

Genealogical History of Carter Salem Sr.

Introduction

We can all tell when summer vacation is over. No longer can the kids stay up late playing PS2, watching TV or having a good game of hide and seek. The alarm clocks must be set and lunches must be made. Then the backpacks, those enormous boulders attached to our children's backs with school papers, 5 subject notebooks, pens, pencils, books and Social Studies projects from Mr. Reinstein. Oh no! Colin got Mr. Reinstein. The school project madman. Oh #\$.%. Projects that become a family affair!

Colin's first project for 8th grade history was titled the "Family Origin and Immigration Project". The project required Colin to interview an older living relative and then trace the path of a family relative from their ethnic country of origin to the New World.

Colin decided he wanted to trace the history of his great grandfather Carter Salem. I recognized he would need a small assist getting the project started. I decided to help Colin by calling a relative and then let Colin take over from there. Well, one interview turned into a half dozen. A quick check of one website prompted links to EllisIsland.com, NationalArchives.org, EllisIsland.org, Ancestry.com, Genealogy.com and on and on and on. I then sought some assistance from a Lebanese friend, Mohammed, for translation of some of Grandpas old letters. I also commissioned assistance from Lebanon for photos of Grandpas birthplace. My first hint that I may have taken things too far was when Mom said she was a little nervous faxing me information related to our Lebanese grandparent who just happened to have lived in Lackawanna, New York. This was happening just as we were hearing about the arrests of men of Middle Eastern decent in Lackawanna, New York! It wasn't until after I checked into some Lebanese Internet chat rooms and started receiving unsolicited subscriptions to jihad mailings that Susan said enough is enough!

Well, either way it turned into a lot of fun for Colin and me. Colin created a poster for his presentation. He also used these notes to create a two page report that was presented to his eighth grade history class. We both learned a lot. We decided to create this document which is a recap of all of the family interviews, web research and research of documents, photos, newspaper articles and your memories. Information in this document came from many of you who are reading this. The web research Colin and I completed resulted in a few new findings, but again, most of the information came with you.

Yet, from what we can gather we didn't have one document that recapped Carter Salem's life journey. You will see there are several instances where dates conflict. We are considering this a work in progress. Feel free to make any additions or changes to this. We think this is a good beginning but we are certain all of you may be able add much more. Please do! Have the kids' make a quick read of this. It may help them to better understand their family history.

We also added a section at the end entitled "Stories Remembered and Retold". Please email your stories of Grandpa Salem and we will add them to this remembrance.

So, *please read on.*

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Names and Dates

Names –

Khatar Moufarrage or Khatar Moufarrege - the “e” and the “a” are interchanged often in various letters and documents by various relatives.

Catter Maffarge – as recognized in Buffalo Enquirer Newspaper on May 4, 1916. If the newspaper article had the correct spelling it may be an indication that was the name he gave to the Ellis Island Immigration officials upon his arrival to Ellis Island.

The name Moufarrage is a relatively common name in Lebanon and there are several different spellings and derivations of the name. It may be why the translation was made from Moufarrage to Maffarge.

The word “farrage” when translated from Lebanese to English means “the relief of burdens”. “Mou” serves almost as a pronoun and personalizes it. Together the name “Moufarrage” means “a person who will relieve your burdens”. From my early memories of Grandpa it really appears that he lived up to his name.

Catter Maffarge petitioned the United States District Court in Buffalo, NY with a request to change his name in 1916. Catter had asked to have “Salem” injected into his name between Catter and Maffarge. He probably chose “Salem” and an American or English version of his father’s first name “Saleem”. The judge misunderstood Catter’s request and granted Catter a name change to “Catter Salem”. Further discussions with the judge would not prompt him to alter the petition. Eventually “Catter” became recognized a “Carter”. The US census records of 1920 indicate his name as “Carter Salem”. So, somewhere between 1916 and 1920 he became known as Carter Salem. But what’s in a name. I, along with many others, referred to him as “Grandpa Salem!” (When Colin wrote part of this he used the term “Great Grandfather”. Still the same guy!)

Dates -

Birth date-

- ~~SS~~ Social Security Death Index records indicates January 10, 1893 as date of birth.
- ~~SS~~ An Identity Statement completed by Grandpa (for loan purposes) indicates his date of birth to be January 10, 1893.
- ~~SS~~ Naturalization record indicates July 10, 1891 as date of birth.
- ~~SS~~ I decided to base any age estimates using January 10, 1893 as the correct date of birth.

Arrival to America-

- ~~SS~~ Internet searches of the National Archives, Ancestry.Com and EllisIsland.org have not produced a signed passenger listing for Khatar Moufarrage or Khatar Maffarge.
- ~~SS~~ Many young men arrived from the Middle East during the period of 1912–1916.
- ~~SS~~ Carter Salem’ s obituary stated he arrived during 1914. He would have been 21 when he arrived in 1914 if he was born in 1893.

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Naturalization-

~~✍~~ An identity statement completed by Carter and Mamie Salem indicated he was naturalized on July 12, 1912 in the US District Court of Buffalo New York. Carter would have been 19 years old. This date of July 12, 1912 does not correlate with obituary article that stated he arrived during 1914.

~~✍~~ A Certificate of Naturalization indicated he became a naturalized United States citizen in U.S. District Court in Buffalo, NY on May 4, 1916. Carter would have been 23 years old. This is the preferred date at this time and it comes close to the United States entrance into World War I during 1917.

World War I-

~~✍~~ We are still trying to locate WWI draft induction records or discharge records. At this time we are guessing he may have entered WWI in late 1917 through the summer of 1918. Interviews with family members recall he served in France.

~~✍~~ That would mean that Carter was 24 or 25 when he entered the service.

Census Records 1920 -

~~✍~~ 1920 census records state he was 25 at the time, with his birthplace listed as the "Syrian Arab Republic."

Marriage-

~~✍~~ Carter Salem was married to Mamie Thomas of Olean, NY on February 12, 1920 at the age of 26.

Social Security Number-

~~✍~~ Grandpa applied for and was granted a Social Security number in 1952 or 1953. If interested in the number for search purposes please contact Kyle or Chris.

Death-

~~✍~~ Carter Salem passed away on July 19, 1973.

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The Early Years in Lebanon

Birthplace-

Written correspondence indicates Grandpa was born in Ein-El-Zitouney-El-Meten. Ein-El-Zitouney is a two-part word. (Ein = eye), (El-Zitouney in this sentence refers to the Olive tree). Ein-El-Zitouney is a part of the bark of the tree; it is circular and was used to tell the age of the olive tree to value the piece of land the tree grows on and to determine the yearly volume of olive and olive oil.

El-Meten is the name of the county. El-Meten is approximately 25 miles northwest of Beirut. El-Meten is a coastal county on the Mediterranean.

El-Zitouney is a very small village and is not easily found on Internet maps. Conversations with friends who have lived in Lebanon have told us El-Zitouney is a small village near or within the town or city of Ras el Metn. Photos of the town have been taken and today the town is comprised of about only 10-12 homes/dwellings.

Most of the county of El-Meten is agriculturally based. At the turn of the century when Carter Salem was a child many people made their living raising goats, sheep, cattle, pigs and chickens. Many other people farmed wheat and olives.



(Left: A recent photo of a sign announcing the entrance to the village of Ein-El-Zitouney. Right: A recent photo of the home Carter Salem owned and lived in. It is still occupied by descendents of Carter Salem)

Reasons for leaving Lebanon-

Lebanon was not a country when Grandpa was born in 1893. It was only after World War I that the League of Nations awarded the territory that is now Lebanon to France in 1920. He was born near the Lebanon coastal area that was territory within the Ottoman Empire. The area that is now Lebanon became the most literate and best educated country in the Arab world during the late 1800' s. During the period of 1912 through 1916 Lebanon experienced a severe drought and famine. Their crops died during successive seasons and many people died of starvation. It was during this time that many people fled what is now Lebanon in search of a better way of life. During this time many Lebanese people emigrated to either the United States or to Australia.

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The Journey to America

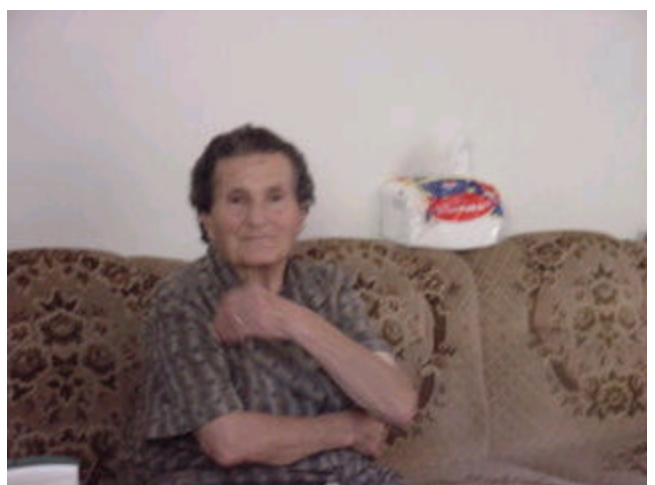
Departure-

We believe my Great Grandfather left Lebanon in 1914.

Lebanon is a coastal country situated along the shore of the Mediterranean Ocean. Beirut, what is now the capital of Lebanon, was his port of departure.

My Great grandfathers' town is located about 25 miles north west of Beirut. He most probably traveled on foot to the docks in Beirut. He probably carried most of his belongings.

Most family members have said he traveled alone leaving all family members behind.



(Left: An old photo of Carter Salem and his brother Joseph Salem that was kept by family members in Lebanon.

Right: A recent photo of Josefeen in her home/Carter's old home in El-Zitouney. Josefeen is a niece to Carter Salem. Josefeen is the oldest known living relative in Lebanon.

Below Left: The stone foundation of Saleem Mouffrage' s original home. Below right: A church and winery in El-Zitouney)



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The Trip-

There were almost always boats departing for two locations; America or Australia. There is a famous story of a young man who wanted to go to America but got on the wrong boat. He did not realize his mistake until he arrived in Australia. He grew up to become a very well successful businessman. Today his descendants continue to be responsible for one of Lebanon's largest import/export businesses.

Fortunately for me, my Great Grandfather got on the right boat and sailed off to America. During this period there were so many Lebanese people emigrating the boats were usually full when they departed. They usually went across the Mediterranean Ocean through the Strait of Gibraltar and then continued directly across the Atlantic Ocean to New York City.

If the boats were not full they would stop in England and add more passengers and then finish the journey to New York City.

The journey by steamboat usually took 2-3 weeks.

The Arrival at Ellis Island-

Once my Great Grandfather arrived in the New York port his boat went directly to Ellis Island. It was there that he had to go through the long entry process. The process included waiting in many lines to review paperwork, medical history and current health status.

To do – Check passenger records again with country being Syria XXXXX with name of Joseph (Youseff) Salem Mourarrege two years later.

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The Early Years in America

Very soon after Carter Salem's arrival in America we can only assume he traveled amongst groups and friends who were also of Lebanese decent. Carter's Salem's Great Grandfather Yuseff Mouffrage was married to Oujaney Dewan. Oujaney Dewan already had relatives in Western New York. We also know that Carter was directed to meet up with Solomon (Joseph) Dewan who was already in America. Carter also met acquaintances in Utica, New York related to the George family. We believe these friends and others drew him to Lackawanna, New York where Grandpa finally settled.

Carter Salem's brother Joseph Salem arrived in the United States two years later and joined Carter in Lackawanna, New York.

World War I-

Carter Salem volunteered for service in World War I. The War started in August of 1914 and continued until November 1918. The United States maintained neutrality and did not join the war efforts until April 2, 1917. It is known that Carter Salem did serve in France during the war. During June of 1917 the United States sent a small AEF (Armed Expeditionary Force) but it wasn't until the summer of 1918 the United States sent large numbers of troops to France. Therefore, at this time, we can only estimate that Carter Salem served in France between late 1917 through the summer of 1918.

The Businessman-

Grandpa gravitated towards merchandising and retailing. It was said that Carter and his brother Joseph had their business beginnings as door to door salesmen.

Grandpa's first store was opened near the lower end of Warsaw Avenue, on Wood Street in Lackawanna, New York. The store was located on the main floor and Grandpa donated the second floor to the original St. Michael's church.

The store then moved to a newer and larger location on the corner of Warsaw and Electric Avenue. This move took place in the early 1920's, probably around 1921 to 1923. Both Carter and Joseph built most of the building located at 1626 Electric Avenue. The sign on the storefront read "Salem Bros." Both Carter and Joseph's family lived in one apartment upstairs above the store. As their families grew Joseph moved to the other apartment. It was said that during these years Grandma Salem learned to cook for groups of twenty or more on a regular basis.

Grandpa then decided to open a second store location. Sometime during 1938 to 1939 he rented storefront space from the owner of the Hotel Lackawanna. This was known as the Ridge Road location (721 Ridge Road). A newspaper article, dated January 31st, 1963, recounted news of a fire that took place at the store. The article referred to the store as "Salem's Store", a women's apparel store.

Both stores operated jointly until the mid 1960's. Additionally, during that period Grandpa also engaged in a joint partnership for another store. This retail location was known as "Melas" (Salem spelled backwards) was also located on Ridge Road in Lackawanna, New York.

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The Successful Familyman and Businessman

Carter Salem married Mamie Thomas of Olean, New York on February 20, 1920. Mamie was also of Lebanese decent and was American born. She was five years younger than Grandpa and was born on October 2, 1898. It was said that Joseph (Sam) Dewan served as a mentor for Carter Salem during his early years in the United States. It was also said that Joseph (Sam) Dewan introduced Carter to Mamie Thomas. The introduction that led to their marriage could be considered the start to what some might consider an arranged marriage.

Carter and Mamie Salem had six children, four boys and two girls. Their children listed in birth order are Carter II, Nelson, Betty, Jeannine, Eugene and Edward.

Mamie Salem was quite busy raising six children. They would always have friends, visitors and relatives stopping by the store and they would almost always stay for Grandma's great cooking. She had always told Grandpa that she would love to have a small cottage, on Lake Erie. We were assuming the cottage would allow her and the family to get away from the hustle and bustle of the store and Lackawanna. Sometime between 1930 and 1932 Grandpa purchased 24 acres of farmland in Blaisdell, New York. He built a farmhouse about a mile off the road. He and the family would spend summers there. I guess Grandma got away from the busy store life but never got the small cottage on Lake Erie! She did, eventually, have a street named after her and the family. "Salem Drive" which was once the site of the Salem Family Farm is located in Blaisdell, New York today.

During the 1950's Grandpa sold the farm and the property and purchased 11 acres on Newton Road, Hamburg New York. Grandpa built his home there sometime around 1957. His son's Carter and Nelson built their homes on the same 11 acres sometime around 1958 and 1959 and Jean (Salem) McDonough also built a home there during the early 1970's.

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The Legacy of Carter Salem

Carter Salem passed away on July 19, 1973.

The following is a reprint of the obituary for Carter Salem, Sr.

Carter Salem Sr., 80, a Lackawanna businessman, died suddenly Thursday afternoon (July 19, 1973) in Hinsdale, while driving to visit relatives in Olean.

Mr. Salem of Newton Rd., Hamburg, started business in Lackawanna as a door-to-door salesman with his brother Joseph, now of Phoenix, Ariz., soon after they arrived here from Lebanon in 1914.

They established a clothing store on Wood St., near Electric Ave., and donated the second floor of the building to the original St. Michael's Church of Lackawanna.

The store was later moved to Electric Ave. and Warsaw St. and subsequently expanded to two stores on ridge Rd. One of the businesses is still operated by the family.

Mr. Salem served in World War I and became an American citizen through his service.

He was always immaculately attired in a white shirt, bow tie and coat and was active in civic and church affairs until his death.

He was a charter member of the Father Baker Council, Knights of Columbus and a founder of the Lackawanna Lebanese Club, one of the city's oldest social organizations.

He was a member of the Holy Name Society of St. Peter & Paul Church, Hamburg and St. John Maron Church of Williamsville.

Besides his brother, he is survived by four sons, Carter Jr. and Nelson of Hamburg, Eugene of Syracuse and Edward of Rochester; two daughters, Mrs. Thaddeus Druzvik and Mrs. Gerald McDonough of Hamburg; and a sister Mrs. Alife Mfrage of Lebanon and 25 grandchildren.

Services will be held at 9AM Monday from Colonial Memorial Chapel, 3003 South Park Ave., Lackawanna and 10 AM from St. John Maron Church. Burial will be in Holy Cross Cemetery.



(Left and Right: Photos that were provided by family members in Lebanon. We are assuming these photos were sent by Carter to his family members sometime during the 1940's to 1960's.)

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OTHER NOTES and DOCUMENTS

(This is a translation of a letter that was left in a book that Carter Salem owned. The letter had a date of "1971" at the top. I did not have a signature that could be read. We are assuming it came from one of Carter Salem's sisters.)

1971

My Dear Brother KHATTAR:

Words can not explain how much I have missed you, I write to you after a 3 year period since my last letter, it is all due to the numerous problems that came down on my head, praise to Allah (God) that the fourth and last operation in my throat was successful, I remained for a period of fourteen months eating soup. I was not able to swallow anything. For more than a year I felt my throat was as thin as cigarette paper.

Let me know how is YOUSSEFF doing, send my regards to him and his family. I am here lonely (I blame time and Time Blames me *). I am not wasting a minute without work

I would like to move from the city, but work would not be the same. I will be patient, but as you know noise and traffic is not what I am used to.

- Not very clear

-

* This is a very popular saying, used to express a persons feeling of boredom.

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OTHER NOTES and DOCUMENTS

(This is a translation of another letter. It was sent to the survivors of Carter Salem who lived in Canada. The author was closely linked to relatives in Lebanon and was seeking documentation that would support Khatter Saleem Moufarrege's name change to Carter Salem. The authors name was YOUSSEFF LAHOOD MOUFARREGE and his son was the doctor who resided in Canada.)

URBAIN STREET CLINIQUE OF PLASTIC SURGERY INC
3875 ST-URBAIN SUITE 802 MONTREAL H2W1V1 TEL 854-6119- 845-5110

JEAN-APUL BOGGE MD
JACQUES PAPILLON M.D
GILLES BEAURSQARD MD
RICHARD MOUFARREGE MD

Our beloved cousins, sons of KHATTAR SALEEM MOUFARREGE:

A while past since our last communication, and since we learned of the death of your father, and we repeat our deepest condolences.

We are now in Montreal Canada at our son RICHARD who specializes in plastic surgery in Montreal (a change from the constant bombing).

We hoped to visit you, but we ran into some difficulties obtaining visas to the United States, maybe our son RICHARD the doctor maybe able to visit you, because he is a Canadian citizen.

Now I am obligated to trouble you with an issue that concerns both parties. We hope you can supply us with a statement in Arabic signed by the Lebanese consulate proving that the CARTER SALEM is KHATTAR SALEEM MOUFARREGE, please update us on YOUSEF'S health, last we knew he was not able to leave his bed.

I have great hope that I would receive that statement from you, prior to me leaving Canada early October.

Allow me to give you an idea of what the statement should read:

WE THE UNDERSIGNED SONS OF CARTER SALEM, WHO DIED IN _____ (Place) _____ ON
_____ (Date)

HERBY TESTIFY THAT OUR FATHER CARTER SALEM WAS ALSO NAMED KHATTAR SALEEM MOUFARREGE...

Please send my regards to all your family member and YOUSSEFF'S family, I have no doubt that you will provide me with what I am asking for, I have heard nothing but good things about your dedication to helping family members, that is something we are all proud of.

My family sends their regards and kisses.

Your cousin

YOUSSEFF LAHOOD MOUFARREGE.

Address:

Richard Moufarrege, MD
1025 east Sherbrooke
Montreal H2L1L4, Canada 514-525-4784

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Stories Remembered and Retold:

Kyle remembers Grandpa traveling in Canada:

Even with all those records and all that paperwork I still remember being delayed at the Canadian-US border with Grandpa and several Aunts! Apparently Grandpa didn't have the correct credentials with him while he was in the car. I think I remember Aunt Jean prepping Grandpa while we were approaching the checkpoint. She told him to keep it simple and tell them his place of birth was Lackawanna, NY. Well, Grandpa became frustrated with Jean and said something to the effect that he was now a US citizen, although he was born in Lebanon, and he will tell customs officials the same. Well he told them. And then they decided to question him in their offices for the next half-hour about his place of birth and the paperwork he should have had with him! They must have finally recognized he was a harmless US naturalized gentleman from Lebanon and decided to let him proceed through. I also remember the rest of the ride home was very quiet!

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Works Cited

Encyclopedia Encarta used for basic research related to Lebanon and World War I.

Translation services and recent photography of Lebanon provided by Mohammed Zhort

Internet research completed on the following websites; Lebanon.com, Ancestry.com, National Archives.org, EllisIsland.org

Copies of newspaper articles, personal documents and photos were provided by Edward Salem and Joan Salem. Theresa Salem provided original copies.

Interviews with the following family members provided a wealth of information – Betty Druzvik, Edward Salem, Nelson Salem, Carter Salem, Joan Salem