

Louie of Constantinople

Louie Nikiassis came to America in 1910, from Constantinople, Turkey at the age of 26. He grew up in the Greek sector under Turkish rule. His father Sotirios Nikiassis had a small pottery shop. The Turks would often show up to vandalize his business, mostly for sport.

Life was hard for the family and around 1900 Sotirios had enough. He was ready to leave Turkey. It took until 1904 before they could save up the money to leave. It was late September of 1904 when a gang of Turks broke into his shop. During the altercation Sotirios was killed. Louie buried his father in Constantinople, packed up the few things he had and took the first ship leaving. After an uncomfortable trip he landed in Argentina. Louie found work in a restaurant in Buenos Aires. For the next five years he saved his money. He wanted to come to America as now he had a restaurant background.

In May of 1910 Louie made his dream a reality. He came to America on an Argentine passport. He had to change his name to match the pass port he purchased. Louie arrived in Los Angeles here he became Louie Navarro. This was a well used name and drew no attention to him. It would fit his need for obscurity.

Louie worked in some of the high-class gourmet restaurants in Los Angeles. He even worked aboard a luxury cruise liner. Louie, along the way, had five children. Each are a success unto themselves. Louie made a life in California. His family was his rock. He had not told his children about Stavros or about First Life. It was just safer not to tell them.

Louie retired in 2020 and he moved to Lancaster, California. He owns several acres along the Sierra Highway. Louie has a small farm raising rescue animals. He is well known around his neighborhood. No one knows of his Stavrosian roots. He's just old Lou, the guy with all the strays.

During our interview he stated that he wished he told his children years ago. It may not be too late, yet they may not believe him now. The S.G.L. offered to talk for him. Louie feels the children will not understand. Louie made the comment, "How could they?"

Today Louie is 137 years old. His health is failing him. Even a Stavrosian has only so many days on this Earth.

This interviewer was notified on April 20, 2021 at 11:00 a.m. that Louie Nikiassis Navarro had passed away peacefully in his home. The S.G.L. will hold a special service for him on the Lake Louie loved, called Little Rock Wash. It will be part of the 2021 First Life Celebration. His children will be invited.