

Our Story:
The Founding of the Parish of Saint Nicholas
Antiochian Orthodox Church of
Bridgeport, Connecticut



Presented on the Occasion of the
Fiftieth Anniversary of the
Dedication of the Church
1957 - 2007

OUR STORY:
The Founding of the Parish of
Saint Nicholas Antiochian Orthodox Church of
Bridgeport, Connecticut

Richard L. Marrash

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Dedication

To Our Beloved Founders

On this fiftieth anniversary of the dedication of our church, we, the grateful beneficiaries of the labors and sacrifices of our Syrian immigrant forebears, acknowledge with deep humility the incalculable debt we owe them. I pray that this brief narrative helps everyone in the Saint Nicholas Church family appreciate the love, dedication, and unwavering faith of our beloved founders, who gave us this blessing.



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Acknowledgements

Events mentioned in several parts of the chronology are based on John Betar's presentation to the parishioners of St. Nicholas on Founders' Day, 10 July 2005. Several other parishioners contributed additional facts and recollections to help flesh out the details. Obviously, not every piece of information has found its way into this short document, but the spirit of those contributions has helped to set the tone. I hope to apply those ideas in a broader community history in the future.

Short documents pose special challenges: managing numerous facts in limited space and telling a coherent story. Hopefully, readers will take away something of value for their trouble. I am deeply grateful to everyone who reviewed the drafts and corrected a number of errors. Thanks first and foremost to John Betar for correcting several points of fact, and also to community "historian" Lou Gramesty for sharing his encyclopedic storehouse of memories and anecdotes. Al Zamar, John Macol, Maggie Shawah, and Patty Boros helped fill in numerous gaps; Patty also did most of the preparation for publication. Adele Marrash gave generously of her time editing copy, carefully proofreading each draft. Father Romanos Malouf offered his constant encouragement to complete the project in time for the event. Indeed, we were all under a tight deadline. I alone, of course, am responsible for any shortcomings or inaccuracies that have remained in the document.

-RLM

A Brief History of the Soueidieh Syrian Community of Bridgeport, Connecticut

The thriving faith and cultural community that is today the parish of Saint Nicholas Antiochian Orthodox Church of Bridgeport, Connecticut represents the enduring legacy of the Syrian immigrants who settled here in the period following World War One. The story of the origins of this community, summarized here in a chronology inspired by the personal recollections and papers of John Betar, founding member and retired president of the board of trustees, captures some of the significant events and turning points in the life of the community as its members put down roots in their new country and struggled to achieve a coveted dream—*building their church*.

This was no small ambition, for these men and women had to start from scratch. They had left everything behind in their hometown of Soueidieh, Syria (modern *Samandag*), a port town in the Ottoman district of Alexandretta (modern *Hatay*) about 10 miles from Syria's ancient capital city of Antioch. Situated at the mouth of the Orontes River, the town had been a major Mediterranean port known as *Seleucia Pieria* during Hellenistic times. Although later overshadowed by the rise of Antioch, it continued to function as that city's seaport well into the modern period. The men and women of Soueidieh spring from an area that proudly traces its Christian history back to the visits of the apostles Peter and Paul. Readers of the New Testament will recall that in the *Acts of the Apostles 11:26* we are told that it was at Antioch that followers of Jesus were first called *Christians*.

Shortly after the Great War, as it was known then, the defeated Ottoman Empire was forced out of existence by the modernizing founders of the new Turkish Republic. The latter, whose fervent nationalism would not tolerate the affirmation of any identity

save Turkish, made the ancestral territory of the indigenous population an integral part of Turkey. Henceforth, the Syrian inhabitants of Alexandretta would be required to adopt Turkish identity and the Turkish language to the exclusion of their native Arabic. Those who refused were forced to emigrate. The war-ravaged economy on top of linguistic and cultural repression drove an exodus that had begun even before the guns of war went silent. There was no longer an authentic place for these Syrians in the land of their ancestors. Those who preferred voluntary exile to imposed Turkification, a process that would be firmly established by the mid-1940s, found refuge in the neighboring countries of Syria and Lebanon, settling mainly in the urban areas of Aleppo, Latakia, and Beirut. A small number headed for America.

The postwar era saw a flood of immigration to America from European and Mediterranean countries, and the Soueidieh Syrians joined the vast flow that passed through Ellis Island in the 1920s. A few early pathfinders from Soueidieh were already living in Connecticut, mostly young men who had arrived in the 1910s just prior to the outbreak of war in their homeland. After the war, as these pioneers settled in with steady work, they returned to the “old country” to bring their wives and fiancées to join them in the bold adventure in their adopted country. A modest influx of immigrants from the region continued to arrive throughout the following decades.

When they processed through immigration, most of the early arrivals in America listed Danbury, Connecticut as their immediate destination. Once there, they found work in that city’s thriving hat industry. Those who made Danbury their permanent home formed the community that became the parish of St. George Antiochian Orthodox Church. Eventually a number of families would relocate to Bridgeport. By the 1940s, the Danbury community had built a church, and the group from Bridgeport frequently joined them for worship and social occasions. Indeed, the long, rural drive over the old Route 25 to Danbury to attend church services only served to accentuate the need for a church in

Bridgeport. Despite changing circumstances and the passage of time, personal and family attachments still hold the Bridgeport and Danbury communities together in a strong bond.

For those who settled in Bridgeport, a decent livelihood could be earned at the old Hawie Manufacturing Company. Even today, many of the community's senior citizens, the first generation born in the USA, can recall having their first job at "the Hawie's," which at one time had nearly 100 employees from Soueidieh. Founded by the Hawie brothers, themselves Lebanese immigrants, the original plant can still be seen at the corner of North Washington Avenue and River Street. For decades a major producer of corset stays and fasteners for women's undergarments, the company continues in operation today. Since it employed both men and women, the Hawie Manufacturing Company introduced the latter to factory employment for the first time in their lives. For those women, working for wages in the industrial economy was an unprecedented break with their traditional past. Life would never be the same.

But not everyone was satisfied working on the assembly line. Before long this small group of immigrants would find new opportunities. Their traditional Levantine inclination toward commerce and their spirit of independence led several of them to begin small enterprises, chiefly food services and distribution. The first few adventuresome souls got their modest starts hawking their wares from pushcarts in local neighborhoods; others acquired used pickup trucks to sell wholesale fruits and vegetables to local grocery stores. Theirs was truly an era of optimism and hardy self-reliance.

In time the more successful among them built stable businesses that prospered for many years. Older Bridgeporters might still remember Betar's Market in the south end of town, Zamary's Market in Long Hill, which later reappeared as Zamary's Southport Market, and perhaps the most prominent of these small enterprises: the American Banana Company. Established in the 1930s by four partners, two Syrians and two Greeks, the American Banana Company supplied their product to most of the groceries and major

food retailers in greater Bridgeport right up until the early years of the 2000s when it closed its doors upon the owner's retirement, a son of one of the original Syrian partners.

From those modest economic beginnings, the Syrian community of Bridgeport laid a sturdy foundation for their quest to share in the American dream. But progress was never without formidable challenges. With barely a foothold in their new land, the struggling immigrant community had to face the severe privations brought on by the Great Depression, followed by the uncertainties and economic rationing of yet another world war, the second in their lifetimes. With some trepidation but also deep pride, they sent their youth off to serve their country, America, in every major conflict up to the present. Yet the daunting challenges of starting a new life in a new world never repressed these hardy souls, who shared not only the hardships but also the joys of life working, worshipping, and socializing together, celebrating their traditional culture in *haflis* and *mahrajans*, and seeking a secure future for their children in America.

In seeking to record the the early history of the development of the community this writer consulted frequently with John Betar, whose own life runs parallel to this story, and several first-generation children of the community founders. Information from those consultations together with a personal memoir from John and my own research have been incorporated in the chronicle that follows. In those personal recollections, John Betar and the other contributors have helped preserve for us a precious record of how they persevered and achieved their dream. Recounted here is an iconic American success story.

Chronology of Parish Development

The Early Years

1900 - 1930	FIRST ARRIVALS IN USA
<p>Claim to being the first person from <i>Soueidieh</i> to arrive in America goes to John Shawah, who sails out of Naples on board the Italian liner, <i>Duca d'Aosta</i>. The ship docks in the Port of New York on March 2, 1910. According to the ship's manifest, 31-year-old <i>Hanna Shawah</i> is traveling with his 9-year-old son, <i>Nicola</i>; their destination is <i>Danbury, Conn.</i></p> <p>Three years later John Deeb, his first cousin, Mariam Deeb Gramesty, and her brother-in-law, Ibrahim Gramesty, arrive in New York aboard the <i>Themistocles</i> on November 11, 1913. All are bound for Danbury: Mariam Gramesty to join her husband, John Gramesty, who anxiously awaits her and his brother 'Brahim' at 201 Main Street, while John Deeb heads for 64 Elm Street to stay with his cousin Michel Baik.</p> <p>Later, after relocating to Bridgeport, the home of Mariam and John Gramesty becomes a welcome stop-over for those who follow. After the war, more young men arrive; later these men return to Syria to bring their brides to live with them in their new country.</p> <p>A record of those early journeys by sea can be found in the ship manifests published on the web site of the <i>Statue of Liberty – Ellis Island Foundation, Inc.</i></p>	
1932	SOUEIDIE BROTHERHOOD SOCIETY organized for community support and fellowship
<p>A few years following emigration from their hometown of Soueidieh in the <i>Alexandretta</i> district of Ottoman Syria, eight men come together in Bridgeport, Connecticut to form the Soueidie Brotherhood Society. They have already made the pivotal decision of their lifetimes—to settle permanently in America.</p> <p>Their purpose is to establish a community for mutual aid and to benefit from group support for their young immigrant families. The Society sets itself the ultimate goal of building a church to serve the group's need for worship.</p>	
1934	FIRST COMMUNITY PROPERTY purchased in Bridgeport by the Soueidie Brotherhood Society
<p>The Soueidie Brotherhood Society acquires a 4-family house at 737 – 739 Broad Street in the</p>	

south end of Bridgeport for \$5,000. The apartments are cold-water flats; the bathrooms are in the hall. The building has two separate spaces in the basement that can serve diverse community purposes.

1930s – 1940s	BROAD STREET PROPERTY
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Residential apartments	<p>The first families to occupy the four apartments are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • John Gramesty & family • John Sadie & family • George Sam & family • John J. Shawah & family
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<p>Basement Space:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Men’s Club and Coffee House • Community/Ladies Society 	<p>Community Use:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One-half of the basement space is used regularly as a men’s club and coffee house. • The other space serves the community’s social needs: haflis, meetings, the Ladies Society, Christmas and Easter celebrations—all take place at “the Club.” • Once a month, a priest from our sister parish in Danbury celebrates liturgy there for the Bridgeport community.
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1930s – 1940s	FUNDING COMMUNITY GOALS: Soueidie Brotherhood Society collects dues and rents
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The first members of the Soueidie Brotherhood Society pay dues of fifty cents per month; later dues are raised to \$1.00 per month. Rents from the property begin accumulating over the years to fund the community’s major goal—to *build their Church*.

1952	BROAD STREET PROPERTY SOLD to State of Connecticut
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To make way for the planned New England Thruway (later designated Interstate 95), the State of Connecticut begins purchasing properties in the south end of Bridgeport including several homes owned by members of the Syrian community; the state purchases the Society’s property on Broad Street for \$39,000.

1952	CHURCH BUILDING COMMITTEE formed to prospect for suitable location
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Building Committee membership:

John Betar, John Nassra, Albert Lewis, John D. Zmary, Frank Shawah, George N. Macol, Louis Gramesty, Michael Terek, George Mossessian.

Their mission: *find a suitable location to build the church.*

Since most of the Syrians live in the south end, the group has been worshipping for years at the Holy Trinity Greek Church on Myrtle Avenue. This is convenient because it is in walking distance for most of them. The imminent prospect of having a church of their own creates excitement and renews everyone's sense of purpose.

1953

INITIAL SITE

located on Norman Street in Bridgeport

Building Committee purchases a one-acre parcel of land with a barn on Norman Street in Bridgeport for \$8,000. Local attorney Raymond J. Ganim, a longtime friend of the Syrian community, becomes the group's legal advisor, and processes the transaction pro bono.

1953

THE NEW BEGINNING:

Discovery of available land at 5456 Park Avenue, Bridgeport

A personal recollection by John Betar:

In summer we used to take the children out for a Sunday drive, including a stop for ice cream from the Good Humor man. The ice cream man always parked his truck along a Park Avenue property near the entrance to the Merritt Parkway—5456 Park Avenue.

On one beautiful Sunday afternoon in summer 1953, we saw a real estate company's "For Sale" sign on the property. I contacted the listing agent, Frank Bero, immediately. He informed us that the property consisted of an eight-room house and approximately six acres of land, offered at an asking price of \$42,000. I gave Mr. Bero a \$2,000 check on the spot instructing him to make an offer of \$40,000. That same Sunday evening he called to say the owner, Mrs. Pastor, would accept nothing less than the \$42,000 asking price.

I told Bero to go ahead with the purchase using the \$2,000 check to place a binder on the property. Mrs. Betar and I agreed to present the property to the Church Building Committee. She and I had already decided that if the Committee rejected the offer, we'd purchase the property for ourselves.

1953	BUILDING COMMITTEE decides in favor of the Park Avenue purchase, requiring two actions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Buy Park Avenue • Sell Norman Street
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A special meeting of the Building Committee convenes on a Sunday in July to explore the proposal for buying the Park Avenue property. During intense discussions, concerns are raised that the property is *“too far out in the country”* and will be *“inconvenient to get to...”*

Ultimately these concerns are relieved; the Committee unanimously approves the purchase of the property at 5456 Park Avenue, and agrees to sell the Norman Street property for a price of \$9,000. Before a buyer can be found, vandals torch the barn that is located on the property. The former owner, a Mr. Jacobson, informs attorney Ray Ganim that the fire insurance policy that he had taken out on the building is still in force, and suggests that the group take advantage of it.

The Committee files a claim and collects \$4,500 for the loss of the building. A short time after the fire, the Committee, advised by George Shawah Sr., specialist in commercial real estate, sells the property for \$9,000.

The young Soueidieh Syrian community and the church project so dear to its heart are now committed to a future that will unfold in their new property at 5456 Park Avenue.

1953 - 1957	MEN’S AND LADIES’ SOCIETIES commit to the building project
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With purchase of the Park Avenue property, the community has a definite site for its future church. The Church building committee is now free to move ahead with the project, and begin an intensive drive for funds. Everyone is caught up in the excitement of the church building campaign.

Without hesitation the memberships of the Soueidie Brotherhood Society and the Ladies Auxiliary pledge nearly the whole of their treasuries to launch the project, a sum amounting to \$50,000.

1953 - 1957	FUND-RAISING efforts launched
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The newly-formed SOYO, under first president Mary Chapar along with committee members George and Mike Terek, quickly steps up to sponsor a kick-off event: a *“building fund social”*

in the church hall of Holy Trinity Greek Church in November 1956.

Another event, “*Buy a brick for St. Nick,*” brings in \$2,000 to add to the growing coffers. Members of the Ladies Society contribute their favorite recipes and publish the *first edition* of their *Cookbook*—brisk sales add to the funding.

The Committee undertakes a bond drive among the church membership offering parishioners bonds paying 3% interest. This effort brings in \$20,000.

As an added token of generosity, a number of parishioners donate their bonds to the church.

1953 - 1957

THE PARISH HOUSE:
An all-purpose building

The Park Avenue property with its early twentieth century, eight-room, red brick house becomes the locus of spiritual and organizational life: liturgical services, Sunday School, meetings of the Men’s and Ladies’ Societies, SOYO, and choir rehearsals all take place in this *parish house*.

The parish of St. George in Danbury offers to share its priest, Father George R. George, with the Bridgeport parish. Once a month Fr. George conducts services in the new parish house—a foretaste of liturgies to come.

1957

THE CROWNING ACHIEVEMENT:
Dedication of St. Nicholas Antiochian Orthodox Church of
Bridgeport, Connecticut

The cherished dream of the Soueidie Syrian immigrants to Bridgeport becomes a reality on February 24, 1957 with the laying of the cornerstone of the church building.

Metropolitan Antony Bashir offers the prayers of consecration, assisted by:

- ❖ *Father Nicholas Saikley*, first priest assigned to the newly dedicated Saint Nicholas parish,
- ❖ *Father George R. George*, pastor of St. George parish in Danbury,
- ❖ *Father Joseph Simko*, pastor of St. John the Baptist Carpatho-Russian Church in Bridgeport,
- ❖ *Deacon Fred Shaheen* of St. Vladimir’s Seminary.

John Betar, president of the board of trustees, represents the St. Nicholas community at the ceremonies.

Dignitaries in attendance include:

- *U. S. Senator Prescott Bush* (father of former President George H. W. Bush, and grandfather of President George W. Bush.)
- *Bridgeport Mayor Jasper McLevy*
- *Industrialists Gabriel and Jacob Hawie*, longtime friends of the Syrian community of Bridgeport. In a splendid gesture of generosity and brotherhood, the Hawie brothers donate the marble *iconostasis* for the newly constructed church.

That same year St. Nicholas parishioners celebrate their first Easter services in the basement of the newly dedicated but still incomplete church building.

1957 - 1977

PARISH GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

- From 1932 to 1957, the young community grows from 32 families to 62 families.

St. Nicholas parish launches a new venture—the annual *Bazaar*. This three-day carnival of rides and games, bingo, music and belly dancing, and especially “Syrian” food becomes a familiar annual event in the local area. Area residents develop a taste for “kibbeh” and “tabbouleh” and “stuffed grape leaves.”

Grounds and parking areas are developed to accommodate ever-increasing special occasions.

- On December 6, 1971, workers break ground behind the parish house for the new *church hall*, and lay the cornerstone the following year. Bishop Elia Saliba dedicates the new facility in May 1973.

The new hall allows the basement of the church, which formerly had served as the social center, to be used for meetings, office space, and Sunday School classes.

- By 1977, the parish grows to over 125 families.

Numerous projects relating to Orthodox spiritual life are undertaken:

The Bridgeport chapter of SOYO, formally chartered in 1954, actively participates to promote the objectives of the Archdiocese.

Teen SOYO, formed in the 1960s, gains prominence in the Eastern Region in Bible study, oratory, and leadership and attests to the creativity and talent of the youth of St. Nicholas.

The annual bazaar is dubbed “Taste the Middle East,” and is streamlined to two days, and is still very popular.

Intermarriages bring new faces and cultures into the church community whose membership has become fully assimilated into mainstream America.

- On October 30, 1977, the parish holds ceremonies in the church hall to honor the service and dedication of the seniors of this community. Over three hundred persons attend the gala to celebrate the forty-seven living members and commemorate the contribution of all of the original founders of the St. Nicholas parish.

1987

THE BURNING OF THE MORTGAGE

Metropolitan Philip and other special guests join our pastor, Fr. Matthew George, and the St. Nicholas Church family in celebrating the termination of the mortgage on the church building with divine liturgies and social events followed by a banquet at Liedle's Restaurant in Stratford, Connecticut.

A number of the original founders of the church have lived to see this memorable achievement.

1987 – 2007

OUR PARISH TODAY:
Expanding and Maturing

- The St. Nicholas parish grows nearly four times since the dedication of the church in 1957 and currently numbers 241 families.

Nearly 500 parishioners pursue an active church life in all areas: regular worship, programs for children and youth, adult fellowship, and shared activities with other Orthodox churches in the area.

There is also a renewed commitment to programs of the Archdiocese: parish teens attend the summer camp at the Antiochian Village; participation in the Eastern Regional Conferences increases significantly, and membership steadily grows in the Order of Saint Ignatius, a major service organization of the Archdiocese founded by Metropolitan Philip in 1975.

The St. Nicholas Food Festival, descendent of the original *Bazaar*, still attracts hundreds of enthusiastic fans of Arabic food and entertainment each year.

The famous St. Nicholas Ladies Society *Cookbook*, first published in the mid-1950s, now in its third edition, remains a bestseller at the Food Festival.

- In contributing to the larger society, parishioner Mary Chapar Moran breaks new ground. In 1989 Mary becomes the first woman to be elected Mayor of the City of Bridgeport, truly a singular achievement for the women of this community, and a proud moment for all of the parishioners of St. Nicholas, regardless of their politics.

Having been the backbone of parish life from the very start, the women of St. Nicholas, both individually and in their organizations, unquestionably make this a successful community

through their hard work and selfless dedication.

Early on their ambitions are constrained by the narrow limits of traditional patriarchal culture, but numerous parish women eventually gain public visibility and respect as they move into leadership positions in their church organizations and functions, including service on the once all-male board of trustees—holding all but the top position.

- As a sign of the changing times, another stereotype is broken in 1989 when the board names Evelyn Zamary as its first female president.

Indeed, the irrepresible women of St. Nicholas continue to do what they always have done to make parish life a cherished experience—they lead by example: in faithful worship and in dedicated service to their communities, to their parish, and to their appreciative families.

2007

FIFTY YEARS OF ST. NICHOLAS:
Celebration

The weekend of 15 and 16 September 2007 encompasses a full program of events that includes receptions for the clergy, family activities, meetings, services of dedication and remembrance, and a grand banquet finale at the Stone Barn, in Monroe, CT.



Fifty Years of St. Nicholas: The Legacy Realized

The long journey begun in the turmoil of the early twentieth century has reached its final destination. Today the children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren of those early Syrian immigrants reap the fruits of their forebears' struggle to forge a new life in America. Having the benefits of security, health, and education in the land their parents chose for them, the succeeding generations have moved into numerous professions adding their contributions to American society as businessmen, educators, lawyers, doctors, politicians, and specialists of many kinds. Because of that wonderful gift, freedom of opportunity, they have come to enjoy the success and prosperity made possible for them by those who came before. The parish of Saint Nicholas Antiochian Orthodox Church of Bridgeport, a community that has grown to 241 families, is living testimony to the faith and devotion, courage and tenacity of that early band of new Americans from Syria.

On this extraordinary occasion, fifty years after the dedication of St. Nicholas of Bridgeport as a new parish in the Antiochian Orthodox Archdiocese, it is particularly fitting that we, the parishioners of Saint Nicholas, honor the memory of the founders of our community—they were our fathers and mothers, our grandfathers and grandmothers. This unforgettable milestone in the life of the St. Nicholas parish of Bridgeport is an enduring tribute to them. Their dream has been realized.

Once again, we are privileged to have our beloved Metropolitan Philip, primate of the Self-Ruled Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America, to offer the prayers and lead the commemorative services. Indeed, our parish is doubly blessed since it was also Metropolitan Philip who officiated at ceremonies celebrating the termination of the mortgage on our church building twenty years ago.

The weekend of 15 and 16 September 2007 comprises an array of events that includes receptions for the clergy, family activities, meetings, and services of dedication and remembrance—a truly festive program culminating in an elegant finale, the grand banquet at the Stone Barn in Monroe, Connecticut.

Honored clergy at the banquet include: His Eminence Metropolitan Philip Saliba, and his assistant, Archdeacon Hans El-Hayek; our pastor, Fr. Romanos Malouf and Khouriyeh Laurie; former St. Nicholas pastor Fr. Joseph Purpura and Khouriyeh Kathleen; and Deacon Sami Bal and wife Susan. Besides St. Nicholas clergy, several Antiochian clergy from nearby parishes as well as clergy from other local Orthodox churches will attend this celebration.

Special guests include: Bridgeport Mayor John M. Fabrizi and wife Mary, Attorney Raymond J. Ganim and wife Gladys, and Mr. Robert Hawie and wife Ann.

EPILOGUE

2019 - OVER A DECADE OF CHANGE

The St. Nicholas story goes on carried forward by the descendants of the early founders. The twelve years since the golden anniversary have witnessed changes of all sorts: the arrival of fresh faces, the passing of old and venerable ones. Routine and not-so-routine events and projects have been launched, especially renovation projects, some still underway. The church property has shrunk as surrounding grounds were sold off to build a financial safeguard for the future, but the church building and the hall remain actively serving the community's spiritual and social needs. The annual food festival goes on, as popular as ever, and the dedicated women of St. Nicholas still form the heart and soul of its community life.

All is well in the parish. The first volume of the Soueidie Syrian journey to a new life of freedom and opportunity is now complete but for one final, bittersweet farewell. After a long career of service to his church and to the community he helped to found, the last of that generation of immigrants has left us. Our beloved John Betar, first president of the parish council and last member of the founding generation, whose memoirs inspired this chronicle, passed away in fall 2018. John's dear wife, Ann, followed him in 2019, ever so gently during Holy Week. + Memory Eternal +

Yet the sequel to this story is still in the making, and fresh chapters are being penned by new authors. Changes have come, and more will surely follow, but the community of St. Nicholas Antiochian Orthodox Church endures, for it sits upon a solid foundation: unshakeable faith in the *good news* of the Gospel and in the American dream. Guided by that faith, the youth of St. Nicholas, in whose hands lies the future, will no doubt mark proud new achievements as they write the next episodes in this ongoing family saga.

RLM, Easter 2019

Appendices*

- Parish Priests and Presidents of the Board of Trustees
1957 - 2007
- The Soueidie Brotherhood Society circa 1930s
- Ladies Auxiliary Society circa 1930s



Members of the First Parish Council

* A complete and accurate list of the original members of the Soueidie Brotherhood Society and the Ladies Auxiliary Society was not available at press time. If such information does become available, the membership lists will be amended in a future revision.

See parish leadership for updates of parish council membership since 2006.

Parish Priests and Presidents of
The Board of Trustees

1957 - 2007

DATE	PARISH PRIEST	BOARD PRESIDENT
1957 – 1960	Fr. Nicholas Saikley	John Betar
1960 – 1963	Fr. Victor George	John Betar
1963 – 1968	Fr. Michael Stott	John Betar
1968 – 1970	Fr. Nicodeme Joseph	Frank Showah
1970 – 1971	Fr. Anthony Silva	Frank Showah
1971 – 1979	Fr. John Chromiak	George Shawah, Sr.
1979 – 1984	Fr. Joseph Purpura	George Shamiss Daniel Shamas
1984 – 1989	Fr. Matthew George	Nicholas Mike Evelyn Zamary
1989 – 1996	Fr. Michael Evans	Evelyn Zamary Gazi Keklik John Sam
1996 – 1997	Fr. Paul Hodge	Mike Terek
1997 – 2003	Fr. Matthew George	Mike Terek John Bashar
2003 – 2006	Fr. Noah Bushelli	Louis Shawah Al Zamary
2006 – Present*	Fr. Romanos Malouf	Al Zamary *See parish updates

Soueidie Syrian Brotherhood Society
Circa 1930s

George Attick

William Baik

George S. Barbar

Louis S. Barbar

Louis "Shahhoud" Barbar

John Beik

John Betar

Michael Betar

George Beylouni

Albert Bougey

Abraham Chapar

George Chapar

Nicholas Chapar

John Daniels

John Deeb

Michael Deeb

Abraham Gramesty

John Gramesty

Joseph Habib
George Hanna
Michael Hanna
Victor Hanna
Albert Kassery
Joseph Kramesty
Nicholas Kramesty
Albert Lewis
George M. Macol
George N. Macol
Michael Macol
Louis Mohegal
Michael Mahigel
Samuel M. Mahigel
Elias Nahley
Henry Midney
George Mike
George Mousey
Nicholas Mousey
John Nassra

John Sadie

George Sam

John Sam

Louis Shamas

Daniel Shamiss

George Shawah

John J. Shawah

Michael Shawah

Samuel Shawah

John Showah

Michael Showah

Samuel Showah

Albert Terek

Daniel Terek

George Youcob

George Zamarly

John Zamarly

John D. Zamarly

Asper Zariff

Ladies Auxiliary Society
Circa 1930s

Rose (Mrs. William) Baik

Helen (Mrs. Louis S.) Barbar

Badia (Mrs. Louis “Shahhoud”) Barbar

Zakieh (Mrs. John) Beik

Zakieh (Mrs. Abraham) Chapar

Mary (Mrs. George) Chapar

Lillian (Mrs. John) Daniels

Helen (Mrs. Basil) Deeb

Mariana (Mrs. John) Deeb

Hanneh (Mrs. Michael) Deeb

Rachel (Mrs. Abraham) Gramesty

Mariam (Mrs. John) Gramesty

Christine (Mrs. Joseph) Habib

Karimeh Kassery

Mary (Mrs. Nicholas) Kramesty

Bertha (Mrs. Albert) Lewis

Helen (Mrs. George M. “Naoom”) Macol

Mary “Sitti” Macol

Nassa (Mrs. George N.) Macol

Mary (Mrs. Michael) Macol
Mariam (Mrs. Michael) Mahigel
Mary (Mrs. Henry) Midney
Helen (Mrs. George) Mike
Frieda Mossessian
Rose (Mrs. John) Nassra
Nasra (Mrs. John “Zarzour”) Sadie
Helen (Mrs. John) Sam
Mary (Mrs. George) Sam
Jamilie (Mrs. Louis) Shamas
Catherine (Mrs. Daniel) Shamiss
Mary (Mrs. John J.) Shawah
Zarif (Mrs. Michael) Shawah
Helen (Mrs. Samuel) Shawah
Mary (Mrs. Michael) Showah
Catherine (Mrs. Albert) Terek
Wasila (Mrs. George) Zamar
Sadika (Mrs. John D.) Zamar
Helen (Mrs. Asper) Zariff

NOTES ON TRANSLITERATION

The transliteration of Arabic names presents special problems. Contemporary documentation generally follows the Library of Congress transliteration system for Arabic, but that has been avoided here since it would be unfamiliar and cumbersome for the purposes of this paper.

In general, this paper uses the *found spelling* for individual and family names, as well as for place names. Different transport companies applied their own transliteration systems to spell Arabic names. That fact largely accounts for the appearance today of variant spellings of the same family name.

In citing the name of the immigrants' town of origin for the historical overview, I used the most commonly recognized spelling, *Soueidieh*, the French transliteration of the Arabic *suwaydiyyah*. Thereafter, the spelling used is *Soueidie* (dropping the final letter *h*) as that follows the spelling used by the community itself in its own writings, and reflects the community's usual pronunciation of the name.

NOTES