

Transcript for Oral History Interview**Conducted for University of Maryland Course HIST 428M – Spring 2020****Instructor: Dr. Rush**

Interviewer: Anthony Hassan**Interviewee: Faizah Haddad****Interviewee's Country of Origin: Jordan****Interviewee's Current Residence: Damascus, Maryland, U.S.A.****Date of Interview: March 9th, 2020****Place of Interview: Damascus, Maryland, U.S.A.**

Introduction: This interview between Anthony Hassan and Faizah Haddad follows the life of Faizah as she grew up as a Catholic girl in a predominantly Islamic nation of Jordan and her immigration to the United States. Born in As-Salt, Jordan, Faizah went to Catholic school for 7 years and then public school for 3 years. Soon after her family arranged an early marriage for her to start a family. She and her husband had two children and traveled around the nation for 8 years, escaping war, terrorism, and economic uncertainty. She recalls experiences related to the Jordanian Civil War and the early wars on the West Bank of Jerusalem. Then her husband suffered an early death due to leukemia. Without a penny to her name and no work opportunities available for women, she and her two children left Jordan for the United States in hopes of a brighter future. Faizah continues her recollection with stories of adjusting to America, finding work, and raising her children as a single mother as well as her memories of her former home.

Keywords: Jordan, Black September, Civil War, West Bank of Jerusalem, Single Mother, Catholic, Arabic

Hassan: Alright, my name is Anthony Hassan. I'm int—I'm interviewing Faizah Haddad. Um, the time now is about 4:35 on February—not February, March 9th, uh 2020 and we are in Damascus, Maryland. How are you doing today Faizah?

Haddad: I'm doing okay, thank you for asking.

Hassan: Very good. So, um, I want to ask you a little bit about, um, where you are from.

Haddad: I'm from Jordan.

Hassan: Like uh what—what city?

Haddad: Uh originally, I'm from the second largest city in Jordan, called As-Salt.

Hassan: Could you spell that for me please?

Haddad: S-A-L-L-A—S. Salt.

Hassan: Mhmm.

Haddad: S-L-A-A-T.

Hassan: Gotcha, Um-hm. Alright, and um when—when were you, uh, born around there?

Haddad: I was born in 1949.

Hassan: Mhmm. And, uh, you lived there for how long?

Haddad: I left Jordan when I was 27 years old and I came to the States 1975, May 28th.

Hassan: Alright. So, while you were living in Jordan, growing up there, could you walk me through like a typical day?

Haddad: Uh, it's very, very, uh, laid back people.

Hassan: Mhmm.

Haddad: Uh, very simple life. When I grew up, we didn't have electricity, we didn't have radio. Uh, we used to read on the lanterns.

Hassan: On the what?

Haddad: Lanterns? [pause] It's like candles, the light candles.

Hassan: Oh, like a lantern?!

Haddad: Lanterns, yes.

Hassan: Yeah.

Haddad: That's what we used to read, and after like in the '60s we started getting the radio, the black and white TV, and the electricity. We used to have—well, we didn't have, uh, I mean, regular, you know, WSSC [Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission – the local water & sewage company].

Hassan: Mhmm.

Haddad: And—but now, Jordan, it's very, very modern. I go visit every year, two years because I still have family there.

Hassan: Mhmm.

Haddad: And uh, what?

Hassan: (chuckles) No—no that's great, that's great. Umm, I also wanted to ask, so, like what—what was like happening, like globally, when you were growing up, there? Um—

Haddad: The weather there, it's very nice in the summertime.

Hassan: Okay.

Haddad: We didn't have humidity.

Hassan: Mhmm.

Haddad: It's dry weather, it's most[ly] mountains. We had only a small sea called Aqaba.

Hassan: Mhmm.

Haddad: In uh—part of the Red Sea.

Hassan: Okay—

Haddad: And the—the Spring there, it's beautiful, the Fall, it's nice, the winter, it's—we didn't see much snow in Jordan.

Hassan: Yeah, I—I think in 2013, that was like the first time they had snow there in decades.

Haddad: Yes.

Hassan: (chuckles) But, um, yeah, I know, I—I've seen pictures, it looks like a really lovely place. I plan to go someday soon. (laughs)

Haddad: Um, the mountains there are so beautiful, the cities there are so beautiful, we have lot of historical places to visit.

Hassan: Mhmm.

Haddad: You know?

Hassan: Oh yeah. There's like the Petra and, uh, the kingdom.

Haddad: Petra, Jerash.

Hassan: The Jerash.

Haddad: Northern Jordan is so beautiful, they have very, very like old, old castles.

Haddad: Mhmm.

Haddad: You know? It's—it's nice to visit there, you know.

Hassan: Oh, yeah. I also wanted to ask, so um, since you grew up there, you know, from—from birth to um your late twenties, uh you went to school, I'm assuming?

Haddad: I went to school and I finished until 9th grade.

Hassan: Did—was that like typical to go and then stop at a certain point or was ninth grade like the end?

Haddad: No, no, no. The reason I—I couldn't finish my, uh, education, I didn't go to high school, I didn't go to college because I get married young.

Hassan: Oooh.

Haddad: I get married when I was 17. [pause] And this is normal in—in the Arabic countries, especially in Jordan. Girls, they get married early.

Hassan: Yeah, um—

Haddad: Especially—[pause] (whispering) stop the recording.

Hassan: Okay.

[Recording pauses.]

[During the brief pause, Faizah took a moment to express a bit of discomfort around the topic of early marriage and culture politics foreign to the United States. After a brief reassurance that the purpose of the recording is to accurately document her life as an immigrant and not to alienate her culture, she allows the recording to recommence.]

[Recording resumes.]

Hassan: So, um, that's good. And, you know, uh how does, like um—oh my gosh, I completely blanked. (laughs) So, when you're—when you're in the village and stuff like that—was it a village or a city?

Haddad: It's a city.

Hassan: It's a city, sorry.

Haddad: It's a city, like the second—second largest city in Jordan.

Hassan: Second to Amman, right? The capital. So, it must be huge.

Haddad: Yeah, yeah Amman is the capital of Jordan.

Hassan: And then you said you, uh, got married at 17 and then you left Jordan about 10 years later. What was happening in between that—that decade? Um.

Haddad: I have two kids.

Hassan: Okay.

Haddad: A boy and a girl, okay. And, uh, I lost my husband. Did I have to write that?

Hassan: (chuckles) Would—would you not feel comfortable saying that?

Haddad: I lost my husband when I was 21.

Hassan: Mhmm.

Haddad: And I have the opportunity to come to America. I brought my kids and I came to the United States to start a new life.

Hassan: So, what—what was that opportunity, if you don't mind me asking?

Haddad: I mean I always heard America is the land of opportunity, when you come, they—you have—we didn't have much freedom in Jordan as Christians because the majority is Muslims [Islamic].

Hassan: Mhmm.

Haddad: And, uh [pause] I came here to the United States to look for better life for my kids. And [pause] thank God they doing okay.

Hassan: Yeah.

Haddad: After all these years, we doing good. Uh, we feel comfortable here. Uh, in the beginning it's so hard to, you know, come from country to country. Different culture, different language and, uh—but with the years go by we get much, you know, much easier to live here. And, you know, to have opportunity to work, to make a better living for—for yourself.

Hassan: And when you came to the United States, what, how—how did you get here? Like—

Haddad: I get my visa.

Hassan: Visa. Okay.

Haddad: Yeah.

Hassan: And did you come on a boat, on a plane?

Haddad: No, on the plane.

Hassan: On the plane.

Haddad: Yeah.

Hassan: Uh, what was the process of obtaining a visa like? Was it—was it difficult, was it easy?

Haddad: In the old days, it's much better than now. Now it's after, uh, 9/11.

Hassan: Mhmm.

Haddad: It's very hard to get a visa to get to the United States. But before, it was, uh, very, it's easy to get a visa to come here, and, uh, you know, to get your, uh, green card and, you know, be a resident in the United States.

Hassan: And, um, eventually you—you guys all got your citizenships, right?

Haddad: I have my citizenship, my kids they have their citizenship.

Hassan: Was that a—how was that process?

Haddad: If you live—after five years in the United States and you have a clean record, you can apply for your citizenship and you can get it.

Hassan: Okay, very good. Um, if you don't mind, uh, me touching back; so, when you were in school, um, what—what was—were there like different school options? Did you have—did it—was it like here where if you live in a certain place everyone goes to this school, or?

Haddad: No, the city they have schools. So, we used to walk to schools, no buses.

Hassan: Right.

Haddad: Everybody walks to school, sometimes some—some, uh, kids they walk like 2 miles to get to the school. No buses, no cars, no carryon to take the children—the students to the schools, they walk, we walk, everybody walk to school.

Hassan: And, uh, did they have like—what kind of subjects did they teach, do you remember?

Haddad: They have regular subjects, you know. English, history, geography, math, uh, chemistry, science. All is exactly the same thing, but in the Arabic language. But we—they teach us second language, it's English.

Hassan: Mhmm.

Haddad: And Jordan used to be ruled by the commonwealth.

Hassan: The commonwealth?

Haddad: Yeah, but after that, [in] 1956 they took—Jordan, they got their independence.

Hassan: I, um, I actually did a couple—a little bit of research on the history of Jordan and I think, um in the—in the time period that, uh, you were living there, there were actually a few kind of like, not so much wars, but there were some conflicts going around.

Haddad: Conflicts in—in the seventies between the Palestinians, PLO, and the Jordanian army.

Hassan: Right, um, d—did that affect your life every day? Did you ever witness anything?

Haddad: Yes.

Hassan: Would you mind expanding?

Haddad: We—we couldn't go out, we couldn't leave the houses, we live under the, uh, you know, down in like the basement. Uh, we know, uh—but, I mean, we heard—we heard the, uh, you know, the bombings, we heard the fire, we saw the fights, but—it's scary.

Hassan: It sounds like it.

Haddad: Yeah.

Hassan: Um. But, you know, it didn't last too long, right?

Haddad: No, it didn't last too long because the Jordanian army took over and they stopped—they had a cease fire, and they stopped the war.

Hassan: And—and, um, I'm sure that actually, um, heightened, you know, um, perception of Jordanian culture, right? Like, um, from what I've seen, Jordanians have a very large sense of pride in their culture, [for] where they come from.

Haddad: We are very proud, Jordanians—one thing about Jordanian people, they are very generous.

Hassan: Mhmm.

Haddad: They are very hospitable, if you visit them, they'll do anything for you.

Hassan: Of course. (laughs)

Haddad: Okay, and uh, very happy people, they like people. Uh, now, now these days, Jordan is for everybody, it's open, it's like a safe haven for everybody.

Hassan: Oh yeah, um, very, very peaceful nation now.

Haddad: Yes, I hope it stays this way.

(Both laugh)

Hassan: Um, so, I also have, uh, another question for you. Was it—so, you—you got your visa and, um, your family, you all came, um, you and your two kids came to the United States. Did you know anyone in the United States before you came?

Haddad: Yeah, I had some of my cousins here before I—when I came.

Hassan: Okay and when you—when you—did they like, uh, help you, not so much choose, but did you go to where they lived so you could all be close together?

Haddad: I lived with my in-laws, they was here before me. I lived with my in-laws, and I start working and, uh, they took care of my kids, you know, when I was working.

Hassan: And did you also work back in Jordan or just in the United States?

Haddad: No, no, just in the United States.

Hassan: Okay. Um, so, how—how was the, uh, if you don't mind me asking, how—how was, uh, life, you know, being a single mother, raising two children in Jordan before coming to the United States?

Haddad: It's hard. It's hard but if you have the strength, and you have the courage, you can go through it.

Hassan: Yeah, it's a great story. (chuckles)

Hassan: Um, did you, um—I'm so sorry (laughs). So, but, uh, in Jordan, kids—there weren't like child labor laws either though. Right? Like you could, uh—there were things saying children were allowed to work in Jordan, not like, you know, like hard factory labor, but they had like smaller jobs for—for children to work.

Haddad: Not too many jobs in Jordan because Jordan, first of all, it's very small country. They didn't have any—I mean they didn't have, uh—they live—most of them farmers.

Hassan: Mhmm.

Haddad: You know, they lived what they sell from their farm and the kids help their parents in the farms.

Hassan: Mhmm.

Haddad: Yeah.

Hassan: So, what—what kind of uh agriculture did they farm? Like, what was—

Haddad: They have olive trees, they have fig trees, they have, uh, fields of wheats and all the harvest. Everything in the harvest fields, they have it, you know, vegetables, almond trees. Jordan, that's why they call it uh almond Jordan's because they have trees of almonds and trees of uh pistachios, they are famous with that.

Hassan: I love their pistachios.

Haddad: Yes!

Hassan: Um—

Haddad: And grapes!

Hassan: Oh yeah, got to get the grapes!

Haddad: Grape vines everywhere in Jordan because it's mountains, you see, it's very beautiful scenery to see all the mountains full with, eh you know, grape vines, and fig trees, and stuff like that.

Hassan: Oh, I've seen the pictures, it's gorgeous. (laughs)

Haddad: Yeah. You've never been in Jordan?

Hassan: I've never been! I'm planning on going this summer.

Haddad: You should go, you know. Treat yourself, not now with the corona virus, nobody wants to go anywhere.

(Both laugh)

Hassan: Right, I'll go eventually, I'll go soon.

Haddad: Yeah, hopefully. It's nice to go for a visit.

Hassan: Now that school is about to be over too. Um, I also have a, uh, another question for you. If you don't mind me, uh, just touching back. So, where—when you left Jordan to come to the United States, where did you come, initially? You said you lived with your um—

Haddad: Direct, I came here to the, uh, Maryland state.

Hassan: To Maryland? Okay.

Haddad: Yeah, I live in, uh, Aspen Hill area, in Silver Spring and Aspen Hill area.

Hassan: Mhmm.

Haddad: And when my kids moved to Damascus, I moved with them to the Damascus area, in Montgomery County. I mean, I've been here since 1975 in Montgomery County.

Hassan: And, um, how old were—were your kids when—when you came?

Haddad: When I came?

Hassan: Yeah.

Haddad: Uh, 6 and 9.

Hassan: 6 and 9, oh wow. And—and they, you know, of course, went to public school and everything?

Haddad: Yes, they came to public school, my daughter went to Maryland University [The University of Maryland], graduated from Maryland University with consumer economics. And my son, he didn't go to college, but he finished his [high school education], but he is very smart!

Hassan: Yeah.

(Both laugh)

Haddad: And he's doing very well.

Hassan: Yeah, yeah. Um, did you find it easier to raise them here, in the United States, or more in—in Jordan?

Haddad: Uh, they have better opportunity in the United States.

Hassan: Mhmm.

Haddad: You know, and [pause] it's hard but we—we manage.

Hassan: Oh yeah.

Haddad: You know?

Hassan: That's—that's good to hear. (laughs) Um, another thing is, um, when you came, you know, you said you learned some English in school.

Haddad: The second—uh second language in Jordan is English, you have to take it with, uh, you know, with your uh n[ative] language, you have to. They teach—always teach English after—with the schools, in the schools. You know?

Hassan: So, would you say your English was—was pretty good when you came over?

Haddad: Uh, it's—it's good, they teach us the proper English, you know, but here they have the short English.

Hassan: Yeah.

Haddad: You know, but I went to, uh— when I came here, to learn more English, I went to the adult education school for English, in, uh, Wheaton High School. I went two evenings a week.

Hassan: I actually did not know that. (laughs) Um and did you feel like that—that kind of helped you get more adapted?

Haddad: Yes. Yes, this way—and I work—and when you work with the—and you have to learn English no matter what. When you work with people, they don't know your language, you have—you force yourself to learn the language.

Hassan: And where—where did you work, if you don't mind me asking, what did you do?

Haddad: I work, uh in the beginning, I work at Holiday Inn for two—uh, two years and a half. And after that I applied for Giant Food Company, and I work as, uh, a baker.

Hassan: Ooh, (chuckles) and, um, excuse me, did you find it easy to get those jobs, like initially when you first came?

Haddad: I just applied, and they expect—accept me.

Hassan: Very good. Um, and those were like your first jobs, huh?

Haddad: That's my first, uh, you know, I worked with Giant for 34 years.

Hassan: 34? Wow.

Haddad: Yeah, and I retired.

Hassan: All 34 is, uh, in the baking?

Haddad: As a baker.

Hassan: Which Giant was it, if you don't mind me asking?

Haddad: I worked at different Giants.

Hassan: Oh, they—they moved you around?

Haddad: Yeah.

Hassan: I bet you brought up their sales, everywhere you went! (chuckles)

Haddad: Yeah, I used to do a lot of cakes for them.

Hassan: Um, and, um, all the while, your kids were going to school, you were learning, you know, you were brushing up on your English and getting things better, and then you said eventually, um, you moved out from your in-laws, right, and you moved with your kids to Damascus.

Haddad: Yes.

Hassan: Did—was that—

Haddad: No! My in-laws passed away, you know—

Hassan: Oh! Okay.

Haddad: Okay.

Hassan: Sorry.

Haddad: It's okay, I moved myself, when I started making a little money, I moved by myself, with my kids.

Hassan: And that was still in Aspen Hill area or into Damascus?

Haddad: I lived in Aspen Hill area around 25 years and then I moved here [Damascus]. I've been here, maybe, uh, 16 years.

Hassan: That's quite some time. (chuckles) And, um, just a little more about the process, um, you—you said came in on a plane, you had your visa, your papers, all that stuff like that, um, how—did—how was your perception of the United States, when you first came?

Haddad: (sighs) I mean, you—you can, like I said before, you can—it's a new country, a new people, a new culture, a new language. It's going to take you a while to adjust, but I'm—I'm happy. I think I made the right decision to come here.

Hassan: Mhmm.

Haddad: Don't take me wrong, I miss my country.

Hassan: Oh, of course.

Haddad: You know, my—I'm proud to be a—a Jordanian, but at the same time, I love the United States and I lived here more [longer] than I lived back home. But you always miss your na—uh, you know, native county because you grew up there.

Hassan: Mhmm. So, we also talked a little bit about being, um, in—it's an Islamic majority country...

Haddad: Mhmm.

Hassan: Jordan. Um, now this is kind of a sensitive question, so, you know, answer however you feel comfortable, but did—was there a separation between, um, you know, being a Catholic person versus, uh, living in an Islamic nation?

Haddad: Actually, not really. We lived together, respect each other. Respect our—there is ex—extremists.

Hassan: Mhmm.

Haddad: Until now, they have the extremist uh Muslims, they hate anybody not Muslim. But, when we grew up there, we didn't have this.

Hassan: Mhmm.

Haddad: We grew up, uh, respect each other and, uh you know, uh, we lived like a family together there. We shared their happiness and their sorrow, they—they shared our happiness and our sorrow. We never had a problem with that. I mean, but when it comes to religion, I mean, there is limit.

Hassan: Of course.

Haddad: Okay, there is like they said redline.

Hassan: Mhmm.

Haddad: You don't talk about religion, you respect them, they respect you.

Hassan: People first, right?

Haddad: People first.

Hassan: That's good, yeah, um, I think the thing is like extremists are a very small minority. They're not the—they're not a representation of the group.

Haddad: [At] that time, we didn't have, you know that [extremists], but now it's getting uh worse and bigger. You know, like ISIS.

Hassan: Mhmm.

Haddad: Like Boko Haram, the one who're killing people in Nigeria. You know, and uh, these people, they are very—they don't belong to Islam. Islam is not like that.

Hassan: Mhmm.

Haddad: I mean, I grew up, my best friend she was Muslim.

Hassan: Do you still keep in contact?

Haddad: Actually, no, she get married and she moved away. And, that time, before, we didn't have a lot of connections, no telephones, no messenger (laughs). Now you connect with everybody on the, you know—the technology now different than 20-30 years ago.

Hassan: Of course, it grows fast.

Haddad: Yes.

Hassan: Um, so when you—when you left Jordan, you said, um, around that time, that's when you started getting radios, the water and everything like that. What was the United States like, technology-wise when you came? Did they have like computers and telephones yet?

Haddad: Telephones, yes but not computers.

Hassan: Okay.

Haddad: Maybe, um uh, limited.

Hassan: Yeah.

Haddad: The comp—but, phones, yes.

Hassan: Did you find the—the new excess of technology—was that more helpful or was—did that actually make things more difficult to adjust to?

Haddad: Now—now it's more helpful.

Hassan: But at the time?

Haddad: Before?

Hassan: Mhmm.

Haddad: Uh, I wasn't, uh, I mean, I didn't need to use it or to, you know, get involved with it until my kids grew up and they start using it.

Hassan: Okay, so it—it kind of was just there but not—

Haddad: There, you know, but now we—it wasn't necessary that time, but now it's necessary.

Hassan: Mhmm, I 100 percent feel that. (chuckles)

Haddad: You know.

Hassan: And then, let's see. You said you also had like your cousins here. When you were coming.

Haddad: I had my cousins, I have uh my sis—my younger sister and my nieces they live here.

Hassan: Oh, you had siblings?

Haddad: Yeah, I have one sister. Yeah, my younger sister she lives here with her family and her husband.

Hassan: Oh, so, umm, is it just one sister, or?

Haddad: Mhmm. I came from a family of eight.

Hassan: Oh!

Haddad: Yeah, but I lost, uh, five of them and only three girls left.

Hassan: Jeez, was it—

Haddad: Back home.

Hassan: Yeah.

Haddad: They died back home in Jordan. It's just me and my younger sister here from my family.

Hassan: Were you young when that happened?

Haddad: No, I was here when they passed away. I—yeah.

Hassan: Um, hopefully natural, or not painful (nervous chuckle).

Haddad: Old age, and you know, they older than me, all of them, yeah.

Hassan: Okay, and, uh, do—do you still keep in contact with your sister?

Haddad: My sister? Yeah, she lives here, only like 15 minutes away from me. We see each other at least once a week or every 10 days. We talk—we talk to each other daily, you know. I now, with the technology, with [Facebook] messenger and, uh, viber, I call my nephews and nieces back home.

Hassan: Mhmm.

Haddad: And, I have 37 nephews and nieces.

Hassan: (chuckles)

Haddad: And, I don't keep in—in touch with all of them but some of them.

Hassan: Of course, I mean that's a lot to.

Haddad: Yeah.

Hassan: Um, so it's good that you had some like family here, you know, must have made things a bit easier to adjust, I hope— [inaudible]

Haddad: Yeah, I have in-laws here, you know, brother in-law, and, uh, their—their nephews and nieces from my fam—uh, my husband's side, they live around here too.

Hassan: Did they contact you to come to the United States, or how did—how did that go through?

Haddad: They here, they—all of them came here, you know, the immigrant open for everyone.

Hassan: Okay, I—I see what you mean. And let's see, let's just touch back on a few things. Um, as far as living in American goes, um, did—you know, you mentioned, briefly, stuff like 9/11 and these Islamic extremist groups which some people project on to the Arabic people, but as we know that's not a good representation.

Haddad: I never had a problem here, with that.

Hassan: Okay.

Haddad: That's the honest truth.

Hassan: That's good!

Haddad: You know, here they respect the human—as a human being, they respect you, doesn't matter who you are. Because this is—this country is built on foreigners, you know. If you want to come to the United States, they respect you, you have the opportunity, to become a good citizen in this country, and you have the right like any other American.

Hassan: I know, that's like the beauty of this place, huh?

Haddad: This is the beauty of America. And you know what? God bless America, it's good country.

Hassan: I know. Are—are there any, uh, stories you have from living in Jordan?

Haddad: Uh, I went to, uh, Catholic school with nuns, they are very strict, but the same time they teach you all stuff they'd never teach you in this, uh, American schools.

Hassan: So, you went to Catholic school?

Haddad: Mhmm. With nuns.

Hassan: With nuns. Uh so, there was—there were Catholic schools in Jordan, and they were separate from the government school?

Haddad: Yes.

Hassan: Okay. Did, uh, did that impede you to, you know, make more friends or did that actually help? Just being with—and did—did they—how—how did the Catholic school work, I guess is—is what I'm actually asking?

Haddad: It's any normal school, you know.

Hassan: Mhmm.

Haddad: But there, uh, most Christians, they send their kids to, uh, Christian schools. But until 6th grade, after that you have to go to the public school.

Hassan: Ah, okay. And, um, excuse me (chuckles). And do you remember, uh, like what your parents did for work and stuff like that?

Haddad: My father used to have a lot of lands and he used to be landlord, he used to plant all kinds of vegetables and, uh, grape vines, and they, uh, collect all of the harvest in the summertime, sell it. They lived on that. They didn't have jobs, their job in the—their farms.

Hassan: And that was, like, typical?

Haddad: Typical, typical, uh, Jordanian people. The young people, they work, some of them, in the government and you know. Some, uh, young people, doctors, nurses, teachers, you know. But my parents, my dad used to be a landlord, had a lot of land.

Hassan: And, if you don't mind me asking, um, do you remember what your husband did?

Haddad: My husband used to be a teacher. Teacher, not to teach [in a school], he teaches like, uh, carpenter. [He] teach the kids how to do, uh, cabinets, doors, I don't know what they call it in English, what kind of teacher is, uh—

Hassan: I think you had it, a carpentry teacher.

Haddad: Yeah, that's what he used to do.

Hassan: Yeah, which—woodwork. Woodworking, that's—that's what it is.

Haddad: Yeah.

Hassan: Um, and did you, um, not work in Jordan because like there was like no need, or?

Haddad: I mean, I—I got married young and I have two kids to raise and I didn't have, you know, college degree to work or to be—do something. You know, I just stayed home and took care of the kids.

Hassan: And that was like, uh, that was kind of like the typical role?

Haddad: Yeah, yeah.

Hassan: Was your marriage arranged, if you don't mind me asking?

Haddad: Yes.

Hassan: Yeah, and then that was normal at the time, right?

Haddad: Most—most marriages until—even until now some of them arranged.

Hassan: But you—I'm sure, you know, it's—it's actually kind of strange, I find that you—because I have Jordanian relatives too. The arranged marriages are the ones that are actually the more loving. It's a little strange.

Haddad: You know, I'll be honest with you, uh, when you get married, there is a respect and a devotion to the marriage.

Hassan: Mhmm.

Haddad: You know. You married, you have to respect the marriage, you have to devote your life to your—to make your marriage work, you know? And, uh, the divorce [rate], it was one percent maybe, in Jordan. Maybe less than that. That time, when I grow up, you didn't hear anybody divorced. Even in the Islamic, uh, marriages. You didn't see a lot of divorce in the old days, but now it's very common.

Hassan: Mhmm, it's a bit different here.

Haddad: It's big differ—not even—even back home now.

Hassan: Oh, really?

Haddad: You hear a lot about divorce [now]. Not when I grew up.

Hassan: So, um, another question, a little bit on the brighter side, um, so, when you, uh, when you came over to America, what did—did you bring anything with you? Like anything—significant, heirlooms? Stuff like that?

Haddad: Uh, I bring like my own spices.

Hassan: Okay.

Haddad: I bring my own things to use.

Hassan: Mhmm.

Haddad: Uh, we use—we famous with the Turkish coffee, I bring these—my cups coffee. (Anthony laughs) This is—very important to have them in your house.

Hassan: Mhmm.

Haddad: And, I mean, anything you use back home, you try to bring it with you here.

Hassan: Mhmm.

Haddad: But now it's—you find that here, it's very, very—uh, when I came 40 years ago you didn't find anything like that here. But now you find it everywhere.

Hassan: Are you saying, um, like the spices, the—the coffee sets, all that stuff, you couldn't—it was harder to find in America when you came, but now, we have, uh—

Haddad: Yeah, you have like Arabic stores.

Hassan: Mhmm.

Haddad: You find it in like the global stores, you find it—the global store, they have everything from all over the world.

Hassan: Yeah, there's one in Gaithersburg I go to with my dad, I like that one.

Haddad: One—the one—which one?

Hassan: I—I can't remember the name but it's off of, uh, 355 on the left side, right next, uh, not too far from the Weis. I can't remember its name, but he—he goes there a lot. Uh, do you still have that same coffee set or did you get a new one?

Haddad: I have them.

Hassan: You still have the same one from Jordan?!

Haddad: I have different ones.

Hassan: Ahh, okay. Yeah, I'd imagine that over time, they always break with the kids and stuff. (laughs) Um, alright. And is there—there—I'm not—I think I already asked but just to make sure, was there any other reason that, uh, you came to the Maryland D.C. area other than, uh, family here?

Haddad: Because I have family here, you know, I—I came here, and I stayed here.

Hassan: Okay, and let's see— [Anthony brushes through his notes]

Haddad: How's it so far?

Hassan: Uh, it's—it's going well, I like it. Still have a good amount of time left. Um, let's see if we can think of, uh, any more stories, um, growing up in Jordan and stuff like that. So, after, um, high school you got married, you were raising your kids, uh, did you still live in the same city the entire time, in As-Salt?

Haddad: No, I moved when I get married, I moved to Amman.

Hassan: Oh. So, you moved to the capital?

Haddad: Yeah.

Hassan: Was there any big difference between the two?

Haddad: It's the capital, it's big—you know, Amman built in seven mountains.

Hassan: Mhmm.

Haddad: And they used to call each mountain by name, yeah.

Hassan: What—what do you mean by that?

Haddad: The city of Amman built in seven mountains.

Hassan: Okay.

Haddad: Like, they say jabal Amman, jabal al-Hussain, jabal al-ashrafee, jabal al—Jabal is mountains [in Arabic], that's what jabal is. Uh, Jabal al-ashrafee, jabal al-naudeef, jabel al-wkhdad.

Hassan: Ah, so they're all named?

Haddad: All named by the, uh, mountains, but the whole—the whole [set of] mountains, it's [in] Amman city.

Hassan: Sounds like a really big place, it's got seven mountains.

Haddad: Yeah. They have like maybe six million live in Amman city alone.

Hassan: Jeez. Umm, did you think that would be a better to place to live than—than your hometown, or do you feel like, uh—like which did you like better?

Haddad: Don't take me wrong, I love Jordan, but I like it here, because maybe if I stayed in Jordan, I'd live a good life there because I used to have my brothers and sisters and my, uh, my mom, but now, uh, my five brothers, I lost three brothers and two sisters and my mother that pass away. I mean, but I'm happy now here because my kids are successful, they have a good life, I

have a good life, I have good friends here. I—I mean, if you tell me to choose where you want to live now? I live in—I stay in the United States.

Hassan: I mean, that makes sense, this is where your life is now.

Haddad: Yeah, I lived more years here, than I lived back home.

Hassan: But you still do visit Jordan?

Haddad: Yeah, I every—I go—I have half-sister, she is older than me. I go every two years, sometimes, to visit her.

Hassan: Oh, a half-sister?

Haddad: Yeah.

Hassan: Could you tell me about that? Like—

Haddad: She's 87 years old.

Hassan: Mhmm.

Haddad: Now she's, uh going—her memory—she's losing her memory and they put her back home in nursing home a couple months ago because she doesn't have kids to take care of her. And my nephews, back there, they put her in nursing home because she couldn't take care of herself anymore. And I was planning to go visit her this—the end of this month but because of the corona, uh, my nephews told me not to come for now. Maybe—hopefully, uh, when things wind down, and I hope this virus goes away and makes people—because everybody freaking out about it.

Hassan: Mhmm.

Haddad: You know? Maybe in the summertime or the end of the summer I'll go be with her and see how she's doing.

Hassan: I hope she's doing well.

Haddad: I called her and, you know, I call where she's in, and the nurse said—once in a while, I'll talk to her, but now she starts forgetting everybody.

Hassan: Yeah, that's just the thing.

Haddad: She's going through, uh, you know, Alzheimer's and she's losing her memory.

Hassan: Mhmm. Um, I also wanted to (laughs) ask—sorry. Um, when—when you came, you know, you brought your spices and you brought a lot of stuff for cooking, you know you worked at a bakery, was cooking and, uh, and stuff like that like—was that a big, um, influence for your household? Does that make—does that question make sense? It just seems—

Haddad: I'm a baker, not—not a chef, there's a difference between—baker you bake bread, you do cakes, you do all the sweet stuff. You know, that's why I'm fat!

(Both laugh)

Haddad: That's a good one!

(Both laugh)

Haddad: From all the sweets, even if you smell it you get fat!

(Both laugh)

Hassan: Um, okay, uh, sheesh, I'm running out of questions (laughs).

Haddad: Do you want to take a break, get you something to drink, to eat?

Hassan: We'll take a quick break.

Haddad: Okay. Would you like some fruits?

Hassan: Uh?

Haddad: I have orange—

[Recording pauses.]

[A ten-minute break goes by with the recording paused. In Arabic culture it is considered very rude to not accept snacks or beverages from your host.]

[Recording resumes.]

Hassan: Uh, I also wanted to ask, just real quick, about, um, a few other events that were going on in Jordan, while you were there. Um, like Black September and the Disaster of 1967?

Haddad: Okay, before '67, my husband was a teacher.

Hassan: Mhmm.

Haddad: We lived in Bethlehem on the West Bank [of] Palestine for a year and a half before the '67 war. When we find out there was going to be a war we moved back to Amman.

Hassan: Mhmm, okay.

Haddad: Okay. And, uh, the '67 war Israel took over the West Bank from Jordan.

Hassan: Mhmm.

Haddad: And, you know, Palestine—the Jordan river between Palestine and Jordan. And they took over the whole land, they occupied the West Bank. And that's—that's the Six Days War between Jordan and between Israel.

Hassan: And that was—

Haddad: When they took over.

Hassan: Mhmm. And that was resolved quickly I suppose? But that caused you to move.

Haddad: We moved before, when we heard there's going to be a war, we moved before, like 2 weeks, 3 weeks before, before the war start.

Hassan: So, um, you're living in As-Salt, you got married and you went to the West—East Bank Bethlehem?

Haddad: No. I went to, uh, Amman, after that, after I have my child, uh—

Hassan: Mhmm.

Haddad: In two months, I had my baby in Jordan. A baby girl.

Hassan: Mhmm.

Haddad: I move—I move with my husband to Bethlehem because he was a teacher.

Hassan: Mhmm.

Haddad: And we stayed there for, uh, from '66 to, uh, maybe May '67. And when we find out it is going to be a war, we moved back to Amman.

Hassan: And then that was the—that was pretty much the end of the—uh, as far as that event goes? [inaudible]

Haddad: Yeah, yeah. And we moved back and after that the war start in '60.

Hassan: Mhmm.

Haddad: You know in June—in June.

Hassan: Yeah, ok, and, um, is there anything else, um, sort of your experience maybe in your adulthood, um, living in Jordan? Before you came to the United States. Like what was happening before you came to—to the United States?

Haddad: Uh, I lost my husband when I was 21 years old. And my son, he was, 3 months old, my daughter, 6 years—uh, 3 years old and uh, that's in 1969. And after 6 years in 1975, I came to the United States with my kids.

Hassan: Um, did—would you mind if I asked how he passed?

Haddad: He had leukemia.

Hassan: Oh.

Haddad: He was very sick. He had leukemia. He was 27 years old.

Hassan: Wow. That is really, really young. I'm sure that was really hard.

Haddad: It's very hard.

Hassan: And you had to take care of the family for the um—

Haddad: I took care of my kids. I lived with my in-laws and, uh, my sister-in-law, she was a teacher, she never married. She helped me out to raise my gran—my kids. And uh, after that I moved here, I came to the United States in 1975.

Hassan: Ok. So that was kind of the like the whole list of events and stories up to the point of coming to the United States. And, um you know, you said, when you first came to the United States, it was—it was pleasant, you know? It was welcoming? [inaudible]

Haddad: It, uh, uh, pleasant, but at the same time it was hard to, you know, to adjust to the new area, to the new, uh, you know, people. Uh, every—even if you move from house to house, it take you awhile to adjust.

Hassan: Oh yeah.

Haddad: And it will be hard, you know, to adjust. Everybody you know who moves from place-to-place, it's going to take him awhile to adjust the, you know, kind of living, you know. But people here were differently—was, uh, respectful. Uh, I didn't have any problems. I mean living here.

Hassan: But—but you did feel that you did adjust, right?

Haddad: I did adjust after maybe a year, I start adjust. And I learned how to drive. And I started, you know, to drive. You know.

Hassan: You know it's interesting that you bring that up. Did they have a lot of cars in Jordan before you left?

Haddad: (sighs) Yes!

Hassan: They did?

Hassan: Yeah. Yes!

Haddad: What—was it like here where pretty much everyone has a car? Or was it more of—

Haddad: No, not everybody had a car. I mean maybe the people who live in the city and they are well-off or educated, they have cars. But the majority of Jordanian people they don't have cars.

Hassan: Mhmm.

Haddad: But now, now, these days, everybody has cars.

Hassan: Oh yeah, everyone.

Haddad: Yeah, it's different.

Hassan: It's different, yeah.

Haddad: After, I mean, uh, everything different! Even—you know?

Hassan: Mhmm. And were there people, like how—do—do you know? Like could your husband drive in Jordan or did you not?

Haddad: No, he never drove.

Hassan: There was just no need?

Haddad: Uh, no, because the transportation there, is very cheap. It's very easy to take the bus or take taxi, you know, to go anywhere you want. And it's cheap.

Hassan: That's, uh, the primary method of transportation? Just taking the bus and stuff?

Haddad: Yes, yes. The bus and the taxi.

Hassan: Did they have trains?

Haddad: One, uh, train.

(Both laugh)

Hassan: Have you ever ridden on the train there?

Haddad: No.

Hassan: No? Okay. Um, excuse me. Now when you go back, comparing it, uh—like when you visit, comparing it to now to then, how—how are things with the transportation?

Haddad: Now it's—everything—the transportation?

Hassan: Yeah, for the transportation.

Haddad: There, it is the same. You can, uh, take taxi. If you are a visitor, you don't have car, but most people now they have cars.

Hassan: Mhmm.

Haddad: I mean all young people, they drive, you know?

Hassan: Mhmm.

Haddad: It's different. You go there, they are more advanced with everything.

Hassan: Right.

Haddad: You know?

Hassan: And, uh, would you say—lets now be a little more general, um, how would you compare it now to then? Like when you left to—when the last time you visited, in Jordan.

Haddad: It's completely different.

Hassan: In what ways?

Haddad: In the technology taking over.

Hassan: Mhmm.

Haddad: You know, in Jordan. I mean you go to the hotel; they have everything you need for your—to—for your needs, you know.

Hassan: Okay. Yeah, there must be a big jump between the two. But it is still recognizable right?

Haddad: Jordan?

Hassan: Yeah.

Haddad: I know the—the old areas but the new areas, if I go there, I don't know the new areas. I get lost.

Hassan: Oh, it's completely different?

Haddad: Completely different.

Hassan: Wow. Um, so I think we're getting close to our wrap-up time, is there anything else you'd like to tell me?

Haddad: I just want to say, thank you to—and wish you luck. And, uh, I'm happy I live in the United States, even I'm proud to be came from Jordan. And I just want to say God Bless America.

Hassan: Alright, thank you again, Faizah.

Haddad: You're welcome.

Hassan: Alright. Let me stop the recording.