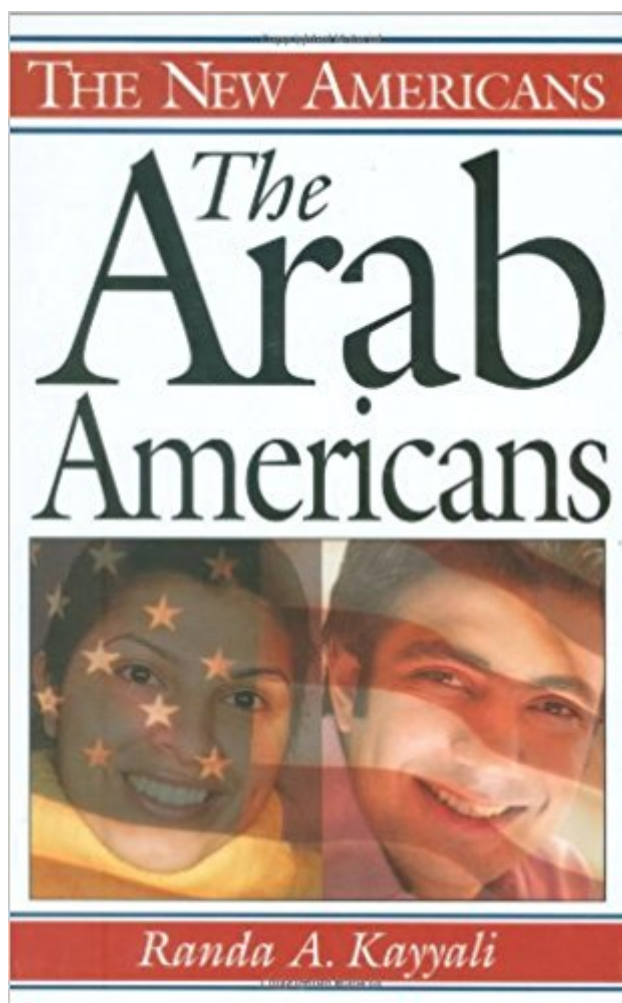


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The Arab Americans (The New Americans)



Synopsis

Americans of Arab heritage have made major contributions to U.S. society, and this is a timely and unique overview of their immigration patterns, settlement, adaptation, and assimilation for a general audience. The first wave of Arab immigrants, mostly Christian men from Lebanon, Palestine, and Syria, arrived in the United States between 1880 and 1925. This book discusses their history as it looks at the successive waves of immigrants, including the post-1965 immigrants, who have brought more diversity to the Arab American community. The latest immigrants have included more Muslims, many are from Egypt, Iraq, and Jordan. The continuing interest in the Middle East, Islam, and the Muslim way of life make this a must-have source for those seeking to understand current events and our multicultural society.

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The book begins by giving a broad political and social history of the Arab world since the advent of Islam in 632 CE. Kayyali also takes care to be inclusive of the different groups who can be classified as Arab, and the discussion of who these people are, with their different religions and beliefs, is an enlightening base to understand their experiences as Arab Americans. Early immigrants typically became peddlers or worked in the new factories and mills. As they gave up thoughts of returning to their home countries, they fought to be classified as white to gain citizenship, and the impact of the Census on their struggle is discussed in detail. Their assimilation and adaptations are discussed, and readers will learn about family issues, women's issues, food, media, and religious practices in the Arab American communities. Within the larger Arab American community, the main issues of pan-Arab identification, Christian and Muslim identities, and generational differences are covered, along with their social networks and celebrations. A final chapter focuses on the impact of Arab Americans on U.S. society, from the arts to politics, with insight into intergroup relations and the impact of 9/11. A sampling of noted Arab Americans, such as Ralph Nader, a glossary, statistical tables, and photos are included as well.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"Interest in Arab Americans has grown exponentially since 9/11, resulting in new works trying to bring awareness and understanding of the Arab American community. Given the internal diversity and extensive historical immigration of persons from the Arab world, accomplishing this is no easy task. Kayyali tries to do so, building on the corpus of previous research and writing on the topic. . . . [T]he book is better than others on the market, especially in terms of trying to draw attention to the diversity of the Arab American community and contradicting the notion of Arab American as a monolithic entity. Recommended. Lower-division undergraduate collections and public libraries." - Choice

"These titles offer high school and college students and in-depth look at Salvadoran Americans and Arab Americans, from their history in El Salvador and the Middle East and North Africa, respectively, to their adjustment issues and communities in the United States today. (Reviewed in conjunctions with *The Salvadoran Americans*)" - MultiCultural Review

Randa A. Kayyali is a PhD candidate at George Mason University and has written on Arab American issues.

The international affairs of today demand improved connections between the Arab world and the countries framing the Western world. In her book, *The Arab Americans*, Randa A. Kayyali delves into the history, geography, culture, and complexities of the Arab society, focusing on Arab Americans in more contemporary times. *The Arab Americans* serves as a collection of objective

information, complete with eventful photographs and brief biographies of influential Arab Americans. A reader will turn the last page of Ms. Kayyali's work with a realization of the composition of Arab Americans and their contributions as new Americans.

The Arab Americans is a well researched, well-written survey that introduces the reader to the distinctive communities within this broad category of people referred to as Arab-Americans. Ms. Kayyali provides the reader with a remarkably objective and unbiased discussion of the issues that have and do confront this diverse group of U.S. settlers and citizens. She also does a fine job of providing the reader with the numerous contributions of the Arab-American community to the United States.

For Stars and Stripes: American-Arabs in the U.S. Military
Silent Victims: Arab and Muslim Americans Post 9/11
Silent Victims: The Plight of Arab & Muslim Americans in Post 9/11 America

Yet, another excellent installment from The New American series of Greenwood Press. In this book, Kayyali explains the unique migration patterns, nuances of culture, and lingering questions of identity and place for the Arab American community. Particularly helpful is the finesse and plain language in which she unravels the complexities of the "Who is an Arab American?" and "Who is a Muslim American?" debate, as the two communities are often incorrectly termed synonymous with one another. Equally important, is her discussion of Arab American feminism and other topics related to women in Arab American households. The book is solidly researched, yet written in concise, easy to understand "everyday" language, making it user-friendly for the first time reader on Arab American issues. In "The New American" tradition, it is written objectively and free of personal opinion or political leanings.

Who's an Arab American? The fact that most Americans have no understanding of Arab American identity makes Kayyali's book timely and appreciated. Her text is an important reference for all interested in Arab affairs, especially Arab American affairs. The volume clearly explains the importance of immigration issues and their impact upon identity as it carefully denotes religious, national, and geographic differences. The book also offers helpful information as to how Middle Eastern Arab culture continues to influence Arab American ideals and ideology and the impact of Arab American identity upon Middle Eastern affairs. Readers will glean from this volume an increased understanding and a sad realization of how little has been known about Arab American

identity until Kayyali provided this gem.

Whereas some previous reviewers have criticized Kayyali for delving into historical migration of Lebanese and Syrian Christians to the United States, it seems that what Kayyali has done should be applauded by any serious scholar, reader, or thinker who has any interest in understanding the historical and current situation of Arabs in the United States. If one has an interest in understanding (and not rabid polemics), this book provides a wealth of research and context invaluable in trying to get a handle on what in the world it means when we refer to "Arab-Americans."

Arab-Americans have made major contributions to U.S. society and yet many of their immigrant patterns and achievements receive relatively scant attention compared with some other ethnic groups. Kayyali, a Ph.D. candidate, opens with a political and social history of the Arab world and moves quickly to narrow the focus to Arab American history and culture, surveying assimilation and immigration experiences, adaptations, and Arab American communities across the country. Part of the 'New Americans' series, its focus is important.

As an Arab American I really enjoyed this book. Randa Kayyali certainly did her homework as the book was well written and thorough. I would definitely recommend it to anyone looking to learn more about arab americans and their contribution to American society. Great Job Randa!

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