

Recommended by Kambiz GhaneaBassiri

Malcolm X, *The Autobiography of Malcolm X: As Told to Alex Haley* (Ballantine, 1999)

Malcolm X is perhaps the best-known Muslim in American history. In his autobiography, first published in 1965, he narrates his spiritual journey to the Nation of Islam and later conversion to Sunni Islam. While most works on Malcolm X focus on his political activism, in his autobiography he explains how his activism was shaped and informed by the teachings of Islam.

Kambiz GhaneaBassiri, *A History of Islam in America: From the New World to the New World Order* (Cambridge University Press, 2010)

This comprehensive history of Islam in America contextualizes the presence of Muslims in the United States in American history more generally while concurrently introducing readers to many of the sources available for exploring American Muslim histories.

Jane I. Smith, *Islam in America* (Columbia University Press, 2009)

This is one of the most widely read introductions to Islam in America. Smith makes a concerted effort to capture the diversity of American Muslim experiences in the United States and to present them on their own terms.

Richard Brent Turner, *Islam in the African-American Experience* (Indiana University Press, 2003)

Turner was one of the first scholars to contextualize “Black Muslims,” the label applied to members of the Nation of Islam in the 1960s and 1970s, within a larger history of African-American experiences with race and religion in the United States.

***Fordson: Faith, Fasting, Football, and the American Dream* (Rashid Ghazi, director, 2011)**

This documentary film opens a window onto Arab-American Muslim life after 9/11 by following the football team of Fordson High School in Dearborn, Michigan. Dearborn has the largest Arab-American and Muslim communities, per capita, in the United States.

Mohja Kahf, *The Girl in the Tangerine Scarf: A Novel* (PublicAffairs, 2006)

Kahf tells the story of a young Syrian-American Muslim woman born to Muslim activists who were among the new wave of immigrants to settle in the United States after passage of the Immigration Act of 1965. The novel is loosely autobiographical and captures the everyday experiences of Muslim activists of this era who often fled repressive regimes and saw in America an opportunity to practice and proselytize Islam as they saw fit.

Thomas Bluett, *Some Memoirs of the Life of Job, the Son of Solomon, the High Priest of Boonda in Africa* (1734), <http://docsouth.unc.edu/neh/bluett/bluett.html>

This is the first known book-length account of the life of an African Muslim in America. Job Ben Solomon was a noble Fulbe who was sold into slavery in Kent County, Maryland. He was manumitted by philanthropists who paid for his passage to England, where he met with the British royal family and the gentry of the time before being employed by the Royal African Company to help advance English trade in the interior of Africa.

Account of the life of Omar ibn Said (1832), <http://docsouth.unc.edu/nc/omarsaid/>

This page on the Documenting the American South website leads to an 1832 account of the life of Omar ibn Said, a Fulbe Muslim slave in North Carolina who wrote an autobiography in Arabic. The site also provides links to other contemporary accounts of Omar, a sample of his handwriting in Maghribi Arabic script, and his portraits.

Muslim Life in America, <http://infousa.state.gov/education/overview/muslimlife/homepage.htm>

The U.S. State Department created this website to showcase Muslim life in America during the early years of the so-called war on terror. It serves as an example of the intermediary role American Muslims have often played in U.S. cultural diplomacy involving Muslims not only in Muslim-majority countries but also in Europe.

Building Islam in Detroit, <http://biid.lsa.umich.edu/>

This website, hosted by the University of Michigan, provides an excellent overview of the history and religious activities of the Muslim community in Detroit, one of the first and best-known centers of American Islam.

Liyakat Takim, *Shi'ism in America* (New York University Press, 2011)

Shia Muslims, a minority within Islam, were among some of the earliest immigrants to the United States, but the distinct development of their communities in America has not received much attention. This is the best available overview of Shia Islam in America.

Stand Up: Muslim-American Comics Come of Age (Glenn Baker, Omar Naim, directors, 2009)

Following the attacks of 9/11, American Muslims came under suspicion from both the government and their fellow Americans. This hilarious PBS documentary shows how five American Muslims employed comedy as a means of expressing American Muslim experiences to a national audience.

Dave Eggers, *Zeitoun* (Vintage, 2010)

This award-winning novel takes the reader to the intersection of Hurricane Katrina and the “war on terror” as they were experienced by an average Muslim family in New Orleans. The book is remarkable for its unveiling of some unexpected consequences of the way in which policies adopted after 9/11 have affected not only how the government treats Muslims but how it functions more generally. The protagonists of the story, Abdulrahman and Kathy Zeitoun, divorced a few years after the publication of the book, and tragically Abdulrahman was charged by the New Orleans Police Department with solicitation of the murder of Kathy. She has told reporters that the depiction of their life in the book was accurate at the time, but that after the wrongful incarceration of her ex-husband during Hurricane Katrina he became increasingly authoritarian and violent.

Michael Wolfe, ed., *Taking Back Islam: American Muslims Reclaim Their Faith* (Rodale Books, 2004)

In this edited volume, American Muslims of various racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds discuss their understanding of Islam in the aftermath of Al Qaeda’s attack on the United States on September 11, 2001.

Aman Ali and Bassam Tariq, *30 Mosques in 30 Days* (blog), <http://30mosques.com>

This is a blog of two young Muslim men who, since 2010, have taken an annual road trip to visit thirty mosques across the United States during the month of Ramadan, when Muslims are obligated to fast from sunrise to sunset. Each day, they break their fast at a different mosque while sharing the stories of the Muslim communities they meet through pictures, videos, and texts.

Edward E. Curtis IV, ed., *Encyclopedia of Muslim-American History* (Facts on File, 2010)

This is the most complete and authoritative encyclopedia of Islam in America to date.

Zain Abdullah, *Black Mecca: The African Muslims of Harlem* (Oxford University Press, 2010)

The stories of Arab and South Asian Muslim immigrants have long overshadowed those of black African Muslim immigrants in the United States. Abdullah brings the richness of black African Muslims’ experiences in America to life through her depiction of their contributions to cultural and social life in Harlem.

James Baldwin, *The Fire Next Time* (Vintage, 1992)

This short book, originally published in 1963 by one of America’s finest essayists, is a portrayal of the Nation of Islam at the height of its influence in black America. Baldwin astutely captures the appeal of the Nation of Islam for African Americans in the 1950s and 1960s while at the same time critiquing its racist cosmology for failing to understand

the historical evolution of American society toward its founding ideals of freedom and equality *for all*.

Moustafa Bayoumi, *How Does It Feel to Be a Problem? Being Young and Arab in America* (Penguin, 2009)

Bayoumi portrays the lives of seven young Arab Americans (six Muslim, one Christian) in Brooklyn, illustrating their hopes, struggles, and accomplishments as members of a socially stigmatized minority community. Borrowing a phrase from W. E. B. Dubois's *The Souls of Black Folk*, Bayoumi highlights the "peculiar" position of many young Arab Americans and Muslim Americans in the United States today. While they are made to feel that they are a "social problem" in post-9/11 America, they are active participants in America's multicultural society and stand to make significant contributions to it.

***Me and the Mosque* (Zarqa Nawaz, director, 2005), www.nfb.ca/film/me_and_mosque**

This documentary film nicely complements Leila Ahmed's book *A Quiet Revolution* on the Muslim Journeys Bookshelf. It tells the story of Muslim women's struggle for social justice within mosques in North America. It also demonstrates how Islamist struggles for social justice have influenced a new generation of Muslim women activists fighting for gender equality in Islam.