

Syrians in the Brooklyn Colony Quickly Adopt American Customs

Glover, Katherine

DWELLING peacefully and quietly on the borders of the Heights in Brooklyn is a growing colony of Syrians. In the past few years they have filtered into the district bounded by Smith street and South Ferry, Joralemon and Union streets, until there are now several hundred families of Syrians occupying homes on lower State street, Willow place, Joralemon, Hicks, Henry, Pacific, Amity, Congress streets and Atlantic avenue, and property amounting to nearly a million dollars is owned by these people from the east.

The neighborhood is beginning to be known as the Syrian colony, but there is nothing to distinguish it from other nearby districts except that among the chil-

they quickly become Americans in their customs, dress and manners of living, adopting the language of the country more quickly perhaps than the immigrants from any other country. When the first Syrians began to come into the neighborhood were now they have formed a colony there was some alarm among the residents around, but the newcomers have proved very peaceable neighbors, inconspicuous and quiet. It is a fairly prosperous class who live in this part of the city, many of whom own their homes and have, some of them, important commercial interests in Manhattan and live in Brooklyn, but some have their business interests in the near neighborhood, such as small grocery stores and barber shops. In Atlantic avenue there is a large lace factory and in Pacific street there is a shirtwaist factory. A number of these Syrian residents of Brooklyn are the owners of the Oriental goods stores in Rector and Washington streets, in Manhattan, some of them are manufacturers with large interests, a few have drug stores and there are several doctors, lawyers and editors, men of education and professional ability. The wealthiest Syrians in Greater New York make their homes in South Brooklyn, where there is a considerable colony between Thirty-ninth and Sixtieth streets. Most of them are merchants and the majority own comfortable homes. Washington street, in Manhattan, has a large settlement of the poorer Syrians that is considered a sort of school for the newcomers who settle there before they have become established in the new country and have earned enough money to live in some measure of comfort.

Nest and Comfortable Syrian Houses.

It is a characteristic of the Syrian people that money spent in a home is considered money well spent. Though not in the least given to rash extravagance the Syrian husband is anxious to surround his family with the comforts of a good home. He is not willing to live under the conditions of squalor and wretchedness that many Italians will submit to, so as soon as the Syrian a business begins to bring him in a fair sum one finds him settling in comfortable sections of Brooklyn, where he can enjoy an untroubled place. In the homes of most of them there is an air of neatness and comfort that bespeaks the spirit of the home-lover, and the people themselves are very hospitable and gracious.

Those who speak English with accuracy mingle some with the people of other nationalities, but for the most part they live by themselves. They are more eager to become Americans in every sense of the word, but it is natural that people from a land so far away, where the customs are so different from ours, should cling closely together. They form a world within themselves, their chief interests centering in their homes and families. The Syrian husband is devoted to his wife and his children, the Syrian wife is faithful to her liege-land and devotes all her time and thought to her home and her household. A club is almost unknown among Syrians, and they are little given to the theater or to any pleasure that takes them away from their homes. Their social life consists almost, altogether in informal gatherings of a group of families at

one home, where there is a game of cards or music and refreshments. There are several Syrian cafes in Manhattan, and one in Brooklyn, on Atlantic avenue, where sometimes the men gather for a meal and linger afterward for games. One of the favorites is a game that closely resembles checkers, and another is much like chess, while the American spirit has stolen among them enough to popularize poker.

It is only in the past fifteen or twenty years that Syrians have immigrated to this country at all, and in that time a noticeable percentage of the population have turned their faces westward. Conditions in the Eastern country are not very favorable to the Christian dwellers under the Mohammedan rule, and within the last century contact with travelers from the West has stirred a longing among the Syrians to see the things of

not meet with very great success there, and emigration to that country has almost ceased. A large colony went to Brazil, and there they have become very prosperous. Many Syrians have gone to Mexico and have flourished, and they got such a strong hold on the business interests of Havil that laws had to be passed against them.

In America the success of the Syrians has been slower than in Brazil and Mexico, because they have had more intelligent people to compete with, but in the end it will undoubtedly be surer. It is estimated that the export and import trade of the Syrians in Greater New York amounts to \$10,000,000 a year.

About 60,000 Syrians in America.

There are probably about six thousand Syrians living in Manhattan and Brooklyn, and in the whole United States there are between sixty and a hundred thousand.

Syria was for centuries a meeting place of the nations, and the Syrian of to-day is a curious mixture of many races and shows the influences of many peoples. At one time or another the country has been occupied by Greeks, Romans, Phoenicians, Jews, Assyrians, Babylonians, and by the Arabs, who gave them their language. The influence of the Crusaders can be strongly traced. Among the Syrian residents of Brooklyn there are one or two families who bear names of the Crusaders, and there are many such living in Syria. With those who have become Christians, representing about one million of

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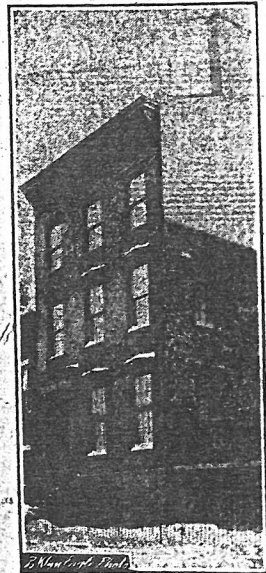
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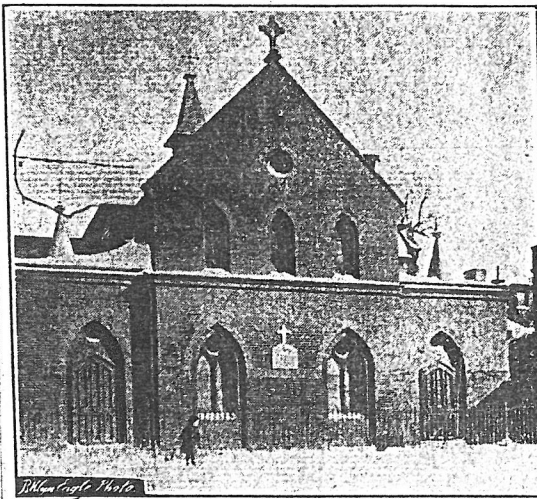
LINCOLN LANDMARKS TRACE HIS CAREER

Dwellings and Noted Buildings Associated With the

him in his wonderful rise from the humblest of stations to the very pinnacle of glory, have been preserved carefully. The log cabin, in which the son of Nancy Hanks was born, had been treasured, and will be one of the features of the great National Park, which it is proposed to make of the historic old farm that knew Lincoln's childhood. It is well that it should be so, for that little house, a shack so pitiable, so squallid that the contractor of to-day would prominent leaders felt dissatisfied when Lincoln was passed. But though he failed of nomination, Musical Fund Hall will ever be identified with Lincoln, because it was there he took commanding place as a national figure, and make folks beg to think of him as the right man for the crisis of 1860. From Musical Fund Hall it is an easy step to the White House, next in the line of buildings associated with Lincoln. What he did there will survive as long as history lives or as men admire greatness.



St. Mary's Chapel, Hicks Street. Green playing in the streets one spots small boys and girls swarthy of skin with the brilliant black eyes of the Oriental. They play along with the fair-skinned Americans as if their people were one, all tumbling together on the same sled with no thought of the significance of their companionship. That illustrates a characteristic of these people from the historic Asiatic country. Having cast in their lot in the new country of the west



St. Nicholas Syrian Greek Orthodox Church, Pacific Street.

the world and to start a new life in more progressive lands. The past thirty years has seen what is called the Renaissance in Syria. There has been a vivid awakening in literature and science, and moral and spiritual stirring, owing to Western influences. Forty or fifty years ago there were not a large percentage of the people who could read and write, and now there are very few who cannot. With this stirring to new progress and culture has come a decided tendency toward emigration. The first immigrants went to Australia before any Syrians came to America, but they did

the country's three million population, the Greek and Phoenician influences are said to be most strongly marked. Under Turkish rule, the Christians of Syria find conditions harsh and unfavorable to progress. No Christians are allowed to hold public office or to enter the army, and life is not easy for them. So they have begun to come to America. The first emigrants came with relics of the Holy Land to sell. News went back of their success, and gradually the tide of emigration to America began. Within the past two years there has been marked commercial success among the Syrians in this country. They are very industrious, with the commercial traits, their inheritance from the Phoenicians, very strongly emphasized.

OUTDOOR VALENTINES

sending of other valentines, except in the lines from the first printed picture

Amers' as well as their people were on all sides. The other on the east side of the river, no thought of the "American" of a char-acteristic of the people from the his-toric Atlantic country. Having cast in their lot in the new country of the west-

OUTPUT OF VALENTINES IS GREATER THAN EVER

Most of the Missives, Sentimental and Comic, Made in Brooklyn.

WORKERS KEPT BUSY ALL YEAR

Growing Tendency Toward a Better Class of Comics—Hundreds of Styles and Sizes.

In front of every stationer's store, the red, heart-decorated sign, "Valentine's Day," flaunts, setting the world of little expectant ple and lovers. A butler with a tray of expectancies—
for the 14th comes, with every February to teach us that the world will never grow un. Even with the gray beads that sign sita sot memories and awakes a smile, for surely there is no one in the whole world who has lived so somber a life as not to have one memory linked with St. Valentine's Day.

St. Valentine's is the day of foolishness, the day when lay bits of paper with pierced hearts and doves and formal yet-mo-nots are sent with tender, somewhat touches, being put in the valentines of 1907, most of which have months ago been issued from the big factory, flooding the small stores the country over.

There are only three or four large valentine factories in this country, and with the exception of the few tokens that are imported, these factories supply all the valentines that are sent on South Eleventh and Berry streets, perhaps, is the largest of all the establishments where valentines are turned out. From February 14 to the end of the year, the workers are busy making the missives that are to be sent on the one day of the year. Just as soon as the last batch of valentines is finished and the season is over, they set at once to work to make the missives for the year to come. The writer of verses sits the year through cutting sweet sentiments to print upon the valentines; the funny man finds from February to February pouring out the rhymes that appear beneath the comics, and the artist is summoning types and pictures to fit in with the rhymes of the poet.

Lace Valentine Still in Favor.

And with all the new kinds of valentines that have been devised for the grand day of telling messages on the 14th, the old factories are in undiminished demand. The lace valentine that for fifty years has carried its tender whispers from one heart to another is still bought in just as great numbers, and the longer and more sugared the verse within the better it seems to please. "No matter that the metre and the meaning are not always what they should be, the lovers are not discriminating about that, so long as the rhymes are full of ardent, glowing sentiment."

The comics that have become associated with St. Valentine within a recent period and of some, they have marred the meaning of the day, being exclusively to joke-joking a motive as to the lovers of America. In staid old England, where for long the customs of St. Valentine's Day were cherished, the comic is unknown, and the

sending of other valentines, except in the way of gifts, has almost passed away. In fact, the custom is to be celebrated almost exclusively in America. In Germany it is not known at all, though some of the valentines that are seen in the American shops are made in that country, especially for export to Italy, where the custom is said to have originated many centuries ago by the boys of Rome. The second of the names that are practiced drawing lots for the name of one should be their sweetheart, there is no such celebration now as St. Valentine's. Just why the day should get its name from St. Valentine is not known. The story goes that the emperor Valerian, who held his head for the sake of his religion, nobody seems to know or very much to care, except that some authorities vaguely state that the saint was known for his charity.

But the devotees of the day waste little time in thinking why on this date they are too busy chatting out the bit of decorated paper or the gift that will say what they most want it to say, and losing themselves in expectancy of the custom of sending flowers and candy and little gifts has grown in favor in the past few years, bearing out an old English custom of the day when a knight, on the eve of bearing the armor of gloves or a bit of jewelry as a reminder of his affection.

Most of Valentine's Made in Brooklyn. It seems a sort of deprecation to say that valentines are made out of pictures and paste and paper in an ordinary, every-day factory, instead of coming straight from Cupid himself, but so I found they were, and most of them manufactured right here in Brooklyn. I made a journey to the factory of love tokens and saw the dainty and the comic creations in the making, the last hurried touches being put in the valentines of 1907, most of which have months ago been issued from the big factory, flooding the small stores the country over.

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At the valentine factory the writer of the so-called comic verses is known as the gentlest, quietest of men, who never would in the least suspect of such a barbarous "Anything But a Poet."

"The Human Monkey." Your face and your shape So strongly claim to mind the ape, That Darwin's theory seems quite true To me, because you set the ape to you. The senders of valentines must have their fun, and as senses of humor vary there seems nothing too broad and flagrant to appeal to somebody. Serving the purpose of a day's amusement, St. Valentine's has come, too, to be a day of settling slight grudges and perpetrating jokes that bear on the faults and foibles of the various classes of people. So the funny man and the artist have to get busy and fulfill the demands of the valentine senders.

The busiest place in the valentine factory is the place where the "pretty valentines" are made, because, as if appropriate to the sentiments they carry, they have to be made almost altogether by hand. Some of the standard comics are done by machinery. Girls sit in groups of three or four at long tables working together to build up the valen-

percentage of the people who are very red and white, and now there are very few who cannot. With this stirring to new progress and culture has come a decided movement toward the west. The first of the Syrians came to America, but they did not come until the late part of the 19th century. They came from the Holy Land to seek a new home for their success, and gradually the tide of emigration to America began. Within the past two years there has been marked commercial success among the Syrians in this country. They are very industrious, and their commercial traits, their inheritance from the Phoenicians, very strongly empha-

squares of paper into the lace trimmed, scalloped and decorated article that it is when completed. One was doing the birds and flowers and doing another putting on the frame of lace from the central picture peeps out. Sometimes one girl would complete the whole valentine knowing the other had practiced that she did the work mechanically. A group was busy pasting on pale-colored silks in puffs and designs and decorating the cards with the hearts and 32 valentines that delight the hearts of country swains and, for years after the sending, decorate the mantels and walls of their homes. The girls who had not lost their love of dolls were busy dressing up pasteboard bodies with tissue paper dresses, making one of the novel- ties of the season in valentines. "Jig-gerbos," they are called, and they are delectably comical figures, whose feet work like a pair of scissors and puff them out into a funny shape. One of the other new things on which a lot of workers were busy filling rush orders were what are called, "Bob-up-comics." They are innocent enough looking bits and pieces, and are bearing the words, "A message of love," on the outside, but, on opening, unfold a figure that is something like our old friends of the comics, "The barber," and the suburbanite at his task of cutting grass, etc.

One table was piled with drop valentines, the kind that fills from a ribbon and has endless hearts and loving pictures and birds and sentiments dangling to it. These have been one of the favorites of the year and the factory has had hard work to meet the demand. Of course, there were hundreds of the heart-shaped and square folded valentines with their messages, "To one I fondly love," "Trust to me" and the style that will always delight an on-coming generation.

Many Styles of Comic Valentines

In other rooms there was the whirl of machinery turning out the printed comics of a hundred different styles and sizes and the post card, which has become one of the favorites in the way of valentines, yet seems not to be in demand. I have in-ferred with the other kinds of valentines. Every style and variety of valentine that has ever been on the market I saw in this Brooklyn factory and more kinds than I could have dreamed of. If you believe for a moment that the custom of sending valentines is dying out you have but to peep into this place where they are made to find your opinion wrong. You will find all the old friends that used to stir your ire, your laughter or awake the beating of your heart when the valentine box at school was opened, and you will find a host of new varieties that have been created since you grew up into forgetfulness of Valentine's day.

There seems to be a growing tendency toward a better class of comics, though the old cheap kind still is in unrelaxed demand. To meet this new demand the factories are turning out what are called "nicer comics," printed on better paper, with pictures more after the style of the comic and with verses that do not offend tender sensibilities quite so seriously as some of the old comics. Then there are what are called cabinet, card comics, the size of a cabinet photograph and very well colored and printed. None of the new fads and the new trades escapes the pen and the brush of the writer and artist of comic valentines. Some of the standard comics have a life of ten years or more, because there are always new senders of valentines growing up to find delight in the familiar picture of the man in the baseball field, the top and the tatter. It was almost like paying a visit to Santa Claus in his shop to go to the place where valentines come from and see them in the making. It was a trifling dis-appointing, I admit, and yet it was rather good to see that so much energy and so much time can be given in this bustling country to the making of a trifling and ancient custom, one of the foolish customs that is not foolish at all, but helps to keep the old world young.

KATHERINE CLOVER.

Of the Syrians in Greater New York practically all are Christians. There are only one or two Mohammedan families among them. The majority are Catholics, belonging to the Orthodox Greek Church; a few to the Roman Catholic Church, and a number to the Maronite Church, which is affiliated with the Catholic Church and is practically the same, except that it has some native saints. Still others of the Syrians are Protestants, belonging principally to the Presbyterian and Congregational churches, but they are but a small per cent. compared to the Catholics.

The Greek Catholics have a church in Pacific street, over which Bishop Rafail, a native Syrian, presides, and there is a Maronite chapel in Hicks street, with a sub-bishop or monsignor. The Brooklyn Syrians who are Protestants hold meetings every Sunday evening at the Unitar-

ian Church at Congress and Clinton streets, and they are planning to build a church of their own when sufficient funds can be secured.

The importance of the Syrian interests in this country is due to the fact that there are eight Syrian papers published in New York and two magazines. Two of the papers are dailies, the other two are weeklies. One of the papers is devoted to the interests of the Syrians in America, and one of the magazines is concerned with the religious interests of the Syrians.

TRACE HIS CAREER

Associated With the Martyr President.

LOG CABIN IN NATIONAL PARK.

Homestead, Only Piece of Real Estate He Ever Owned, Shrine for Patriotic Americans.

Lincoln's life can almost be traced by the buildings which are associated with it. There are not many of these. The "Martyr President," unlike Washington, the only other American who compares with him in fame was not a soldier or a

House in Which President Lincoln Died, Washington.

man of means. His fame was made on the rostrum, at the bar, in the halls of Congress and finally in the White House. Military headquarters of Washington, houses in which he lived, slept over night, danced or visited are pointed out all over the states that existed in his day. Lincoln's birthday finds his home perpetuated in fewer structures. Never owned but one piece of real estate, his home in Springfield, but it is interesting to note that there are eight Syrian papers published in New York and two magazines. Two of the papers are dailies, the other two are weeklies. One of the papers is devoted to the interests of the Syrians in America, and one of the magazines is concerned with the religious interests of the Syrians.

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The log cabin, in which the son of Nancy Hanks was born, had been treasured, and will be one of the features of the great National Park, which it is proposed to make of the historic old farm that once Lincoln's childhood.

It is well that it should be so, for that little house, a shack so pitiable, so squallid, that the contractor of to-day would hesitate to house his Italian laborer, in it, is more than a memorial of the man who saved the nation, it is a perpetual object lesson that the system of American government makes the highest honors possible to all.

One of the Lincoln houses that survive is perhaps the most interesting of all, the Lincoln homestead at Springfield, Ill., a shrine to which thousands of patriotic Americans make their pilgrimages yearly.

This was Lincoln's home for thirty years, and as has been previously stated, it was the only piece of real estate he ever owned.

He lived in the Springfield house for thirty years, but it was not until 1849 that he managed to own it. A rugged and honest business man, he had acquired possession sooner, in 1837, with a man named Berry, but he had embarked in a business venture in New Salem. Berry proved a sound and the firm was not long in becoming prosperous. The store was discontinued, and Lincoln might have escaped his debt, but he was not the man to take advantage of technicalities, and he paid every dollar incurred by the firm, the last payment being made in 1849. Then he bought the house.

To this home, in 1842, he brought his first wife, Mary Todd, daughter of Robert S. Todd of Lexington, Ky. Lincoln, usually thought of as a Northerner, of Northerners, really had many things to bind him to the South, perhaps that one of the reasons why, as the years carry the nation further from the bitterness of 1861-65, Americans south of Mason and Dixon's line continually put a higher value on the character and achievements of the sixteenth President. He was born in Kentucky, he found his wife there, and had he lived, he would undoubtedly have made the effort he always contemplated to make money reparation to those plantation owners who were ruined by the loss of their slaves.

The Springfield home of Lincoln is a modest dwelling, such as any business man of moderate means would think none too good. It is inferior to the dwellings of thousands of Lincoln's contemporaries of far less fame. But to Lincoln it was home, the best loved place in the world. Most of the happiness that came into his sad life, he found there, and what he thought of as the paths of his farewell when he left for Washington to take up one of the most fearful tasks that ever fell to the lot of mortals.

The State of Illinois now appropriately enough owns the Lincoln homestead. After the death of his mother, Robert Lincoln, son of the martyr himself, Minister to England and Cabinet member, and at one time prominently mentioned as a possible candidate for the presidency presented it to the state. It is that time it has been most reverently cared for, and has become the repository of many relics of Lincoln and his family.

Another building prominently identified with Lincoln is Musical Fund Hall, Philadelphia, where was held last summer the celebrations of the forty-first anniversary of the death of the martyr. This venerable hall, still standing in much the same condition it was then, is nearly a century old, and has witnessed the voices of the most famous singers of the world.

In that first Republican convention, held there in 1840, that saw the beginning of the party that has been dominant with an interval of only eight years since 1860, Lincoln was a commanding figure. In fact, it may be said that this convention really launched him on the presidential factor and paved the way for his nomination in Chicago, four years later.

Musical Fund Hall will ever be identified with Lincoln, because he once took commanding place as a national figure, and make folk-legend as a link of him as the right man for the crisis of 1860.

From Musical Fund Hall it is an easy step to the White House, next to the fine buildings associated with Lincoln. What he did there will survive as long as history lives, or as we admit a volition to principle. What he suffered can never even be remotely guessed, for those who knew him intimately say that the burden he bore would have broken men of lesser physical strength, mental caliber and lofty devotion.

It is well that there will survive as part of the improvements of 1902, had not been added, and the changes in the dwelling plan to accommodate the large family of President Roosevelt, were then not even contemplated.

Not far from the White House stands the New York Avenue Presbyterian Church, which did there will survive as he was chief executive of the nation. This historic old place of worship probably is the only church of note intimately associated with Lincoln. The edifice is in appearance to-day practically the same as in Lincoln's time, and his pew, when the interior of the structure was renovated some time since, was left undisturbed and is constantly an object of great interest to visitors to the National Capitol. The New York Avenue Presbyterian Church is one of the oldest churches in Washington. Several years ago it celebrated its centennial, at which time Lincoln's intimate connection with the church was given much prominence.

A few blocks from the executive mansion are the two buildings directly across the street from each other that saw the sad story of Lincoln's life completed. One is Ford Theatre, the other the house in which he died.

That deed of blood performed there, in that Tenth avenue structure, only a stone's throw from Pennsylvania avenue on April 14, 1865, has marked the end perhaps the most terrible shock it ever knew. The dying man was carried to a dwelling directly across the street, and there at a few minutes before 7 o'clock, he passed into the Great Beyond.

Appropriately enough, the buildings, that knew him after death still survive, for in that pathetic progress across the country to Springfield the body lay in state in many statehouses, including the most famous of all, Independence Hall, Philadelphia, the cradle of American liberty.

The increasing veneration for Lincoln shown at each recurring birthday is assurance that Americans will never permit the passing of one of these structures associated with his life and death.

HUGE DREDGING UNDERTAKING

It Is to Begin Soon at Coconut Grove, Miami, Fla., W. J. Matheson's Winter Retreat.

(Special to the Eagle.)
Huntington, L. I., February 9.—The W. J. Matheson, whose country home is near here, are now at Miami, Fla., near which place their winter home is located. The spirit of improvement, which is a feature at all Mr. Matheson's many properties, is being carried out at Coconut Grove, as his Florida place is known. A correspondent writes of it as follows:
"Probably the most extensive project of the kind ever attempted in this section is that now undertaken by W. J. Matheson at Coconut Grove, and for which he has built and equipped a complete dredge boat of great capacity, the same now being practically ready to commence work. It is the purpose of Mr. Matheson, who has built at Coconut Grove one of the most extensive and elaborate residences in the state, to dredge out a large basin in front of his property, the same to be sufficiently deep and large enough to accommodate a number of large cruising yachts, and to cut therefrom a canal to the channel of the bay. The soil removed by the dredge will be thrown up in front of his property, which will be raised four feet. The work, which will be rated four feet, will cost \$100,000, and will be a great success. Mr. Matheson is a large owner of property in and about Miami."