

EI-490

ALICE ESAIAN HAKIMIAN

BIRTH DATE: May 29, 1904

INTERVIEW DATE: July 6, 1994

RUNNING TIME: 35:00

INTERVIEWER: Paul E. Sigrist, Jr.

RECORDING ENGINEER: Same

INTERVIEW LOCATION: Albany, New York

**TRANSCRIPT PREPARED AND REVIEWED BY: Paul E. Sigrist,
Jr. 8/1998**

TRANSCRIPT REVIEWED BY: CHARLES MITCHELL, 5/2010

TURKEY VIA EGYPT (ARMENIAN), 1910

AGE: 5

SHIP NAME NOT RECORDED

PORT OF EMBARCATION: ALEXANDRIA, THEN LIVERPOOL

RESIDENCES: AINTAB; TROY, NY

ORAL HISTORIAN'S NOTE: Present also during this recording is Mrs. Hakimian's son Harry, who is an active participant in the interview. Paul E. Sigrist., Director of Oral History, 8/4/1998

SIGRIST: Good afternoon, this is Paul Sigrist for the National Park Service. Today is Wednesday, July 6th, 1994. I'm in, is this considered Albany?

HARRY: Yes.

SIGRIST: Yes, this is Albany proper. I'm in Albany, New York, with Alice Hakimian.

EI-490/HAKIMIAN

HAKIMIAN: Yeah.

SIGRIST: Mrs. Hakimian came, was born in Turkey, correct?

HAKIMIAN: Yeah.

SIGRIST: You came to this country in 1910?

HAKIMIAN: I was five.

HARRY: Yes.

HAKIMIAN: Five months, five, or between five and six months [six years] that we came here.

SIGRIST: What year was it that you came?

HAKIMIAN: Oh, I wouldn't know what year it is. (she laughs) I wouldn't know that. (Mrs. Hakimian and her son Harry converse in Armenian about her year of arrival in the United States.)

HARRY: One thousand, nine hundred and ten, 1910

HAKIMIAN: One thousand...

HARRY: 1910.

HAKIMIAN: ...nineteen...

HARRY: Ten.

HAKIMIAN: Nine. That's what he says.

SIGRIST: Let me also say for the sake of the tape that Mrs. Hakimian's son Harry is with us and that we will try to speak English as often as possible...

HARRY: Okay.

SIGRIST: ...but we may slip in and out of Armenian. Mrs. Hakimian, how old were you when you came to this country?

HAKIMIAN: This country? I was between five and six years old.

SIGRIST: What is your birth date?

EI-490/HAKIMIAN

HAKIMIAN: My birthday is May the...

HARRY: 29th.

HAKIMIAN: ...the 29th, is it?

HARRY: 1904

HAKIMIAN: May 29th.

SIGRIST: What year?

HAKIMIAN: Oh, I...

HARRY: 1904.

HAKIMIAN: That it's com--, uh, I think it's next month.

HARRY: 1904.

HAKIMIAN: Huh?

HARRY: 1904

HAKIMIAN: 1906

HARRY: '4.

HAKIMIAN: Next month.

SIGRIST: 1904 you were born?

HARRY: Yes.

HAKIMIAN: Uh, I don't know. That much I don't know.

SIGRIST: Well, okay. Harry says it was 1904, May 6th?

HARRY: May 29th.

SIGRIST: May 29th. Harry, when you do speak, use your full voice...

HARRY: Okay

SIGRIST: ...so that it does pick up on the microphone.

EI-490/HAKIMIAN

HARRY: Sure/

SIGRIST: Where in Turkey were you born?

HAKIMIAN: Where was Turkey?

SIGRIST: Where in Turkey were you born?

HAKIMIAN: I was born, uh, not near the Turkies, Turks. I don't know it. But sometimes, when my mother used to tell the people and all, that's all I know. We weren't in with the Turks. They were outside, around us, see?

SIGRIST: Was it all Armenians where you lived?

HAKIMIAN: Yeah, yeah.

SIGRIST: What was the name of the village or the town?

HAKIMIAN: I wouldn't know.

HARRY: It's Aintab, Turkey.

SIGRIST: Aintab.

HAKIMIAN: Oh the Aintab, yeah.

SIGRIST: What do you remember about that village when you were a little girl?

HAKIMIAN: Well, the only thing I remember is because we left there and were left on the road almost nine to ten months, see? And I, there's nothing in my mind around if you're four years old or not quite four. You can't have too much in your mind 'til now.

HARRY: Why don't you explain to him the kind of houses that you lived in?

HAKIMIAN: Huh?

HARRY: The kind of house that you lived in. You remember that.

HAKIMIAN: Now, we had a, my father, grandfather is the builder.

SIGRIST: He used to build houses.

EI-490/HAKIMIAN

HAKIMIAN: He used to build houses. And then he came to America before us. So, he, the driveway is a long driveway. You get in the yard. And you play there with pad, pencils, and this and that. Little kids only four years old. That's all.

SIGRIST: What did the house look like? Do you...

HAKIMIAN: House?

SIGRIST: Yes. What, what did the houses look like?

HAKIMIAN: The houses, you go up quite a bit of stairs. There's a house right there when you get up. And then there's stairs, you got to get in there, see? And then there's one down the, the yard. You see, there were four brothers and they had their houses there. But half of them had come here, see? So...

SIGRIST: Did the house have a garden?

HAKIMIAN: No, no, no. Well, my uncle, I only remember this. My uncle was very, very sick. No matter what they did, he wouldn't open his eyes. You know what they did? They put him out in the yard. They don't have quilts and all, like us. We have the woolen things, pieces, and then put it in the material and then they sew that. So they put two or three of those in the yard and put my uncle there so that at least maybe from the air or something he will talk. And how many days after he started to say small words, this I don't know because I was very small. But when they told the other peoples, you know, when we came out here to America, that's where I learned a few words.

SIGRIST: What was your father's name?

HAKIMIAN: My father's name was Harry Hakimian [sic, Harry Esaian].

HARRY: Esaian.

SIGRIST: And what, what was his name in Armenian? What was Harry...

HAKIMIAN: Artin, Artin.

HARRY: Artin.

SIGRIST: How do you spell that?

HARRY: A-R-T-I-N, it would be spelled.

SIGRIST: A-R-T-I-N. Artin Hakimian [sic, Esaian]

HAKIMIAN: Yeah.

SIGRIST: And what was your mother's name?

HAKIMIAN: Oh, the mother's name was Osama. [ph, sic]

HARRY: I'm sorry. Rebecca.

HAKIMIAN: Oh, yeah.

SIGRIST: Your mother's name was Rebecca. What was the Armenian?

HARRY: Rebecca, (he accents the first syllable) they would say. Rebecca would be...

SIGRIST: Spelled the same way?

HARRY: Same way, yes.

SIGRIST: And what was her maiden name? (to Mrs. Hakimian) What was your mom's name before she was married?

HAKIMIAN: I don't know that. It's not like America. The Armenia is not like that. It was very old, you know, and you can't remember anything. They don't do these kind of talks. Now they came to America, they're, they're Americans all. They talk nice and all.

SIGRIST: What did your father do for a living in Armen--, uh, in Turkey?

HAKIMIAN: My father's...

SIGRIST: What did he do for a living?

HAKIMIAN: Oh, my father was a, used to build homes, build their homes. The only one.

SIGRIST: So that was like your grandfather.

HAKIMIAN: He was the only one. He used to, they used to, one used to come and say, "Do this for, will you do this?" He'll do that. And then the other one, he'll put some on there. And about five or six different places, see?

EI-490/HAKIMIAN

SIGRIST: What was your father like as a person? What was his personality like?

HAKIMIAN: Oh, very good, very good. He'd love, help people and he used to take me on his lap, I was only two or three years old, play with me. He was a very good man.

SIGRIST: And let me ask you the same question about your mother. What was her personality like?

HAKIMIAN: Well, my mother, you see, over there they did, they, the boy, if he sees the woman, they don't go together. And he saw my mother and he wanted my mother. He come home and told them. "Go home. Go over there and get her and we'll have a wedding here." Yeah, so the did. And my mother, he asked my mother. My mother says, "You people know. I don't know." (she laughs) You know, they're married. She was only sixteen years old. So, they got married.

SIGRIST: And how many children did they have?

HAKIMIAN: They had nine children.

SIGRIST: Did all nine live?

HAKIMIAN: No. There was, uh, a couple died there in Aintab. And we came to America and I, I don't know. There's only four living now here in America. All the rest, they got some sickness and all. They died.

SIGRIST: Do you remember your grandparents in Turkey?

HAKIMIAN: Huh?

SIGRIST: Do you remember your grandparents in Turkey? Were they living?

HAKIMIAN: Grandpa?

SIGRIST: Your grandparents.

HAKIMIAN: No, I don't know. I was very small. I came, we got out of the Aintab when I was only four years old. And then we came to, uh...

HARRY: Alexandria.

HAKIMIAN: Yeah, we came there.

HARRY: Egypt.

HAKIMIAN: And they made my eyes, you know, they were very fussy at that time. They said, they pulled me aside and he says, "You can't go." My father says, "How can I go? I'll go and then my wife will try to clean her eyes and go to a doctor. And then I'll call my wife." That's the way they came.

SIGRIST: So your father actually got here before you did. Do you remember what people ate in Turkey? What kind of food did people eat in Turkey?

HAKIMIAN: I don't know. Funny, I don't know. I was only four years old when I got out of there. And it's not like American, everything around, no.

SIGRIST: Why did your family leave? Why did they want to come to America?

HAKIMIAN: You see, the Turks were doing a lot of damage. They were killing the Armenians. And the head office couldn't do nothing with them, see? They always killed them, see? That's why everyone, practically all came to America.

SIGRIST: You said that in your town all the Armenians lived together and the Turks were on the outside.

HAKIMIAN: Yeah, it's a big place, you know, like here. Way, five or six thing over, it's got to be big, see? They all got together, see, and that's all.

SIGRIST: Did you have any family in America before your father came over?

HAKIMIAN: No. My father came alone. And then he start working and then some money down and we came.

SIGRIST: Where did your father work when he first came to this country?

HAKIMIAN: I don't know. See, he used to go to work. I think he used to do the building, building. That was his job. He used to do a lot in the old country.

EI-490/HAKIMIAN

SIGRIST: When he came to America first, did he stay in New York City...

HAKIMIAN: No.

SIGRIST: ...or did he come up here to the Albany area?

HAKIMIAN: No, he didn't stay in New York City. Where was it that he stayed?

HARRY: (Armenian)

HAKIMIAN: Huh?

HARRY: Did he come to Troy [NY]?

HAKIMIAN: Uh, I think, that's where he came to.

HARRY: I think they settled in Troy [NY].

HAKIMIAN: Very small here was, so he came here. And I don't know how many months after, he had to make some money. And he sent it down to us and we came.

SIGRIST: Do you remember anything of the trip from Turkey to Alexandria?

HAKIMIAN: I wouldn't, because how old am I to know that.

SIGRIST: How long did you stay in Alexandria?

HAKIMIAN: Well, we had to stay until my father got some money and send it down, see? I, about five or six or seven months, like that.

SIGRIST: Did your mother ever talk about that experience of being in Alexandria and what that was like?

HAKIMIAN: No, she never said it. Well, the elderly ones, maybe they talked together but they never said anything to a four or five year old kid.

SIGRIST: How many children does your mother have at this point when you're in Alexandria?

HAKIMIAN: Uh, the whole, all the, she had nine children. And now she has four. They all, little by little, the little ones died quicker. But the elder one, the two older ones died. They got very sick and they died. They died in the hospital.

SIGRIST: In, this country?

HAKIMIAN: In Troy.

SIGRIST: Here, once they were here.

HAKIMIAN: In Troy, yeah. That's where we came to, Troy.

HARRY: If you repeat that question slower to her, I think she'll understand it. You want to know how many was in Alexandria?

SIGRIST: Right. When your mother was getting ready to come to America, how many of you children are with her.

HAKIMIAN: Well, it was one, two, the boy died, and the other boy lived, and me, see? But when we came to America, the other boy died, too. My mother only had five girls, and one of them died about twelve or fifteen years ago, yeah.

SIGRIST: You said your father's name was Harry Hakimian.

HAKIMIAN: Yeah.

SIGRIST: Did you marry a Hakimian?

HAKIMIAN: No.

HARRY: She did. My father's name was Hakimian.

HAKIMIAN: Huh?

HARRY: Her father's name should be Harry Esaian, not Hakimian.

SIGRIST: Oh.

HARRY: She married, my father's name was Hakimian. She confused it.

SIGRIST: (to Mrs. Hakimian) So, so your last name before you married was...

HARRY: Esaian.

SIGRIST: Esaian. (Mrs. Hakiman and Harry agree) How do you spell that?

HARRY: E-S-A-I-A-N.

EI-490/HAKIMIAN

SIGRIST: (spelling with Harry) E-S-A-I-A-N. Esaian. And then you married Hakimian.

Hakimian: Yeah.

HARRY: Right.

SIGRIST: Good. Harry, I should ask you, are there any stories that you would like to prompt your mother to tell before we get out of Europe that you can think of?

HARRY: Coming across you mean?

SIGRIST: Well, we haven't gotten on the ship yet but is there anything that, that...

HARRY: Well, they always used to, in their stories that she used to tell when she was a lot younger and we could understand them, mostly all the people lived a very comfortable life, middle class comfortable life of people, where there wasn't any of these uprisings which the Turks had. Naturally, mostly all the people that were running the Turkish government were Armenian people for the simple reason that the Turks were a backward nation of people. And you got to remember here that we have Christians sprinkled in with Moslems. Same kind of a problem that's going on over in the Middle East again. It doesn't seem like it will ever end. They used to have, for instance, a bakery. They had things at the bakery and they had bakery shops like we have.

HAKIMIAN: Oh, yeah. They had that.

HARRY: They had different kinds of weaving shops like we have. A lot of things were made by hand in those days. But the predominant animal they had was the donkey instead of the a horse because of the terrain.

SIGRIST: (to Mrs. Hakimian) Do you remember the bakery in Turkey?

HAKIMIAN: No, I don't.

SIGRIST: No, nothing like that.

HARRY: They would probably go and order the stuff and then they'd send it to the house.

HAKIMIAN: Huh?

EI-490/HAKIMIAN

HARRY: Remember, your father would go and order things and then they'd send it to the house.

HAKIMIAN: Yeah.

HARRY: That's the way it was done. They had delivery just like here.

HAKIMIAN: The women there didn't do no cooking in the house because there's no gas. But sometimes they used to, they had a stove like that in the yard and they'd burn that and they'd make some pilaf and that's...

SIGRIST: Some what?

HAKIMIAN: Pilaf.

Harry: Wheat.

SIGRIST: Pilaf.

HARRY: Pilaf is wheat. Uh, they call it bulgur now.

HAKIMIAN: Yeah. Or else they can't do anything. The man, in the morning, when the father is going, he'll go in the place and say, "Send this, this, this to my wife." That's it.

SIGRIST: Is Turkey a warm country? Is it warm there?

HAKIMIAN: It's not too warm. It's not too cold, see?

SIGRIST: Does it snow in Turkey?

HAKIMIAN: I think so. I think so.

HARRY: In the northern part of Turkey it does.

HAKIMIAN: Because I don't know too much about it.

SIGRIST: Well, you were just a little girl.

HAKIMIAN: Yeah. Four years old. Three years old.

SIGRIST: So you and your mother and two brother, I believe, were in Alexandria waiting to come to America. Your father sent you the

EI-490/HAKIMIAN

money so that you could get out of Alexandria. Where did you go when you left Alexandria?

HAKIMIAN: I really don't know.

SIGRIST: IS that where you got the ship to come to America?

HAKIMIAN: You got to go and get another ship, I think, see, another kind of ship. That kind I don't know much. See, four or five years old.

HARRY: Ma, why don't you explain how the rug that you had that your father had given you was your, your cover for sleeping. And how the water used to come on the ship and then you used to dry out the...

HAKIMIAN: Oh you see? When we were going to come to the, America, the ship is got three places. The first place, when the ship is coming, all the water is coming in there. I used to be wet like anything, see, because we couldn't go any higher. That's higher price, see? So, that's what I used, they used to put a lot of things on us, oh, and cover us up. And some of us used to get sick. That's they way we came.

SIGRIST: Do you remember what the name of the ship was?

HAKIMIAN: Oh, no. I can't. (she laughs)

SIGRIST: Do you remember if it was a long boat ride before you got to America? Do you remember how long it took to get to America?

HAKIMIAN: I never, I couldn't go nowhere so I could see. They were always scared. We were always in a bunch like this. (she gestures) We can't go nowhere. How am I going to know. Even if it was, I wouldn't know. I was too small.

HARRY: I think their ship docked in Liverpool, England, because my, they stayed there for quite some time and they didn't quite like the fog and the mist in England. And then I think from there was the next journey to America.

SIGRIST: Do you remember coming into New York?

HAKIMIAN: No.

SIGRIST: Being...

EI-490/HAKIMIAN

HAKIMIAN: No, I don't know any of those things. Only a little kid, hasn't seem anything. How am I going to know? (she laughs) I wouldn't know any, I didn't know anything. My father even came. You see, my father had a moustache and one day his friend says, "Come of. Let's go in and have our face cleaned." He went in there to get my father's, uh, thing off. He didn't like that on there. He went in there and they sat down. And he said it in American. The man knew it, see? He told him and the man went like that. (she gestures shaving off half the moustache) Well, my father can't keep it half way, this side and nothing. (she laughs) So, they were telling me and I, sometimes you learn things, see? That's all I know.

SIGRIST: Do you know if your father came to New York to meet you when you arrived?

HAKIMIAN: No, no.

SIGRIST: What's the first thing that you remember after you got to America?

HAKIMIAN: To America? We got off the boat, ship. And a nice old, it was winter, (she gestures) all the things this high.

SIGRIST: The snow?

HAKIMIAN: Yeah. And we haven't got no heavy clothes. So my sister, there was a boy between, he died, next was my sister and, so the man, a nice man, he put my hand in his pocket, see? And then the other hand he wrapped some things up so it wouldn't be so cold. That time was very cold. So he brought us up to an Armenian house and then he went. And in the morning, my father came. I didn't see my father. My father called me. I wouldn't go because he looked funny without the moustache. I wouldn't go. (she laughs) So my father starts to cry. So this was it all. That's all I know.

SIGRIST: Where did you live? Where did your father take you to live?

HAKIMIAN: Where (?) for a couple of days they, for a couple of weeks the lady said, "There all small house." Well, they used to put the things on the floor, heavy things, and you sleep on there. So that's what we did. And later on, year by year, they learned a lot. And they used to build those things, uh, whatever needs they used to do it all.

SIGRIST: Did they put you in school?

HAKIMIAN: Me? Well, they put me in school but the teachers said, "We can't have her," because they say something, I'd just stay there and look at them. I don't understand nothing. So, for a couple of years I couldn't go to school.

SIGRIST: How did you eventually learn English?

HAKIMIAN: Huh?

SIGRIST: How did you learn English?

HAKIMIAN: How did I learn? Well, we used to go to school and then some of the children were before us, they came, they learned. They, we used to say it to one another and play. That's all.

SIGRIST: What about your mother and father, could they speak English?

HAKIMIAN: My father could hardly speak English. My mother never spoke English. When she went downtown to buy anything, she'd look at it, give the money and that's it.

SIGRIST: Did your mother like being in America?

HAKIMIAN: Oh yeah, she loved it because there was no more killing, the Turks.

SIGRIST: When you were here in Troy, I assume this is where you're talking about...

HARRY: Yes.

SIGRIST: ...when you were in Troy, did you or did any of your family ever experience any kind of prejudice because you were Armenians? Did anyone make fun of you because you were foreign?

HAKIMIAN: Well, they used to make fun of us but we used to run back home, or if the school is near we'd run there. That's the only way. They used to make a lot of fun of us. We got used to it later on, so, then we start learning, too.

SIGRIST: Did you see anything in America that you had never seen before in Turkey?

HAKIMIAN: No, because I didn't go out too much because I was always afraid that they'd hit me and I'd get sick or something happens.

EI-490/HAKIMIAN

Because I saw a lot of them, see? And that's why the mothers all stopped when they cross--, to get to school. A lot of the mothers used to go and bring them home, yeah.

SIGRIST: Because people were being rough on them?

HAKIMIAN: They're going to him them. They're going to him them.

SIGRIST: Harry, let me ask you, since we've now gotten you up to Troy (gestures to Mrs. Hakimian), is there any story that we should prompt your mom about in the hold, when the ship arrived and that whole experience before we go on to Troy, that you can think of?

HARRY: There isn't too much that I could add there.

SIGRIST: Okay. (to Mrs. Hakimian) Tell me about the house that you lived in in Troy. Did you live in one house or did you move?

HAKIMIAN: Oh, one house, one whole house. They, we used to eat there. Everything used to be done. Then, when the children have to sleep, they used to put things like this (she gestures) and put them on, sleep, until we get used to it. Until they get money, they used to get it, little by little.

SIGRIST: Did your mother ever go to work?

HAKIMIAN: No.

SIGRIST: What about your, your brothers or sisters?

HAKIMIAN: I went to work but my mother never did.

SIGRIST: How old were you when you went to work?

HAKIMIAN: How old? I was twelve years old.

SIGRIST: And what was the job that you got?

HAKIMIAN: Huh?

SIGRIST: What was the job?

HAKIMIAN: Oh, it was these neckties.

HARRY: Collars, collars.

EI-490/HAKIMIAN

HAKIMIAN: Cluett Peabody.

SIGRIST: The Cluett Peabody Collar, was this in a factory?

HARRY: Yes.

HAKIMIAN: Oh, it's a big factory.

SIGRIST: Do you remember how much you got paid?

HAKIMIAN: Oh, yeah. I used to make good money. And I used to bring it and my father used to take it. He used to be happy about it. (she laughs)

END OF SIDE ONE

BEGINNING OF SIDE TWO

SIGRIST: Do you remember exactly what you did? What did you do in the factory?

HAKIMIAN: In the factory?

SIGRIST: What was your job in the factory?

HAKIMIAN: You see, the collars, these collars...

SIGRIST: These are the detachable collars.

HAKIMIAN: ...the top is big and the bottom, the thing that you got to button is only this wide. (she gestures) They connect that together and then the men just put it on and button it and then put their things on.

SIGRIST: And you were making the collars yourselves?

HAKIMIAN: I used to do it in the factory at twelve years old.

SIGRIST: Did you want to go to work when you were that young?

EI-490/HAKIMIAN

HAKIMIAN: Huh?

SIGRIST: Did you want to have this job when you were that young?

HAKIMIAN: I watched it?

SIGRIST: Did you want to have the job? Did you want to go to work when you were young, or did you have to go to work?

HAKIMIAN: Oh, I had to go. I had to go because you need, everybody needed money, see?

SIGRIST: So were you not going to school then when you were twelve?

HAKIMIAN: No, I never went to school, no. My elder sisters, they did because they were small. But me, I had to work, make money.

SIGRIST: Make your father happy. (they laugh) Tell me about when you got married.

HAKIMIAN: When I got married?

SIGRIST: How old were you when you got married?

HAKIMIAN: I was sixteen years old when I got married.

SIGRIST: And what was the name of the man that you married?

HAKIMIAN: (armenian)

HARRY: First name was Avedis and the last name was Hakimian.

SIGRIST: Can you spell Avedis?

HARRY: A-V-E-D-I-S.

SIGRIST: And how did you meet Mr. Hakimian?

HAKIMIAN: What do you mean?

SIGRIST: How did you meet your husband?

HAKIMIAN: Oh you don't meet nothing. The boy comes or the boy's parents come to the house. And they always watch you. They watch what you, what I do and this and that. I didn't even know anything

about it. And so, then the mother and father came and said, "We want your daughter for our son." So...

SIGRIST: And that was it.

HAKIMIAN: So, then we got engaged and then we waited, I was too small, another year. Then we got married.

SIGRIST: And how many children did you have?

HAKIMIAN: Me? (to Harry) How many did I have?

HARRY: You had three children.

HAKIMIAN: Yeah, that's all I had.

SIGRIST: And what are their names.

HAKIMIAN: My mother had five. I had three.

SIGRIST: What were the names of your children?

HAKIMIAN: I don't know. I forgot all about them. They're all, years and years ago.

SIGRIST: Your children. What are the names of your children?

HAKIMIAN: Huh?

SIGRIST: Your children. The children that you had. Your own children.

HAKIMIAN: Oh, my own? Here's one, (she gestures) Harry.

SIGRIST: Harry.

HAKIMIAN: And the other one is George. I didn't have too many children.
(she laughs)

HARRY: How about my sister?

HAKIMIAN: That's all.

HARRY: My sister. You had my sister.

HAKIMIAN: Huh?

EI-490/HAKIMIAN

- HARRY: She died. You had my sister and she died.
- HAKIMIAN: Yeah, I had a sister [sic, daughter] and she died. That's all. I only had three children. That's all.
- SIGRIST: Did you ever want to go back to visit where you were born, to go back to Turkey?
- HAKIMIAN: Never, never. Nobody did.
- SIGRIST: So your parents never wanted to.
- HAKIMIAN: The Turks there will kill you, see? That's why they all came to America.
- SIGRIST: Were there a lot of Armenian people in Troy?
- HAKIMIAN: Yeah, in Troy there was a lot of Armenians. Now, they're all over, see?
- SIGRIST: I was wondering, can you speak some Armenian on tape for me?
- HAKIMIAN: I can't speak Armenian.
- SIGRIST: Can, what about a prayer. Do you know a prayer in Armenian? Do you ever pray in Armenian? (Harry speaks to his mother in Armenian)
- HAKIMIAN: Oh, we pray.
- SIGRIST: Can you do some for us, while the tape is running, can you pray out loud and slowly.
- HAKIMIAN: I pray, all the (?) small, when I start to talk, my mother taught me how to pray, see? And I still pray all the time.
- SIGRIST: Do you know one of the prayers in Armenian?
- HAKIMIAN: No, I don't.
- SIGRIST: No, just in English. Did, in your house when you were a little girl, everyone spoke Armenian, correct? When you were little, everyone spoke Armenian here. Well, Harry is there anything else that you would like to add before we conclude on this hot day.

EI-490/HAKIMIAN

- HARRY: The only this was that, well, the conditions in which they came. They just about started from the bottom of the barrel and they worked their way through.
- HAKIMIAN: Now, my headaches.
- HARRY: With the amount of people that were there in Troy, they were mostly a very close knit bunch of people, the pioneers that came here. And mostly any one of them that got any kind of work later on down the line were either in dry cleaning or in the meat business, butchers. And, eventually, as their children grew up, they got to college and they branched out into other fields. So they were here when Troy was at its zenith. Troy at one time was quite a town.
- SIGRIST: And I assume that a lot of them had jobs in the factories, too.
- HARRY: Yes. Cluett's was one. There was also steel factories here, too. And, of course, that, there was good employment as Troy got going and these people worked their way. Some of them got to school and some of them, like in my mother's case, had to help support the family like a lot of people did.
- SIGRIST: I'm sure that that was probably the more common scenario, actually.
- HARRY: Right, right, like a lot did. Especially when they were large families. It's almost back to the same scenario we have today, when husband and wife have to go out, with things the way they are, they both have to work to make ends meet and to provide a good family. (gesturing to his mother) Yeah, she paid her dues. She certainly did.
- SIGRIST: Yeah, indeed. Well, I want to thank you very much. Thank you for letting me ask you these questions.
- HAKIMIAN: You're welcome. I'm sorry but I get tired.
- SIGRIST: That's all right. It's hot, too. So, this is Paul Sigrist, singing off with Alice Hakimian and her son Harry in Albany [NY] on Wednesday, July 6th, 1994. Thank you.
- HAKIMIAN: You're welcome.