

# Muslim 'Pioneer' recalls his history

With the Name Allah (In the Name of God), Most Gracious, Most Merciful; praise be to God the Cherisher and Sustainer of the worlds.

By Kariem Muhammad



WHEN KARIEM MUHAMMAD joined the nation of Islam in 1949, he told the Honorable Master Elijah Muhammad he should have been there "20 years earlier."

I would like to give the history of my life in the World Community of Islam in the West, formerly known as the Nation of Islam.

My father died in 1917 when I was only 15-years-old; there were 10 of us in the family, five boys and five girls. I was the oldest of the family and had to work and help my mother take care of the rest of the family.

I stayed home until I was 21-years of age and I told my mother I was going North to try and make something of myself. I came to Chicago, Ill., Aug. 13, 1923. I joined Mr. Marcus Garvey's organization.

I stayed in it until it went off the scene and then I joined the Peace Movement of Ethiopia, back to Africa. Mrs. Madam L. Gordon was the head of it. I stayed in it 11 years until I met Bro. Lester X; he has his holy name now. I think his name is Abdul Hakim Bey. He was teaching in Washington Park one Sunday evening.

What he was teaching appealed to me and I told him I loved the teaching and wanted to become a member of the Nation of Islam. He invited me to the Temple of Islam at 824 East 43rd St.

I came the following Sunday. Mr. Andred X. was the first speaker, and then, Bro. Lucious X.—he has his holy name now; he spoke second and the Honorable Elijah Muhammad (peace be upon him) spoke last.

I told the Honorable Elijah Muhammad—then head of the Nation of Islam—that I should have been there 20 years earlier, and he said that I could not have come before time. I did not understand then because I thought everybody would accept the teaching if they had heard it like I did. But I was wrong.

I remember the first message the Honorable Elijah Muhammad taught on eating the swine flesh, and I used to buy it by the slab 13-15 and 15-17 pounds.

It was not easy in those days. People whom I thought would accept the teaching scorned me or cursed me... or threatened to sick the dogs on me. In those days I used to sell the Pittsburgh Courier, the Los Angeles Dispatch and the Crusader.

I would go from door to door. Sometimes people would threaten me with violence; sometimes they would threaten to shoot me if I did not get away from their doors. But I realized that any organization worthwhile has to start from its humble beginning so it did not discourage me though I was hurt at times.

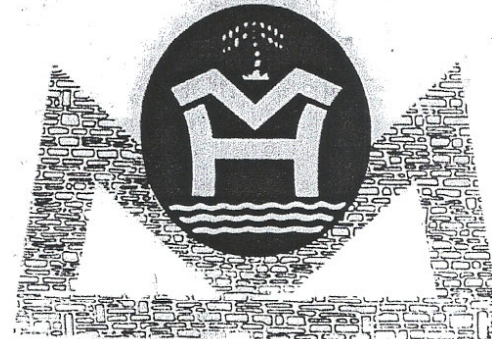
I used to go in some of those high-rise apartment buildings. I would take the elevator to the 17th floor with an armful of papers and work down to the first floor. I would meet with some unpleasant circumstances, but it was worthwhile. I could see this day we are living in now.

It is great to be one of the "Pioneers," following our leader, guide, and teacher, the Honorable Wallace D. Muhammad. He is the great teacher of the Holy Quran and Al-Islam, and I pray for the success of the World Community of Islam in the West and the whole world in general.

I came in the World Community of Islam in the West, then known as the Nation of Islam, in July, 1949—I have been successful ever since. I am expecting to make the Hajj, the Pilgrimage to the Holy City of Mecca—if it is the Will of Allah—with the Honorable Wallace D. Muhammad.

I thank Allah, who blessed me to write my history.

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