

# The Ongoing Surge to the Sea: Greeks in Oregon and Southwest Washington

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By Steve Frangos  
TNH Staff Writer

CHICAGO - "A Surge to the Sea: The Greeks in Oregon," by Thomas Doulis remains a classic of Greek American history. This volume's subtitle offers more of the community base for this pi-

## No Waiver-ing from Burns on US Policy

By Angelike Contis  
TNH Staff Writer

NEW YORK - After 27 years in the diplomatic hot seat - whether as U.S. Ambassador to Greece during the fighting in Kosovo or Ambassador to NATO when the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 struck, Nick Burns decided to retire two years ago at the age of 51, but he's still firing a diplomat's measured philosophy, teaching international relations at the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard, in Cambridge, Massachusetts, near his Boston roots.

"My wife and family and I enjoyed every minute of our careers. We wouldn't trade it for anything," Burns told TNH while in Manhattan for an April 19 fundraiser organized by the New York Committee of the Thessaloniki-based American Farm School (AFS.) Burns, the featured speaker at the event held at the Yale Club - which

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oneering study; "A Photographic History of the Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Community of Oregon and Southern Washington." It is not just that the book may well be the first visual history of a Greek community anywhere in North America but that it is part of the longest-running continuous historic projects on Greek communities anywhere in the nation. What few Greek Americans realize, outside the Great Northwest, is that after that book Doulis researched and wrote two other history photovolumes dealing with the same Greek community, using an ever-expanding base of source material, while generally working with the same band of Greek American colleagues from Oregon and Washington.

Long recognized as a novelist and literary historian, Doulis' contributions to Modern Greek Literature are better known outside the Greek American community. His four novels (to date) include: "Path for Our Valor," "The Quarries of Sicily," "Open Hearth: The First Generation, A Novel of Immigration," and "City of Brotherly Love: The Second Generation." The last two novels aim, in what is promised to be a trilogy, to fictionally survey the pioneer, bridge and fully Americanized (or not) generations of Greek immigration to North America.

Doulis' singular record of literary and historical studies includes a critical biography of George Theotokas, the survey "Disaster and Fiction: Modern Greek Fiction and the Asia Minor Disaster of 1922" followed by his translated of the 1856 novel Thanos Vlekas by Greek writer Pavlos Kalligas. Taking the long-view of history and literature Doulis has two additional studies of note. "Out of the Ashes: the Emergence of Greek Fiction in the Nineteenth Century from Katharevousa to Ethnography," and the yet to be published "The Iron Storm: The Impact of the Military Dictatorship of 1967-1974 on Greek Literary Culture."

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# The Ongoing Surge to the Sea: Greeks

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Ever attentive to the Greek presence in North America, in its broadest sense, Doulis has also researched and authored two books 'Journeys to Orthodoxy: A Collection of Essays by Converts to Orthodox Christianity,' and "Toward an Authentic Church: Orthodox Christians Discuss Their Conversion," that explore something of the impact of Eastern Orthodoxy to American shores.

If we add to this mix of literary, historic and religious studies Doulis' histories on the Great Northwest, including "Landmarks of Our Past: The First 75 Years of the Greek Community of Oregon: A Photographic History of the Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Community of Oregon and Southern Washington and then his lengthy first chapter, "Voices of the Past," in "A Centennial Celebration of Faith, History, and Community: 1907-2007," we have one of the most intriguing and complex mix of historical and literary writings in all of Modern Greek and/or Greek-American Studies. Outside of, perhaps, Helen Zeese Papanikolas, Andrew T. Kopan or the much-neglected Nickolas Prevas I know of no other author outside of Doulis with a comparable long-term community-focused series of publications in Greek-American Studies.

Doulis is now fully retired as a professor Emeritus in English from Portland State University. While he would be reluctant to note a Tom Doulis Graduate Fiction Award, that means that outside of Greek-American circles his career is seen by his colleagues on a par with Theodore Saloutos, Papanikolas and Kopan, in whose memory academic awards are named.

Our principal concern here is with Doulis as historian of a much-overlooked region of Greek-America, the Great Northwest. In that more than 30-year enterprise, Doulis would be the first to say, as he does in the introductions to all three photo-histories, that he has worked hand-in-hand with many others.

## THE FIRST HISTORIC VIEWING

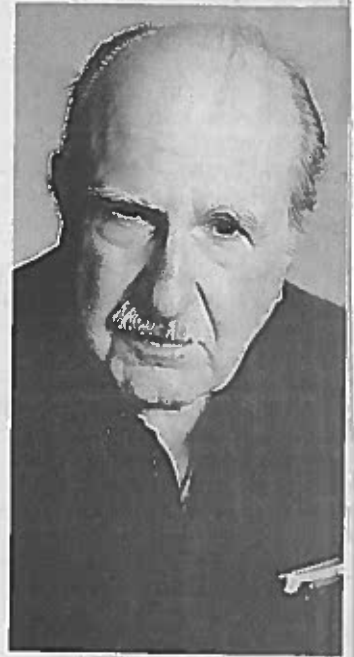
In the 1970s, various individuals and groups came together to form the Delphi Hellenic Uni-

versity Club at Portland State University. Doulis as a member of the English Department was involved, as was Dr. John Cavaros of the Classics Department. The Delphi Hellenic University Club soon decided to collect cherished family photographs and to audio record the memories of the oldest Greeks within the broader Oregon and southwest Washington community.

While Doulis interviewed various Greeks from the pioneer generation of immigrants, 34 oral history interviews were recorded by a host of local Greeks spanning the years 1977-2007 and then between 2008-2010. The Delphi Hellenic University Club, which no longer exists, eventually turned over their interview tapes to the Oral History Committee, now part of Portland's Hellenic-American Cultural Center and Museum. The Oral History Project is still active. The local AHEPA Chapter, District Firwood 22, donated \$10,000 for recording equipment, professional transcriptions and related costs. Individuals involved in the Oral History Project off and on since 1977 include Demetra Ariston, Maria Katchis Boyer, Nicolas Hanches, Maria Hanches, E. John Rumpakis, Cleo Rumpakis, Sophia Goritsan Sly, Effy Stephanopoulos, Chrysanthos Voreas, and especially the late Jennie Hrestu Reimann.

Given the local history of Portland and southwest Washington, Doulis drew on two other sources. First, Peter Corvallis, a local Greek with a national reputation as a photographer for images documenting the region's Hellenes from the 1950s onward. Then, David B. Cole, for his invaluable (and now decades long) historic research on the Russian community of Oregon. Technical and other much-needed forms of support were generously lent by Andrew Kulas, the 1977 chairman of the Holy Trinity Festival-Bazaar Committee who Doulis asserts initiated the overall project "as a way of marking the community's anniversary," as well as Jack Lockie and Associates, who brought the volume's physical existence into reality.

Surge to the Sea on one level marks the 70th anniversary of



Novelist and literary historian Thomas Doulis.

the Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church, as one sees in the black-and-white slipcover to this hard-backed volume in the panoramic photograph of the Spring 1908 ground breaking celebration of the first Holy Trinity Church. Yet more is at work. Doulis' sweep is far from parochial or limited and takes into account the sacrifices, cultural confusions, and decades-long view of what are daily (even moment by moment) personal experiences that collectively result into historical changes.

The text in this volume is not lengthy at 87 pages but it is concise (one might even say poetic) in its sensitivity to the beliefs and values of the Greek community not only of the present but also most assuredly of the past. We see the gradual panorama of Greek American concerns dealt with by a deft hand: the stoic sacrifice of the first wave of bachelor Greeks, the initial abuse of American society at large to all the pioneer immigrants, the limited presence of Greek women, the Herculean efforts to found a community on what was at first foreign soil and the joys and concerns children inevitable brought.

## IT'S ALL THERE

Doulis has done his homework. This volume is judiciously augmented with facts, figures,

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# in Oregon and Southwest Washington

and all the sure attention and nods toward the Greek American historic literature (as it then existed) one might expect of a serious historical study. But I am more impressed by his concision and insight into basic humanity than his obvious grasp of the wider scholarly documents. In reflecting on pioneer Greek arranged marriages we find Doulis musing over: "The treasured moment when the two soon-to-be married strangers meet must have been full of the mystery that certain everyday events possess. There are great moments in history - the beginnings and ends of wars, the assassinations of leaders, the coronations of kings, the inauguration of presidents: books are written about these. But there are other moments like the meeting of two shy people, that we have been taught to consider unimportant because they are ordinary. Books rarely take these as their subjects. Without them, though, history is impossible."

Carefully crafted text mixes with 131 photographs for which all have their principal individuals, occasions, or events identified. Physically the volume is some 8" x 12" and printed on (what used to be called) hard-gloss paper. This, as the name may imply, results in crystal-sharp black and white reproductions of the historic photographs. As an artist might

apply under-colors to accent the central image Doulis provides notes and other commentary to situate those he writes of in terms of their time or cultural sensibilities.

Typical of Doulis' attention is that he even brings into question his source material so that the reader can also see pasted the page in front of him or her in ever-new ways: "But we are more than our photographs show us to be. The images that follow are surface views of a reality that is deeper and more mysterious than we can ever know: moments, theatrical and posed, for which we have prepared ourselves and learned our lines. They show us to be less than we are. We are so much more that cannot be photographed that these images, precious as they are to us, strike us as a dreams, remembered at the moment they fade forever, fragments of a present rushing to become the unrecoverable past," he writes.

At some point after the book was completed, (and before Doulis knew more volumes would be in his future) he contacted Vasiliki Vlahakis, who is responsible for the Holy Trinity Cathedral archives to accept the material he had gathered (or had been entrusted to him) as part of the parishes archives, which she did. Doulis has never been alone in his efforts to preserve the history and culture of

the Greeks in the Great Northwest.

Today, the stunning Hellenic-American Cultural Center and Museum of Oregon and Southwest Washington stands as just one example among many of the collective efforts these Greeks have created and continue to share with their American neighbors. One material result of this long-term and ongoing historical project is the recognition of the Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church's (which is only one of 12 Eastern Orthodox Churches in the greater Portland metropolitan area's) status as a Cathedral which came about directly because of these collective historical documentation projects.

Doulis remains a tireless worker and critical thinker on the Greek experience across sweeps of time and what often seem even greater geographic distances. All you have to do to benefit from his sustained labors is to read one of his many books. For "just a Greek street-kid from Philadelphia," as he often refers to himself, he continues to give back more than he was ever given.

(Surge to the Sea can be ordered for \$20.00 per copy plus \$4.95 for shipping and handling. Orders can be placed with the Ethnos Greek Orthodox Bookstore 3131 NE Glisan Portland Oregon 97232 503-234-0468 ext 25.)

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