Syria, Syrians and Syrian Americans

This list details select research sources in the Migration and Social Services Collections related to Syria, Syrians and Syrians Americans. The list also details materials related to Lebanese Americans whose families emigrated circa 1880-1920, as they were frequently identified as Syrian during that time.

All research sources presented here are available for public research, by appointment, in the Elmer L. Andersen Library Reading Room. To make an appointment, or for more information, please visit the Migration and Social Services Collections website. To contact individual units, refer to the link listed after each collection description.

Select Archival Sources in the Migration and Social Services Collections

K. Brook Anderson papers, 1919-1980 (bulk 1949-1959). Papers contain correspondence relating to Anderson’s work with prisoners of war in Egypt, Syria and Palestine following World War I. Most of the correspondence is with friends and colleagues, particularly with Archie Harte, YMCA secretary in Jerusalem and under whom Anderson worked. Y_USA.27.

James M. Ansara papers, 1920-1982. Papers consist of correspondence, writings, notes, newspaper clippings, photographs, certificates, magazines, newsletters and books. Subjects include the Syrian and Lebanese American Federation of the Eastern States, the National Association of Federations of Syrian and Lebanese American Clubs, Syrian history, organized tours throughout the Middle East and Arab American relations. Of particular interest are boxes 1-3. IHRC208.


Fred K. Hoehler papers, 1917-1965. Papers document assistance to displaced persons, including displaced local Arab populations in the Middle East and North Africa. There is also correspondence discussing the political situation in the Middle East, circa 1945-1960. sw0117.
International Institute records, various. The IHRCA holds the organizational records for various International Institutes from across the United States, including for several locations which have historically been home to Syrian and Syrian American enclaves, such as Niagara Falls, Buffalo, Boston and Toledo. Contact staff for more information. IHRCA.

International Social Service (ISS), United States of America Branch, records, 1924-1995. The ISS records include studies and reports on refugees and displaced persons in the post-World War II era. In particular, box 15 includes a study from 1944, which documents the living conditions and daily activities at a displaced persons camp for Europeans in Aleppo, Syria. sw0109.

Jewish Community Relations Council records, 1920-2010. The collection consists of the administrative records of this non-profit organization which acts as the public affairs voice of the Jewish community in Minnesota and the Dakotas. There are six folders of material relating to Syria and Syrian Jewry, circa 1974 and 1991-2000. umja0013.

Frank Maria papers, 1940-2000. The Frank Maria papers include extensive files of correspondence, reports, meeting minutes and notebooks. The son of Syrian immigrants, Maria was a leader in Arab American community life. Of particular note is series 3: “Organizations,” subseries 3: “Syrian and Lebanese American Federation of the Eastern States.” IHRC1469.

Mary Mokarzel papers, 1921-1972. Mokarzel succeeded her father as publisher of the Arab-American newspaper Al-Hoda. Her papers contain personal correspondence, business records, photographs, advertisements and miscellany. This collection is primarily in Arabic. IHRC1614.

Alixa Naff papers, 1962. This small collection contains summarized transcriptions of oral history interviews collected from Christian Syrian-Lebanese first generation immigrants in the United States. Topics include folklore and individuals’ life stories. IHRC1644.

Helen Hatab Samhan papers, 1916-1926. The collection consists of correspondence and financial records for the Mount Lebanon Relief Committee (New York). The committee appears to have been initiated at the start of World War I, perhaps in conjunction with the Lebanon League of Progress. IHRC2356.

Syrian Ladies’ Aid Society records, 1908-1958. The records of this Brooklyn, NY based charitable organization consist of by-laws, correspondence, newspaper clippings, photographs and miscellany. IHRC2567.

United States Committee for Refugees and Immigrants records, 1970-1995. This large collection includes meeting minutes, correspondence, project materials and resource files on refugee groups around the world. Materials relating to Syria are in boxes 67, 78 and 129. There are also numerous folders relating to Lebanon and Palestine. IHRC2640.

Young Women’s Christian Association of Greater Lansing (Mich.), Nationality Communities Department, records, 1916-1941. Records include annual reports (1926-1949), club announcements, newsletters (1926-1931) and photographs. Programs of the Syrian Mothers Club, Syrian Sisterhood and Young Phoenician Society, as well as membership lists, are also included. Microfilm. IHRC1043.
Select Periodicals in the Immigration History Research Center Archives


To view these periodicals, please contact the [Immigration History Research Center Archives](mailto:IHRCA@umn.edu • 612-625-4800).
