

John Karkoulis

Narrator: John Karkoulis, Kingston November 2nd 2017, Duration: 27:57			
Interviewed by: George Katinas; Translation: Athina Peidou			
min:sec	File:	KGHP_17_KARKOULIS_J_20171102_KINGSTON_GKATINAS_AUDIO.MP3	
Interview Time	Chronology	Place	Description
1:05	Born	Thana, Tripoli, Arkadia, Greece	Thana village is approximately 2 km away from Tripoli, Arkadia, Greece.
1:25	After high-school/First years in Kingston	Thana, Tripoli, Arkadia, Greece	He graduated from the 1st High School of Tripoli in 1945. Before 1945, the Germans occupied Greece. The civil war started right after. They were catastrophes in Greece.
2:22			After high school Mr Karkoulis wanted to study medicine. He failed the first time but succeed the second time. He got into the medical school but instead he had to serve the military. He served the military for 35 months.
3:01	Life in Kingston	Kingston, Canada	His brothers (Peter, the younger one, and George, the older one,) were already in Canada and invited John to study there. He decided to enroll in Queen's University.
3:14			He started working as a dishwasher while in university. He and his brothers opened a coffee shop called "Lunch Bar". He worked there for 2 years and skipped university as the business was successful. He bought a house.
4:10			He continued working in his coffee shop which was at Princess Street and Division Street, near where the current pharmacy is. Business was good, as there were many students.
4:28			John bought LaSalle hotel in 1966. The hotel had 40 rooms. They rented out the rooms for 7 CAD/night. There was a financial boom and John bought a car for the first time. In 1974 John and his brother renovated the hotel. They were working many, many hours: 12-15 hours a day, 7 days a week.
5:47			Before then, John visited Greece in 1963 for vacation where he met his wife. His brothers had already visited Greece beforehand in 1960 and 1961 after not being there for 10-12 years. There, they met Greek women to marry and bring to Canada. John did the same in 1963 and they have lived together now for 54 years. They have 3 kids.
5:40			Life in Kingston
8:23	Life in Kingston	Kingston, Canada	Many new Greeks were arriving, yet there was no Greek community. There were 15-20 'old families' from before the war established in Kingston. As more people were arriving, half the Greeks were going to the community in Ottawa and half were going to Watertown. It was split in half. An archbishop named Athinagoras visited Kingston and saw how the Greeks were organized. He united them in one place, the LaSalle hotel. They spoke about how they will go about organizing their community. That is when the Greek Community of Kingston was established.

10:42	Life in Kingston	Kingston, Canada	George Speal and John Karkoulis worked towards buying a church. Every month, everyone in the Greek community set aside money to buy it. They bought a church at Johnson Street, which is still the Greek Orthodox Church today. The building had been a church beforehand. There was not a permanent priest at the beginning. For ceremonies (baptisms, funeral , holidays ...) they would bring a priest from Toronto, Ottawa, Watertown... Later the community hired full-time priests. They change constantly.
12:56			Now, the priest of the community is a Canadian who converted to Orthodox. A “very educated person” who speaks Greek well.
13:23			For church equipment at the beginning they got offers from Vogiatzis church shop in Athens who had a “monopoly in North America”, and another local shop in Athens which made an offer at one third of price. They decided to buy church equipment from the local shop. It was during this time that the community significantly started to grow.
15:12	Greek Orthodox Church	Kingston, Canada	The original building of the church was totally empty. A person called Oleg Harisson offered to make a templon (the screen of icons which separates the altar from the front of the church). The templon of saint Stefanos of Jerusalem was chosen.
15:54			(Speaking about some difficulties within the community at first). There was a sort of miscommunication at the community. Eddy Papadakis was a successful business man who while president of the community divided the community board.
11:25	Greek Community	Kingston, Canada	Most of the young Greeks left Kingston after they graduated from Queen's which made the future of the community uncertain. He doesn't know what will happen, but he says we will try to keep as much as we can (regarding the future of the community).
18:20	Life in Greece	Thana, Tripoli, Arkadia, Greece	Mr. Karkoulis's parents were farmers and cultivated vegetables and fruits. They did also have horses and cows. Life was very simple. They used to sell their products to live. They had 10 acres of potatoes. They sold their produce at markets. Everything they ate was what they grew.

More notes:

- he came to Kingston in 1953, where his brothers were waiting for him.
- his first impression of Canada was that there was snow (March). In Greece it had be 25 degrees, and when he saw the snow here he said “where am I going?”
- The Canadians were good to the Greeks
- he did feel that some people had in the back of their minds that they were better. He experienced some things such as someone telling him he needs to speak English in this country, when he was speaking Greek behind the counter of the restaurant.
- He slowly learned English.
- Canada is a great country.
- his parents came to Canada too