

New Hampshire's Greek Americans

Immigrants arriving in the United States in large numbers tend to share at least two experiences: they look forward, trying to become American, and they look back, trying to maintain some traditions from their homeland. This document is part of a series discussing these tendencies in groups that have migrated to New Hampshire. The series is meant to support the New Hampshire Historical Society school program *Passport to New Hampshire History: Immigration and the Granite State*.

Becoming American

Greek and Greek Revival Architecture



While the Greek immigrants who came in large waves between 1900 and 1920 shared many of the same experiences as those from other countries, their experiences nevertheless differed from others in an important respect.

Americans already had a tradition of reverence for Greek ideals associated with democracy and Classical culture. Stemming from the American Revolution, and especially following the War of 1812, Americans were in no mood

to build structures that reminded them of the English; instead, they turned to the ancient Greeks for inspiration. Americans began to erect buildings reminiscent of Greek temples, the fondness for Greek forms growing out of an association between the ancient Greek city-states and the dawn of Western democracy.

Archaeological discoveries and American sympathy for the Greek war for independence of the early 1800s helped further popularize Greek architecture.

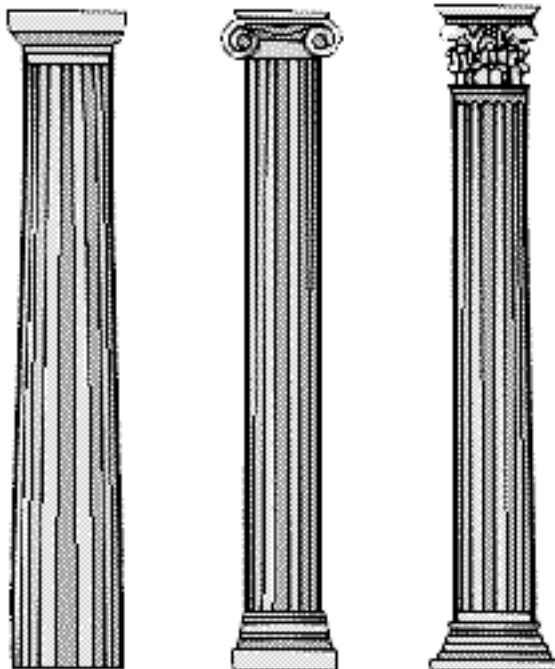
The Mary Baker Eddy House (right) on Concord's North State Street, completed around 1850, is one of the more elaborate New Hampshire dwellings built in the Greek Revival Style. The house's gable has been turned to face the



street to imitate the look of an ancient Greek temple. This impression is furthered by the addition of columns and moldings to the building's front.

While American architects drew from the full range of Greek styles, they preferred the simpler forms, which they felt were purer. It was for this reason that designers favored the simpler Doric and Ionic orders of architecture to the more ornate Corinthian. Architectural styles created by the ancient Greeks over 2,000 years ago are still regarded as being among the most elegant and well-balanced forms ever developed. In subsequent centuries, architects have used elements of classical Greek architecture in everything from public buildings in Washington, D.C. to modest single-family homes.

Later buildings, especially major structures like banks and government buildings, kept these architectural traditions alive, using the full palette of styles originated in Greece and modified by the Romans. Well into the 1900s, designers have continued to use these styles to link American institutions and values to those held by the ancient Greeks centuries ago.



The Greek Orders of Architecture (left to right)

Doric

The Doric is the least ornate and most basic order and is associated with strength and simplicity.

Ionic

With its decorative scrolled capital, this order is more elaborate than the Doric order.

Corinthian

The most elaborate of the three orders, Corinthian features decorative scrolls enhanced by ornamentation that is inspired by nature.

Coming to America

The history of modern Greece began with the recognition of Greek independence from the Turkish Ottoman Empire in 1832. During the Greek war for independence, many Americans supported the effort, identifying it with both the American revolutionary cause as well as the ancient democratic tradition that emerged in Greece centuries ago.



In the late 1800s, Greece was beset by political and economic hardship. Victory in the war for independence had brought the country freedom, but the Greek governments that followed proved to be of little improvement.

An oppressive system of taxation required peasants to pay 10 to 40 percent of their income to the government, with the wealthier classes paying little or nothing.

The largest wave of Greek immigrants, about 350,000 coming between 1900 and 1920, were mostly unskilled men from southern Greek villages. Most Greek immigrants came from the country's southern peninsula, the northern province of Macedonia, and the islands of the Aegean and Ionian Seas; ethnic Greeks living on the western coast of Turkey also sought opportunities in the U.S. Like immigrants from other countries, these first migrants intended to stay in America no longer than necessary, hoping to find profitable work and returning home with their savings. Some of them succeeded in this ambition but most remained in the U.S. where they began a new life.



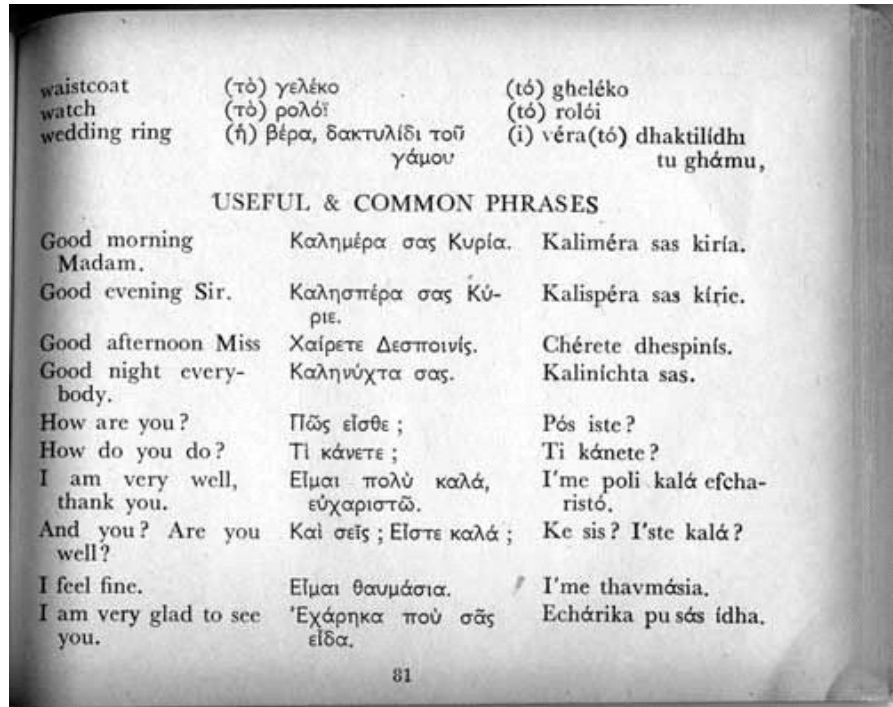
Greek Coffee Shop, presented at the 1935 Hancock Fair by the Rockingham & Strafford Recreation Advisers.

By 1920, there were 3,000 Greeks living in Manchester and about 1,200 in Nashua. While Greek workers made up about 10 per cent of the workforce at Manchester's Amoskeag Manufacturing Company, many Greek immigrants chose to work in shoe shops or service industries, and eventually began small businesses.

Keeping Traditions

The Greek Language and Alphabet

Here are some common English phrases, followed by their translation into Greek and how these phrases are rendered into phonetic English. Below is a complete list of lower and upper case letters. *Can you identify any Greek letters that are the same or similar to letters in English?*



From *How to Say It in Greek* (1954)

Greek Alphabet—Modern Pronunciation

A α	B β	Γ γ	Δ δ	Ε ε	Ζ ζ	Η η	Θ θ	Ι ι	Κ κ	Λ λ	Μ μ
άλφα	βήτα	γάμα	δέλτα	έψιλον	ζήτα	ήτα	θήτα	γιώτα	κάππα	λάμδα	μι
alfa	vita	gama	thelta	epsilon	zita	ita	thita	yiota	kapa	lamtha	mi
a	b	g	d	ē	z	ē	th	i	k	l	m
[a]	[v]	[ɣ]	[ð]	[e]	[z]	[i]	[θ]	[i]	[k]	[l]	[m]
Ν ν	Ξ ξ	Ο ο	Π π	Ρ ρ	Σ σ ζ	Τ τ	Υ υ	Φ φ	Χ χ	Ψ ψ	Ω ω
νι	ξι	όμικρον	πι	ρο	σίγμα	ταυ	ύψιλον	φι	χι	ψι	ωμέγα
ni	xi	omikron	pi	ro	sigma	taf	ipsilon	fi	hi	psi	omega
n	ks, x	o	p	r, rh	s	t	u, y	ph	kh, ch	ps	ō
[n]	[ks]	[o]	[p]	[r]	[s, z]	[t]	[i]	[f]	[x]	[ps]	[o]

Greek Cuisine

ΣΠΑΝΙΚΟΠΙΤΑ [Spanikopita]: Spinach Pie

This Greek specialty has become increasingly popular among Americans in recent years. Like family heirlooms, *spanikopita* recipes are passed down from one generation to the next in Greek and Greek-American families.

Although each recipe has its own special touch or flourish, common to all are the following ingredients: spinach, phyllo dough, feta cheese, finely-chopped onions, and olive oil.

Ingredients:

4 pkgs. frozen chopped spinach	1 lb. Ricotta cheese	1 lb. Feta cheese, crumbled
1/2 c. Parmesan cheese	16 phyllo dough	1 c. butter, melted
4 eggs, beaten	1 med. onion, chopped	4 tbs. vegetable oil
1 tsp. dill, chopped	1 tsp. salt	1/4 tsp. pepper

1. Allow spinach to stand at room temperature to defrost completely.
2. Squeeze spinach dry and combine with cheeses, onion, eggs, oil, salt, pepper, and dill.
3. Carefully arrange eight layers of phyllo dough, each brushed with butter, in a greased pan 10 x 15 inches and cover with spinach filling.
4. Cover top with eight more buttered layers of phyllo dough. Seal edges to retain filling.
5. Brush top with melted butter. Cut through top layers to mark pieces into triangles.
6. Bake in a 350° oven for about 45 minutes or until golden brown.

σαλατα θερινι [Salata Therini]: Summer Salad

Ingredients:

2 Tomatoes cut in wedges	1 Cucumber sliced	1 Onion sliced
2 Green peppers	6 tbsp. Olive Oil	6 tbsp. lemon juice
2 tbsp. vinegar	Salt to taste	Pepper to taste
1/3 lb. Feta cheese	2 doz. Kalamata olives	Chopped parsley or crumbled dried oregano

Baklava

This popular Middle Eastern pastry traveled a long way from its homeland into American diets. Made with phyllo dough and filled with sweetened nuts, this desert's origins possibly lie in Asia's Caucus Mountains. The people of Azerbaijan called this treat *Bakı pakhlavası*, or "Baku baklava." The Ottoman Turks, whose empire included Greece and much of the Balkans prior to WWI, introduced baklava into southeast Europe. Greek, as well as Albanian and Bulgarian, immigrants brought baklava to America in the late 1800s.



Phyllo dough is itself interesting. The term originates from *phyllon*, the Greek word for "leaf," a reference to the dough's thinness. This ingredient, also used in *spanikopita*, is probably of Turkish origin, dating to the 11th century. Turks called phyllo dough *yuvgha*, while the Uzbek people of Central Asia still call it *yupqa*.

The use of phyllo for baklava originated with the Turks. Prior to WWI, every great house in the Ottoman Empire had two kitchen staff dedicated to making phyllo. One cook prepared phyllo specifically for baklava, while another made the dough for all other dishes.

Ingredients:

1 lb. phyllo dough	4 to 5 cups walnuts, chopped coarsely	1/2 cup sugar
1/4 tsp. ground cloves	1 tsp. cinnamon	3/4 lb. sweet butter

1. Combine nuts, cinnamon, cloves, and sugar.
2. Melt butter in a saucepan.
3. Use pastry brush to brush inside a 14 X 10-1/2 inch pan with melted butter.
4. Line bottom of pan with one piece of phyllo dough. Fold under excess phyllo.
5. Repeat five times, Alternating sides with each piece of Phyllo, brushing the top of each layer with melted butter.
6. On the 6th sheet, sprinkle evenly with nut mixture. Continue until all nut mixture is used.
7. Repeat step five to form top crust.
8. Use a sharp knife to cut into diamond shapes.
9. Bake at 300° F for about 1-1/2 hours or until lightly brown.

The Syrup:

2-1/2 cups of water	3 cups sugar
3 tsp. lemon juice	1 tsp. vanilla

1. Combine syrup ingredients. Boil syrup for about 10 minutes and then allow to cool.
2. Pour cooled syrup over hot pastry.

Olives

The fruit of *olea europaea* has been gathered for at least 10,000 years. Known cultivation began in Palestine or Syria at least 5,000 years ago. Since then, cultivation has spread from Central Asia in the east to Spain in the west. Some varieties are even grown today in California.

A majority of olives are used in the production of olive oil. Among the most frequently uncovered artifacts at ancient Greek archaeological sites are the *amphora* that were used to store olive oil. Among the ancient Greeks, the olive was considered sacred. Greek mythology tells us that the olive tree was the gift of Athena. To destroy the olive groves of your enemies was sacrilegious and considered ruthless.

It wasn't until the 20th century that olives became a staple of Americans' and Britons' diets. Isabella Beeton, author of the 1800s most famous cookbook, *Beeton's Book of Household Management*, called the olive "foreign" and did not prescribe its use.