



# Al'thr: "The Trace"

Issue 1,  
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Above: The Early Arab American Community in Milwaukee

## AMWRI: The Arab and Muslim Women Research and Resource Institute

The Arab and Muslim Women Research and Resource Institute (AMWRI) is a new organization in the Milwaukee region that is dedicated to documenting the experiences and histories of Arab and Muslim communities while promoting an understanding of issues that impact these communities in the U.S. and abroad. AMWRI is documenting Arab and Muslim Americans social history through oral interviews and surveys, focusing on the experiences of various generations. While AMWRI is recording both men and women's experiences, its emphasis is on documenting women's social history in order to obtain information on women's economic and professional status as well as their position within their families. This is a very important step toward changing the general public perception towards the Arabs and Muslims in general, and the position of Muslim women in particular. Many prevailing stereotypes are produced and conceptualized as a result of misconceptions about Arab and Muslim women.

The idea of establishing AMWRI came as a result of early attempts to document the Arab and Muslim communities' experiences in Greater Milwaukee in 1990s. This first attempt was made by Dr. Enaya Othman, resulting in a master thesis that compares the assimilation processes between Arab Muslim and Arab Christian communities in the Milwaukee metropolitan area. This study was based on oral interviews and surveys because of the unavailability of written information or documentation on

these communities. As a result of this shortcoming, Dr. Othman and others developed a commitment to writing down these communities' experiences. The dearth of information about the Arab and Muslim communities in the United States in general and in Milwaukee in particular keeps these communities' history and contributions to the larger American society invisible and unknown. Moreover, this lack of information affects these communities' political and economic status as well as their strength on the national scene. It also leaves unchallenged the negative perceptions and stereotypes generated by the media coverage.

In addition to documenting these histories and experiences, AMWRI will establish an archive that will gather and store any written materials or documents connected to Arab and Muslim Americans communities in the US. For this purpose we encourage all members from Arab and Muslim communities to donate copies of old photos, letters, memoirs, or any other kind of documents that might help us save our history. Men and women are encouraged to write about their immigration experiences and stories in the US and submit it to the organization. The information gathered will be used to write Arab and Muslim immigrants' history and it will be accessible to scholars and researchers interested in this field. We are also interested in documenting refugee families' experiences and identifying obstacles they are facing as they resettle and adjust to their new environment in American society.

The goal of our work at AMWRI is to have our history written by our community, so that our children may read about their parents' struggles, accomplishments, culture, religion, and other important aspects of our life. We want our history to be documented as part of American history and a manifestation of the plurality of American culture and society that many ethnic and religious groups share. Your story is very important for the overall project. Please get in touch and contribute your stories! If we do not document and write our history for our children, who will do it for us?

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This is the first edition of the organization's newsletter, and it includes the contributions of the first team of interviewers. The team's contributions in this newsletter are based on interviews they conducted during the past few months. These interviewers are working energetically and enthusiastically to help documenting the Arab and Muslim community histories, experiences, contributions, and most importantly the issues of identity and belonging. They are young, energetic, and talented scholars and women, who are dedicated to documenting the history of their communities and to providing more accurate portrayal of Arab and Muslim communities to help eradicate and overcome stereotyping and the negative perceptions prevailing in the U.S.

The organization would like to coordinate and cooperate with other institutions that are interested in our project. As a newly established organization, AMWRI will be in need of funds in order to materialize its aims. We are hoping that interested institutions, individuals, and believers in our cause will contribute to the organization. If you are interested in contributing to or participating in any of our projects, please contact:

Dr. Enaya Othman at  
[AMWRI@live.com](mailto:AMWRI@live.com) or  
[Enaya.othman@mu.edu](mailto:Enaya.othman@mu.edu)

*"The goal of our work at AMWRI is to have our history written by our community, so that our children may read about their parents' struggles, accomplishments, culture, religion, and other important aspects of our life. We want our history to be documented as part of American history and a manifestation of the plurality of American culture and society that many ethnic and religious groups share. Your story is very important for the overall project. Please get in touch and contribute your stories! If we do not document and write our history for our children, who will do it?"*

## The Process of Immigration

By: Javaria Asad

Thousands of individuals every year make the life changing decision to immigrate to the United States for a multitude of reasons. One group of interest that has immigrated to the United States and specifically to the Milwaukee area is Indian and Pakistani Muslims. Through my collection of interviews I have learned about the immigration of first generation Indian and Pakistani Muslims to the United States, including; the immigration process, their reasoning behind leaving their native country, their current life in America, and their views on their identity, education, marriage, child rearing and assimilation. My hope is that this knowledge will be a platform on which we can build a greater understanding of what immigration has meant for this ethnic and religious group and how they have become a vital part of the ever-changing American culture and society.

To understand the process of immigration, we must first observe why people decide to immigrate. For the Indian and Pakistani Muslims, reasons for immigration were primarily because their interviewee's spouse or parents received a job opportunity in the United States and thus they all decided to move. This suggests that in their native country the job outlook was dim and forced people to look elsewhere. Other sought better educational opportunities for themselves and their children outside their homeland. One of my interviewees grew up in a small village in Pakistan, and recounts that she was unable to receive any formal education because the village had insufficient funds for a school.

After immigrating to the United States, immigrants usually face an initial culture shock and often need time and support to adjust to the different style of food, climate, clothing, social and cultural norms, etc. In order to ease the transition, immigrants turn to family members who previously immigrated to show them how things are done in America and to gain a better understanding of the American culture while trying to incorporate as much of their native culture as well. Yet, many are able to easily assimilate because they find the lifestyle in the United States more comfortable and compatible with the life they are seeking.

While trying their best to adjust to the American culture, immigrants do face racism in different forms. For this specific group, most of the racism is often linked with preconceived notions and stereotypes about 9/11. Based on my interviews, some of these women experienced racism when they began to wear the headscarf. Yet, they combat this racism by putting forth a positive attitude and addressing questions in a civil manner with hopes that one day things will get better.

While living in the United States, immigrants sense a feeling of disconnect with their native country, and they try their best to incorporate some of their culture into their new American life. Based on the interviews, I have learned that this includes speaking the native language at home, cooking cultural food, keeping in touch with family back home, watching Indian and Pakistani television, and forming communities of friends and family of the same culture.

Lastly, through the whole immigration process an immigrant's identity slowly transforms and many immigrants wonder what category of identity they should identify with? Based on my interviews, all interviewees have taken upon the new identity of being an American because they have assimilated into the American culture and established a life in this country. Also, they all identify religiously as Muslims because they are able to incorporate their religion into their daily life in America. Some say that they still are Indian and Pakistani because that was always a part of them to begin with and to assimilate does not necessarily mean to erase one's previous identity. This shows that identity can evolve and take on new roles based on the time and situation.

From my interviews with the Indian and Pakistani Muslim immigrant I have

# Experiencing Iran and the West

⌘ Lillian Figg-Franzoi

During my project with AMWRRRI Oral Histories, I was afforded the opportunity to interview a group of Iranian women. Their stories provided insight into the relationship between Iran and the West. Their immigration was certainly structured around the reality of coming from a land whose paranoia and concern with imperialism is a fundamental aspect of the national character. However, their experience of living in America was rarely punctured with negative views of American culture.

I interviewed three Iranian women. These participants were from a class of educated women, who grew up during the Revolutionary years and who currently interact with their religious community in America on a regular basis. Many immigrants from Iran to the United States left their homeland in the early years of the 1979 regime change. Most of these immigrants were those who feared for their liberty under the new regime, as they had often supported Marxist or socialist movements. Others in this group were those who worked under and for the Shah's regime. Most of these immigrants in the early 1980s were the political and intellectual "elite" in Iranian society.<sup>1</sup> The majority of these Iranian immigrants settled in California and a great number remain there today. Another wave of Iranian immigrants seems to have arrived in the late 1980s and early 1990s. From this group, I had two interview participants. It is uncertain whether the majority of these immigrants were fleeing persecution or seeking economic opportunity. However, my participants were specifically chosen because they were not fleeing persecution. For this reason, the group from which I chose my participants tended to be pro-Revolution and frequently visited their local mosques. I wanted to focus on women from this group because they reflect a group of women who are not often given a voice in discussions on American immigration. My interviewees were neither secularists nor were they from the conservative female *basij* group in Iran, the likes of whom often join the ranks of or support the female *Yegan ha-ye vizhe* morality police.<sup>1</sup> These Iranian immigrant women represented moderate religious Shi'i women. Through my numerous conversations with these women (some of which were recorded while others occurred in less formal settings), I gained insight into many aspects of these women's self-identification and their experience with the West before and after immigrating to the United States.

My interviews posed a range of inquiries, but most often, the interview extended into less structured conversation. In each interview, I asked about their relationship with various historical Islamic figures such as Maryam, Fatimah and Zaynab, their opinion of Ayatollah Khomeini, their understanding of the Islamic Republic, and their impression of "Western culture". Each woman stressed the particular paradox of modernity and westernization that presented itself when they

lived in Iran and then again when they came to America.

In each interview, the women began with talk of the Revolution. My first interviewee, Hamideh, told me, "you know, everyone wanted the Revolution.... We loved the Revolution." After this, she began a long praise of the Ayatollah Khomeini, stating, "he was a great person... because he was the leader of the Revolution. He wasn't interested in power." Adjusting the sunglasses on her face, she told me, "he was not," searching for just the right words, "corrupt, you see. Because he didn't care about power. He was respected. He was honest." She insisted that his charisma and his personality embodied the Revolution, which "was a very good thing for Iran." Insisting that Khomeini was a role model for all Iranian men and women, she explained matter-of-factly, "he asked us to join him to resist and we did." Hamideh pushed up her sunglasses up over her short hair while rolling the window up and down in the traffic's heat. "He did not make demands of us, like they said. He respected us as women, wanting to fight. There were so many of us on the street. Shouting and walking with him." She turned to face me from the front seat of the car, nodding her head, "everyone was happy about the Revolution. No one was not happy. And Khomeini made it, so we were happy to have him as a leader." After addressing her support for the Revolution, she provided insight into her views of American life. Primarily, she saw Western life to have a problem with what she referred to as "patience". She found Iranian life to be calmer and expressed interest in returning back to Tehran in the near future.

In mid-July, Shireen invited me to her house for a traditional Persian lunch that her husband had cooked. I sat in the kitchen with her sixteen-year old daughter and helped place the plates on the table as she explained her view. "You see, my family was split. Some people liked the Revolution and some people did not." She recalled a long and fond memory of visiting Iran in the summers before the Revolution when she lived in Bombay. I asked Shireen if she was glad to see the Shah go. She stopped doling mounds of rice onto plates and leaned against the counter thinking, "I don't much think about it. At the time, I liked going to Iran. Visiting Iran during the summer from India was fun when the Shah was there. It was like here. After the Revolution, we couldn't do the same things. So, that was hard. But, when I look back now," she paused again to think upon this and then nodded her head, "I think, yes, it was for the best." She told me that she liked the Western culture that was in Iran before the Revolution. Although she recognized the excessive nature of Western opulence, she believed that Western liberalism added dynamism to a country's culture. She explained that, because she was an immigrant to a cosmopolitan city, Bombay, she most likely viewed the West differently than other Iranians. Upon moving to the West, she stayed connected with her culture and very connected with her religious community, but found little difficulty in finding her place amidst American culture.

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Perhaps the most Revolutionary-spirited of the women I interviewed, Farrin, explained the Revolution and Khomeini with excitement. She was sixteen when the Revolution began, "Boys and girls and the people, would come to the school asking you to demonstrate and protest and calling to you 'come out of your schools!' But the principal would lock the doors, in my high school." She smiled during our interview and shook her head, "but you can't imagine the energy that people had in the school. One day, they broke the door and went out. The ones who wanted to participate would leave and go." She continued with a laugh, "I was so young, and it was like that. It was an historic moment and I was glad I was there." Farrin told me that after the Revolution, "I liked the religious atmosphere." She gestured to her scarf wrapped over her hair and fiddled with the fruit knife in her hand: "I was the only one in my family who wore the scarf. I liked it. I studied a lot about it and decided and I think it suits me. So, I had chosen before. After the Revolution, it was nice because I was finally not the only one in class wearing the *hijab*. A Muslim country and I was the only girl in class wearing the *hijab*!" She laughed at this observation from her past, expressing amused confusion more than disapproval. She continued to describe the Revolution: "At first everyone was happy. Everybody, it was everyone pouring out into the streets, demonstrating. The goal was just throwing away the Shah because everyone got sick of his regime. Everyone was hotheaded during this time. It was a nice time." She noticed that, in Iran, Western influence was pervasive and was either seen as a bad infiltration or a means by which the youth expressed themselves in revolt against the government. Because of the lack of "freedom, [the young people] felt the pressure and wanted more. In terms of materialism and politics." Because of this, they looked to the West even after the Revolution. Upon moving to the United States, she noticed that Americans sometimes kept their distance from her. She assumed this was because of her *hijab* and lack of knowledge about her as an Iranian and her as a Muslim. They eventually had many American friends, her husbands colleagues and neighbors, who were very accepting and would ask questions and thus decrease their distance. She said that she loves having American friends. She describes her relationship with her neighbors: "Maybe four or five days, we don't see each other and then we do and we hug each other...we miss each other...she tells me all about her family and everything and now that we know each other, we are comfortable. I wear my *hijab* and we go walking, shopping and she has no problem with me, because we know each other and we feel comfortable. At the end, we are all human beings. We share a lot of similar characteristics. So, if people think of it that way, we won't have any problem. It would be peaceful everywhere."

Westernization has been a present idea for Iranian elites since before the Revolution. Before the revolution, Reza Shah's process of modernization decidedly considered progress to mean Westernization. One man describes how the Iranians began to look at themselves Westernizing during the

years of his reign, feeling it was "costing them their identity. The Shah's "interests and lifestyle suggested that he considered Western lifestyle superior to that of Iran" [Iranedagh.com 2008]. A dichotomy cemented itself in the minds of many Iranians: The West was the Shah's ideology, and it was incompatible with Iran's welfare and the protection of its culture. Subsequent ideology arising from the Revolution was in opposition to Western influence. Al-e Ahmad's *Occidentosis*<sup>1</sup>, or *Gharbzadegi*, popularized this threat from the West:

I speak of 'occidentosis' as of tuberculosis. But perhaps it more closely resembles an infestation of weevils. Have you seen how they attack wheat? From the inside. The brain remains intact, but it is just a shell, like a cocoon left behind on a tree.<sup>1</sup>

The Shah and his modernization or, rather, Westernization, was conceptualized as an infestation and infection within Iranian social-intellectual culture. For a while, this hostility towards the West continued, until President Khatami began opening dialogue with the West, particularly America and Britain, in the late 1990s. For a few years, Iranian-American relations appeared to be improving; however, the administration of President Ahmadinejad changed the foreign policy which returned, once again, to its more protectionist state.

These political views of the West, and particularly America, are interesting to view when seen in relation to the views of American culture held by Iranian immigrants who supported the Revolution. Although these women harbored hesitations about Western culture and the possibility of "Westoxification," they felt no negative qualms about living in the West, specifically America. They all led happy lives, pleased with the culture and country, raising their children with American values and Iranian remembrances, such as some food and language. These women expressed that they had many "American" friends, including close neighbors or other women from work. One woman, Shireen, worked outside the house and the others did not feel necessarily affronted nor upset by venturing into the American public realm.

These women's interviews gave insight into how Iranian immigrant women, who supported the Iranian Revolution, a decidedly anti-Imperialist and Westernization movement, engaged with American culture. Although these women supported the Revolution and would occasionally view the West as having cultural or moral deficits, they did not dislike living in the West and positively engaged American culture. Particularly, as I saw in the interview with Farrin, where there is engagement of ideas and cultures and individuals, there is understanding and thus peace.

## Second Generation Arab Americans Fight Misconceptions

✂ Affnan Mohammad

Migrating to a new country is never an easy thing to do. People have been migrating for centuries, searching for better economic opportunities, professional development or safety from political persecutions or oppression. Prior to the 21<sup>st</sup> century, immigration meant leaving one's home and joining another community with the possibility of never returning or maintaining ties with their home. In this new age of globalization, this is no longer the case. Today's immigrants can maintain strong ties with their homes through high-speed communications and transport technology to their native countries. Immigrants in the past had no option but to assimilate to their new homes, but migrants today are able to maintain strong economic, emotional and political links with their sending countries through inexpensive means. While perceived as a positive outcome by many, this also adds to the debates in many Western democracies about citizenship, identity and being a member of the political community.

Through my interviews with members of the Christian-Arab community, I sought to uncover the relationships that first and second generation Arab-Americans have with their sending countries, as well as the extent of their political engagement in the United States. I focused my first interviews on Christian-Arabs for two main reasons. While a majority of Arabs in the world are Muslim, that is not the case in the United States. According to the Arab American Institute (AAI), 63 percent of Arab Americans are Christian, 24 percent are Muslim and 13 percent are categorized as "Other." Another important reason is Christian-Arabs made the majority of the earliest wave of Arab immigration to the U.S. and have been an integral part of U.S. society ever since. Based on my interviews with political activists from the Christian-Arab community, it is evident that their concerns with both their homeland and integration in the United States have strongly affected their political activism.

The two individuals I interviewed, Robert Ashmore and Joe Makhoulf, are highly engaged in political and community affairs. Robert Ashmore, a Professor Emeritus at Marquette University, vividly recalled the event that initiated his lifelong political activism. Ashmore explained that during Israel's invasion of Lebanon in 1982, Israeli pilots were dropping U.S. bombs from U.S. airplanes on Beirut daily. As a human rights activist, Ashmore decided, "I can't put up with this. This is morally wrong and it's a violation of international law." Along with other human right activists, Ashmore made several visits to Arab countries to develop a better understanding of the politics in that region. He also joined every organization that worked towards improving relations between the U.S and the Arab world. These organizations included the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee, the National Association of Arab Americans, the Association of Arab-American Graduate Students, the Palestine Human Rights Campaign and many others. He remains involved with and holds leadership positions in the organizations that still exist today.



**Above: Early Arab Americans learned to assimilate with American society and break down misconceptions**

Joe Makhoulf, also emotionally connected to his homeland, spent many years being actively engaged in political organizations working for Palestinian, Arab and Arab-American interests. Among the many organizations Makhoulf joined, he spoke highest of the Council of National Interests (CNI), an organization founded by Paul Findly, the former Senator of Illinois. Unlike other organizations, Makhoulf explained that CNI worked to defend the United States' national interests by showing the government that current policies of unconditional support to Israel are profoundly damaging to Americans. This organization was different than other organizations headed by Arab-Americans because "their focus is the interest of the United States." Makhoulf's sense of citizenship motivated his involvement in the Council of National Interests, as well as his participation in Arab-American organizations.

Makhoulf also spoke greatly about the misconceptions many Americans have of the Arab world and specifically the Palestinian problem. He laughed about an experience he shared with a young woman who would not believe he was Arab because she imagined "an Arab is someone who is riding a horse in the desert with a whip in his hand." While he placed some blame on the media for creating these images, he also held Arab Americans responsible for not "giving our attention to the real problems" and not focusing on "how to get U.S. citizens to understand our beliefs and what we stand for." He also expressed his belief in accepting American culture and beliefs, as he believed this will bring other Americans closer to understanding and supporting Arab causes.

Both Makhoulf and Ashmore strive to educate other Americans about issues that ultimately affect their relationship with them. They were deeply involved with politics in the Arab world, but were also very concerned with the position of Arab-Americans in society. These issues show the importance of citizenship, identity and assimilation for immigrants in the Christian-Arab American community in Milwaukee.

## Honoring the Past While Embracing the Future

✽ Shazia Ali

During the course of the Arab and Muslim Women Research and Resource Institute interview process, I was able to interview two women who came from north central Pakistan. Both women found themselves leaving their homeland during the early 1990's after being recently married in their early twenties, and were members of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community. As such, the stories of both Kulsum and Ayesha have similar threads depicting the struggle of such a women coming to the United States of America near the turn of the twenty-first century. Similarities can be found in their reasons and circumstances for leaving, the environment in which they found themselves in upon arriving, the family lifestyle and values with which they raised their families and the personal impact immigration has had on them.

### Persecution

Due to their religious affiliation with a minority Muslim group, for Kulsum and Ayesha personal discrimination was a common occurrence within their schools. Girls did not wish to associate with them and as such friends were hard to come by. Kulsum describes how people would throw stones at their house making it impossible to sit outside during the hotter days. Their house was continuously vandalized as well. Both had family members thrown in jail and in the case of Kulsum, even killed. As Ayesha explains, part of the reason for this dislike was because Pakistan declared members of the Ahmadiyya Community as non-Muslim in 1974. Ayesha continues to explain that opportunities for Ahmadi's in Pakistan were very poor leading to their family's wish that she and her husband go to the United States. She states, "if you had an interview, once they found out you were Ahmadi, they interview was over." Such religious persecution was a driving force for why Kulsum and Ayesha choose to leave Pakistan in pursuit of better opportunities.

### Obstacles after Immigration

While a slew of obstacles arise upon moving to a foreign country, Kulsum stated that the one that affected her most was the language barrier. Despite never taking English classes she was able to learn enough to communicate with doctors, teachers and others who spoke English. She describes how people were patient with you when you would try to speak with them and notes that all of the people she encountered as she adjusted to her life were friendly and kind. As she and her husband settled and started a, they also helped several other family members begin their lives in the United States. She describes a continual stream of family that lived with her. At times, Kulsum would have to ration food because the income was short and there were many people to provide for. Additionally she taught other immigrant how to drive, something she learned how to do within a couple years of moving to the United States.

As for Ayesha, having learned English language in a British school, she was not as greatly impacted by the language barrier. Instead, Ayesha found the isolation from her family a difficult burden while her husband worked at several odd jobs while studying at both Marquette University and the University of Wisconsin Milwaukee to earn a business degree.

### Importance of Education

Ayesha is a living example that the common misconception of uneducated women living in Pakistan is incorrect. Prior to moving to the United States she attended the Government College, the oldest educational institute in Pakistan where she was enrolled in a master's degree program. Ayesha explains that having an education was very important to her family. Not only did she receive sixteen years of education in Pakistan but she did so at a college that was far from their home. As such, Ayesha lived in her school housing system equivalent to the US system of dorms. Upon completing her education in Pakistan, Kulsum worked as a teacher prior to her immigration. While both women left following marriage, they note that it was their decision to leave and afford their children better educational opportunities. In regards to her children, Kulsum stresses the importance of education, stating that education opens the mind and enables a person to face whatever challenges that come their way.

### Dual Cultures

Despite the struggles faced in both Pakistan and the United States, both women feel a connection to both countries as they have now lived in both for equal amounts of time. Ayesha agrees stating that she is loyal to this country. "This is also a part of our religion, wherever you live, you should be loyal to that country." However, she still identifies herself with the Pakistani culture. Urdu, the major language of Pakistan, is spoken within their homes by parents and children alike. Both women have made an effort to preserve their culture, maintain a religious home, and form a connection to the country to which they immigrated to.

“This is also a part of our religion, wherever you live, you should be loyal to that country.”

- AMWRRI Interviewee





### **Javairia Asad**

My name is Javairia Asad and I am a second generation Muslim. My father immigrated to the United States from India while my mother immigrated from Pakistan. As a child of immigrants I feel that it is vital that we know and understand their lives because it crafts our future. The stories that immigrants share, their struggles, their success, and their contributions to America help us better comprehend and value their presence in American society. Being a part of AMWRRI has been a gratifying experience because it has prompted me to realize that in order to understand who we are, we must first understand where we have come from.



### **Shazia Ali**

Shazia Ali is a senior at Marquette University double majoring in Biomedical Sciences and Biological Sciences. She is grateful to her interviewees for sharing their stories of discrimination and hardship and is inspired by their courage in staying true to their culture while assimilating into Western society. To learn about the struggles new immigrants to America face through the words of her interviewees has been a privilege and opened her eyes to the similarities first generation immigrants and the second generation Muslim women share. The AMWRRI Oral History project realizes the importance of documenting and understanding an era of immigration history. To be a part of the effort to preserve the stories of Muslim immigrant women in Milwaukee is an honor, and a unique experience.



### **Lillian Figg-Franzoi**

Lillian Figg-Franzoi is a senior at Marquette University whose major is International Relations with a focus in Religion, Islam and the Middle East: I really enjoyed the AMWRRI Oral History project. It introduced me to a variety of Muslims and Arab-Christians in our Milwaukee community, allowing me to see the connections between immigrant stories alongside their diversity. The process of interviewing immigrants, particularly many women, was both touching, befuddling, enlightening and frustrating. I heard stories that ought to have been written in books or play-acted in films on American identity and immigration history. It was enlightening to see the variety of experiences but also frustrating to realize the implications of political policies on individuals' lives who are forced to leave their home and grapple with difficult identity issues. The stories collected are informative and important in our process of documenting the Milwaukee Arab and Muslim community. I have been proud to be a part.



### **Affnan Mohammad**

At one point in time, oral history was the only way to preserve the culture and traditions of a group. It is important to recognize that history is not only found in textbooks, but it is also in the memories of people who experienced the events. It provides us a glimpse into people's lives, families and communities. As a researcher in AMWRRI, I am happy that I could contribute to the process of recording the memories and stories of members in the Arab-American community.

## Recap: Syrian Church Event Brings People Together

The Arab and Muslim Women's Research and Resource Institute and the Department of Foreign Languages at Marquette University held an even on Sunday November 14h at the St. George Melkite Church on 1617 W. State Street. At the event Marquette Students shared stories from interviews conducted throughout their semester long involvement with the AMMRRI Oral Histories Project. As seen in the picture to the right, the event successfully brought people from different walks of life together to learn about the Arab-Christian community and their contribution to Milwaukee.



## Would you like to get involved with AMWRRI?

Contact:

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