



Oral History Project Interview

Arab and Muslim Women's Research and Resource Institute (AMWRRRI)

Interview Number: AA 1.00

Date: 3/5/2021

Gender: Female

Name: "Renee"

Country of Origin: Palestine

Year of Immigration: 1970s

Abstract: Renee (name changed for confidentiality) is a Palestinian American Christian woman who moved to America as a young child in the 1970s. She grew up in the Chicago suburbs of Illinois, and as a kid she faced many challenges adjusting to life and school in America. She also explains how differently her upbringing was compared to how she has raised her two children. Renee is a very educated women and was a computer engineer at one point in her life.

Key Themes: Religion, Christianity, education, family, motherhood, careers, immigration

Note: In the transcript, *I* refers to Interviewer, and *R* refers to Respondent/Interviewee.

I: I am Anthony Aldurra and I'm here with (name omitted for confidentiality). The date is March 5th, 2021 and we are in Glenview, IL. Before I start the interview, I just want to remind you that your confidentiality will be protected, and your name will not be identified in the transcript of the interview that will be made public. I would also like to remind you that the interview will be recorded, but will never be made public, it is just to help me create an accurate written transcript of the interview. So, to start off I would like to ask you some general questions about your background. Can you state your name and age?

R: My name is (name omitted for confidentiality) and I am 49 years old.

I: And where is your homeland?

R: My homeland is Jerusalem, Palestine.

I: And do you remember much of your childhood there about any places and buildings where you spent a lot of time?

R: Um, actually I do, I remember my home, I remember my aunt's home, I remember walking through a street, um so there are some memories although I was young.

I: And then did you live in any other countries before coming to the US?

R: No.

I: So, when did you actually end up immigrating to the US?

R: So, in 1977, my family decided to immigrate to the US as a family, so we came as a family I was I was five almost six years old at the time.

I: And then after you, did any of your other family members immigrate here?

R: Yes, actually we did have um I had some cousins and aunt on my mom's side and I also had some family members on my father's side.

I: And are you currently married?

R: Yes, I am.

I: And I assume you were not married when you immigrated?

R: No.

I: And then can you talk about kind of the culture that took part in your marriage, whether it's traditions or...

R: Yeah, so we had a very traditional I guess you could say Arabic wedding. Um what we did was the night before it's tradition at least for us Palestinians to have a sahra the night before the wedding, so we actually did have that. And then we had the actual wedding with the Arabic music and the dances and of course we had for us it's also very traditional to have "zefat il-arous" um so we had that as part of our wedding. Some of the traditions also include you know the family giving gold at the wedding to the bride, um that's very traditional. We also have a tradition after the honeymoon they you know the family gets together and does a very elaborate dinner.

I: And um can you tell us about your children, names, ages, and where they live?

R: I have a daughter, her name is (name omitted for confidentiality) and she is currently doing graduate work in university. She did her undergraduate at Marquette and I have my son who is a senior at Marquette.

I: And are you currently employed or working outside of the home?

R: I do, I actually do work as part of my husband's practice so um that is something that I've been doing for a few years now.

I: Alright thank you, and then the next little topic I would like to ask you questions about is the decision to immigrate to the US, and I know you mentioned earlier you came when you were

very young with your family. So originally when they came did, they plan on staying for life and that was the plan?

R: So the plan was, the reason why they came but first of all my, my uncles were both had immigrated to the US and due to the conflicts actually back home um, it was very strenuous on my parents including especially my father whose business was impacted with the struggle between the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, so they thought that it would be best if they leave and come to the states.

I: And then, did you end up following them in where you were ending up settling in the United States?

R: Yeah, so they actually came to this area in the Chicago land area in a suburb of Chicago, and my family actually stayed in the area and um as I got older got married and I decided also to stay here in the suburbs of Chicago.

I: Yeah, that's awesome. So then, the next set of questions mostly revolves around your early experiences in the US. So, can you tell me a little about what your life was like when you first immigrated to the US and what obstacles you faced?

R: Yeah, there are quite a few obstacles that we faced, especially for me at my age. When we first came to the US, we ended up living short term with one of my uncles until my parents settled in getting, you know finding a job, and um finding a place. So, you know some of the struggles that I personally faced was that the language barrier. Although my family tried to prepare me personally with English, teaching me English, it was it was a struggle when I started school, and um those were things that I think to me was the most difficult, trying to make new friends at a school that I felt foreign, I felt like a foreigner being there, so that was the I think for me the language barrier and feeling like an outsider was that was the hardest thing.

I: And then how did you deal with those, most specifically probably the language barrier?

R: Yeah, well what I ended up happening is I was taking special courses, um being tutored with the language, and although things became easier as I progressed in my education, um I guess I've always felt like I was different than most of my classmates because of the fact that I can speak another language and English would be my second language technically.

I: Yeah, of course. And then what kinds of jobs have you had since immigrating here?

R: Well, I graduated, um I did my undergrad at Loyola University and I worked at Motorola for 15 years. I graduated with a degree in computer science and math, and my job I started off as engineering software, engineering in software engineering, and ended up progressing up to engineering management so I was there for many years. And after that I ended up helping my husband start off his business in the medical field doing primarily software and financials for his practice.

I: That's awesome. And then most specifically talking about your first job as an engineer, what role did your family have regarding decisions about your employment?

R: My family was very supportive. The fact that you know it was very important for them they had a college degree, and it was very important that I have a stable job, and they, they supported the decisions that, that I made.

I: And then do you want to talk about the kinds of jobs that your spouse has had since immigrating here?

R: Yes, so my spouse, my husband came from Syria and he actually was a physician, a medical doctor there. When he came here, he had to get re-certified as a physician and enter residency. Um, in the meantime while trying to make ends meet, he actually did have some odd jobs like um insurance, what do you call it? Insurance, he worked for insurance companies to do exams

for people. Sometimes he would take a job just for just for you know make ends meet. He finally did get into residency and after residency he's been working as a physician at both the hospital and private practice.

I: Nice, and then did your family have any say your influence at all in your spouse' jobs.

I: And then did your family have any say or influence at all in your spouse's jobs?

R: In my spouses jobs no. Because when I met my husband, he was already seeking his you know re-certification here as a foreign medical graduate for his license so they, they knew that he is a physician and he's pursuing getting residency here as a medical doctor.

I: And then last question on this little subtopic. Shortly after you immigrated what kind of places are buildings did you spend a lot of time in during those initial years?

R: Mostly home and school, so there was no is only two really main um main, main places that I that we spent there really wasn't really much for us, we spent a lot of time with family, we had we had my like I said my uncles and their families we spent a lot of time with them but that's you know family is very important as well as the church we spent a lot of time, and our faith is very important as well.

I: So, we're just going to move on to the next subtopic if that's ok, and those are going to revolve mostly around marriage. So, in your culture how do you think women are viewed and what is their typical role?

R: Well, um for me you know from what from at least from what I have seen growing up, um you know women have a very strong role in the family. Their role as a spouse and as a mother is, is quite important and actually is a priority over everything else. So that is taken very seriously. So the role of the woman in the family is really meant to bring the family together, it's meant to support the family, it's meant to, to help the family, but never taking away from her role as an

individual, a person. The woman is still respected for who she is, she's respected for her education, her career, and her decisions. At least that's how it's been in my family growing up.

I: And then can you talk about the same perspective but for men in your culture?

R: Well, its obviously men are seen, they have a more of um an influential role, or I guess a headship kind of a role in the family. And of course they're already known to be the main providers for the family, um so their role outside of the home is very critical, while the, the wife role inside the home is very critical.

I: And then I know that faith is something that is very important to you, so what are some ways in which you balance your faith and your identity as an American woman?

R: Well, that's a very good question because my faith is at odds with um the American culture so for, for me the most important thing is to stay firm in my faith, stay firm in my beliefs, stay firm into what I believe is true and try to live my life accordingly.

I: And then, how did your religious or ethnic upbringing contribute to the person that you are today?

R: My religion is a big part of who I am today, and um it actually grounded me in my morals, in my values. If it wasn't for my faith and my upbringing in the faith, um I believe that I probably would have strayed away from uh from many ethical things.

I: And then back to marriage, what does marriage mean to you?

R: Marriage to me is a lifetime commitment, it's actually a sacrament that is a it's an infinite bond between two people who love each other and it's meant to be something that's supposed to last a lifetime. So, to me marriage is a very important, significant, and very sacred thing.

I: And then, what factors play a role in a marriage, and what are the first characteristics that you were looking for in a husband? Did the homeland or nationality matter, can you talk about that?

R: Yeah, so for the characteristics that I feel were that I feel are very important in marriage is 1, there needs to be love between the two, respect between the two, and a commitment. And when I was at that age looking to get married, those are the qualities that I wanted someone who was serious about their faith, who is serious about marriage, and yes the culture and the religion were both very important things for me because I knew, um at least the culture part, I knew for my family would be an important thing the culture, um so yes it was very important that I marry someone who is of my faith and of a similar background.

I: And then I know that marriage is something that's very important to you, would you move because of your marriage or relocate where you are? Or is this something that you would not consider?

R: I would uh, if I had to, I would relocate um because of my marriage if my, if for any reason my husband you know ends up having to move to another state I would do so yeah, I would do.

I: And then do you want to talk a little more about the wedding and the ceremony such as how many days did you celebrate, is this the same tradition and ceremony that your siblings did what are the most important rituals and whatnot?

R: Yeah, we actually all of my siblings, even my cousins, we all kind of went through a very similar, similar thing with our with our wedding. Actually, it doesn't start at the wedding, it starts when you get engaged. So, our engagement was a big affair, it wasn't a private proposal done you know amongst each other. Normally the way it starts is that you know my spouse came to our home and formally asked for my hand from my family. That is something very, very important in our tradition. And um as soon as that occur, we be put a timeline in place the fact that he is actually now very serious and he is asking for my hand, we put a date on one we would get engaged. Um when the date of the engagement came it was actually not a private engagement

like I said, but it was a big gathering that was that was done in a in a hall, and we actually had at our engagement which is common to both of my siblings as well as my cousin's engagements, we had a priest that actually would bless the rings prior to the actual engagement. So, he blessed their rings, and we would, we would have a party and food and all that. So, at the time that the wedding came like I said we have the night before we had an event a sahra. That's very traditional we had the wedding the next day at the church, and then immediately after the wedding we had a reception which was fairly decent size, we had about 250 guests from our for our wedding attend. Um, and that again, the whole theme of the wedding was very traditional in regard to the music, the dancing, and the "zefat il-arous"

I: And then is there anything that you would change about your marriage, or that ceremony and the celebration.

R: No, I would not change a thing.

I: And, um I noticed, um we can talk about the obstacles that you faced before marriage if there are any major ones.

R: Yeah, there were many obstacles. Some of the obstacles that I faced was that we didn't believe in dating, so dating was not something accepted in our culture. So, when I met my husband, I met him at the University and our time together was pretty much you know at the school. It wasn't until he formally spoke to my family that we were able to spend limited time together.

I: And then did anyone, such as like relatives parents influence your decision to get engaged or married to your spouse currently?

R: Um, they, they did influence me in the fact that they supported me. Um, they were happy and proud of the fact that I'm considering somebody who is of, um who was a Christian from the Middle East who has a very, who comes from a very good family. It is also traditional that the

family of the bride to be would actually, you know you know kind of investigate or look into who this person is that's going to marry their daughter. So, I did have my uncle who is, who lived in Jordan to actually ask about the family that's going to marry you know that his niece is going to marry. So, we had many people who were asking about you know the reputation of my current spouse and so forth. So that was very common and very traditional.

I: And then I know you stated earlier that you got a degree, and you were an engineer, can you tell me about why you chose this degree and if the possibility of having children influenced your decision at all?

R: Um, my decision to go into engineering was purely based on my, what I like actually in computer science. My family actually supported that, and going into this field, I was not thinking about at the time having children or the children impacting my decision-making because I felt that my career is something that I can balance between my family and, and my children. So, I felt that this is something, and I did also have support from my mother who actually took care of my children while I was at work. So, it was never really a concern for me I was given, I had the support that I needed to do anything I want because my mother was there to aid me and support me with my family.

I: And then I know that your husband is older than you, but would you consider marrying someone younger than you or is there a certain age gap that you would cut it off at?

R: Yeah, I would not, I would not consider someone younger, I've always felt that I needed to marry someone who was, was mature and I felt that when I was younger, I felt, I didn't find anybody really my age or younger who would fit that description so I always felt that I would, I felt more comfortable you know marrying somebody who would be older versus younger.

I: Yeah. And then when it comes to marriage, um who would make most of the decisions or kind of what is the roles of the husband and wife when it comes to decision making?

R: Um, the way that my husband and I worked it out is that I would primarily make the decisions in regard to my kids' education, my kids' activities being, being active in their daily school and outside activities. My husband was the one who made, uh he made sure that he was part of course everything that we were involved in, but overall, we actually made major decisions together. For example, he took care of any kind of medical issues, medical concerns, but anything major in regards to family, the home, and the children we did together, buying a new house we did that together, whether it's you know investing in you know something that's meaningful to both of us we did it together.

I: And then I know you mentioned one of the obstacles before marriage was the fact that dating was something that wasn't allowed, so now that you've gone through this process and you've gotten married what do you think about dating?

R: I think if my, my views on dating is if, if, if their intent to date is to get married, I think it is wise for someone to get to know the person before marriage. So, I have a more relaxed version of dating than my family did, but I, it has to be a commitment, it has to be, you know the person has to be doing it for a long-term commitment, not doing it just for fun or... so if someone's not ready to make a commitment, then I don't think they should be dating.

I: Agreed, and obviously you didn't have Internet and dating apps and Facebook and all this social media back in the day, but do you think the rise of all of this technology and communication makes it easier for young Arab and Muslim Americans to meet their future mate and get to know them better before making any major decisions?

R: I don't know if I think it's easier. I think the problem with social media is the fact that you may see a false image of a person. I mean the person on, on these on the social media is going to show the best of themselves. I honestly don't believe you can understand the real person of who they are if you do not meet them in person and interact with them, so I think for me I'm actually a little concerned about the fact that yeah maybe it would be easier to meet people, but I don't think it's the right way to meet people.

I: And then how is marriage in America different than your parent's way of marriage?

R: Um my parents, at least, my parent's way of marriage, again like I said it's a commitment, it's a once in a lifetime commitment and they stuck with that commitment. I feel here in America the problem is that people take marriage very lightly and they are easy to end a marriage and quick to start a new one and I think that's, that's a big flaw in the way marriage is viewed in the American culture.

I: And then I know that you personally do not have any sisters, but for families with more than one daughter do you think that there should be a different process or restrictions for the oldest versus the youngest daughter at all?

R: Yeah, usually I mean from my experience with my family members, the oldest daughter always tends to, the parents have to be kind of more strict on the older daughter cause she's going to be the example for the other ones. And of course you know when it comes to marriage they would like their oldest daughter to get married first, but I think overall in regards to restrictions, I think that's probably the only view that I believe would be different about them.

I: And then, if you don't mind, we're just going to shift over kind of to some questions about parenting and children. So, do you think in any way that boys should be raised different from girls?

R: No, I do not believe a boy should be raised differently than a girl. I think, I think that the opportunities given to a boy should be the same opportunities given to a girl and I believe the restrictions put on a girl should be put on a boy. Yeah.

I: And then more so going into education of your children, how involved were you their education when they were growing up here?

R: I was, I was quite involved in their education. I made sure education is very important in my family, and it's their future and so investing in their education, being involved in their education is, it's an investment in making sure that they are able to succeed in life, so I was quite involved.

I: And what kind of schools did your children attend whether they are private, public, etc.

R: Yeah, it was very important for me that my kids attended a private school growing up. One, in regards to faith and morals I sent my kids to Catholic schools because I grew, I grew up here and I wanted to ensure that my children were shielded from some of the, some of the exposure in public schools, so therefore it was very important that they attend private Catholic schools. They did so in, throughout from when they first started it through college.

I: And then what would you say were some major issues you faced raising your children, if any?

R: Yeah, I think for me the hardest thing would be some of the challenges, would be maybe some other friends that I did not believe work the right ones for them. That was a challenge, when their feelings were hurt, or you know they were not treated fairly school or with their peers I think those were probably the most challenging things for me. I felt like I always had the need to protect them and to ensure that they were treated properly.

I: And did your husband also face the same issues?

R: Absolutely.

I: And then I know that you have a boy and a girl, so do you in particular have any fears for your daughter that you don't have for your son, and if you do how did you deal with these?

R: Um, I think my, my greatest fear with for my daughter would be that for her to not marry the right person and that she is not going to be taken care of, um even though I believe that she can take care of herself, I still would depend on her future spouse on for that. As for my son I think I would have the same fear that he would marry there you know not marry the right person just because of the fact that you know if for any reason my son marries the wrong person it's gonna be heartbreaking for him and it's going to be miserable. So, I think that I think my fears are the same for both of them.

I: And then did you have any major conflicts with your children?

R: Ah, I think I had any major conflicts with my children. I think they're pretty normal everyday things.

I: And then I know that both of your children are in college and they're currently studying, and when your children were deciding their careers and their majors, what role did you have in leading them to choose this career if any?

R: They actually chose their careers on their own. I was very pleased with what they chose so I did not find it, I did not find a need to intervene and direct them in their decision making. If it, if it was not the case then I would definitely have intervened.

I: And I know earlier you mentioned the worry of marrying someone who wasn't right for them and who wouldn't take care of your children, so what kind of husband or wife would you like for your children and how important is it too if they marry someone from the same culture and religion?

R: So, for me I believe marrying someone from the same religion is of utmost importance. Faith is very crucial um it would be ideal for my children to marry someone of the same culture just because the more you have in common, I believe you know the better the possibilities of them getting along. The problem that I think most people are concerned about is that marriage in general is difficult, it is very challenging, and the more conflict there is when it comes to religion and culture then the more conflict it's going to be on the marriage itself and on how to raise the family and the children and the decision making. So, those are very important factors.

I: Yeah, and then if you're done with this topic we can move on to kind of your culture and how you define yourself. So how would you identify yourself?

R: I identify myself as a Palestinian Christian who is living in the United States, so I guess you could, I guess I'm an American Palestinian Christian although I'm a Palestinian Christian first.

I: So, would you say that you identify mostly with your Palestinian culture versus your American culture, or they're kind of equal?

R: Yeah, I guess I take the best of both worlds. I am proud of my Palestinian culture and I'm also considered blessed to be part of America where I can be free to live out my faith and my culture. So, there's good there is good from both sides I guess I could say. I enjoy the freedom here I enjoy the fact that I don't have to worry about politics to a certain extent.

I: And then I know with covid a lot of things are restricted in terms of where you can go and whatnot, but what are some places or buildings that you enjoy spending a lot of time in, in like this day and age.

R: Well besides my home, (laughs) definitely my church, and unfortunately because of Covid that's, that's really, I'm limited to those two places.

I: And then what language/languages do you speak at home?

R: English and Arabic.

I: And is there one majority, that is spoken most of the time versus the other.

R: Yeah, I think English is definitely spoken more so than Arabic and that primarily is because when the kids were growing up I, I primarily wanted them to be strong in English before they went to school, but also because I grew up here it's kind of like my fall back language is English.

I: And then, how would you describe your religious life?

R: Um, I think the older I got the more spiritual I got, so my Christianity is a big part of who I am as a person and it leads me to make certain decisions in my life. So, it is a big part of who I am.

I: And then in what ways are you kind of involved in your religious community?

R: I actually am very involved at the church and with the youth group. I actually provide, I'm I guess the youth advisor or youth minister I guess you can say, I actually teach the children their faith. We do service projects together to make sure that these children are taking care of the community and those that are in need, and that's a big part of who we are as Christians is to love not only God, but to love our neighbor and that is, that is my mission really is to help teach them and to build their character and to go out and to serve the community, to serve the people who are in need.

I: And how would you describe your political participation in the US if you really have any besides voting?

R: I think for me, a couple of things are very critical to me in politics. I do vote, I'm involved in the presidential can voting, but, voting, besides voting I think it's important that our, our religious freedom is maintained and those, of course you know freedom of those people who are unfortunately taken advantage of. So, um yeah.

I: And do you read like the daily newspaper at all?

R: No, I am very, I do read the news quite a bit but mostly online. So, I actually I reach all of my news via the Internet.

I: And then what are your connections with your homeland, have you visited since you left, your family there?

R: Yeah, I still have family there. I have family on both sides my father's side as well as mostly my mom's side. I have not been back there although my desire has always been to go back but primarily due to the fact that I am married to my spouse is from Syria I would like to take my Syrian husband and my children with me. The only reason why I have not been back is because if I if I do that if I do take my husband and children then the chances of them entering Syria would be diminished, so I felt the need that my children need to be in touch with their father's family in Syria and to visit them so I can't, I didn't want to jeopardize that in any way.

I: And then have any political events in your homeland affected you here?

R: Oh absolutely. I think the situation with the Palestinians back home is it has impacted my family, it has impacted us personally, and that is why it's so important for us to you know speak up and ensure that we have our rights as Palestinian. That is the basic dignity of human life is to have that freedom.

I: And then I assume you were in the United States on September 11th, 2001?

R: Yes

I: And how did you feel at that time in the days and months that followed?

R: It was terrible actually; it was it was very terrible. I was working, I was actually on my way to work when the September 11 attack happened. And not only was it tragic that the loss of lives took place, but also the fact that the aftermath of it in regards to you know the reaction of the

people who you know the in the U.S. I guess for me personally, people who I work with started looking at me differently at that point in time, asking me about my faith and where I was from, where in the past they were not as interested as they up until up to that point. So, yeah definitely there was definitely changes there.

I: And then if you don't mind, I'd like to switch topics to cultural clothing for a little bit. And then do you actually have any traditional or cultural clothing?

R: Um, actually interesting there, I do have some of the traditional Palestinian garments that are from my homeland, but other than that, that's about it.

I: And then do you wear these at all?

R: I don't wear them. I think for me they're more of a keepsake item.

I: And um, the next few questions are about your perceptions and beliefs towards disability, so we'll start off with do you think that people with disabilities can lead lives that are as fulfilling as people without disabilities, generally speaking you think there's a prejudice towards people with disabilities in the community? It could also be mental illnesses as well.

R: Yeah, absolutely. There is definitely, I believe that they, they can lead full lives. Anyone who's whether physically or mentally disabled can, and they are worthy of leading a full life, it may not be the life that we have envisioned in our minds. Are they looked at differently within society, within our culture, absolutely. They are not viewed, unfortunately, they're not viewed in a in a positive light which is kind of unfortunate because they're the ones that probably need the most attention from us.

I: And then for families that do have members that are disabled or have mental disabilities, do you feel that these family members kind of keep it a secret and don't talk about it, or are they more open to talking about it?

R: No, definitely mental disabilities are hush hush in our culture, in our society. There's a stigma with mental health, and the unfortunate reality is that's a part of who we are. In regards to the physically disabled, I think maybe people are more open to that because you can't really hide it, but definitely with mental health it's definitely, it's definitely a stigma people do not want to share that they're having issues or seeking help or sometimes they don't even seek help.

I: Uh huh, and do you think that the community and the families perceive disabled males different than females?

R: No.

I: Alright, and then these next set of questions are going to be about COVID-19 and the impact on your personal well-being. So, how is the outbreak of the Covid virus affected you personally in terms of financial, social, and health situations.

R: Regarding uh financial, I don't think I was impacted that much, because you know my husband is in the health fields and he was extremely busy. I think socially it impacted us a lot because we are very social people, social in our, even within our culture, our community, so that has impacted us a great deal causing us some discomfort mentally in regards to that. I think that's emotionally it's difficult being home all the time, you know someone who is used to being out and about and active and social.

I: So, then how do you communicate with these people who you don't see now in your household?

R: Yeah, well other than phone and sometimes zoom, but mostly over the phone, and that's about it. If it's nice outside we'll meet outside, but that's kind of hard in Chicago.

R: And then has your employment status change at all because of Covid?

R: No.

I: Ok, and then I want to move on to Covid's impact on your religious practices. Have you continued your traditions such as going to church and whatnot every week?

R: Um , it's definitely more, I'm more cautious of it we have been limited at certain times going, especially in initially with Covid we weren't even able to go to services. I think now that things are starting to stabilize it's becoming less of a problem, but it's still an issue within our community and our church.

I: And then have you participated in any virtual religious activities?

R: Yes, I have.

I: And then has the pandemic affected your religious beliefs or faith in anyway?

R: No, I think if anything it kind of maybe helped build my faith even stronger because it's very clear to me that, the you know we as human beings are so dependent on God sometimes we forget, and so this pandemic if anything is a wakeup call for those who may not have the faith.

I: And then trying to get to a positive note, what was the most uplifting experience that you've had since the outbreak of Covid or something that inspired hope or happiness for you?

R: The fact that we spent more family time together, the fact that my kids were around more often, the fact that people would reach out to each other or people who cared for me and people who I care for I would reach out to I think that was quite uplifting that people cared for each other and showed that. So, I do always find hope, hope in people regardless of what the situation is.

I: And then what is it that you're most forward, most looking forward to once COVID-19 is kind of on the back burner?

R: Hugging my family hugging, my family meaning my brothers and my nephews and my nieces and being able to spend time with them. I think missing out on larger family gatherings is something that is that probably the most difficult thing that I had to go through personally.

I: And then we are just going to switch to some closing questions, is there anything else about your history that you'd want to tell me?

R: No, not really (laughs)

I: Then are there any particular services or resources that you think the Arab and Muslim's Woman Resource and Research Institute should provide to meet the needs of the communities in which you belong to?

R: Not really (laughs again)

I: And then just a couple more questions, do you have any other family or friends you think we should interview?

R: Uh, no.

I: And then, lastly do you have any letters, old photographs, notes, or any kind of documents that you think will help us understand your family history?

R: No?

I: Alright, well thank you for your time and energy and for sharing your experiences with me you have given us valuable information about your life and your family history. If you need to contact me, please do so and thank you so much.

R: Thank you, for this opportunity.