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FAITH, LANGUAGE, AND IDENTITY: THE ROLE OF EDUCATION IN THE AMERICANIZATION OF "SYRIANS" IN THE UNITED STATES, 1880–1928[1]

Abstract
This article seeks to address a significant lacuna in Arab American Studies in respect of the role played by primary, secondary, and adult education in the integration of hundreds of thousands of mainly Christian immigrants from the Ottoman Levant between the 1890s and the late 1920s. The article begins by discussing the context in which US federal authorities sought to assimilate and "Americanize" these new immigrants through the education of adults and minors in a rapidly evolving public education system, also addressing the developing role of charitable, parochial, and other private schools within the nascent Arab American community. At the heart of national policy was a concern, voiced particularly loudly during the second half of World War I, that the loyalty of immigrants to their new country had to be embedded through a deliberate inculcation of common American values. The education system, in its various forms, bore the brunt of this work. This ideological policy, however, often came into conflict with a countermovement of cultural pluralism, through which it was attempted to retain or reclaim intellectual, cultural, and social legacies from the migrants' countries of origin. After tackling this wider context, the article focuses on the disparate communities of Arabic-speaking immigrants, from New York to states such as Michigan, Mississippi, Nebraska, and California. Within this heterogenous but, initially at least, mainly Christian diaspora, an intense debate took place throughout the first quarter of the twentieth century over these questions of Americanization, race, identity, the desirability, speed, and comprehensiveness of assimilation, and the extent to which the language and cultural legacy of the mother country would have to be sacrificed in becoming American. These debates, focused on education, shaped the self-view of the nascent diaspora community in ways that lasted until the more nationally diverse "second wave" of post-World War II Arab immigration.

خلاصة

تسعى هذه المقالة إلى معالجة ثغرة كبيرة في الدراسات العربية الأمريكية فيما يتعلق بالدور الذي لعبه التعليم الابتدائي والثانوي والتعليم للبالغين في دمج مئات الآلاف من المهاجرين من بلاد الشام العثمانية (وكانوا باكثريتهم مسيحيين) بين تسعينيات القرن التاسع عشر وأواخر عشرينيات القرن العشرين. تبدأ المقالة بمناقشة السياق الذي سعت فيه السلطات الفيدرالية الأمريكية إلى استيعاب هؤلاء المهاجرين الجدد و"أمركتهم" من خلال تعليم البالغين والقاصرين في نظام تعليمي حكومي سريع التطور، كما تتناول الدور المتنامي للمدارس الخيرية والطائفية

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وغيرها من المدارس الخاصة داخل المجتمع العربي الأمريكي الناشئ. في قلب السياسة الوطنية كان هناك قلق، تم التعبير عنه بصوت عالٍ بشكل خاص خلال النصف الثاني من الحرب العالمية الأولى، مفاده أن ولاء المهاجرين لبلدهمً الجديد يجب أن يكون من خلال غرس متعمد للقيم الأمريكية المشتركة. تحمل نظام التعليم، بأشكاله المختلفة، العبء الأكبر من هذا العمل. ولكن هذه السياسة الإيديولوجية كانت تتعارض في كثير من الأحيان مع حركة مضادة للتعددية الثقافية، والتي حاولت من خلالها الاحتفاظ بالإرث الفكري والثقافي والاجتماعي من بلدان المهاجرين الأصلية أو استعادته. وبعد تناول هذا السياق الأوسع، تركز المقالة على المجتمعات المتباينة من المهاجرين الناطقين بالعربية، من نيويورك إلى ولايات مثل ميشيغان وميسيسيبي ونبراسكا وكاليفورنيا. وفي إطار هذا الانتشار غير المتجانس، والذي كان يتألف في البداية على الأقل من المسيحيين، دار نقاش مكثف طوال الربع الأول من القرن العشرين حول هذه الأسئلة المتعلقة بالأمركية، والعرق، والهوية، ومرغوبية وسرعة وشمولية الاستيعاب، والمدى الذي يتعين فيه التضحية باللغة والإرث الثقافي للبلد الأم لكي يصبح المرء أميركياً. وقد شكلت هذه المناقشات، التي ركزت على التعليم، النظرة الذاتية لمجتمع المهجر الناشئ بطرق استمرت حتى الموجة الثانية" من الهجرة العربية بعد الحرب العالمية الثانية والتي كانت أكثر تنوعاً من ناحية" الوطن الأصلي للمهاجرين.

INTRODUCTION: EDUCATION AS A THEME IN ARAB AMERICAN STUDIES

This article seeks to make the case that education was an instrumental force in the shaping of Arab American identity during the earliest decades of diaspora formation in the United States. Education, especially in public schools, was an important interface at which mainly Arabic-speaking immigrants began to experience life as a minority for the first time. The anthropologist John Ogbu has argued that those whose emigration is based on a belief that a new nation would offer more economic prosperity, greater social opportunity, and more political freedom become "voluntary minorities"—and that education is a crucial step in any upward mobility among such communities.[2] The school-adaptation patterns of successful minorities such as the "Syrians"—so classed in most official documentation because of the large number of immigrants from Mount Lebanon, a subdivision of the Ottoman province of Syria—explain why such communities were so successful in overcoming barriers related to their different language and culture, and to European American prejudice.

The school was also an environment in which race played a significant part. These earliest, mainly Lebanese émigrés had left behind an Ottoman Empire made up of Turks, Arabs, Kurds, Jews,

Greeks, Slavs, Armenians, and, at its fringes, black Africans; one where, according to the laws embodied in the *millet* system, social categorization was primarily sectarian rather than racial.[3] In the United States, they had now arrived in a country where race was the most entrenched and defining social division. For an Arabic-speaking school pupil, or adult enrolled in night school, race played a highly visible part in the relationship between the student and an almost entirely white teaching body. Education was a field in which gender mattered, too, and in which conventional expectations imported from the sending countries were often overturned by the less conservative societal norms of the New World. As a result of these and other factors, education was the focus of often intense debate within the Arab American community, in which arguments over integration, assimilation, "Americanization"—the declared aim of federal policy—and cultural pluralism were thrashed out over identifiably discrete phases in the early twentieth century in the Arabic- and English-language newspapers of the diaspora.[4]

Immigrants from the Middle East, of course, were far from alone in asking how best to educate their children amid a wider debate over the assimilation of huge numbers of enthusiastic but non-Anglophone and often illiterate new Americans. Arabic-speaking Levantines were a tiny minority among the Italians, Russians, Poles, Germans, and Scandinavians arriving from Europe. Arab Americans were also negotiating an education system that itself was in a state of flux, as national and local authorities tried to recalibrate outdated teaching processes to keep up with rapid social changes and to offer a compelling alternative for parents who would otherwise send their children out to work.

Scanning the published literature on the Arab American experience, however, reveals that education during the earliest years of mass immigration into the US has been insufficiently and unsystematically studied. Despite the widely rehearsed trope that education was a strong personal motive for emigration and that illiterate first-generation immigrants were enthusiastic about their children's education in America, nothing by way of systemic analysis has been carried out in respect of the actual pursuit of satisfactory schooling. In terms of the *pre*-migration school experience, the education of Ottoman Arab nationals in the sending societies of the Middle East—often by American and European missionary groups and often in the context of unsatisfactory indigenous options—has been well-studied and, as will be seen, played into the diaspora's internal responses to Americanization over time.[5] But in the context of the post-

migration experience in the US, only general remarks about the perceived desirability of secondary and tertiary education, without focus and usually pertaining to individual circumstances, can be found scattered throughout many works regarded as canonical in the field.[6]

Several otherwise important contributions to the historiography, including some that engage in detail with contemporary debates over Americanization, assimilation, and cultural pluralism, address education, a key part of those processes, in only glancing terms.[7] Three works are worth highlighting because they *do* include a detailed examination of the educational experience of the earliest Arab Americans; as such they are as conspicuous in the field as they are valuable for the cultural overview they present. These are: the third instalment of Louise Seymore Houghton's 1911 four-part analysis of the Syrian diaspora; James Ansara's pioneering 1931 thesis on "The Immigration and Settlement of the Syrians;" and Elizabeth Boosahda's much later recording of reminiscences by the previous generations, albeit specific to educational experiences in Worcester, MA.[8] Such works notwithstanding, this prevailing lack of detailed discussion of early immigrant education can be compared with the much more intensive studies focused on the schooling of Arab immigrants after World War II. These later arrivals navigated a social environment colored by events in the Middle East, and in which the anxiety and insecurity of a growing and increasingly varied Arab American community over integration, acceptance, and attainment was acute.[9] But even works devoted to the evolution of Levantine or Middle Eastern Arabs into Arab Americans, such as Katibah's "Asiatic Immigration: Syrian-Americans," and Bawardi's *The Making of Arab Americans*, failed to address the education of earlier generations as a specific contributing factor in that change.[10]

This, then, is the historiography to which this article seeks to contribute by examining the earliest phases of Arab American education for the first time and addressing a significant aspect of a complex and multifaceted field. The chosen methodological approach engages with contemporary debates in America among both the policymakers and providers of immigrant education on the one hand—at federal, state, city, and even school level—and the "consumers" of that education, including adults and children. While reflecting on and profiting from secondary sources where necessary, the article chiefly draws from English- and Arabic-language primary sources, including speeches by federal officials, US government documents, records and yearbooks of charitable institutions, memoirs, newspaper reports, editorials, op-eds, published poetry, and oral histories gleaned from

Ellis Island, Alixa Naff's recordings, and more recent interviews by third-generation Arab Americans that discuss their grandparents' educational experiences. The article begins, however, with an attempt to set these discussions in context: an assessment of the immigration/education challenge as articulated by the host community into which Arabs sought to settle, primarily through official documents and contemporary speeches made by those responsible for encouraging and managing the process of Americanization.

US ATTITUDES TO EDUCATION AS PART OF AN "AMERICANIZATION POLICY"

> America is looking with anxious hope to the school as the chief instrument of Americanization.[11]

So began a 1920 Immigration Commission investigation into the perceived deficits among America's immigrant community in the areas of functional literacy, citizenship training, and basic spoken English. From the early 1880s to the end of World War I, the US federal government and American society more broadly had been grappling with the challenge of absorbing hundreds of thousands of new immigrants. "Americanization" was often proposed as the panacea to meet the central problems of the immigrants' linguistic and social integration with their new neighbors, themselves of multiple national origins.[12] This term encapsulated diverse personal and collective identifiers, including naturalization, citizenship status, and civic values. In some discussions, race was the elephant in the room: not always mentioned but an ever-present aspect of inter-community dialogue over language, eligibility for citizenship, and social interaction. Other contemporary publications did not hesitate to place the issue of race front and center.[13] In short, Americanization meant different things to different people, and was debated widely at national, state, and city administration levels, especially during and immediately after World War I.[14] Some manifestations of Americanization were benign if didactic; take the series of "Lessons in Patriotism," published in the *Literary Digest*, for example. The column's dual aim sought to "give the latest information and opinion on foreign races being assimilated into American thought and institutions; secondly, to advise Americans on their responsibilities toward this new increment of American citizenship."[15]

The imprecise definition of the values embodied in Americanization contributed to a diversity of interpretation.[16] As Mel van Elteren has written, if immigration prompted the invention of Americanization, "Americanization in turn prompted the invention of a set of terms by which America could be regarded as having some sort of predefinition . . . [even if] the Americanness implied in this Americanization was a fiction."[17] Those of a progressive (i.e., broadly left-of-center) mindset understood those values broadly to indicate discipline, productivity, and opportunity based on hard work, mutual tolerance, and equality. Origins were irrelevant if an immigrant played by the rules. Those with a lower tolerance of multiculturalism in society instead saw American-ness as equating to whiteness and Europeanness, prompting a spectrum of responses to immigration that ranged from generalized nativism to assumptions of white supremacy and even, in the 1920s, eugenicist-inspired anti-immigrant legislation. Immigrants of Middle Eastern origin were forced to go to court to distinguish themselves from so-called "Asiatics," who were particularly targeted by racist immigration laws, including the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 and serial legislation between 1905 and the 1930s aimed at Japanese and Filipinos. And in terms of language, the 1906 Nationality Act made the ability to speak English a requirement for naturalization as a US citizen, while the Immigration Act of 1917 barred entry to immigrants who were not literate in any language.[18]

The Johnson-Reed Act of 1924 represented more than the culmination of this trend: it amounted to the acme of racially motivated American legislation in this sphere, one which, in the words of Richard Soash, "screwed the lid on the melting pot."[19] The law sought to favor immigrants from northern and western Europe by limiting the number of immigrants from elsewhere through a "national origins quota."[20] For Arab Americans from the former Ottoman province of Syria, the law dramatically reduced the number of arrivals, dropping from the thousands seen annually over the first two decades of the century to just 123 per year from what was now French Mandate Syria and 100 from British Mandate Palestine, the latter the statutory minimum.[21] "America of the Melting Pot Comes to End," blared a *New York Times* headline above a triumphant article penned by the co-sponsor of the act, US Senator David A. Reed, who boasted that "the racial composition of America at the present time thus is made permanent."[22]

Ideological agendas aside, it was swiftly recognized at city, state, and federal levels that, if Americanization were to mean anything, it had to embrace everybody, and it had to start young. In 1903, the president of the New York Kindergarten Association,

Hamilton W. Mabie, wrote: "The kindergarten age marks our earliest opportunity to catch the little Russian, the little Italian, the little German, Pole, Syrian and the rest and begin to make good American citizens of them."[23] But the crucial word that the Immigration Commission should have included in 1920 was that America was *still* "looking with anxious hope to the school as the chief instrument of Americanization."[24]

The federal government knew that its efforts lagged behind those of several social activist organizations. The so-called "International Institutes" of New England had set out not just to integrate and educate new arrivals during this immigration boom period in cities such as Boston, but to mold them into efficient and appropriately skilled American citizens.[25] In Massachusetts, the Friendly House was founded by wealthy Arabophile (and occasionally Arabic-speaking) members of the Junior League of Worcester.[26] The North American Civic League for Immigrants (NACLI) had been working since 1907 "to change the unskilled inefficient immigrant into the skilled worker and efficient citizen."[27] Efficiency, indeed, was the watchword of the NACLI manifesto, summed up in a four-page pamphlet published in 1910:

> Whatever will make the immigrant worker a more efficient worker, a more cheerful liver, a more thoughtful neighbor, and a more active citizen—whatever, in short, will make him more economically and socially efficient—will tend to strengthen the state and elevate humanity.[28]

Anxiety over basic literacy as a prerequisite for good citizenship—indeed, anxiety about a systemic failure in the "melting pot" principle of Americanization—had intensified during the recent war.[29] The year 1916 had seen a pronounced spike in public expressions of concern, from President Woodrow Wilson down, that old beliefs in the natural assimilation of "hyphenated" Americans, a process in which education had always played a vital part, had been tested and found wanting.[30] Addressing the first national Citizenship Convention in Washington, DC, on 13 July 1916, President Wilson remarked that the "friendly and intimate instruction" owed to "the great multitudes of hopeful men and women who press into this country" should come from "the school which all of us attend, which is furnished by the life of the communities in which we live and the nation to which we belong."[31] For William Maxwell, Superintendent of Schools in New York City three years

earlier, the "proper education of the immigrant child" embraced English language training but also health education, "intellectual education," "how to play," and the rights and duties of an American citizen.[32] And the US Bureau of Education was itself well aware that "the great problem of the Americanization of the immigrant" had been "thrown into especial prominence by the war"—not least by the revelation that 7 percent of those who registered for the draft were functionally illiterate and could not sign their own names.[33]

As the Ottoman Empire was allied to Germany and diplomatic relations between Washington and Istanbul were severed in April 1917, the presence of a large resident minority with ancestors or living relatives in that empire was potentially problematic. Where did their loyalties lie: were they, like German Americans, a potential "alien enemy" within?[34] Another reason for anti-immigrant sentiment during the war years was the perceptibly larger number of new arrivals. The years preceding World War I saw the highest rates of immigration by mainly Arabic-speaking people from the Middle East—people deemed "non-white" by many European Americans. German consular staff in Beirut estimated that 24,000 people left Mount Lebanon, Damascus, and Beirut in 1912 alone, compared to 1,400 the previous year.[35] So it was no coincidence that, according to the pioneering scholars of Arab-American assimilation Philip and Joseph Kayal, "anti-Syrian resentment reached its peak in 1914–1915."[36] Still, this was only the latest trigger for a root-and-branch reassessment of local, regional, and national education systems catering to the children of immigrants, among them the Arab Americans who are the focus of this article.

THE US EDUCATION SYSTEM: A WORK IN PROGRESS

The age of progressive education in America had been underway, with significant geographic variation, since the early 1880s.[37] New curricula emerged to prepare children and young adults for a rapidly changing, industrializing, and more technologically sophisticated workplace.[38] Of course, it was America's rapid and continuing economic growth that attracted immigrants, comparing favorably with the privation endured by many in their countries of origin in Europe and the Middle East; however, more than a willingness to work hard was required for those immigrants who wished to find a place in that burgeoning land of opportunity.[39] The burden of transforming multiple national groups from linguistically siloed and therefore socially introspective communities into productive Americans in a cohesive society fell, essentially, to the school system. Compulsory schooling laws prescribing entry ages and a minimum age for leaving education varied

from state to state, because the legal right to pass compulsory attendance legislation was based on the Tenth Amendment and was therefore a state rather than federal prerogative.[40] By 1900, thirty states required attendance until the age of fourteen or higher. As will be seen, such legislation was often designed to keep young children out of the workplace and in school. But many such laws specifically targeted immigrant students for whom state legislators saw mandatory attendance as "solving two problems at once: the evils of child labor and the dangers of alien culture and religion."[41]

The priority challenge was oral language teaching and basic literacy in English. The 1910 US Census produced some remarkable statistics about the degree of linguistic assimilation by America's newest arrivals. The total number of US residents then classified as both foreign-born and white—categories that included Ottoman nationals from "Turkey in Europe" and "Turkey in Asia"—was 13,345,545.[42] Of this number, 3,383,110 had arrived from England, Ireland, Scotland, Wales, and non-Francophone Canada, leaving 9,962,435 for whom English was not their first language. Of these, 2,953,011 were assessed by the census-takers as "Unable to speak English."[43] While striking, this final figure, nearly three million Americans, also means that nearly seven million men, women, and children *had* acquired the host language to a satisfactory level in the (unspecified) time that they had been in the United States. Looking more closely at Arab Americans, aka "Syrians," statistics from the Bureau of Immigration in 1911 found that 56.42 percent of the community were illiterate, with 43 percent of those at the peak working age (i.e., between 14 and 45) unable to read or write.[44] Gregory Orfalea states the case even more baldly: the early Syrians were "overwhelmingly illiterate before coming to the United States."[45]

While this urgent priority was recognized in US government departments, anxiety about instilling "Americanness" in new immigrants at the cost of spurning their own innate qualities was a persistent theme in policy deliberations. When Commissioner P. P. Claxton sought in 1911 to distil experiences and lessons learned to date in a new manifesto for the US Bureau of Education, he insisted that immigrants, both adults and children,

> must be prepared for American citizenship and for participation in our democratic industrial, social and religious life . . . [but] we must respect their ideals and preserve and strengthen all of the best of their Old World life they bring with them. We must not attempt to destroy and remake—we can

> only transform. Racial and national virtues must not be thoughtlessly exchanged for American vices.[46]

The author of another report five years later worried about "unilingualism:"

> The insistence on English as a prerequisite to Americanization is one thing, but the sudden and radical suppression of all foreign languages by city of State command . . . [and] attempting to *command* immediate and utter forgetfulness of the old country to foreigners is another. . . . The common assumption that the foreigner has nothing to lose and everything to gain in the transition; that he has nothing of himself, his background, his country to give in exchange for what he receives, makes both him and the new country the losers.[47]

AMERICANIZATION 101: BE WHITE

There was certainly an irony in the expressions of anxiety on the part of US officialdom over immigrant literacy at a time when literacy tests designed to be impossible to pass enabled segregation and voter suppression in the "Jim Crow" southern states.[48] Indeed, language aside, the strict racial segregation of early twentieth-century US society meant that successful assimilation on the part of Arab Americans implied assimilation into—or at least acceptance by—white society. Jennifer Holsinger wrote that "assimilation, and in this case racial formation, is a dialogue in which immigrants are active participants, although most times constrained by the social, political and historical context."[49] In practice, that meant that, in Charlotte Karem Albrecht's words, "Syrians had to have contact with the right kind of Americans . . . they had to have a widespread contact with white Americans."[50] But in reality, as both Albrecht and Sarah Gualtieri have observed, Arab Americans inhabited a fluid and not entirely comfortable middle ground "between white and non-white."[51] Arab American oral history confirms the sometimes-precarious nature of belonging in this new society. Arriving in the Mississippi Delta, Syrians often settled in more affordable African American or racially mixed neighborhoods, where they were not alone in experiencing an ambivalent reaction, if they were lucky, to their presence from the white population. "My mother used to tell us that we were not accepted fully as citizens really," Pat Davis Sr. told James G. Thomas of the Center for the Study of Southern

Culture at the University of Mississippi. "The Lebanese were called names and, you know, looked down upon, but not like the African American people. We were able to go to the white schools. We were able to drink out of white fountains and go to the white restrooms."[52]

Nor did Arabs encounter only prejudice against blackness: as alluded to above, they also had to differentiate themselves in law (if not in society) from "Asiatics." Indeed, the first legal ruling on the question of race in respect of newly arrived "Syrians" did not come until 5 November 1909, when Judge George Hutton of the Superior Court in California concluded that Syrians were white and, as such, could become US citizens.[53] This was not, however, the end to legal argument: the following decade saw multiple and conflicting rulings on the issue. One legal scholar pronounced that it was "perplexing" that "judges qualified Syrians as 'white persons' in 1909, 1910, and 1915, but not in 1913 and 1914."[54] Again, it is Gualtieri who has presented the most complete analysis of "the Syrian racial prerequisite cases," concluding with two crucial cases in 1923, as a result of which it was established in law that "Syrians were eligible to immigrate into the United States, so they were therefore eligible to naturalize . . . and the Syrian eligibility question never again reached the courts."[55]

In day-to-day life, therefore, the progressive attitudes espoused by earnest Immigration Commission officials were far from universal. By the 1890s in New York City, the term "street Arab" was shorthand for an impoverished and likely thieving urchin of either gender and irrespective of race or original nationality.[56] That casually racist shorthand was echoed by contemporary press descriptions of actual Arabs. Terry Hammons has written of enduring social prejudices in the US that were rooted in a combination of nineteenth century Bible studies and Orientalist fantasy, amplified by the reports of missionaries and travelers moving in often hostile territory. The result was that, well into the twentieth century, Arabs were often seen by Americans as "lazy, voluptuous, greedy, treacherous, violent, fatalistic, and of course, fanatical."[57] Such attitudes were echoed in turn-of-the-century US print media, where skeptical, nose-holding, or openly racist accounts of the nascent Arab-American communities in New York and Pittsburgh showed that the "anti-Syrian resentment" identified by the Kayals in 1914–15 was nothing new.[58] A full page of the *Illustrated American* magazine in October 1893 was devoted to "Scenes in the Turkish Quarter of New York," part of a longer article headlined "A Plague of Men." One figure poses in fez, embroidered waistcoat, and traditional baggy trousers over the caption "Just landed." The same gentleman is then pictured alongside a teenaged boy dressed in smart

three-piece suit, foulard, watch-chain, and cane. This time the caption is "Ancient and Modern Syria"—and the message about which fitted in in America was clear.[59]

EDUCATION AMONG THE EARLIEST ARAB AMERICAN IMMIGRANTS

For new arrivals from the Middle East, learning English fast was crucial, both for business success and for social cohesion beyond ghettoized, Arabic-only communities. Self-appointed community leaders—many of them the beneficiaries of high-quality indigenous or missionary education in Beirut, Damascus, Baghdad, and Mount Lebanon—were already exploring and agitating for educational opportunities for their children by the early 1890s.[60] The first school serving this new diaspora community was opened in Lower Manhattan at 95 Washington Street on 5 May 1892. The building housed the office of Dr. Amīn Ḥaddād, secretary of a new Syrian society that had been set up the previous month precisely to pursue "the advancement of the condition of the Syrian people of New-York, principally by the training of their children."[61] Dr. Ḥaddād's speech to mark the formal inauguration of this fledgling kindergarten facility, involving just two pupils at first, addressed the difficulties experienced by Syrian migrants:

> There is but little chance for many of these people, especially the uneducated, to care for themselves in a strange land without some aid or encouragement being extended to them. . . . Is it not wise, or allow me to say, is it not our duty to devise some means to make these Syrians good Christian American citizens and to educate them, so that when they vote they will do it intelligently and in time become self-supporting instead of a burden on the community?[62]

Nor was it only children that were the focus of the education drive. In late September 1892, the Turkish Consul-General in New York, Xenophon Baltazzi, presented a petition to the city's Board of Education, requesting that a room be provided in Grammar School No. 29 on Greenwich Street for adult Syrian immigrants to study English.[63] Such a disposition, argued the Orthodox Christian newspaper *Kawkab Amrīka* (Star of America), would show that Syrians, unlike other foreigners, were keen to "conform to the customs and condition of

things in the land of their adoption."[64] The newspaper's founding editor, Ibrahim Arbeely, would go on to publish America's first English/Arabic dictionary and phrasebook.[65] This large volume is cleverly arranged with forty pages of basic English-Arabic instruction and vocabulary printed at the beginning of the book as a Western reader would read it, while the far more substantial content, 630 pages of comprehensive Arabic-English tuition, is printed from the other end of the book. As Naff has observed, the book taught immigrants as much about assimilation as language, "providing them with a wide range of American business forms and letters as well as social courtesies, tastes and manners."[66]

The most successful vehicle for teaching English, civics, and a variety of more specialized work-related skills to adult immigrants was night school.[67] The NACLI offered a series of illustrated lectures made freely available to education professionals teaching evening classes "in an effort to attract the residents of the foreign colonies to the schools in their neighborhood."[68] It also published pamphlets—in Arabic for their Syrian readership—on a range of patriotic themes, including "The United States, Its People and Its Laws," "The Need of Learning English and the Advantages of an Education," and "A Primer for the Alien Desirous of Becoming a Citizen," as well as cut-out-and-keep guides to all-American figures such as George Washington.[69] Albert Shields, district superintendent for New York City's public schools, argued in May 1913 that the evening school should be "a sort of glorified public social settlement" to complement the work of agencies such as the NACLI that were already "doing splendid work in aiding the immigrant." Shields stressed the necessity of high-quality teachers: "In no other branch of instruction does the personality of the teacher count for so much."[70] Later that same decade, however, the US Bureau of Education lamented that the policy of most night-school instruction in English still rested upon a fallacy, "that teaching English to foreigners is a simple, secondary matter, and may be safely entrusted to any who can be found to accept the pittance allowed such instruction."[71]

The Syrian Society of the City of New York had a night school in place as early as May 1892. In its first annual report, the society noted proudly how Saleem Hadeed (possibly a relative of the school's founder) "devotes two hours five evenings of each week . . . to the noble work of teaching and drilling the young men and boys of his race and nation."[72] But New York was far from alone in using a combination of the public school system and night schools in the expansion of its educational facilities for immigrants. In regular daytime classes in Lawrence, MA, "natives mixed freely with foreigners. Not one of the

city's schools in 1896 had a dominant number born in any one country and most had students from five to seven ethnic groups. Only the Syrians were confined to one school."[73] And it worked: data from 1909 shows that of the 686 Syrian employees recorded as working in Lawrence, 73.9 percent of the men and 34.6 percent of the women were assessed as being able to read and write in English.[74].

Fifty miles southwest, the Dartmouth Street School in Worcester ran a "special grade" where, as James Arraj later recalled, "they had a young girl there who spoke Arabic, helped us out, interpreted for us," enabling the youngster to progress rapidly: "I caught on to English very nicely . . . and I was skipping grades."[75] In Grand Rapids, MI, in February 1908, Mayor George Ellis had the backing of the city's churches when he cautioned the education board against canceling night schools; they were, he argued, "no longer an experiment but a necessity," offering "the best opportunity for assimilating the foreign population and . . . a favored institution for inculcating American values."[76] As far away as California, the Bethlehem Institute in Los Angeles provided free day and night school, employment, and housing to Syrians alongside Russian, Mexican, Japanese, Armenian, Italian, and Jewish immigrants.[77] In Boston, the Quincy Grammar School was established on Tyler Street in 1905 for adults and children. There were already twenty-six evening schools in the city, with an average annual attendance of 9,247 students; some were illiterate Americans, but most were recent arrivals from a wide variety of countries. "Out of the total of 2,119 pupils attending five named schools, including Quincy Grammar," the *Boston Sunday Globe* discovered, "90 percent of the number could not speak, much less write, a word of English when they entered."[78]

New immigrants from the Arabic-speaking eastern Mediterranean were, of course, part of this wide range of nationalities. At Quincy Grammar, students were guinea pigs in a hothouse of progressive educational theories being tested on real pupils, among them the arrangement of "single-headed" classrooms, in which the school was divided into several classes taught simultaneously in different rooms.[79] These innovations were clearly relished by newcomers, including prospective community leaders from the various Christian groups. The 1905 *Boston Globe* article on Quincy Grammar quoted above found

> a most interesting group of 16 men from Beirut, Damascus, Jerusalem, etc. [including] a Catholic priest, Rev Peter Nisby Darhouney, graduate of the Syrian college of Beirut. He is in the

> city until the Syrian church in Lawrence [MA], where he is to go as pastor, is completed. The minister of the Syrian Protestant chapel went to the Quincy school [for] two years for instruction. The Greek Syrian priest, and the priest of the Russian Orthodox church were also enrolled as pupils, and last year a Syrian nun attended half the term.[80]

While American commentators clearly found the presence of the clergy intrinsically validating, the role of the churches in education would, as will be seen, prove divisive as the debate over schooling intensified within the diaspora community.

A mile south of Quincy Grammar, Denison House was the focus of educational facilities explicitly devoted to female students and their families, a sector identified as a priority in Houghton's comprehensive social overview of the Arab American community in 1911. "The eastern custom of neglecting to educate girls," she wrote, "probably counts for much in this percentage of illiteracy [56 percent]. For Syrian parents to send a daughter away from home to school requires even yet a courage and resolution quite heroic on the part of both daughter and parents."[81] In this respect, Denison House was a pioneer: a club for Syrian women had been set up in 1907, followed three years later by a broader educational society, the "Gemaat Surea Americanea" (Syrian-American League). Nor was the focus solely on classroom tuition; addressing what the Denison House management team called "neighborhood hygiene," 157 of 288 families receiving treatment from surgeons, physicians, and nurses—including home visits—were Syrian. "Suddenly," noted the board at Denison House, "everyone has become acutely conscious of the presence of the immigrant among us. Everyone is asking whether he is a national asset or a liability."[82] Once again, for the executive committee, directors and, as importantly, donors, it all boiled down to transforming immigrants into model citizens, especially at a time of national emergency.

CHURCH VS. STATE SCHOOLS

When Lucius Hopkins Miller surveyed the Syrian community in New York City in 1903, he found that 80 percent of Syrian families with children between the ages of six and fourteen in the communities of Lower Manhattan, South Ferry, and South Brooklyn had enrolled them in school. Of these students, fewer than half attended public schools, while a substantial majority were enrolled in private schools operated by the Catholic, Orthodox, and Protestant churches.[83] The question of

church-sponsored education was hotly debated within an Arab community that became more comfortably embedded in American society over the first quarter of the twentieth century—a debate largely missing from the historiography of the diaspora.[84] Philip and Joseph Kayal wrote that for some early Syrian immigrants, there seemed to have been "a tendency . . . to imitate a custom of the old country by having their children put into educational boarding schools run by various religious denominations." In practice, they added, this meant that "practically all the Syrian children of the Catholic faith (Maronites and Melkites) attended parochial schools while the Orthodox and Presbyterians had only [*sic*] the public system to depend on."[85]

By contrast to the Maronites and Greek Orthodox, Muslim families in the US had no formal Islamic pedagogical institutions to which they might send their children until the 1930s, as a direct result of the founding of the Nation of Islam in Detroit.[86] Faute de mieux, as Yvonne Yazbeck Haddad's research revealed, the early Muslim immigrants "sent their children to Christian Sunday schools and daily vacation bible schools so that they would receive a proper moral education."[87] Research within one Maronite community in Ohio appears to demonstrate a belief that the only education that would secure a prosperous future for children was available through "a Church-school system similar to the kind prevalent in Lebanon with the French Catholic missionaries."[88] Indeed, Maronite churches in small New York towns like Utica and Olean built their own schools to cater to the children of their communities.[89] In Richmond, VA, the small population of Lebanese immigrants sent their children to the school attached to Saint Patrick's Roman Catholic Church, until a dispute with Bishop Augustine van de Vyvor prompted them to withdraw the children and send them to the public school instead.[90] "In the same way that in Lebanon my parents and their families had been trained by French and Lebanese nuns and priests in parochial schools," Peter Awn has written, "so here they naturally followed the same tradition, feeling that a parochial education was somehow their birthright."[91]

For others, however, such schools represented an unwelcome continuation of an intrusive and parasitical sectarianism that they thought they had shaken off when leaving the Levant. Some of the most vituperative articles denouncing the grip of the clergy on Lebanese society appeared in *al-Hoda*, the New York newspaper founded, ironically, by the Maronite Mokarzel family. The first broadside came in October 1904, when Sheikh Yūsuf ʿAwād wrote to denounce the "religious fanaticism" (*al-taʿsub al-dīnī*) that had been imported to America. He listed seven causes for the failure and "backwardness" of

new arrivals in the US: poor integration with other communities; a lack of technical knowledge; a lack of competitive focus; sectarian bigotry; mutual mistrust among the community; laziness; and clinging to outmoded traditions. Having described the disease, the sheikh wrote, all that was needed was the prescription for a useful cure: "Establish schools. Schools. Schools. Kill fanaticism [*qatl al-taʿṣub*]."[92]

The following month, *al-Hoda* published a powerful poem by Mikhāʿīl Asʿad Rustum, whose sprawling account of ten years in America, *Stranger in the West*, had been published a decade earlier to widespread acclaim, both in the diaspora and back in Lebanon.[93] His poem in *al-Hoda* was a warning of escalating pitch against importing the sectarian clannishness of Mount Lebanon. The only winners in a mutual tussle of envy and competition between immigrants, he wrote, in which "Our profits continue to increase / But we gain no status," were the clergy:

> As long as fanaticism is alive among us, and our hearts are filled with hatred,
>
> As long as our priest is a despot . . . and we consent to his wild tendencies,
>
> We obey his orders like a child obeying his father. . . .
>
> O priest of God, these souls have been kept from the right path . . .
>
> While you have forsaken your Lord after dedicating to Him your selfless soul. . . .
>
> O would that you would serve your flock, so that they would be grateful to you,
>
> Instead of minding other people's business.[94]

This sentiment, albeit without the anti-Catholic acrimony, was endorsed in 1906 by Faraḥ Anṭūn, a Lebanese intellectual based in Egypt.[95] In an article for his own *al-Jāmʿa* newspaper entitled "Observations in America," Anṭūn wrote that America's political sophistication and press freedom were less important than its system of mandatory elementary schools. His conclusion was the passionate argument "that Arabs study in American schools rather than establishing their own schools, where the 'Eastern' mentality might be perpetuated."[96] Earlier the same year, in a continuation of *al-Hoda*'s concerted campaign, Jamīl Maʿlūf had contributed a long opinion piece in which he warned that indulging the "megalomania" (*hub al-ʿaẓima*)

of the clergy by giving them any say in education would trigger a "great catastrophe" and an "incurable disease" (*al-dāʾal-ʿaẓāl*) that would "plant into the hearts of our young people the spirit of ignorance and disunity which was planted in our hearts by clerical schools in our home country."

> It is insanity for parents to try to educate their children in foreign schools if they expect a bright future for them in America. True, forgetting our customs and maybe our language too is difficult for parents to bear—but it is inevitable as long as their children's future is here. What is more difficult for the parent who has only a few years to live: sacrificing the pleasure of having a short conversation with his son [in Arabic] or sacrificing that son's entire life?[97]

Despite such campaigns, early émigrés did, as has been shown, entrust their children to church schools. In 1911, the US Immigration Commission compiled statistics from thirty-seven cities relating to the wider American debate over public versus parochial schools. The commission reported that 1,281 children, born outside the US to "Syrian" fathers, were enrolled in public schools.[98] This figure was part of a total of 1,048,490 foreign-born public-school pupils—that is, a miniscule 0.12 percent of all immigrant children—suggesting that the new Arab American diaspora presented a negligible part of the overall challenge to the educational establishment, compared to the far greater numbers of Italians, Germans, Russians, etc. Considerably fewer children were counted as attending Christian parochial schools. Data from twenty-four cities, also in 1911, showed that just 149 Syrian students were classed as foreign-born parochial school pupils. Again, this was a tiny proportion: just 0.07 percent of the 221,159 immigrant children in American parochial schools.[99] But these statistical comparisons are, in one respect, flawed: they assume that all Arab American children were in school. It is highly likely, however, that many Syrian children were called on to work.

SCHOOL OR EMPLOYMENT?

As discussed above, learning English was, from the immigrant perspective, the essential ingredient in getting ahead. Stacy Fahrenthold has presented fascinating evidence on the range of jobs undertaken by immigrants from different parts of the Ottoman Empire,

for which English was essential.[100] Indeed, many families simply could not afford to prioritize education over work. Descendants of Lebanese immigrants consistently describe their forebears' relative lack of education. Khalīl Jabūr, who arrived in America at the age of fourteen in around 1896, was "not educated. He could do math in his head, but he couldn't write it down," so his daughters kept the books for him at his wholesale dry goods company in Vicksburg, MS.[101] Yūsuf Khalīl Korkmas was also fourteen when he left Jūrat el Turmus in the Maronite-dominated canton of Kisrawān in 1898. "I'm not sure my dad would be considered third grade education [i.e., at the level of a nine-year-old] in Lebanon," his son recalled. "He did not know any English. When they would speak Arabic to us, they would insist that we answer in English, so *they* could learn English."[102] So several big industrial companies, including car manufacturers such as Ford Motors in Detroit and mill operators across New England, set about arranging their own education facilities.[103] Workplace learning was a pragmatic way to train and retain personnel while making a loud statement about their own corporate contribution to Americanization. Turks, too, experienced the same pressures. As Ahmed Emin Yalman discovered in 1912, "[s]ome expected to get rich fast in the United States, but they had to work in factories to maintain their lives with hardship. Some intended to get [an] education in industry, business, and other fields. However, they had to quit schools due to financial problems."[104]

As for Lebanese immigrants, thousands became itinerant door-to-door salesmen, scattered across New England and out into the Midwest. These men, women, and children were memorably described by James Ansara as "unlettered and sometimes unwanted."[105] Naff has pointed out that, for these people, peddling was itself a way of rapidly improving the vendor's English and speeding up social assimilation. Such commercial forays, she wrote, were the "schools of the road"—although she included a cautionary tale about Syrian peddlers in Cedar Rapids, IA, who picked up rudimentary Bohemian from Czech immigrants without realizing that, as a lingua franca, it had a strictly local currency.[106]

Youngsters were also regularly seen out on the roads of New England and the Midwest, peddling their wares. The often-harsh reality of child labor was a very real alternative to education. Truancy, Donald Cole tells us, was "a nightmare for the principals" of Lawrence, MA, averaging 8,500 cases a year.[107] There are many stories of teenagers having to work to help the family pay the rent. After arriving in New York from Mount Lebanon with his father at the age of fourteen in May 1901, Ilyās Naṣr was on the road by early summer, carrying character

references from local Presbyterian ministers.[108] While his disabled younger brother Naṣrī was sheltered and educated at a charitable school upstate in Tarrytown, Ilyās purchased his merchandise from Lebanese wholesale suppliers on Washington Street in Lower Manhattan, while his home for the next five years was the Mills Hotel at 160 Bleecker Street in Greenwich Village—subsidized lodging where working men (or boys) with meager salaries could rent a tiny room for twenty cents a night and eat for fifteen cents a meal.[109] Tanios Girgis Obeit had received no education when he left the Port of Tripoli and arrived in the US at the age of thirteen. Instead of school, he went to work directly, first as a water-boy on his brother's road construction gang in Pittsburgh, then in the spinning room in the cotton factory at Clark Mills outside Utica, NY.[110] For Richard Herbert, similarly unschooled in rural Mount Lebanon, a brief period in school in North Adams, MA, was "a beautiful experience," but within a year he was hard at work, first at the Barber Leather Company and then on ten-hour shifts at the Hoosac Cotton Mills for twelve dollars a week.[111]

The campaign to end child labor through federal legislation was slow to bear fruit. The work of the National Child Labor Committee began at the turn of the century, but it was not until 25 June 1938 that President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed into law the Fair Labor Standards Act, which enshrines most of today's legislation relating to child labor. The committee's greatest asset in reaching the American public was the work of Lewis Hine, who photographed children in a multitude of often hazardous work-places, often securing his images against the wishes of their employers.[112] A typical Hine photograph from 1911 shows a six-year-old boy working alongside his eight-year-old sister—two of nine children among seventy pickers, "mostly Syrians from Boston and Providence"—in the Maple Park cranberry bog outside East Wareham, MA.[113] Of course, such activism sought to give all American youngsters, not just recent immigrants, the right to a childhood not just free from exploitation but also focused on education. Research by the pioneering social worker Jane Addams in Chicago in 1903 investigated the instances of truancy among under-age newsboys (and girls) in the city:

> Among the 1,000 newsboys examined there were 75.1 per cent who came under the Compulsory Education Law.[114] Of these 662 gave the name of some school they were attending. . . . It was found, however, that in many cases their attendance was so irregular as to amount to truancy.[115]

So Syrian children were active participants in the workforce. The Miller survey of 1903, cited above, was pragmatic in this respect. His finding that 80 percent of the Syrian families surveyed had children between the ages of six and fourteen enrolled in school meant, of course, that 20 percent did not.[116] Miller accepted fifteen as the age of de facto adulthood (i.e., employability), although the age of compulsory education was raised that year in New York State from fourteen to sixteen.[117] While his assessment that only twenty-five children from the Syrian community in New York City were working in shops, factories, or as itinerant salesmen seems implausible, Miller was forced to concede that "doubtless there are many more in the community whose education is interfered with more or less by the selfish demands of parents upon their children's earning capacity."[118]

NEW IMMIGRANTS, NEW ARGUMENTS OVER AMERICANIZATION

By the second half of the 1920s, some big changes had occurred, both in American society and in the resulting immigrant trends from the Middle East. As discussed above, the Immigration Act of 1924 severely restricted numbers but—in what has retrospectively been dubbed a "second wave" of Lebanese migration—brought into the US a new, post-imperial generation with greater nationalistic sensibilities and for whom literacy in English was taken for granted as part of a necessary and comprehensive education. Beverlee Mehdi identified a pivotal 1927 gathering of writers, businessmen, and other professionals from the Greater New York area who "saw their task to be one of education, to dispel inferiority feelings among the immigrant community and to better interpret themselves to the American communities."[119] Such meetings were part of a resurgence in the intra-diaspora debate over Americanization. Print space was now largely given over to a more focused argument over the desirability rather than the necessity of assimilation—with some arguing that the process had already gone too far. This is how James Ansara put it in 1931, a time when the debate was still very much a live one:

> The movement is led by the Syrian-American literati of New York, Boston, and Detroit, mostly men who were not born in America but immigrated as boys and young men. Their propaganda is not that Americanization be hampered but that there is something in the Syrian

> heritage that is worth preserving. They ask that certain cultural ideals and traits which are the products of thousands of years of cultural development be retained by the Syrians in the United States.[120]

This time, the intra-*mahjar* arguments were aired in the pages of the community's new English-language publications, especially the *Syrian World*. A decade had passed since the end of World War I, with its attendant fears about potential subversion from within, and the consequent extinction of the Ottoman Empire. This was recognized in late 1927 by the Reverend Wade Mansur, a Lebanese-born Presbyterian minister in Omaha, NE, who contributed the first of two articles on "Problems of Syrian Youth in America" to the *Syrian World* and for whom the premise was simple: "The Great War now marks the dividing line between the old and the new in Syrian-American thinking." The parents of young Arab Americans may have intended to return to the Middle East but they themselves did not, forcing a generational shift in attitudes towards "race prejudice," marriage, patriotism, religion, and education.[121] For Mansur, these new Americans were, effectively, *former* Syrians—a point hammered home in April 1929 when he sent in a new piece arguing that the change had been effected by the immigrants' "intelligent choice of America": "We stand for America first and nothing else. We declare America's ideals, our ideals; her citizenship, our citizenship; her institutions, our institutions."[122]

Mansur was not the first of this generation to think about these issues in the new post-war context. In September 1926, Habib Katibah had argued in the *Syrian World* that Americanism, while hard to define, was a "gigantic psychical and spiritual movement" that "should have as its immediate objective the conversion of untutored foreigners into good, responsible American citizens."[123] Earlier that year, no less a figure than Khalil Gibran had used the debut issue of the *Syrian World* to address "young Americans of Syrian origin." His remarks were, perhaps inevitably, more poetic than practical:

> I believe in you, and I believe in your destiny.
>
> I believe that you are contributors to this new civilization.
>
> . . .
>
> I believe that you can say to the founders of this great nation, "Here I am, a youth, a young tree whose roots

> were plucked from the hills of Lebanon, yet I am deeply rooted here, and I would be fruitful." . . .
>
> I believe that even as your father came to this land to produce riches, you were born here to produce riches by intelligence, by labor.
>
> And I believe that it is in you to be good citizens.[124]

As more celebrated and influential members of this increasingly settled—and intellectually confident—community chimed in on the debate, practical pointers and useful backgrounders became part of the discussion. In the spring of 1928, Joseph W. Ferris contributed a closely argued two-part analysis of the long legal process, outlined above, by which Syrians had been determined to be eligible for US citizenship.[125] Fascination with the way the community was seen by their American neighbors was reflected in June 1928 by the re-issue of an article by J. Ray Johnson of the Foreign Language Information Service (motto: "To interpret America to the Alien and the Alien to America"), which had published the piece in their own magazine, the *Interpreter*.[126] Leaning heavily on the scholarship of Philip Hitti and other Lebanese advisers, Johnson's community profile presumably presented a view that the editors of the *Syrian World* endorsed, including its notes on industry, geographical spread, sectarian divisions ("the deepest lines of cleavage in the Syrian national community"), and the post-war "renaissance of the Syrian nation."[127]

But there was also a counter-tide from those who argued that too much was being lost, reflecting a resistance to Americanization that was illustrated by, for example, the Cleveland, OH, family whose English-speaking parents allowed only Arabic at home "so that their children may not get away from them."[128] In Richmond, VA, the Maronite priest Fr. Abdalla Tarabay ran an Arabic school for Lebanese children: "A typical effort of immigrant churches to teach the mother tongue to second generation children."[129] In the same edition as Johnson's article, Naʿūm Mokarzel—brother of the *Syrian World*'s editor and himself editor of *al-Hoda*, the paper which had been so invested in the debate over Americanization twenty years earlier—confessed to being "seized with grief upon being told that not only is our young generation ignorant of Arabic but that it has a decided apathy to it."[130] Later in 1928, the topic of teaching Arabic to the second generation grew livelier. The August edition of the *Syrian World* featured not only a two-page article on "Teaching Arabic in America" but also passionate letters from Edward Karam of Pittsfield, MA, and

Clare Bishara of Brooklyn, who opined that it was parents, some of them "even ashamed of their mother tongue and indifferent to their precious traditions," who were "woefully negligent in this respect."[131] Ruby Nakfoor, a member of the Young Phoenician Society at her Lansing, MI, high school, agreed: "Our parents didn't encourage us any further. They didn't have the patience to help their children, some wondered what good the Syrian language could do them in America, and others didn't approve of it at all, and we ceased learning."[132] Almost a year later, George Ferris echoed those anxieties about the fundamental identitarian nature of language. "It is obvious," he lamented, "that the younger generations of Syrians in America are rapidly losing contact with the native tongue of their parents. Many of them, educated in the public schools and colleges, although able to understand the Arabic language, yet are unable to read or write it, and … the Arabic language among those of Syrian descent is doomed to extinction, or near extinction." More worryingly, he wrote, "the history of foreign minorities in the United States . . . would seem to indicate that separate, distinct, racial groups are doomed to be absorbed into the body politic."[133]

Such sentiments were echoed in the words of another of the Arab American community's finest ambassadors in America. Ameen Rihani was the author of the 1911 novel *The Book of Khalid*, as well as multiple works of poetry, historical and political analysis, philosophy and literary criticism.[134] He had been a central member of the New York-based Pen League and, arguably, the founding father of Arab-American literature.[135] In early 1929, the *Syrian World* ran, alongside several tributes to the author by several distinguished contemporaries, the translation of a speech by Rihani entitled "Americanism and Native Culture," in which he echoed the sentiments of those pioneering US federal officials who had tried to incorporate immigrants of many origins into a reshaped education system without sacrificing their many native qualities and urged his own community not to forget or abandon their roots in the Middle East:

> I am a firm believer in Americanism; but I also believe in foreign culture. . . . Every people, ladies and gentlemen, has a certain culture, which reflects the best of its racial heritage; and the nation in which these various cultures abound and are incorporated harmoniously into its own spirit, without losing altogether their original identity, is destined to become the greatest nation in the world. . . . [T]he foreign-born and their descendants in this their

> adopted country, cannot better perform their duties as citizens than by preserving their native culture and keeping alive all that is good in their racial characteristics. That is why I say to the new Syrian generation: do not sacrifice everything in your racial heritage and do not assimilate everything in your new surroundings.[136]

CONCLUSION

These reservations look in hindsight like a doomed attempt to reverse an irreversible process. From the earliest years of Arab immigrations, primary and high school education was pursued as part of what Donald Cole called "the immigrants' search for security in Americanism," a quest articulated in Arabic newspapers like *al-Wafā'* (Fidelity) which actively encouraged Americanization and, more prosaically, recommended its readers in Lawrence, MA, to "study English because it will help you earn money."[137] Indeed, it is impossible to argue that the forces of assimilation and Americanization did not affect those Lebanese and other Arab Americans who remained in the United States—and even more so their immediate descendants. An education that was at first hard-won became an established and valued norm. The public school system that had adapted so rapidly to absorb so many illiterate and untrained newcomers, adult and child, was now accepted as natural and necessary.

As the numbers of first- and second-generation Arab Americans graduating from high school began to increase—and with the arrival of well-educated young adults from Beirut and Mount Lebanon—thoughts within the community began to turn to tertiary education. The 1911 Immigration Commission survey indicated that Syrian representation in American colleges could only improve from what was an extremely low base. Data from seventy-seven US academic institutions showed that, of 2,979 foreign-born male students, fifteen were Syrian, eight of them studying medicine. Of the 387 foreign-born female students, two were Syrian, both studying medicine.[138] In 1931, James Ansara noted that "the higher education of Syrian girls has been badly neglected, due to the survival of an old world prejudice against liberally educating girls. . . . To the majority of Syrians the only use they have for a college education is merely as a stepping stone to some profession and since only boys are expected to enter professional life girls have been denied further education."[139] And as late as the 1960s and 1970s, six professional Arab American women interviewed by Naff described how they had overcome the lack of formal education in their younger lives—material used to powerful

effect by Sheila Corey to demonstrate the shortfalls of both the pre-emigration and US education systems in respect of girls.[140]

The Lebanese teacher and historian Philip Hitti believed that the malaise was not just about women and girls: educational forces in the diaspora were, he wrote, "lamentably meagre and ineffective" and a "rush for material betterment" had "created in the Syrian-American a mercenary spirit and abated his generally recognized zeal for higher education."[141] As a way of helping, Hitti had earlier compiled a guide to the American educational system, from kindergarten to "Greek letter fraternity." In it, he described the 1916 founding of the Brooklyn-based Syrian Educational Society (SES), which operated in New York and Boston and awarded fifteen annual scholarships to students of "Arabic-speaking origin" under the motto "The future of the Syrian people lies in its youth, and the hope of the youth is in education."[142]

Across America, then, the second and third generations of immigrant families graduated not just high school but college too, going on to careers in fields as diverse as medicine, law, heavy industry, commerce, the automotive sector, textiles, engineering, real estate, and politics. What had been, for a couple of generations, Arab neighborhoods began to thin out and disappear.[143] It was Naff who observed in the 1980s: "The relatively high degree of Americanization among first generation Syrians and the relatively low degree of ethnic consciousness in the second generation are two of the indications that the assimilation process penetrated sectors of the Syrian community more deeply than might have been expected."[144] The "anxious hope" with which US officialdom had invested in the school system as the "chief instrument of Americanization" had been more than rewarded. It was education—of adults in night school and of their children in such public, private, parochial, and diocesan schools as were variously available—that transformed a widespread scattering of inchoate clusters of Arab immigrants who happened to be in America into a transnational yet coherent and identity-conscious community of Arab Americans.

NOTES

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[2] John U. Ogbu, "Immigrant and Involuntary Minorities in Comparative Perspective," in *Minority Status and Schooling: A Comparative Study of Immigrant and Involuntary Minorities*, eds. Margaret A. Gibson and John U. Ogbu (New York: Garland Publishing, 1991), 3–36.

[3] Fuat Dundar, "Empire of Taxonomy: Ethnic and Religious Identities in the Ottoman Surveys and Censuses," *Middle Eastern Studies* 51, no. 1 (2015): 136–58. See also Ipek Kocaömer Yosmaoğlu, "Reflections on Whiteness, Blackness, and Race in the Ottoman Empire and the Republic of Turkey," Northwestern University Spring Speaker Series, 3 May 2021, available online, https://sites.northwestern.edu/africanstudies/2021/05/03/reflections-on-whiteness-blackness-and-race-in-the-ottoman-empire-and-the-republic-of-turkey/.

[4] Raymond Mohl, "Cultural Pluralism in Immigrant Education: The International Institutes of Boston, Philadelphia, and San Francisco, 1920–1940," *Journal of American Ethnic History* 1/2 (1982): 35–58.

[5] Examples from the wide range of studies into missionary education across the Ottoman Middle East include, in chronological order: Afif I. Tannous, "Missionary Education in Lebanon: A Study in Acculturation," *Social Forces* 21, no. 3 (1943): 338–43; Abdul Latif Tibawi, *American Interests in Syria, 1800–1901: A Study of Educational, Literary and Religious Work* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966); Alixa Naff, *Becoming American: The Early Arab Immigrant Experience* (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1985), 36–37, 68–69; Samir Khalif, "The Background and Causes of Lebanese/Syrian Immigration to the United States Before World War I," in *Crossing the Waters: Arabic-Speaking Immigrants to the United States Before 1940*, ed. Eric J. Hooglund (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1987), 17–36; Samir Khalif, "On Doing Much with Little Noise: Early Encounters of Protestant Missionaries in Lebanon," in *Altruism and Imperialism: Western Cultural and Religious Missions in the Middle East*, eds. Eleanor Harvey Tejirian and Reeva S. Simon (New York: Columbia University Middle East Institute, 2002), 14–44; Ussama Makdisi, *Artillery of Heaven: American Missionaries and the Failed Conversion of the Middle East* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2008); Heather J. Sharkey, *American Evangelicals in Egypt: Missionary Encounters in an Age of Empire* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008); Mīshāl Sabʿa, *Al-madrasat al-baṭriyyarkiyya: muāʾa wa-khamsūn ʿāmān min tārīkh Beirūt* [The patriarchal school: 150 years of Beirut history] (Beirut: n.p., 2014); and Yunus Emre Uçan, "Osmanli Devleti'nde İngiliz Misyoner Okullari" [British missionary schools in the Ottoman Empire] (PhD diss., Erciyes Üniversitesi, 2015).

[6] See, for example, William Isaac Cole, *Immigrant Races in Massachusetts: The Syrians* (Boston: Massachusetts Dept. for Education, 1922), 8–9; Barbara C. Aswad, "The Southeast Dearborn Arab Community: Struggles for Survival Against Urban 'Renewal,'" in *Arabic Speaking Communities in American Cities*, ed. Barbara C. Aswad (New York: Center for Migration Studies, 1974), 61–64; Philip M. Kayal and Joseph Kayal, *The Syrian-Lebanese in America: A Study in*

Religion and Assimilation (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1975); Eric J. Hooglund, *Taking Root: Arab-American Community Studies* (Washington, DC: ADC, 1985), 2:12–13, 93–4; Elsa Marston Harik, *The Lebanese in America* (Minneapolis: Lerner, 1987), 16–17, 41; Caesar E. Farah, "Syrians," in *American Immigrant Cultures: Builders of a Nation*, eds. David Levinson and Melvin Ember, 2 vols. (New York: Simon & Schuster Macmillan, 1997), 2:859–65; Alixa Naff, *The Immigrant Experience: The Arab Americans* (Philadelphia: Chelsea House Publishers, 1999), 82–83; Loukia K. Sarroub, "Education," in *Arab American Encyclopedia*, eds. Anan Ameri and Dawn Ramey (Detroit, MI: Arab Community Center for Economic and Social Services, 2000), 121–32; Gregory Orfalea, *The Arab Americans: A History* (Northampton, MA: Olive Branch Press, 2006); Anthony Mansour, *Our Pioneers from Al Watan: The Peddler to Merchant Generation*, ed. Lisa Blackburn (Flint, MI: Arab American Heritage Council, 2010).

[7] Gregory Orfalea, *Before the Flames: A Quest for the History of Arab Americans* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1988) does not even mention education in his index; James Zogby, ed., *Taking Root, Bearing Fruit: The Arab-American Experience* (Washington, DC: ADC Publications, 1984) focuses any discussion of aspirations to education on post-World War II Palestinian and other immigrants. See also Michael W. Suleiman, "Early Arab-Americans: The Search for Identity," in Hooglund, *Crossing the Waters*, 37–54; and Akram F. Khater, "Arabs in America," in *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of American History*, ed. Jon Butler (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013–present), 25 January 2019, https://oxfordre-com.ezproxy-prd.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/americanhistory.

[8] Louise Seymour Houghton, "Syrians in the United States III: Intellectual and Social Status," *The Survey* (2 September 1911), 786–803; James Ansara, "The Immigration and Settlement of the Syrians" (master's thesis, Harvard College, 1931), 116–20; Elizabeth Booshada, *Arab-American Faces and Voices: The Origins of an Immigrant Community* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2003), 104–7, 142–5.

[9] Several important works on the twentieth-century Arab American experience treated the early diaspora as ancient history largely irrelevant to the study in hand. Abdo A. Elkholy, *The Arab Moslems in the United States: Religion and Assimilation* (New Haven, CT: College & University Press, 1966), 86–91, 103–6; Sharon M. Abu-Laban, "Stereotypes of Middle East Peoples: An Analysis of Church School Curricula," in *Arabs in America: Myths and Realities*, eds. Baha Abu-Laban and Faith T. Zeadey (Wilmette, IL: Medina University Press International, 1975), 149–69; Philip M. Kayal, "America's Arabs," in *Contemporary American Immigration: Interpretive Essays (Non-European)*, ed. Dennis L. Cuddy (Boston: Twayne, 1982), 220–39; Kristine J. Ajrouch, "Ethnicity, Gender and Identity among Second Generation Arab-Americans: Growing up Arabic in America" (PhD diss., Wayne State University, 1997); Kristine J. Ajrouch and Amaney Jamal, "Assimilating to a White Identity: The Case of Arab Americans," *International Migration Review* 41, no. 4 (2007): 860–79; Brent K. Ashabranner, *An Ancient Heritage: The Arab-*

American Minority (New York: HarperCollins, 1991). George Dimitri Selim, *The Arabs in the United States: A Selected List of References* (Washington, DC: US Library of Congress, 1983) identified no fewer than 33 dissertations evaluating the status, image and career decisions of Egyptian, Emirati, Jordanian, Libyan, Saudi, Sudanese, and Syrian students in public schools and universities across the nation.

[10] Habib I. Katibah, "Asiatic Immigration: Syrian-Americans," in *One America: The History, Contributions, and Present Problems of Our Racial and National Minorities*, eds. Francis J. Brown and Joseph S. Rouček (New York: Prentice-Hall, 1945), 291–7; Hani J. Bawardi, *The Making of Arab Americans: From Syrian Nationalism to U.S. Citizenship* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2014). It is worth noting that even in Michael Suleiman's magisterial 2006 assessment of the existing literature, the section on Education includes nine contemporary newspaper reports, while the other 52 entries cover exclusively the late twentieth and early twenty-first century educational experience. Michael W. Suleiman, *The Arab-American Experience in the United States and Canada: A Classified Annotated Bibliography* (Ann Arbor, MI: Pierian Press, 2006), 161–9.

[11] Frank V. Thompson, *The Schooling of the Immigrant* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1920), 1. See also Patricia Albjerg Graham, *Schooling America: How the Public Schools Meet the Nation's Changing Needs* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 11–19; and Michael R. Olneck, "Americanization and the Education of Immigrants, 1900–1925: An Analysis of Symbolic Action," *American Journal of Education* 97, no. 4 (1989): 398–423.

[12] John F. McClymer, "Americanization Movement," in *Dictionary of American Immigration History*, ed. Francesco Cordasco (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1990), 23–8.

[13] Winthrop Talbot, *Americanization: Principles of Americanism, Essentials of Americanization, Technic of Race-Assimilation*, ed. Julia E. Johnsen, 2nd ed. (New York: H. W. Wilson, 1920). See also Carol Aronovici, "Racial Assimilation," in *Americanization* (St. Paul, MN: Keller Publishing, 1919), 16–23.

[14] Representative examples might include: Howard B. Grose, *Aliens or Americans?* (Dayton, OH: Home Missionary Society of the United Brethren Church, 1906); Barney R. Robbins, *Immigration and Americanization* (New York: n.p., 1924); and Peter Roberts, *The Problem of Americanization* (New York: Macmillan, 1920). Location-specific works from the same period include: Commonwealth of Massachusetts, *Annual Report of the Division of Immigration and Americanization* (Boston: Massachusetts Dept. of Education, 1922); Cleveland Americanization Committee, *Americanization of Cleveland* (Cleveland: Cleveland Americanization Committee, 1918); Philadelphia Chamber of Commerce, *Americanization in Philadelphia: A City-Wide Plan of Co-Ordinated Agencies* (Philadelphia: Philadelphia Chamber of Commerce Americanization Committee, 1923); Albert Shiels, *Americanization: What It Means, How It Operates, How Every City and Town Can Put It Into Practical Application* (Los Angeles: LA Examiner, 1919); and R. D. Harriman,

Suggestions for Americanization Teachers (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1920).

[15] "Education in Americanism: Syrians in the United States," *Literary Digest* 61, no. 5 (1919): 43.

[16] Ester de Jong, "Immigrant Era: Focus on Assimilation," in *Foundations for Multilingualism in Education: From Principles to Practice* (Baltimore: Caslon, 2011), 130–33, presents a useful overview of the movement.

[17] Mel van Elteren, *Americanism and Americanization: A Critical History of Domestic and Global Influence* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2006), 58. See also Booshada, *Arab-American Faces and Voices*, 131–60; and Henry Perkinson, *The Imperfect Panacea: American Faith in Education, 1865–1965* (New York: Random House, 1968).

[18] De Jong, "Immigrant Era," 131–2.

[19] Richard Soash, "Stirring the American Melting Pot: Middle Eastern Immigration, the Progressives and the Legal Construction of Whiteness, 1880–1924" (master's thesis, Florida State University, 2013), 62.

[20] Section 11.a: "The annual quota of any nationality shall be 2 per centum of the number of foreign-born individuals of such nationality resident in continental United States as determined by the United States census of 1890, but the minimum quota of any nationality shall be 100." For the full text of the 1924 Act, which set even more stringent limitations than the Quota Act of 1921, see https://loveman.sdsu.edu/docs/1924ImmigrationAct.pdf. The US State Department's Office of the Historian notes further that immigrants from Asia were "completely excluded." US State Department, "The Immigration Act of 1924 (The Johnson-Reed Act)," https://history.state.gov/milestones/1921-1936/immigration-act.

[21] "Quota Areas, Immigration Act of 1924," Record Group 59, Maps of Foreign Areas, 1941–1944, 4/1940, General Records of the Department of State, US National Archives, Washington, DC, https://www.docsteach.org/documents/document/quota-areas-1924.

[22] "America of the Melting Pot Comes to End: Effects of New Immigration Legislation Described by Senate Sponsor of Bill – Chief Aim, He States, Is to Preserve Racial Type as It Exists Here Today," *New York Times*, 27 April 1924, 3. Claudia Goldin, "The Political Economy of Immigration Restriction in the United States, 1890 to 1921," in *The Regulated Economy: A Historical Approach to Political Economy*, eds. Claudia Goldin and Gary D. Libecap (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 223–57, analyzes the various commercial and industrial lobbies behind America's increasingly strict immigration rules. On the post-1924 legal battles over immigration and quotas, see Jia Lynn Yang, *One Mighty and Irresistible Tide: The Epic Struggle Over American Immigration, 1924–1965* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2020).

[23] Quoted in Melissa R. Klapper, *Small Strangers: The Experiences of Immigrant Children in America, 1880–1925* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2007), 51.

[24] Thompson, *Schooling of the Immigrant*, 1.

[25] International Institute of New England (IINE), "1910–1924: Redefining Americanism," IINE, blogpost, 31 January 2024, https://iine.org/1910-1924-redefining-americanism-2/.

[26] Booshada, *Arab-American Faces and Voices*, 141–6.

[27] Edward G. Hartmann, *The Movement to Americanize the Immigrant* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1948), 38, 41.

[28] Leslie Hayford, *The Foreign Child and the Public School* (Boston: North American Civic League for Immigrants, 1910), 1–4, https://archive.org/details/foreignchildpubl00hayf/page/n3/mode/2up. A NACLI report for the year ending 30 June 1909 describes how the overwhelming number of immigrants, "so unlike the woof of the American race . . . presents special difficulties in assimilation and education." *New York-New Jersey Committee of the North American Civic League for Immigrants, December, 1909–March, 1911* (New York: North American Civic League for Immigrants, 1911), 8, available online via the US Library of Congress, https://tile.loc.gov/storage-services/public/gdc/00280019562/00280019562.pdf.

[29] For analyses of the "melting pot" metaphor over a fifty-year period, see Philip Gleason, "The Melting Pot: Symbol of Fusion or Confusion?," *American Quarterly* 16, no. 1 (1964): 20–46; Charles Hirschman, "America's Melting Pot Reconsidered," *Annual Review of Sociology* 9 (1983): 397–423; and Heike Paul, "Chapter V: E Pluribus Unum?: The Myth of the Melting Pot," in *The Myths That Made America: An Introduction to American Studies* (Bielefeld: Transcript Verlag, 2014), 257–310.

[30] Rena L. Vassar, ed., *Social History of American Education*, 2 vols. (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1965), 2:124. See also Timothy L. Smith, "Immigrant Social Aspirations and American Education, 1880–1930," *American Quarterly* 21, no. 3 (1969): 523–43.

[31] Woodrow Wilson, "Address to the Citizenship Convention (1916)," in Vassar, *Social History*, 2:213–16.

[32] William H. Maxwell, "III. Education of the Immigrant Child," in *Education of the Immigrant: Abstracts of Papers Read at a Public Conference Under the Auspices of the New York-New Jersey Committee of the North American Civic League for Immigrants, Held at New York City, May 16 and 17, 1913* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1913), 18–19.

[33] US Bureau of Education, *Biennial Survey of Education, 1916–18*, 4 vols. (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1921), 1:117.

[34] Between April 1917 and the end of the war, twenty regulations were issued at the behest of President Woodrow Wilson to minimize the threat from (mainly German) aliens residing in the United States: Joseph V. Fuller, ed., *Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, 1918, Supplement 2, The World War* (Washington, DC: United States Government Printing Office, 1933), available online via the US State Department, https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1918Supp02. Ironically,

the authorities in Istanbul saw the diaspora as "a dangerous place, its half million emigrants full of potential for sedition, [and] collusion with the Empire's enemies:" Stacy D. Fahrenthold, *Between the Ottomans and the Entente: The First World War in the Syrian and Lebanese Diaspora, 1908–1925* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019), 1.

[35] Not all these migrants, of course, went to the United States. Boutros Labaki, "Les rôles économique et politique des émigrés libanais durant la première guerre mondiale" [The economic and political roles of Lebanese emigrants during the First World War], *Guerres Mondiales et Conflits Contemporains* 262 (2016): 27–29.

[36] Philip M Kayal and Joseph M. Kayal, *The Syrian-Lebanese in America: A Study in Religion and Assimilation* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1975), 74.

[37] Wayne J. Urban and Jennings L. Wagoner, "Organizing the Modern School System: Educational Reform in the Progressive Era, 1890–1915," in *American Education: A History*, 5th ed. (New York: Routledge, 2014), 175–207.

[38] Theodore G. Zervas, "Finding a Balance in Education: Immigration, Diversity, and Schooling in Urban America, 1880–1900," *Athens Journal of Education* 4, no. 1 (January 2017): 77–84. See also Klapper, *Small Strangers*, 3–17.

[39] Charles Hirschman and Elizabeth Mogford, "Immigration and the American Industrial Revolution from 1880 to 1920," *Soc Sci Res* 38, no. 4 (2009): 897–920, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssresearch.2009.04.001.

[40] Moses Stambler, "The Effect of Compulsory Education and Child Labor Laws on High School Attendance in New York City, 1898–1917," *History of Education Quarterly* 8, no. 2 (1968): 193. Amendment X of the US Constitution reads: "The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people." See also Tracy Steffes, "Governing the Child: The State, the Family, and the Compulsory School in the Early Twentieth Century," in *Boundaries of the State in US History*, eds. James T. Sparrow, William J. Novak, and Stephen W. Sawyer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015), 157–82.

[41] Jeff Lingwall, "Compulsory Schooling, the Family, and the 'Foreign Element,' Evidence from the United States, 1800–1900," Heinz College Second Paper (Carnegie Mellon University, 2010), 5, https://doi.org/10.1184/R1/6471125.v1.

[42] "Chapter VII: Country of Birth of the Foreign-Born Population," *Thirteenth Census of the United States Taken in the Year 1910*, 11 vols. (Washington, DC: Government Printing Press, 1913), 1:781.

[43] "Chapter XIV: Inability to Speak English," *Thirteenth Census of the United States*, 1:1265.

[44] Houghton, "Syrians in the United States III," 787. See also Kayal and Kayal, *Syrian-Lebanese in America*, 94.

[45] Orfalea makes this point by way of comparison with the post-World War II "second wave" of Arab immigrants, who were, he writes, "60 percent

Muslim," as opposed to the "90 percent Christian" early arrivals. "They arrived more by plane than boat and tended to be in much better financial position than were the early turn-of-the-century Arabs. They were better educated than the earlier group." Orfalea, *Arab Americans*, 153.

[46] "Letter of Transmittal (1 November 1913)," in US Bureau of Education, *Education of the Immigrant*, 5–6.

[47] US Bureau of Education, *Biennial Survey of Education, 1916–18*, I:119.

[48] Michael J. Klarman, *From Jim Crow to Civil Rights: The Supreme Court and the Struggle for Racial Equality* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 30–34, 69–71. An example of such a test can be seen in "Take The Near Impossible Literacy Test Louisiana Used to Suppress the Black Vote (1964)," Open Culture, 23 July 2014, https://www.openculture.com/2014/07/literacy-test-louisiana-used-to-suppress-the-black-vote.html. Thanks to my colleague Dr. Joe Leidy for this observation.

[49] Jennifer Leila Holsinger, *Residential Patterns of Arab Americans: Race, Ethnicity and Spatial Assimilation* (El Paso, TX: LFB Scholarly Publishing, 2009), 67–68.

[50] Charlotte Karem Albrecht, "Narrating Arab American History: The Peddling Thesis," *Arab Studies Quarterly* 37, no. 1 (2015): 111.

[51] Charlotte Karem Albrecht, "An Archive of Difference: Syrian Women, the Peddling Economy and US Social Welfare, 1880–1935," *Gender & History* 28, no. 1 (2016): 130–1; Sarah M. A. Gualtieri, *Between Arab and White: Race and Ethnicity in the Early Syrian American Diaspora* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009), 66–70; and Gualtieri, "Strange Fruit? Syrian Immigrants, Extralegal Violence and Racial Formation in the Jim Crow South," *Arab Studies Quarterly* 26, no. 3 (2004): 63–85.

[52] James G. Thomas, "Mississippi *Mahjar*: Lebanese Immigration to the Mississippi Delta," *Southern Cultures* 19, no. 4 (2013): 46.

[53] "Says Syrians Are Citizens: Judge Hutton's Decision Has National Import," *Los Angeles Herald*, 5 November 1909, 16.

[54] Ian F. Haney López, *White by Law: The Legal Construction of Race* (New York: New York University Press, 1996), 67–77. The last case here cited, *Dow v. United States* (226 Fed. 147 (1915)), is generally regarded as the definitive ruling in respect of Arab Americans, whiteness, and eligibility for citizenship, reinforced by the detailed arguments eight years later in the US Supreme Court case of *United States vs. Bhagat Singh Thind* (261 U.S. 204 (1923)) (see note 55, below).

[55] Sarah M. A. Gualtieri, "Becoming 'White': Race, Religion and the Foundations of Syrian/Lebanese Ethnicity in the United States," *Journal of American Ethnic History* 20, no. 4 (2001): 29–58. In *United States vs. Bhagat Singh Thind* (261 U.S. 204 (1923)) before the US Supreme Court, Thind lost, but a key reason for his case being rejected—the exclusion of "all natives of Asia within designated limits, including all of India"—was subsequently cited as suggesting that those who had been accepted as immigrants from

outside those "designated limits," including Syrians, should therefore also be accepted as viable candidates for naturalization. These legal cases have also been comprehensively rehearsed in Soash, "Stirring the American Melting Pot," 49–61.

[56] Jacob A. Riis, *How the Other Half Lives: Studies among the Tenements of New York with Illustrations Chiefly from Photographs Taken by the Author* (New York: C. Scribner's Sons, 1890), 196–209. See also Albrecht, "An Archive of Difference," 128, on the use of this phrase as part of "the racialisation of Arab immigrant women and their families within social welfare," one of many "spaces of Syrian migrant life" analyzed by the author "that do not focus on the law."

[57] Terry B. Hammons, " 'A Wild Ass of a Man': American Images of Arabs to 1948" (PhD diss., University of Oklahoma, 1978), 110, https://shareok.org/handle/11244/4529?show=full.

[58] See, for example, " 'Sanctified' Arab Tramps: Wretched Maronite Beggars Infesting This Country," *New York Times*, 25 May 1890, 17; "The Foreign Element in New York: The Syrian Colony," *Harper's Weekly* 39, no. 2016, 10 August 1895, 746; and "Orient Trespassing on the Occident: Syrian Colony in Pittsburgh is Large and is Steadily Growing," *Pittsburgh Press*, 29 March 1903, 46.

[59] *The Illustrated American*, 14 October 1893, 453–5.

[60] See Julia Hauser, Christine B. Lindner, and Esther Möller, eds., *Entangled Education: Foreign and Local Schools in Ottoman Syria and Mandate Lebanon (19–20th Centuries)* (Beirut: Orient-Institut, 2016); and Fahrenthold, *Between the Ottomans and the Entente*, 14–30.

[61] "To Found a Home for Syrian Children," *New York Times*, 5 May 1893, 8. See also *Syrian Society of the City of New York: First Annual Report* (New York: George R. Valentine, 1893), 3–4, available online via the Moise A. Khayrallah Center for Lebanese Diaspora Studies (hereafter Khayrallah Center), https://lebanesestudies.omeka.chass.ncsu.edu/collections/browse.

[62] "The New Syrian Society Has a School," *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, 10 May 1892, 1.

[63] Baltazzi Effendi, previously the Ottoman Secretary and Chargé d'Affaires in Washington, DC, had been transferred to New York "to keep a close watch on seditious activities" among the Syrian diaspora. Sinan Kuneralp, "Ottoman Diplomatic and Consular Personnel in the United States of America, 1867–1917," in *American Turkish Encounters: Politics and Culture, 1830–1989*, eds. Nur Bilge Criss, Selçuk Esenbel, Tony Greenwood, and Louis Mazzari (Newcastle-upon-Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2011), 106.

[64] "Syrians to Learn English," *Kawkab America* 1, no. 25 (30 September 1892): 1.

[65] A. J. Arbeely, MD, *Al-bākūrat al-gharbiyyat fī taʿlīm al-lughat al-inkilīziyya* [The Western primer for teaching the English language]: *The First Occidental*

Fruit for the Teaching the of the English (and Arabic) Languages (New York: Oriental Publishing House, 1896).

[66] Naff, *Becoming American*, 104.

[67] Linda K. Carter, "A Hard Day's Night: Evening Schools and Child Labor in the United States, 1870–1910" (PhD diss., Vanderbilt University, 2008).

[68] Hartmann, *Movement to Americanize the Immigrant*, 46–47.

[69] NACLI, *Messages to New Comers to the United States: Second Series, Nos. 5, 6, 7, 8* (Boston: NACLI, 1906–1916), available online via Harvard University, https://curiosity.lib.harvard.edu/immigration-to-the-united-states-1789-1930/catalog/39-990063084780203941.

[70] Albert Shields, "V. Evening Schools for Foreigners," in US Bureau of Education, *Education of the Immigrant*, 39–42.

[71] Bureau of Education, *Biennial Survey of Education, 1916–18*, 1:118.

[72] *Syrian Society of the City of New York*, 4.

[73] Donald B. Cole, *Immigrant City: Lawrence, Massachusetts, 1845–1921* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1963), 80.

[74] Cole, *Immigrant City*, 214. The healthy enrollment of Syrians in free evening classes at the Oliver, Packard, and Essex High Schools in the city doubtless contributed to that progress; in December 1914, for example, 111 Syrian men and 78 women were enrolled: *Sixty-Eighth Annual Report of the School Committee of the City of Lawrence, Massachusetts, 1913* (Lawrence, MA: Dick & Trumpold, 1915), 46.

[75] James J. Arraj, interview, 28 May 1986, AKRF-164, Ellis Island Oral History Project Collection (henceforth Ellis Island Oral History), US National Park Service, New York, NY, https://heritage.statueofliberty.org/oral-history-library.

[76] James F. Goode, *A History of the Syrian Community of Grand Rapids, 1890–1945: From the Beqaa to the Grand* (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2013), 115.

[77] Klapper, *Small Strangers*, 84.

[78] "Making Good American Citizens: Evening Schools of Boston," *Boston Sunday Globe*, 5 November 1905, 12.

[79] Chloe Bordewich and Lydia Harrington, "Boston's Little Syria: The Rise and Fall of a Diasporic Neighborhood," Al-Jumhuriya Collective, 19 November 2022, https://aljumhuriya.net/en/2022/11/19/bostons-little-syria/.

[80] "Making Good American Citizens," *Boston Sunday Globe*, 5 November 1905, 12.

[81] Houghton, "Syrians in the United States III," 788.

[82] *Denison House: The College Settlement in Boston: Annual Report for the Year Ending October 1, 1916* (Boston: Denison House, 1916), 11–12.

[83] Lucius Hopkins Miller, *Our Syrian Population: A Study of the Syrian Population of Greater New York* (New York: n.p., 1903), 10, 32–34.

[84] In terms of general studies, not specific to pupils of Middle Eastern origin, see, for example, Robert S. Kelley, "Sectarian Secondary Education in the United States during the Twentieth Century" (master's thesis, Loyola University, 1940); and David T. Marke, "Sectarian Education in America," *Phi Delta Kappan* 31, no. 5 (1950): 234–47, which outlines the constitutional underpinnings, sectarian leadership structures and finances of private church schools. For references to the Arab American diaspora, see Loren Henry Houtman, "Response of Detroit Public Schools to Immigrant Groups" (EdD diss., Michigan State University, 1965), 154–74; Ferris Anthony Kleem, "The Cleveland Maronite Lebanese and Education" (PhD diss., Wayne State University, 1982); and Zareena A. Grewal and R. David Coolidge, "Islamic Education in the United States: Debates, Practices, and Institutions," in *The Cambridge Companion to American Islam*, eds. Juliane Hammer and Omid Safi (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 246–65.

[85] Philip Kayal and Joseph Kayal, eds., *The Syrian-Lebanese in America: A Study in Religion and Assimilation* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1975), 94.

[86] Grewal and Coolidge, "Islamic Education in the United States," 248.

[87] Yvonne Yazbeck Haddad, "Maintaining the Faith of the Fathers: Dilemmas of Religious Identity in the Christian and Muslim Arab-American Communities," in *The Development of Arab-American Identity*, ed. Ernest N. McCarus (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1994), 78n28.

[88] Kleem, "Cleveland Maronite Lebanese and Education," 11.

[89] Stewart G. McHenry, "The Syrians of Upstate New York (A Social Geography)" (PhD diss., Syracuse University, 1973), 153. For further examples from the 1920s of church-based "educational social organizations which served to hold the community together," see also Joseph Schechla, "Dabkeh in the Delta," in *Taking Root: Arab-American Community Studies, Volume II*, ed. Eric J. Hooglund (Washington, DC: American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee, 1985), 39.

[90] The dispute arose when the bishop refused to allow "Syrians" burial in the white section of the cemetery. Kaye Brinley Spalding, "Immigrants in Richmond, Virginia: Lebanese, Armenians and Greeks, 1900–1925" (master's thesis, University of Richmond, 1983), 38.

[91] Peter J. Awn, "Being Arab American in New York," in *A Community of Many Worlds: Arab Americans in New York City*, eds. Kathleen Benson and Philip M. Kayal (New York: Museum of the City of New York and Syracuse University Press, 2002), 84–86.

[92] Sheikh Yūsuf ʿAwād, "ʿIlat asūrī – sabab tākhiruh – ʿilājuh" [The problem of the Syrian – the reason for his backwardness – his treatment], *al-Hoda*, 5 October 1904, 2. Translation by Osman Nusairi.

[93] Mikhāīl Asʿad Rustum, *Dīwān al-gharīb fī al-gharb* [The stranger in the West] (Philadelphia: Eastern Press, 1895).

[94] [Mikhāīl] Asʿad Rustum, "Aasbāb tākharnā" [The causes of our backwardness], *al-Hoda*, 12 November 1904, 2. Translation by Osman Nusairi.

[95] Faraḥ Anṭūn (1874–1922) was a socialist and a key member of the cultural enlightenment movement known as the Nahda. Born in the Lebanese port city of Tripoli, he moved in 1897 to Egypt, where he founded the *al-Jāmʿa* (Alliance) newspaper.

[96] Faraḥ Anṭūn, "Mushahadāt fī amrīkā" [Observations in America], *al-Jāmʿa*, 15 September 1906, 208–12, 15 October 1906, 257–69, and 1 November 1906, 313–17, cited in Michael W. Suleiman, "Impressions of New York City by Early Arab Immigrants," in Benson and Kayal, *A Community of Many Worlds*, 42–43.

[97] Jamīl Maʿlūf, "Madāris sūria fī amīrikā!?" [Syrian schools in America!?], *al-Hoda*, 13 July 1906, 1–2, available online at http://www.dalnetarchive.org/handle/11061/2919. Translation by Osman Nusairi. Maʿlūf also paraphrases President Roosevelt, who had written in respect of "True Americanism" that "the man who comes here from abroad and remains a foreigner" was a "noxious element." When it comes to "the new-comers to our shores," he wrote, "we must Americanize them in every way, in speech, in political ideas and in principles, and in their way of looking at the relations between Church and State." Theodore Roosevelt, *American Ideals and Other Essays, Social and Political*, 2 vols. (Philadelphia: Gebbie, 1903), 1:16–37, available online at https://archive.org/details/rooseveltideals01theorich/page/36/mode/2up.

[98] Of that number, 355 (i.e., more than a quarter) were in New York. "Abstract of the Report on the Children of Immigrants in Schools," in *Abstracts of Reports of the Immigration Commission*, US Senate Immigration Commission, 2 vols. (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1911), 2:11–15.

[99] Of that number, 62 percent were in Philadelphia (49) and New York (43): *Abstracts of Reports*, 2:64–65.

[100] Stacy D. Fahrenthold, "Arab Labor Migration in the Americas, 1880–1930," *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of American History* (23 May 2019), 8–12, https://oxfordre.com/americanhistory/display/10.1093/acrefore/9780199329175.001.0001/acrefore-9780199329175-e-598.

[101] "Oral Memoirs of George H. Jabour, Audio," interview by Rosemarie M. Esber, 9 April 2013, Arab Americans of the Southern United States Oral History Project, Baylor University Institute for Oral History Interviews, Waco, Texas, https://digitalcollections-baylor.quartexcollections.com/Documents/Detail/oral-memoirs-of-george-h.-jabour-audio/978027.

[102] "Oral Memoirs of George Francis Korkmas, Audio," interview by Rosemarie Esber, 2 March 2013, Arab Americans of the Southern United States Oral History Project, Baylor University Institute for Oral History

Interviews, Waco, Texas, https://digitalcollections-baylor.quartexcollections.com/documents/detail/979149.

[103] Vincent Portillo, "Assembly Line Americans: Labor, Language, and Literacy at Ford Motors" (PhD diss., Syracuse University, 2022), 13–40, 93. See also Jonathan Schwartz, "Henry Ford's Melting Pot," in *Immigrants and Migrants: The Detroit Ethnic Experience*, ed. David W. Hartman (Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 1974), 252–60. Interesting oral histories were recorded in 1999 for the Arab Community Center for Economic and Social Services (ACCESS). Arab American National Museum (henceforth AANM), "Arab Americans and the Automobile – Voices from the Factory Collection," https://aanm.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p16806coll15. In the textile sector, some mills set up evening classes to teach technical skills as well as English. Melvin T. Copeland, *The Cotton Manufacturing Industry in the United States* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1912), 137–8.

[104] Ahmed Emin Yalman, "Amerika ya Turk muhacerati" [Turkish immigration to America], *İstanbul Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi Mecmuası* 1 (1912): 3, quoted in Bilal Sert, "Early Turkish Immigrants' Adaptation Experiences," in *Turkish Immigrants in the Mainstream of American Life: Theories of International Migration*, eds. Sebahattin Ziyanak and Bilal Sert (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books and Fortress Academic, 2018), 40.

[105] Ansara, "Immigration and Settlement of the Syrians," 116.

[106] Naff, *Becoming American*, 187–9, 149. See also Enaya Othman, "Building a Community Among Early Arab Immigrants in Milwaukee, 1890s–1960s," *Wisconsin Magazine of History* 96, no. 4 (2013): 39.

[107] Cole, *Immigrant City*, 79.

[108] Manuscript sources describing this period can be found among the Joseph Nusser Family Collection at the AANM. See Fergus Nicoll, "Preacher Turned Peddler: The Migration Experience of Yūsuf Naṣr/Joseph Nusser," Moving Stories blogpost, University of Oxford, 16 January 2024, https://movingstories.history.ox.ac.uk/article/preacher-turned-peddler-the-migration-experience-of-yusuf-nar/joseph-nusser.

[109] Paul Groth, *Living Downtown: The History of Residential Hotels in the United States* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 149–50. Ilyās Naṣr, also known as Elias Nusser, was naturalized as an American citizen in April 1906.

[110] Tony George, interview, 27 April 1995, EI-600, Ellis Island Oral History, US National Park Service, New York, NY.

[111] Richard Herbert, interview, 19 October 1993, EI-404, Ellis Island Oral History, US National Park Service, New York, NY.

[112] Russell Freedman, *Kids at Work: Lewis Hine and the Crusade Against Child Labor* (New York: Clarion Books, 1994). See also Walter Rosenblum, Naomi Rosenblum, and Alan Trachtenberg, *America & Lewis Hine: Photographs 1904–1940* (New York: Aperture Foundation, 1977), available online at https://archive.org/details/americalewishine0000hine.

[113] Klapper, *Small Strangers*, 35.

[114] The state of Illinois had enacted a law for the compulsory education of children between the ages of eight and fourteen in 1883. Edith Abbott and Sophonisba P. Breckinridge, "The Growth of the Compulsory System, 1833–99," in *Truancy and Non-Attendance in the Chicago Schools* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1917), 53–68. See note 40, above, on the states' prerogative to pass such legislation.

[115] Jane Addams, "Newsboy Conditions in Chicago," Chicago Federation of Settlements and Neighborhood Houses, 1903, 17–18, https://digital.janeaddams.ramapo.edu/items/show/301. The author was the co-founder of Hull House, opened at 800 S. Halsted in Chicago's Near West Side in 1889 to help recently arrived immigrants.

[116] Miller, *Our Syrian Population*, 10, 32–34.

[117] Stambler, "Effect of Compulsory Education," 190.

[118] Miller, *Our Syrian Population*, 10.

[119] Beverlee Turner Mehdi, *The Arabs in America, 1492–1977: A Chronology & Fact Book* (Dobbs Ferry, NY: Oceana Publications, 1978), 16. See also Mary Ann Haick DiNapoli, "The Syrian-Lebanese Community of South Ferry from its Origin to 1977," in Benson and Kayal, *A Community of Many Worlds*, 16–18.

[120] Ansara, "Immigration and Settlement of the Syrians," 135.

[121] Rev. Wade A. Mansur, "Problems of Syrian Youth in America I," *Syrian World* 2, no. 6 (December 1927): 8–11; and Mansur, "Problems of Syrian Youth in America II," *Syrian World* 2, no. 7 (January 1928): 9–13. See also Raouf J. Halaby, "Dr. Shadid and the Debate over Identity," in Hooglund, *Crossing the Waters* (1987), 64.

[122] Rev. Wade A. Mansur, "Syrians' Loyalty to America," *Syrian World* 3, no. 10 (April 1929): 3–9.

[123] Habib Katibah, "What is Americanism?," *Syrian World* 1, no. 3 (September 1926): 16–20. On the role of Habib Katibah in the production of the *Syrian World*, see Gregory J. Shibley, "The Business Saga of New York's *Syrian World*, 1926–1935," *New York History* 96, no. 2 (2015): 210–12.

[124] Khalil Gibran, "To Young Americans of Syrian Origin," *Syrian World* 1, no. 1 (July 1926): 4–5.

[125] Joseph W. Ferris, "Syrian Naturalization Question in the United States," *Syrian World* 2, no. 8 (February 1928): 3–11; and Ferris, "Syrian Naturalization Question in the United States: Part II," *Syrian World* 2, no. 9 (March 1928): 18–23. These two articles, with added footnotes by Philip Hitti, are a comprehensive step-by-step guide to this complex legal process. While they have been cited by several leading scholars on Arab-American assimilation, the author's identity and legal qualification (if any) have not been discoverable.

[126] *The Work of the Foreign Language Information Service: A Summary and Survey* (New York: Foreign Language Information Service, n.d.), available online at https://iiif.lib.harvard.edu/manifests/view/drs:4430983$1i. In a footnote

introducing a "splendid organization" that was aimed at reaching "persons of high moral influence throughout the United States who are vitally interested in bringing about the homogeneity of the American nation on a basis of genuine understanding," this motto was tweaked by the editor of the *Syrian World* to read "To Interpret America to the Immigrant and the Immigrant to America."

[127] J. Ray Johnson, "Syrians in America," *Syrian World* 2, no. 12 (June 1928): 19–23.

[128] Klapper, *Small Strangers*, 93.

[129] Spalding, "Immigrants in Richmond, Virginia," 40.

[130] N. A. Mokarzel, "Arabic as an Asset," *Syrian World* 2, no. 12 (June 1928): 17–18. For manuscript material on the "Mozarkel Family," see the collections of the Khayrallah Center: https://lebanesestudies.omeka.chass.ncsu.edu/collections/browse.

[131] "Teaching Arabic in America," *Syrian World* 3, no. 2 (August 1928): 44–45; "In Favor of Teaching Arabic," *Syrian World* 3, no. 2 (August 1928): 46; "Arabic: A Priceless Gem," *Syrian World* 3, no. 2 (August 1928): 46–47.

[132] "Readers' Forum," *Syrian World* 3, no. 3 (September 1928): 55. See also Mehdi, *Arabs in America*, 84–85.

[133] Joseph W. Ferris, "Syrians' Future in America," *Syrian World* 3, no. 11 (May 1929): 3–7.

[134] Ameen Rihani, *The Book of Khalid* (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1911).

[135] For plentiful manuscript material on Rihani, see the collections of the Khayrallah Center: https://lebanesestudies.omeka.chass.ncsu.edu/collections/browse. The AANM has an important collection relating to the Pen League (*al-Rabita al-Qalamiyya*): https://aanm.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p16806coll19.

[136] Ameen Rihani, "Americanism and Native Culture," *Syrian World* 3, no. 10 (April 1929): 23–24.

[137] Cole, *Immigrant City*, 160–1.

[138] US Senate Immigration Commission, *Abstracts of Reports*, 2:76–78.

[139] Ansara, "Immigration and Settlement of the Syrians," 119–20.

[140] Sheila Corey, "The Women from the Levant: A Study in Cultural Adaptation" (master's thesis, California State University, 1996), 60–67, describes the six named women as "Landowner," "Single Mother," "Divorced Businesswomen," "Sandwich Shop Proprietor," "Mill Worker," and "Child Peddler."

[141] Philip K. Hitti, *The Syrians in America* (New York: George H. Doran, 1924), 90–91.

[142] Philip K. Hitti, *Educational Guide for Syrian Students in the United States* (New York: Syrian-American Press, 1921), 34.

[143] Hooglund, *Taking Root*, 2:12–13.

[144] Naff, *Becoming American*, 11.