

# AMERICAN IMMIGRANTS WHO COME AND GO

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## **Body**

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To the Editor:

In a March 13 news article, "Some Greeks Find Promise of U.S. Fades," you say that "for the first time, a growing number of Greek immigrants are thinking about leaving the United States and returning to Greece. . . ."

For centuries, Greeks have been migrating to all parts of the world - and for centuries, they have been returning home in droves. Oscar Handlin, who wrote of this tendency among Greek and other immigrants nearly three decades ago ("Immigrants Who Go Back," Atlantic, July 1956), noted that "from the start, the currents of trans-Atlantic migration has flowed in both directions."

Indeed, during the first three decades of this century, nearly four million immigrants left the United States for Europe.

But the return home was not necessarily permanent. The process of migration and transplantation transforms Greek immigrants into Greek-Americans, Greek-Australians or Greek-Canadians, and the memory of the new land pulls them back like a magnet.

I have an aunt who has crossed the Atlantic eight times in the last 15 years, each time believing she was making a permanent move. Her latest crossing, made last August, took her back to Athens. In her most recent letters to me, she wrote of how she longed for Astoria (New York).

Her plight - the vain search for the best of both lands - is by no means unique. A word for Greeks who go back: Greece won't be what you think it is, anymore than the United States was what you expected it to be.

NICK A. KOMONS Potomac, Md., March 13, 1984

## **Classification**

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