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Part I - History

Chapter 1	Immigration to America: Late Arrival of Greeks.	1
	<i>While the largest migration of Greeks to the United States took place between 1889 and 1921, others had preceded them to the Americas, some arriving as early as the 15th and 16th centuries. After 1815, both the sending and receiving countries contributed to the magnitude of migratory flow. Many historic factors delayed mass immigration of Greeks to the United States, while other events forced the ultimate exodus from Greece as the twentieth century approached.</i>	
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	<i>The elusive search for the first Greek immigrant to settle in Cleveland produced some interesting results that expand on earlier editions of this book. Meanwhile, a historical trek to a “kaffenion” (coffee house) paints a vivid picture of immigrant life as it existed as the birth of the twentieth century approached. The kaffenion was a place where Greek men could relax in a strange land, but it also acted as a support network. During the height of its popularity, which coincided with the peak immigration years, a coffee house could be found within every other doorway along Cleveland’s Bolivar Road.</i>	
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	<i>Even without a church in which to conduct religious services, Greek immigrants were able to practice their faith and participate in sacraments held in homes, coffee houses, and even in open spaces. When formal communities were finally established and churches built, their growth was exceptional, even without a formal national church hierarchy in place.</i>	
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	<i>The years of the “Great Depression” devastated the Greek American Community; the loss of the Annunciation Church property was barely avoided as benefactors stepped in and kept hopes flickering. As the decade stumbled along, a second church appeared in the Greek American Community of Cleveland. By decade’s end, the picture had improved dramatically.</i>	
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	<i>In 1943, the Greek War Relief Association published a book of editorials, cartoons, articles, and letters that described the heroism of the Greeks in WWII. To paraphrase: “The Italian invasion of Greece had almost universally been predicted to be another success for the Axis powers. But Greece opened the eyes of the world when the invading Italian Army was forced back into Albania. It was the first sign that Mussolini and Hitler could be beaten. The valor and success of the overwhelmed Greek forces inspired the world, and eradicated the last vestiges of discrimination against Greek immigrants in America.</i>	
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	<i>The wartime economic boom helped the businesses of Greek entrepreneurs to flourish, and they were generous with their giving. Donations flowed into the Greek War Relief treasure chest, as well as into the Community’s building fund for expansion—as a single, integrated entity.</i>	
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