

What to Read Next?

AMERICAN ISLAM:

THE STRUGGLE FOR THE SOUL OF A RELIGION

By Paul M. Barrett

(New York: Farrar, Strauss & Giroux, 2007)

In seven profiles, the author shares stories that represent the diversity of the nearly six million Muslims living in the United States, including immigrant and native-born Muslims as well as converts. One chapter focuses on the Dearborn-based publisher of the *The Arab American News* and his experience in the Muslim community of metro Detroit.

BUILDING ISLAM IN DETROIT:

FOUNDATIONS / FORMS / FUTURES

<http://biid.lsa.umich.edu>

Building Islam in Detroit is a research project that documents the growth of mosques and Muslim communities in greater Detroit over the last century; the stories and documents collected through that research form the basis of this online exhibit. The exhibit panels explore the architectural, aesthetic, and ethnic diversity present in the region's mosques, as well as the customs, rituals, and traditions that hold true across communities. In addition, the website features descriptions, historical background, and photos and videos from a number of Detroit area mosques.

THE MAKING OF ARAB AMERICA:

FROM SYRIAN NATIONALISM TO U.S. CITIZENSHIP

By Hani Bawardi

(Austin, TX: Univ. of Texas Press, 2014)

Bawardi offers an alternative account of the development of Arab American identity in the 20th century, focusing on the political advocacy organizations, including the New Syria Party and the Arab National League, which embraced broad nationalism and engaged diverse Arab immigrant cohorts in the Detroit region and beyond.

2015

ARAB AMERICAN BOOK AWARD

The Arab American Book Award is a literary program created to honor books written by and about Arab Americans. The program, managed by the Russell J. Ebeid Library & Resource Center at the Arab American National Museum, generates greater awareness of Arab American scholarship and writing through an annual award competition and educational outreach. Learn more about past and present winners at arabamericanmuseum.org/bookaward.

The goal of the Reading & Discussion Guide project is to increase the audience for Arab American literature and stimulate discussion about the winning books' themes and topics.

*This project has been made possible by
Bustan Al-Funun Giving Circle at*



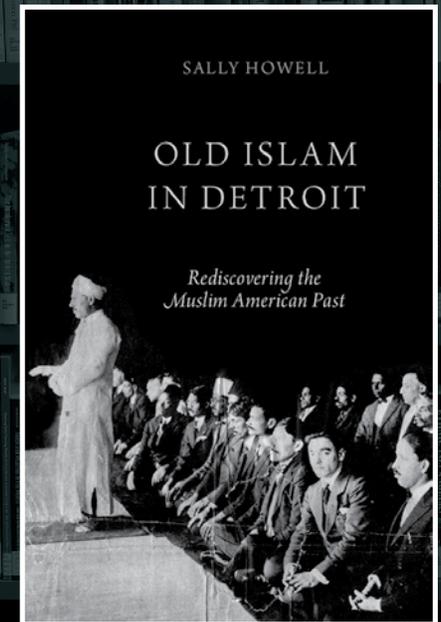
13624 Michigan Ave., Dearborn, MI 48126 • 313.842.4748

www.arabamericanmuseum.org

2015

ARAB AMERICAN BOOK AWARD

*Evelyn Shakir
Non-Fiction Award Winner*



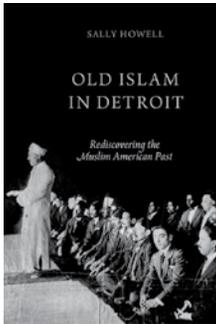
READING & DISCUSSION GUIDE



2015

ARAB AMERICAN BOOK AWARD

*Evelyn Shakir
Non-Fiction Award Winner*



Old Islam in Detroit: Rediscovering the Muslim American Past

By Sally Howell
Oxford University Press

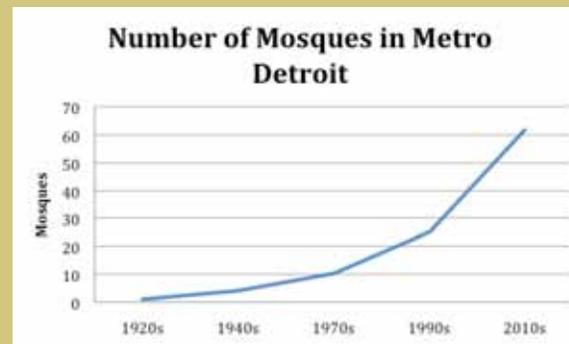
SUMMARY

Old Islam in Detroit explores the diverse Muslim communities, including Arabs, South Asians, and African Americans, that have shaped the practice of Islam in Detroit for nearly one hundred years. Beginning with the building of the first mosque in the United States in Highland Park in 1921, Detroit Muslims have experienced frequent encounters between old and new models of practice. Acculturation, political involvement, secularism, and religious education are continually debated across the communities, particularly between generations.

Howell presents empirical evidence, in the form of case studies, which contradicts common assumptions about the early history of Islam in Detroit and offers a new interpretation of the possibilities and limits of Muslim incorporation in American life. The book shows how Islam has become “American” in the past and how the anxieties many new Muslim Americans and non-Muslims feel about the place of Islam in American society today are not inevitable, but are part of a dynamic process of political and religious change that is still unfolding.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Did this book lead you to reconsider your understanding of Muslims or Muslim Americans? Did you hold any stereotypes before reading?
2. Howell describes the experiences of early 20th century immigrants arriving in the United States, where the “rituals, histories, and social forms that constituted their Muslim identities” were largely unknown. How did this affect the religious practices of the new immigrants? How did this change over time?
3. What factors contributed to the need for “rediscovery” of the history of Islam in Detroit?
4. Do you see comparisons between the history of Muslim Americans and the history of other religious or ethnic groups within the U.S.?
5. How have both conflict and collaboration, particularly between Shi’a and Sunni, contributed to shaping Detroit’s Arab Muslim community?



American Moslem Women's Society members gathered in front of Dearborn's American Moslem Society building in 1952.

About The Author

SALLY HOWELL is Associate Professor of History within the Center for Arab American Studies at the University of Michigan-Dearborn. She is co-author of *Citizenship and Crisis: Arab Detroit after 9/11* and co-editor of *Arab Detroit 9/11: Life in the Terror Decade*. With Andrew Shryock, she is the principal investigator and curator of the *Building Islam in Detroit* project; the fieldwork-based project, which has involved visits to more than 50 mosques, is dedicated to understanding how Detroit’s Muslim population of roughly 150,000 has evolved over time. Howell received her master’s and PhD from the University of Michigan’s Program in American Culture.