

**Arab Americans and the Automobile:  
Voices in the Factory**

**Instruction Resources**

## **Arab immigration periods, push and pull factors, and immigration policy in the United States**

In this first session, students will investigate primary and secondary sources related to Arab American immigration: what brought Arabs here, what they did and how immigration policy impacted them (and other immigrants).

### **Document 1**

#### **Arab American Immigration: A Brief History**

Arab immigration to Detroit has been occurring since the 1880s. The British and French colonized the region in the 1700s, taking land from indigenous tribes from across the state. As these colonial powers established a presence in what became the Detroit area, immigrants from Western European countries like Germany and Ireland began pouring in during the early to mid-1800s. By 1880, immigrants from Eastern European countries like Poland, Greece, Russia and others. Some came to America seeking refuge from conflict, but many were simply looking for better job and educational opportunities.

Like other immigrants to Detroit, Arabs have been coming to the Detroit area since the 1880s and have continued to arrive. Given that the Arab world is large and spans from Northern Africa to places like Syria, Lebanon, Palestine, Iraq and Jordan, many immigrants have arrived in the United States in different periods throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Two defining moments in immigration policy have had a profound impact on Arab immigration periods. In 1924, anti-immigrant sentiment was high and resulted in what is known as the 1924 Immigration Act, which placed quotas on immigrants from European and non-European countries, which included the Middle East. The number of Arab immigrants was greatly reduced during this time period, though it began to increase slightly after the second World War, when the United States allowed Palestinian refugees to enter as a result of conflict around the creation of the State of Israel. In 1965, immigration laws for Europeans and non-Europeans changed, allowing more individuals to come to the United States in a third period of immigration. A newly formed fourth period of Arab immigration began in the early 1990s and continues to this present day.

Arab Americans first began arriving to Detroit in large numbers in the 1880s. Many of the individuals who came during this time were Maronite Catholics or Christians coming from what was known at the time as Greater Syria. Greater Syria included parts of Syria, Lebanon, Palestine and Jordan. Many of these early immigrants were males seeking better employment opportunities, bringing their wives, children, and extended family members over after they had saved enough money or established themselves. These early immigrants were entrepreneurs and ran their own peddling or store businesses. As the automobile industry began to grow, more

came to America seeking work in factories. Many immigrants were attracted to Henry Ford's Five Dollar Day work program, where workers were paid \$5 per day for their labor. It was also during this period of immigration to America that anti-immigrant sentiment within the United States began to grow, which resulted in the Immigration Act of 1924 (also known as the Johnson-Reed Act). This established quotas for non-European immigrants, limiting the number of immigrants who entered the United States. Although Arabs were not targeted in this law, quotas were placed on the number of immigrants entering, and this did affect Arab immigration.

The second period of Arab immigration began around 1924 and lasted through the early 1960s. Though the Immigration Act of 1924 had not been lifted, a small number of Arabs entered the United States during this time. The government also made exceptions for some Arab immigrants. Some of the immigrants who came during this time came as a result of political turmoil and unrest often pushed people out of the Middle East, and many came to America. Many who came were Palestinian refugees who were displaced as a result of conflict with the newly established state of Israel. Other immigrants who were displaced due to conflict included Chaldeans from northern Iraq. Others who migrated to the United States were not like the working class immigrants of the first period who arrived in America. Rather, they were professionals who came from urban areas.

The third period of Arab immigration began around 1965, when the Hart-Celler Act was passed. This new law allowed for immigrants to enter the United States, and the number of Arabs increased substantially. Many still came from countries like Syria, Palestine, Jordan, Iraq, and Lebanon, but newer immigrants also came from Yemen and were overwhelmingly Muslim Arabs. These newer immigrants were also fleeing conflict and political turmoil, but they also sought better educational and occupational opportunities. Despite their religious differences, the Detroit area remained a hub of Arab immigration because of its established community. Organizations like the Arab Community Center for Economic and Social Services (ACCESS), the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC), and the Arab American Institute (AAI) were started in the Detroit area, providing social and political supporting to Arab Americans. Along with these services, local businesses, restaurants, community centers and places of worship were established and have contributed the continuation of Arab migration to the area.

Research by the Arab American National Museum (AANM) suggests a newly formed fourth period of Arab immigrants emerging from 1990 to the present day. This immigration period is also marred with political unrest, often due to United States and Western foreign policy in the Middle East region. A steady stream of political conflict and unrest have occurred in the Middle East, including the the Iraq War after September 11, 2001, the rise of Islamic State (IS), the Syrian Civil War, war in Yemen, and other uprisings in Libya, Egypt and Tunisia in the 2000s. This unrest has brought Yemenis, Syrians, Iraqis, among others to the Detroit area once more. However, anti-immigrant sentiments have increased once again, this time more focused on Arab Americans and Muslim Americans. AANM writes that "U.S. official policy and tone towards Arab immigrants in the U.S. changed following the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001. Security officials looked at how the perpetrators had entered the country and found that the hijackers

were all young male Arab nationals who had entered the United States with visas in their real names.” They go on to discuss that policies like this have allowed the United States government to track Arabs and Muslims in the United States, which has had a profound impact on the community here and abroad. Given the discrimination and stereotypes that have persisted about Arab Americans, there have been more attempts to curtail Arab immigration. Most recently, those from Iraq, Syria, Libya, and Yemen, in what many call a Muslim Ban. Despite the setbacks the discrimination the community has faced, Arab Americans have continued to contribute economically, politically, culturally, and socially to the Detroit area just like their predecessors.

### **References**

Arab Detroit: From Margin to Mainstream

Arab Americans: a Pictorial History

Arab Americans: History, Culture and Contributions -

(<http://arabamericanmuseum.org/umages/Arab-Americans.pdf>)

## **Document 2**

### **Ishmael Ahmed oral history:**

<http://aanm.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/compoundobject/collection/p16806coll15/id/44>

AMERI: were you born in this country?

MR. AHMED: Yes. I was born in Brooklyn, New York, on August 31, 1947. My father is an Egyptian immigrant and my mother is from a Lebanese family that arrived here in the mid-1800s. MS. AMERI: Your mother was born in this country?

MR. AHMED: Yes. She was born in Detroit.

### **Ron Amen oral history:**

<http://aanm.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/compoundobject/collection/p16806coll15/id/47>

MR. AMEN: Actually, both of my parents were born here in the United States. My father was born in a little town in Indiana, Michigan City, Indiana, and then returned to Lebanon when he was about ten years old with his family, and didn't come back to the United States until he was in his early twenties. My mother was born right here, and raised here in Dearborn.

MS. KALAYDJIAN: And how did your father end up in Michigan?

MR. AMEN: When he came back in his early twenties, he came back with an uncle of his who was working then at the Pullman factory in Michigan City, Indiana. This is a factory that produced the old Pullman cars when train travel was still the only way to get around in the United States. And my great-uncle, my father's uncle, was one of the first immigrants to that city.





# Passport cards

FORM 1-487 (5-1-47)  
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE  
Immigration and Naturalization Service

FORM APPROVED  
BUDGET BUREAU No. 43-2063

**PASSENGER CARD**

1. Name in full RAFIDI Izzat KARIM  
(Family name) (Given name)

2. Permanent address 321 West 41st Street  
(Final destination)  
Ashtabula, Ohio, U.S.A.

3. Age 18 Sex M Nationality Palestinian

4. Passport No. \_\_\_\_\_  
(Place and date of Issue)

5. Immigration document 256a - No. 654489  
Damascus, April 6th, 1949 (Place and date of issue)

6. Date of birth 1931 Place of birth Palestine

7. If naturalized \_\_\_\_\_  
(Place) (Date)

8. Occupation Student

9. Height 5' 4 1/2" Married or Single Single

10. Color of hair Black Weight \_\_\_\_\_

11. Race Caucasian Color of eyes Brown

12. Able to read Ar, Eng. Language Arabic, English  
write

13. Name and address of nearest relative in home country  
NABIHA A. RAFIDI  
El-Bira, Ramallah, Palestine

14. Passenger accompanied by \_\_\_\_\_  
(Name) (Relationship)

Air line \_\_\_\_\_ (Owner or Operator)

Aircraft \_\_\_\_\_ (Registration marks and Nationality)

Flight No. \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Point of Embarkation \_\_\_\_\_

Point of Disembarkation \_\_\_\_\_

15. Purpose in going to country of disembarkation \_\_\_\_\_

16. Length of intended stay there \_\_\_\_\_

17. Intended address in country of disembarkation \_\_\_\_\_

18. Name and address of friend or relative to whom destined in that country \_\_\_\_\_

19. Whether in that country before, and if so, when and where \_\_\_\_\_

20. Whether ever excluded from admission to that country... \_\_\_\_\_

21. Whether ever in prison or in institution for the care and treatment of insane \_\_\_\_\_

22. Marks of identification \_\_\_\_\_

For official use in country of disembarkation

Passenger inspected (and information hereon verified) by \_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature of Immigration Officer)

**INSTRUCTIONS FOR PREPARATION OF PASSENGER CARD**

*One Copy required. Must be filled out in the English language, typewritten or printed in ink.*

*WHEN REQUIRED - The card is required in the case of every alien passenger arriving by aircraft in the United States from outside thereof except an alien passenger originating.*

1. *In Mexico, Canada, Newfoundland, St Pierre, or Miquelon or*
2. *In possession of any of the following valid unexpired documents:*
  - a. *U. S. Re-entry Permit - Form 1-132*
  - b. *U. S. Immigration Visa on U. S. Foreign Service Form 256A*
  - c. *U. S. Temporary Visa on U. S. Foreign Service Form 257 A*

*WHEN TO BE DELIVERED - The card, except the spaces expressly reserved for the Immigration Officer, must be correctly filled out by the time of the arrival of the aircraft, and be delivered to that officer, with the manifest in which the passenger is listed.*

*RACE (PEOPLE) - The entry under the heading "race" on the card should show the race (people) as given in the list below. Abbreviations as shown in underlined capital letters in that list should be used.*

*"Race" is to be determined by the stock from which aliens spring and the language they speak. The original stock or blood shall be the basis for the classification, the mother tongue to be used only to assist in determining the original stock.*

*Special attention should be paid to the distinction between race and nationality (country or which citizen or subject) and entries should be carefully revised by inspectors in this regard. For instance, an Irish, German or French alien by race might be of English, Swiss, or any other nationality. In this connection the following distinctions should be especially observed:*

*"Cuban" refers to the Cuban people (not negroes)*

*"West Indian" refers to the people of the West Indies other than either Cuban or Negroes.*

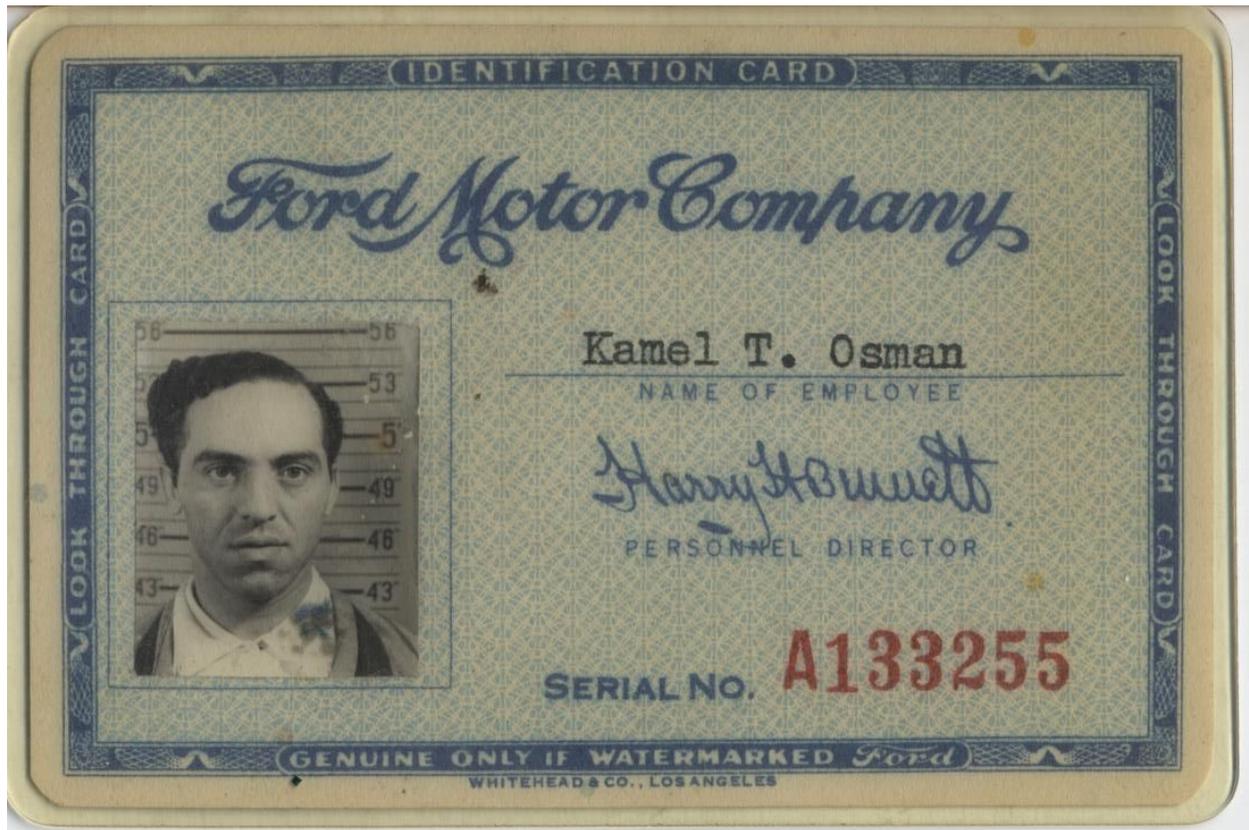
*"Latin-American" refers to the people of Central and South American of Latin descent.*

*"Negro" refers to the African (black) whether coming from Cuba or other islands of the West Indies, North of South America, Europe, or Africa.*

*Any alien with admixture of blood of the African (black) should be classified under this heading.*

<b>ALbanian</b>	<b>DalMatian</b>	<b>French</b>	<b>Latin-American</b>	<b>Pacific Islander</b>	<b>Scotch</b>	<b>Turkish</b>
<b>ARmenian</b>	<b>DUTch</b>	<b>German</b>	<b>Latvian</b>	<b>Polish</b>	<b>Serbian</b>	<b>Welsh</b>
<b>Bohemian</b>	<b>East Indian</b>	<b>Greek</b>	<b>Lithuanian</b>	<b>Portuguese</b>	<b>Slovak</b>	<b>West Indian (other than Cuban)</b>
<b>Bosnian</b>	<b>English</b>	<b>Hercegovinian</b>	<b>Magyar</b>	<b>Rumanian</b>	<b>Slovenian</b>	
<b>Bulgarian</b>	<b>Estonian</b>	<b>Irish</b>	<b>Mexican</b>	<b>Russian</b>	<b>Spanish</b>	<b>White</b>
<b>Chinese</b>	<b>Filipino</b>	<b>Italian</b>	<b>Montenegrin</b>	<b>Ruthenian (Russick)</b>	<b>Syrian</b>	<b>Other Peoples</b>
<b>Croatian</b>	<b>Finish</b>	<b>Japanese</b>	<b>Moravian</b>	<b>Scandinavian (Norwegians, Danes &amp; Swedes)</b>		
<b>Cuban</b>	<b>Flemish</b>	<b>Korean</b>	<b>Negro</b>			

Ford Motor Company work ID



**WHAT IS THE DOCUMENT? - What kind of document is it? What is the date on the document?**

**WHAT'S THE POINT? – Why is this document important? What was its purpose?**

**WHAT ELSE DOES THE DOCUMENT TELL US?**

## Push-pull factors of immigration

This next section will discuss the factors that pushed Arab Americans to America and what pulled them. Students will read newspaper clips and oral history excerpts to understand some of the reasons behind why Arab Americans came and what they did once they were in America.

## Document 4

A Detroit Free Press article from December 27, 1998 says the following:

“Historians break down American immigration into four main eras: the colonial (1600-1800), political (1850-1900), economic (1900-60) and persecuted (1970-present). Many older U.S. cities have gone through all four phases, but not Detroit. Unlike Boston and Philadelphia, Detroit attracted few colonists; unlike New York and Chicago, Detroit didn’t get many people fleeing autocratic leaders either. Detroit, more than any other city, attracted millions of people who simply hoped to get a good wage for an honest day’s work.” (page 12a)

“Metro Detroit is home to more than 90 active languages. So far this decade [1990s], Asian Indians, Russians and Arabs top the immigrant groups coming to Metro Detroit. The latest wave is drawn to jobs, pushed out by the instability and hostility of their homelands, demise of leadership in the South Pacific and collapse of communism.” (page 12a)

## Document 5

**Faras Wara oral history quote:**

<http://aanm.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/compoundobject/collection/p16806coll15/id/35>

JF: you’ve worked at GM for how long?

FW: Seven years.

JF: You worked there for 7 years, okay. Okay, I’m going to ask you a couple of questions about your experience coming to the United States. Okay, what year did you come to the United States? FW: 1967.

JF: Okay, did you come after the war?

FW: Before.

JF: Before the war.

FW: One month before.

JF: Oh, really? Okay. Now why did you come to the United States?

FW: To continue my education.

JF: Okay, and which is, what were you going to school for?

FW: Electronics.

JF: Okay, and was the education better here? Is that what, why you came?

FW: Yes.

JF: Okay, and how old were you?

FW: Twenty...years.

JF: Twenty years old?

FW: Twenty years old.

**Don Unis interview:**

<http://aanm.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/compoundobject/collection/p16806coll15/id/38>

Don Unis: Oh...my father came, and then, on my grandmother's side came in 1896 and he was a peddler. Most Arabs who first came here were peddlers. Dr. Alexa Naff said that in her book and a lot of Arab Americans got very upset with her. Guess what? It was the truth, they were peddlers. And a lot of the recent Palestinians, growing up, my young friends were peddlers.

Guess what? They did very well. And they made money peddling and eventually they bought a business and they settled down. But there was no shame, there was no shame in working hard and peddling or selling. And eventually they found jobs in the auto industry before the union and after the union.

ANAN: So, what did you do in a factory? How many years you worked, first? 5

DON: Well, I worked, I worked at the Ford for about 8 months and then I worked at General Motors for about 5 years and then I left to become a fire fighter. Yea, I became a Dearborn fire fighter and I stayed there for the rest of my career. So.

ANAN: What did you do in the auto industry?

DON: You know, I did, I did a number of jobs. One of my jobs was...selecting certain parts that dealerships were calling for all over the country. And it was parts for cars going back 20 years. And we would go find these parts and see if they would match and then send them. I worked at Fords making, making engine, heater engines, you know. I mean, whatever it would take to build a car or to service a car, maintain a car, I was part of it. And I worked on the line. Putting, putting seats in.

ANAN: Did they train you, or...

DON: Well it didn't take much training.

ANAN: Ah.

DON: I mean that's why immigrants flocked to these jobs because basically on that assembly line, as we know, you did one job. You put the headlight on. I mean that's all you did, you put the headlight on. And all you had to do was keep up with the line coming down. You know, many times the line would speed up. But it was a job many immigrants went to because it didn't take too much training and it took very, very little skill, but it paid well. Don't forget when Henry Ford was paying 5 dollars a day, most places were paying only 2 dollars a day. And so that's, that's why they came here.

ANAN: (inaudible)

DON: They started in Michigan City, on, on my uh, on, on my mother's side, my grandmother's side and then they went to Highland Park with opening of the Ford Rouge plant and then they come to Dearborn with the opening of, I mean with the opening of the Highland Park plant then they came to Dearborn with the opening of the Ford Rouge plant. Many immigrants, and, and, and a number of Arabs, Arab families came with them. And as you can see the south of Dearborn with relation to the Ford Rouge plant. I mean it was a place where the Arab fathers or

immigrant fathers could work, walk to work. They didn't, they didn't need, they didn't need to drive a car, they walked to work.

**Imad Srour interview:**

<http://aanm.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/compoundobject/collection/p16806coll15/id/54>

LS: This is Lamis Srour interviewing her father, Imad Srour. Okay, Baba, why did you come to the United States?

MR. SROUR: There was opportunity to leave old country [Srour is from Lebanon] because of situation there, and to make a better living.

MS. SROUR: Was it easy for you to adapt here in this culture, or did you find it hard?

MR. SROUR: It was hard in the beginning. Then I started to get used to it.

**Sam and Katherine Amen interview:**

<http://aanm.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/compoundobject/collection/p16806coll15/id/32>

HM: Okay when you, when you moved here from Lebanon, were you planning on moving back to Lebanon or did you want to stay here?

SAM: Well no, I plan on stay here.

HM: Okay, why, you didn't want to go back to Lebanon at all, I mean, to live?

SAM: No.

HM: Okay, did you like Lebanon?

SAM: Yea. I like it.

HM: Yea?

SAM: There was, there were, it was a little bad over there but it was okay.

ANAN: Why, what do you mean a little bad? Was it poor? Was it hard? Was it war? Was it cold? Little bad.

SAM: I had to get out, go some work when there was a little..

ANAN: Little (indiscernible).

SAM: Yea.

ANAN: In the farm, you mean?

SAM: Yea.

ANAN: Did you make money in Lebanon? Did you work?

SAM: (laughs) No, there was no money making in Lebanon.

**After reading the material, list the Push and Pull factors for Arab Americans.**

<i>Push Factors</i>	<i>Pull Factors</i>

## **Session 1 Summary Sheet:**

**After students have answered the questions in the session, synthesize what they have learned below:**

<b>Factors of Arab American Immigration</b>

<b>Other important information about Arab Americans</b>

## **Session Two**

### **Arab American diversity and immigration policy**

**This session focuses on the diversity within the Arab American community. There are many myths and perceptions, and this session aims to educate students on the ethnic and religious diversity within the community. This session also covers immigration policy in the United States, by examining primary and secondary sources on two laws passed in the twentieth century that profoundly affected all immigrants.**

## **Document 6**

**Religious diversity within the Arab community**

**Highlight that not all Arabs are Muslim and not all Muslims are Arab**

“Although American popular culture and media tend to present all Arabs as Muslim and all Muslims as Arab, Arabs represent only one-fifth of the world’s 1.5 billion Muslims. Arabs are a minority of Muslim Americans as well. A 2011 Pew Research Center survey found that 26% of Muslim Americans and 41% of foreign-born Muslims were from the Middle East and North Africa. This highlights that Muslims are not always Arab, but in addition Arabs are not always Muslim.”

Excerpt taken from: <http://arabamericanmuseum.org/umages/Arab-Americans.pdf>, page 7)

## **Document 7**

**Cultural diversity among Arab Americans**

★ ARAB WORLD FESTIVAL, AUGUST 6, 7, 8, 1976 ★

Ingredients available at OASIS MART, 4270 N. Woodward

Between 13 & 14 Mile Road in Royal Oak — 576-0081

**FAVA BEAN SALAD**

(Fool Imdamis)

- |                         |                           |
|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1 teaspoon baking soda  | 2 tomatoes, quartered     |
| 2 cups dried fava beans | 1 teaspoon mint           |
| 1 onion, chopped        | 2 tablespoons lemon juice |
| 1 clove garlic, chopped | 2 tablespoons olive oil   |

1. Soak beans overnight in water with baking soda.
2. Following day, rinse.
3. Cover with water and boil for 1 hour.
4. Cool, then add onion, garlic, tomato, dried or fresh mint, lemon juice and olive oil. (Serves 4.)

— From "Sahtein" cookbook

about 15 minutes or until lightly browned.

**SPOON HALVA**

- 2 cups sugar
- 5 cups water
- 1½ cups olive or vegetable oil
- 3 cups farina or cream of wheat
- ½ cup chopped walnuts
- Cinnamon

Boil sugar and water to make syrup. Place oil in another saucepan and bring to boil. Reduce heat and stir in farina. Stir until mixture is golden brown. Add walnuts and sugar syrup; blend until smooth. Cool mixture for 30 minutes and use a tablespoon to spoon onto serving dish. Sprinkle with cinnamon. Hot mixture also can be spooned into a ring mold, cooled and sliced to serve.

### **Oral history interview with Sandra Amen**

<http://aanm.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/compoundobject/collection/p16806coll15/id/51>

MS. AMERI: When you grew up, how much Arabs were there compared to now? What changes happened in the neighborhood in terms of ethnicity, Arab-ness?

MS. AMEN: When I was growing up, this neighborhood was the big melting pot. I had Romanian neighbors on one side, Spanish neighbors on the other side, Mexican neighbors across the street. People from the south of the United States next door to them. My other friends in school were Albanian. There was everyone here. We all got along. Our nationalities, our religions, our political views were never a reason to be alienated from anyone. We all just accepted our differences as a part of normal life. In terms of ethnicity, as I got older, the composition of the neighborhood became more and more strictly Arabic and Yemenese.

### **Don Unis interview**

<http://aanm.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/compoundobject/collection/p16806coll15/id/38>

Don: And I'm not a religious person, don't get me wrong. I mean I respect my Muslim faith, I respect my friends who are Christian, my wife was a Christian girl. I mean, and I have Jewish friends, I mean. But yet, there seems to be some, some hidden agenda there. About this fear of Muslims and this fear of the Arab world.

### **Ali Souhouba interview:**

<http://aanm.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/compoundobject/collection/p16806coll15/id/26>

JAN: How about discrimination, I need to get nearer (cross speak). At work did anybody ever make fun of you for being Arab or Muslim?

ALI: Oh, yea.

JAN: Yea? What did they say?

ALI: When I work, I'll... We got a lot of Arab and Christian Arab. They ask me sometime, "Because you are in the same land" you know as (in Arabic - "The Christians"), the Christians yea. We are the same land, same country, you know, only is the different between religion, you know.

## **Interactive Notes**

**(Interactive Notes to be used with Documents 6, 7, 8)**

**Document #: \_\_\_\_\_**

**What is the document:**

**What does this document tell us about Arab Americans?**

# Immigration Policy in the United States

## Document 9

**From the United States Department of State website on the 1924 Immigration Act:**

“The Immigration Act of 1924 limited the number of immigrants allowed entry into the United States through a national origins quota. The quota provided immigration visas to two percent of the total number of people of each nationality in the United States as of the 1890 national census. It completely excluded immigrants from Asia.

In 1917, the U.S. Congress enacted the first widely restrictive immigration law. The uncertainty generated over national security during World War I made it possible for Congress to pass this legislation, and it included several important provisions that paved the way for the 1924 Act. The 1917 Act implemented a literacy test that required immigrants over 16 years old to demonstrate basic reading comprehension in any language.

The literacy test alone was not enough to prevent most potential immigrants from entering, so members of Congress sought a new way to restrict immigration in the 1920s. Immigration expert and Republican Senator from Vermont William P. Dillingham introduced a measure to create immigration quotas, which he set at three percent of the total population of the foreign-born of each nationality in the United States as recorded in the 1910 census. This put the total number of visas available each year to new immigrants at 350,000. It did not, however, establish quotas of any kind for residents of the Western Hemisphere. President Wilson opposed the restrictive

act, preferring a more liberal immigration policy, so he used the pocket veto to prevent its passage.

When the congressional debate over immigration began in 1924, the quota system was so well-established that no one questioned whether to maintain it, but rather discussed how to adjust it.

The restrictive principles of the Act could have resulted in strained relations with some European countries as well, but these potential problems did not appear for several reasons. The global depression of the 1930s, World War II, and stricter enforcement of U.S. immigration policy served to curtail European emigration. When these crises had passed, emergency provisions for the resettlement of displaced persons in 1948 and 1950 helped the United States avoid conflict over its new immigration laws.

In all of its parts, the most basic purpose of the 1924 Immigration Act was to preserve the ideal of U.S. homogeneity”

Published by the United States Department of State Milestones website (public domain):  
<https://history.state.gov/milestones/1921-1936/immigration-act>

## **Document 10**

In 1965, Congress passed the Hart-Celler Act, which repealed the quotas established in the 1924 Immigration Act. Read the following statement made by Congressman John Burton of California in support of the law:

August 25, 1965

CO

Mr. BURTON of California. Mr. Chairman, I rise to support H.R. 2580, to amend the Immigration and Naturalization Act.

I want, first of all, to commend my distinguished colleague, the gentleman from New York Chairman EMANUEL CELLER, who has fought so vigorously and valiantly for many years in support of reform in our immigration and naturalization laws. His success this year is a tribute to his dedication to the purposes of this legislation.

I support this measure because of the long overdue changes and improvements it makes in our present immigration and naturalization laws. I am proud, by my bill, H.R. 2587, to be a coauthor of these changes.

I am particularly pleased by the phasing out of the national origins quota system, which through its discriminatory structure runs counter to the basic democratic principles upon which our Nation was founded.

Just as we sought to eliminate discrimination in our land through the Civil Rights Act, today we seek by phasing out the national origins quota system to eliminate discrimination in immigration to this Nation composed of the descendants of immigrants.

We can certainly pass no more meaningful piece of legislation which seeks to make a reality out of the dream of America than this bill we act on today.

Mr. CELLER. Mr. Chairman, I yield back the remainder of my time.

Documents are from the Government Publishing Office and are Public Domain:

<https://www.govinfo.gov/app/details/GPO-CRECB-1965-pt16/GPO-CRECB-1965-pt16-5>

## Document 11

The following statement is by Congressman Paul Findlay of Illinois, and was given after Congressman Burton's statement.

Mr. FINDLEY. Mr. Chairman, immigration laws have needed review and updating for years. For that reason I am glad to see this legislation come to the House floor. I cannot pose as an expert on the details of immigration law, but I do offer some thoughts on the philosophy which should be behind it.

The beckoning beacon of our Statue of Liberty is one of America's greatest and most appealing symbols. For years it cast a gleam on nearby Ellis Island, the major point of debarkation for immigrants. Now most immigrants come by aircraft, and ocean voyagers check in at points elsewhere.

But the Statue of Liberty—the gift of our great sister Republic France—still stands as an inspiration and a hope to those millions beyond our borders who long for an opportunity to share in the American heritage.

To them America is a promised land, a place of refuge, a place where people can live in dignity and without fear.

It is a place which exalts the individual person and prizes people as the greatest of all national resources. In America people are regarded as a form of wealth and national enrichment, not as problems. Immigrants enrich our national life today just as they did in the last century. They don't really put people out of work, whether they are skilled or otherwise. Each can help America by providing services, helping to produce goods, being good citizens.

This is indeed a nation of immigrants. The achievements of immigrants of past generations are tremendous.

American history is largely the history of immigrants. Who are we to suggest that the achievements of the immigrants of today and tomorrow will be less than those of the past?

America has vast land spaces—room for many more people. Ours is not a restricted, protected system but an open one. Or at least it should be. Most of us did not choose to be American citizens. We won this rich heritage as the accident of birth. Those who decide they want to be American citizens and make the personal sacrifice and effort necessary should be welcomed. In my district are many immigrants, and I find most of them are intensely patriotic, hardworking, and good citizens. My district is a better place because it has these immigrants as citizens.

As we write this legislation, let us keep to the high road so there can be no mistake that the Statue of Liberty's beacon gleams brightly as ever.

Documents are from the Government Publishing Office and are Public Domain:

<https://www.govinfo.gov/app/details/GPO-CRECB-1965-pt16/GPO-CRECB-1965-pt16-5>

Interactive Questions (to be used with Documents 9, 10, 11):

Document #: \_\_\_\_\_

**What is this document telling us about immigrants?**

**What impact did these ideas and laws have on Arab American immigration?**

## Session 2 Assessment

*What is an American to you?*

*Do you think America is a melting pot? Why or why not?*

*Briefly describe what you might know about current immigration policy and ideas.*

## Arab American stereotypes and discrimination

Though the immigration policies of the twentieth century were not specifically created to prohibit Arab American immigration, negative sentiments surrounding all immigrants have continued despite more open borders. In this session, students will learn about common stereotypes and forms of discrimination that Arab Americans have faced.

### Document 12

“More than 300 movies, nearly 25 percent of all Hollywood movies that in one way or another demean Arabs, contain gratuitous slurs or they portray Arabs as being the butt of a cheap joke.”  
-- Jack Shaheen (Reel Bad Arabs)

“Why can’t we unlearn our prejudices against Arabs and Muslims? What matters is not to remain silent. I think when-ever we see anyone being vilified on a regular basis, we have to speak up, whether we’re image-makers or not. We have to take a stand and say this is morally and ethically wrong to demonize a people.” -- Jack Shaheen (Reel Bad Arabs)

“Arab men have been represented in U.S. popular culture in limited ways, as sheiks and terrorists. These images have distorted the lived realities of Arab men. Sheik, the Arabic word to refer to an elder or leader, has been used in the U.S. to signify a variety of stereotypes of Arab men; dangerous romantic heroes, kidnappers, rapists, and greedy oil-rich men.” (excerpt from: <http://arabstereotypes.org/why-stereotypes/what-orientalism/sheiks-terrorists>)

For women, “Over the last century, women have been represented in U.S. popular culture primarily as harem girls, belly dancers, and oppressed veiled women.”(excerpt from: <http://arabstereotypes.org/why-stereotypes/what-orientalism/veils-harems-belly-dancers>)

### Document 13

**Don Unis on discrimination:**

DU: We Arab Muslims still have a long way to go uh because, well of course the media doesn’t do a very good job. A job on us and we are portrayed as being violent and uncivilized, which is of course not the truth.

ANAN: Now, being the son of an Arab family and a Muslim family, did you experience, or your family, discrimination on the job or in the community at large?

DON: Yea. You know, Anan, there was always...you know that, well, you know, that whole question of “you’re a,” you know, “you are Muslim,” like, yea. I mean, whatever that means.”

**Faras Warra oral history interview:**

<http://aanm.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/compoundobject/collection/p16806coll15/id/35>

JF: Did you, did people treat you differently...

FW: Yes. 6

JF: ...for being Arabic?

FW: Yes.

JF: Okay.

FW: They used to call me "camel jockey."

JF: (laughs) And what did you used to say back to them when they would call you that?

FW: I said, "Yea, I don't know what you mean by camel jockey." They said, "all you guys, you Arab, ride the camel." I said, "Well, I came from country where, you know, where I never rode a camel." I seen it, but I never rode a camel. But when I went back to Egypt, one time I visit Egypt, I rode a camel just to take a picture (Janice laughs) next to the pyramids there. So, that's all.

JF: So did you, now when people would tease you and call you camel jockey, were they just joking around you think or did they really feel hatred, or anything like prejudice toward you? Or do you think...

FW: Some, they were prejudiced; some, they were just, you know, just jokingly.

---

These quotes and oral histories are examples of how Arab Americans have been "othered" in American culture. Many Arab American scholars suggest that Arab Americans have become "othered" as a result of these negative images, as people who are not American or do not stand for American ideals and values. The following images also illustrate the Otherness of Arab Americans in the media.

**Document 14**



# Document 15



[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:The\\_Sheik\\_2.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:The_Sheik_2.jpg)

# Document 15, continued

*A Paramount Picture*





*Agnes Ayres and Rudolph Valentino*

*"When an Arab sees a woman  
he wants to take her!"*

Special Parade of Stars

**THAT** was the meaning of love in the desert—until the Sheik met the English girl.

That is the heart of the plot of "The Sheik," which in book form is the year's sensation on both sides of the Atlantic and which as a Paramount Picture finds and thrills a multi-million audience.

Don't miss the thrill of seeing the proud English mad-cap girl snatched from the sands by the hard riding Sheik of a hundred tribes.

You will be amazed at her life within the tented luxury of the Bedouins.

You will see love-making by the handsome Rudolph Valentino as the Sheik which is in the full torrent of Oriental tradition.

How shall the lovely and aristocratic Agnes Ayres (as the English girl) escape with life and honor?

That is the plot of it, the shiver of it—the odds are so great—that is the drama you see against a background of infinite desert.

—of a thousand wild Bedouin horsemen with long rifles and flowing robes,

—of the bride-market at Beokra where the slave-brides are sold,

—and of desert fighting between Sheik and Bandit, and between their troops, of a ferocity only equalled by tigers.

Does love emerge supreme and glorious at the climax? Is a pure spot found in the heart of the bronzed Sheik?

The answer to that will make you draw the deepest breath of all.

—and recognize that once more Paramount has given you the best show in town or state.

PARAMOUNT PICTURE-LASKY CORPORATION

JESSE L. LASKY presents  
**A GEORGE MELFORD PRODUCTION**

# "The Sheik"

with  
**AGNES AYRES and RUDOLPH VALENTINO**

*From the Novel by Edith M. Hull - Scenario by Monte M. Katterjohn*

## The Unbeatable Box-Office Sensation!

The novel is the best seller in the country—now—right now.

And right on the crest of the wave of popularity comes the sensational picturization!

Best selling books have been picturized before this. But—here's the point—they've always been filmed *after* the book had ceased to be a best seller—a year or so after it.

Never before has the release of the picture version corresponded with the high point of the book's sales.

Right now—when every book store in the country is rushed with orders; when edition after edition is turned out as fast as presses can turn; when everybody is reading it, buying it, borrowing it, talking about it—*now* comes the picture!

And now comes your chance to make the biggest box-office clean-up of your season!

### Half the World Has Read the Book All the World Will See the Picture

*"The Sheik" will be advertised to the public with a double page spread in the Saturday Evening Post, November 19th.*

*A Paramount Picture*



## **Interactive Notes**

**(Interactive Notes to be used with Documents 11, 12, 13, and 14)**

**Document #: \_\_\_\_\_**

**What is the document:**

**According to what is written or shown, what stereotypes are suggested?**

Document 16



# Document 17

The Arab American Institute lists several of the following as famous Arab Americans:

<https://www.aaiusa.org/famous-arab-americans>

- Bobby Rahal - Indy 500 winner in 1986
- Graham Rahal - Indy car driver (and son of Bobby Rahal)
- Doug Flutie - Heisman trophy winner in 1986, football analyst on ESPN
- Ernest Hamwi created the first ice-cream cone at the 1904 St. Louis World's Fair
- Donna Shalala - first Arab American appointed to a Cabinet secretary post, longest serving Secretary of Health and Human Services
- Helen Thomas - served for 57 years as a correspondent for United Press International and was dean of the White House press corps
- Ned Mansour - formerly the president of Mattel, Inc., maker of Barbie dolls and other toys
- Hoda Kotb - co-anchor of the NBC News morning show Today and co-host of its entertainment-focused fourth hour
- Naomi Shihab Nye - Poet, author of children's literature
- Jaques Nassar - Former president and CEO of Ford Motor Company
- Dr. Ahmed H. Zewail, professor of physics, winner of the Nobel Peace Prize in Chemistry in 1999
- Dr. Michael DeBakey - medical doctor, invented the heart pump
- Rashida Tlaib - US Congresswoman from Southeastern Michigan
- Mikie Mahtook - Professional baseball player who has played for the Detroit Tigers
- DJ Khaled - American DJ, record executive, songwriter, record producer

**Interactive Notes to be used with Documents 16 and 17**

**Document #: \_\_\_\_\_**

**What is the document:**

**According to what is written or shown, who are Arab Americans?**

**How do these documents contrast to the stereotypes you have learned about?**

## **Lesson Assessment**

**What were the four periods of Arab American immigration**

- 1.**
- 2.**
- 3.**
- 4.**

**What push factors brought Arabs to America?**

**What pull factors attracted Arabs to America?**

**List the two immigration policies that impacted Arab immigration. State their impact on immigration in America during the 20th century.**

**In what ways have Arab Americans have discriminated against? Use examples from the material presented in the sessions.**

**What have you learned about Arab American immigration and history in the United States would combat these stereotypes? Use examples from the material presented in the sessions.**

**Have Arab Americans have achieved the American dream?**