

The Gentle American



The Gentle American

**George Horton's Odyssey
and His True Account of the Smyrna Catastrophe**

By

Ismini Lamb

Christopher Lamb



2022

Gorgias Press LLC, 954 River Road, Piscataway, NJ, 08854, USA

www.gorgiaspress.com

2022 Copyright © by Gorgias Press LLC

All rights reserved under International and Pan-American Copyright Conventions. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, scanning or otherwise without the prior written permission of Gorgias Press LLC.

2022

,



ISBN 978-1-4632-4449-1

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

A Cataloging-in-Publication Record is available at the
Library of Congress.

Printed in the United States of America

*This book is dedicated to Nancy Horton, who so fervently
wanted the truth about her father made known,
and to the victims of persecution anywhere
regardless of race, creed, or color, in keeping
with George Horton's life work.*

EPIGRAPH

The Greek soldiers had all been gone five days, and the problem of maintaining order among the frightened and helpless inhabitants was the same as would confront a pack of wolves in a sheepfold.

George Horton,
on the Turkish occupation of Smyrna, 1922

The tyrant can always find an excuse for his tyranny. The unjust will not listen to the reasoning of the innocent.

Aesop,
the morals of his fable, “The Wolf and the Lamb,” (c. 620–564 B.C.)

AUTHORS’ NOTE: Before reading the Prologue, readers may want to watch an eleven minute, 1922 film from the British Pathé news agency on the burning of Smyrna. It incorrectly notes the fire spread to the Turkish section of the city, but depicts how the conflagration developed and spread over the course of the day and into the night. It is available on YouTube at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-6YYy9PAee8>. YouTube also features other short films of Smyrna before, during and after the fire.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Epigraph.....	v
List of Illustrations	vii
Preface.....	xv
Key Figures in the Biography.....	xix
Abbreviations and Foreign (or Antiquated) Terms.....	xxi
Towns Mentioned in the Biography (1922 and today).....	xxiii
 Prologue: The Saddest Man in Smyrna	 1
Chapter One: Smyrna, The Mecca of His Ambitions.....	17
Chapter Two: The Great War Comes to Smyrna	51
Chapter Three: George, Germans, and Genocide.....	79
Chapter Four: On the Frontlines in Salonica.....	109
Chapter Five: The Real King of Smyrna.....	143
Chapter Six: The War of Words with Bristol.....	167
Chapter Seven: “Normalcy” During Crisis	193
Chapter Eight: Prelude to Catastrophe.....	223
Chapter Nine: Smyrna’s Demise, The Greeks Leave	253
Chapter Ten: Smyrna’s Demise, The Turks Arrive	277
Chapter Eleven: Remonstrations in Athens	309
Chapter Twelve: Revelation in Washington.....	335
Chapter Thirteen: The Vote.....	365
Epilogue: A Life Worth Living.....	397
 Acknowledgements	 419
Selected Bibliography: George Horton Biography	423
Notes	439
Index.....	509

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Figure 1. George Horton, about the time he left for service in the Ottoman Empire. Courtesy of George Horton Papers, Georgetown University.	xii
Figure 2. Map of Greece and Anatolia with cities of note. Courtesy of Melissa Sung, Gorgias Press.	xiii
Figure 3. Map of Greek administrative area, including Smyrna and surrounding towns of note, 1922. Courtesy of Melissa Sung, Gorgias Press.	xiv
Figure 4. Map of Smyrna. Courtesy of George Poulimenos.	3
Figure 5. Desperate refugees swamp a boat. Courtesy of the Naval History and Heritage Command.	6
Figure 6. Ottoman Greeks mourning deaths of loved ones. From U.S. National Archives, Record Group 353, Roll 55.	10
Figure 7. George Horton's parents, Peter Davis and Mary Sophia. Courtesy of George Horton Papers, Georgetown University.	11
Figure 8. 1903 Saturday Evening Post cover highlighting Horton's latest novel. Public Domain.	13
Figure 9. George Horton in Salonica. Courtesy of George Horton Papers, Georgetown University.	18
Figure 10. Panoramic view of Smyrna. Courtesy of Levantine Heritage Foundation.	20
Figure 11. George behind Catherine, sitting next to Nica holding baby Nancy. Courtesy of George Horton Papers, Georgetown University.	28
Figure 12. U.S. consulate in Smyrna. Top: illustration by Nika Sacopoulo in <i>The Blight of Asia</i> ; Bottom, postcard, courtesy of Levantine Heritage Foundation.	38
Figure 13. Rue Galazio viewed from the quay with the high sporting club on the left and the American consulate partially hidden behind it further back. Courtesy of Akylla Milla.	46
Figure 14. Cropped version of "Hellenism in the Near East: an Ethnological Map compiled from the latest statistics by Professor George Soteriadis of the University of Athens," 1918; in the public domain.	58
Figure 15. Rahmi Bey. Courtesy of Levantine Heritage Foundation, the Guiffroy family, and Mr. Le Hemonet.	65

Figure 16. British map depicting wartime operations against Smyrna. From "The Graphic," March 13, 1915.....	69
Figure 17. Rev. Brett's St. John the Evangelist Church. Courtesy of Levantine Heritage Foundation.....	72
Figure 18. View of Smyrna quay and one-horse trolley. Notice the Kraemer hotel (just above the trolley) where Walter Geddes died. Courtesy of Library of Congress.	84
Figure 19. Map of the Armenian Genocide in 1915. www.armenica.org , CC BY-SA 3.0 < http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/ >, via Wikimedia Commons.....	87
Figure 20. General Liman Von Sanders. Courtesy of George Horton Papers, Georgetown University.....	100
Figure 21. George Horton on consulate's terrace in Smyrna. Courtesy of George Horton Papers, Georgetown University.	104
Figure 22. Salonica fire. Left to right: Italian officer, Jewish civilian, Russian officer, Serbian officer, Greek officer, British Tommy, Italian soldier, native, British officer. Courtesy of George Horton Papers, Georgetown University.....	112
Figure 23. Salonica waterfront during WWI with captured German plane brought down by French aviators on display. U.S. consulate not far from the bottom right of the picture. National Geographic, September 1916...	117
Figure 24. Signed photo of General Louis Franchet D'Esperey to George Horton. Courtesy of George Horton Papers, Georgetown University.....	126
Figure 25. Greek statesman Eleftherios Venizelos and King Constantine of Greece confer in Salonica. National Geographic, September 1916.....	130
Figure 26. Map of General D'Esperey's successful offensive that ended WWI. Courtesy of Melissa Sung, Gorgias Press.	132
Figure 27. Dr. Eugenie Flood Keyes and Dr. Mabel Flood in their Monastir hospital assisting a local Serbian woman with an ear problem. Courtesy of the Red Cross and Library of Congress.	138
Figure 28. Smyrniotes watch from the Sporting Club as the Greek fleet arrives in Smyrna. Courtesy of Levantine Heritage Foundation.....	145
Figure 29. Greek army marching along quay in Smyrna, 1919. Courtesy of Wikimedia Commons.....	146
Figure 30. On the left in a suit is Greek High Commissioner Aristidis Stergiadis. To his immediate right is Greek army commander Leonidas Paraskevopoulos. Courtesy of Wikimedia Commons.	151
Figure 31. Itinerary of President's Wilson's fact-finding missions to Anatolia. Courtesy of the Naval Institute Press.	153
Figure 32. A Turkish hamal in Constantinople. National Geographic, June 1922.....	165

Figure 33. USS Scorpion, Admiral Bristol's yacht. Courtesy of George Horton Papers, Georgetown University.	177
Figure 34. Battleship Lemnos salutes arrival of Admiral Bristol in Smyrna, 1919. Courtesy of the Naval History and Heritage Command.	177
Figure 35. Admiral Mark L. Bristol. Courtesy of Library of Congress.	178
Figure 36. George's Horton's calling card in Smyrna, 1919, indicating he was a delegate representing Bristol. Courtesy of George Horton Papers, Georgetown University.	182
Figure 37. Photos and notations on the back sent by George Horton in his April 22, 1920, cable. Top: destroyed farm; bottom: Turks with camels returning to Pergamo. National Archives, Record Group 443, Roll 18.	188
Figure 38. Map depicting designated Allied administrative zones and series of Greek military advances against Kemal's Nationalists. CC BY-SA 3.0 < http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/ >, via Wikimedia Commons.	198
Figure 39. Map depicting the results of the Treaty of Sevres. Courtesy of Wikimedia Commons.	201
Figure 40. Photo that Venizelos autographed and gave to George Horton. Courtesy of George Horton Papers, Georgetown University.	202
Figure 41. Nancy Horton on the terrace of the U.S. Consulate holding pet rabbit and next to the family pet, Tyi. Stacks of the Lemnos are visible in the background. Courtesy of George Horton Papers, Georgetown University.	213
Figure 42. A one horse trolley on the quay photographed by George Horton, apparently as he sat in a café. Courtesy of George Horton Papers, Georgetown University.	217
Figure 43. Maynard Barnes, George Horton and Wallace Treat visiting Colophon excavations in early May, 1922. Courtesy of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens, Archives, Carl W. Blegen papers.	235
Figure 44. Picture from consulate terrace of Smyrniotes demonstrating in appreciation of Lloyd George after his speech in the House of Commons; excerpt on right is an enlargement of one of the banners. Courtesy of George Horton Papers, Georgetown University.	248
Figure 45. Picture of Lloyd George demonstration from street level. Courtesy of George Horton Papers, Georgetown University.	250
Figure 46. Top: Greek deportations Mark Ward documented; courtesy of Aris Tsilfidis, Greek Genocide Resource Center. Bottom: Assyrian/Chaldean/Syriac genocide; courtesy of Wikimedia Commons.	251
Figure 47. George Horton with Tyi in what might be the Adamopoulos garden. Courtesy of George Horton Papers, Georgetown University.	254
Figure 48. Catherine Horton in garden with Tyi. Courtesy of George Horton Papers, Georgetown University.	255

Figure 49. Map of Smyrna and locations of major American buildings. Courtesy of Naval Institute Press.	260
Figure 50. The Greek cavalry leaving Smyrna in September 1922. Courtesy of Wikimedia Commons.	273
Figure 51. Turkish cavalry on the quay entering Smyrna. Courtesy of Achilleas Chatziconstantinou.	278
Figure 52. Chrysostomos Kalafatis, the Greek Orthodox Metropolitan Bishop of Smyrna, and Abdurrahman Nouredin, Turkish military commander of Smyrna. Courtesy of Wikimedia Commons.	283
Figure 53. Men being picked out from among the refugees for deportation to the interior. Courtesy of National Geographic, November 1925.	293
Figure 54. American sailors rescuing a woman from the sea who entered the water in evening dress. Courtesy of the Naval History and Heritage Command.	298
Figure 55. Refugees on deck of an American destroyer. Courtesy of George Horton Papers, Georgetown University.	306
Figure 56. HMS Iron Duke with burning Smyrna behind it. Courtesy of Wikimedia Commons.	308
Figure 57. A woman seeking the names of her loved ones on the daily lists of the lost and found that George Horton had posted. Courtesy of National Geographic, November 1925.	311
Figure 58. Refugees inhabit the box seats of the Royal Opera House in Athens. Courtesy of National Geographic, November 1925.	313
Figure 59. The wall of humanity left on the Smyrna quay after the fire. Courtesy of Library of Congress.	322
Figure 60. Turks fish for bodies in Smyrna harbor, hoping to find valuable items. Courtesy of National Geographic, November 1925.	325
Figure 61. Tents pitched for refugees near the Temple of Hephaestus, a 5 th Century B.C. temple in Athens. Courtesy of Library of Congress.	328
Figure 62. American relief supplies flood into Smyrna after the fire. Courtesy of Library of Congress.	333
Figure 63. An oblong gold coin of Croesus, with the lion facing the bull. Courtesy of Heritage Auctions, HA.com.	336
Figure 64. On left, Eliza Shahinian, courtesy of <i>The Bridgepoint Times and Evening Farmer</i> , from the Library of Congress; on right, an Anatolian Greek girl, one of the millions of Christian refugees, Courtesy of National Geographic, November 1925.	343
Figure 65. Allen Dulles, second from the left, chief of the Near East Division of the Department of State meeting with an attache and engineers from the Near East. Courtesy of Library of Congress.	347

Figure 66. Burned remains of U.S. consulate in Smyrna. Courtesy of Levantine Heritage Foundation.....	349
Figure 67. During and after WWI, the Department of State was housed next to the White House in the Old Executive Office Building, then called the State, War, and Navy Building. Photo from 1917; Courtesy of Wikimedia Commons.	351
Figure 68. Vice Consul Maynard Barnes at the time of his promotion, from his personnel file.....	355
Figure 69. Excerpts from Maynard Barnes' October 9, 1923, personnel evaluation addressing his relationship with Adm. Bristol and naval officers.....	361
Figure 70. George Horton gives a speech in Budapest on July 1, 1924 in honor of George Washington. Courtesy of George Horton Papers, Georgetown University.	369
Figure 71. The Turkish delegation at Lausanne; Ismet Bey, first row, in the middle, fourth from left. Courtesy of Wikimedia Commons.....	373
Figure 72. George Horton on Greek island during his retirement years. Courtesy of George Horton Papers, Georgetown University.....	398
Figure 73. George, Nancy and Catherine under cherry trees, presumably near the tidal basin in Washington, D.C. where they used to picnic. Courtesy of George Horton Papers, Georgetown University.	402
Figure 74. The Horton family at Voula, Greece, just southeast of Athens. From left to right: Nancy, Olga, Walter, Catherine, Nika and George. Courtesy of George Horton Papers, Georgetown University.	404
Figure 75. George and Nancy Horton share a quiet moment at Voula, Greece. Courtesy of George Horton Papers, Georgetown University.....	404
Figure 76. George Horton in retirement. Courtesy of George Horton Papers, Georgetown University.....	406
Figure 77. George Horton statue in Nea Smyrni, Athens, Greece. Courtesy of George Horton Papers, Georgetown University.	408
Figure 78. George Horton contemplating the tomb of Saint Polycarp. Courtesy of George Horton Papers, Georgetown University.	417

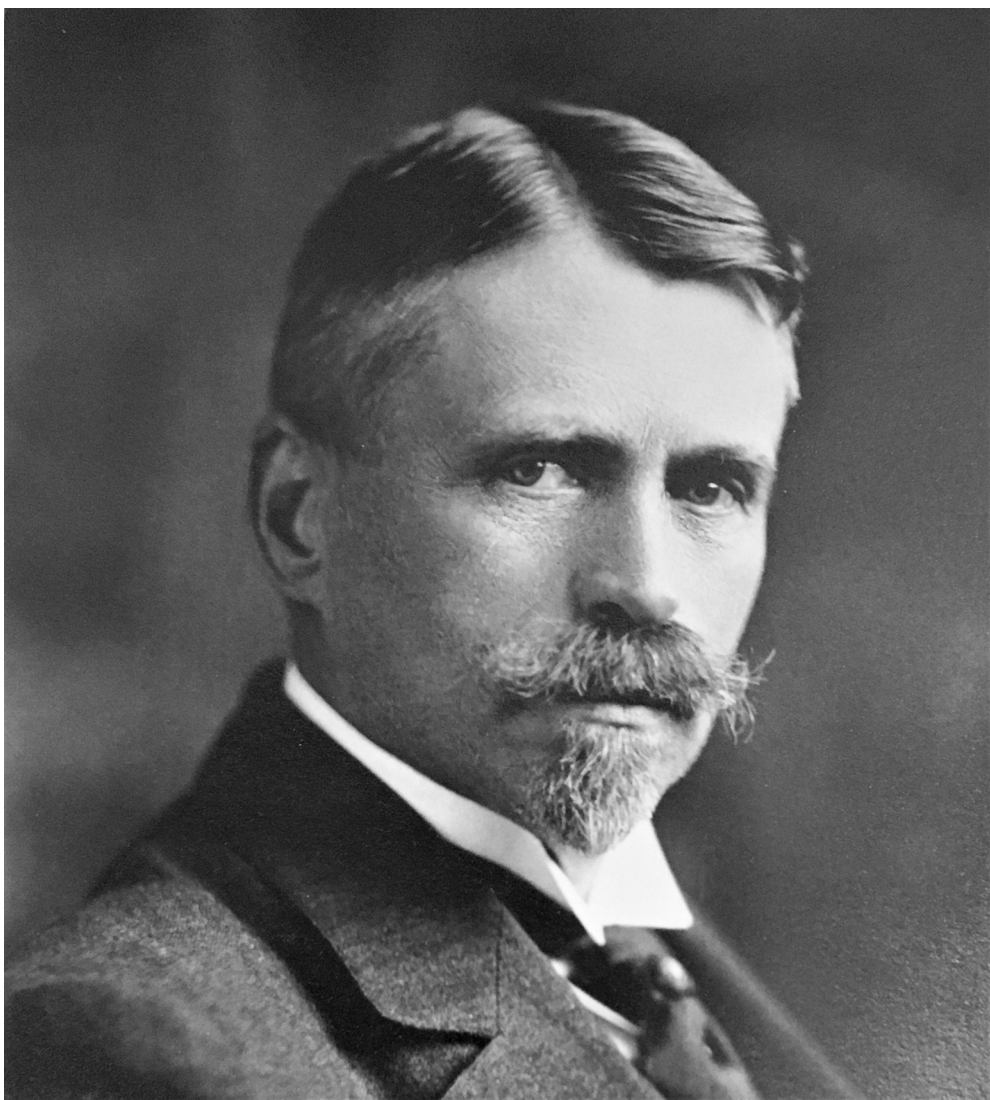


Figure 1. George Horton, about the time he left for service in the Ottoman Empire. Courtesy of George Horton Papers, Georgetown University.

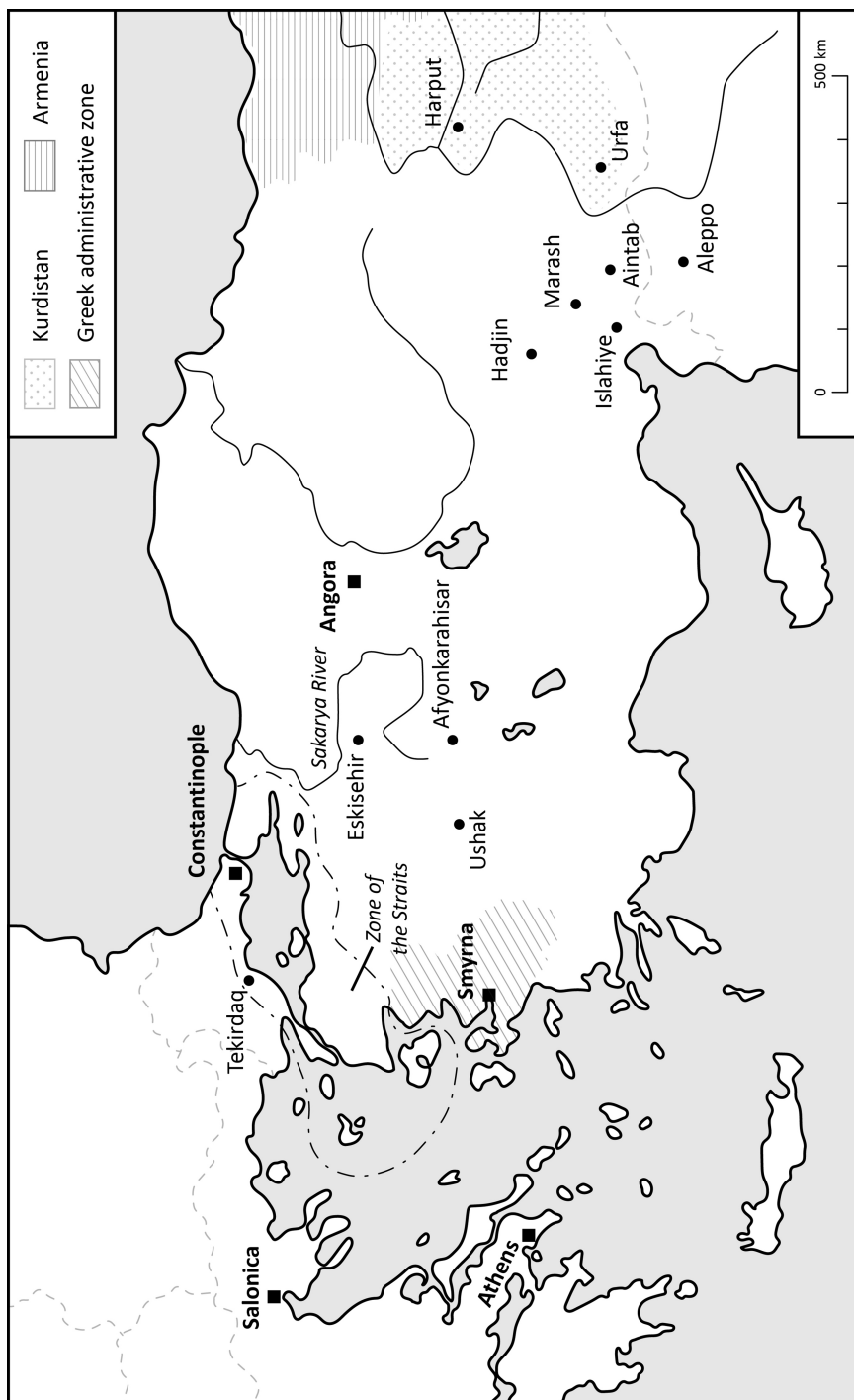


Figure 2. Map of Greece and Anatolia with cities of note.
Courtesy of Melissa Sung, Gorgias Press.



Figure 3. Map of Greek administrative area, including Smyrna and surrounding towns of note, 1922. Courtesy of Melissa Sung, Gorgias Press.

PREFACE

In retrospect it seems a miracle this book came to fruition, beginning with how the project began. On Mother's Day weekend in 2013, I was sitting in a wonderful Italian restaurant in Manhattan, New York. Best friends were visiting from Greece and other friends from my years at Georgetown University were also there. One person was close with Ann Marie Pitkin, the wife of George Horton's great grandson. She told us the Horton estate was looking for a biographer. I knew a little about Horton, the American consul in Smyrna when the city was sacked and burned by Kemal's Nationalists in 1922, but not much. When my friends suggested I should write the biography, I scoffed. They reasoned I could do it because I taught Modern Greek language and culture at Georgetown. I reasoned they were nuts. I love teaching but have not done much scholarly research and writing. Besides, I was busy with my program and students and anxious to do a second year of study as a C.S. Lewis fellow.

But Monday, back in Washington, D.C., I received a call from Ann Marie. "Just come see the Horton papers" at the family's residence, she said. In response to her prodding, I went. After a few hours surveying Horton's personal diaries, journals, correspondence, draft chapters of memoirs and his daughter's draft biography, I was telling myself the book would practically write itself. Nine years later I often think back to that moment and wonder how I could have been so astoundingly naive. If I had known then the amount of sacrifice the project would demand, I do not believe I would have agreed to do it.

There was a tell-tale sign of how difficult it would be amidst all the Horton papers. In the correspondence I discovered there had been many previous attempts to write a George Horton biography. Nancy Horton, George's third daughter, dedicated much of her life to that goal. She tried to write one herself, and when that did not work out, encouraged others to do so. No one succeeded. Perhaps they learned how varied, full, and complicated his life was, or how daunting it is to accurately recreate the life experience of anyone born almost two centuries ago, even when you are well-armed with personal papers, online databases, and draft products. It took innumerable long nights, weekends, holidays, summers, and the help of many others to produce a manuscript (see the acknowledgements!). But, not knowing that, I bought books on biography, mulled it over for a week or so, and offered to give it my best shot subject to a couple of provisos.

First, I wanted unfettered authority to write whatever I found to be true. I had no intention of writing a hagiography. I proposed a narrative biography based on

the facts and Horton's own words. I do not like psychobiography where the authors intuit a subject's thoughts and words. I wanted Horton to speak for himself, especially since he had left behind such a great amount of personal material. Anything with quotes in this book is an accurate depiction of what Horton or other characters wrote or said; not something I inferred they would likely say. I should also note that we tried hard to avoid the trap of "presentism;" that is, imposing present-day attitudes on those living in a previous century. Reading newspapers and articles from long ago underscores how much social mores have changed, but we let the historical characters speak for themselves while avoiding unnecessarily offensive words. Last, I wanted ready access to the Horton papers, so I asked that they be donated to the special collections at Georgetown University's Lauinger Library. The Horton estate agreed to all these conditions, and the adventure began. It went on for nine long years, with every waking moment dominated by what my husband began to refer to as "Hortonitis."

Speaking of my husband, a word about my coauthor is in order. He began by insisting "this is your project" and casting amused glances in my direction as I sat partially hidden by stacks of documents, pouring over them with great concentration and little effect. But I had the last laugh. He too came down with Hortonitis and soon was making much appreciated recommendations. Eventually he was involved in everything. His years of experience in the Department of State, the Department of Defense, and research institutes were invaluable. All my friends and family know he is the reason this book materialized. Moreover, it soon became clear that the sheer volume of work required was beyond one person's capabilities.

We began by thinking the primary value of the biography would be to reveal Horton's true character, resolving the long-standing issue of whether he had an "anti-Turk" bias as some sources on his Wikipedia page claim. However, the more we discovered, the more we wanted to learn. We traveled to Chicago and Grass Valley, California in the United States, to Athens, Poros, and Thessaloniki in Greece, and to Izmir, Turkey and Rapallo, Italy for on-site research. We took over 9,000 screenshots of documents at the U.S. National Archives. The project ballooned into a thirty-three chapter, cradle-to-grave tome. Today our computer tells me we have more than 2,500 folders and 57,000 individual files on Horton. I would be embarrassed to share how many pages of manuscript we have produced while recording his life adventures.

But, in the end, we knew how a bright Michigan farm boy grew up studying the classics, developed skills and ideals that enabled him to succeed, and then realized his lifelong dream of visiting Greece. We discovered how much Horton's character was shaped by his difficult relationship with his father, who torpedoed his dreams and cancelled his first love. We learned how he made his way alone to Chicago almost penniless, and within five years became a nationally known poet and editor whose progressive political sentiments earned him an appointment as American consul in Athens, and how five years after that, he had elevated himself as America's most prominent expert on modern Greeks, mastering their language and customs and

sharing Hellenic culture in popular books that made him an internationally celebrated author. We uncovered the details of the personal tragedy in Chicago that destroyed his family, sidetracked his literary career, and forced him to reinvent himself as a scholar and professional diplomat.

As years passed, I began to fear the Horton estate was giving up hope. They never said so, but I could not have blamed them. We were tempted to give up too. What kept us going were the “eureka” moments; those sudden discoveries of what no one else knew. I do not mean the plethora of previously unknown details about Horton’s life. There is not much information in the public domain about him, so every poem, article, letter, and diary entry we examined was a “new find” of sorts. I mean the big “eureka” moments when we found something that challenged existing historiography and corrected previous scholarship. Those moments kept us grinding on, convinced the biography was going to make a significant contribution. When it was complete, our understanding of both world wars and the period between them had changed dramatically, and I am confident readers too will be surprised after learning what Horton knew and experienced.

With so much material, we had to prioritize. This portion of Horton’s story begins when he is transferred from one important Ottoman city, Salonica, to serve as the American consul general in another, even more important Ottoman city: Smyrna. Horton was fifty years old and well past his physical prime when he was assigned to the Ottoman Empire. Even so, over the next two decades he made his lasting mark on the world. He repeatedly helped Muslim, Jewish and Christian refugees, petitioners, and prisoners, directly by intervening on their behalf, and indirectly through aid programs he initiated. He carried out a long and acrimonious struggle with his superior in Constantinople, the American High Commissioner, Admiral Mark Bristol. Bristol facilitated Ottoman persecution of native Christians, disinformation, fake news, and a Department of State cover-up of genocide and ethnic cleansing. Horton fought him every step of the way.

I will state plainly that I lost respect for Bristol over the course of our research. For decades historians have treated Bristol as an accomplished champion of realism. More recently, his bigotry has tarnished his reputation. But what we discovered made us believe that for sheer boorishness and unscrupulous behavior, Bristol charted new territory in the annals of American diplomacy. He seems to us the perfect embodiment of the main protagonist in that classic work, *The Ugly American*, an irredeemably ethnocentric ambassador uninformed on his assigned country and region who was nonetheless loud and opinionated in the only language he could comprehend—his native English. More than that, Bristol said and did things that were jaw-droppingly immoral and sometimes manifestly stupid; or, depending on how his motives are assessed, invidiously duplicitous. Do not take our word for it; decide for yourselves based on Bristol’s own reports, correspondence, and actions.

Regardless of how readers assess Bristol, Horton’s long struggle with him helps demonstrate how fragile and variable U.S. foreign policy was between the two world wars. Prevailing American historiography for this period suffers from “hindsight

bias.” Most historians treat the inter-war years in the Near East as fixed by circumstances, as if there was no way to stop the genocides nor any alternative other than accepting Kemal’s Nationalists on whatever terms they offered. But Kemal’s triumph was closely contested and hung delicately in the balance. The same is true for American foreign policy in 1922. At a critical moment, when the Department of State was comparatively small, a few key people, including Horton and Bristol, had an outsized impact, shaping the course of history. It could have been much different, both worse and better. “If only....”

In sum, we believe Horton’s life experience reveals a great deal, and not just about Horton, but about Europe, the United States, and the Middle East. Among other things, readers will discover how World War I really ended in Europe, and how it never really ended in Turkey despite the armistice. Beyond these and other revelations, Horton’s story should give readers a new or renewed appreciation for why nations, like people, cannot avoid moral choices. The issues he contended with a century ago are still readily apparent in our own recent headlines. People and nations still have to decide whether to accept the role of the good Samaritan or avert their eyes, leaving a mass of victims to horrible fates.

Now you know how the book came to be, and why we believe it is important. Horton liked to say, “the truth will out,” and that nicely encapsulates our own modest hopes for this biography. It is out of our hands now. Readers will ultimately determine whether the book is considered a success or not. Meanwhile, if I am invited to dinner in Manhattan again, I will have to give it more careful consideration than last time—not to mention find a new husband.

Ismini Lamb
Springfield, Virginia
2022

KEY FIGURES IN THE BIOGRAPHY

Maynard Barnes	Vice consul in Smyrna when it burned.
James Barton	Chairman of Near East Relief, 1919-1930, head of American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions 1896-1927
Carabibber Bey	The Greek Secretary to the Governor-General, Rahmi Bey
Rahmi Bey	Ottoman Governor-General of Smyrna
Edward Bierstadt	Author of <i>The Great Betrayal</i>
Mark L. Bristol	U.S. High Commissioner in Constantinople
William Buckler	American diplomat on Paris Peace delegation
Howard Crosby Butler	Field director at Sardis excavations until August 1922
Edward Capps	Head of Red Cross mission to Greece, long-time chair of the managing committee of ASCSA; Ambassador to Greece, 1920
Mitchell Carroll	George Horton's best friend and literary executor, editor of <i>Art and Archaeology</i> , Secretary of the Archaeological Institute of America
Winston Churchill	British Minister of Munitions, 1917-1919, British Secretary of War, 1919-1921
Claflin Davis	The American Red Cross director in Constantinople
William P. Dortch	Vice consul in Smyrna and Salonica and manager of the Smyrna branch of the American Tobacco Company
Allen Dulles	Chief of the Near East division of the Department of State, 1922-1926
David Lloyd George	British Prime Minister, 1916-1922
Dana Getchell	Missionary in Smyrna
Warren G. Harding	President of the United States, 1921-1923
Samuel Ralph Harlow	Head of the Department of Sociology, International College, Smyrna, 1912-1915, 1919-1922
Arthur J. Hepburn	Admiral Bristol's Chief of Staff, 1922-1925
George Horton	American Consul General, Smyrna, 1911-1917, 1919-1922
Peter Davis Horton	Horton's father
Mary Sophia Horton	Horton's mother
Carrie Nichols	Horton's first wife
Georgia Horton	Carrie and George Horton's daughter

Katherine Bogart	Horton's second wife
Dorothy Horton	Katherine and George Horton's daughter
Catherine Sacopoulo	Horton's third wife
Nancy Horton	Catherine and George Horton's daughter
Ourania Sacopoulo	Catherine's mother
Charles Evans Hughes	U.S. Secretary of State, 1921-1925
Harold C. Jaquith	Director of Near East Relief in Constantinople
Mustapha Kemal	Leader of the Turkish nationalists, 1920-1922; President of Turkey, 1923-1938
Chrysostomos Kalafatis	Greek Orthodox metropolitan bishop of Smyrna, 1910-1914; 1919-1922.
Harry Lamb	British consul in Salonica and Smyrna
Caleb Lawrence	A missionary who worked multiple times assisting George with relief efforts; married to Grace Williamson's niece
Alexander MacLachlan	President of the International College of Smyrna
Henry Morgenthau	U.S. Ambassador to the Ottoman Empire, 1913-1916
Abdurrahman Nouredin	Turkish general during WWI, Governor-General of Smyrna, 1918-1919, Military Commander, Smyrna, 1922
James Loder Park	American vice consul in Smyrna when it burned
William Peet	Treasurer of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions in Turkey
Mark O. Prentiss	Impromptu special correspondent for the <i>New York Times</i>
Sappho	Greek poet who Horton said was more inspiring to him than any other human, c. 630 – c. 570 BC
Nika Sacopoulo	Catherine Horton's youngest sister
Olga Sacopoulo	Catherine Horton's younger sister
Theodore Leslie Shear	Field director at Sardis excavations after Howard Butler
Aristeidis Stergiadis	Greek High Commissioner of Smyrna, 1919-1922
The Three Pashas	Mehmed Talaat, Ismail Enver, and Ahmed Djemal, who ruled the Ottoman Empire from 1913 to 1918
Eleftherios Venizelos	Prime Minister of Greece, 1910-1915; 1917-1920
Charles Vickery	General Secretary, Near East Relief in New York
Otto Walter	Austrian archaeologist, husband of Olga Sacopoulo
Grace Williamson	A pro-Turk nurse and British subject who recorded her observations in an extensive diary
Woodrow Wilson	President of the United States, 1913-1921

ABBREVIATIONS AND FOREIGN (OR ANTIQUATED) TERMS

ABCFM	American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions
AHEPA	American Hellenic Educational Progressive Association
ASCSA	American School of Classical Studies at Athens
Bashi-bazouk	irregular Ottoman soldiers
Bluejackets	U.S. Navy enlisted personnel, frequently confused with U.S. Marines
Central Powers	originally Germany and Austria-Hungary, but later joined by the Ottoman Empire and Bulgaria
Chetas (chettahs, or Çetes)	another term used for Muslim irregulars and brigands.
CUP	Committee of Union and Progress
Dragoman	an interpreter, translator, guide and advisor
Entente (aka Triple Entente)	originally France, Russia and the United Kingdom, but later joined by many other countries and generally referred to as the allies
Gendarme	French term for police maintained by the national government
Giaour	Turkish for infidels
Hellenic Greeks	Greeks who lived in the Kingdom of Greece (as opposed to Ottoman Greeks)
Kavass (or cavass)	a uniformed, armed guard employed by foreign consulates in the Ottoman Empire
Konak	Ottoman city hall
Megali idea	Greek for the “big” idea that the Greeks in the Ottoman Empire ought to be liberated and united with Greece
Musselmen	Muslims
Quay (or quai)	a long seaside platform, path, dock, or wharf
Rayah	literally “members of the flock,” an Ottoman term for the lower classes, often referring to Ottoman Christian subjects who also were referred to as Rum or Rumları (Romans, i.e. Byzantines)
Rucksichtslos war	the German term for war without restraint
Smyrniotes	general term for inhabitants of Smyrna
Vali	Ottoman governor-general

Vilayet	Ottoman district or province with its own governor-general
YMCA	Young Men's Christian Association
YWCA	Young Women's Christian Association

TOWNS MENTIONED IN THE BIOGRAPHY (1922 AND TODAY)

1922

Aidin
Aintab
Aivali
Afyonkarahisar
Akhisar
Bergama (Pergamus, Pergamo)
Bornova (Bournabat)
Boudja (Buca)
Cesme (Chesme)
Christianochori
Colophon

Constantinople
Cordelio
Dikili (Dickili)
Develikeuy
Ephesus
Eskisehir
Hadjin
Harput
Islahiye
Koukloudja
Marash
Narli-Dere (Narly-Dere)
Nazli
Menemen
Odemish
Nymphion
Paradise
Pergamus (see Bergama)
Phocis (Focias, Fochias, Phocis, Phocaea)

Today

Aydin
Gaziantep
Ayvalik
Afyonkarahisar
Akhisar
Bergama
Bornova
Boudja
Cesme
Kadıköy (10 miles northeast of Bergama)
(Ancient site 20 miles south of Izmir on
Icarian coast)
Istanbul
Karsiyaka
Dikili
Derekoy
(Ancient site 30 miles south of Izmir)
Eskisehir
Saimbeyli
Elazig
Islahiye
Absorbed in modern Izmir
Kahramanmaras
Narlidere
Nazilli
Menemen
Odemis
Kemalpasa
Sirinyer (absorbed in modern Izmir)
Bergama
Foca

Salonica (Salonika, Saloniki)

Sardis

Sevdikeuy (Seydikoy, Seydiköy)

Sokia

Smyrna

Tepekioy

Tekirdaq

Urfa

Ushak

Vourla

Thessaloniki

Sart, near Salihli

Gaziemir

Soke

Izmir

Tepekoy

Tekirdag

Sanliurfa

Ushak

Urla

PROLOGUE:

THE SADDEST MAN IN SMYRNA

George Horton considered the possibility that the Turks would sack his beloved city. Sitting in the American consulate on *Rue Galazio*, in Smyrna, Turkey, he thought about his recent, vivid nightmare, in which he saw the city aflame. He had seen the results of massacres and the prospect was chilling to contemplate. He was nearing the end of a lengthy career in the United States diplomatic service, spent entirely in Greece and the Ottoman Empire, where civilian populations were often targeted. As the American consul general in Smyrna, he had labored for years to prevent such a catastrophe. His advice had been ignored, and now the disaster he had predicted was approaching.

That morning, September 6, 1922, Smyrniotes, as the denizens of the city were called, awoke to a shocking sight. For the past few years, the Greek army had protected the city. But now, long lines of exhausted Greek soldiers were trudging through Smyrna to be evacuated by sea. One English resident watching from her window described them as “a miserable rabble, ragged, weary and wan.” The soldiers were accompanied by large numbers of refugees, “both Greek and Turkish, plodding their way under a burning sun, through clouds of hot dust swirling in the air.”¹ Earlier, news of the Greek army’s collapse was discounted. Now the evidence was at hand, and the Turks could not be far behind. Anxious Smyrniotes were discussing what was in store for them.

Horton understood the city’s precarious position well. Perched on the coast of Asia Minor, Smyrna occupied a strategic position in the centuries-old fault line between Christian and Muslim civilizations vying for control of the Eastern Mediterranean. Long referred to in the West as “the Jewel of the Orient,” and by Muslims as “infidel Smyrna,” Smyrna had a reputation for religious freedom, commercial success, and cosmopolitan ways. Blessed with a world-class harbor and serving as the center of the region’s railroad network, Smyrna was a gateway between East and West. Traffic passed through the city on its way to the Aegean and from the Aegean to Anatolia’s fertile plateau sandwiched between the northern Pontic and southern Taurus mountain chains. It was the largest and most prosperous city in Anatolia, home to more Greeks than Athens.

Before and during the First World War the Turks drove out and mass murdered millions of Christians in Asia Minor; the Greeks first and then the Armenians in particular (esp. 1915-16).² Horton had been there to see the horror unfold during his first tour as consul general in Smyrna. Now he was back for a second tour, observing the Greek army and civil authorities occupying Smyrna. They had been dispatched

by the victorious Allies to enforce the armistice that ended the war, and to pressure the Turks to sign a peace treaty that broke the Ottoman Empire into new nations and protectorates. But as Turkish resistance to the armistice and treaty increased, the Greek army had spread out across eastern Asia Minor, followed by Christian refugees returning to the homes they had inhabited for centuries before being driven from them by the Turks. Now the flow of that human tide had been reversed by Mustapha Kemal's Nationalist army. The Greeks had suffered a cataclysmic defeat in a great battle about three hundred miles due east of Smyrna.

Some, like Horton, had anticipated the Greek collapse, but it was a shock for many Smyrniotes. The city's large Greek, Turkish, Armenian, Jewish, and European population had not suffered from widespread destruction in any living person's memory. Smyrna's charmed existence even held up during the First World War, as Horton and others did their best to protect the city from the horrific violence suffered elsewhere in Turkey. The so-called Levantines of European descent were major beneficiaries of this relative calm. Their great families dominated commercial activity and were the wealthiest portion of society. They had inhabited the city since the time of the American revolution, for the most part enjoying a blissful lifestyle revolving around an endless series of tennis parties, balls, yachting, and picnics accompanied by Greek bouzouki players.³

Now Smyrna's civic leaders were wrestling with the city's suddenly perilous future. Along with the Allied consuls in the city, who wielded substantial influence as the representatives of the victorious side in World War I, they had to manage the delicate, age-old problem of transferring authority to a conquering army. Many Levantines were hopeful, believing the approaching Turkish army would maintain order. Many reasoned the Turks would be loath to destroy a prosperous city. Doubts were reassured by the presence of British, French, and Italian warships in the harbor, which they thought would deter the Turks from bad behavior. Two smaller American warships, the destroyers *Litchfield* and *Simpson*, had also just arrived. Surely the Turks would be restrained under the watchful eyes of the world, particularly the army of Mustapha Kemal, a man reputed to have progressive views, military acumen, and iron discipline.

Armenian and Greek residents were much more concerned. In fact, their spiritual leaders were on the verge of despair. Chrysostomos Kalafatis, the Greek Orthodox Metropolitan Bishop, or "Metropolitan" for short, thought the Turks would rampage. There were already signs that the Turkish quarter of the city, jubilant after Kemal's victory, was gearing up for violence. Worried, the Metropolitan went to visit the Anglican Vicar, the Reverend Charles Dobson. He asked Dobson to deliver an urgent message to the Archbishop of Canterbury. Signed by the Metropolitan, the Armenian Archbishop, and other dignitaries, the message pleaded with the British Archbishop to use his influence to have local British representatives meet Kemal's forces outside the city and negotiate its peaceful surrender. Dobson was struck by the letter's dire concluding sentence: "For Christ's sake hasten to avoid the calamity which we feel is approaching." He thought the Metropolitan was unduly anxious but promised to pass the document on. Dobson went to see Sir Osmond de Beauvoir Brock, commander of the British naval presence at Smyrna. Brock was reassuring. He expected an orderly Turkish takeover of Smyrna and he promised to give all the protection in his power to the community.

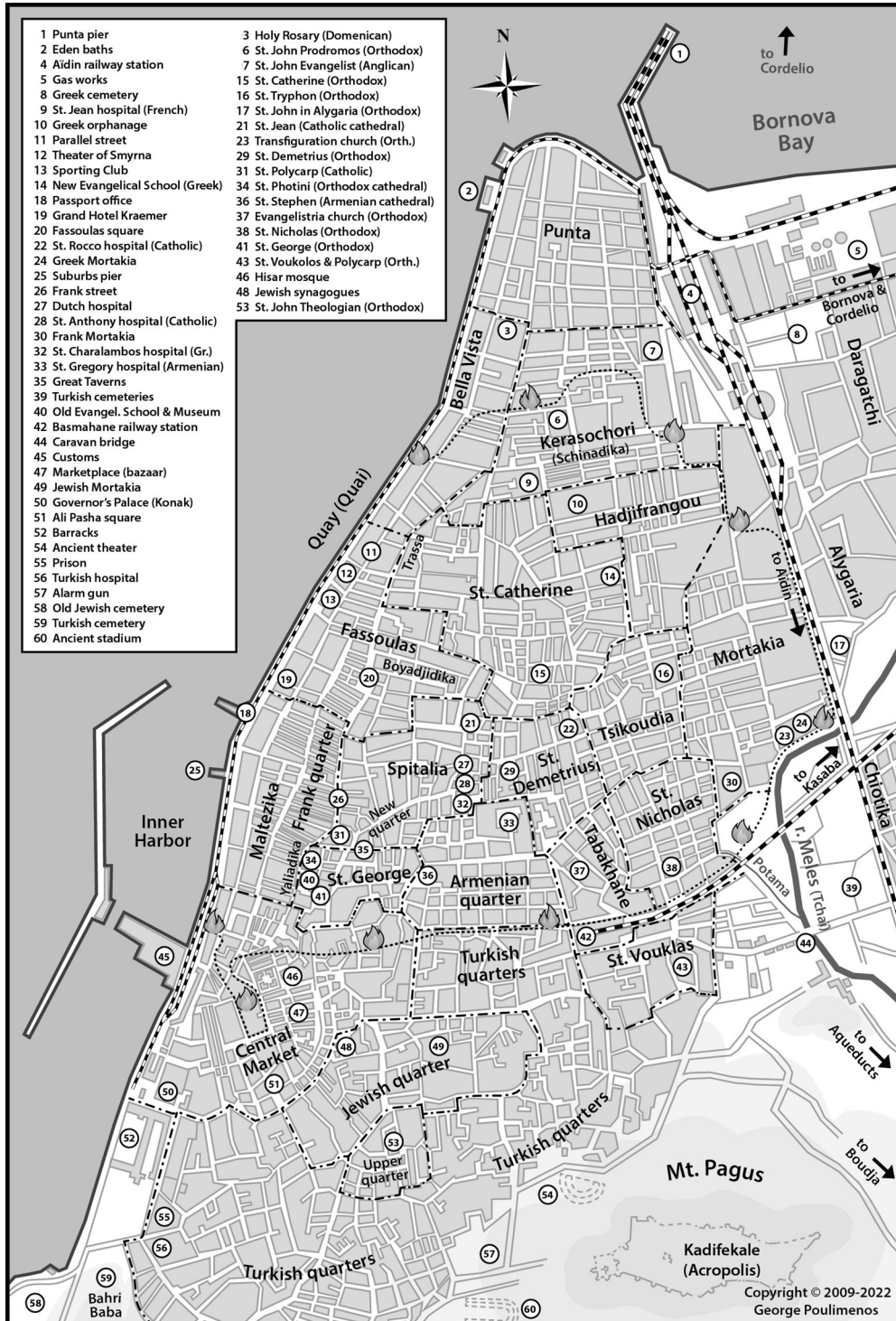


Figure 4. Map of Smyrna. Courtesy of George Poulimenos.

The Metropolitan hurried on to solicit support from others. The French consul told him troops from France would soon arrive. The Italian consul said something similar. He added that because thousands of Italian citizens inhabited every quarter of the city, he would, perforce, be the defender of all the city's Christian residents. This heartening, even grandiloquent, gesture bucked up the Metropolitan. However, when he went to see the British consul, Sir Harry Lamb, his fears quickly returned. Lamb was in an angry mood, and plainly put off by the Metropolitan's suggestion that the British sally forth to negotiate with Kemal. He said the headlong, disorderly retreat of the Greeks made that impossible, bluntly stating the British would not defend the periphery of the city or parlay for terms.⁴

Discouraged, the Metropolitan left, wondering if there was any point in seeing his friend, Horton, the American consul. In the Near East, the Americans were better known for their religious and philanthropic efforts than for political or military interests. Still, he thought he should try. Horton, however, was every bit as anxious as the Metropolitan, and did not want to provide false reassurances. A 10th generation Yankee of Puritan stock, Horton was a classicist, poet, journalist, and best-selling author with a decade of experience in Smyrna. He walked with a limp from an accident suffered years earlier but was still active for his 62 years of age. Some who knew him well thought he had a mystical bond with Smyrna. Growing up in New York, and later Michigan, Horton recalled his father reading aloud from the Bible about Smyrna. As an adult, he had sought assignments to Smyrna, which he called "the Mecca of his ambitions." His wife and her family were from Smyrna, his third daughter had been born there, and his mother and mother-in-law had lived with him in Smyrna and were buried there.

Like the Metropolitan, Horton had spoken with the British, French, and Italian consuls. Their offices were close to the American consulate, which was located just a short block from Smyrna's waterfront. The French and Italian consuls told Horton the same sort of reassuring things they told the Metropolitan: that Kemal's troops were disciplined and would behave in a civilized manner. Horton was not concerned for his own safety. During the Greek occupation, he had intervened regularly to protect indigent, imprisoned, and mistreated Turks; so much so that he had earned a reputation in Athens, Greece for being "pro-Turk." He believed he and the native-born American businessmen and missionaries would be exempt from violence. However, he was quite concerned about the two to three hundred naturalized American citizens and family members resident in Smyrna. Many of them were former Ottoman subjects. The Turks did not recognize their adopted nationality, and based on previous experience, Horton expected they would be treated badly. He did not want to create a panic, but he knew the history of the area and its ethnic rivalries.

Horton was an especially astute observer of the Greeks. When they occupied Smyrna three years earlier, he had warned Washington it would be a "second Syracusan Expedition," a reference to the ancient Athenians' 415 B.C. military venture during the Peloponnesian War that doomed their city-state. Horton had numerous contacts throughout the Smyrna region. He was fluent in Greek and French, capable in Italian, and spoke some Turkish, although Turkish officials conversed in French.

He was well informed that the retreating Greek army was covering its retreat with a scorched earth policy. He knew a huge refugee population would accompany the Greek army, and that there would be reprisals and worse. He was unwilling to reassure anyone they would be safe. He advised people to leave and insisted the refugees could never return to their homes. Many local women took his advice and left. Horton asked his wife to join her sister and their daughter back in Greece, but she refused.⁵

Horton arranged vessels to transport the Christian residents who wanted to depart. He also established a meeting point for all Americans in case of an emergency. He chose the *Theatre de Smyrne* for the rendezvous location. The theater, owned by a naturalized American citizen, was a large building in the line of elegant homes and businesses lining the waterfront. It was close to the consulate and would afford Americans easy egress to the sea if evacuation proved necessary; that is, assuming they could get there from "Paradise," the name of the little suburb east of the city where most Americans lived.

As the Turks drew closer to Smyrna, Horton and the Americans meeting at the theater organized a relief effort for the hundreds of thousands of refugees streaming into Smyrna from the Anatolian interior. Using the theater as a base, they set up feeding stations and transported food and clothes using cars and trucks donated by local American business firms. Horton also launched a series of increasingly emphatic messages back to Washington asking "in the name of humanity" for warships, humanitarian assistance, and authorization to mediate a peaceful turnover of the city. While he waited for responses, the Greek administration and bulk of the Greek army departed. An eerie quiet settled over the city. It did not last long. On September 9, Turkish forces entered Smyrna and all hell broke loose.

* * *

Four days later, after the most grueling, harrowing, and overwhelmingly tragic experiences of his life, Horton was rushing to evacuate his doomed consulate. The Turks had organized an orgy of violence, targeting first the Armenian sector of the city, and then native Christians more generally. The Turks were careful not to harm foreign nationals or give foreign armed forces an excuse for intervention. Foreign residences were looted, and a few European and American citizens were beaten or murdered when they got in the way or tried to protect native Christians, but in general foreign residents were not molested. Horton saw in the Turkish behavior a frightful mix of calculated cruelty and mindless excess, writing later that:

at Smyrna, nothing was lacking in the way of atrocity, lust, cruelty and all that fury of human passion which, given their full play, degrade the human race to a level lower than the vilest and cruelest of beasts. For during all this diabolical drama the Turks robbed and raped. Even the raping can be understood as an impulse of nature, irresistible perhaps, when passions are running wild among a people of low mentality and less civilization, but the repeated robbing of women and girls can be attributed neither to religious frenzy nor to animal passions.⁶

After several days of unbridled looting, gang raping and mass murder, Turkish forces torched the Armenian homes where they had committed most of their initial crimes, and then poured flammable liquids along the streets to guide the flames down to the sea. Eventually the great conflagration would consume everything except the Turkish and Jewish quarters that adjoined one another in the southern portion of the delta-shaped city.



Figure 5. Desperate refugees swamp a boat. Courtesy of the Naval History and Heritage Command.

As the fire advanced down to the sea and toward the American consulate, Horton worked feverishly to assist terrified residents with any kind of documentation that would help them escape the doomed city. Earlier he had assisted escaping refugees by raising American flags on any vessel he could find and then paying or importuning the crews to set sail. These interventions were not authorized. Like all the Allied consuls in Smyrna, he was under orders to remain strictly neutral, which meant not irritating the Turks by helping their victims escape. Only after the refugees huddled on the wharf were threatened with being burned to death by the advancing fire did the giant battleships in the harbor relent and offer assistance. Commercial shipping also helped. The American Export Lines freighter, "Winona," a Japanese merchant ship, and other vessels eventually took on thousands of desperate refugees.

Earlier in the week, Admiral Mark Bristol in Constantinople, the senior U.S. representative in the country, sent some of his trusted Naval officers to watch Horton and make sure he obeyed orders not to interfere with the Turks. Bristol knew Horton well and feared he might exceed his instructions. After Bristol's chief of staff, Captain Arthur Hepburn, reported Horton was doing just that, Bristol decided Horton had to leave. He assigned him the duty of leading the American colony to safety in Greece. When the wall of fire was only four blocks from the consulate, Hepburn told Horton

that in another hour the crowds on the quay would be too thick to pass through, but Horton continued his work, signing one manner of “laissez-passer” after another and thrusting them into hands of eagerly awaiting supplicants.

Hepburn then returned to the theater where Horton’s vice-consul, Maynard Barnes, was trying to keep things under control. With Turkish soldiers as an outer cordon, twenty American bluejackets (Navy enlisted personnel—not to be confused with U.S. Marines) and a machine gun guarded the theater doors. They were manning their positions underneath a macabre and prophetic electric sign. In block letters two feet high, it announced the last film the theater would ever show: “The Tango of Death.” The wife of an American missionary, Anna Birge, arrived and looked the scene over. After her harrowing trip from the suburb of Paradise to the port, she was preparing for the next challenge. Despite strict orders from Bristol’s Navy officers, she had insisted on bringing Greek and Armenian boys with her, hidden among the luggage in her truck. They were orphans from earlier Turkish massacres. For three years she had mothered the boys, and she would not abandon them. As one of the orphans later recounted, she called them all together and offered the choice of going to the port or staying behind:

There was a risk either way; if they did not come, the Turks might deport them; if they did come, they might be shot. They must decide which risk to take. There was an outcry from the faculty; with all her good intentions, Mrs. Birge was proposing to endanger the entire convoy. But the sailors were willing and she was adamant. “Where’s the baggage?” asked the driver. “I have human baggage,” said Mrs. Birge and she turned to the boys. “Which of you is coming?” “We were about twenty in number, and it seemed as if each one of us looked on the truck as a lifesaver for a moment, and then the picture changed in our weary imaginations into a funeral procession,” one of the boys wrote later. “It was a question of life and death, and yet one that required an instant decision. Eight of us declared that we would take the risk and go.” The men protested to the sailors, but Mrs. Birge won out.⁷

Birge and her human cargo survived several narrow escapes to make it to the quayside theatre where she found her path blocked by Turkish soldiers. She brazened her way past the soldiers uttering a few English words and trying to “look as calm as I thought an American would.” Recognizing that one of the Turkish officers was a former student at the college, Mrs. Birge walked up to him and said in Turkish, “Something is going to happen here in a moment, and if you do anything to prevent it you will spend eternity in the hottest kind of hell.” Whether this threat impressed the soldier or not, he let Birge and her boys slip by. Having made it past the Turks, Birge ran into Captain Hepburn. “Only Americans,” he insisted:

“These are my sons,” said Birge. “Oh?” said the Captain. And how long have they been your sons?” “For three years,” she said. “That’s quite a family to raise in three years. I’m sorry but I can take only American names.” “All right, then, take this,” said Mrs. Birge: “H. M. Casparian Birge, Evangelides Birge....” [Meanwhile] Vice-Consul Barnes was calling on the assemblage to group themselves by families. “Only Americans will be taken aboard,” he announced firmly. Mrs. Birge rushed from one family to another; would each of them adopt one boy as their own? Eight mothers agreed.⁸

Hepburn relented. It was time to transport people to the *USS Simpson*. Within the hour Birge and her "sons" would be on their way to safety, along with many others. How many "relatives, friends, and other hangers-on" accompanied those who could claim American citizenship was unknown. "To say they were considerable would be an understatement," Horton later noted.

While sailors transported Birge and others to the *Simpson*, Hepburn returned to the consulate to retrieve the stubborn American consul. He appeared at Horton's side and told him his time was up. They were leaving in ten minutes, regardless. Horton went to the consulate's safe and removed sensitive documents, as well as a packet with thirty gold coins given to him for safekeeping by American archaeologists. Rushing upstairs, he gave the coins to his wife, Catherine, who sewed them into a cotton-twill sash she had made especially for this contingency. He grabbed a few favorite personal items while he stripped off his jacket and shirt. Catherine helped him wrap the sash around his waist. Once reassembled, Horton and his wife hurried downstairs and told Armenouhie, Horton's Armenian secretary, another consular clerk, and the family's Greek servant, Andromache, that it was time to leave. Looking around, Horton grabbed a couple of other personal effects, and then the little group followed Captain Hepburn out onto the street to the waiting vehicles.

When Horton and his group arrived at the theater. The bluejackets stepped up and linked their arms around them. Then the group moved forward, inch by inch, wedging their way through the thick mass of humanity crowded on the quay. It seemed to take forever to traverse the two blocks to where American lighters from the warships were waiting. Horton marveled at the discipline of the officers and men, thankful for their "coolheaded and capable" assistance rendered "with extreme courtesy":

There was great danger of the launch being rushed and swamped by the desperate, terrified people swarming the wharf. One frightened man who jumped into it, was thrown into the sea by a young American. He was promptly fished out again and went away ashamed and very wet. It was this incident, happening at a psychological moment, and the determined guard kept by bluejackets and a few native-born Americans, which enabled us to embark and get away.⁹

Sailor Melvin Johnson, one of the bluejackets assisting the Horton party, recalled the jostling crowd and general pandemonium that reigned:

"As we were pulling out I'll never forget the screams," he later recalled. "As far as we could go, you could hear 'em screaming and hollering, and the fire was going on. . . [the] most pitiable thing you ever saw in your life. . . the only way the people could go [was] toward the waterfront. A lot of 'em were jumping in, committing suicide."¹⁰

The last American contingent with Horton began moving to the *Simpson* around 6 p.m. as dusk settled on the beleaguered city. By the time they made it to the ship and it lifted anchor, it was almost 7:45 p.m., at which point darkness descended.

Once on board the *Simpson*, Horton secured his wife and the few items in his possession. He then went up to the Captain's bridge for a better view of what he had

just left behind. The scale and rapidity of the disaster unfolding before his eyes was shocking. The fire threatening the consulate had trapped a mass of humanity up against the seawall. Crushed between fire and sea some fell, leapt, or were pushed into the water. Chaos reigned within a tortured body of terrified, begging, stunned, screaming people from infants to elderly. The great throng of people was trapped with the fire behind them and the sea before, and a powerful fleet of warships looking on, doing nothing. The Americans aboard the *Simpson* stood mutely watching the horrific scene. Only Miss Mills from the American Collegiate Institute for Girls made a peep. She could not control her sobbing.

As the *Simpson* moved away, and the writhing mass of people on the narrow waterfront receded, Horton could better discern the broader scale of the disaster. Sparks and ashes from property and possessions on fire comingled with the screams and prayers of people crying out, rising upward with the mass of roiling clouds of black and gray smoke that obscured the horizon of the star-lit night sky. The throbbing scene was silhouetted against the great fire, only partially hidden behind the wall of buildings fronting the northern end of the quay. As the *Simpson* moved further into the gigantic harbor, the brilliant backlighting from the immense conflagration revealed a struggling mass of humanity all along the entire two-mile long waterfront.

Like many others aboard the *Simpson*, Horton was now a refugee who had lost his worldly possessions. His priceless photographs and artwork, precious mementos, correspondence, research, and all the trappings of a comfortable middle-class life were fodder for the inferno. As the *Simpson* retreated toward the outer harbor, Horton thought he was watching the last remnants of the glorious Byzantine empire go up in flames. He could recall his father's Bible readings as he viewed the demise of the last of the seven great churches of Asia Minor. God's counsel from the Book of Revelation to the Smyrniotes echoed from the recesses of his youth: "Do not be afraid of what you are about to suffer." "Be faithful even to the point of death and I will give you the victor's crown of life." Horton later paid homage in verse to the city that had long served as a lonely sentinel defying the apocalypse: "The six died down in the long ago," but Smyrna's "light shone on with a constant glow" until Kemal destroyed it.

Horton the classicist would compare the sacking of Smyrna to the Roman obliteration of Carthage, bitterly noting a key difference: "There was no fleet of Christian battle-ships at Carthage looking on at a situation for which their governments were responsible." The scene before him seemed particularly tragic because he was convinced it could have been easily prevented. The Turks, he said, were slaughtering, raping, and plundering:

within a stone's throw of the Allied and American battle-ships because they had been systematically led to believe that they would not be interfered with. A united order from the commanders or from any two of them—one harmless shell thrown across the Turkish quarter—would have brought the Turks to their senses. And this, the presence of those battle-ships in Smyrna harbor, in the year of our Lord 1922, impotently watching the last great scene in the tragedy of the Christians of Turkey, was the saddest and most significant feature of the whole picture.¹¹

He had tried to prevent it. For three years he had vainly attempted to steer American policy toward humanitarian intervention in Asia Minor. He had challenged Admiral Bristol to the point of insubordination—and beyond. As time ran out, he pleaded that he be allowed to mediate a peaceful evacuation of Smyrna, a request denied by no less than the President of the United States. He became so distraught that he asked to be reassigned to different duties. That too was ignored, and he went on doing his duty.

Horton was so deeply affected by the tragedy surrounding him, and how terribly unnecessary it was, that he was described as “the saddest man” in the midst of the crisis.¹² Just before Smyrna burned, Abraham Hartunian went to the American consulate for travel documents, where he saw Horton, profoundly dispirited.¹³ Hartunian was an Armenian who had survived an 1895 Turkish massacre in Severeck, another in Maras during the Armenian genocide of 1915-1916, and yet another when Smyrna was destroyed in 1922.¹⁴ Despite all the suffering he had experienced, Horton's misery had made an unforgettable impression upon Hartunian.

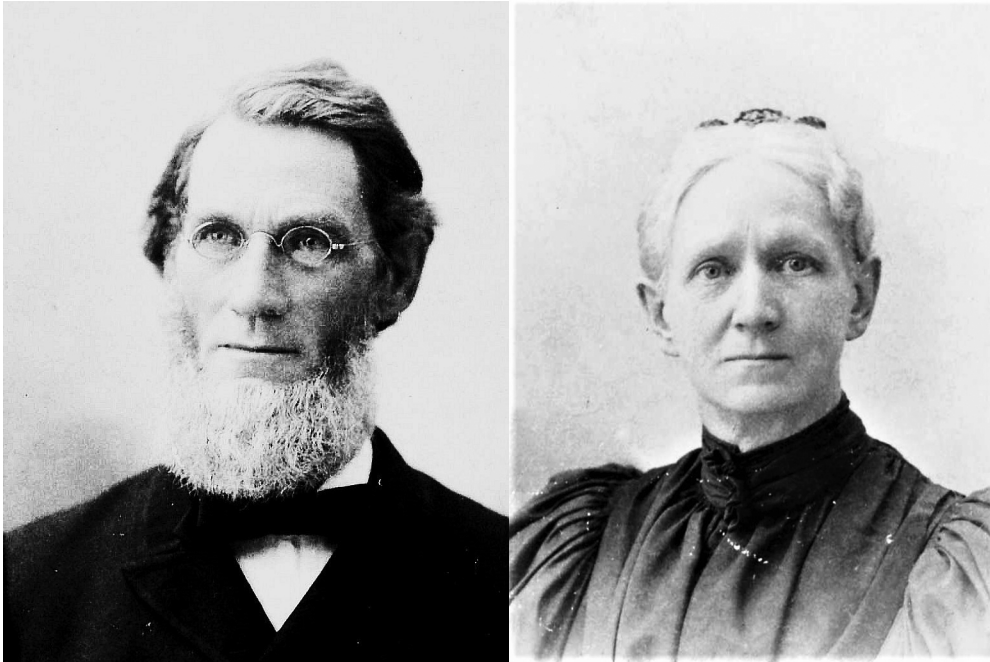


Figure 6. Ottoman Greeks mourning deaths of loved ones. From U.S. National Archives, Record Group 353, Roll 55.

As the *Simpson* steamed out of the harbor toward Athens, Greece, friends and acquaintances crossed Horton's mind, sometimes with recollections of where he had last seen them and what they had said. He was anxious about their fate. He struggled with overwhelming emotions, the keenest of which, he later wrote, “was a feeling of shame that I belonged to the human race.” His ability to take refuge in hopes for a better world died more slowly than the city he loved, but soon that part of Horton's spirit lay buried in Smyrna's ashes as well. Later, when people consoled him with thoughts of the lives he had saved, he would reply, “It's the ones that I didn't save that

haunt me.” That, and the world’s seeming indifference to the city’s suffering, remained an open wound and eventually became a scar upon his soul.

Watching the Smyrna conflagration, Horton had no idea how closely he would become associated with the city’s destruction. It was a sad ending to a remarkable career. Up to that point he had lived a full and fascinating life. He was born before the Civil War in a New York farming community to fundamentalist, Methodist parents who valued education and read the Bible, poetry, and literature to him. An only child, he learned to be a peacemaker between his quick-tempered father and his lighter-hearted mother. One of his earliest and most vivid memories came from a celebration of the North’s victory at Gettysburg. He carried the American flag to a balcony overlooking a large hall packed to suffocation with men and women. His flaxen head barely protruded above the balustrade, but when he raised the stars and stripes above his head, a hush fell over the assembly. Waving the flag slightly, the four-year-old recited Joseph Redman Drake’s poem “the American Flag” in a treble voice. When he finished, pandemonium broke out. People tossed their hats in the air, shouted, cried, and hugged.



**Figure 7. George Horton’s parents, Peter Davis and Mary Sophia.
Courtesy of George Horton Papers, Georgetown University.**

It was the beginning of a long career in poetry for Horton. Twelve years later he was elected class poet at the University of Michigan, where he earned a degree in classics. He excelled at Latin and especially Greek, for which he had a passion. Graduating at age eighteen, he secured an apprentice position in the law office of his hometown’s legendary judge. He dreamed of a career in politics. Those hopes evaporated the day his father stormed into the respected man’s office and berated him for contaminating the minds of young men with Darwinian sympathies. Horton left

for California. His mad, glad, glory days as he called them, took him first to bawdy San Francisco where he witnessed slayings in broad daylight, attended masked balls, and gambled with Lucky Baldwin and "White Hat" McCarthy.

To make a living he taught school in the rough and tumble California gold fields, rising to become a popular high school principal in Grass Valley. At age 19 he married a fresh-faced, rosy-cheeked, seventeen year old who, unbeknownst to him, happened to be a second cousin. His domineering father arrived, declared the marriage a sin, and had church authorities annul it. After a few years of trying to make a success of his wrecked life, George broke permanently from his father and left for Chicago. When his train pulled into Union Station, he had nothing more than his wits, college diploma, eight dollars and a valise full of his poems. He won a job as a cub reporter on the *Chicago Herald's* night shift, covering gruesome murders, grotesque suicides, and ghost stories. He learned to evaluate tragic scenes with clinical dispassion but write up a story with the sympathy of a poet. He covered the infamous Chicago Haymarket riots and anarchist trial and rose through the ranks of the hurly-burly world of fin-de-siècle Chicago journalism popularized in the classic movie, "The Front Page." He earned promotions into the ranks of the *Herald's* editors where he wrote poems and editorials and mixed with a new generation of authors in Chicago's famed Press Club.

Five years after arriving in Chicago, Horton was a nationally known poet. His voluminous poetry was read in papers across the United States, earning him popular notoriety. Horton poems, including "The Farmer's Song Bird," "Obstinate Old Man," and "Enj'yin' Poor Healthe," made it into anthologies and schoolbooks like *Werner's Readings and Recitations* where they were read and often memorized by a generation of American students. His translation of Sappho's poem, "Ode to Aphrodite," was widely applauded as superior to that of the great Scottish poet, Andrew Lang. In a bold move he used the nation's most popular living poet, Walt Whitman, as a subject for a poem. Whitman, reading it in his local paper, pronounce it "very good" and sent it to friends. To Horton he sent an inscribed, limited edition of his own work, *Leaves of Grass*, bound in green Morocco leather. By the early 1890s, Horton was a respected, oft-quoted, well-known, well-liked, and well-ensconced figure in Chicago's literary scene.

Then his life took a dramatic detour. He accepted an appointment from President Grover Cleveland to be consul in Athens, Greece. "I was a passionate lover of the classics," he later wrote, "which, indeed have been the solace and companion of my entire life, and I yearned mightily to go to Athens." Before departing, he brought his courtship of Katherine Bogart to a successful conclusion. Newly married, he headed to Greece as one of America's "literary consuls," following in the footsteps of men like Nathaniel Hawthorne and James Fenimore Cooper. His tenure was unusual. Unlike many of his fellow writers, he took his consular duties seriously, upgrading the consulate and modernizing its administration. Unlike most classicists, he quickly mastered modern as well as ancient Greek, so well in fact, that he was inducted into the premier Greek philological institution, the Society of Parnassos. He authored books in Greek and English, some of which were best sellers and received glowing reviews in America and England.

His book, *In Argolis*, earned him an international reputation as one of America's foremost ethnographers of Greece, and his epic poem, *Aphroessa*, won rave reviews in England where he was compared to Keats and Tennyson.

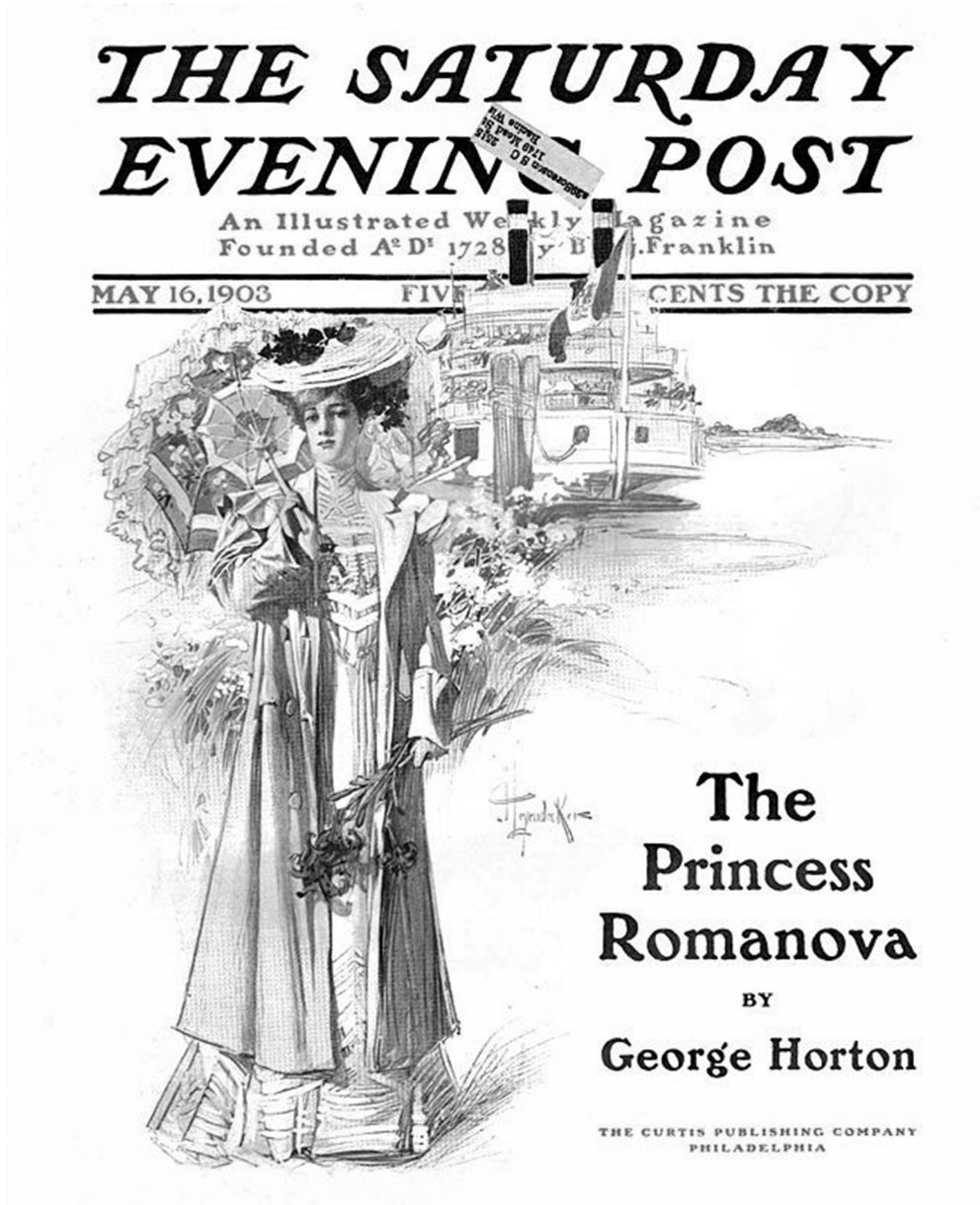


Figure 8. 1903 Saturday Evening Post cover highlighting Horton's latest novel. Public Domain.

That kind of talent, plus a pleasing personality and a charming wife who also had a flair for languages, allowed Horton to thrive as a diplomat. The Hortons made a splash in Athenian society, getting to know the Greeks of that period as few have, from common folk and their traditions to the royal family and their peculiarities. Their stay in Athens coincided with the revival of the modern Olympics, which Horton helped promote. His enthusiasm led him to train for the new sport of cycling, which ended in a near death crash that left him with a permanent limp. Toward the end of his tenure in Athens, a Cretan insurrection, brutally suppressed by the Ottomans, and a brief war in Macedonia between Greece and the Ottoman Empire, educated him on international politics and the competing national interests involved in the region's balance of power. The Cretan insurrection, which Horton went to see, became the backdrop for his best-selling novel, *Like Another Helen*.

Returning to Chicago, he took up his literary career with enhanced prestige, working for Randolph Hearst's *Chicago American* as the editor of its "Art and Literary Review." In this capacity he mixed with the Chicago literati who were transforming American literature with "Midwest realism" in what would become known as Chicago's literary renaissance. He was a member of "The 40 Club," an exclusive group that included the likes of literary icon Eugene Fields, actor Maurice Barrymore, and the Reverend Ernest Stires, who later became Episcopal Bishop of Long Island. As an editorialist, he promoted social reforms that helped shape modern America.

He traveled around the world in a Hearst newspaper publicity stunt, getting a view of the lead-up to the Russo-Japanese war. Characteristically, Horton used the experience to create another best-selling novel, *The Edge of Hazard*. Returning from the trip, he made the shocking discovery that his wife had taken up with a millionaire commodity trader, Edward Bacon. He begged Katherine to reconcile for the sake of their daughter, but she refused. At the time divorce was not possible without cause, and Bacon, who had three sons, would not agree to marry Katherine if her name was sullied in the newspapers. Despite having evidence of Katherine's adultery in her own handwriting, Horton did not want her left alone and without means of subsistence. Against the advice of his friends, he offered to publicly accept blame if Bacon would marry Katherine, an agreement both men honored.

Deeply depressed, Horton left Chicago and his successful literary career. Eventually he found his way to Washington, D.C. where, once again, he had to rebuild his life. This time he had more than his education and resiliency to work with; he had an international reputation as a poet, novelist, and ethnographer. He interviewed Booker T. Washington on race relations and made a name for himself in scholarly circles, earning an honorary doctorate from George Washington University. After he decided he would be most useful back in the diplomatic service, his friends lobbied for his reappointment to Athens. They collected petitions of support from prominent classicists in America and Europe, which were sent to President Theodore Roosevelt. Roosevelt invited Horton to lunch and professed to have read and liked his books. Senator Henry Cabot Lodge and his son, both admirers of Horton, also lobbied Roosevelt for Horton's reappointment. In this long process Horton learned a

great deal about Washington politics and how much harm could come from the personal pique of a Secretary of State who took umbrage over something he had previously written. Eventually, though, after the incumbent consul died, Roosevelt reappointed Horton and he began his second tour in Athens.¹⁵

There he discovered the Foreign Service was rapidly evolving into a more regimented, “professional” organization. He had to accommodate its new ethos, produce voluminous reports, and aggressively promote his country’s commercial interests. He succeeded and was rewarded with good reviews from the new inspection system instituted by the Department of State. In 1907, during a period of rising anti-immigrant sentiment, Horton took a leave of absence to travel across the United States to explain modern Greece to Americans and assure them the Greeks would make worthy American citizens. For three months he traveled coast to coast giving lectures in forty-five cities, making the case for the continuity between ancient and modern Greeks in their language, customs, and attributes. The tour established his reputation with Americans as their foremost authority on modern Greece, and with Greeks as their foremost advocate among Americans.

When he returned to Athens to take up his consular duties, Horton renewed his courtship of Catherine Sacopoulo. Catherine was twenty years his junior and a native of Smyrna. The oldest of three daughters educated in Switzerland, she was a trained pianist with a somewhat high-strung nature. After a long and at times amusing and even vexing courtship, he won Catherine’s hand and a new lease on life. She would become his rock, a faithful companion through war, disease, and genocide. Shortly after their marriage, just as Horton was turning fifty years old, he was assigned to Salonica in the Ottoman Empire where he experienced first-hand the intricacies of great power politics and the Ottoman approach to organized ethnic cleansing.

In some respects, Horton was a natural diplomat, and in others, an anomaly. He was a gifted linguist whose early years constitutionally inclined him to peacemaking, a proclivity he demonstrated throughout his life. He was compassionate and social, making friends easily and enjoying the company of others, with whom he loved swapping anecdotes and stories. But he also had a scholarly bent, choosing solitude and research and writing and poetry over frivolous social affairs. He was a keen observer of humanity, with reporting skills sharpened by years of journalistic endeavor. He was a witty humorist who could poke fun at human failings without condescension. He was politically progressive for his era, as demonstrated in his writings and editorials. He became an ecumenical Christian only late in life, but one who took Christ’s teachings seriously.

On his 1907 cross-country tour, when America was better known for its missionaries and merchants than its military, Horton explained that modern Greeks preached Hellenism and practiced commerce. He thought they were true descendants of Odysseus, “the typical Greek,” who had the “spirit of adventure,” and was “a wanderer” who was “bold, plausible, talkative,” and “when need be, wry, capable of extricating himself from the most perilous difficulties. He traveled far, yet he ever longed for his native isle, to which he hoped to return at last... deeply religious, filial, and a good parent.” Horton’s explanation of the prototypical Greek fit him well too. He was a

voluble adventurer who went abroad, navigated diverse difficulties, and never forgot his duties to his family and homeland.

This book chronicles the final episodes in George Horton's odyssey. Readers who take the journey with him will step back in time to a different United States, to a period of historical adolescence, when America was on the threshold of great power status and faced critically important decisions about its role in the world. They will encounter fake news, government disinformation, cover-ups, and whitewashing of mass murder. They will get a first-hand comparison of two men, Horton and Bristol, who played outsized roles in setting America on its foreign policy path as a great power, and they will readily discern how the issues they contested are still with us today.

Horton, who some called "the gentle American,"¹⁶ believed American policy required a moral foundation. Bristol argued for subordinating humanitarian interests to hoped-for commercial benefits. He was an archetype for what became known as the "ugly" American: an energetic, opinionated, insular, forceful, and ethnocentric man. Horton and Bristol agreed the United States had much at stake in the Middle East, but their understanding of the region, and their motives and priorities, were vastly different. Those differences came to a head when Smyrna was destroyed. That high-profile event and the great power reactions to it constituted a fork in the road for American foreign policy. The United States either had to intervene on behalf of the ideals it fought for in World War I or acquiesce to genocide and ethnic cleansing, changing the region's character forever.

Horton argued his country took the wrong path with major implications for the future. He tried to put it back on track and succeeded in some respects—at least in the short term. Yet the questions about American foreign policy Horton raised remain with us to this day. In that regard, his struggle is our struggle, and his experience is educational, illuminating the past but also the choices that must be made in the future.

CHAPTER ONE:

SMYRNA, THE MECCA OF HIS AMBITIONS

In January 1910, the Department of State transferred Horton from Athens, Greece, to Salonica, a port city in the northwest corner of the Aegean Sea. The city and its harbor were situated a mere fifty miles away from snow-capped Mount Olympus, looming majestically across the gulf of Salonica. Salonica was Horton's first tour in the Ottoman Empire as an American consul, and it proved both eye-opening and career-enhancing. His time there convinced him that sometimes "a remote consulate is more important, and requires greater knowledge, skill and training than is needed in many legations."¹ The city was the Ottoman Empire's gateway to the Balkans, and thus Europe. It was a crossroads for merchandise and new ideas; indeed, it was a hotbed of revolutionary sentiment. Just a year or so before George arrived, Salonica revolted and overthrew Sultan Abdul Hamid, considered by the U.S. Ambassador in Constantinople to be "the most autocratic ruler of modern times."² The Committee of Union and Progress (CUP), or "Young Turks" as they were more commonly known, led the revolution. By the time George arrived with Catherine, his new Greek bride, there were high expectations that CUP leaders would transform the Ottoman Empire with a liberal, constitutional government.

George's Salonica tour gave him a front-row seat on the evolving politics and culture of the Ottoman Empire. He learned a great deal from his European counterparts, who were respected Balkan experts and highly accomplished diplomats. They openly debated how to manage, and if possible, benefit from instability in the teetering Ottoman Empire without upsetting the European balance of power and precipitating a general war. This so-called "Eastern Question," was a major preoccupation in European diplomatic circles, with many statesmen convinced that Europe's next major war would begin in the Balkans. Watching the Europeans jockey for position stimulated Horton's own strategic reasoning. In his 1907 tour of the United States, he had expressed the hope that Christian minorities, and particularly the Greeks with their Byzantine heritage, could take back by virtue of their example what the Ottomans could only control by force. But the evidence pointed the other direction. The Young Turks seemed determined to forcefully unify the country around Turkish language and culture.

During his tour Horton documented the evolution of the Young Turks from liberal liberators to repressive tyrants, explaining how CUP leaders betrayed their promises and began using force and terror to suppress the diverse minority groups within the empire. He noted:

the Young Turk Party has lost the confidence of the Christian population of Macedonia, and of many of the Ottoman faith, and has sewed a crop of hate and vengeance which it will take them years to cut down and plow under. The burning question for them, as for all Europe is, will they ever succeed in doing this?³

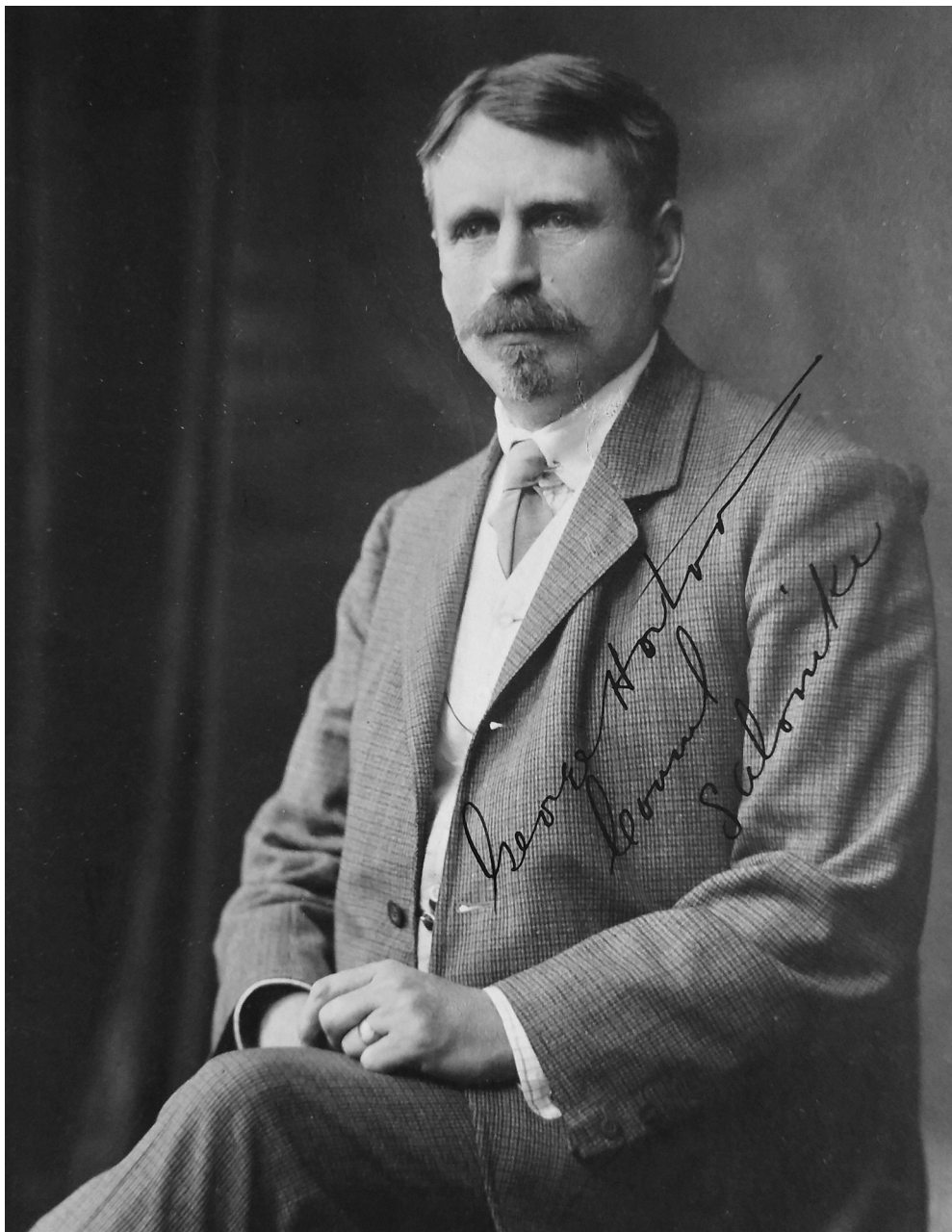


Figure 9. George Horton in Salonica. Courtesy of George Horton Papers, Georgetown University.

Before departing Salonica, he concluded the answer was no. He warned the Department that war was drawing nearer:

Things seem to be going from bad to worse. Lawlessness, in the form of bands who roam about the country disturbing the public peace, preying upon the inhabitants and attacking the Turkish troops, is widespread, and is on the increase. What adds to the gravity of the situation is that these bands, though of different nationalities—Bulgarian and Greek for the most part—seem at last to be acting in harmony, and not, as formally, to be ready to fall upon each other whenever they come in contact.⁴

Horton did not remain in Salonica long enough to see war arrive. His tour was cut short by family crises. A few months after arriving in Salonica, the Department informed him that his father, Peter Davis Horton (known as P.D.), had passed away in Culpepper, Virginia at age eighty-four. The man who taught George right from wrong in no uncertain terms, torpedoed his first job and aspirations for elected office, annulled his first marriage, and did so much to shape his views on religion, life, work, and family, was gone. Nothing in George's journals, diaries, or correspondence indicated how he felt about it with one exception. George, who already made his parents' monthly mortgage payments and provided a stipend for their living expenses, noted in his diary that he had sent a check "to mother for expenses in connection with my father's death, of which I received notice by telegram from State Department this morning. He died Saturday, the 2nd." Almost fifty, George still had not come to terms with his conflicting emotions about his father. Later, in his memoirs, he would offer a charitable assessment of his father's generation, stating they were "men of strong bone and muscle and of great virtues" who "had their faults" and were "a little gloomy, perhaps, and narrow," but who "did the right as they saw it."⁵

The following year, George received an alarming letter from Georgia, his daughter from his first marriage. She wrote from Creston, Washington to alert George that his mother, Mary Sophia, was in declining health. P.D. and Mary Sophia had raised Georgia after annulling George's marriage to his first wife. Georgia was on good terms with Mary Sophia, and wanted her to cross the country by train and live with her and her husband, Robert Cuddeback. She enclosed Mary Sophia's negative response, which was a shock to George:

Your offer to come here and take me back with you is a very kind one, but if I was able to go I could go alone. I would need a man to assist me, not because I am nervous but because, at present, my legs are almost useless. I can just scuff across the floor in the house and when it is pleasant, around the yard a little....The allopath said my nervousness was caused by neurasthenia of the digestive organs. I am just a skeleton.

Mary Sophia closed the letter with a plea for prayer, "that I may get out of this! Lovingly, Gran."



Figure 10. Panoramic view of Smyrna.

The letter jolted George to action. He returned home, oversaw his mother's recovery, and asked her to accompany him and Catherine to his next post in the Ottoman Empire: Smyrna. George had long wanted to visit Smyrna. Catherine had been born in Smyrna and also was keen to return to her cosmopolitan and Hellenized birthplace. George called the city "the Mecca of my ambitions." There he would assume the position of Consul General, a major step up for his career. While waiting for Mary Sophia to recover enough strength for the journey, George burned his leave time and introduced Catherine to friends in Washington, D.C. Foremost among them was Mitchell Carroll at George Washington University, who played such a helpful role in George's life. George gave lectures at Carroll's behest and tried to locate a publisher for his latest novel, "Miss Brinkerhoff's Alias."

Two days after George took his oath of office at the Department of State to be consul general in Smyrna, Harold MacGrath, his good friend, former newspaper colleague, and best-selling author, inked a deal with Bobbs-Merrill for a new novel. MacGrath, like George, built his stories around love, mystery, and adventure in foreign settings he had personally visited. He churned out one or more a year. George, consumed with Foreign Service duties, could not keep pace, and was disappointed when Bobbs-Merrill turned down "Miss Brinkerhoff's Alias." The rejection underscored his slipping literary status, but he pressed on and hoped the book would eventually sell well enough to make Bobbs-Merrill regret its decision. As the date for his departure approached, George decided to entrust his manuscript to



Courtesy of Levantine Heritage Foundation.

Richard Badger of the Gorham Press in Boston. The two men agreed on a new name, “Miss Schuyler’s Alias,” and that they would split profits down the middle. Badger’s job was to publish and market the book aggressively, in serial installments in newspapers if possible, and arrange for its dramatization and stage production.

On Monday, November 13, at six a.m. sharp, George, Catherine and Mary Sophia sailed from New York harbor on the *Athinai*. It went to Marseilles, France, and from there to Piraeus, where they transferred to a ship bound for Smyrna. George described the scene as their ship approached the eastern end of the long Gulf of Smyrna:

That ancient city, one of the oldest in the world in point of continuous existence from prehistoric times, was...a flourishing mixed settlement of about three hundred and fifty thousand inhabitants, whose civilization was essentially Greek. She was situated on a magnificent bay, comparable to that of Vancouver, in which any number of ships can anchor safely. The town itself extended in a half moon around the shores of this harbor and flowed back up the sides of Mount Pagus.

Some believed Smyrna was Homer’s birthplace, and George thought the claim was well-founded. The patron saint of the city was Polycarp, burned to death by the Romans on February 26, 156 A.D. Ancient Roman aqueducts traversing the two valleys that lead through the mountains to the city also served as graceful reminders of the city’s storied

past. Modern Smyrna was picturesque. Luxurious department stores, residences, cinemas, and opera houses adorned the portion of the town closest to the sea. The seaside boulevard, or "quay," was paved with broad, square stones forming a promenade just north of the bustling custom's house and port facilities. The Hortons had a good view of the city's cosmopolitan character as their ship docked, which was well described by another traveler from that period:

In a single glance, one can easily observe Europeans, Levantines, Greeks with European attire, peasant Turks wearing many-hued "ipokamisa" [shirt] and wide-belted short breeches, islanders with deep blue breeches, Albanians, Montenegrans, Arabs, Dervishes with their various picturesque garb, uniformed Turkish officers, and Christian Smyrniot ladies outfitted in the latest Parisian fashions. It is a flow so perfect and a crowd and a life so diverse and rich in contrast. Although only possible in the East, even here one doesn't see such diversity everywhere, but only on the quay of the great mercantile city.⁶

The city's various ethnic groups were distinct but collaborated, like the English, French and Armenian footballers who took a silver medal for Smyrna in the 1906 Olympics. In general, cosmopolitan Smyrniotes were known for their "lightheartedness," which George later claimed "was well-nigh irrepressible."⁷

George went straight to the consulate on the corner of *Rue Galazio* and *Rue Parallele*, one row of buildings from the waterfront. It was about a half kilometer up the quay from the custom's house, passport-office, and telegraph office adjoining the pier that jutted out from the quay to form the entrance to the inner harbor protected by breakwaters. The consulate, rented from an Italian baron, was ornate and offered easy access to the seafront. The offices were on the first floor. George's personal rooms were on the second floor. There he installed his large library, with his literary treasures, including autographed first editions of his Chicago literary confrères lining the walls. The second floor also had a terrace with a nice view of the city.

Not long after arriving George lost his deputy consul general, Lucien Memminger. Memminger had come up from Beirut to cover Smyrna until George could arrive, and then was sent off to Paris. His replacement was vice consul John W. Dye, an extraordinary man who would accomplish what few others had ever done: thoroughly exasperating George. It took the better part of a year, however. Meanwhile, George had the services of a long-serving and well-connected Smyrniote named James Wilkinson, who operated as his deputy. Wilkinson knew all of Smyrna's upper crust and all the ins and outs of the city. With Wilkinson's help, George came to know all Smyrna's "quarters" well.

The French or "European" quarter with most of the foreign consulates dominated the northern end of the city. The Greek quarter was behind the European, back a bit from the waterfront, and the Armenian quarter was in the middle of the city stretching back to the Meles river, which ran behind the city. The Jewish quarter was adjacent to the port at the southern portion of the city, just beyond the municipal buildings, Governor's house and military barracks. The Turkish quarter was next to it, stretched across the foot of Mount Pagus with its Medieval castle. George regularly visited contacts in the various quarters, particularly businessmen, with whom he

would swap tales. The locals regaled George with anecdotes about his predecessors, like the inimitable “Colonel Madden.” One story he heard about Madden reinforced his experience in Salonica and may have influenced his views on working with Ottomans. The Turks refused to release some of Madden’s goods from their custom-house in hopes of collecting “certain illegal taxes:”

Madden took a caique, one of those Oriental row-boats pointed at both ends, mounted a small cannon in the prow and pulled out in front of the custom-house. He then sent word to the Governor that, if the goods were not released within a given number of minutes, he would open fire. The merchandise was immediately discharged. He carried a heavy cane and had the habit, when discussing matters with the Vali, or Turkish Governor, of bringing it down on the latter’s table with a loud clap, resembling the discharge of a pistol. Madden’s dragoman, whom I found still residing in Smyrna, told me that whenever the American Consul was announced, the Vali would say, “Find out what he wants and for Allah’s sake let him have it!”⁸

George, a veteran story-teller himself, gave as good as he got, often swapping tales over coffee in the Turkish quarter. He visited the bazaars with their colorful, long covered arcades, “heavily stocked with cheap German goods and Turkish rugs,” and frequented the quarter’s cafés, which he found “extremely picturesque,” situated in “squares shaded with huge trees and clambering vines.” There the locals spent hours swapping rumors, drinking excellent coffee, and eating sweets George considered “indigestible.” George kept an open mind about cultural differences, even those he did not approve of, such as camel fighting, a favorite sport of the Turks:

The beasts selected for the fray were males who were brought into a large open space gaily caparisoned. A beautiful female was shown to the gladiators as the prize of the victor. The eternal triangle. These animals, in fighting, engage their long necks in a two-stranded rope and then twist and strain until one breaks the other’s neck. All that can be said of the sport is that it is neither as cruel nor as disgusting as a bull fight.⁹

Camel caravans padded noiselessly through the streets of Smyrna, tied together by ropes and led single file by a Turk on a small donkey. George “often saw ladies in high heeled boots and modern costume fearlessly lift the rope between two of these ungainly beasts and pass under.”

George served as honorary president of the American Chamber of Commerce in Smyrna and knew all the people and companies advertising in the *Levant Trade Review*. He sent in fifty-three trade reports during his first six months in Smyrna. Despite that flurry of work, he managed two excursions his first year in the city. He toured the Holy Land, taking in Jaffa, Jerusalem, Galilee, Damascus, Baalbek, and Beirut. Along the way he visited Jericho, the Jordan river and the Dead Sea, “on the shores of which I saw a bright American flag flying at a great distance.” Exploring, he found it graced the top of a tent “in which were housed a jolly company of Standard Oil explorers,” with whom he had lunch. He enjoyed the trip but did not learn anything startling other than vast areas seemed not to have changed much from the days of Joseph and Mary. The other trip he took shortly after his arrival in Smyrna.

It was a pilgrimage to Sappho's home island of Lesbos and its main town, Mytilene, just sixty miles northwest of Smyrna.

Sappho, George claimed, had "been more of an inspiration to me than any other human who has ever lived." He acknowledged this could "seem strange to the uninitiated," especially given her ancient origins in the seventh century B.C. and the fact "that so little of her literary output has survived." Still, he thought Sappho's literary fragments burned "with unquenchable fire and beauty," and insisted, "Anyone who comes in touch with Sappho has a feeling that the woman herself is still alive; of contact with a presence so exquisite and incorporeal that it never could have been mortal."¹⁰ The entire port was bathed in moonlight when George's boat slipped into Mytilene around 9 p.m. on January 3, 1912. Setting foot on Lesbos, he was "at last walking over ground that had once been caressed by the light feet of Sappho and Erynnas and their singing companions, beholding the same skies, seas and hill slopes that their eyes had seen." He was prepared to be awed but did not find Lesbos any more beautiful than other Greek islands. He realized "the Sapphic realm was largely an idealization, glorified by a splendor that shone out from the poet's soul."¹¹

For George the classicist, the history, myths, and geography of the ancient world were ever-present. Traveling north from Mytilene, he passed the island of Tenedos, close to the shore of Asia Minor, where he "recalled the unhappy fate of Laocoon and his two sons," attacked by the "hoary sea serpent." He had seen the famous sculpture immortalizing the story in the Vatican art collection while courting Catherine in Rome. George was on his way to Constantinople because the Department had directed him to consult with the experienced American consul general there, Gabriel Bie Ravndal, as soon as practicable. Unfortunately, George suffered an acute attack of appendicitis in Constantinople and had to conduct the consultations with Ravndal from his hospital bed, where he was laid up for three weeks.

What really defined George and Catherine's first year in Smyrna was not their new contacts, friends, or travel, but two major developments: one personal and one professional. Catherine informed George of the personal development not long after he returned from Constantinople. She was pregnant. Just a few months shy of thirty-two, Catherine was going to give George his third child—if all went well. The other major development was a tragedy that dominated George's professional life in Smyrna for a period and educated him on Ottoman negotiating tactics. A short while after George and Catherine celebrated her 32nd birthday on April 17, the *SS Texas* sank near Smyrna with great loss of life. At five in the afternoon, while attempting to exit Smyrna's harbor on the way to Salonica, the *Texas* hit a mine and sank. Only seventy of its 139 passengers were rescued. Initial reports indicated fire from Fort Yeni Kale had sunk the *Texas*. Later, it was asserted the fort fired shots to warn the steamer it was off course, including one just before the *Texas* hit the floating mine. Most of the passengers were Armenian, Greek, and Russian pilgrims returning from the Holy Land. The Vali, or governor-general of Smyrna, Rahmi Bey, raced to the scene of the accident, as did steamers with doctors, but they were too late to prevent the death of half the passengers and crew.

The Ottomans had mined the harbor because they were at war with Italy, which attacked Tripoli (modern day Libya) in September 1911. The Italian navy held a decisive advantage at sea, so the Ottomans protected Smyrna's harbor with mines. Neutral ships could only enter and exit the harbor carefully with the help of a pilot boat. The *Texas* was formerly the *Olympia*, a 480-ton vessel built in 1888, and one of eight steamers renamed in 1910 after the owners of the "Archipelago-American Steamship Company" claimed American registry and flew American flags. The principal owners were naturalized Greeks. Memminger had already gone to bat for the company repeatedly, and George would spend a great deal of time doing the same:

The fleet of this Greek Company consisted of a number of dirty little steamers that had been put under American protection by one of our consuls. There was nothing American about them, locally, except a dummy "President," one American citizen and their flags. These were so big and the ships so small that the bunting trailed in the water unless a strong wind was blowing. This company was the occasion of continual exasperation to the Consulate. It seems to have been well anchored in Washington. I received frequent orders to "report fully on the American status of the A. A. Steam-ship Company," and I wrote many long reports indicating that its claims to our protection were of the flimsiest. These orders were always followed, after a discreet interval, by telegrams commanding me to give the company full protection. The only explanation of this strange state of affairs I could ever get from people who ought to have known, was that the directors had a good American lawyer.¹²

The captain of the *Texas* was a Greek subject, and Turkish authorities intended to prosecute him for criminal negligence rather than allow the matter to be handled by the U.S. consular court. Consular courts were a common provision in the agreements Sultans negotiated with Christian nations to encourage commercial relations with the West. Known as "the capitulations," these agreements exempted foreign citizens in the Ottoman empire from local prosecution, taxation, conscription, etc. When the *Texas* sank, George asked for a naval officer to help with the aftermath of the maritime tragedy, and per his request, Commander Frank B. Upham of the *USS Scorpion* soon arrived, along with an Embassy interpreter, Charles Fowle. With their help, George made a thorough investigation of the sinking of the *Texas*. After much communication with the Department, the U.S. Embassy requested "the surrender of Spiro Macris, the captain of the *Texas*, to the custody of the American Consulate General at Smyrna, to be tried by the American Consular Court."¹³ The game was on, and it preoccupied George for the remainder of the year. As George later recounted in his memoirs, the experience taught him that being protected from interference by Ottoman authorities was worth a great deal to businessmen, which led to attempts to bribe him:

When I took over the post at Smyrna a certain rich Greek merchant in a neighboring city offered me one thousand pounds Turkish (four thousand four hundred dollars then) if I would appoint him American consular agent. The protection was worth that much to him. His emissary, a native-born American, urged quite speciously that I do this, arguing that the sale of the consular agencies was a legitimate perquisite of my post.... The gentleman in question never became our consular agent,

though I had been considering him before he approached me. As judge of the Consular Court, I was once trying an important case, between a group of Americans on the one hand and of Levantines on the other. One of my fellow citizens came to me and said:

“Mr. Consul, it is with a sensation of humiliation that we observe that you are driving a Ford. We feel, sir, that the prestige of the colony would be better upheld if our representative were supplied with a finer car, and we are prepared to present you with any type of automobile that you may select. Just name the brand and we shall send for it at once.”

Needless to say, my caller was a principal in the suit that was then before the court. He was also a very good friend of mine so I simply laughed and told him, “Nothing doing.”¹⁴

Managing the consular court was a major time sink, and often frustrating, especially when the Americans involved were merely using their citizenship for convenience. Nevertheless, George carried out his instructions, running back and forth to the Ottoman Governor General, Rahmi Bey, trying to pinpoint the charges against the Captain, the evidence at hand, the charts showing the location of the wreck, the buoys, the courses, and so on—information that would be necessary to adjudicate culpability. The case became so complicated that a French journal of international law reviewed its precedent-setting nature.

Even so, George cut to the main point in a note to the Department on July 1, 1912. Ships were everywhere recognized as different from other types of property in international law, with “special laws, traditions and regulations.” For this reason, “the transfer of foreign ships to the American flag is considered such a serious matter and is hedged in by so many precautions by the Government,” or should be he might have added. But what was done, was done: “If a ship legally flying the American flag is not an American ship, what is it,” George asked?¹⁵ There were consequences to putting US prestige on the line for anyone wanting to fly the flag of the United States as a convenience. What was the Department prepared to do about the insult to American prestige given the fact that the ship was flying the American flag?

Not much it turned out. A week later the trial of the captain and twenty others commenced in Turkish penal court at the Konak (the Ottoman Government offices). George summarized the first day of the trial for Ambassador William Rockhill in Constantinople, telling him the captain, “in accordance with my instructions,” told the court that he did not recognize its jurisdiction because he “was captain of a vessel flying the American flag.” A few questions were posed to other witnesses and then the trial was adjourned until July 30. George believed Turkish authorities were “feeling their way” forward “to see how far the Americans will let them go.”

The situation in the question of jurisdiction is thoroughly understood by the more intelligent portion of the community here, and our helplessness in the matter seriously compromises our prestige to an extent which probably cannot be realized either in Washington or at Constantinople. The fact that the vessel never should have been allowed to fly the flag and that the captain is a Greek has no bearing on the question at issue, which is one of law and prestige.¹⁶

George's note appeared to stiffen Rockhill's determination. The Ambassador sent a brief response the same day telling George: "Protest vigorously. I am doing the same." The next day Rockhill sent a long note to the Ottoman Minister of Foreign Affairs, closing with the following:

I cannot conceal my surprise that notwithstanding the requests contained in the above-mentioned memorandum and two notes of this Embassy, all of which remain unanswered, the local authority should have acted as stated above, and, reserving all rights, I am constrained to enter here a most formal protest against the attempt on the part of the Ottoman authorities to try the said Spiro Macris....¹⁷

George also made repeated protests, per Rockhill's direction. This pleased the Department¹⁸ but not George. He thought the protests, unaccompanied by action, undermined U.S. influence.

Captain Macris' case languished over the summer of 1912 as elite Smyrniotes headed to cooler climes and the city's life slowed down. The war with Italy also pre-occupied Ottoman officials. Italian ships had bombarded Beirut and occupied Rhodes and the Dodecanese islands just south of Smyrna. Besides that, rumors were spreading about a war in the Balkans. Serbia, Montenegro, Greece, and Bulgaria were engaged in not-so-secret talks about liberating their fellow nationalities from the Ottoman yoke. By summer their military alliances were in place, but France, Austria-Hungary and others constrained the Balkan countries, fearing a general conflagration if war broke out. Over the summer George sent a series of reports on military and political developments in the Smyrna district. He thought the Turkish army, which had "no little contempt" for the Italians on land, could "take on several of the smaller Balkan states, or even one or two of the great powers," and do well.¹⁹ But he added, the army was politicized, hostile to the Committee on Union and Progress (CUP), and watching domestic political developments closely. On July 23, Djelal Bey, the CUP man in Smyrna, invited George and other consuls to watch military maneuvers a few miles north of Smyrna. 40,000 men put on a good show but what impressed George more was how dismissively the military commander, Abdullah Pasha, treated Djelal. George heard that Abdullah, having been invited to Constantinople, responded, "if I do go, it will be at the head of my army corps." Abdullah and his officers were meeting in a house at Sevdikeuy, near Smyrna, where they received from 40 to 50 cipher telegrams a day from other military outposts in the Empire. George explained the various political factions in play and summed up by saying he thought the danger of internal instability was more likely than an Italian landing at Smyrna.²⁰

In August, George's stream of military and political reporting was sidetracked. He took Catherine out for an evening on the town on Thursday, the first day of the month. When she began to experience contractions, he rushed her to the British Seamen's Hospital where Dr. Chassaud and Nurse Williamson promptly assumed responsibility and directed efforts. Williamson finally sent him home to rest, realizing the birth would not come quickly. George obeyed, but was unable to sleep, and rushed back to the hospital early the next morning on a one-horse tram. After three days of suffering, Catherine finally gave birth at eight a.m. on Sunday morning, August 4th. George and Catherine named the little girl Nancy Phyllis Horton.



Figure 11. George behind Catherine, sitting next to Nica holding baby Nancy. Courtesy of George Horton Papers, Georgetown University.