Food and Foodways, 20:211–232, 2012
Copyright © Taylor & Francis Group, LLC
ISSN: 0740-9710 print / 1542-3484 online
DOI: 10.1080/07409710.2012.715964

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

Mint Grows Through the Cracks in the Foundation: Food Practices of the Assimilated Lebanese Diaspora in New England (USA)

AMY E. ROWE
University of Cambridge, Faculty of Asian & Middle Eastern Studies, Cambridge, United Kingdom

With an ethnographic focus on descendants of Lebanese migrants in the U.S.A., this paper examines what ethnic foods means for people who consider themselves to be "assimilated" into the American white, middle-class mainstream, and who are eager to remain accepted as unhyphenated Americans, as neither Lebanese-American nor Arab-American. The paper traces their food practices and analyzes how they use food within kinship networks to honour ancestors, communicate, and generate bonds between people of Lebanese ancestry. It illustrates how preparation and consumption of "Lebanese" cuisine has become embedded in social practices of these residents of small towns across rural New England. The findings presented in the paper provide an analysis of an identity practice with both a white, assimilated American aspect and a Lebanese diasporic one.

INTRODUCTION: (LEBANESE) MINT IN THE (AMERICAN) LANDSCAPE

The following excerpt from my fieldnotes is from a conversation with Jean and Mike, a third-generation[1] Lebanese couple, about the house they bought in Winslow, Maine in 2002. Jean narrated the discovery of the mint.

> The house had been empty for a while, and it looked a little tired but we knew we could fix it up quite easily. It just needed a little TLC [tender loving care]. When we looked at the exterior of the property with our

Address correspondence to Amy E. Rowe, University of Cambridge, Faculty of Asian & Middle Eastern Studies, Sidgwick Avenue, Cambridge, CB3 9DA, United Kingdom. E-mail: aer47@cam.ac.uk

> surveyor, that was when I first noticed the mint growing everywhere. It was running through the flowerbeds and even through the cracks in the foundation of the house, through the concrete! We knew immediately this must have been a Lebanese house at some point. Who else would have large plots of mint around here? We laughed at the hearty nature of the herb—it is so resilient! It will keep on growing despite having no Lebanese owners tending it. This gave us a good feeling about the place—we felt it gave us a connection. We bought the house the next day… (Fieldnotes, 30 Nov. 2005).

Her husband Mike then described that after buying the house they asked their Lebanese friends and family questions about the property. They learned that a first-generation Lebanese brother and sister from the Sarkis family had lived there many years before. But Jean and Mike did not really need this confirmation—the mint had already told them this must be the case. It just helped them define the Lebanese history of the house.

The mint points to historic food practices and suggests that despite the Lebanese brother and sister moving away long ago, there is a Lebanese resilience embedded in the place. As second-generation Doris confidently told me on more than one occasion: “You can always tell a Lebanese house by the size of the plot of mint growing in the garden.” Other local houses might feature a bit of mint as a sample among many other herbs, but only the Lebanese houses have mint as a dominant garden feature.

What is striking about these conversations is that the people of Lebanese descent in northern New England all consistently say they are *not* “Lebanese” or “Lebanese-American;” instead they assert they have assimilated and are just “American.” They note they have Lebanese ancestors and Lebanese heritage, but do not generally identify as Lebanese—*except* when discussing, preparing, and enjoying food. When sitting with Diane and Tony, Diane, who is not of Lebanese descent, explained: “Tony’s family … they are Americanized today, all the [Lebanese] people in Vermont have lost their old ways … nobody talks Lebanese[2] anymore … ” and then they both said simultaneously, with a laugh: “But we talk Lebanese food!” The goal of this paper is to unpack what people of Lebanese descent mean by this and similar assertions regarding food and identity. More broadly, this work contributes to understanding the diverse and creative uses of food in diasporic contexts.

This study is based on ethnographic fieldwork conducted in 2005–2006 in northern New England (Maine, New Hampshire, and Vermont) in the U.S.A. with people of Lebanese ancestry. Their immigrant parents, grandparents, and great-grandparents left the Ottoman province of Greater Syria in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Most of the Arabic-speaking migrants to the U.S., and indeed to other areas of the world, at this time were Christian (c.f. Hooglund 1987, Hourani & Shehadi 1992). Everyone in this study is of Lebanese Christian ancestry or is married to someone of

Lebanese ancestry.[3] The vast majority come from a Maronite Catholic background. Those involved in the study spoke English and little to no Arabic, thus all interactions were in English. Approximately three quarters of the people have anglicized surnames; this combined with the use of English first names mean names do not tend to suggest an Arab background. Most informants were middle or upper-middle class. I interacted with the Lebanese through participant observation whenever possible, for example at large Lebanese dinners,[4] yet because such events were infrequent I came to rely on scheduled interactions with people. This typically took the form of semi-structured interviews which provided the opportunity to meet at peoples' homes or in a coffee shop to talk.[5]

The people I did fieldwork with were descendants of the first Arabic-speaking migrants to the U.S., and they continue to reside in relatively rural locations and small towns where there have been no subsequent waves of Arab migration. Their experiences are comparable to those of other ethnics in the region such as Italians, Irish, French-Canadians, and Jews. Many in first and second-generation felt pressured by the WASP establishment to "assimilate," meaning to shed all ethnic and cultural signifiers and embrace American values, lifestyles, and behaviors. Some Lebanese embraced the idea for the opportunities it would provide socially and economically; others were less enthusiastic. As many scholars argue, "white ethnics" who assimilated attained belonging and full membership in the American nation (Jacobson 2006, di Leonardo 1998: 92–93). Christian Lebanese-Americans fit into this matrix alongside European immigrants in the American ethno-racial context (Gualtieri 2001, 2009).

From the 1970s onward there has been a significant shift away from those of Arab ancestry in the U.S. being considered part of the white ethnic assimilated crowd; instead Arabs and Arab-Americans are considered a racial other, a group outside the American mainstream and one whose capacity to assimilate is suspect if not entirely impossible (Joseph 1999, Suleiman 1999, Michael 2003, Alsultany 2006, Naber & Jamal 2008). This is in part due to U.S.-Middle East geo-political relations and to a shift in newer waves of predominantly Muslim immigrants from the Middle East (highlighting the ease with which the U.S. assimilation model is more open to Christians than those of other faiths).

More recently the legacy of 9/11 and terrorism have had a serious impact on the lives of Americans of Arab ancestry. Though classified as white in the census and other official classifications, Arab-Americans today experience racial and religious (Islam) discrimination on a regular basis (Samhan 1999, Majaj 2000, Bakalian & Bozorgmehr 2009, Tehranian 2009). While Christian Arab-Americans experience less discrimination than Muslim Arab-Americans, it has undoubtedly impacted their daily lives.[6] As a politically organized ethnic community, Arab-Americans have sought a place at the multicultural table; in particular, they work hard to condemn the negative

stereotypes and discrimination endured by Arabs in America. In the contemporary period some descendants of the first wave of Arab Christian migrants have embraced a Lebanese-American and/or Arab-American ethnic identity.

Yet as my ethnographic fieldwork revealed, for some other descendants of the first wave of Arab Christian migrants it has been important to articulate an "assimilated" identity, meaning one that is neither hyphenated nor celebrates multiculturalism (the popular means of expression in the U.S. today, c.f. Jacobson 2006, Roediger 2005). My informants use the language of "assimilation"; they invoke the term to describe themselves as white Christian Americans, and as real New England locals.[7] In effect, they use the term the way many social theorists have: to indicate difference has been erased and no structural measures of their ethnicity remain. Rather than examining how descendants of migrants have integrated, I am curious about what work the "assimilation" concept does when my informants invoke it (Gershon 2007:791).

For the purposes of this paper, I follow Louise Lamphere's suggestion to give careful attention to "the cultural construction of difference that is somewhere between the maintenance of cultural traditions by first-generation transnational immigrants and the 'ethnic options' (a term used by Mary Waters 1999) or 'symbolic ethnicity' (the phrased coined by Herbert Gans 1979) characteristic of third- and fourth-generation European immigrants to the U.S. before 1924" (Lamphere 2007: 1134). She urges scholars to consider both the novel means by which elements from different cultures have been woven together as well as the variability within families, networks, and communities than is typically recognized in the literature.

By examining the foodways of New Englanders of Lebanese descent one gains insight into the subtle methods of maintaining and creating ethnocultural distinction within a network. I suggest this is significant for three reasons. One, it provides a nuanced understanding of how descendants of migrants retain, and creatively reconfigure, a Lebanese identity in conjunction with a "white" American identity. Two, it provides insight into how ethnic identity is maintained outside of an ethnic enclave, a traditional locus for scholarly studies of ethnicity. This contributes to the scholarship examining alternative scales and spaces for immigrant reception, incorporation, and maintenance of transnational networks (c.f. Glick-Schiller et al. 2006, Glick-Schiller & Caglar 2009). Finally, this paper contributes to the growing body of scholarship on Arab-Americans. Most of the recent ethnographic work on this group examines the experience of recent immigrants, those who live in large urban settings, and who are Muslim. By studying those who are descendants of early twentieth century Arabic-speaking Christians one deepens our understanding the Arab-American population and its diverse identity practices.

FOOD PROVISIONING & DISTRIBUTION FOR THE FAMILY HOME

Consuming Lebanese style food in the family house is a central point of discussion for people of Lebanese ancestry in Northern New England. This is especially so with regards to preparing and ingesting the same types of foods as Lebanese ancestors. A structured tie is made between Lebanese in the past and their descendants in the present. The house serves as a backdrop to the activity which structures the relationship: the techniques and consumption of food are what link relatives, and more broadly people of Lebanese ancestry, and make them the same type of people.

Women were at the time of migration, and remain, most closely associated with preparing proper Lebanese food. First-generation women typically made Lebanese food at home, though men were often involved in procuring appropriate ingredients.[8] In subsequent generations women have continued to play a primary role, although there is a great deal more flexibility regarding who does the cooking at home. Today men are also taught cooking techniques by their older female relatives. My informants cite leaving behind traditional gender roles regarding food preparation as a sign that they are no longer Lebanese but are "assimilated." Yet creating and ingesting Lebanese food is a central activity for them, and it is noteworthy that my informants exclusively associate women with preparing Lebanese foods in the family home as a traditional Lebanese activity. It is regarded as vital that someone in the family takes on the responsibility for producing Lebanese food, including people who marry into the family who do not have a Lebanese background.

In order to prepare Lebanese food, people must first have the right ingredients in the house. Given that the first-generation Lebanese settling in the region were few in number and quite spread out, there were no specialty shops or restaurants exclusively selling Lebanese or Middle Eastern products. Some first-generation Lebanese who opened dry goods stores[9] or restaurants around the region would stock a shelf with specially ordered Lebanese (or Mediterranean) goods from New York, Boston, or Montreal, or feature a few Lebanese dishes on a restaurant menu. Yet in order to be economically viable these establishments had to primarily serve "American" goods in order to appeal to a wide clientele to stay in business.[10] Some of these small corner grocery stores are still in operation and continue to have a shelf of Lebanese foods.[11]

There is an ebb and flow to the availability of certain items. While fresh 'Syrian' bread[12] was made by women weekly in every household fifty years ago, it was difficult at that time to buy fresh aromatic *kamoon* (cumin) or *burghul* (cracked wheat). Today, it is much more difficult to find good quality, thin Syrian bread because few people are able to make it at home due to time constraints or insufficient ovens,[13] or both. Middle Eastern style

pita bread is available at every supermarket; however, my informants regard it with disdain and do not buy it. Yet *kamoon* or *burghul* are easy to find in local health food stores.

Locating good quality Lebanese foods to bring to the family table in small town New England has always been a challenge. Procurement is therefore a skill that has been passed down and sharing how to locate rare goods is a frequent topic of conversation. The most oft-cited source for rare and good quality items is George's Bakery in Methuen, Massachusetts. Everyone I met had tasted food from George's. Everyone talked about George's. The following excerpt is from an interview with two second-generation sisters; one of them explained the following:

> There is this Lebanese shop with all kinds of great things from Lebanon and foods galore. It used to be in Lawrence [MA]—hey there are a lot of Lebanese people there!—but now it is someplace nearby . . . Methuen I think. It is well marked off the highway. We haven't been in a while, we go a couple of times a year and really stock up! We freeze a lot of things. If you know which day they are making bread, and drive there and back in the same day, and freeze the bread right when you get home it will taste just great any time you use it. But that is the trick, you absolutely must freeze it on the day it is freshly made . . . Oh, the proprietors of this store are great. Last time we were there they said to us 'We're going to Lebanon soon, what can we bring you this time?' You know, this is just what Lebanese people are like, so generous, going out of their way to bring us something special, that we can't get ourselves. You know, we just enjoy being Lebanese together. There is a real pride and enjoyment about being Lebanese together, and you see it there!

Variations on this theme abound. People buy spices, yoghurt, breads, fresh grape leaves, and canned goods from Lebanon. Everyone encouraged me to go there, to take a look and have a taste. It is a considerable drive to Methuen. For most of the Lebanese families it is between a two to four hour one-way journey. For some families in northern Vermont a trip to the Adonis Market (Marché Adonis) in Montréal is the equivalent to a trip to George's.[14] Adonis has a wide array of international foods, and increased its Lebanese food section after new Lebanese immigrants arrived during and after the Lebanese Civil War (1975-1990).

While everyone *knows* about George's Bakery in Methuen, only a few people actually travel to the shop itself. One or two family members are elected to travel to the shop a few times a year to buy all the spices in bulk, specialist tools (e.g. a *munara,* which is a tool for coring *kousa*, a type of small zucchini), and other goods for the family. Next these people return home to divide up the items and deliver them to each household. Four siblings from one family somewhat jokingly call their sister Sarah the "keeper of the spices" because she holds this collection/distribution

responsibility. Though they teased about her title, it is clear she holds an important position and they respect the task she performs for them. Though she has a demanding job and her own children to care for, she devotes a few weekends a year to this process of collection and distribution to all her siblings, nieces, and nephews.

"Keeper of the spices" types are specialists who are granted important status within their wider kin network and who facilitate food sharing. Such specialists are also distributors of food knowledge in that they share family recipes and are the ones who explain to the next generation or to people with no Lebanese ancestry who marry into the family where and how to locate and deliver food. While more often than not these tasks fall to women, many retired men will accompany wives, sisters, or female cousins on these journeys to collect food; occasionally men themselves are in charge of such provisioning and distribution, though more rarely. Personally selecting foods in order to get the best quality items is considered ideal; another option is mail-ordering products. This, too, is the domain of the specialists. One of the most commonly ordered items is bread, with emphasis on good taste and particular thinness of the product. A few families in Barre, Vermont, said that the bread at George's is not to their liking, so they mail order Syrian bread from Ghossain's Bakery in Ohio while collecting all other provisions from George's.

In circumstances where personal deliveries from a relative are not an option, food is shipped around New England, and indeed North America, to ensure families have proper foods and are eating the same foods. One of the most remarkable examples of this is Josephine's bread. Josephine is a second-generation woman in her seventies from Caribou, Maine. Everyone in northern Maine extols the virtues of her bread. She is the only woman who continues to make Syrian bread on a wood-burning stove in her house as first-generation women did. Josephine bakes her bread for sale to a limited clientele, making it an especially rare commodity. She only sells bread to her family and friends of Lebanese ancestry. Yet those in her inner sales circle typically buy in bulk in order to pass it on a second time to their Lebanese relations. Josephine takes the orders by phone and mails it to those who cannot drive to collect it. To retain freshness she freezes it straight after it comes out of the oven, then the next morning ships it Fed Ex (same day delivery) to anywhere in the country (she frequently ships to her cousins' children in California) so that the bread will still be somewhat frozen upon arrival. In this way, it can either be slipped into their freezer for saving or they can continue to let it thaw for immediate use.

Josephine's clients report that they feel she charges far too little for her bread; they think the checks they send her only cover the postage and a portion of the cost of her ingredients. When they try to give her more money she refuses. They surmise that she does not do this for a profit; instead, she keeps this bread beloved by so many in circulation in order to

keep the connections alive. Her clients perceive it as a rare treasure that she continues to prepare Syrian bread in the old fashioned way.

Josephine's case is the most elaborate in terms of the number of people (relatives and non-relatives) who consume her food. Many smaller circles of sharing food by shipment occur within families. In a case from Dover, New Hampshire, Bobbi described to me how her sister, who moved to Ohio when she got married, picks vast quantities of mint from her garden every year, dries it, and then mails it to her. Bobbi's job is to then take this large quantity of mint, divide it up, and distribute it among her own adult children and their families. In this way, everyone can then taste the mint from the same plant, the same plot, and thereby connect with this relative who lives far away. Chuckling and smoking a cigarette outside St. George's Church, Bobbi said that sometimes she worries the postal service will think it is some sort of contraband—the dried up little mint leaves look suspicious. "Who the heck ships mint around like that? Well, we Lebanese do!" she said, cackling with laughter.[15]

Third-generation Lebanese say that they do not typically have Lebanese food every day. In their households there are a variety of food influences. This is especially due to intermarriage[16] and to both parents working outside the home, which means that simple and swiftly prepared foods are the norm. Everyone is quite quick to point out that Lebanese food preparation often requires many steps, and is always about stuffing something—e.g. *kousa* (zucchini) stuffed with rice and meat, or stuffed cabbage or grape leaves. Many complain that preparation of these dishes is labor-intensive; they were often (in the old country) created out of the need for frugality and preservation. They also represent something that housewives and daughters had more time to do because they were not usually working outside the home. For these reasons many traditional Lebanese foods are not seen as conducive to my informants' twenty-first century households nor to contemporary women's roles.

These are common arguments as to why Lebanese foods are prepared less frequently; however, people insist that when it comes to special family gatherings—a family reunion, a summer holiday at a beach cottage—or religious holidays (Easter and Christmas primarily) a great deal of attention and time is devoted to preparing and sharing Lebanese food. Take, for example, Easter cookies. Marlene's comments exemplify how food sharing is heightened during such festive occasions:

> Much of our tradition has been diluted, but some pieces remain important such as cooking. I still make Easter cookies, you know the ones? With *mahleb*? [ground black cherry seed] I do this every year with my children, we make loads of them. My sister, myself, and one cousin all do; today we are the ones in charge of initiating the family exchange of Easter cookies, we get everyone motivated . . . It isn't so much about Easter or

> the cookies themselves, the really important part is sharing them with one another. Each person makes them slightly differently, you see different families vary the ingredients, for example my aunt's family used a lot of nuts, so my cousin does too. But we like them all, the differences are subtle . . . the main idea is to circulate them. When I make a batch, I need to bring part of the batch to the homes of my siblings, and then to my mom and dad. You always have to share a portion of these cookies. Even if you have tons at home, and do not need any more cookies, you still go to great lengths to do these exchanges and have samples from a great variety of family members. This year I didn't see my parents at Easter, so I put part of my batch in the freezer and the next time I saw them, I brought them over. Even though it was a few months later, it didn't matter, you just have to share them.

These shipments and this sharing signify that families are bound together through food. It is not simply that they are eating within a general genre, i.e. Middle Eastern cookery, but that they are in fact ingesting *the same* food. This is thought to keep people close, especially when families are split apart by geographical distance.

Janet Carsten's and Monica Janowski's work both suggest that consumption of the same substance, produced in the same home on the same hearth and consumed together there, can create relatedness amongst the participants (Carsten 1995: 234, Janowski 2007a and 2007b). In the cases outlined thus far, the "keeper of the spices" specialists, including those who deliver in person and those who ship food around, enable the sharing of food which reinforces relatedness in this sense. This works most notably to reinforce genealogical kinship, yet is also important in cases of intermarriage. My informants also describe food sharing as broadly connecting all people who are of Lebanese ancestry. Foods and knowledge of how to procure foods are shared with anyone who is of Lebanese ancestry, not only those who are genealogical kin, and often with those who marry into such families. Thus, non-kin can be said to be made into kin.

Sometimes the tools of food production, which cease to be used for their original purpose, are set on display in the house. Wooden boards used to make Syrian bread (similar in size and shape to a pizza peel) were commonly observed hanging on the wall in either the kitchen or living room of a home, displayed the way a family photograph or painting might be. In this case the board has made a transition from object of food production to object of family history. The objects become heirlooms and the important practice is the transmission of these between family members.

While having coffee with Joe, a second-generation Lebanese in his seventies, he pointed out the *jiddurn* grinding stone in the corner of his dining room.[17] I had not noticed it at first because it was being used as a plant stand. Joe stood up and removed his wife's house plant to reveal the worn edges of the *jiddurn*. He demonstrated how his parents would prepare the

meat each Sunday on this stone, his father starting with the lamb meat in cubes, his mother taking over after it was softer so she could pulverize it more and mix it with the onions and *burghul*. Joe has never used this to prepare food himself, but keeps it prominently displayed as a sign of his Lebanese heritage and as an honor to his parents (he inherited it upon his father's death).

Joe has four sons, and by 2005 three of them were married and all of them had purchased their first homes. These trappings of new adult lives stimulated a family discussion about the need for each of their new homes to also have a *jiddurn*. In the end it was decided that Joe and his wife would keep the original and the four sons had four replicas made of their grandparents' *jiddurn*. Joe noted his sons had ordered the best quality marble and teak wood be used for the new objects. The high quality craftsmanship was cited as a way of paying homage to their ancestors. In particular, paying respect to the ancestors is partially achieved through demonstration of the family's wealth (by paying for high quality replicas), thus indicating how well the family has done in the U.S. due to the sacrifices made by the immigrant ancestors. The intention is not for these items to be used, but rather to have something that looks exactly like what their grandparents used and what their father possesses in his home. Setting the *jiddurn* on display in their homes is something which strengthens the four sons' ties to one another, to their father, and to past Lebanese ancestors.

Whenever possible, extended families gather together in houses for a meal, to eat the same food prepared on the same "hearth". Sunday afternoons after church services are the most common time for such get-togethers (this remains true even for those families who no longer attend church). Exceptionally large gatherings with upwards of forty people in a house on an average Sunday with large quantities of food for all is cited as a "Lebanese" way of doing things, which is opposed to the "American" way, which involves sharing within much smaller family groups (cf. Shryock 2000: 585-6). The type of food, style of service (not a sit-down meal, but food eaten in every room, passed around in shifts), and the nature of the gathering called up the use of the term "Lebanese" for what people were doing.

Another case of food practices conjuring an imagined American/ Lebanese division is in regards to how people speak about Thanksgiving. Many said that they have "two Thanksgivings," one with Lebanese dishes and one with American ones. As one woman explained: "We do both! We serve an entire Lebanese feast right next to the traditional American fixings. I line them all up on the table, Lebanese on one side, American on the other." She described how her family members would select one "side" to select food from first; after they were finished, they would transition and take food to eat from the other side. This differs from examples where different types of food are mixed in alongside the more traditional Thanksgiving foods. It also differs from W. Lockwood & Y. Lockwood's (2000) discussion of Arab

families in Detroit where the symbols of American Thanksgiving (pies, turkey) are used but there is an Arab ethnic meaning to the feast itself. In an analysis of Thanksgiving as a ritual of American nationality Janet Siskind (1992) describes how all people who consider themselves American, or desire to be considered American, celebrate a ritual family feast centered around a stuffed turkey. Preparing and ingesting two parallel meals suggests partaking in two spheres of life with different yet compatible meanings; it also suggests the ability to move between the two with equal familiarity and skill. Through the American meal my informants participate in a ritual about being American; through the Lebanese one they enact a ritual which reinforces their relatedness by ingesting Lebanese foods prepared according to Lebanese methods. They create, in effect, two parallel and distinct identities at the same time and within the same meal.

FOOD-ORIENTED CELEBRATIONS IN CHURCH "HOUSES"

There are two Maronite Catholic parishes in Northern New England founded in the first half of the twentieth century by Lebanese immigrants: St. Joseph's in Waterville, Maine and St. George's in Dover, New Hampshire. In the social halls of the two Maronite Churches people of Lebanese ancestry (including many who no longer attend religious services or rituals in the main sanctuary) gather for informal communal meals and annual celebratory feasts which feature Lebanese food. Those who live too far to be parish members and who usually attend a Latin rite Catholic Church[18] will travel to St. Joseph's or St. George's for special festivities, or to other Maronite churches in Southern New England where they may have connections via family or friends.

Responsibility for cooking for church events, for example at a Christmas bazaar or a church fund-raiser, is one of the key ways to support the church community. This in turn is often construed as a means of honoring one's Lebanese ancestors. Cooking in these contexts is typically done entirely by women, with men helping with setting up the tables, serving, and cleaning up after the events.

The consumption of food in the church hall itself enforces relatedness in a broad sense, going beyond genealogical kinship. Eating the same food, in Carsten's and Janowski's sense, in this case serves to reinforce the bond between certain types of people—those of Lebanese descent in small town New England. It also facilitates communication. One woman at St. George's declined to be interviewed and instead bought me a large meal from the church hall after Mass (on sale from a Lebanese dinner held the previous day) saying: "Now you can experience our food, you can know us through this food." This may seem like a kind gesture, a woman wishing me well with my project but not wanting to get involved. Yet what was striking about her comment was that the food itself was seen as capable of transmitting knowledge.

The sentiment that eating together is a means of enacting Lebaneseness and that these churches were akin to family houses was conveyed to me repeatedly. An example of this was recently posted on St. Joseph's Church website. A group of volunteers were referred to as a team of "Beit Maroon," or House of Maron,[19] members. They had come together on this occasion to prepare a community meal in honor of the women of the Rosary Sodality (a women's group in the Church). Rosary Sodality members typically do all the cooking and preparation for community gatherings in the church hall. An excerpt from the website provides further detail:

> [The] dinner was offered free to the whole parish in honor of being a family of St. Maron. The majority of the time, parishes use a dinner as a fund-raiser, and rightfully so. They are an important part of assisting the financial needs of a parish. In a real family setting, a family doesn't charge each other to attend, and we wanted to make sure that we all know that sometimes the social life of the church is not always about raising funds but having a "family good time" with each other and to say thanks to those in the family that are usually busy in the kitchen. There may have been torrential rain outside, but inside St. Joseph Maronite Church was laughter and family warmth. Long live the spirit of St. Maron.[20]

In this manner, churches operate like large houses in that they are conceived of as intimate domestic spaces—places of conviviality where food is shared to reinforce relationships and affirm Lebanese identity through Maronite affiliation and ingesting Lebanese cuisine. This again recalls the analysis made by both Carsten and Janowski of the 'nested' nature of food consumption, in generating kinship, by households and by higher-level houses (Carsten 1995; Janowski 2007a and 2007b). By gathering together in the Maronite churches, people are entangled in community life replete with loyalties and social obligations to the Lebanese ancestors who founded the churches. Indeed, many describe participation both in religious life and in these communal meals and larger festivals, like annual *haflis*[21] parties, as something to be done to honor the ancestors. It is also a way of respecting and honoring the family in the present. Ties within church settings are thus on the one hand about genealogical kinship—these are typically churches that one's Lebanese ancestor attended and/or founded—and also about broader identification with fellow Lebanese Maronites. Food in these instances makes such relationships visible and tangible; it also provides a means for people to learn these techniques to reproduce them in the future.

VILLAGE COOKING OR GENERIC CUISINE?

There was a great variety of culinary techniques among first-generation immigrants depending on their village of origin. Competition with respect to

spicing and style was common; at a secondary level, this was also a means for gossiping and judging one another's villages as well as maintaining distinctive village identities. Though memories and occasional practices of such diversity survive, by and large a more generic and flexible "Lebanese cuisine" is the contemporary norm. Writing about a similar phenomenon—including shortcuts, hybrid use of ingredients, improvisations—among Indian migrants in the U.S., Purnima Mankekar notes that this procedure enables the reproduction of "culture" in the diaspora (1997: 204). Thus we find that in Northern New England, diverse Lebanese techniques and dishes have collapsed into a general food category which everyone accepts and uses.

Cookbooks are an important part of this in that they provide standardized recipes which contribute to the production of "Lebanese food." Nearly every house I visited had at least one Lebanese or Middle Eastern cookbook, either produced commercially or by a church parish, on hand for reference.[22] There is some debate about the role of cookbooks. While most people I spoke with would acknowledge that recipes contained in such books are valid and can be used to produce Lebanese food, there is a strong preference for apprenticeship as the means to gain knowledge for preparing Lebanese food. One would, it was often said, rarely be able to produce *real* Lebanese food by learning the techniques using a cookbook alone as a guide. The idea is that one must be taught directly by a relative, and can supplement one's training by referring to a cookbook.

Maronite Churches, as "houses," are important sites for exchanging cooking know-how, which in turn encodes ideas about (Lebanese) social life; cookbooks have become objects for this medium of exchange. For example, the *Traditional Lebanese Cookbook* (prepared for the 75th anniversary of St. Joseph's in 2002) includes information about selecting ingredients and preparation techniques, yet also has sayings and proverbs scattered between the recipes.[23] Such sayings provide information about traditions and appropriate conduct in social settings, whether it is a weeknight family meal or a festive event like a wedding. People occasionally quoted them from the cookbooks to me and suggested they take advice from these comments embedded between the recipes.

The St. Joseph's cookbook was produced both to earn money for the parish and as an honorary object for the anniversary of the church's founding. It is sold in the church and used in the church kitchen. Everyone in the Waterville area has a copy of it in their house. Recipes have rarely been written down in families; people are taught to cook directly by relatives through demonstration, not exact measurement. Parish cookbooks thus set a standardized version of recipes down in print—contributing to the development of a local generic "Lebanese cuisine"—as a resource for all in the community.[24]

Overall, there is little judgment today about how one makes Lebanese food. The diverse techniques and competitive commentary of the

first-generation ("how small and delicately have you rolled your grape leaves?") are moot. Today, as long as people of Lebanese ancestry are *making it at home* (in houses or churches) for family consumption and for sharing (even by mailing) within the wider family network, this is regarded in a positive light. With high rates of inter-marriage, changes in residential patterns, and dual-income families, Lebanese food is made and eaten less frequently than in the past. For these reasons, whenever my informants eat "Lebanese food," it is considered acceptable and a positive activity.[25] The food is thought to have the qualities needed to affirm Lebaneseness.

HOME FOOD OR EATING OUT?

Concerns arise about generic Lebanese food, however, when such food is prepared and served in a restaurant setting—i.e. not "at home." My informants were clear that the specific location where one eats and who has prepared the food and how are crucial components of this food praxis. In other words, it is not a case of any old "Lebanese food" will do. I will briefly outline why food consumed in commercial settings is set apart from that produced in houses.

First, due to the small number and dispersed settlement patterns of Lebanese immigrants and their descendants, no "ethnic" shops or restaurants catering exclusively to Lebanese people developed. Businesses owned by Lebanese immigrants and their children did not, originally, expressly use ethnic terminology for their businesses or their foods. However, in the last two decades this has changed. There are currently two restaurants in Northern New England which feature primarily Lebanese foods: The Lebanese Bakery[26] in Waterville, Maine and The Phoenician Restaurant in Salem, New Hampshire.[27] In both cases more recent immigrants are involved in running the businesses.

While some of my informants eat in these restaurants, they detach that activity and the eating of the food from the food praxis I have outlined thus far. I will take the case of the Lebanese Bakery to explain the caveats placed on restaurant food. In this tiny restaurant with five tables at one end and a small kitchen at the other, the proprietor, Laya, does all the cooking in full view with only a countertop between herself and the customers. She serves primarily *mezze* (appetizers) such as *hummus*, *baba ghanouj* (eggplant dip), *warak enab* (stuffed grape leaves), *falafel*, *fatayer bi sabanekh* (spinach popovers), *kibbe* (fried beef or lamb), *malfouf* (cabbage leaves stuffed with rice and meat), green salads, olives; rice and lentil dishes are also available for more hearty fare.

Many people of Lebanese descent argue that Laya's Lebanese Bakery is for Lebanese men and Americans. They point out that Laya is primarily running a business to earn a living, and this dictates how and what she

serves. For example, her *tabouleh* has far more *burghul* in it than parsley because to buy the proper amount of fresh parsley for the dish would be very expensive; she has modified her dish to be mindful of the cost. According to one woman: "This is okay for a quick lunch for the Lebanese men, or for Americans who don't know what real *tabouleh* is supposed to taste like." Women of Lebanese descent do occasionally eat at Laya's, but they make these kinds of distinctions. This is not a comment on Laya's skill; in fact she prepares many special orders for the nearby St. Joseph's Church and caters for weddings out of her restaurant. In these cases, parishioners or Lebanese families paying for weddings are more than happy to pay a little more for the right ingredients and for the extra time it might take to make it the "homemade" way.

All the food Laya makes, whether in the homemade way or for sale in her bakery, is considered to be Lebanese; yet because market conditions are brought to bear on her preparation for the food served in the restaurant and because it is made for anyone to eat, not only for those with Lebanese blood, it is deemed categorically different. Discussion about this restaurant reveals two key distinctions: foods acceptable for Lebanese/Americans, and for Lebanese men/women. Women are considered the ones who traditionally create Lebanese food, and because they are capable of making it at home there is little need to go out to eat. Laya's is a good spot for a quick lunch for working men, though as more women are working outside the home they are also eating out more (at places like Laya's and many other non-Lebanese spots). Despite evidence that both Lebanese men and women eat at Laya's, the essential point of interest is the characterization of acceptable ranges of practice for men and women.

Men's food practice can be in a commercial space where market-related aspects are brought to bear on food preparation; yet men can also operate in the home where obligations to kin are the main influence on food preparation and distribution. For women, food practice is categorically tied to the home. Responsibility for food sharing (and thereby maintaining relatedness) falls more on women than men. Going to great lengths to ingest the same food, and to properly provision relatives, is considered the role of Lebanese women. Married women perform this duty for both their natal families and their husband's; unmarried women will sometimes do so for their brothers (whether married or not).

It is through food discussions that my informants position themselves as categorically differentiated from "Americans." The example above of eating out at a restaurant prompts this distinction; so too do discussions about inviting people over for dinner. I first became aware of this early in my fieldwork while talking with Marion, who expressed concern that "Americans" would not eat *kibbe nayeh* (raw beef) that she prepared because they are not used to it[28] and they would think it "barbaric" to eat raw meat. She explained that she is mindful of who is attending a dinner party and will never plan to

serve this dish for her American friends and neighbors. Marion was born in New Hampshire and has spent her whole life in her hometown. She always referred to herself as "American;" it was only her parents and grandparents who were "Lebanese." Yet strikingly, around the subject of food she calls herself Lebanese and dips into this Lebanese/American contrast.

I later encountered many references to *kibbe nayeh* and other dishes as unsuitable, unpalatable, or undesirable for Americans. Sometimes stories were shared about an "American" neighbor who came to love a Lebanese dish. Spouses of non-Lebanese descent must learn to cook and prepare Lebanese foods (women) or enjoy homemade Lebanese foods (men) in order to actually be recognized as a relative. This has important implications for the identity of children of mixed marriages (Rowe 2008).

The key finding here is the importance of the relationship between the creation of food and the intention for its use. Food produced in restaurants, while it has the right ingredients and techniques, has been influenced by external determinants, namely financial gain, and is not made with the intention of sustaining a personal, familial (or family-like in the case of people of Lebanese ancestry gathering in churches) relationship. Furthermore, when Lebanese foods are eaten, or not, by those with no Lebanese ancestry, a critical distinction emerges: that between "Americans" and "Lebanese." Food praxis is the one arena within which a division emerges, and my informants identify as "Lebanese" people.

CONCLUSION

In this paper I have demonstrated how the descendants of migrants from the Middle East in small town New England understand Lebanese food and food-related practices; they are objects and actions that transmit information, meaning, and substance, which in turn invigorate and renew relationships amongst those of Lebanese ancestry. These people consider themselves to be "assimilated" (i.e. exclusively "American"). Yet my findings show that they have developed a means of transmitting and sharing "Lebaneseness" without expressly naming it as such except in kin-, church-, and home-based food-related events. It is through identifying food objects in the landscape and via food practices in the home that they express their "Lebanese" qualities and identity as differentiated from their "American" ones.

It is vital to analyze why food practices are the main method for maintaining ethnic identity (Holtzman 2006). Assimilation pressures in the U.S. in the first half of the twentieth century urged white ethnics to alter their demeanor, language and marriage habits; and to celebrate the nation through specific sorts of civic participation. However, what one ate in "home spaces" (houses or churches) with "family" (kin relations and fellow people of Lebanese ancestry) was less challenged. There was certainly pressure and expectation to participate in American food rituals, like Thanksgiving, or

for kids to bring "American" foods for school lunches. Yet my informants found that they could keep the Lebanese foods alongside the American ones without too much discord as they assimilated into mainstream U.S. society, using them to construct a parallel Lebanese identity alongside their American identity into the second- and third-generations.

Though some earlier studies suggested that if creolized versions of cuisine were consumed rather than "traditional/authentic" ones (Lu & Fine 1995), or if ethnic foods were no longer consumed with great frequency (Alba 1990, Douglas 2003) this was evidence of loss or erasure of ethnic identity. Yet many ethnographic cases like the one presented here suggest this is not the case. These food practices developed as a creative response to expectations of assimilation and, more recently, to avoid anti-Arab stigma.

As prejudice against people of Middle Eastern descent has risen over the last thirty years in the U.S.A. (Hagopian 1975, Abraham 1989 & 1994, Aswad 1993, Suleiman 1999, Marvasti & McKinney 2004, Orfalea 2006) many people of Lebanese descent correspondingly avoid links to "Lebanese," "Arab," or "Middle Eastern" status. Food enables them to maintain a "low-profile ethnicity" (Shokeid 1988) with regards to Lebanese identity—one that is not immediately evident to those outside the group and that fellow Americans would not see as threatening behavior (c.f. Joseph 1999).

A final point to consider is the creative mixing of Lebanese and white American identity seen here which means there are cultural forms in place for more prominently asserting a Lebanese identity in the future. These people are part of an old diaspora, descendants of Lebanese traders and entrepreneurs who spanned the globe one hundred years ago (Cohen 2008, Hourani & Shehadi 1992). As many contemporary studies of diasporas show us, there is always the possibility for groups to re-establish diasporic ties and self-identify as an ethnic or diasporic group. In other words, for these New Englanders the latent potential to reactivate diasporic ties remains.

As an ethnographer I came to see the subtle and important ways in which my informants are involved in this food praxis; whether it is mailing bread around the country or replicating a *jiddurn*, what I read as creative and evocative methods of identity construction. They are easy to write off or not notice precisely because that is what my informants hope people will do. They strive to keep themselves "off stage, off display" (cf. Shryock 2004), and do so with great success. Yet if they chose to come "on stage" as it were, the food practices outlined here could be the very mechanism through which they establish a more prominent, public Lebanese identity and use it to link with others in the Lebanese diaspora(s).

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am thankful for the support of an ESRC Postdoctoral Fellowship which provided the time to examine my fieldwork materials for a closer look at the

use of food among my informants. I am very grateful to Monica Janowski and Carole Counihan as well as the three anonymous reviewers for their time and very helpful comments on this paper.

NOTES

1. First-generation refers to the migrants while second-generation (etc.) refers to those born in the U.S.
2. Meaning they do not 'speak Lebanese.' Some people say the language is 'Lebanese,' or 'Syrian,' not Arabic. This couple moved between all three terms for the language during our conversation.
3. Starting with the second-generation intermarriage with non-Lebanese was the norm; over eighty percent of my informants had intermarried.
4. Large scale "Lebanese dinners" or "*haflis*" (parties; my informants use the Arabic singular with English plural 's' added) do occur sporadically in northern New England. This paper is focused on day to day food practices rather than heritage events where food features as an important component.
5. I did seventy-two such interviews involving about ninety people; I estimate that I had meaningful, repeated interactions with at least thirty additional people and socialized with at least a hundred more people of Lebanese descent.
6. Christian Arab-Americans sometimes leverage their Christian status as a means of avoiding negative stereotyping as Arabs and as a means to gain acceptance as part of the white mainstream (Cainkar 2009: 68, Howell & Shryock 2003:456, Aswad 2002:285).
7. Rural New England is popularly configured as consisting of unspoilt nature and pre-industrial agricultural villages with a "Yankee" population descended from early colonial pioneers—i.e. as one of the whitest parts of the country, as an area devoid of racial or ethnic "others" (cf. Brown 1995, Wood 1997, Lewis 1993, Lindgren 1995, Conforti 2001, Nissenbaum 1996, Harrison 2006).
8. First-generation men who migrated without any female relatives often cooked Lebanese foods for themselves. In a few cases they also worked in restaurant settings and had the opportunity to prepare a few Lebanese dishes in those contexts.
9. This was a typical business for Lebanese immigrants who first traveled through the region as peddlers selling items such as textiles, pots and pans, sewing implements, toiletries, knives, etc.
10. George's Restaurant in Waterville, Maine or Handy's Lunch in Burlington, Vermont.
11. Joseph's Market in Waterville, Maine and Sarkis Market in Brattleboro, Vermont.
12. They most often refer to the bread as 'Syrian bread,' and occasionally as *khoobz* (bread) or *khoobz marook* (or *marouq*), meaning mountain bread. It is called Syrian bread because in the early 20th century immigrants from the Ottoman province of Greater Syria (this included modern-day Lebanon) were known as 'Syrian.' The immigrants often referred to themselves, and their foods, as Syrian. References to 'Lebanese' people, culture, and food became more commonplace by the 1940s.
13. Ovens need to be upwards of 500°F to bake the bread, a challenge for most conventional modern ovens but easily achieved on the old fashioned wood-burning stoves once common in New England homes.
14. These families also go to George's, especially if it is a time of year when the US-Canada border has long waiting times. Montréal is about two hours by car, while George's is closer to a three hour trip (one-way).
15. Here is a rare instance when my informants slip into describing themselves as "Lebanese" around the subject of food.
16. Within the second- and third-generation approximately eighty percent of all marriages were so-called "mixed marriages," i.e. between someone of Lebanese ancestry and someone with no Lebanese ancestry.
17. A *jiddurn* (using the pronunciation of my informants), or *jurn,* is an item used to pound fresh meat to make *kibbe* (a meat dish, typically a mixture of lamb and beef served either raw (*kibbe nayeh*) or cooked). Most of the ones I saw were made of heavy granite and were from Lebanon (either brought by migrants or ordered via specialist stores). They are perhaps a foot in diameter and are in effect a huge pestle and mortar; sometimes they are affixed to a wooden stand.

18. Most first-generation Lebanese Maronite Catholics joined Latin rite Catholic parishes across the region because there were too few Maronites to join together to establish a separate parish for those following the Maronite rite.

19. This is how Maron is pronounced—"Maroon." St. Maron was the monk who is viewed as the founder of the Maronite Church in the 5th century.

20. Source: http://web.mac.com/aboonalj/iWeb/Site/Events/01A74863-FF79-482D-BFE8-5E26572447B4.html. This website was launched after my fieldwork concluded in summer 2006.

21. This is the plural term for a *hafli* (or *hafla*) used by the Lebanese in New England; they do not use the Arabic plural form, *haflat*, but instead the Arabic singular with an English plural modification. A *hafli* is a communal celebration, a party, and is the term most often employed for special annual gatherings.

22. Interestingly my informants did not distinguish between cookbooks produced commercially for a mass-market and those produced by local parishes. There was more excitement and pride about the parish cookbooks, yet both types were regularly described as legitimate sources of Lebanese food preparation techniques.

23. Examples include: "When you enter a Lebanese home for the first time, upon departure you are given a small bag of sugar or salt" (p. 5); "When a groom carries his bride over the threshold she places raw dough on the top of the outside doorframe. If it sticks, it is good luck" (p.22); "When given a plate of food, never return an empty dish" (p.28).

24. While there is an important linkage between cookbooks as literature being written and used by those in some form of diaspora or exile (Appadurai 1988: 18), production of a church cookbook is fairly common in various New England Christian churches regardless of denomination.

25. The frequency with which Lebanese food is consumed varies greatly from family to family, and at different times of the year. It also depends upon the age and household circumstances of individuals (living alone, away at school, etc.). Everyone in the study eats Lebanese food at least a few times a month, and they contrast this with the idea that their Lebanese ancestors ate Lebanese food daily.

26. This is operated by Laya who moved from Lebanon in the 1970s to marry an older second-generation man from Waterville. Now a widow, she runs the business with the assistance of her brother and daughter.

27. This establishment is partly run by staff from Bishop's Restaurant, which served a mix of Lebanese and American fare, in Lawrence, MA which closed down in 2001.

28. People of Lebanese descent are described as "genetically" predisposed to this food, as physically designed to be able to eat it ("We can stomach it") and/or as capable of eating it because they have developed an ability to do so ("We were raised eating it, so we can handle it").

REFERENCES

Abraham, N. 1989. Arab-American Marginality: Mythos and Praxis. *Arab Studies Quarterly*, 11 (2/3): 17–43.

Abraham, N. 1994. Anti-Arab Racism and Violence in the United States. In *The Development of Arab-American Identity* (ed.) E. McCarus, 155–214. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

Alba, R. 1990. *Ethnic Identity: The Transformation of White America*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

AlSultany, E. 2006. From Ambiguity to Abjection: Iraqi-Americans Negotiating Race in the United States. In *The Arab Diaspora: Voice of an Anguished Scream* (eds) Z. S. Salhi and I. R. Netton, 127–142. London: Routledge.

Appadurai, A. 1988. How to Make a National Cuisine: Cookbooks in Contemporary India. *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 30 (1): 3–24.

Aswad, B. 1993. Arab-Americans: Those Who Followed Columbus. *MESA Bulletin*, 27: 5–22.

Aswad, B. 2002. Arab Americans. In *Race and Ethnicity: An Anthropological Focus on the U.S. and the World* (ed.) R. Scupin, 267–287. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Bakalian, A. and M. Bozorgmehr. 2009. *Backlash 9/11: Middle Eastern and Muslim Americans Respond*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Brown, D. 1995. *Inventing New England: Regional Tourism in the Nineteenth Century*. Washington D.C: Smithsonian Institution Press.

Cainkar, L. 2009. *Homeland Insecurity: The Arab American and Muslim American Experience after 9/11*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

Carsten, J. 1995. The Substance of Kinship and the Heat of the Hearth: Feeding, Personhood, and Relatedness among Malays in Pulau Langkawi. *American Ethnologist*, 22 (2) 223–241.

Cohen, Robin. 2008 [1997]. *Global Diasporas: An Introduction*. London: Routledge.

Conforti, J. 2001. *Imagining New England: Explorations of Regional Identity from the Pilgrims to the Mid-Twentieth Century*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.

di Leonardo, M. 1998. *Exotics at Home: Anthropologies, Others, American Modernity*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Douglas, M. 2003 [1984]. *Food in the Social Order: Studies of Food and Festivities in Three American Communities*. Mary Douglas Collected Works, Vol. 9. London: Routledge.

Gershon, I. 2007. Compelling Culture: The Rhetoric of Assimilation among Samoan Migrants in the United States. *Racial and Ethnic Studies* 30:5, 787–816.

Glick-Schiller, N., A. Calgar, and T. C. Guldbrandsen. 2006. Beyond the Ethnic Lens: Locality, Globality, and Born-Again Incoroporation. *American Ethnologist*, 33(4): 612–633.

Glick-Schiller, N. and A. Caglar. 2009. Toward a Comparative Theory of Locality in Migration Studies. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 35(2): 177–202.

Gualtieri, S. 2001. Becoming 'White': Race, Religion and the Foundations of Syrian/Lebanese Ethnicity in the United States. *Journal of American Ethnic History* 20 (4): 29–57.

Gualtieri, S. 2009. *Between Arab and White: Race and Ethnicity in the Early Syrian American Diaspora*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Hagopian, E. 1975/1976. Minority Rights in a Nation-State: The Nixon Administration's Campaign against Arab-Americans. *Journal of Palestine Studies* 5(1/2): 97–114.

Harrison, B. 2006. *The View from Vermont: Tourism and the Making of an American Rural Landscape*. Burlington: University of Vermont Press.

Holtzman, J. D. 2006. Food and Memory. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 35: 361–378.

Hooglund, E. 1987. From Near East To Down East: Ethnic Arabs in Waterville, Maine. In *Crossing the Waters: Arabic-Speaking Immigrants to the United States before 1940* (ed.) E. Hooglund, 85–103. Washington D.C: Smithsonian Institution Press.

Hourani, A. and N. Shehadi (eds.). 1992. *The Lebanese in the World: A Century of Emigration*. London: I.B. Tauris.

Janowski, M. 2007. *Feeding the right food: the flow of life and the construction of kinship in Southeast Asia. Kinship and Food in Southeast Asia*. M. Janowski and F. Kerlogue. Copenhagen, NIAS Press: 1–23.

Janowski, M. 2007. *Being 'Big', Being 'Good' : Feeding, kinship, potency and status among the Kelabit of Sarawak. Kinship and Food in Southeast Asia*. M. Janowski and F. Kerlogue. Copenhagen, NIAS Press: 93–120.

Jacobson, M. F. 2006. *Roots Too: White Ethnic Revival in Post-Civil Rights America*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Joseph, S. 1999. Against the Grain of the Nation—the Arab. In *Arabs in America: Building a New Future* (ed.) M. Suleiman, 257–271. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Lamphere, L. 2007. Migration, Assimilation, and the Cultural Construction of Identity: Navajo Perspectives. *Racial & Ethnic Studies*, 30 (6): 1132–1151.

Lewis, G. H. 1993. The Maine that Never Was: The Construction of Popular Myth. *Journal of American Culture*, 16 (2): 91–100.

Lindgren, J. 1995. *Preserving Historic New England*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Lockwood, W. and Y. Lockwood. 2002. Continuity and Adaptation in Arab American Foodways. In *Arab Detroit: From Margin to Mainstream* (eds.) N. Abraham and A. Shryock, 515–550. Detroit: Wayne State University Press.

Lu, S. and G. A. Fine. 1995. The Presentation of Ethnic Authenticity: Chinese Food as a Social Accomplishment. *The Sociological Quarterly*, 36 (3): 535–553.

Majaj, L. S. 2000. Arab-Americans and the Meaning of Race. In *Postcolonial Theory and the United States: Race, Ethnicity, Literature* (eds.) A. Singh and P. Schmidt, 320–337. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi.

Mankekar, P. 2005. India Shopping': Indian Grocery Stores and Transnational Configurations of Belonging. In *Cultural Politics of Food and Eating: A Reader* (eds.) J. L. Watson and M. L. Caldwell, 197–214. Malden: Blackwell.

Marvasti, A. and McKinney, K. D. 2004. *Middle Eastern Lives in America*. New York: Rowman and Littlefield Publishes, Inc.

Michael, J. 2003. Beyond Us and Them: Identity and Terror from an Arab American's Perspective. *South Atlantic Quarterly*, 102 (4): 701–728.

Naber, N. and A. Jamal (eds.). 2008. *Race and Arab Americans Before and After 9/11*. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press.

Nissenbaum, S. 1996. New England as Region and Nation. In *All Over the Map: Rethinking American Regions* (eds.) E. L. Ayers, P. N. Limerick. S. Nisenbaum, and P. Onuf, 38–61. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press.

Orfalea, G. 2006. *The Arab Americans: A History*. Northampton, MA: Olive Branch Press.

Roediger, D. 2005. *Working Towards Whiteness: How America's Immigrants Became White*. New York: Basic Books.

Rowe, A. 2008. Lebanese Lives in New England: American Narratives of Assimilation and Ethno-Racial Classification. PhD dissertation, Department of Social Anthropology, Cambridge University.

Samhan, H. H. 1999. Not Quite White: Race Classifications and the Arab-American Experience. In *Arabs in America: Building a New Future* (ed.) M. Suleiman, 209–226. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Shokeid, M. 1988. *Children of Circumstances: Israeli Emigrants in New York*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Shryock, A. 2000. Kinship and Community in Arab Detroit. In *Arab Detroit: From Margin to Mainstream* (eds.) N. Abraham & A. Shryock, 573–610. Detroit: Wayne State University Press.

Shryock, A. 2004. In the Double Remoteness of Arab Detroit: Reflections on Ethnography, Culture Work, and the Intimate Disciplines of Americanization. In *Off Stage/On Display: Intimacy and Ethnography in the Age of Public Culture* (ed.) A. Shryock, 279–316. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Suleiman, M. 1992. The Arab community in the United States—a comparison of Lebanese and non-Lebanese. In *The Lebanese in the World: A Century of Emigration* (eds.) A. Hourani & N. Shehadi, 189–208. London: I.B. Taurus.

Suleiman, M. W. 1999. Introduction: The Arab Immigrant Experience. In *Arabs in America: Building a New Future* (ed.) M. W. Suleiman, 1–24. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Siskind, J. 1992. The Invention of Thanksgiving: a Ritual of American Nationality. *Critique of Anthropology*, 12 (2): 167–191.

Tehranian, J. 2009. *White Washed: America's Invisible Middle Eastern Minority*. New York: New York University Press.

Waters, M. 1990. *Ethnic Options: Choosing Identities in America*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Waters, M. 1999. Optional Ethnicities: For Whites Only?. *Rethinking the Color Line: Readings in Race and Ethnicity* (ed.) C. A. Gallagher, 491–503. New York: McGraw Hill.

Wood, J. 1997. *The New England Village*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press.