



The Lebanese in North Carolina Project: Sourcing the Community for a History Only They Could Tell

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Beginning in 2010, *The Lebanese in North Carolina Project* is dedicated to **researching, preserving and publicizing** the Lebanese-Arab experience from 1880 to today by recognizing the contributions of Lebanese-Arabs in NC. Using the community as the archive, we collect materials to tell a multi-faceted story of transmigration, family, work, religion, memory and belonging. The Project has 4 cultural goals.

Visit us!

nclebanese.org

nclebanese.wordpress.com

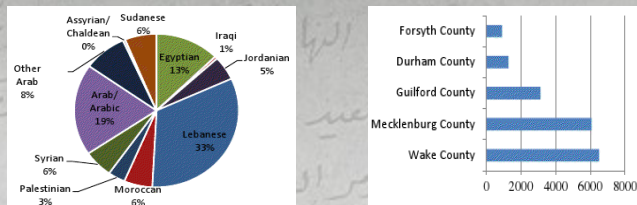
#SAA12

Community

After exhausting state-wide memory institutions for materials, we learned that the Lebanese-Arabs in the state were custodians of the richest sources of their own history.

Who are they?

The number of North Carolinians who claim an Arab ancestry more than doubled since the Census first measured ethnic origins in 1980 and is among the fastest growing Arab populations in the country. It is estimated that the **statewide population is close to 91,788**. In North Carolina, according to the 2010 Census, roughly **33% of Arab-Americans in the state have Lebanese roots**.



Courtesy of the Arab-American Institute Foundation

What materials did they provide?

The Project made contact with over **50 families**. We:

- Conducted over **75 interviews** (some video, others audio-only) in North Carolina, New York and Lebanon, in homes and offices
- Scanned and cropped over **2,500 photographs and documents**
- Transferred **20 VHS tapes and 46 Super-8 home movies**
- Photographed dozens of **artifacts and heirlooms**
- Collected over **50 early 20th century Arab songs** (also provided by UC-Santa Barbara's Special Collections)

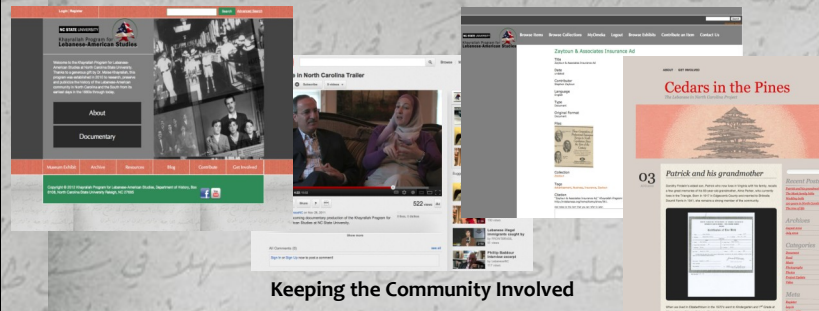
Digital Library (2011-Ongoing)

To ensure that the materials would be used for education and research, we developed a library with an interactive and searchable archive at its core.

The Scope of the Library

We aim to convert, preserve and store all materials collected from the community making the digital library **the most comprehensive source on the NC Lebanese-Arab community**. This website uses:

- **Omeka stand-alone** platform for all materials
- **YouTube** for documentary clips, filmed interview clips, and transferred home movies
- **Wordpress blog** for daily updates and to showcase newly donated materials to collection
- **Facebook and Twitter** for promotion and outreach



Keeping the Community Involved

- Users **create profiles and upload materials** that broadens and strengthens our community, encourage **digital preservation** of materials, and further our goal of **educating the public**.
- We **recruited and trained volunteers** of all ages, and **undergraduate and graduate students at NC State University** to conduct and transcribe interview, prepare materials and populate the library, and to participate in 3 additional endeavors of the Project.

Documentary (2010-2012)

Cedars in the Pines: The Lebanese in North Carolina premiered in Spring to **over 700 attendants**. It combined interviews of first, second and third generation Lebanese-Americans along with records found in the US Census, historical societies, churches, research libraries and family photo albums.

Museum Exhibit (2012-2014)

In collaboration with the **North Carolina Museum of History** and its sister museums and **NC State University's History and Computer Science departments**, the Project will unveil physical, traveling and virtual exhibits. It will include: **Adaptive labeling** to engage all visitors; a **video game** that focuses on immigration; **interactive maps** taken from Census data; and **public programming events**.

Textbook and Educational Materials (2012-2015)

Understanding the importance of reaching a new generation through education, the Project is collaborating with **educators** across the state to develop a **textbook, curriculum, and teacher training** that can be used in Wake County schools and will focus on Middle Easterners' contribution to the American South especially NC.

