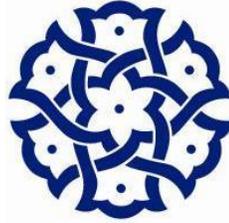


Arab American National Museum Archives
13624 Michigan Ave., Dearborn, MI 48126



Title: Emily Wills Collection
Creator: Wills, Emily
Inclusive dates: 2007-2011
Bulk dates: 2008-2009
Extent: 2 linear feet; 2 document boxes, 1 bankers box
Accession number: 2013.09.01

Abstract:

These materials were collected between 2007-2011 as fieldwork research for Emily Wills' dissertation. It contains community newspapers, flyers, and other ephemera. Digital files include photographs, PowerPoint presentations, essays, and research notes.

Language: Material is in English and Arabic
Acquisition: Donation from Emily Wills, June 2013
Accruals: Additions to the collection not expected.
Access: Collection is open to researchers
Photographs: Box 1; Folder 9
A-V Material: None
Digital Materials: DVD of files (including photographs), listed in finding aid
Copyright: Copyright has been transferred to the Arab American National Museum.
Processed: June 2013 by Elizabeth Skene
Arrangement: Original order, typically by location or organization
Preferred citation: [item], Folder [#], Box [#], Emily Wills Collection, Arab American National Museum

Biography

Emily Wills, (a non-Arab American), holds a BA from Yale in Gender and Women's Studies and Political Science, and an MA and PhD from The New School for Social Research in Politics. As of 2013, she is an assistant professor at the University of Ottawa, where she teaches American and comparative politics.

Donor's Statement

My dissertation focused on politics in everyday social spaces in the Arab community of New York City, especially in the neighborhood of Bay Ridge, Brooklyn. I was interested in studying this question because Arab-Americans aren't very well connected to mainstream politics, including electoral politics or lobbying efforts, but they are highly interested in politics, and various state agencies are highly interested in them. So, I wanted to know where politics was happening, and, particularly, how people were talking about it and using conversations to come up with new ideas about politics. For my fieldwork, I did fieldwork as a member and participant at three organizations: the Arab-American Association of New York, Adalah-NY: The New York Campaign for the Boycott of Israel, and Al-Awda NY: The Palestine Right to Return Committee. I picked these organizations because they were prominent in the community, they were led by Arabs and a majority of their participants were Arab, and because they gave me permission to do fieldwork there.

The materials in this collection include newspapers, which I used to begin to study what political issues mattered to Arabs in New York, and how they organized their communities; flyers and handouts from different organizations, which I used to trace what groups' priorities were, how they explained themselves to others, and what their actions were; and a wide variety of ephemera, which are interested for the way they show the symbolic territory of the neighborhood and communities. I also include photos that were a part of my data collection, including photos of demonstrations showing signs and slogans. I combined these with handwritten and typed fieldnotes to produce a good recording of what people talked about and how they understood their actions during demonstrations.

I'm continuing to work both on Arab communities in the US, and on transnational connections between Arab diasporas and their countries of origin. In particular, I'm looking to see how the ways of talking about politics that arise in diaspora communities translate into political engagement back in the Middle East. My next project is going to be about tracing those connections into people's lives and political engagement.

Subjects

Cultural assimilation
Ethnic neighborhoods
Bay Ridge (New York, N.Y.)
Brooklyn (New York, N.Y.)
Muslim holidays

Keywords

Salam Lutheran Arabic Church
Arab American Family Support Center
Network of Arab-American Professionals
Alwan for the Arts
Diwan

The Coalition for Muslim School Holidays
Adalah-NY: The New York Campaign for the Boycott of Israel
Al-Awda NY: The Palestine Right to Return Coalition
Aramica
Arab-American News
Middle East Studies Association

Contents

Box 1

Folder 1: Muslim School Holidays

(Wills' note: Documents from the The Coalition for Muslim School Holidays, which advocates for days off for Eid al-Adha and Eid al-Fitr in the NYC public school system. The digital files include a blog post on a protest held by them.)

Folder 2: Palestine

(Wills' note: Documents collected during fieldwork pertaining to Palestinian activism. My fieldwork concentrated on the organizations Adalah-NY: The New York Campaign for the Boycott of Israel and Al-Awda NY: The Palestine Right to Return Coalition.)

Folder 3: Research Docs

(Wills' note: These may not be useful, but they are charts and printouts of files I used for empirical analysis of the Arab community in NYC.)

Folder 4: Arts Organizations

(Wills' note: Flyers and handouts collected that have to do with arts organizations, including Alwan for the Arts in lower Manhattan and the Diwan conference held at the Graduate Center.)

Folder 5: Arab American Association of New York

(Wills' note: I did the majority of my fieldwork at the AAA. These are papers collected from them. They include materials that were placed in their front lobby to be picked up, flyers and posters for events they sponsored, and internal working documents.)

Folder 6: Other Arab Organizations

(Wills' note: Any papers from any other organization I collected. Most of them are described in the spreadsheet I included on the DVD. Major organizations include Salam Lutheran Arabic Church and Arab American Family Support Center. Brooklyn-centric, with the exception of NAAP, the Network of Arab-American Professionals.)

Folder 7: Bay Ridge

(Wills' note: Papers, business cards, flyers, etc picked up on the street in Bay Ridge.)

Folder 8: Ephemera

(Wills' note: Business Cards, pins.)

Folder 9: Photographs

Box 2

Newspapers

(Wills' note: All of these newspapers were collected in Bay Ridge, Brooklyn, during my fieldwork (some of them before serious fieldwork had begun). They were available, for free, at local businesses. Generally, they were only available at businesses that had some tie to the Arab community--such as Arab-owned

grocery stores, or the halal Chinese restaurant. Businesses that catered to non-Arab Bay Ridge residents, such as Mike's Donuts, didn't tend to have Arabic papers in them. Many stores along Bay Ridge's Fifth Avenue (the main street of the Arab business district) also sold newspapers from the Arab world, such as *Al-Hayat*.)

Digital files (Descriptions provided by Wills')

- *Dissertation* - The third chapter is a 'geography' of Arab New York, using a mixture of statistical analysis and description based on my fieldwork to describe community institutions, Arab-owned businesses, religious institutions, and other elements of the Arab community of New York city.
- *fieldwork sites.xls* - a spreadsheet of community institutions I identified in my early research phases, with notes on different elements of their work and self-presentation, as well as early notes on my interviews with them.
- *Visuality in Arab Brooklyn.doc* and *Images - Visuality.pdf* - a term paper analyzing the visual semiotics of identity and membership in Arab Brooklyn, along with the photos I read in the paper. Lots of images of storefront windows.
- *Communities and Outsiders.doc* and *communities and outsiders - article database.xls* - a term paper written on the Arab-American press in English, including a database of article titles with content notes and interviews with the editors of *Aramica* and *Arab-American News*.
- *Community and Representation folder* - files associated with a paper I gave in 2008 at the Middle East Studies Association meeting. In that paper, I analyzed images of beauty salons and clothing stores to talk about how they presented femininity in public in Arab Bay Ridge. *PIP* was a departmental working-paper presentation where I presented an early draft.
- *Transnational flows.rtf* and *transnational flows ppt.ppt* - A job talk (lecture) I gave in early 2013 that analyzed transnational discursive flows between Arab activists in New York and political action in the Middle East.
- *mesa 2011 copy.ppt* - a powerpoint of a presentation I gave at MESA in 2011 on Arab-American engagement with the 'Arab Spring.' Very drafty, but has some good data.
- *ajrabieh* - Coalition for Muslim School Holidays Rally, 9/21/2009 - a blog post about a protest I attended, with some notes on it. This can be filed with the materials on the Coalition that I'm sending.