

ALBANY INSTITUTE OF HISTORY & ART

A Guide to the Sarkis Mahigian Family papers

Summary Information

Repository

Albany Institute of History & Art Library

Creator

Sarkis Mahigian and family

Title

Sarkis Mahigian Family papers

Identifier

MG 260

Date

1904-approx. 1990

Physical Description

1 box, 1 linear foot

Physical Location

The materials are located onsite in the Museum.

Language of the Material

English, Italian, French, Turkish, Armenian

Abstract

This collection contains papers, photographs and ephemera related to the family of Sarkis Mahigian, who fled the Armenian genocide in Armenia and emigrated to the United States together with Avedis Chaderjian in 1909. The collection has been arranged into series related to the Chicago Market business in Albany, Family photographs and papers, immigration papers and documents, and medical papers.

Preferred Citation

Preferred citation for this material is as follows:

Sarkis Mahigian Family papers, 1909-1978, MG 260. Albany Institute of History & Art Library, Albany, New York.

Conditions Governing Access and Use

Restrictions on Access

none

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Immediate Source of Acquisition

Accession: # LIB 2021.26.1

Accession Source/Date: September 28, 2021

Processing Information

Processed by Andrea Belair; completed October, 2021.

Biographical/Historical

Sarkis Levon Mahigian was born in Marash, Turkey in 1892. Fleeing the Armenian Genocide in which his father and other family members were killed, seventeen-year-old Sarkis and his cousin, Avedis Chaderjian, emigrated to the United States in 1909 to pave a pathway to legal residency for their families who remained in Turkey. At that time, Sarkis changed his family surname from “Yedibellaian” to Mahigian. Sarkis first settled in Troy, New York, where he worked at the George P. Ide Company ironing shirts, collars, and related items. Struggling to learn English, Sarkis attended night school to improve his language skills as much as possible.

In 1917, with the support of his employer, Sarkis secured a bank loan and purchased a 100-acre farm in Poestenkill, New York. Sarkis married Ossanna Ganimian in 1919, and

shortly thereafter sold the farm and moved to Troy. During their time in Troy, Sarkis and Ossanna resided in at least two homes and became parents to three children: Haigoohi, Levon and Haig.

The family eventually moved to Albany, New York, and in 1946, Sarkis and Ossanna purchased a home on upper Washington Avenue. In 1921, Sarkis opened the Chicago Market, or Chicago Meat Market, in Albany. Although it moved on at least one occasion, the market's final location was 301 Central Avenue, Albany. Sarkis' youngest son, Haig, oversaw the family business beginning in 1959 until its closing in 1978. By that time, the Chicago Market had become one of the longest tenured meat markets in the Capital District.

Some interesting medical documents in the collection include a 1946 Samaritan Hospital bill for Youghaper Mahigian (Sarkis' mother), as well as a bill from when Sarkis and his brother, Karekin, contracted the Spanish Flu in November 1918. (Karekin did not survive the flu.) Lisa Mahigian Howard, daughter of Haig and granddaughter of Sarkis and Ossanna, supplied the Institute with the following family tree.

Birth family of Sarkis Levon Mahigian (1892 - 1990)

Father: Levon Sarkis Yedibellaian (1870 - date of death unknown; died in the Armenian Genocide)

Mother: Youghaper Mesrobian Mahigian (1866 - 1946; interred at Elmwood Hill Cemetery, Troy)

Siblings: Karekin (1885 - 1918; died of the Spanish Flu, interred at Elmwood Hill Cemetery, Troy); Sarkis (1892 - 1990; interred at Elmwood Hill Cemetery, Troy); Victoria (1895 - 1989); Makrouhi (1900 - 1925); John (1901 - 1982); Arika (1902 - 1989); Hripsime (1907 - 1945; interred at Elmwood Hill Cemetery, Troy)

Birth family of Ossanna Ganimian Mahigian (1894 - 1985)

Father: Garabet Ganimian (date of birth unknown – 1895; died in the Armenian Genocide)

Mother: Khatoun Hasekian (1855 - 1930; interred at Elmwood Hill Cemetery, Troy)

Siblings: Arousiag (1880 - 1916; interred at Elmwood Hill Cemetery, Troy); Haigoohi (date of birth unknown – 1915; died in the Armenian Genocide); Nishan (1888 - 1968); Barkevoohi (1893 - 1978); Ossanna (1894 - 1985; interred at Elmwood Hill Cemetery, Troy)

Scope and Contents

The materials are comprised of photographs, documents, receipts, and invoices relating to the family passage to the United States, the life of Sarkis Mahigian, photographs of the

family, records and photographs from the business Chicago Market, and documents related to medical expenses after an illness. Also included among the materials is a contemporary photograph of Alyssa Kyeong Howard, who created a project that chronicled the immigrant experience of Armenians that fled the genocide. The series have been arranged in chronological order.

Contents List

The following section contains a listing of the materials in the collection.

Description	Box	Folder
Series 1: Family photographs and papers, 1904-approx. 1990	1	1
Series 2: Immigration papers and documents, 1916-1933	1	2
Series 3: Medical papers, 1918-1946	1	3
Series 4: Chicago Meat Market photographs and papers, 1930-1978	1	4