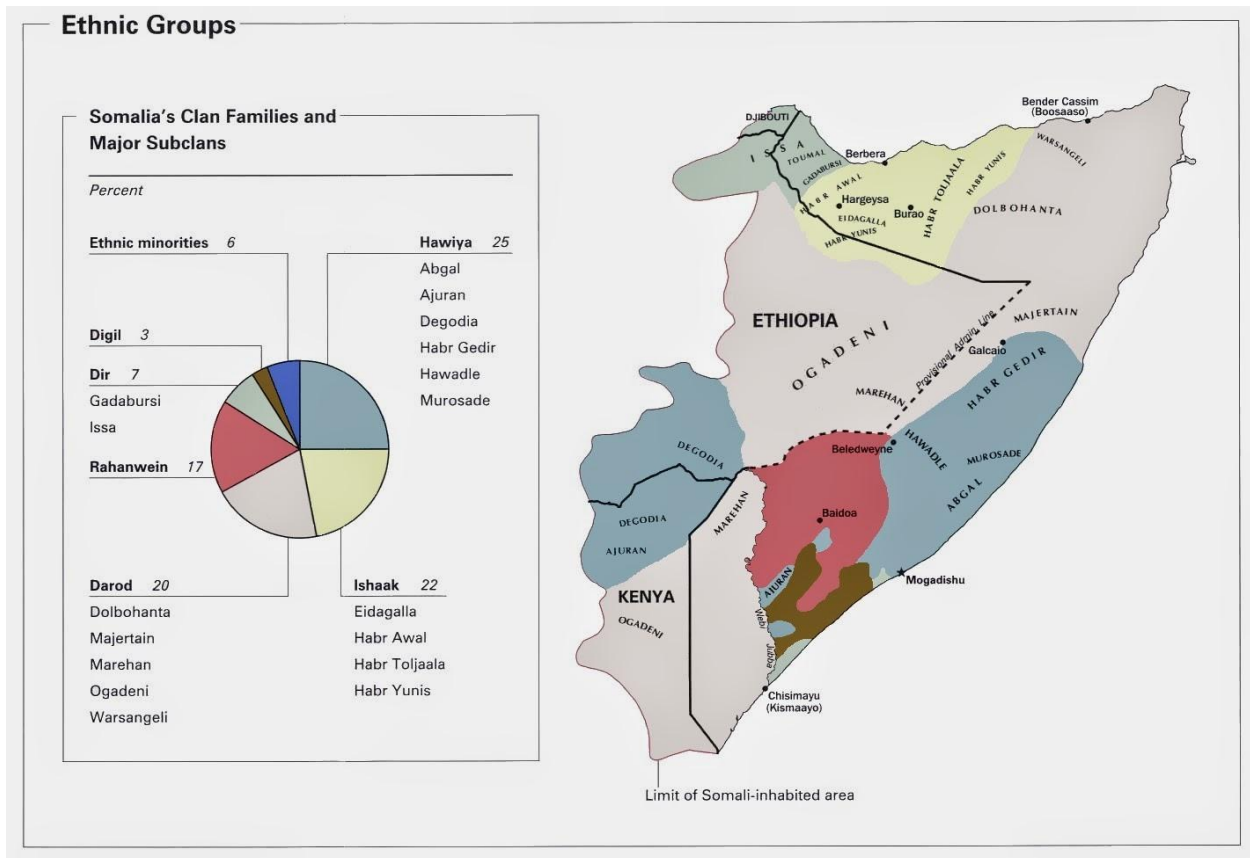


Resources for students & faculty about Somali communities in Maine

This annotated bibliography provides Bates students and faculty with educational resources about Somalis -- Somali Bantus in particular -- who have settled in Lewiston, Maine. This compilation of information is up-to-date and includes resources that provide essential knowledge about the history and experiences of the Somali community. To clarify not all Somalis have the same experiences, and one must be careful to avoid homogenizing diverse communities. Bolded listings or sections are highly recommended.

Map

Somalia is located in the horn of Africa and surrounded by Ethiopia, Kenya, and the Indian Ocean. Somali Bantus primarily reside in southern parts of Somalia. As demonstrated by this map, there are many ethnic communities in Somalia.



2002 CIA map shows the distribution of the various Somali clans.

This map shows the historical colonization of Somalia. Additionally, the link below also includes other geographic and political maps of Somalia through time.



Moe, Robert. "Somali Deep Dive Module 1" 19 October 2011. Web. <http://www.slideshare.net/Robertmoe/somalia-history>

General Timeline

1800s	Indian Ocean slave trade brings East Africans to southern Somalia as slaves for agricultural plantations and pastoralism. Italy and England each claim parts of Somali territory as colonies.
1903	Slave trade to southern Somalia ends.
1840-1950s	Fugitive and freed slaves and ethnic minorities from the Shabelle River Valley move into Jubba Valley villages to farm.
1960	Somalia gains independence.
1969	Siyad Barre takes over Somalia's government in a coup.
1977	Somalia attacks Ethiopia to reclaim Somali-inhabited territory controlled by Ethiopia and is defeated. Somalia becomes a Cold War ally of the US.
1980s	As a Cold War ally, Somalia becomes second largest recipient of US aid in Africa.
1990	The Cold War ends, and the US cuts aid to Somalia.
1991	Siyad Barre's government falls.
1992	Civil war engulfs the country. Militias attack sedentary farmers for labor and food. Thousands flee to refugee camps in Kenya.
1992-3	The UN and the US intervene in civil war but fail to establish peace. The loss of 18 US Rangers prompts the US to withdraw from the conflict.
1990s	Minority farmer-refugees persecuted in refugee camps. Resettlement attempts in Tanzania and Mozambique fail. The name "Somali Bantu" emerges as an umbrella term for agriculturalist ethnic minority population.
2000	The US agrees to grant Somali Bantus persecuted minority status and resettle 12,000 in the US. Somali Bantu refugees begin to relocate to Kakuma refugee camp in 2002.
2001	Resettlement process freezes after 9/11 World Trade Center attacks.
2003	Somali Bantu refugees begin arriving in US.
2005	Somali Bantu refugees begin secondary resettlement in Maine.

<http://wiki.colby.edu/display/AY298B/Historical+Timeline>

Islam

The majority of Somalis are Muslim and practice Sunni Islam. Follow this link to access a slideshow about the basic practices and beliefs of Islam: <https://haikudeck.com/p/huD5xVa9Db>

Film and Videos

WCVB. "A Journey from Africa to Maine" 29 January 2016. Web.

<http://www.wcvb.com/chronicle/a-journey-from-africa-to-maine/37697112>

This short news broadcast presents the journey of Somali refugees to Lewiston. Different community leaders are interviewed and share their thoughts on the transitions Lewiston has undergone. Though the video does not have much depth, it is informative and helps initiate a conversation about the varied perspectives individuals hold about the migration of Somalis to Lewiston.

Dahler, Don. "After Bumpy Start, Maine town embraces African immigrants." CBS News. 28

April 2016. Web <http://www.cbsnews.com/news/after-bumpy-start-lewiston-main-town-embraces-african-immigrants/>

This three minute broadcast focuses on how many young Somalis have fully integrated into the community by interviewing the Lewiston High School principal. It also points out that the town was not always idyllic, but it does highlight that LHS recently won the state championship, which is a demonstration of cross-cultural collaboration. The discussion feed has comments that would be interesting to unpack.

Makepeace, Anne, dir. *Rain in a Dry Land*. Makepeace Productions, 2007.

Rain in a Dry Land is an 82 minutes long film that follows the journey of two Somali Bantu families beginning in refugee camps and then in the United States. The film captures how these families are prepared to transition into a new culture and all the experiences they encounter once in their new environments. Though this documentary is not set in Lewiston, it provides a clear understanding of some of the challenges that Somali refugees face when adapting to a community unlike their own. To learn more about this must-see film follow this link:

<http://www.makepeaceproductions.com/rain-in-a-dry-land.html>.

Books

Besteman, Catherine. *Making Refuge: Somali Bantu Refugees and Lewiston, Maine*. 2016.

<http://read.dukeupress.edu/content/making-refuge>

Catherine Besteman is a professor of Anthropology at Colby College. Her areas of expertise include inequality, refugees, humanitarianism, and activism. Some of her fieldwork has taken place in Somalia, and since then, Besteman has written many books on the Somali population. Recently, as an “action anthropologist” she has written, *Making Refuge: Somali Bantu Refugees and Lewiston, Maine*. In *Making Refuge*, Besteman tracks the journey of Somali Bantus who have fled their homes and have attempted to resettle in communities like Lewiston, Maine in the United States. Besteman is focused on ethnographically recording their process as they reconstruct their lives after having lived through many horrific experiences. At the same time, she captures the varied responses that Lewiston locals have in regards to the new waves of immigration. Besteman’s book highlights the current debates about immigration and provokes the reader to think about what social responsibility means. Her book is divided into three parts: first she provides some background on the Somali Civil War and other historical events that caused many Somalis to seek asylum, in the second part she records what happens when Somali Bantus begin to settle in Lewiston and the different reactions that residents have, and in the final part she explores what integration looks like and what it means for both recent immigrants and locals. Overall, this collection of ethnographic stories captures some of the struggles that Somali Bantus have encountered since becoming refugees and how they navigate the conditions of living in a predominantly Euro-American, English-speaking community. **All the chapters in this book are highly recommended.**

Buck, Patricia and Rachel Silver. *Educated For Change?*. Charlotte, N.C.: Information Age Pub., 2012. Print.

Educated for Change? is written by Patricia Buck, an educational anthropologist at Bates College and co-authored by Rachel Silver, co-founder of the non-profit organization Matawi. This ethnography focuses on the transformative power schooling has for Somali women and girls living in refugee camps and in the United States. *Educated for Change?* draws the ways in which the educational experiences of Somali females deal are interrelated with their cultural history, religion, and gender politics. The book is divided into two parts: the first part examines young women in the Dadaab refugee camps of northeastern Kenya and the second part is about Somali women who have resettled in a New England town. **Recommended chapters** are in the second part: Chapter Nine, Chapter Ten, Chapter Eleven, and Chapter Thirteen.

Grady, Sandra. *Improvised adolescence: A study of identity formation among Somali Bantu teenage refugees*. 2015. <http://search.proquest.com/docview/577653103>.
<https://books.google.com/books?id=q3z8CAAQBAJ&pg=PA139&lpg=PA139&dq=somali+bantu+gender&source=bl&ots=GWJNN7QKxk&sig=VmY9flWk2OCXH6Mhy>

[UXBf_mE1kl&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwjipLXq-53MAhWF6SYKHcFEDeQQ6AEIKzAD#v=onepage&q=somali%20bantu%20gender&f=false.](http://www.pbs.org/pov/raininadryland/letter-from-maine/2/)

In *Improvised adolescence: A study of identity formation among Somali Bantu teenage refugees*, folklorist Sandra Grady, studies how young Somali Bantu refugees experience the transition into adulthood while living in the United States. Through ethnographic research, she examines how the formation of young individuals' identities is altered by leaving refugee camps and resettling in midwestern communities. Grady sets up a dichotomy between adolescence in U.S. culture and entering adulthood from childhood in Somali Bantu culture to demonstrate how the media and educational system impacts young Somali Bantu's perceptions of identity and gender roles. Grady argues that the concept of adolescence delays adulthood, which is thought of as an individual process in the U.S. and a collective process in Somali Bantu culture. The book contains six chapters, which in composition present the distinct cultural rituals of the transition to adulthood. Grady's wider discussion is about how young Somali Bantus living in the United States have constructed practices to improvise their adolescence. **Chapter Four and Chapter Five** are highly recommended because they provide a modern approach to the conceptualization of young refugee identities and they explain how the education system is a rite of passage for many Somali Bantus teens.

Huisman, Kimberly A. *Somalis In Maine*. Berkeley, Calif.: North Atlantic Books, 2011. Print.

Somalis In Maine was written by Kimberly Huisman in collaboration with non-Somali and Somali writers in order to present the rich narratives of cross cultural interactions in Lewiston. What makes this text special is that many Somali students became involved with the project and contributed their own work. The collection of stories and images encourage new voices to display the cultural currents in this community. Though the history of the Somali diaspora is still ongoing, this books attempts to provide important knowledge about Somali history, culture, and Islam. The anthology is divided into five parts that offer lots of content. The **recommended readings** are: "Moving Past," by Kay Ahmed; "Zest," by Fartuna Hussein; "The Journey to Who I am" by Nawal Wali; "Caaliya's Storytelling," by Kristen Langellier; "L.L. Bean, Community Gardens, and *Biil*: Somalis Working in Maine," by Mazie Hough and Carol Toner; "Why Maine? Secondary Migration Decisions of Somalis in Maine," by Kimberly Huisman.

Articles

Inc., POV. Letter From Maine: New In Town: Rain In A Dry Land: POV: PBS. POV | *American Documentary Inc.* <http://www.pbs.org/pov/raininadryland/letter-from-maine/2/>.

The article, "Letter From Maine: New In Town," was originally published in The New Yorker and written by William Finnegan in 2006. The Public Broadcasting Station features this article on their Point of View program which highlights *Rain in a Dry Land*. The article covers an important moment in time when the then mayor of Lewiston, Laurier Raymond, wrote an open letter to the Somali community in 2002 asking them to stop encouraging other refugees to settle in Lewiston. This became national news and attracted supporters and opposers of the new wave of refugee settlement. This article is a must read because it relates the unification and collaboration among Lewiston locals, Batesians, Somalis, and others that took place in order to defend the rights of underrepresented individuals and shine light on their stories.

"Incoherent Thoughts...". *Incoherent Thoughts...*. Web. <https://shafisaid.wordpress.com/>

This blog is run by Shafi who resides in London and dedicates time writing about Somalia and Somali culture. The emphasis of "Incoherent thoughts" is on the rich, cultural heritage of Somalia and the topics covered range from politics to poetry. This platform provides the reader with an "insider's" perspective on the experiences of being Somali. Though the blog has not been active since 2008, there are many thought-provoking and informative pieces that are worth reading.

Anderson, Cynthia. "One City's Refugee Success Story". *TheHill*. 2 December 2015. Web. http://thehill.com/blogs/congress-blog/homeland-security/261708-one-citys-refugee-success-story#disqus_thread

"One City's Refugee Success Story" is a blog entry for The Hill, a political newspaper. The blog is about how Lewiston serves as an example of successful multicultural communities. Anderson briefly lists some important events that shaped Lewiston and states that there is still division between refugees and locals because it is not a utopia. She also makes the comparison between the Syrian refugee crisis and the diaspora of Somali refugees in hopes of demonstrating that Lewiston's success can be replicated elsewhere.

Ellison, Jesse. Lewiston Maine Revived by Somali Immigrants. *Newsweek.com* 16 January 2009. Web. <http://www.newsweek.com/lewiston-maine-revived-somali-immigrants-78475>

This piece was published in Newsweek and argued that the new wave of Somali immigrants was boosting Lewiston's economy. This positive view on the growing refugee population was in response to much of the backlash Lewiston locals. In addition to helping the economy, the article also points out that new Somali residents were changing the demographics by lowering the median age of Mainers. This short read is important because it displayed the positive impacts that Somali groups had on this community and justified their settlement in Lewiston.

Ellison, Jesse. "We Need More Mainers Like ZamZam Mohamud". *Down East*. February 2016. Web. <http://downeast.com/zamzam-mohamud/>

This article is an inspirational account of ZamZam Mohamud's life. ZamZam was one of the first Somali refugees who settled in Lewiston and since then has become an active leader. This piece follows the work she has done and it also covers some important events that have shaped the community. ZamZam is portrayed as a cultural translator and liaison who has helped unite White and non-White groups in Lewiston. She is considered a Somali representative, but at the same she also challenges traditional, cultural gender norms. ZamZam argues that she is not a representative of anybody but herself. This refreshing and insightful article is highly recommended.

Gibney, James. "Maine's Somalis Could Be Its Saviors". *Bloomberg View*. 9 November 2015. Web. <http://www.bloomberg.com/view/articles/2015-11-09/maine-s-somalis-could-be-its-saviors>

"Maine's Somalis Could be Saviors" focuses on the interrelation of politics and cultural understanding. The article presents the Lewiston mayoral runoff between Ben Chin and Robert Macdonald and exposes some of the discriminatory policies implemented by elected leaders that have harmed marginalized groups. Gibney's argument is that political leaders need to have constructive conversations about race and diversity in order to develop effective economic strategies. This piece does an excellent job addressing some of the fears Lewiston locals have about new residents.

MacQuarrie, Brian. "Somali Refugees Find A Farming Oasis — In Maine - The Boston Globe". *BostonGlobe.com*. 16 August 2015. Web. http://www.bostonglobe.com/metro/2015/08/16/somali-refugees-find-farming-oasis-maine/Q8LwE2N7eKRD1ytgmtlU2l/story.html?s_campaign=8315

This short article is about Somali Bantu refugees who had found employment working as farmers. It explains that working in the fields is part of Somali cultural heritage and it is not seen as work, but, more of a "therapeutic hobby." This feel good story about cultural acceptance and community integration is worth analyzing and dissecting.

Wuthmann, Walter. "Muslim In Maine: Coping With Mistrust, Counting On Faith, Community". *Theforecaster.net*. 4 April 2016. Web. <http://www.theforecaster.net/muslim-in-maine-coping-with-mistrust-counting-on-fa>

[ith-community/](#)

This piece looks at some of the challenges that Muslims of all nationalities living in Maine face in regards to their faith. The article begins with a story of a Somali woman who was a victim of islamophobia in Lewiston right after news spread about an ISIS attack in Paris. However, there are also stories about progress and the appreciation of religious difference. Overall, the article is divided into six sections and are intertwined in such a way that they draw a larger narrative about the importance of Islam for many refugees in Lewiston.