

The Assyrians of the San Joaquin Valley, California: From Early Settlements to the Present.

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Historical Background

Modern Assyrians are the descendents of the ancient Assyrians who have continued and for thousands of years to occupy a land known by the Greeks as Mesopotamia, a reference to a region between the Tigris and the Euphrates. Although the Assyrian Empire fell in 612 BC, the Assyrian people, contrary to common belief in the west, did not vanish. Just as today's Italians, Greeks, Egyptians, Jews, and Persians rightly claim that they are the descendents of the ancient Romans, Greeks, Egyptians, Israelites, and the Medes respectively, so do the modern Assyrians who trace their heritage to the ancient Assyrians. After the fall of their empire, the Assyrians continued to live as peasant subjects under conquerors such as the Mede Persians and the Greeks. With the coming of Christ, Assyrians were one of the first people, besides the Armenians, who accepted Christianity. As Christians, the Assyrians lived chronologically under the Romans, Sassanid Persians, Arab Caliphate, Mongols, and the Ottoman Turks.

In 1915, and during World War One, a systematic extermination of all indigenous Christians of today's Turkey, i.e. the Assyrians, Armenians and the Greeks, was ordered by the Turkish Government. The Turkish army assisted by the Kurds burned many Assyrian villages in the Hakkari Mountains in southeast Turkey and forced the Assyrians to flee and join their Assyrian brothers and sisters in Azerbaijan (northwest Persia). The Russian army stationed there gave the Assyrians some protection but withdrew later and many Assyrians (some 20,000) fearing for their lives followed the Russians. The Russians returned to Azerbaijan later and protected the remaining Assyrians for some time but the Russian Revolution of October 1917 changed everything. All for a sudden and in January 2, 1918, the Russians withdrew again from Azerbaijan leaving the Assyrians at the mercy of the Turkish army and the Kurds. Thousands of Assyrians and many Armenians were killed. Some (80,000) Assyrians, including some Armenians, were forced to evacuate Azerbaijan and flee to the south and seek the protection of the British army stationed in Hamadan, Persia. The Assyrians were later set in a refugee camp in Baquba, Iraq. One-third of the original (80,000) perished in what became known as one of the most horrifying exoduses the world has known. It is reported that two-thirds of the Assyrian total population was killed during WWI (1914-1918).

In 1924 the Turkish army while massacring and harassing the remaining of the Assyrians in the southern Turkish region of Tur Abdin, forced thousands into mass deportation towards the Syrian frontier. Consequently, Assyrians in southern Turkey dwindled to only couple thousands due to persecution policies or the later Kurdish-Turkish bloody

conflict as the Assyrians were caught in the middle. Due to the above and other reasons directly related to the massacre of Assyrians in 1933 in Iraq by the Iraqi Army, other Assyrian settlements were established in Lebanon too. The Assyrian settlements in Iran, meanwhile, are of much earlier periods dating to pre-Christianity.

For some two millennia, the Assyrians have continued to form ethnic clusters confined to southern Turkey, northern Syria, northern Iraq, and northwestern Iran. But World War I changed the political and demographical shape of the region. Instability and continuous persecution against the Assyrians in the Middle East in the last 100 years have scattered the Assyrians in almost every continent of the world. They live in countries such as Iraq, Iran, Syria, Lebanon, Russia, Armenia, Jordan, Greece, Italy, Sweden, The Netherlands, France, Germany, England, Canada, USA, Australia, New Zealand, and many others, with the majority of the Diaspora Assyrians in the United States numbering some 250,000.

The nature of the Assyrian society is very complex. Today, they are living in isolated and separated communities due to circumstances beyond their control. The various Assyrian communities today are desperately searching to come together again as one people. Many reasons have fostered the creation of these isolated Assyrian Christian communities:

1. Theological controversies and debates rooted and developed in the 4th, 5th, and 6th centuries regarding the nature of Jesus and his relation to God and the Virgin Mary, created polarized Christian Centers in Antioch, Constantinople, Alexandria, Selucia-Ctesiphon, and others. This polarized the Assyrian Christians into various rival Christian sects.
2. The long Roman – Persian wars in early centuries of Christianity separated the Assyrians into two major communities, one under the Roman (west) and the other under the Sassanid Persians (east), each showing loyalty, whether willingly or reluctantly, to the ruling power they were living under.
3. The coming of western missionaries, specifically the Roman Catholic to the Assyrian region and the establishment of the Catholic rite among the Assyrians (also known as Chaldeans) fragmented the Assyrians yet further.

In time, and due to the above-mentioned reasons, the Assyrians came to be known by their ecclesiastical designations: the Nestorians (members of the Church of the East); Chaldeans (members who separated from the Church of the East and became Catholics); Jacobites (members of the Syriac Orthodox Church); and Melkites (Christians who refused Monophysitism and remained faithful to the Byzantine rite of Constantinople and mainly Catholic); and many others.

The Assyrians are an ethnic group separate from the Arabs, Kurds, Turks and the other groups in the Middle East. The Assyrians are born into their ethnicity. The Assyrians' unique racial background determines their unique ethnicity. The Assyrians' ethnicity is focused upon their race and Christian religion; both go hand in hand.

Brief Description and Reasons of Early Settlements

Early Assyrian settlers began to arrive in the United States during the last part of the 19th century. The Assyrian settlers of the San Joaquin Valley came mainly from northwestern Iran (Urmia region) as early as 1910 but the migration increased due to the genocide committed against them before, during and after World War I by the Turks, Kurds and Persians Moslems. The Assyrian Christian migration continued throughout the 20th century with peak points during and post WWI and WWII and after other specific political and religious upheavals specially after the Ba'ath Pan-Arab Party took power in Iraq in 1968 and the Islamic Revolution in Iran in 1979.

According to Smith, the reasons for the Assyrian Christian migration from the Middle East could be generally speaking classified under three categories: family, politics and religion. [1] A good percentage of Assyrians did not come to the San Joaquin Valley directly from the Middle East. They came from Chicago, San Francisco and other American cities. Some came from Canada. Smith's study showed that one-third of the Assyrians polled have lived in the United States for over ten years before moving to Stanislaus County. [2] Almost half of the Assyrians polled stated that family was the reason why they moved to Stanislaus County, another 25% did so because of the existence of the noticeable Assyrian community and some 20% gave the climate as their reason. [3]

Early Settlers

Dr. Isaac Adams, an Assyrian Medical Missionary, had begun to plan to settle in California, as early as 1902. In that year, he wrote to Sacramento for the availability of land for settlement but the answer came negative from the authorities. Then he contacted the Canadians and was told that a settlement in North Battleford was possible. Dr. Adams thereafter brought a group of Assyrians from Urmia to Canada. In 1906, Dr. Adams and few others moved to Chicago and it was there that he met an official from the Santa Fe Railroad, who recommended the San Joaquin Valley as a settlement area. [4] In 1910 he established an Assyrian colony in Turlock after his first attempt to settle in near by Delhi region had failed. His failure was due to a foul play by a real estate agent who gave the Assyrians the wrong picture regarding the true condition of the soil. The real estate agent did not tell the Assyrians that they did not have access to water for irrigation in that part of the valley. [5] Despite this set-back, Dr. Adams and few others including George Peter, Odisho Backus, Joseph Adams, and Sargis Hoobayar liked the climate of that part of California, which was similar to that of their homeland in Urmia, Iran, and thought that they could have better chances in near-by Turlock. In 1915, while the total population of Turlock reported being (1,500), there were ten Assyrian families living in Turlock. [6] "By 1921, the Assyrian community grew to a degree where an area south of Turlock proper became known as "little Urmia." [7] The Assyrians migration to the region was so noticeable that the Turlock Daily Journal published an article titled "Assyrian refugees, persecuted by the Turks, are coming to Turlock" in its issue of May 14, 1920.

The Assyrians During the Early to Mid 1900s

The Assyrian population continued to increase significantly. In 1930, 20% of the Turlock population was Assyrian; unfortunately, they still did not have adequate representation in the local political power. [8] This was not completely strange since as minorities in their original homelands the Assyrians were kept away from any participation in the local governments, therefore, they did not have the tools necessary to understand what the concept of representation in government meant and how important that was. Even after moving to the west, they continued to shy away from local politics. Most Assyrians concentrated, generally speaking, on living in peace and making an honest living. They worked year-around picking melons, tree-fruits; later pruning. Women picked grapes or worked seasonally in the canneries, cutting apricot and peaches. [9] It seems that many Assyrians began to purchase land and started farming during the early days of their settlements. The 1926 Stanislaus County Rancher's Directory contained forty-four Assyrian surnames. The size of the Assyrian farms ran from five to forty-two acres. [10] Most planted alfalfa and fruit trees such as grapes, melons, peaches, beans and they raised Turkeys and Chickens. The 1931 Stanislaus County Rancher's Directory listed sixty-five Assyrian surnames, totaling some (320) people, and they were mainly small or medium family farmers. [11] The depression of the 1930s forced some Assyrians to sell their farms, while others found work in San Francisco to pay for their mortgages. Those remaining helped each other by joining forces in order to survive.

The Depression of the 1930s slowed the Assyrian migration to Turlock considerably. The Assyrians population from 1930 to 1940 increased by a mere seventy-two people, increasing from five hundred to five hundred seventy two. [12] The boom of the 1940s though allowed many Assyrians to buy back their farms, which they had lost during the Great Depression. In addition, Assyrians from Chicago began to move to Modesto-Turlock area and began to buy orchards and continued to be mainly farmers. [13] The 1950 Turlock-Modesto Polk's City Directory recorded a listing of (414) Assyrian surnames in the district or about (1656) total Assyrians. The Turlock Assyrians meanwhile consisted of (148) families, making about 8% of Turlock's population, working as farmers, business owners, professionals, clerics, skilled laborers and other professions. The breakdown of the Assyrians in the district, in 1950, is illustrated in the chart below. [14]

Town	Numbers
Turlock	148
Modesto	57
Unincorporated	161
Keyes	23
Hughson	17
Denair	5
Ceres	3
Total	414

There is a noticeable drop in the Assyrian population in the town of Turlock from the 20% in 1930 to 8% in 1950. This is due to the increase in Turlock's overall population to the whopping (6,800) people and the move of some Assyrians from Turlock to Modesto, Keyes, Hughson and other areas in the district. During this period the Assyrians continued to be absent from managerial or executive positions whether in private or public offices, with one exception of Mary Shimmon. She was the 1927 Turlock High School graduating class Valedictorian who later became a lawyer and the Stanislaus County Deputy District Attorney. In addition, she held the position of the Counsel for the California State Dept. of Employment. [15]

Despite the considerable success of some Assyrians with farming in the region, discrimination was an issue they had to learn how to deal with in the early years of their settlement. The Swedes who made the majority of the Turlock groups in the 1920s looked down at the Assyrians. Some stores would not sell farming equipments to the Assyrians or some banks refused Assyrians' loan applications. Other problems arose when a couple Swedish girls in the Presbyterian Church fell in love with Assyrian boys. The Assyrians, who attended the church at the time, with the absence of an Assyrian church, were kicked out of the church because of these relationships and hence forced to retreat in to isolation. [16]

This non-friendly behavior motivated the Assyrians to begin to plan to build their own church. They began to raise money and decided to establish an independent, non-denominational Evangelical Assyrian church. Joseph Adams donated seven lots and a few Assyrian contractors in San Francisco like Paul Karib, Aprim of Kossi and Eshaya Aveetar among others donated generously for building the church. The decision was to build a hall first, which could nicely be used to conduct the Sunday service in and at the same time use it for other purposes such as weddings and special gatherings. They decided to build a typical church structure later. But it was not until 1948 though that the real church was completed under the title of the Assyrian Evangelical Church. Today, the church is situated on 500 Morof street, Turlock, California 95382, and has over (300) member families. (Fig. 1)

One of the interesting incidents occurred when Dr. John Sergis, an Assyrian dentist from San Francisco, bought forty-three acres of land in Keyes for \$20,000 and moved in after he finished building his house on the property in 1925, but this is not the point. What is interesting to say is that his house was the first in the area to have tiled bathroom, which attracted the curiosity of many neighbors and they were dropping by to inspect it. [17]

On April 14, 1926, the Assyrians build a second church, The Assyrian Presbyterian Church. Today the church is located on 450 S. Palm, Turlock, California 95380. (Fig. 2) And late in the 1940s the number of the Assyrians from Iraq, who were members of the Church of the East, began to increase and donations began to be collected to built a church for them and thus the Mar Addai Assyrian Church of the East was consecrated in January 1950 by the Late Patriarch Mar Eshai Shimun. [18] Situated on Canal street, Turlock, California, and has some (450) family members. (Fig. 3)

At the same period, the thought of building an Assyrian club to host the Assyrians and their events began to materialize; hence, the Assyrian American Civic Club of Turlock was established in 1946, today situated at 2618 N. Golden State Blvd., Turlock, California, 95381. (Fig. 4) The Civic Club today has over (1,200) family members and is involved in many Assyrian civic and national activities. Such activities include the Assyrian Martyr Day (on August 7th) in commemoration of the Assyrians massacred during the 20th century, and the Assyrian New Year (on April 1st). (Fig. 5) It worth mentioning here that the Assyrian year of 6751 is equivalent to the 2001 Gregorian year. The club in addition has a beautiful national choir and orchestra under the name the Nabouram Assyrian National Choir and Orchestra. The Choir and Orchestra have twenty-five and fourteen members respectively under the direction of maestro Alexander Shoorra Michalian. Nabouram promotes Assyrian culture and heritage through concerts conducted throughout the United States. (Figs. 6,7)

Assyrians in More Recent History

By the 1960s the Assyrian population doubled according to Smith. Polk's Stanislaus County Directory gave (253) Assyrian surnames, meaning over (1000) Assyrians in the county, many living in urban locations. [19] Need to make clear here that the Polk figures do not reflect the total population of the Assyrians rather the farm owners only. Since many Assyrians had left the farming business at this time, the (253) figure in the Polk 1960 reflects the natural decrease from the (414) Assyrian farm owners in the 1950. Many second generation Assyrians had begun to seek non-farming jobs and moved to Modesto or few moved to Ceres. These Assyrians were intent on getting accepted as Americans and were less interested in the maintenance of Assyrian ethnic identity. [20] These second generation Assyrians, wrote Smith, began to join non-Assyrian churches since they did not understand the Syriac language and did not relate to the non-western aspects of the service. [21] These were natural consequences to the early discrimination their parents had witnessed in the valley. They needed to break the Assyrian isolation of their parents whether due to those discrimination practices or language barriers. Still, Assyrians have begun to have some impact in the political arena. An Assyrian was elected as a County Supervisor and served for two terms in the 1960s. Other Assyrians began to hold positions in local political offices.

At this time, the Catholic Assyrians (i.e. Chaldeans) increased and accordingly the Assyrian Chaldean Catholic Church was established in May 24, 1964, situated on 2901 North Berkeley Ave., Turlock, California 95382, and has about (350) family members today. (See Fig. 8)

By 1970 Assyrians in the San Joaquin Valley experienced a change in profile, wrote Ishaya. The Assyrians were no longer practicing family farming. They were engaged in urban occupations instead. As powerful non-local agricultural businesses moved in, they provided opportunities for wage work. Family farmers, who could not compete with corporate operations, sold out and took up urban occupations. [22] It was not surprising to notice that the 1970s Assyrian working class in Turlock for example increased compared to the 1950 figures.

Below are the owned businesses, professionals, clerical jobs or sales and skilled labors categories of the two periods. [23]

Occupational Profile	1950	1970
Owned Business in town	18	20
Professional	8	23
Clerical and Sales	17	31
Skilled labor	13	41

In April 1974 the Bet Nahrain Inc., an Assyrian organization dedicated to Assyrian educational and cultural activities, was established. The organization, in addition, promotes national awareness among the Assyrian people. The organization succeeded soon after in establishing a radio and later a TV station (AssyriaVision) broadcasting programs in Syriac, also known as the Neo-Aramaic (the Assyrian’s mother tongue), and in English. The Station is supposed to be linked to the Satellite system in February 2002 and hence it will be seen worldwide. The organization is involved in many social and cultural activities just as that of the Civic Club and it does hold through its TV programming telethons for raising funds for various Assyrian related projects. The Assyrian Cultural Center of Bet-Nahrain is located at 3119 South Central Ave., Ceres, California 95307. (Fig. 9)

The 1975 special census indicated that in Turlock the Assyrians were the third largest ethnic group after the Mexican-Americans and the Portuguese. [24] In the 1980s, Assyrians had large investments in commercial and residential property in Turlock. Assyrian real estate agents confirmed that some twelve Assyrians had assets worth one million or more. An Assyrian family owned a whole block of a residential property in down town Turlock. One real-estate firm owned a block of business property on Main Street. The firm belongs to the heirs of Bob Abraham, the first Assyrian businessman who started a hamburger and hot dog stand on the above street in the early 1920s. [25] Although very few Assyrians ventured into business in early settlement periods yet as the number of Assyrian immigrants increased in the San Joaquin Valley, businesses owned by Assyrians increased accordingly. In 1985 there were some ninety-one Assyrian owned businesses in the Turlock-Modesto area ranging from restaurants, auto dealers, repair shops, groceries, gas stations, real estate agencies, beauty shops, jewelers, tailors and many others. [26]

To accommodate other Assyrians in the valley, the Assyrian Club of Orhai was established in 1989 on 2016 N. Central Rd., Modesto, California 95357 and it has close to (200) members today (Fig. 14). Furthermore, the Assyrian American Association of Modesto, which is still very young, was established too in the last few years.

We hear from older Assyrian residents in the valley that in the 1960s Assyrian church members had begun to dwindle seriously. We are told too that the Assyrian community feared that it would eventually decline in regards to ethnic identity and began to face a

dilemma. [27] As much as Assyrians love America and being Americans, at the same time they fear complete assimilation. The majority of the early Assyrian settlers of the 1920s and their heirs have indeed lost all ties to Assyrian culture, language and customs. The influx of the Assyrian immigrants and refugees in the 1970s brought new blood to the region; it revitalized ethnic identity in the community. Prior to this influx, Smith's study showed that 65% of the Assyrians polled were marrying non-Assyrians. If this trend continued, the researcher stated, the continuity of the Assyrian ethnicity in Stanislaus County would be questionable. [28] The percentage mentioned by Smith in 1981 would be completely revised in my opinion if the study were to be conducted today since a good percentage of the new Assyrian immigrants and refugees choose their marriage partners from within the Assyrian community. As far as language, Smith wrote, almost half of the first generation Assyrians spoke, read, and wrote Syriac, while none of the second generation was proficient in all the three aspects of the language, although many spoke it only. [29] The study finally showed that half of the second generation Assyrians at the time of the study in early 1980s in Stanislaus County did not attend Assyrian churches. [30] This issue has been addressed many times in Assyrian Church meetings. The sixty-four thousand dollars question continues to be what should the Church do in order to attract the Assyrian youth?

Still, some Assyrians continue to complain at times that more churches are needed as more immigrants and refugees continue to arrive and establish new communities in the valley. In 1991 the Mar Zaia Parish of the Assyrian Apostolic Catholic Church of the East was consecrated at 1457 Mable Ave. Modesto, California 95355. (Fig. 10) Its membership is not known today exactly, but it is stated that it might reach (100) families. And then the St. Mary Church was born on 7401 Fox Rd., Hughson, California 95326, with approximately (200) family members. (Fig. 15) And most recently in 1998 the Mar Giwargis (St. George) Parish of the Assyrian Apostolic Catholic Church of the East was consecrated at 3900 Brickett St. Ceres, California. Today, the St. George church has over (400) family members. (Fig. 11)

We have to admit that despite all the obstacles the Assyrians faced and the complete change of life style and environment, Assyrians have generally succeeded in adapting to their new home. Sarah Sergis Jackson and Victoria Yonan Nevils wrote:

“Indications are that the Assyrians have achieved what they were looking for in migrating to the United States; opportunity to develop their individual potential. Nothing really stands in the way of their doing so, unless it is whatever hampers anyone in this country, be he of long time native stock or of recent ethnic origin.” [31]

Many freelance writers in the valley have become interested in the Assyrians, their culture, language and way of life. Brenden Cassidy wrote about one Assyrian in an article for a Modesto publication where she said:

“Our family's friend Janet came to America from Iran in 1975. Some of her relatives from Turlock sponsored her and her family. Janet is 100% Assyrian ...Being a religious minority in their homeland has helped keep them together for 2000 years. Janet celebrates American and Assyrian holidays.” [32]

The Assyrians who have arrived very recently to the Stanislaus County as refugees have witnessed some of the most unpleasant and horrific experiences mankind has witnessed. Most of them have fled Iraq after the Gulf War or Iran after the Islamic Revolution. Many of them had stayed for years in poorly maintained and disease infected refugee camps mainly in Turkey. The Stanislaus County Refugee Health Program's staff has worked with these Assyrian refugees and has examined (218) refugees, in the span from fall of 2000 to April 2001, for parasites from contaminated water or food, or for tuberculosis that may have been spread in those crowded refugee camps. That was double the number examined for all of 1998. In fiscal year 1999, the staff examined (152) people and had a backlog of (101) more cases, said program's refugee coordinator, Roselyn Cunningham. [33] *“ ... The refugees are coming to Stanislaus County to join family in the growing Assyrian communities in Turlock, Modesto and Ceres, said Peter Kucher, who resettles families in the Modesto area for New York-based World Relief.” [34]*

These Assyrian refugees go through different adjustment process to their new life in the United States. This process is very difficult and especially in the first years, depending on their socioeconomic status, age, educational background and their knowledge of the English language. The previous factors influence in addition their social interaction with other ethnic groups. [35] Studies had shown that the process of migration effect these refugees directly as they develop various psychological problems such as panic attacks, social phobia, and PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder). [36]

“...The refugees, according to Baskauskas, L. (1981) and Loizos, P. (1981), pass through three stages: conservatism, a defensive element to maintain the past; bereavement and anger for the irretrievable losses; and, moving on beyond one's loss to develop new patterns of life.” [37]

Most of heads of families experience harder times in the process of adjustment. But they learn how to adjust and adapt to the new life, with very few exceptions. One of the most important reasons is the well-being and safety of family members, mainly spouse and children that become more important to them. [38] Treatments for these eastern refugees in the west are, unfortunately, culturally biased or insensitive in general and do not take into consideration their unique background.

Badal stated: *“These refugees may have limited resources to deal with their stressors, but their extended family, self defense mechanisms, and cultural and community support may provide some immunity against persistent and long-term emotional disorders.” [39]*

Having experienced a culture shock, i.e. lost everything on their way to their new home in the west, the Assyrians feel that preserving social and cultural identity could provide self-esteem, security, purpose and a mean for a better life. A sense of identity and purpose therefore is very essential for Assyrians, which explain their strong tie to their culture despite their financial or health conditions. [40] Many portray this behavior of semi-isolation as a rejection or dislike for the new culture and life style, which is not the case at all. The Assyrians value the opportunity given to them to have a better life and most importantly the freedom they experience as American citizens. They understand that the USA is the land in which dreams come true. The Assyrians had to learn how to walk that thin line where they can be successful and good American citizens yet still preserve their unique Assyrian culture, language, customs and identity. And if there is one country in which Assyrians could make that dream come true, then it is in the United States of America.

Although the Assyrians are a distinct ethnic group, they still believe and act as part of the larger fabric of the American society. The Assyrians try to facilitate and promote greater interaction with the society at large to have a better understanding, respect and harmony among all various ethnic groups in the region. In that respect, the Assyrians donated on April 24, 1999, through the renowned Assyrian Food and Wine expert Narsai David, a bust of the Assyrian King Ashurbanipal to the Vasche Library of the California State University, Stanislaus. (Fig. 12) King Ashurbanipal had of course established the first library in the world in the Assyrian capital of Nineveh during the 7th century BC. Furthermore, they had started, with the cooperation of the local school district, special Syriac language classes held at the Turlock High School for anybody who is interested to learn the language of the Assyrians. (Fig. 13) In accordance with that same purpose, the Assyrians hold annual Food Festivals at the Assyrian Cultural Center of Bet-Nahrain where literature about the Assyrians is made available and special Assyrian food is enjoyed while typical Assyrian music and dance are played and performed.

Today, the San Joaquin Valley (Turlock, Modesto, Ceres, Manteca and the neighboring towns) is the home for some (15,000) Assyrians. It is a bustling Assyrian community with seven churches, four clubs, and youth and adult cultural groups, in addition to various athletic teams and much more. Assyrians have available to them many hours of TV and radio broadcasting whether via public or private enterprises. Many Assyrian youth attend local and remote universities and go on to become prominent citizens in the community. The Assyrians are part of almost every business in the San Joaquin Valley. They are the lawyer, engineer, teacher, professor, technician, car dealer, farmer, real estate agent or broker, insurance agent, hair stylist, restaurant owner, doctor, nurse, convenient storeowner, artist, gas station owner, and others. Among the Assyrians today, there are those who live an average life and those who had become millionaires and live lavishly. They all work together to make their community a better place to live.

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