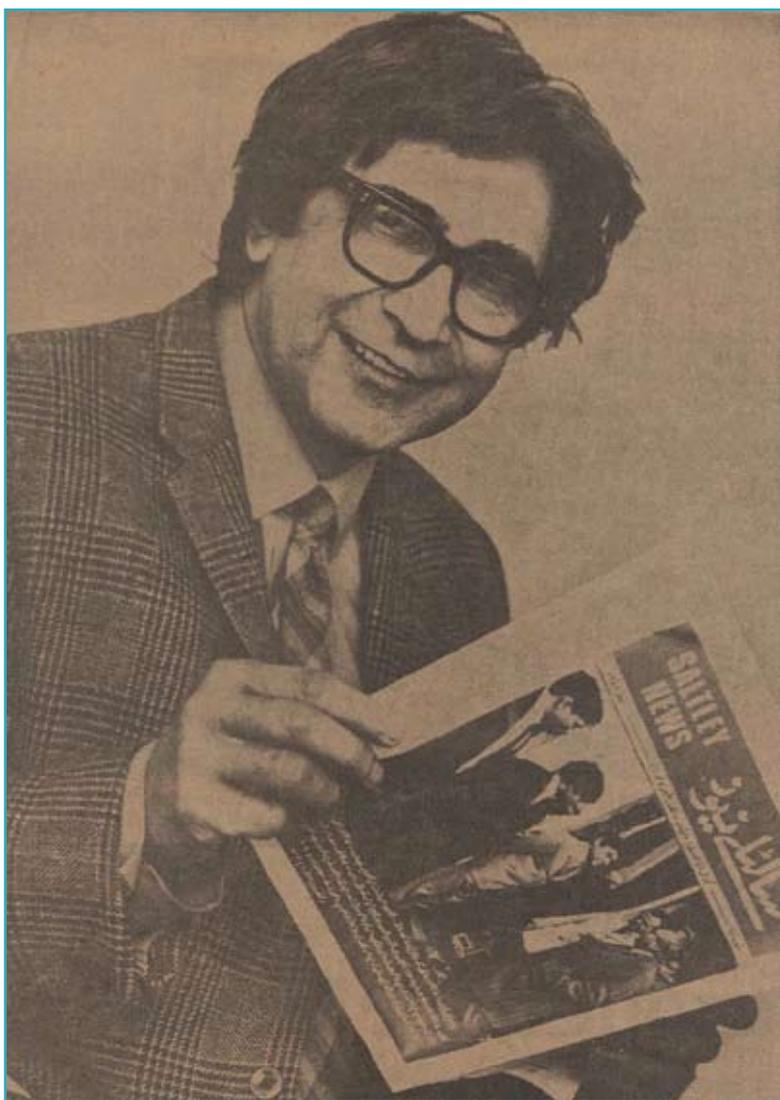


Mahmood Hashmi

The Mahmood Hashmi Archive can be used to explore stories of migration to Birmingham. The information shared here about Mahmood's life was used by a group of teachers to develop [Using an enquiry process](#) to explore archive materials.



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of Mahmood Hashmi.

Mahmood Hashmi is a well-known Urdu writer living in Small Heath, Birmingham. Since arriving in Britain in 1953, he has been a keen observer of the lives of South Asian immigrants and the following generations. He is regarded as a leading light in the world of Urdu literature and is consulted by writers from across the globe.

Mahmood graduated from Punjab University and went on to gain a M.A and LL.B from University of Aligarh in 1943. Before Indian independence in 1947, his short stories and radio dramas appeared in important journals and were performed on radio. In 1950, Mahmood's book 'Kashmir Udhas Hai' [The Sorrow of Kashmir] was published, relating what life was like in Kashmir at the time of Independence. It was considered a literary landmark, and is used in the BA Urdu course of the Open University in Islamabad.



Mahmood moved to Britain in 1953, gaining a Postgraduate Certificate in Education from Leeds University, and becoming the first Black teacher in Birmingham in 1956.



'Continental Grocers', Saltley, Birmingham, 1976 by Nick Hedges. The shopkeeper stands in the doorway whilst his relatives are photographed. The photograph documents how a community arrives, settles and supports itself in a new area. Reproduced by kind permission of Nick Hedges

In 1961 he became the founder editor of 'Mashriq' [The East], Britain's first Urdu/South Asian newspaper, based in London. Initially, the newspaper was financed by Pakistani/Kashmiri factory workers from Birmingham, who could see the important impact it would have on their lives. When he left the Mashriq in 1972, he returned to Birmingham and set up an Urdu interpreting and translating service, edited a bilingual newspaper [Saltley News] and continued to teach.

In the 1980s, as Urdu began to be introduced into British schools, he moved to Peterborough, where he undertook research into the needs of young people who were interested in learning Urdu in schools, and he devised teaching methods and materials. This led him to create his Qaida [Primer], which was published by Bradford Metropolitan Council, in 1986. An entirely original approach in the teaching of Urdu, the Qaida was highly praised in the Times Educational Supplement.

Since retirement in 1983, he has reviewed bilingual books for the Times Educational Supplement, acted as a language consultant for the BBC School Magazine, and as an examiner for the Royal Society of Arts Certificate in the teaching of community languages.

The Mahmood Hashmi Archive

The Mahmood Hashmi Archive includes a range of material including photographs, books, publications and newspapers. It is held within Birmingham Archives and Heritage collections and was donated by Pervaiz Khan; a friend of Mahmood's and an artist, activist and campaigner.

Archiving such a collection raised a series of challenges, the most crucial being that that most of the information and material is in the Urdu language. In order to catalogue and list material so that people could gain access to it, the support of Urdu speakers was crucial.

For several months after the archive had been donated, there were discussions between members of the Urdu-speaking community and the Archive and Heritage Service, to find a way to support and develop the archive, so that it could be made publicly available.

Two people volunteered to list the contents of the collection including Birmingham's Deputy Lord Mayor at the time, Councillor Rashid. More remains to be known about its contents, and more work needs to be done - including capturing Mahmood Hashmi's story as an Oral History.

The Mahmood Hashmi archive can be found at Birmingham Archives and Heritage.
Reference MS 2579

With thanks to Nikki Thorpe and Izzy Mohammed, Birmingham Heritage and Archives

