

# Chapter 10

## ESTABLISHMENT OF LIME FACTORIES

THE production of lime can be profitable and worthwhile. However, because of the abnormal conditions resulting from the fierce competition and the lack of a spirit of cooperation among our countrymen in the past, the result has been poor gains from the opportunities which were often available.

Thus the opportunity presented with the start of the renovation of Salonica after the destructive fire of 1917, could have resulted in even more unprofitable operations.

Fortunately, however, some of our more progressive countrymen joined together in the 1924-25 period, organized a company, and established a factory using modern methods of lime producing which did not rely on kilns fueled by shrubs and branches.

Praise is due to those who took the initiative to organize that first company called "Union of Lime Production" (Enosis) using modern production means and who evolved this work into a proud industry. They succeeded in selling their product in Salonica and other places, transporting it to far away districts and distances by motor vehicles and trains. They did not rely on adulteration of the product, as was common in previous times, nor the other devious means used by the former lime producers.

With the new production processes and cooperative business spirit that characterized their company, they succeeded in bettering their economic condition, as well as that of the community since they employed many members of our families at progressive wage scales.

# Chapter 11

## DATE OF THE FOUNDING OF FACTORIES

THE start of the renovation of old Salonica which was destroyed by the fire of 1917 needed large amounts of lime and thus we see after a while other countrymen of ours with their progressive spirit and desire to copy the founders of the first company "the Union" (Enosis). These people uniting into two other associations, the "Omonia" and "Progress" succeeded in establishing factories for the production of lime, thus all of them making our country town of Asvestohorion into a small manufacturing suburb of Salonica.

And for the sake of history let us note the names of all those who took the first step of this movement, and were responsible for the establishment of the above companies.

Pioneer was the Union Asbestos Production Company founded in 1924-25, the first lime factory, employing the production process type Ringoffman.

Originators and workers in this movement were the following countrymen of ours: Steven Hatziantoniou, George Tsiakires, Nicholaos Hatziantoniou, Hippocrates Polyzopoulos, Christos Peltekis, Gregory Zorlou, and Christos Harizanes.

The "Union" Company, due to its great success because it was the time of the renovation of Salonica, when the demand for lime was high, succeeded in founding in our country a second similar related factory and a similar one in Athens, thus broadening even there the production of lime with other factories.

The Union Company was followed later in 1930 by the Omonia Company which founded a similar factory with the original workers, among whom was Christos Mandikos

who had lived 35 years in America, and who died and was buried in the homeland after his return, George Moschobitses, Basil Samaras, and Stavros Karagounes.

Finally, after many years in 1945-50, a third company, the Progress, was established by the initiative of Constantine Kondourakis, Constantine Arvanitopoulos, Aristotle Hatziasteriou (pharmacist), and the brothers Peltekis using another type of factory which worked with liquid fuels.

Here we must mention also the two private factories for the manufacture of lime, that of our townsman Gregory Rousides, the son of Constantine Rousides, who for many years worked as one of the first pharmacists in Salonica, and that of Mr. Constantine Brellas of Salonica, who constructed an expensive villa in Asvestohorion.

Both worked with sincerity, following the spirit of the rest of their colleagues in business of the above companies. Recently, in 1953, a fourth company named "Hermes" was founded with many shareholders from our homeland as well as others, and with the initiative of Mr. Basil Samaras and Mr. G. Philippos they erected a lime factory similar to that of "Progress" but using solid fuels and continuing its work under the same conditions as the three companies mentioned earlier.

## *Chapter 12*

### DEPARTURES AND MIGRATIONS

**I**N older periods the quantity of lime produced for sale in Salonica under the conditions related was not very profitable.

As a result sufficient work could not be obtained by all inhabitants of Asvestohorion.

For this reason there began to develop the spirit of emigration more or less at first for temporary periods, later for extended ones. This continual expatriation became a common practice among the male population and was interrupted sporadically by brief periods of repatriation.

The causes of migration must be attributed to the inclination of many to be relieved of the hard life at home and the poor economic conditions compared to the richer life found in foreign lands.

The migration was for nine months or a year for the most, except for a few, who, finding in foreign lands a wide circle of activity and a better life, settled for many years with their families, particularly those who migrated to Bulgaria and Romania.

They usually went under the leadership of an employer who fixed their pay according to part time or on a yearly basis, in accordance with the profits of the annual work, but also according to the conscientiousness of the leaders of employment, some of whom took malicious advantage of the innocence among their workers by keeping for themselves the lion's share.

Since there was no transportation by railroad from Salonica and the transportation by sea was poor, the migrants had to cover great distances by foot or on horseback to the Balkans as far as the Danube and via the seacoast of Asia Minor to Smyrna. In this city lived a countryman of ours by the name of Anagnostes, a very strong and dynamic person who was a lime merchant and owned large caravans of camels and who helped many of our countrymen who later settled in Smyrna.

Likewise, others went to the islands of the Aegean and many cities of Central Greece and to Volos, where even

today there are families of Palyoungas and Evangelou who have succeeded and prospered. Others went to Athens and especially to Tatoi, where many families go every year, who worked in the production of lime using the old kiln method, such as the families of Kalos, Giakatos, etc. At Tatoi many times in later years our countrymen who worked at lime production came into contact with the children of the royal family.

One day a worker from Asvestohorion by the name of George Tzioures met King George I near his lime kiln whom he greeted, not knowing that he was our King. After they exchanged a few words the lime maker asked this fellow what his name was.

"George", he replied. Then the lime-maker gladdened and enthused, grabbed his hand and said to him with the usual peasant indifference: "Your name is George, my name is George, well, then, give me a cigarette."

The King, smiling, offered him a cigarette and left.

Later, when transportation by railroad with the rest of Europe was completed and travel by sea was likewise increased, the emigrants went farther into Russia and especially to Odessa where for the first time there settled our countryman from Agrapha, Davidovitz, with his family, working as a tobacco merchant, who donated to our church sacerdotal vestments and later the Holy Sepulcher.

Afterwards, Gregory Samaras, brother of the well-known family of Nicholas and Christos Samaras, also arrived in Odessa. He worked successfully in the rather profitable cultivation of vegetables in greenhouses. Later he spread out to greater activities and left Odessa, bringing there the successor of his work, his relative from Asvestohorion, Harilaos Polyzopoulos. He, however, settled in Petrograd and later in Moscow where he continued his work with the greenhouses.

Both succeeded in Russia, becoming self-sufficient with

large families and attained a prominent place among people of the above two cities. Many relatives worked with them and also prospered.

The overthrow of the government of the Czars resulted in a catastrophe for both families.

A few members of their families were saved by fleeing, leaving behind in Russia everything they had. Gregory Samaras was massacred by the Bolsheviks.

Continuing their migrations our countrymen travelled to Serbia, Hungary, Austria and Roumania. They succeeded greatly in Roumania with the production of lime, some of them became wealthy, successful businessmen and great landowners. Others left with their families, settling in foreign countries. Since many of our townsmen of Asvestohorion were not able to earn a living, they emigrated to foreign lands. Thus the inhabitant of Asvestohorion who left his hometown, wandered about, suffered, was lost for many years, but returned again to the hometown even for a short time, in a better economic status and in high spirits, so that those who knew him as a poor and insignificant person would see him. The man of Asvestohorion, realistically characterized, is a proud person.

It was this migrant whom other countrymen mimicked and thus began the practice even among the young, who took to emigration as a patriotic duty.

The children of the emigrants began to take for granted the absence of their fathers and were excited and impressed by the stories their fathers brought from the foreign lands.