

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



Title: Joseph Nusser Family Collection  
Creator: Mike Monterastelli  
Inclusive Dates: 1870 - 1920  
Bulk Dates: 1880 - 1910  
Extent: 0.5 linear feet  
Accession number: 2017.01.00

**Abstract:**

This collection features the papers of Joseph (Yousif) Nusser, a Lebanese immigrant to the United States. In the U.S., Nusser worked as a peddler throughout the New York and New England area. The collection also includes some papers from his family, particularly his son Joseph Jr. The documents included paint the picture of Joseph and his family's life story from Lebanon to New York City and provide insight into his personal and professional life.

Language: Bulk Arabic (possibly Ottoman Turkish in Arabic script) and English, some Ottoman Turkish, French, and Spanish

Acquisition: Donation from Mike Monterastelli, 2017

Accruals: Additions to the collection are not expected

Access: Collection is open to researchers

Photographs: Digitized photographs are available on CD

A-V Material: None.

Copyright: Copyright is held by the Arab American National Museum

Processed: March 2017 by Nathan Santoscoy

Arrangement: Folder are in original order, documents chronological within folders.

Separated Mats.: Two artifacts removed from archival collection and stored with museum artifacts.

Additional Mats.: Spreadsheet timeline of events created by donor. Available on request.

Preferred citation: [item], Folder [#], Box [#], Joseph Nusser Family Collection, Arab American National Museum.

**History**

Joseph Nusser was born in Mount Lebanon, then a part of Greater Syria, in 1854 and immigrated to New York City in May 1900 with two of his sons Joseph (Yousif) Jr. and Elias. His wife, Tebti, stayed behind in Syria. Before moving to the United States, Joseph was the only Protestant man in his community on Mount Lebanon and, according to documents included in this collection, faced persecution as a result. Joseph began life in the U.S. as a peddler. He returned to Mount Lebanon in 1903, just after the death of Tebti and married a second time, to Rose (Ward). Joseph and Rose returned to New York in 1906 with several of his children from his first marriage, and proceeded to build a family of their own in the U.S. Joseph and his family lived in the vibrant Arabic speaking community of Little Syria in New York City.

**Scope and Content**

This collection consists of a wide range of items, the bulk of which are correspondence. This correspondence fits into three general themes: Joseph's legal correspondence in Mount Lebanon, letters of recommendation for Joseph to sell his wares in the United States, and Joseph's personal correspondence, mostly with friends and relatives in Lebanon. Also included are passports for Joseph and his family members, Joseph's marriage certificate to his second wife Rose (Ward), the New York birth certificate of his daughter Marion Nusser, receipts, Joseph's U.S. peddler's licenses, three books in Arabic, a handwritten autobiographical account of Joseph's life, several of Joseph's business cards, and the story of Joseph as written by his granddaughter.

**Subjects**

Immigration  
Peddling  
City and town life--New York (State)--New York  
Correspondence

**Genre terms**

Correspondence  
Legal Documents  
Books  
Receipts  
Licenses  
Business Cards

## Contents

### **Box 1**

Folder 1: Joseph Nusser Marriage Certificate

Folder 2: Passports

Folder 3: Marion Nusser Birth Certificate

Folder 4: Document in Arabic

Folder 5: Legal Correspondence with the Appeals Court of Mount Lebanon

Folder 6: Letters of Reference

Folder 7: Joseph Nusser Correspondence

Folder 8: Receipts

Folder 9: Peddler's Licenses

Folder 10: Arabic Books

Folder 11: Joseph Nusser Jr. Address Book

Folder 12: Various Documents and Correspondence I

Folder 13: Various Documents and Correspondence II

Folder 14: Joseph Nusser Life Story

Folder 15: Story of Joseph Nusser as written by his granddaughter

Folder 16: Business Cards

Folder 17: CD with Digitized photographs (2017.01.02)

- 02a: Joseph (Yusif) Nusser, Tabti Nusser, Elias Nusser. Syria, about 1886
- 02b: Joseph Nusser Jr. Driver's License and photo
- 02c: Unknown portrait
- 02d: Joseph Nusser Jr., circa 1905, age around 16. Attended Woody Crest School in Tarrytown, NY.
- 02e: Charles (Ferris) Nusser, brother of Joseph
- 02f: Ward/Wadi Rose Nusser, second wife of Joseph, in Detroit
- 02g: Ward (Rose) Nusser and daughter Marion Nusser, New York, 1912 or 1913
- 02h: Fadwa Nusser, daughter of Joseph and Tabti, died in NY in 1913 at age 16
- 02i: Tewfik Nusser, son of Joseph and Tabti, in front of store (NY or Detroit), 1912 or 1913

### **Separated Materials**

Leather Pouch – 2017.01.03

Fabric compact – 2017.01.04