

Comment rendre actuelle l'Arménie occidentale : Armenian Weekly explique aux Américains-arméniens



For many decades, generations in this country have uttered, "We are *Vanetzi*" or "Our family is *Kharpetzi*." Another popular one is, "We are proud *Sepastiatzis*." To some, especially the new generation, the question is what does that mean? Well literally, it refers to a family lineage from a particular region of our historical homeland in western Armenia. In past generations, the location of your birth was a proud identifier since an independent sovereign state had

been denied to the Armenians. After the genocide and the forced expulsion of our ancestors from a land they had known for several millennia, many of the new immigrants formed compatriotic unions or organizations of people from the same area. Some still exist today. My own grandfather and several relatives belonged to the *Koch Hisar Miyoutouyn* which consisted of individuals from that village region in Sepastia. As time marched on and the organizations gave way to new groups, the distinct geographic labels continued with succeeding generations. Whether it is for preserving local cuisine or family history, it has continued in some form to this day.

For several years, I taught Armenian history at a summer camp. I would always ask my students if they knew where their geographic roots were as we studied geography. Several were aware and would share their knowledge with the class. For those who were unaware, I would encourage them to speak with their parents and grandparents to seek answers. It was always gratifying to meet students during the year at public events, and they would share their new knowledge of their identity. Many would point to a map exactly where their immigrating generation had come from.

Can our history survive solely on surface knowledge?

But what does this mean to third and fourth generation removed (from the homeland) American

Armenians? How do we make our currently lost Western Armenia a reality for our young people and not a seemingly distant footnote in our vast history? Can our history survive solely on surface knowledge? I believe there is an answer to these questions that is both contemporary as well as ...

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