

Carroll Yesteryears  
25 September 2016

## Exhibit Offers Glimpse Into Life As An Early Immigrant From Greece In Carroll By Mary Ann Ashcraft

Weekends are busy at this time of year, but if you have an extra hour, stop in at the Historical Society of Carroll County's Emerald Hill in Westminster to see an exciting new exhibit. It tells the story of the city's Greek community from the first immigrants to arrive at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, to the numerous successful businesses they established over the next 50+ years, and their gradual assimilation into American life. *Yearning to Breathe Free: Westminster's Greek Immigrants* is a look at a small but important segment of this county's immigrant population. The exhibit is open September 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup>, and October 1<sup>st</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup>.

Those of us whose ancestors arrived in the United States centuries ago probably have very little understanding of what drove them to leave their home countries or their struggles once they got here. This exhibit, which includes historical background plus photographs and memorabilia, offers insights into the lives of the local Greek families who contributed their treasures from the past.

Of course there are passports in foreign languages such as the one accompanying this column. A trickle of Greeks arrived in the U.S. in the 1880s, followed by two huge waves of immigrants between 1890 and 1924. Most of Westminster's Greek families came in one or the other of those large waves. Carroll County may not have been their initial destination, but once here, they put down roots.

If you have visited Ellis Island and seen the ephemera on exhibit there, you will have a sense of what *Yearning to Breathe Free* offers. One room in Emerald Hill replicates a typical Greek bedroom with its religious icons, Greek blankets, and other items that preserved memories of the homeland. Want to sample the sweets for which Greece is famous? There will be some here, as well as recipes.

Westminster's Greeks served in America's armed forces during both world wars. The exhibit includes military memorabilia from Peter Samios's service in World War I plus letters and uniforms belonging to men from the Sharkey, Berbes, and Lefteris families who served in World War II. Peter Samios was instrumental in establishing the American Legion post which operates today on East Green Street in Westminster.

Many of the Greek families opened restaurants, so it isn't surprising that the exhibit includes the old cash register from the original Harry's Lunch, a popular Westminster eating establishment, and chairs from the American Restaurant which operated more than 50 years on East Main Street.

Walking through the exhibit rooms is a trip down memory lane for those who have lived most of their lives in Carroll County. For anyone new to the community, the displays offer an

Immigration is a major issue in the current presidential election. This exhibit offers an interesting look at the story of one immigrant group in our county.

**Ἀνεκδοκὴν** ἔχει ὁποῦν ἐν τῇ ἐκδόσει αὐτῇ  
**ἐκ** Ἀμερῆς καὶ ἡμετέρας ἐκδοτικῆς Κῆρυ  
**ἐκδόσεως** τῶν Ἑλληνικῶν Πολιτικῶν τῆς Ἀμερῆς.

*Nous certifions le contenu de la photographie  
 et contre appeler.*

ΕΝ ΟΝΟΜΑΤΙ

# ΤΗΣ ΚΥΒΕΡΝΗΣΕΩΣ

ΤΟΥ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΥΤΟΥ ΤΗΣ ΕΛΛΑΔΟΣ



AU NOM

# DU GOUVERNEMENT

DU ROYAUME DE GRÈCE

ΑΡΙΘ. 14971

ΧΑΡΑΚΤΗΡΙΣΤΙΚΑ

Ἰδιότητα ἰδιωτῆς

Ἀντικείμενο ἰδιωτικὸν

Τύπος ἰδιωτικὸν

Οὐσιαστικὸν ἰδιωτικὸν

Πῶς ἰδιωτικὸν

Στοιχεῖα ἰδιωτικὸν

ΣΤΑΤΙΣΤΙΚΑ ΧΑΡΑΚΤΗΡΙΣΤΙΚΑ

Ἔθνος ἰδιωτικὸν

Διεύθυνσις ἰδιωτικὸν

Εἰς τὸν ὅτι οὐδὲν ἔστιν ἰδιωτικὸν χωρὶς νὰ  
 ἐμποδισθῇ ἢ ἐνοχληθῇ παρ' οὐδενός, νὰ χορη-  
 γηθῇ μάλιστα, ἐν ἀνάγκῃ, πρὸς αὐτὸν πᾶσα εὐκολία  
 καὶ ὑπεράσπισις.

Ἐπὶ τούτῳ ἐξέδωκε τὸ παρὸν ὑπογεγραμμένον παρ'

14971

SIGNALEMENT

Age 12 ans

Taille 1 m 50

Cheveux bruns

Yeux bleus

Dents 12

Bouche petite

Signes particuliers

Commune Athènes

Domicile Athènes

Signature du Porteur

PAR AUTORISATION DU MINISTRE DES AFFAIRES ÉTRANGÈRES

ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗ ΔΗΜΟΚΡΑΤΙΑ

ΥΠΟΥΡΓΕΙΟ ΕΞΩΤΕΡΙΚΩΝ

ΔΙΕΥΘΥΝΣΗ ΓΡΑΦΕΙΟΥ ΓΕΝΙΚΗΣ ΔΙΕΥΘΥΝΣΗΣ

Αθήνα, 14 Σεπτεμβρίου 1920

Requerrons tous les officiers, civils et militaires,  
 du Royaume de Grèce, et prions ceux des pays amis  
 de laisser passer librement Monsieur  
 Basile Ch. Eleftheriou -  
 se rendant en Amérique  
 pour accompagner son oncle sans  
 qu'il soit empêché ni molesté par personne, et  
 de lui prêter aide et protection, en cas de  
 besoin.

A cet effet nous avons délivré le présent, signé  
 par nous.

ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗ ΔΗΜΟΚΡΑΤΙΑ

ΥΠΟΥΡΓΕΙΟ ΕΞΩΤΕΡΙΚΩΝ

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*Image caption: This visa in Greek and French was issued to Vasilios Eleftheriou (Bill Lefteris) who left his native Greece in 1920 at the age of 12. He settled in Westminster where he finished school, joined relatives in running and owning successful businesses, and served his new country in World War II.*