

were named after the parent's sibling, cousin, or parent who fell victim to Turkish atrocities.

Aside from family histories and the direct transmission of memories from parent to offspring, a major source of knowledge and inspiration is the literature—the novels, short stories, memoirs, autobiographies, and poetry—written by first-generation writers in response to their own traumatic experience. Hakob Karapents, a writer of short stories on the theme of the diasporan Armenian predicament created by the Genocide and the dispersion of the survivors, expresses gratitude and appreciation for the first-generation Armenian American writers who recreated the Armenian homeland in their writings. He calls them “the old sowers [seed planters] of the New World.”¹²

Karapents depicts the way the first generation lived in “*Jefersen, A.M.N.*” (Jefferson, USA), showing the scope of the impact of the Genocide in that microcosm of the American Armenian Diaspora. The wretched, half-educated refugees from the Old World are the first to arrive in Jefferson at the turn of the previous century, fleeing persecution in the Ottoman Empire. They live in America but they have not severed ties with their homeland. “Give them a hundred documents proving their American citizenship, they will still say they are Armenian, and not only Armenian, but *kesabtsi*, *aintabtsi*, or other” (22). In the fictional town of Jefferson,

¹² Hakob Karapents, “*Jefersen, A.M.N.*,” in *Nor ashkharhi hin sermnats’annerē* [The old sowers of the new world] (Beirut: Atlas Press, 1975), pp. 9–23. I have discussed the phenomenon of the first-generation Armenians in “Jefferson, USA” in *And Those Who Continued Living in Turkey after 1915*, pp. 57, 164.