

Parents Perish in Turkey Georgetown Became His Home

by Jerry Tuton

Practically everyone has heard about Nazi concentration camps and how 6,000,000 Jews were incinerated, shot, or killed by other violent means during the Second World War.

Due to Nazi atrocities, the word "genocide" has become well known to everyone. But, few seem to remember that a similar genocide was committed by another nation 25 years before the Jewish massacre.

The nation was Ottoman Turkey and its victims were three million Armenians living in the Eastern part of Turkey. The area they lived in was formerly called Armenia, but, in the Middle Ages had been overrun by Turks.

They Were Aliens

During the 500 year Turkish occupation, Armenians were harassed, persecuted, and massacred frequently. In 1896, Turkish mobs killed 300,000. They were persecuted because they were Christians and "aliens."

During the First World War, Turkey decided to end the "Armenian Problem" once and for all by killing all Armenians living in Turkey.

The plan was carried out with unprecedented barbarity, resulting in the massacre of 500,000 Armenians. The rest were driven into the Syrian desert to Arab countries, or fled for their lives.

The massacre created thousands of orphans, who for years roamed from town to town, homeless and without food. Many died of hunger, others were aided by the American Refugee Fund. A small minority was accommodated in Western orphanages in a different part of the Middle East.

Haig Kouyoumjian, 17 Ellen Street, Brampton is one of the hundreds of orphans who were rescued and taken care of in these orphanages.

Mr. Kouyoumjian was born in 1915 in Caesaria, Turkey, of Armenian parents. Both his parents were killed during the massacre. He doesn't know if he had any other relatives. He can't even remember his mother and father.

Five Years Old

He faintly remembers a British missionary group saving him and taking him to Constantinople (Istanbul). He was five years old at the time. Mr. Kouyoumjian stayed at the orphanage for a year, and then, with thousands of other orphans was transported to Corfu because Istanbul had become unsafe for Armenian orphans.

Forty of the orphans were brought to Canada in 1923. The following year, the orphanage administrators decided to bring another group to Canada.

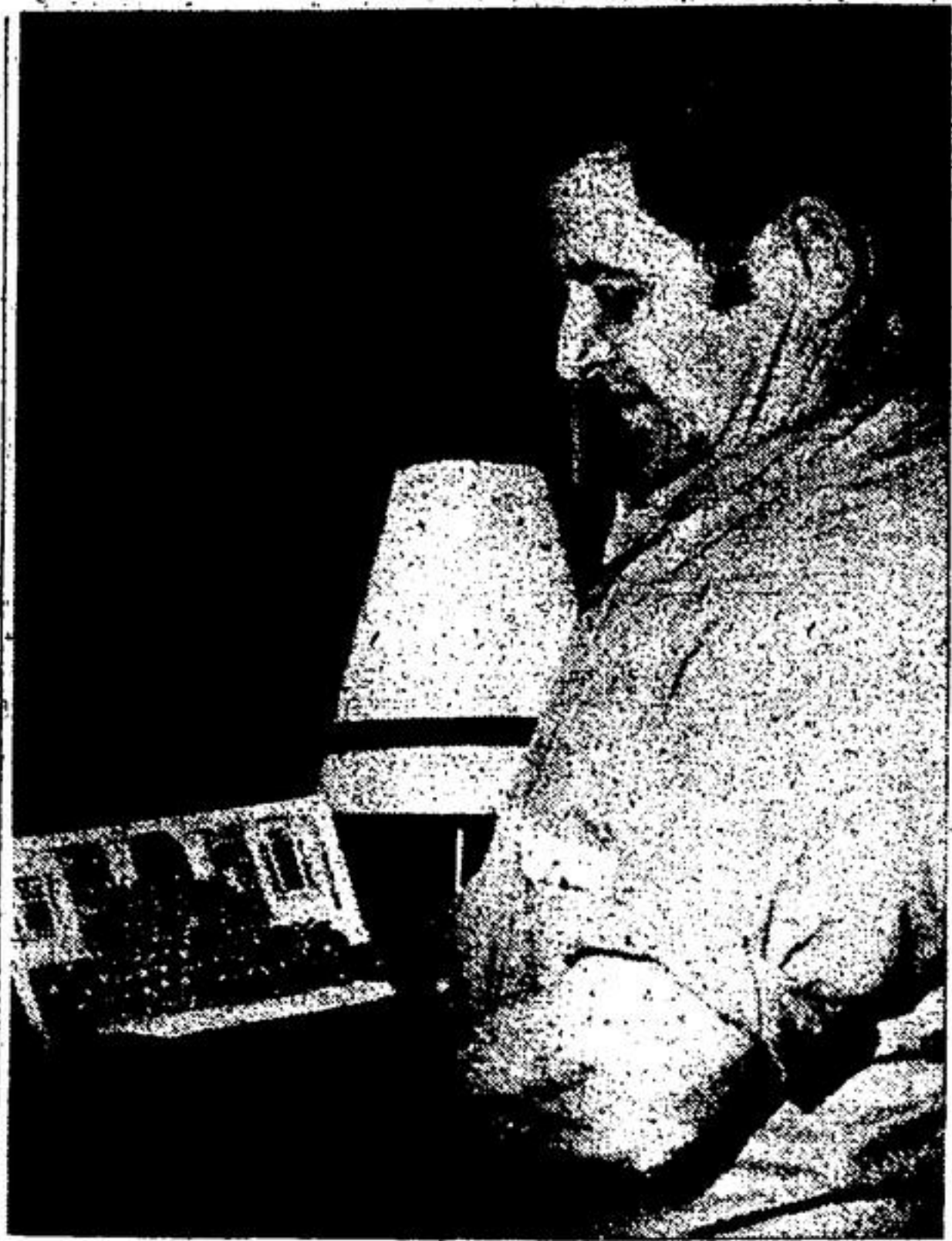
Mr. Kouyoumjian was in that second group. Before finalizing the applications, the boys underwent rigid medical tests. Some of the boys, who didn't want to leave, rubbed onions in their eyes, said Mr. Kouyoumjian. "So that doctors would think they had trachoma and reject them."

"I had no reason to stay in that part of the world. I had no one, besides, the orphans who came in 1923, sent good reports about Canada," he said.

The S.S. Braga left Piraeus, Greece, in mid-1924 with 40 orphans on board. "I think it was a French ship; they were serving wine on the table," Mr. Kouyoumjian recalled.

Go To Georgetown

The ship arrived in Halifax in September, and two days later the boys were brought to the Armenian Boys' Home in Georgetown. On their way to Toronto, whenever the train stopped, the orphans were asked to sing Armenian songs at the station. Mr. Kouyoumjian re-



Haig Kouyoumjian is looking back 45 years to the Georgetown Armenian Boys' School picture. Most of the people in the picture still live in Canada, but Mr. Kouyoumjian is the only one still living in this area.

members that some of the past Georgetown Armenian Boys' sengers gave them fruit and candies.

The Armenian Boys' Home was on Main Street South. The boys were taught English and worked on the farm as chore boys and milk boys.

It was forbidden to speak Armenian, and the boys were told to change their names and adopt Anglo-Saxon names. "We got together and decided we were not going to change our names. We told the principal that all we have left of our parents, you can't take that from us."

Mr. Kouyoumjian said the orphans were treated well although the food seemed strange to them: "I never liked the porridge they cooked for us."

He lived in the Armenian Boys' Home for nearly two years and in 1926 asked to be transferred where "I could learn the farming business in a shorter time."

Friends Had Left

When he returned to Georgetown seven years later to live in this area permanently, he couldn't find his orphan friends. The boys had scattered to all parts of Ontario, and the home was converted into a school called Cedarvale School for Girls.

Kouyoumjian married in 1935 and worked on area farms until 1945. That year he joined Calvert Florists of Brampton. He moved to Brampton with his family, because wartime gasoline restrictions made commuting from Georgetown to Brampton difficult.

Haig Kouyoumjian of Brampton is looking back 45 years to

McNeil, McDowell Have New Posts in School System

The work of the North Halton area's two former area superintendents has been phased out.

W. Leonard McNeil, former area superintendent of the Halton No. 4, (Milton, Nassagaweya and Acton) has been appointed a Superintendent of Schools with the Ontario Dept. of Education, with responsibility for private secondary schools in the Grades 11 to 13 level. Orville G. McDowell, who was area superintendent in Halton No. 1 (Esqueving and Georgetown) has accepted a position as Program Consultant in Special Education with the Department, and is responsible now for Region 7 which includes Simcoe, Dufferin, Peel, Halton and 3 boroughs of Metro Toronto.

They are both working out of a Department office at 40 Eglington Ave. E. Toronto.

Mr. McNeil came to the Halton office as an inspector ten years ago, and says he enjoyed every minute of his work in the area. He recalls the introduction of the new mathematics, continuous progress, and the equipping of every school in his area (with just one exception) with fine new library resource centre facilities among the accomplishments in education during his tenure here.

He began his new work in mid-Jan. and is working with two other superintendents

Parents' Panel Discusses Training Retarded Children

On Monday, March 3, parents and teachers of North Halton Sunshine School enjoyed an evening of discussion and study on the trainable retarded children.

E. Lavender, Superintendent of North Halton for the County Board of Education brought greetings from the board. K. Armstrong, superintendent of Special Education for Halton County Board of Education, spoke to the group of his hopes and aspirations for education in our special schools and his desire to know the children and their needs.

A panel of five parents, Mrs. A.D. Hall, Mrs. L. Pickering, L. Virus, R. Cotter, and B. Cannon discussed problems that can arise as a parent of a retarded child. Rev. M. Christenson as moderator of the panel guided more discussion from the floor. The set questions discussed by the panel were as follows:

1) Do you have problems with other members of your family because of your retarded child? If so how do you handle them?

2) Do you feel discrimination towards your child by children outside of your family? Adults? If so, how do you cope with it?

3) Do you treat your child as you do the other children in your family or do you tend to discriminate? (responsibilities, family outings, etc.).

4) Does your child like

DEER IN PARK

Postmaster Harold Marshall did a double take a week Sunday morning when he looked out a back window in his Charles Street home to see a deer in the town park.

It is rarely that deer venture into town limits although they are plentiful in the countryside.

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50-50 WINNER

Sales of 50-50 tickets which will help finance the trip west of the Juvenile hockey team continue to grow each week. Last week Ann Puckering, Terra Cotta had the lucky ticket and her share of the week's sales was \$364.25.

a panel of professional advisors including a doctor, dentist lawyer, public health nurse and educator.

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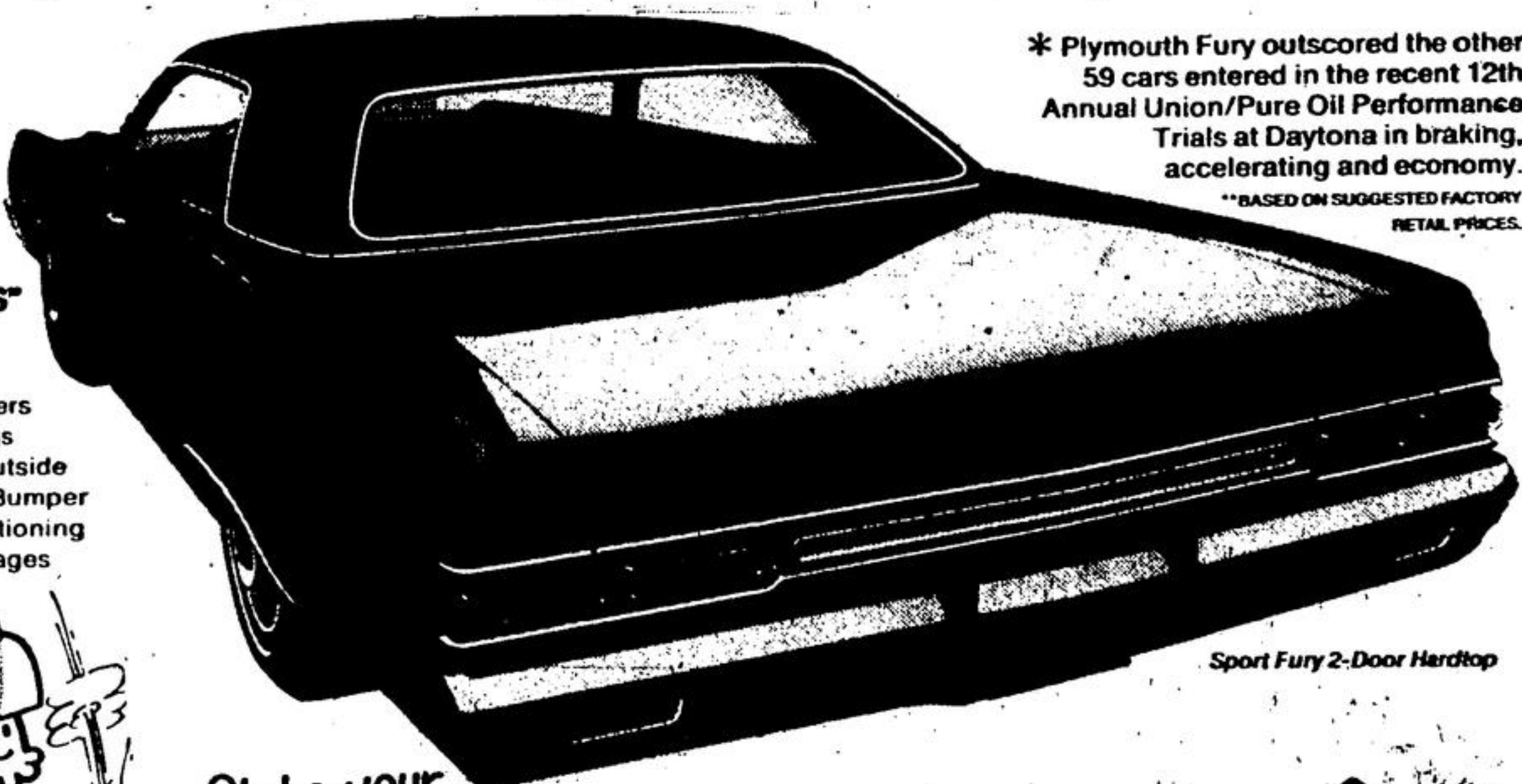
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