Preserving your New York Story: Arab American Genealogy

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Arab Americans - For the purposes of this presentation, we refer to persons in the U.S. from, or with ancestors from, one of the 22 Arab League countries.

Arab League Members		
Algeria	Bahrain	Comoros
Djibouti	Egypt	Iraq
Jordan	Kuwait	Lebanon
Libya	Mauritania	Morocco
Oman	Palestine	Qatar
Saudi Arabia	Somalia	Sudan
Syria	Tunisia	United Arab Emirates
	Yemen	

Although there are people of other ethnic/cultural-identities from these countries that do not identify as Arab, for purposes of our research tips and discussion, we use the term Arab American.

New York Highlight: Little Syria

Kalimah Press - Linda Jacobs

<u>kalimahpress.com/blog/the-syrian-colony-on-</u> <u>washington-street-and-the-lost-lower-west-side/</u>

"Syrians in New York: Mapping Movement, 1900 – 1930" Moise A. Khayrallah Center for Lebanese Diaspora Studies

lebanesestudies.ncsu.edu/explore/publications/projects/

Arab American National Museum "Coming to America"

arabamericanmuseum.org/coming-to-america/



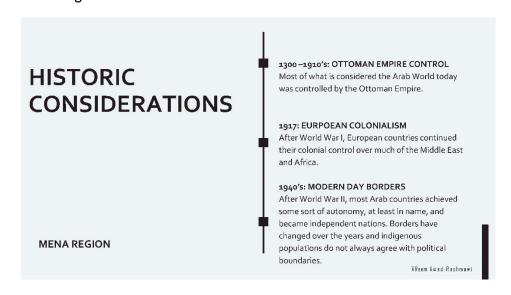
Bain News Service, Publisher. Syrian Food Seller. [Between and Ca. 1920] Photograph. Library of Congress

Issues Hindering Research

- There are no clear Arab or MENA/SWANA identifications in US records.
- US records use changing identities for Arabs or others from the region. *Example:* woman born in Lebanon Turkey, Syria, & Lebanon identification in records.
- Spelling variations and naming practices are unfamiliar to researchers.
- There are language barriers to research.

Historical Considerations

- Be sure to look at historical context when beginning your research.
- MENA region context



US historical context

Helpful Arabic Naming Tips

- In most Arab countries, legal documents list 4 names—given name, father's name, grandfather's name and family name—instead of the Western use of 3 names. Upon immigration to the U.S., the family or clan name may have been dropped.
- Traditions: Father's name as middle name and eldest son named for grandfather.
- Names shortened in English & Dashes/spaces are optional Example: the name Abdul-latif, same as AbdulLatif and Abdul Latif. It may be shortened to Abd, Abdul, Abdel, Abe, Latif, Tif, Teef, etc.
- Spelling variations Example: Sabreen same as Sabrine same as Sabrin or may be changed to Sabina

Where to start – Before looking at records

- Write down what you know Write out or use a computer program to include all you know about your family history names, places, dates, stories.
- **Around the house** What records do you have or you can get from family members?
- Interview family members Do you have living relatives in the US or abroad that you can interview about your family history?

Examples of traditional US genealogy records

- Census State
- Census Federal
- Vital records
- Immigration records

- Newspapers
- Court records
- Land records
- Religious records

Research Resources

- US Records –photosmemoriesbyreem.com/arab-american-genealogy-research
- Records Outside the US photosmemoriesbyreem.com/arab-genealogy-research

DNA – Genetic Genealogy

- **Testing** Many Arab Americans are taking autosomal DNA tests, also Y and Mitochondrial DNA.
- Family Tree DNA Group Projects Group Projects provide communities for people who are interested in a specific topic. There are at least 18 groups related to Arab DNA some country specific and others are name specific.

Where to find more information and join with others to research your Arab American ancestors:

National Society for Arab and Arab American Genealogy (NSAB) – NSAB's mission is to foster interest in Arab & Arab American genealogy, by encouraging education, research, writing & recording family histories and preserving records.

<u>arabamericangenealogy.com</u> § <u>facebook.com/arabamericangenealogy</u> <u>instagram.com/arabamericangenealogy</u> § <u>arabamericangenealogy</u> @ <u>gmail.com</u>