

The Hellenic Genocide: Survivor Interview Guide

One of the strongest evidence of every Genocide are the eyewitnesses testimonies and people that survived people, that had first hand experiences. The next strongest evidence is people that heard those horrifying experiences from survivors.

All the stories about Genocides or holocausts that committed all over the world, survivors can tell you all about the atrocities that happened.

The Genocide of the Greek Christians in Asia Minor (what you would call Turkey today) and the extermination of the Hellenism from its roots, is committed with unheard brutality and barbarism from the turkish hordes, its one of the few times in the human history that such acts have committed against other humans.

So, if you know a survivor, or an eyewitness, his/hers story needs to be told and written down for future generations to know. In case that there are no survivors, please interview the relatives that heard those stories from first hand, and of course keep detailed notes!

Thank you for trying to keep the History of Our Nation Alive!!

SXM

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Section I: City/Village Life

City/Town/Village

1. Population (size, ethnic groups, ratio of Greeks to Turks)?
2. Occupational structure. What occupations were specific to Greeks/Turks?
3. Physical Layout (types of buildings, location of marketplace)
4. What was available? Who did the shopping? Who sold what?

Neighborhood

5. Specific name, boundaries, who lived where (ethnic, religious, class groups).

6. Physical layout (types of buildings).

7. Transportation

8. Vendors

Home

9. Physical description (floor plan, number of rooms, function of each room, furnishings, yard, heating, lighting, water supply, animals).

10. What furnishings do you remember in each room?

Family

11. For each family member (e.g., great-grandparents, grandparents, parents, uncles, aunts, siblings), what was his or her name, age, sex, relationship to you, occupation, educational level?

12. Who lived in your house? Did non-family members live with you?

13. Who made family decisions? What was the division of responsibilities in your family?

14. Where did your relatives live, and how often and in what contexts did you see them?

15. What was the relationship between your family and other relatives?

Childhood

16. Describe some of the happiest moments during your childhood.

17. Do you remember specific songs, rhymes, or stories from your childhood?

18. With whom did you play and where?

19. What games did you play? What toys did you have?

20. What responsibilities and expectations did your parents have for you, and at what ages?

21. Do you remember being punished? If so, for what offenses? And by whom?

School

22. Who attended school?

23. Who ran the school?

24. Do you remember names of teachers?

25. What subjects did you study?

26. How many years did you attend school?

27. Do any incidents stand out in your mind?

28. Were there other schools in your town/village/city?

Occupational Preparation

29. Were there apprenticeships for specific jobs?

30. What job or vocation did your parents want you to pursue?

Household Management

31. How did you obtain, store, and prepare food?

32. How were children bathed? Clothes washed?

33. Describe a typical day in the life of a Greek housewife.

34. How was money used within the household? What were typical expenses?

35. Who made decisions on household matters?

Health Care

36. Was there a hospital in your town? Were there doctors? Midwives? Nurses?

37. What happened when someone became sick in your house?

38. Were there home remedies? Medicines?

39. How did mothers give birth? What customs surrounded the birth of a child?

40. How were the elderly cared for? The mentally retarded? The physically handicapped?

Leisure Pastimes

41. What did you do during the summer? After school?

42. What books and newspapers were read in your home? By whom?

43. Did you have a summer house? Describe it.
44. Did your family go on vacations? Trips?
45. Describe patterns of visitation with others in your household.
46. How was leisure time spent by men? Women? Boys? Girls?

Church

47. What churches were in your city? Names? Who went?
48. To what church did you belong? What activities do you remember?
49. Was there a Greek church in your city? What was the relationship between its members and those who were Muslim?
50. Did religious leaders play an active role in your community? Politics?

Religious Observances

51. How did you celebrate Christmas, Lent, Easter, various Saints' days?

52. How religious were people in your household? How often did you attend services?

53. How often did most people in your community attend church? For what specific occasions?

Folk Heritage

54. Do you remember any proverbs? Songs? Legends? Tales? Greek sayings?

55. Do you remember any superstitions?

Manners and Customs

56. What customs existed relating to birth? Death? Health? Illness? Engagement? Marriage?

57. Rituals associated with entry into manhood/womanhood?

58. At what age did marriage occur? Who could marry whom? How was marriage permission secured? Could the girl refuse?

59. Was there divorce? Remarriage?

60. How were girls treated? How were wives treated?

Greeks and Turks

61. Were there Turks in your city?

62. How did Greeks and Turks get along?

63. Did you or your family have Turkish friends?

64. Did Greeks have any different rights from Turks?

65. Did you know any Greeks who became Muslims at the time of the deportations? Why did they convert? How were they treated by other Greeks?

Clubs, Organizations, Political Groups

66. Were there revolutionary parties in your area? How many members did they have? How active were they?

67. Outside of church, what clubs and organizations were there? To which did you or your family belong? Who belonged to these groups?

68. Were there charitable organizations in your community? What did they do?

Community Organization

69. Who were the Greek leaders in your area? What were their responsibilities?

70. How did they relate to the Turks in your area?

71. Were Greeks free to govern their community?

72. Were Greeks in complete control of their churches? Schools?

Social Control by Turks

73. In your community, what do you remember about courts? Prisons? Taxes? Drafting of Greek men/boys?

74. Did Greeks ever try to defend themselves against attacks by Turks? How?

75. How did Greek leaders maintain control in your community?

Military Service

76. Did you or anyone else in your family serve in the military?

77. Who was drafted? Were men able to avoid the draft? How?

Section II: Massacre and Deportation

Before 1915

78. Did anyone in your extended family die in the 1894-96 massacres? The 1912-1914 massacres? Who? How? Where?

79. What were relationships like between Turks and Greeks immediately before the deportations of 1915? Were there any indications of growing political tensions?

Imprisonment and Torture

80. Were Greeks arrested or tortured in your area before the deportations?

81. Were guns or other weapons gathered from Greeks by Turkish officials in your area?

82. Did you observe any brutalities toward Greeks before the deportations?

Resistance

83. Was there any resistance by Greeks against Turkish orders or brutalities?

84. Did any Turks come to the rescue of Greeks? Did any Turks shelter families? Children?

Deportation

85. Were Greeks deported from your area?

86. How were deportation orders given?

87. How many days did Greeks have to prepare for deportation?

88. How did Greeks prepare for deportation? What did you take with you?

89. Did you have transportation during the deportation?

90. Who was deported from your extended family?

91. Describe the first day or two of your deportation journey.

Deportation "Death" Marches

92. Where were you deported? Specific towns/villages?

93. Describe specific events that occurred during the deportation marches.

94. What role did gendarmes or soldiers play during the deportations?

95. Were you attacked at any point during the deportations?

96. Did you observe any incidents of rape? Abduction of children? Women?

97. Where did you sleep?

98. How did you secure food? Water?

99. How long were you deported? Days? Weeks? Months?

100. Did you observe people who died from attack? Dehydration? Starvation? Disease? Describe specific instances.

101. Did any of your family members die during the deportation marches? Were any abducted? Did any family members become separated?

Deportation Caravan

102. How many were deported from your area?

103. How many arrived at the destination point of your caravan?

104. Was there any resistance to being deported? Why or why not?

105. Did you observe other deportation caravans? What was their condition?

Section III: Orphanage Life (if survivor lived in an orphanage)

Admission

106. When did you first become aware that there were orphanages for survivors?

107. In what orphanage(s) did you live? Name? Place? How long did you live there?

108. Who was in charge? Names of people?

109. How did you enter the orphanage? What procedures were followed in admitting you?

Orphanage Life

110. Describe a typical day in the orphanage.

111. Describe the facilities. How was the orphanage organized?

112. How was the food? Clothing?

113. Did you go to school? Or receive vocational training?

114. What did you do for recreation?

115. What are your favorite memories and worst memories of orphanage life?

Greek Identity

116. Did you have to relearn the Greek language?

117. Were there efforts to instill a nationalistic spirit in the orphans?

118. What was the role of religious education within your orphanage?

119. Do you remember specific songs or other things that you learned in the orphanage?

Leaving the Orphanage

120. When did your orphanage leave Turkey? Describe the process.

121. Where were you resettled after leaving Turkey? Describe the new setting.

122. At what age did children finally leave the orphanages? Were there engagements and marriages in the orphanages?

Reunions

123. How did you become reunited with family? Relatives? Friends?

124. After leaving the orphanage, did you return to Turkey? If so, describe the process of going home and what you found in your hometown.

Section IV: Emigration and Marriage

Marriage

125. Where did you meet your spouse? Describe courtship/marriage.

126. Where did you live? In how many different places/countries did you live? What years? Why did you move?

127. What job(s) did you and your spouse have? Describe your economic circumstances.

128. How many children do you have? Where were they born? When?

United States (Or present country of residence)

129. When did you immigrate to the United States or present country of residence? Why?

130. Did children, relatives, or friends immigrate before you?

131. Did you encounter any problems in entering the United States?

132. What were your first impressions of the United States?

133. How did you make a living after coming to the United States? Describe your job history.

134. Where in the United States have you lived?

Adjustment

135. Were there any Greek organizations, churches, or other groups that were particularly helpful to you?

136. How did your children adjust to the United States? Your spouse?

137. Have you experienced any discrimination in the United States?

138. What have been your hardest times since coming to the United States?

139. Did you ever regret moving to the United States?

Children/Grandchildren

140. Describe your children. Did they marry Greeks? How many grandchildren do you have? Where are your grandchildren going to school?

141. What type of work do your children do? Where do they live?

142. Did you name any of your children after siblings or relatives who died in the Genocide?

143. Do your grandchildren speak Greek? Can they write Greek? Do they know your story? Are they proud to be Greek?

144. What churches do your children/grandchildren attend?

145. Do your children/grandchildren belong to any Greek organizations?

146. Do they subscribe to any Greek newspapers?

Greek Identity

147. Do you have many non-Greek friends? What percentage of your closest friends are Greek?

148. To what Greek organizations do you currently belong? How active are you?

149. Do you speak Greek in your home? With your spouse? Children? Grandchildren?

150. Do you attend a Greek church? How regularly?

151. Are you worried about the future of Greeks in the United States? Why? In what ways?

152. What advice do you have for Greek young people?

Section V. Attitudes and Interpretations

Causes of the Genocide

153. In your view, why did the Genocide occur?

154. What was the Greeks' role in the Genocide?

155. What role did the revolutionary groups play?

Attitude Toward Turks

156. What was your attitude toward Turks before the Genocide?

157. Did you observe Turks who were helpful to Greeks both during the deportations and afterward?

158. Do you think the average Turk approved of the actions of the government against the Greeks?

159. After you left Turkey, did you have any contact with Turks? What was your experience with these individuals?

160. How would you describe Turkish character?

Childhood Feelings

161. What specific events from your childhood stand out most clearly in your mind?

162. What were your most painful experiences? Joyful moments? Do you think most often of the good or bad times from your childhood?

163. As a child, were you able to understand why the deportations were occurring? Or why there was hostility toward the Greeks?

164. As a child, particularly in the orphanage, did you talk with others about the Genocide (i.e., sharing stories of what you had experienced and witnessed)?

165. If orphaned during the Genocide, how sad, depressed, or lonely do you remember being? How did you cope with these feelings as a child? What sources of comfort did you have?

Adult Feelings

166. How much did you think about the Genocide as an adult, and how did your feelings change over time?

167. In the last few years, how preoccupied have you been with the Genocide? Is it something that you think about daily?

168. Have you ever had, or do you currently have, dreams about events you experienced during the Genocide?

169. Do you attend special events to commemorate the Greeks who died during the Genocide? How do you feel on that day?

170. Do you feel that you have healed from your experiences during the Genocide, or do you still thinking about it often?

Guilt

171. Have you ever felt guilty that you survived when so many Greeks perished?

172. Are there any specific events from the deportations about which you feel bad--where you failed, or perhaps your mother or father failed or compromised?

173. Did you observe Greek women abandoning children or infants? How do you feel about such decisions?

Shame and Humiliation

174. In what ways were Greeks shamed and humiliated during the deportations?

175. Did you ever feel that you had become less than human during the deportations?

Talking About the Genocide

176. Do you talk with fellow survivors about the Genocide? Is this a regular or infrequent topic of conversation?

177. Do you frequently talk with non-Greeks about the Genocide?

178. Have you told your story to your children? To your grandchildren? In how much detail? What have been their reactions? How interested have they been in your story?

179. What attitudes about the Genocide do you think you have communicated to your children and grandchildren?

Effects of the Genocide

180. How do you think the Genocide has affected you? Physically? Emotionally? Educationally and vocationally?

181. Has anything positive resulted from the Genocide for Greeks? For you personally?

Religious Practice and Attitudes

182. What was your religious background as a child?

183. How would you describe your religious commitment and beliefs as an adult?

184. How do you reconcile the Genocide with your religious beliefs?

185. Do you think about the Genocide?

186. Do you have a satisfactory explanation for why the Genocide occurred?

187. Should the Greeks seek reparations or return of their homelands?

188. How angry are you toward those responsible for the Genocide? What would have to happen in order to reduce your anger? Would acknowledgement of the Genocide by those responsible be sufficient? Would you like an apology?

189. Why do you think Greeks continue to talk about an event that happened so many years ago?

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