

Title Page & Abstract

An Interview with Ziyad N. Samara

Part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library
Immigrant Stories Oral History project

Interview # IM-A-L-2013-070

Ziyad Samara, a West Bank Palestinian's journey to the United States, was interviewed on the date listed below as part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library's *Immigrant Stories* Oral History project.

Interview dates & location:

Date: June 26, 2013

Location: ALPLM, Springfield, IL

Date: July 15, 2013

Location: ALPLM, Springfield, IL

Interview Format: Digital audio

Interviewer: Carol Esarey, ALPL Oral History Program volunteer

Transcription by: _____

Interview being
processed

Edited by: _____

Total Pages: _____ Total Time: 1:05 + 1:02 / 1.08 + 1.03 = 2.11 hrs

Session 1: Life in Palestine (West Bank) and Kuwait and Immigration to U.S.

Session 2: Adjusting to life in America, and running a restaurant business

Accessioned into the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Archives on October 24, 2013.

The interviews are archived at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library in
Springfield, Illinois.

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Abstract

Ziyad Samara

Immigrant Stories

IM-A-L-2013-070

Biographical Information Overview of Interview: Ziyad Samara was born in the west bank of Jordan, Palestine in the early 1950's and lived in his early years in Tulkarem. His father moved to Kuwait to find work when Ziyad was still a child, as the country and culture in Palestine was changing in the late 1950's and 1960's. The family later joined him in Kuwait where Ziyad completed his high school education in the mid-1960. Later, he was to meet his future wife, Souad, while in Kuwait. Ziyad's older brother emigrated to the U.S in 1969 and Ziyad's father borrowed money to bring his family to America in 1971, finding a home in Chicago Heights, Illinois.

Ziyad attended Prairie State College in Chicago Heights while working as a busboy and dishwasher. Continuing to work in the restaurant business, he became a restaurant manager in Springfield, Illinois, working at Lum's Restaurant from 1978 to about 1996. In 1999 he became the owner of Sgt. Pepper's Café, actively working each day in the restaurant. Ziyad was impressed by the American tradition of Thanksgiving and now is known for his generosity, serving free Thanksgiving and Christmas meals at his restaurant every year.

Subject Headings/Key Words: Family life in Palestine, early 1950's; life as a Palestinian in Kuwait, 1960's; immigration to the US; work ethic of immigrants; integrating into American life as a Muslim; politics in Palestine

Note to the Reader: Readers of the oral history memoir should bear in mind that this is a transcript of the spoken word, and that the interviewer, interviewee and editor sought to preserve the informal, conversational style that is inherent in such historical sources. The Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library is not responsible for the factual accuracy of the memoir, nor for the views expressed therein. We leave these for the reader to judge.

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