat concludes that they showed great devotion with buying these newspapers despite their little incomes. She says that these Turkish workers in Federal Germany had a great interest in their countries. Abadan-Unat, *Bitmeyen Göç*, 109-10.

<sup>152</sup> McCarthy, *The Ottoman Peoples and the end of Empire*, 111. At the time of World War I many such events took place. The both sides, consisted many defenseless and innocent people, paid the price of Armenian rebellions and mean local Turkish officials who supervised slaughter of many Armenians. The Ottoman authorities tried 1400 for such crimes against Armenians and executed many of them.



However, despite all of this, the records indicate that the *millet*s continued living together in the same households or on the same streets.

Non-political, everyday urban crime was a part of Peabody. The Peabody chief of police once told Frank Ahmed that they could “build a new police station and equip it” with the judgement penalties they collected from Turkish immigrants for fighting. But he also noted that the Turks would always come along with the police without a fuss if the police respected them. But if the police tried to use force against them, they would resist. He said, “it took us a while to understand that respect was important in their culture.” They believed that Turks carried knives with them and knew how to use them but they never used them against a police officer because “there seemed to be sense of mutual respect by both of us, which helped us to keep the peace.”<sup>153</sup>

Feelings of anger, powerlessness, and anomie among the immigrants are a result of their being incapable of communication. As the story of the Peabody chief of police shows, if the Turks knew that they were understood and respected by the police, they would never attack them. However, fights and conflict could be expected generally in a place where the Turks were inarticulate, where few tried to understand them, and where they remained a “puzzle.” As a result their anger flared at times when they felt insecure. It was, perhaps, this insecurity, this insecure world that led many to carry knives, not so much for protection, but for psychological security.<sup>154</sup>

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<sup>153</sup> Ahmed, *Turks in America*, 31.

<sup>154</sup> In Albert Albee’s play titled “The Zoo” a man who could not communicate with the intellectual man sitting on a park bench, reading a book and not listening to the story the man tells. Then he uses the most primitive way of communication and he sticks a knife into the

Besides the stories of conflict between the Turks, Greeks, and Armenians, there was enmity between some Turks and Kurds in Peabody. It would be difficult to talk about any Kurdish nationalism, or even ethnic identity in the homeland at this point in time (pre World War I).<sup>155</sup> At this time Kurds, who were independent of tribal control, were much like the Turks in their relation to the state. However, national self determination which was an important part of America's policy during and after World War I, gave rise to expectations for a Kurdish homeland after the defeat of the Ottoman Empire. Here again, division among the Ottomans in Peabody came in the wake of conflict in the Old World. When Mehmed Fuad visited Peabody in 1923, he reported that the most of the Turkish "citizens" in Peabody were Kurds and that some of them did not come to a meeting he held because of the conflict with the Turks. He told the Kurds who did attend that it was for their good to work together. They then promised to solve their problems among themselves.<sup>156</sup>

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intellectual man's body. In the same way, incapability of communication paved the way for growing anger of the Turks.

<sup>155</sup> McCarthy, *The Ottoman Peoples and the end of Empire*, 77.

<sup>156</sup> Sabiha Sertel tells that the Kurds and Turks in Detroit were in conflict. When they were planning to hold a meeting, the Kurds told her that they wouldn't go to the Turks' association; the meeting must be held in their association and the Turks could come to their association if they wanted to. She told them that the issue between the Turks and Kurds was nonsense but held the meeting first in the Kurd's association. See Roman Gibi, 54-5. The same thing happened in Federal Germany between the Turks and Kurds during the 1960's. The Federal Germany's politics of exclusionary citizenship and its support of the organization of groups based on religious and ethnic ties, led to the Turks' and Kurds', *Alevi*s and *Sunni*s taking their sides. The politics in Federal Germany divided Turkish citizens into at least 100 groups. See Abadan-Unat, *Bitmeyen Göç*, 67.

## **Contribution of the Turks in the Peabody to the Economy of the Mother Country**

It is often an outcome of such transnational population movements that the immigrants contribute to the economy of the mother country. This was also true for the Turkish immigrants in Peabody. The Turkish immigrant, who thought that he would return to his homeland soon, would live in desperate conditions meeting only his basic needs. He would carry his life savings in his leather belt and then would send some part of it to the homeland and take the remainder with him when he returned to his home town.<sup>157</sup> Those who returned to their villages in Anatolia with money were considered rich in their societies. They were able to buy a bit of land, some livestock, get married. There were, of course, also those who lost all their wages while gambling at the coffeehouses and therefore returned home with empty hands.

While this type of “contribution” is a very personal and familial, another type of contribution evidenced a growing sense of Turkish nationalism among the immigrants in Peabody. When the War for National Liberation started, many of the Turkish immigrants in the United States gave their life savings to the chair of “Himal-i Etfal” Society Mehmed Fuad Bey. He came to the U.S. in 1923 in order to raise money for the orphans of the war. He visited Wisconsin, Illinois, Michigan, New York, New Jersey, Massachusetts, and Rhode Island and many Turkish and Kurdish workers in these states gave all

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<sup>157</sup> Because of this habit, according to Wells, many Turks were murdered and robbed and after these events they became good bank depositors.

their life savings to Mehmed Fuad Bey to support the construction of orphanages and the reconstruction of the country.<sup>158</sup>

### **The Decision to Return and the Remnants of the Turks in Peabody**

After peaking in 1914, the number of Turkish immigrants coming to Peabody began to decrease because of the hostilities in World War I. Soon after the end of World War I, Congress enacted legislation that severely limited immigration from non-Western countries and those nations that had not been heavily represented in the past century of immigration. The quota system introduced in 1921-1924 allotted just one hundred immigrants per year to Turkey and that quota was filled with non-Turks such as Greeks, Armenians, Assyrians, etc. Furthermore, as the new quota system considered the immigrant not according to the country he came from but to his birth place, many Greeks exchangees and Armenians born in Anatolia were regarded as “Turks” even if they lived out of Turkey.<sup>159</sup> With the establishment of the quota system Turkish migration to the United States effectively ceased after 1924. The lack of new immigrants and the return of many others to the homeland led to a sharp drop in the Turkish population of Peabody. In 1930 only ninety-eight Turks remained in the city.

After 1920, the process of returning to the homeland for the Turks in Peabody, like others in New York City, Detroit, and Chicago, accelerated. As a

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<sup>158</sup> Mehmed Fuad, *Amerika'da Türkler*, 1925.

result of the Greek occupation of the homeland, and because of their anxiety about their families hundreds of Turks in the United States resolved to return home in order to defend their country.<sup>160</sup> After 1929, the Turkish presence in Peabody markedly diminished and they became a minority in the areas in which their population dominated just a few years ago. There were still coffeehouses along the Walnut Street and the Turks continued to meet at the Orphan Aid Society Hall in the O’Shea building on Peabody Square. The areas where the Turkish population had been a majority began to be called the “Greek Areas” in the 1940s.<sup>161</sup>

According to Sabiha Sertel, she and some Turkish workers returned to Turkey by the ship called *Gülcemal* which she said carried Mehmed Fuad to New York in 1923. However, Mehmed Fuad notes in his book that he came with the ship called *Aquitania* in 1923.<sup>162</sup> Moreover, the evidence shows that *Gülcemal* reached New York Harbor only four times, first in October, 1920 and three times in 1921. Although it is said that the ship came to the United States for the first time in 1923, the records shows that *Gülcemal* did not arrive at any time in 1923.<sup>163</sup>

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<sup>159</sup> Karpat, “The Turks in America”, 238.

<sup>160</sup> Kemal Karpat asserts that one factor that made the Muslims and ethnic Turks to return home was the lack of a suitable Muslim women to marry in the United States. See Karpat, “The Turks in America,” 235.

<sup>161</sup> Ahmed, *Turks in America*, 84-5.

<sup>162</sup> See Mehmed Fuad, *Amerika’da Türkler ve Gördüklerim*.

<sup>163</sup> Sertel, *Roman Gibi*, 58-9. She tells, in 1923 it was the first time a Turkish ship came to the United States. See John J. Grabowski, “Cumhuriyetçi Algılayışlar: *Time* ve *Gülcemal*,” Pınar Şenışık, trans. (*Toplumsal Tarih*, 2001), 15. Professor Grabowski consulted Morton Allan Directory of European Passenger Steamship Arrivals for the Years 1890 to 1930 at the Ports of New York, Philadelphia, Boston and Baltimore. Moreover, Hikmet Feridun Es tells a Turk named Mehmed Malik who remained in the United States because he missed *Gülcemal*. Mehmed Malik told Hikmet Feridun Es that in 1921 the ship departed from Istanbul, it took 16

Wells asserts that the entire Turkish population in Peabody returned their homeland just before the advent of the Depression.<sup>164</sup> However, the 1930 Census shows that although many Turks had left, ninety-eight remained. A minority of those who remained after World War I, decided to settle and marry foreign wives.<sup>165</sup> Nearly all of the marriages brought children who considered each other as “cousins” even if they did not had any blood relationship. Even though such families were now committed to staying in the United States, they retained strong ties to their culture, keeping their homes in the Turkish way. For example, Frank Ahmed tells that his Uncle Mehmet, although married late, chose a Turkish Jew for his bride. He continues:

He had the most Turkish home I found outside of Turkey. There were pictures of Turkey’s President Ataturk, as well as Turkish newspaper spilled about, all several weeks old, as they had come by surface not air mail. He had sofas along the walls covered with material from Turkey.<sup>166</sup>

Uncle Mehmet had a water pipe (nargile) at his home and he cooked Turkish foods for his guests at home. He set up a patriarchal family and brought up his children in the Turkish way although he married a foreign wife. The wives had to adapt themselves to the “open-house policy” at home and adjust themselves having guests constantly.<sup>167</sup>

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days to reach the port of New York and it was *Gülcemal*’s second trip to the United States. See Es, “Amerika’da Türkler”.

<sup>164</sup> Wells, *Peabody Story*, 388.

<sup>165</sup> Sabiha Sertel notes that some of the Turks in the United States were married to Turkish picture brides but in Peabody it seems that there were no Turkish men married to Turkish wives.

<sup>166</sup> Ahmed, *Turks in America*, 52-3.

<sup>167</sup> *Ibid*, 47-57.

The Turks who remained in the United States remained loyal to their country while they had a deep admiration for their adopted homeland. Some of them, like Frank Ahmed's father, fought for the United States army during World War I. They did not fully adopt an American way of life but only the things they understood and needed. Then too there was an incentive to stay Turkish, both in behavior and nationality. The new Turkish government objected to its people giving up their citizenship and adopting another and, as in the Ottoman times, the government was suspicious of those who returned with American citizenship.<sup>168</sup> It is, perhaps, not surprising that the Federal censuses for 1910, 1920, and 1930, reveal only one naturalized Turk in Peabody. The 1930 census lists Hussein Mohammed S., who immigrated to the United States in 1912, and was naturalized as an American citizen.

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<sup>168</sup> See Ahmed, *Turks in America*

## CONCLUSION

In 1971, Halil Zekeriya Coşkun, a United States Social Security retiree living in a small village in Elazığ told a Turkish journalist the story of his immigration to the United States:

I was 20 years of age, strong, even powerful in the view of some of my friends. I longed for work, but there was none. We were all desperate. Today in Turkey this would be difficult to understand; now most of us are wealthy by the living standards in 1912. At our most desperate hour we heard there was a country called America where jobs were abundant; workers were needed since the country was under populated. One was assured work if he wasn't blind, crippled or sickly. We felt that America was opening its arms to everyone and beckoning all to her shores regardless of nationality. We don't know who first brought this word to our village, but it was all we talked about. It was always a part of our conversations and dreams. America became our hopes – it was our hope for living.<sup>169</sup>

The dream drew many Turkish immigrants from the heart of Anatolia to the United States in the first decades of 1900's; the dream gave them the strength to take a long road to an alien world; and the dream made them leave their families behind; a “Godotess”<sup>170</sup> named “Buyuk Amerika” (Great America) was waiting for them with a torch in her hand.

The early Turkish “brawn drain” from Anatolia to the United States represented a trans-national migration of a work force and therefore it needs to

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<sup>169</sup> *Ibid*, 86-7.

<sup>170</sup> The term “Godot” is taken from Samuel Beckett’s play “Waiting for Godot” and is turned into a female name.



be viewed as economically motivated and, as such, comparable to other migrations linked to the needs of labor markets. The Ottoman *millets* in Peabody shared a common goal—making money. If they did not disturb each other’s interests, and if there wasn’t any serious conflict in the Old Country, these Ottoman immigrants lived in a relatively peaceful and interdependent immigrant community. In fact, they needed each other in order to survive and to achieve their economic goals in an alien world. The key to this were the commonalities of Ottoman culture, which included foodways, entertainment (particularly the coffee house) and most importantly, the ability to communicate in the languages common to the Ottoman Empire.

This interdependence survived well beyond the peak period of immigration. When Hikmet Feridun Es visited many American cities in 1948 such as Detroit, New York, Los Angeles, and San Francisco, in which many Turks and Turkish Greeks lived, he noted that they established communities together in those cities, and opened coffeehouses and bars.<sup>171</sup> Given the findings of this study and the observations of people such as Es, it would seem that any study of early Turkish immigrants in the United States will be fruitless without considering the links between them and the other *millets* of the Ottoman Empire. Similarly, one might suggest that a study of any millet’s migration experience must take into account the matter of an overarching Ottoman culture.

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<sup>171</sup> Es, “Amerika’da Türkler”.

Also the multifaceted aspects of the early Turkish migration to the United States must be analyzed both as a global phenomenon and as a case peculiar to the Turks. Moreover, the Turks in Peabody and elsewhere can be better understood within a wider chronological period. The early Turkish migration to the United States in the 1900's show striking similarities to the Turkish migration to Germany in the 1960's. Therefore, when these two Turkish migrations in these two different periods are studied in relation to each other, it brings a new perspective to the analysis of both. Similarities between these two groups of Turkish migrants can be summarized as follows:

1. Both groups were composed of young, mostly male workers;
2. Both settled in Christian countries and both host societies were ignorant of and often insensitive to the Turkish workers' needs;
3. The immigrants in Germany lived in Heims-dormitories and those in the United States lived in boarding houses;
4. Neither seemed to want to integrate into the host society and both remained loyal to the homeland, preserving their ethnic solidarity through religion and tradition with little or no interest in learning the host language;
5. Both groups were economic migrants, each showing a strong motivation to earn and save money;
6. Both seemed satisfied to remain in unskilled or semi-skilled low level jobs unwanted by the "natives" in the host countries;
7. Finally, both showed an initial reluctance to join any labor union,

This study also has much to say about the role of and problems with memory in the preservation of history, particularly ethnic history. Reconstructing the history of Peabody's Turkish immigrant community has been difficult, and any further study on the early Turkish immigration to the United States and to Peabody will be difficult. The incongruities and anachronisms between documents and "memory", as we have seen, make it harder to work on this subject. Perhaps this happened because memories, such as those of the people who went to the United States and studied the Turkish workers faded over time. Or perhaps sometimes these "*mistakes*" were made on purpose as is seen in the example of the *Gülcemal*, or the exaggerated stories about conflict between Turks, Greeks, and Armenians. Where these observers saw constant conflict, the census records tell another story about the lives of the Greeks, Turks and Armenians in Peabody.

Moreover, as we have seen, the number of the Turks in Peabody was probably exaggerated by Doctor Mehmed Fuad and Ahmet Emin Yalman. It seems like this was done for nationalistic purposes. In other words, the Turks, perhaps needed to claim a larger population in order to prove their importance and also to feel secure. One of Hikmet Feridun Es's articles illustrates this condition; he tells of a Turk named Hızır who was known as "Hızır Aleyhisselâm", the savior angel of those who are in trouble. Hızır, who came from Harput 40 years before Es's visit in 1948, was in Los Angeles at that time. He was a very patriotic Turk, despite the 40 years he had spent in the United States He sought to protect Turkey against those who would say

anything negative about it and, interestingly, he warned those who would claim that the Turkish-American population was less than he felt it to be. Population meant power for the Turkish immigrants in the United States whether it was in 1918, in 1923 or in 1948.<sup>172</sup>

The story of the early Turks in Peabody is not really a story of success and achievement of the American dream. Rather, it is a sometimes sad story of hundreds of immigrants who worked under the worst circumstances in the tanneries. They were viewed as workers fit largely for such undesirable jobs in the city. The major characteristics of the early Turkish immigrant population in Peabody can be summarized as: almost all were male, young (mostly between the ages of 25 and 40); they came predominantly from rural parts of Anatolia; they resided in boarding houses within their own community groups; they made little effort to integrate into American society; they had little interest in learning the host language and they showed great solidarity with their own fellow people. Their primary goal was to earn money and return to the homeland. Most of the Turks remained conservative during their presence in Peabody and therefore the time spent in the United did not make great changes in their lives.

Not all of the workers achieved what they had planned before coming to the United States. For example, Yalman notes the Turkish workers in Peabody, and also those in other industrial cities of U.S., sometimes led lives corrupted by the alcohol, prostitutes, and gambling found in some of the coffeehouses.

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<sup>172</sup> Es, "Amerika'da Türkler".

These immigrants spent all the money they earned in the coffeehouse and saved nothing.<sup>173</sup> They, perhaps, were among those Turks who did not return to Turkey and remained locked in a male world of their own until their deaths. Again, Hikmet Feridun Es provides insight into this aspect of the Turkish immigrant experience. Hızır, the patriotic Turk noted above told Es that he did not marry because he asked himself “how can a man, who can not help going to the coffeehouse every night, make his wife and children happy?”<sup>174</sup>

However, there were also some among the early Turkish immigrants who remained in Peabody and advanced to other work areas in the leather factories. For example, Frank Ahmed’s father George (Yakub) Ahmed, after working for years in the leather tanneries, was promoted from the Beam House to the sorting area that was one of the last steps before the skins left the factory. After two decades of hard work, George Ahmed was made a foreman. Moreover, Frank Ahmed notes that Turks, who had small businesses such as coffeehouses or who rented houses to other Turks, became successful. Those Turkish immigrants, who managed to stand on their own feet and joined the community, did not return to Turkey. The successful ones elevated their status within not only the Turkish community but also the larger community. Therefore they made some of the Turks’ lives easier by providing a doctor or attorney when needed. Their connections within the local government officials also helped some Turks when they needed a permit or license. This ended their

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<sup>173</sup> See Yalman, “Amerika’daki Göçmen Türkler”.

<sup>174</sup> Es, “Amerika’da Türkler”.

status as an unapproachable people and began their recognition as contributors to the local community.<sup>175</sup>

This localized study of Peabody, Massachusetts, suggests that early Turkish emigration to the United States was an intrinsic part of a larger Ottoman emigration chain. The migration of the Turks and other ethnic groups from Anatolia and other parts of the Ottoman state was impelled by and also created great changes in the economic, ethnic, and political fabric of the Empire during its final years. Moreover, the Turkish immigrants' existence with their distinct characteristics also created a considerable change, albeit temporarily, in the social and economic fabric of the host societies in the United States who were largely unacquainted with non-Judeo-Christian cultures. Although they were viewed negatively at first by the Americans and other European immigrants and were given the worst, backbreaking work in the leather tanneries, they ultimately were praised by the host society, as in Peabody, for their work ethic and hard work. Had the first Turkish immigrants come with their families, stayed in the United States in larger numbers, built schools and mosques, formed strong societies, and became more independent, there is no doubt that they would have much more influence on the United States. Nevertheless, what seems to have made life more bearable for those Turks who did come to cities such as Peabody, was the re-creation of a broad Ottoman cultural cocoon. That replication of a familiar world, albeit one in which conflict and strife occasionally occurred, seems to have sustained them

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<sup>175</sup> Ahmed, *Turks in America*, 72-4. See also Karpat, "The Turks in America".

for the brief time they spent in a strange new land. Further studies of other early Turkish/Ottoman communities will need to be made before this conclusion can be applied broadly to the early Ottoman diaspora and to determine see if those communities, like Peabody, were interdependent cultural outposts of the Ottoman Empire.

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## APPENDIX A

My research on the Turkish immigrants in Peabody, Massachusetts, relies on the 1900, 1910, 1920 and 1930 U.S. Federal census microfilms for that city. I went through every page of the microfilm and identified Turkish or Ottoman immigrants by using the categories of the immigrant's name, his mother tongue, and his birth place. While I found the Turkish immigrants, who had typical Muslim names such as "Ally Hassan", I also found other Turkish-born immigrants who had typical Greek names, such as "Kipouros, Christos" and typical Armenian names such as "Dikran, Ovejian" whose mother tongues were Turkish. Therefore, I did not count them as Turkish immigrants, but as Greeks or Armenians. However, there were of course some Ottoman immigrants whose names did not easily match Turkish, Greek, or Armenian name forms. These included names such as "American, Hooset" whose identity was uncertain. Turkish-born immigrants with such names were not included in my statistical work. Among the Turkish immigrants both in the United States and Peabody, sometimes it becomes very hard to define who is who. However, I was able to identify enough members of each of the millets in order to carry out a fairly complete reconstruction of the Ottoman community in Peabody.

It is impossible to determine the exact number of Turks in Peabody at any one time. A high rate of Turkish immigrant mobility, the lack of a surname in a European sense, and constant misspellings and inversion of names by the census takers who were unacquainted with a Muslim-Turkish culture formed barriers to any attempt to find a single Turk who appeared in all or several of the censuses. As a point of record, my search of the 1900 census revealed no Turkish names. There were only Armenian names whose birth place was registered only as "Turkey". Therefore, this led me to think that the Turkish immigrants in Peabody began to come after 1900. However, it is also impossible to know whether some of these Armenian names belong to Turks who may have changed their name and identity because they thought that they could live easier if they were thought to be Christians. For example, Kemal Karpat notes that the Ottoman legation in Washington reported as early as 1892 that there were "considerable numbers" of Ottoman Muslim immigrants in the United States. According to the report, the total was around 200 and they were to be found in Massachusetts, Michigan, and St. Louis, Mo. Furthermore, the report noted that 10 Muslims from Kharput had recently come to Worcester, Massachusetts.<sup>176</sup> The report did not mention Peabody but the possibility of Turks residing in the city before 1900 still exists but cannot, at this point be

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<sup>176</sup> Kapat, "The Ottoman Emigration to America, 182.

proven. These types of difficulties in finding Turkish immigrants in Peabody handicapped my efforts to determine the exact number of Turks or other Ottomans in the city at any one time.

Besides difficulty in following the Turkish immigrants, the other problem in this research was impossibility of finding detailed information on any of the immigrants themselves, excluding, of course, the details that Frank Ahmed provided on his own family. Therefore, I turned to the narratives of observers such as those of Doctor Mehmed Fuad, Ahmed Emin Yalman, Frank Ahmed, Sabiha Sertel and Hikmet Feridun Es. These secondary narratives allowed me to give some sense of identity to the people in the community that I had reconstructed from the census schedules. This study is only a beginning in the reconstruction of the history of Turkish immigrants in the United States. Future work would be helped by interviews done among the descendants of the Turkish immigrants who remained in the United States and who returned to Turkey. There are various other records, such as towns' court records, ship manifests, the letters sent among the Turkish and American Embassies, cemetery records, city directories, and missionary reports which are waiting for researchers who are interested in this subject.

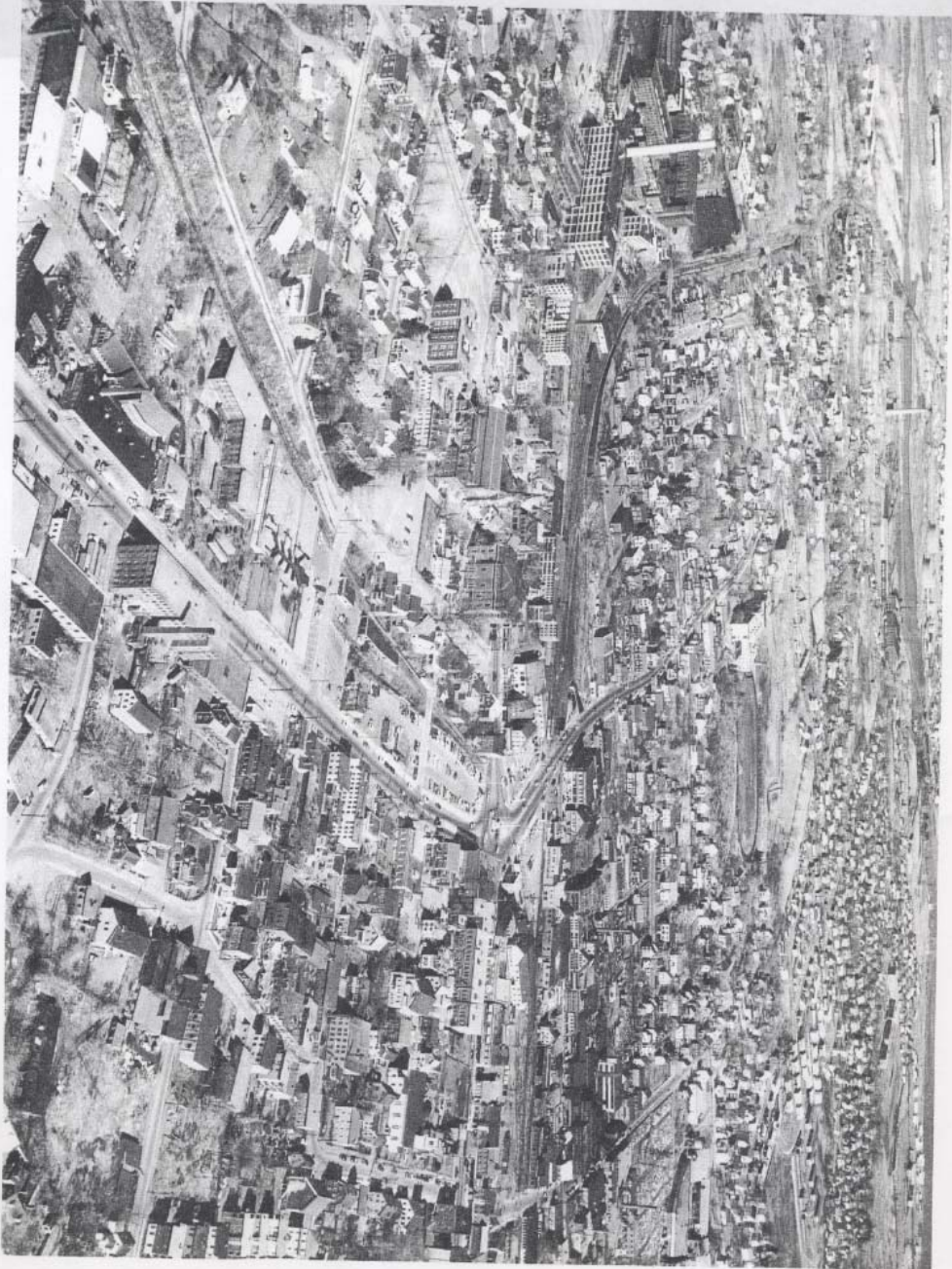


**APPENDIX B**  
**VIEWS FROM PEABODY, MASSACHUSETTS**



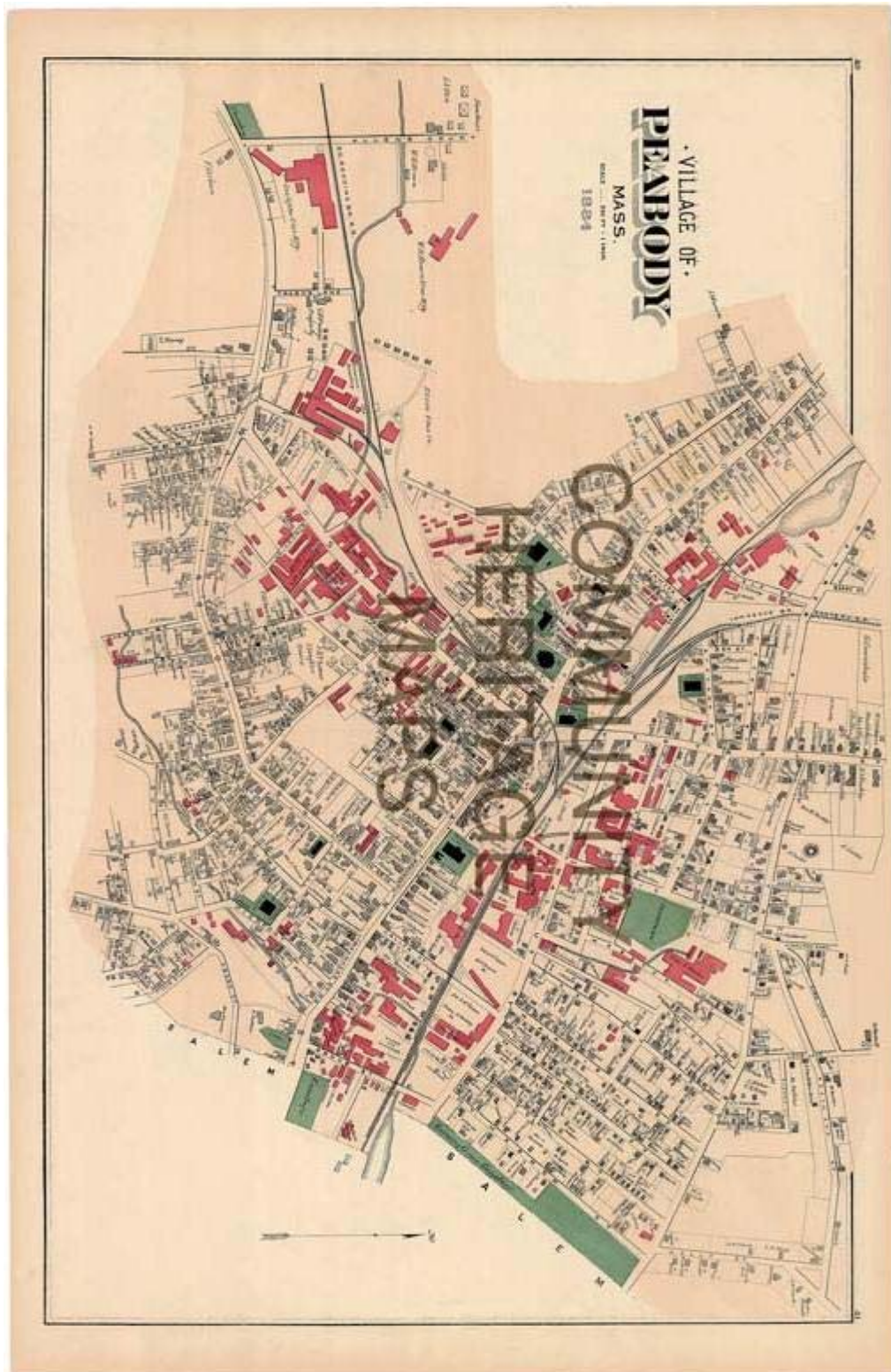
Source: John A. Wells. *Events in Peabody's History 1626-1972*. (Salem: Essex Institute, 1972).

AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHIC VIEW OF DOWNTOWN AREA OF PEABODY IN 1966 .

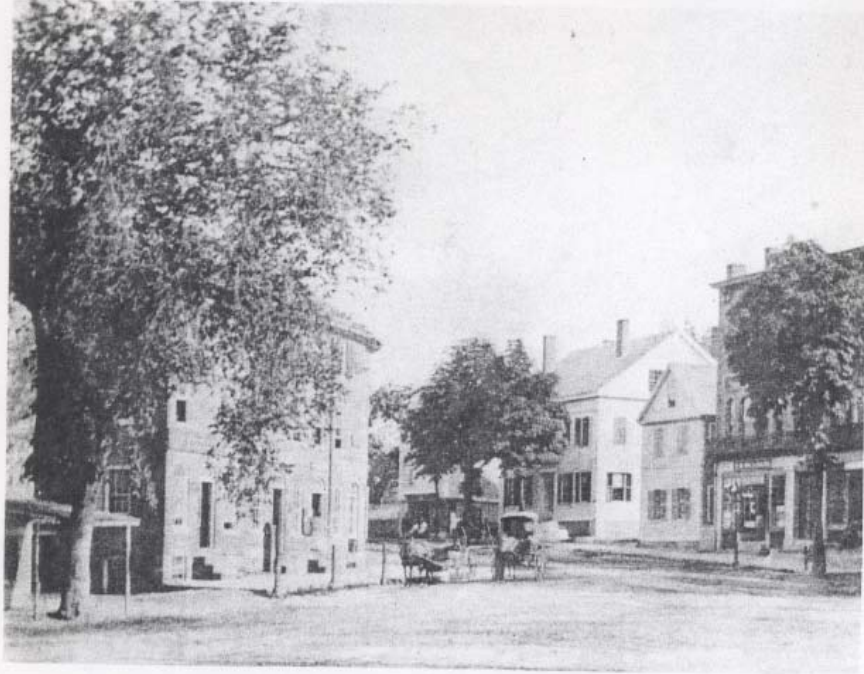


Source: Wells, *Events in Peabody's History 1626-1972*, 1972.





Source: <http://communityheritagemaps.com/essex/big/essex41.ht>



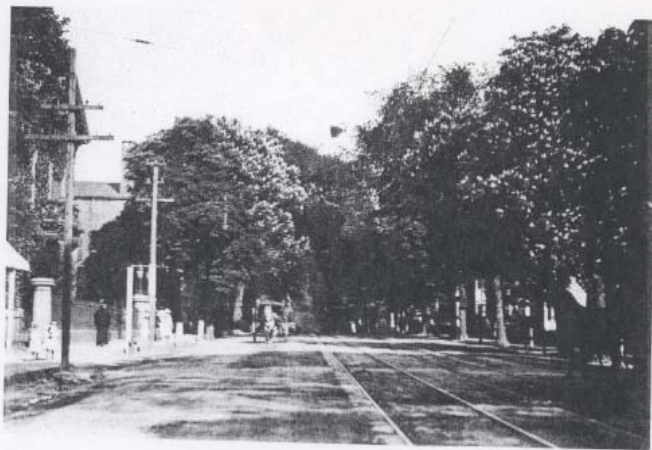
PEABODY SQUARE IN 1865 looking towards Main Street. Shown on left is original Allen Block before addition. Warren National Bank on right.



MONUMENT SQUARE. (1890)

Source: Wells, Events in Peabody's History 1626-1972, 1972.

MAIN STREET PEABODY IN 1890



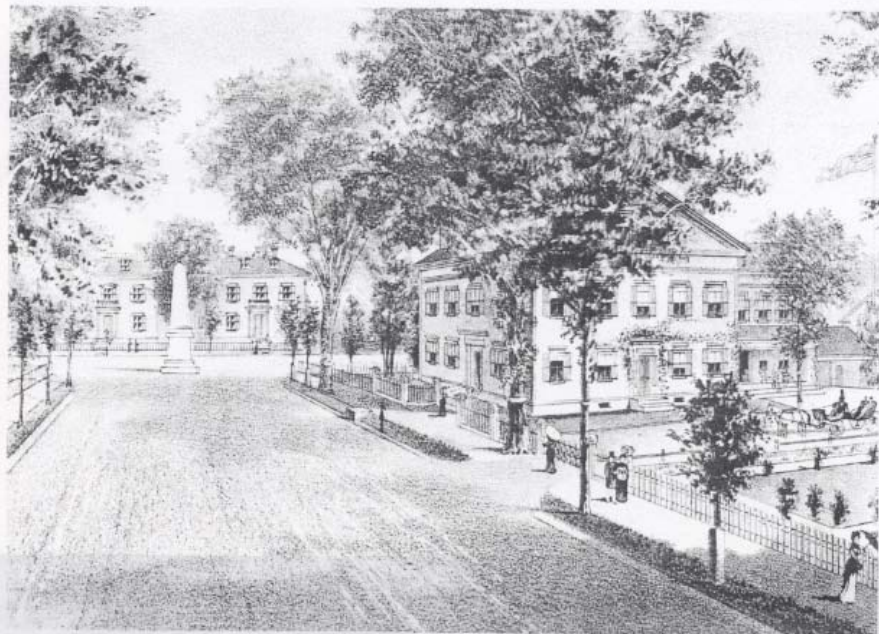
MAIN STREET.

Source: Wells, *Events in Peabody's History 1626-1972*, 1972.



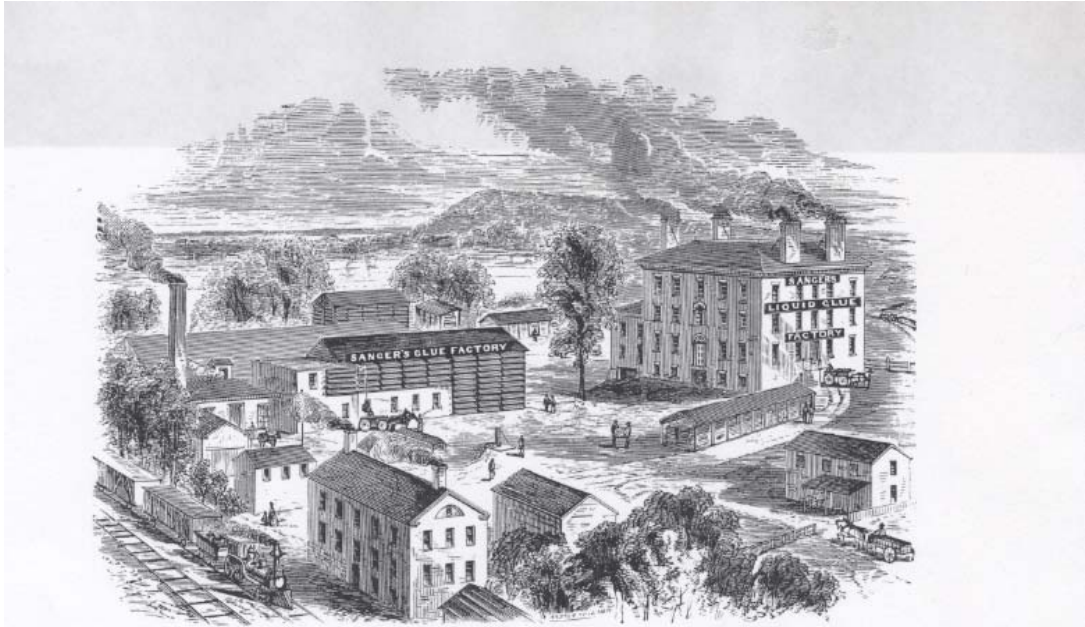


MAIN STREET AND HORSE STREET RAILWAY IN 1888. First horse cars between Peabody and Salem in 1863.



WASHINGTON STREET 1883 WITH A.A. ABBOTT RESIDENCE AT RIGHT.

Source: Wells, *Events in Peabody's History 1626-1972*, 1972.



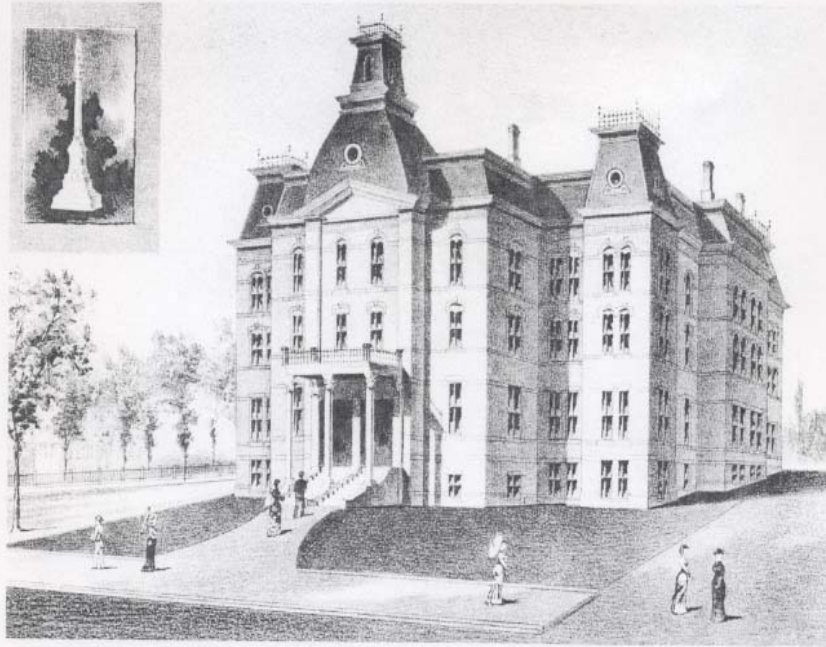
SITE OF A.C.LAWRENCE LEATHER CO. MAIN PLANT IN 1860 then Sanger's Glue Factory. Building with four chimneys was original Crowningshield mansion. Building near engine of freight train was part of early woolen mill . Buxton's Hill and pond shown in background.



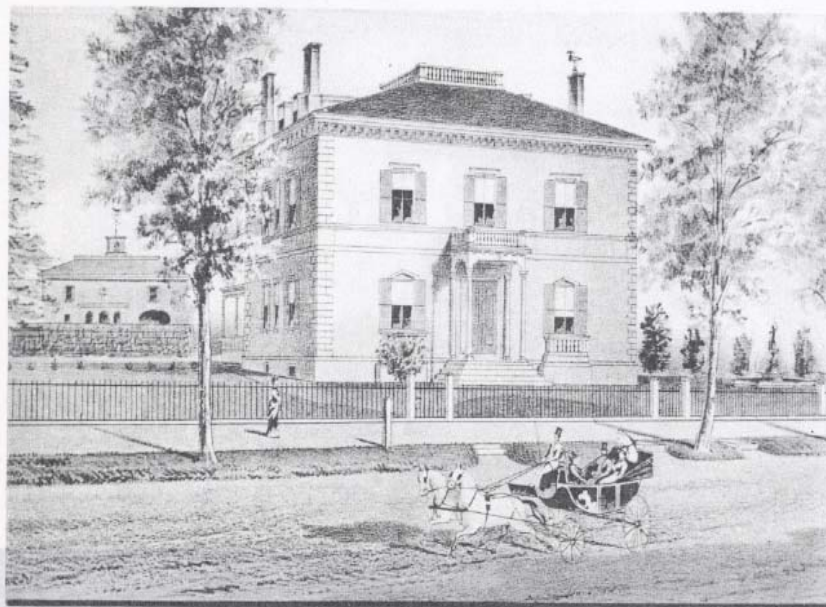
A.C.LAWRENCE LEATHER CO. MAIN PLANT IN 1966

Source: Wells, Events in Peabody's History 1626-1972, 1972.





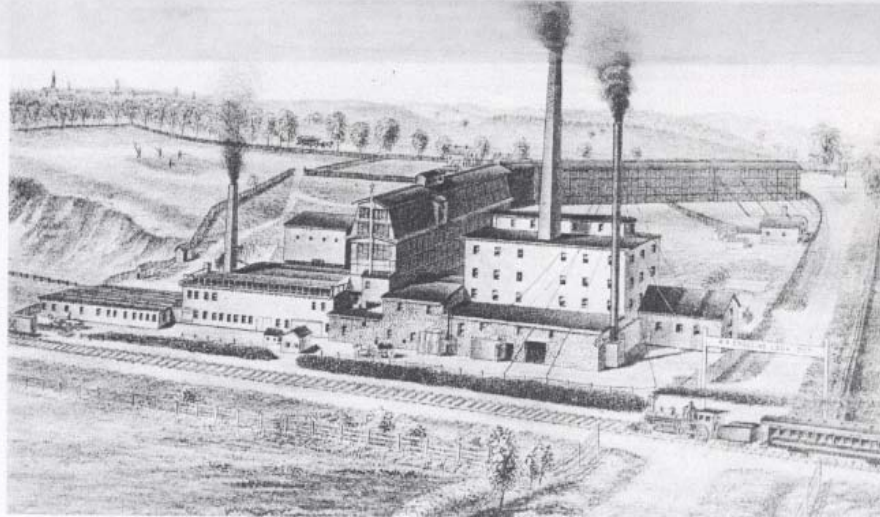
PEABODY CITY HALL as it appeared when dedicated in 1883. It is now listed on the National Register of Historic Places.



RESIDENCE OF MRS. ELIZA SUTTON.  
MAIN ST., PEABODY, MASS.

Source: Wells, *Events in Peabody's History 1626-1972*, 1972.





GEORGE UPTON GLUE CO. 1870 on Allens Lane and Washington Street. Later site of American Glue Co., and now Eastman Gelatine Corp. Glue industry founded in Peabody by Elijah Upton in 1817 at this site.



EASTMAN GELATINE CORP. that produces two-thirds of the product requirements of the Eastman Kodak Co. parent firm at Rochester, New York. Eastman Gelatine is Peabody's third largest taxpayer.

Source: Wells, *Events in Peabody's History 1626-1972*, 1972.