



St. Louis community members welcome new missionary (1953)



Usman Khalid

In 1947, Usman Khalid accepted Ahmadiyya under the auspices of Ibrahim Khalil. During those days there were not any official missionaries visiting St. Louis. Ibn Yamin and Ibrahim Khalil worked diligently to spread the message of Islam in the area. Usman became an active and dedicated member. His wife, Aminah Khalid, became so impressed with his complete moral change and dedication that she also accepted. Usman and Aminah Khalid would serve and support the St. Louis Ahmadiyya community for decades to come. They worked as Presidents and counselors to countless members, neighbors and friends. Their legacy lives on with three generations of Muslims continuing to serve.



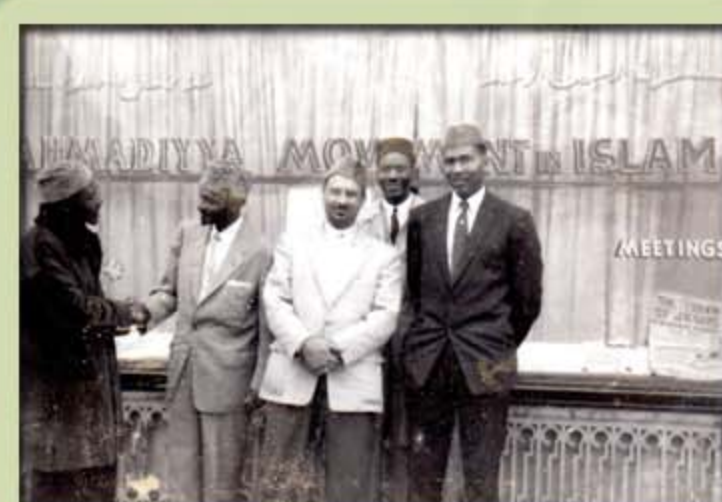
Abdullah Ali, Usman Khalid, Jawad Ali, Mubarak Ahmad



St. Louis Community, 1950s



St. Louis Ahmadi children (1950s)



Munir Ahmad, Ahmad Hadi, Jawad Ali, Ibrahim Khalil, Mubarak Ahmad

Abdullah Ali



Abdullah Ali was one of the eldest living members of Ahmadiyya. It is said he died at the age of 99. The actual date of his joining Ahmadiyya is unknown. But his dedication and commitment is unparalleled. In the 1950s, Abdullah and his wife, Almas, would provide residence for the first official missionary and family assigned to St. Louis. The Ali's would hold Friday service (Juma) at their home and provide support for community members. Abdullah was well known for his call to prayer (Azan). Every New Year's, when neighbors would shoot their firearms, Abdullah would go to the top of his roof and call his most melodious Azan.



Abdullah Ali, Ali Razaa, Ibn Yamin, Abdul Ghaffur, Abdullah Aziz, Ibrahim Khalil, Habibullah Aziz

In 1922, St. Louis became one of the first established Ahmadi communities in America. The extraordinary missionary efforts of Sheik Ahmad Din exposing hundreds to Islam in the St. Louis area. By the mid-1930s, changes in local leadership and challenges by black nationalist groups, affected growth in the community and caused some indifference amongst a few members. However, a smaller group of Ahmadis continued to preach and serve creating another wave of new converts to join. Of these second wave of conversions, were Ibrahim Khalil and Ibn Yamin. They re-established the Ahmadiyya community of St. Louis and continued to reach out to African Americans. Some of their early converts came from other Muslim groups. Abdullah Ali and Usman Khalid are said to have come from Muslim organizations as such. It is important

to note that many of these predominantly African American Muslim organizations at this time were break-offs or splinter groups from the Ahmadiyya Community. This phenomena of splintering was not unique to St. Louis but had taken place at the major Ahmadiyya centers around the country. These years were turbulent for African Americans in general and some Ahmadis differed on how religion should address the social justice issues of the era. The Ahmadiyya model focused more on self-transformation and inclusiveness for all races. This model remained attractive and successful for many in search of both physical and spiritual liberation. Throughout the 1930s and 1940s the Ahmadiyya Movement continued to be the prominent Muslim organization, particularly, for African Americans.

AFRICAN AMERICAN JOURNEY TO ISLAM

... and they prayed too.



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