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Assyrian Foundation of America

P. O. BOX 26178

SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA 94126

Established 1964

Nineveh West....

**** COMING TO YOU FROM THE ASSYRIAN CULTURAL CENTER, BERKELEY ****

APRIL 1977

MEETING SUN., APRIL 17 - 7 P.M.

To remind the members that the General Membership Meeting will be held on the above date in our own Assyrian Cultural Center, 1920 San Pablo Ave., Berkeley (one block off University Ave.). Notices will not be sent. Bring your spouse and/or a friend. Refreshments will be served.

**COLOR MOVIE ON THE ASSYRIAN HERITAGE
 IN WORLD MUSEUMS....**

Held in Mar Narsai Parish Hall on March 13, drew a crowd of approx. 200 people. A few non-Assyrians attended. The producer, Victor Alexander was present. We are proud that an Assyrian took the initiative to produce such an outstanding film on Assyrian history. It is a record of Assyrian monuments and artifacts in the Louvre (Paris) and the British Museum (London). We applaud his perseverance and dedication. The narration by Jack Douglas was superb. We have some reservations on the music and singing, especially during the narration.

Joe Elias in his introduction on the film said, 'All of us are familiar with the phenomenal impact on the American consciousness of the book ROOTS and the television series based on it. The story had a universal appeal because it touched on a fundamental aspect of human nature-- the need to identify with one's origins. For unless you know where you came from, and what you came from, you cannot know who you are or what you are. And if you don't know that, you cannot reach the fullest level of self-realization of which

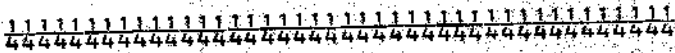
the human spirit is capable. That is what this film tries to do--to establish the present-day Assyrian identity in the roots of its ancestors.'

A WORD ABOUT ASSYRIAN FOUNDATION

1. Non-profit, tax-exempt charitable organization.
2. Established in 1964.
3. The specific and primary purposes are to operate for the advancement of education of Assyrians and for charitable purposes to aid needy Assyrians.
4. Solicits funds and distributes its funds to the Assyrians locally as well as internationally.
5. Over the years, the Foundation has contributed towards the following:
 - Shushan School - Teheran, Iran
 - Assyrian School - Kamishly, Syria
 - Assyrian School - Hasseka, Syria
 - Assyrian School - Beirut, Lebanon
 - Assyrian Clinic - Teheran, Iran
 - Scholarships within California
 - Needy Assyrians within California

CONVALESCING

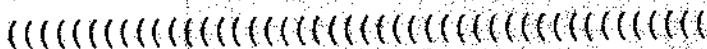
We were sorry to hear that one of our dedicated members, John Samo, was involved in a car accident recently. (Not his fault). He is now convalescing at home. Get well soon, John. We hope to see you at the next meeting.



ASSYRIAN NEW YEAR PARTY

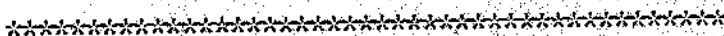
Given by the combined efforts of the Foundation and the Community Center on April 2, the atmosphere was jubilant and everyone had a good time. Mr. and Mrs. Fred Tamimi were guests of honor. Mr. Tamimi gave a talk on the Assyrian New Year. He said that, in ancient Assyria, two New Years were celebrated, one called SACRED which was observed on the first day of Spring, or the date of Vernal Equinox, which to the Assyrians was first day of NEESAN (April), first day of Spring called Bit-Neesani. It is selected as a day of joy and celebration at the rebirth of all growing things, blossoming of flowers, etc.

The other feast was on the first of TISHRI (or September 21 of our calendar), or at the time of Autumnal Equinox for it was the beginning of a farming or agricultural year.

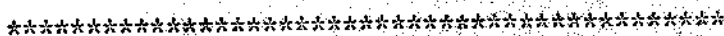


ASSYRIAN RUNNING FOR OFFICE

Sam Lazar of Oakland is running for the office of City Auditor. A party with champagne, hors d'oeuvre, live music to meet Sam Lazar was given by the Lazar for City Auditor Committee on March 19.

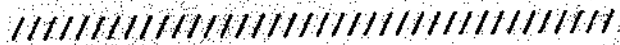


ED. NOTE: Newsletter name "NINEVEH WEST" is a contribution by Audrey Shabbas of Berkeley.



DEDICATION -- GENEROSITY

In April 1976 when the Foundation bought the building in Berkeley to serve as a Cultural Center, a General Membership Meeting was held on the premises. At the meeting Youel Baaba was elected Chairman of the Building Committee to raise funds. In less than one hour, \$17,000 was pledged to be paid over a period of 5 years. \$4,000 was contributed on the spot. This astounding act demonstrates once again the loyalty and dedication of the members. INSPIRATION! APPRECIATION!

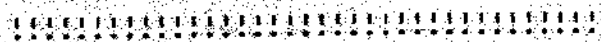


RENOWNED ASSYRIAN RESTAURATEUR

Appearing in the March 27 edition of the Sunday CHRONICLE & EXAMINER (California Living section) was a 3-page article and photographs on Narsai's widely publicized dinner. The paper says, "This year Narsai David, whose East Bay restaurant is nationally renowned, offered to duplicate the Claiborne dinner as a contribution to the KQED auction. Four couples, all of them executives of the Bank of America, made the winning bid of \$2,000. The staggering, 5-hour repast, consisting of 25 different dishes and nine vintage French wines, took place at Narsai's on February 17."

The article describes Narsai & Samuel, the maitre d' "chattering away in Assyrian (although born in Turlock in the Valley, they are of Assyrian descent and fluent in the language)."

We are very pleased that someone who is proud to be an Assyrian, and who has supported the Foundation, has reached such heights of success. Narsai David is also a wine connoisseur. Congratulations!



TRUTH ABOUT ASSYRIANS (AS RELATED BY A. T. OLMSTEAD IN HIS BOOK HISTORY OF ASSYRIA)

- 1) The Assyrian was frankly and honestly an imperialist. There was bloodshed and cruelty in his warfare and he did not understand why he should not relate what he did. In this he was simply following current practice and his example has been followed in turn to modern days.
- 2) Historians of Assyria in modern times have carefully tabulated each horror and have given the Assyrian a reputation for frightfulness.
- 3) Historians have not told with equal fulness the truth about the peoples whose histories they have written.
- 4) The truth is that the Assyrians were no worse than other imperialists.
- 5) Modern imperialism differs in one respect fundamentally from ancient, it is not so honest; such an innocent term as "punitive expedition" may cover a multitude of sins from flat-nosed bullets to men blown in shreds from cannon. If the Assyrian cut off heads, the Egyptians preferred hands or phallos and our own Indians scalps. The English came nearer the Assyrian custom with their rotting heads of traitors spiked on Tower Gate in London. Where the Assyrian impaled, the Roman crucified, the Englishman quartered and drew. If the Assyrian burned youth and maidens in the fire, for each recorded example in the Assyrian annals, we can literally give a thousand cases of witches, another thousand of heretics burned by Christian orders. War is a revision to savagery. There is not an Assyrian atrocity, which has not its parallel, or its equivalent in the civilized history of the last hundred years.
- 6) It is generally recognized that the Assyrian Empire marks the first great advance in efficient imperialism. The firm foundation of modern imperial organization was laid by the Assyrians.
- 7) War was not the only interest of the Assyrians. He developed a real empire. He organized a provincial system which did more than we suspect to weld the peoples he controlled into a unity with international outlook.
- 8) Warrior first and then administrator, the Assyrian was not without a deep culture, and if we have not as yet credited him with non-military activities, it is because we have confined our reading to his war annals. Now we may visit his ruined capitals, stroll about his city ramparts, observe the architecture of his palace, enter his once closely guarded harem, read his record on his palace walls, often in the ornamental cuneiform writing, but we will learn more of his civilization if we turn to the beautiful bas-reliefs which likewise clothe his walls. From his sculptures we may learn his method of making war or of fishing, the manner in which a palace or a bird's nest is constructed, the foods he ate, the animals he kept in his stables. We may assist in the introduction of novelties in technology, such as a new method of casting bronze, or in the discovery of a new plant, the tree wool man shred for garments.
- 9) Assyria produced the first literary historians.
- 10) The royal annals are the greatest glory of the Assyrian literature.
- 11) In Assyrian culture we meet for the first time in history a civilization whose possessors may rightly be called "Heirs of the Ages."
- 12) In a real sense, true history begins with the Assyrians.

- 13) It is not uncommon to assert that an ethical attitude towards the ruler's subjects is the result of Christianity. We shall certainly not look for a high development among the militaristic Assyrians. To be perfectly fair, however, we should note the frequent occurrence of language implying something of this attitude. The Good Shepherd was not first discovered by Christians; the "faithful shepherd," the "true shepherd," the "shepherd of the four world regions," are among the titles the kings apply to themselves. He may be a god himself, but he is also a pious follower of the great gods. With the aid of his helper gods, Ashur and Shamash, he walks righteously and it is their decrees which he carries out. He bears a sceptre of righteousness, which overwhelms all lands. Sargon's cylinder inscription is full of his claims of righteous action. Sennacherib is the watchful or the powerful shepherd, who fears the great gods, who guards the truth, who loves the right, who renders help, coming to the aid of the weak, and his expressed care for the groaning workmen and other signs of sentiment have already been noticed. Ashur-bani-apal in his messianic passages tells how happy was his land. The letters are as usual proof that this care was exercised in detail, if here too the figure of the calculating shepherd is somewhat in the foreground.

After all, the ultimate test of a government is not the good intentions of its rulers but what they accomplish. Judged by this test, the Assyrian can claim about as considerable a success as the next. Before the advent of the Assyrians, western Asia was in a state of chronic warfare between petty states; Assyria gave peace to a large portion of this area, a peace which was cheaply earned by isolated frontier wars or by taxation.

- 14) Centuries after the warder of the flock is dead, the impartial historian proves that the sheep have gained from his wardship. Roman provincials, for example, hated the Eternal City, and not without cause; with all her faults, with her numberless abuses, it is now universally recognized that the Roman Empire did a great work for civilization. Nothing could be more evil than Caesar's conquest of Gaul, for a million of lives were destroyed, probably more than all men put to death by all the Assyrian kings; who today would have the foundations of France other than Roman?

In their day, the Assyrians were the shepherd-dogs of civilization. The great majority of their wars were wars of civilization, either to bring within the range of cultural influences savage tribes or to hold back these savage tribes from destroying the thin line of civilization in the Fertile Crescent. They failed tragically, and when they fell much of the older culture of western Asia was irretrievably lost. They failed, but they had held back the savages from the Arabian wastes or the equally backward Indo-Europeans from the northern grasslands until they had been at least varnished with the elements of the older culture.

Assyria was too small a state to bear the heavy burden of imperialism. For the moment, the Assyrian won great glory and much financial return, but he was bled white in the process, and his collapse was without hope of recovery.

What must be the final verdict of history? As his epitaph we must write, not that "In him is incarnate, to the highest degree, the defects and vices of Asiatic political systems," but the more charitable, more sympathetic, more historically just, "The Assyrian was a human being; being such, he was very much like ourselves. He was sometimes good and sometimes bad, he was cruel and he was forgiving, he was wise and then he blundered, he had capabilities for certain work, he had none for others. All in all he was a man, and a

capable man; he suffered the usual human limitations, he was a child of his age. The empire he founded marked a mile-stone in the long and heartbreaking advance towards a higher civilization. He was the shepherd-dog of civilization, and he died at his post." Such an epitaph is sadly lacking in rhetorical art, but it is the sober truth of history.

1976 YEAR-END BALANCE SHEET ...

Our sincere apologies for the delay. The Balance Sheet is in the process of being typed. Hint, hint, J.B.

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THE POWER OF APPEAL

As a result of our earnest appeal through the pages of our March issue of "HIGHLIGHTS," many of our members came forth with their dues, initiation fees and pledge commitments.

With "NINEVEH WEST" we renew our appeal..... the uncommitted??????

NEWSLETTER NO. 2.....

- 1) The subject of Newsletter will be on the agenda for the coming meeting.
- 2) Our next issue will incorporate a section in Assyrian.

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Which Bone Fits You?

The body of an organization has four kinds of bones:

The (wish) bones who spend all their time wishing someone else would do all the work;

The (jaw) bones who do all the talking, but very little else;

The (knuckle) bones who knock everything that everybody else tries to do, and

The (back) bones who get under the load and do all the work.

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FIG. 152. NETTING THE DEER

