



Tell Us Your Story

Cenna Khatib

I have spent my whole life in this lovely small town of Swampscott but my roots are well traveled. My mother, Keli (Webb) Khatib was born and raised in Charleston, West Virginia. Her ancestors are from England and Ireland but both sides of her family have lived in the United States for many generations.

My father, Osama (Sam) Khatib, on the other hand, was born and raised in Damascus, Syria with a lineage that dates back over 1,500 years and ancestors who participated in the ancient spice trade. He was always proud to pull out the copy of his family tree to show us.

At age eighteen, my father went on a plane for the very first time, knowing no English and came to America for a new start and education. He learned English and attended college at the University of South Carolina in Columbia, SC, where he met and married my mother. They lived in North Carolina and Maryland before finally making their way to Swampscott.

I've been fortunate enough to grow up in a place where family parties always consisted of celebrating all the various cultures and backgrounds of our friends and family.



PHOTO: Spice Market in Damascus, Syria 1895 where Khatib Ancestors traded

