

# FOUNDATIONS

## ALLAH-O-AKBAR God is the Greatest of all

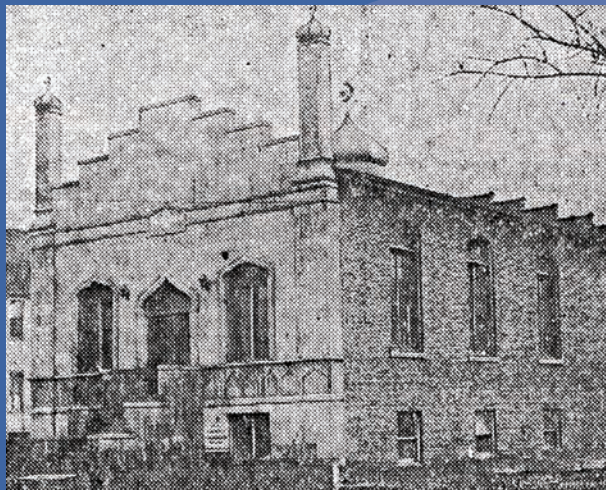


THE MOSLEM MOSQUE  
(Mohammedan Prayer Hall)  
302 Victor Avenue  
in the City of Highland Park, Detroit, Mich., built by  
Mr. M. Karoub (see right) at the cost of \$50,000.  
Mr. Hassan Karoub, (see left) the Imam.

Poster circulated to raise funds for the construction of the Highland Park Mosque, circa 1919. Courtesy of Carl Karoub.

*This is the first Moslem mosque built in this land and I am proud to have the first prayer in it, as the first imam therein. This mosque, although built for the followers of Islam, will be open to the believers of all religions for a place of rest, prayer and meditation. Mohammedans believe in worshipping but the one God. Mohammed, on whom be peace and the blessings of God, is a prophet of God who teaches us how to come into communion with Him.*

*We are all children of the one God. There is no original sin. There is no eternal hell. The religion of Islam treads underfoot all racial prejudices. Islam teaches its devotees that when they go to any other country they must peacefully obey the laws of the government of that country. Thus it is the sacred and religious duty of every Mohammedan here to be a good citizen of America and to learn the language of the country, without which we cannot understand each other rightly.*



The Highland Park Mosque, circa 1927.

Dr. Mufti Mohammad Sadiq (from India)  
Detroit News. Thursday, June 9, 1921



Pioneer members of the Nation of Islam, 1975. Photo by Shedrick El-Amin.



Congregation of Masjid Wali Muhammad.



Masjid Wali Muhammad, 2005.



Local imams celebrate the opening of the Highland Park Mosque, 1921. Detroit Free Press.

## 'ALLAH HO AKBAR!' IS CHANT IN DETROIT WHEN CITY'S MOSLEMS GATHER FOR SERVICE.



Imam Khalil Bazy (right) embraces Duse Mohammad Ali at Eid al-Fitr services, 1927. Detroit Free Press.

Muslims first came to Detroit in the 1890s. They were drawn to the city's booming industrial economy, and by the 1920s small Muslim enclaves had formed near automobile manufacturing plants. Detroit's early Muslims belonged to two groups: (1) immigrants from parts of Europe (Bosnia and Albania) and the Middle East (Turkey and Greater Syria) controlled by the Ottoman Empire; and (2) African Americans, most of them from the Deep South. The Europeans and Middle Easterners were either Sunni or Shi'a. African Americans, by contrast, embraced new, alternative versions of Islam framed in response to anti-Black racism in the US. These movements included the Moorish Science Temple (founded by Noble Drew Ali in 1913), the Ahmadiyya movement (which originated in India in the 1880s and was brought to America in 1921 by Mufti Muhammad Sadiq), and the Nation of Islam (founded in Detroit in 1930 by W.D. Fard).

Detroit's first mosque – and the first in the U.S. – was built in Highland Park in 1921, when the local Muslim population was said (in newspaper accounts) to be 16,000 strong. The Highland Park mosque closed in 1923, but by the mid-1930s Arabs, African Americans, Afghanis, and Indians had prayer spaces on Hastings Street, a road that connected Detroit's "foreign worker colonies" to "Paradise Valley," the city's largest African American neighborhood. The oldest continuously occupied mosque in greater Detroit, the American Moslem Society, was established in Dearborn in 1938. Albanians established their first mosque in 1950, near Highland Park.

By 1971, most area Muslims worshipped in only four congregations: the Albanian Islamic Center, in Harper Woods; the American Moslem Society, in Dearborn; Muhammad's Temple No. 1, in Detroit (renamed Masjid Wali Muhammad in 1976); and the Islamic Center of America, in Detroit. Many of Detroit's new mosques are linked historically to these institutions, all of which still function as houses of prayer.



Federation of Islamic Associations banquet in Detroit, 1957. Courtesy of Joe Caucy.



W.D. Fard (in framed portrait), Elijah Muhammad (seated), and Warith Deen Muhammad. Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture.