



In 1930, Sufi M. Rahman Bengalee was sent to America as the missionary-in-charge and editor of the Moslem Sunrise. Bengalee moved the national headquarters from Wabash to 56 E. Congress, Suite 1307.

**Ahmadiyya Missionary Will Lecture in St. Louis**

The missionary of the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam in the United States, Sufi Mutur Rahman Bengalee of Qadian, India, is in St. Louis to lecture on the principles of his faith which he claims is the Mohammedan religion. He is a graduate of Punjab University in India and has been in the United States for two years establishing missions.

“Islam means peace,” Bengalee declared in explaining his religion. “The master prophet Muhammad is the founder of Islam. A Moslem honors and believes in all the divine teachers of the universe, including Krishna, Buddha, Moses and Jesus. We are mono-theistic.”

Bengalee will announce the time and place of his lectures late. (The East St. Louis Journal, Sept. 26, 1930)



**Ibrahim Khalil**

When he heard about the Ahmadiyya Movement and the claims of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, he went to Chicago to meet with Sufi M. Rahman Bengalee. Br. Khalil owned the Pyramid Barbershop that featured arabic writing of Bismillah hir-Rahman nir-Raheem, (In the Name of Allah the Most Gracious, Most Merciful) and Laillaha-illala Muhammadan Rasulillah (There is no God but Allah) in the front window. It also hosted a sign “Jesus Did Not Die on the Cross”.



Br. Khalil, according to Sultan Latif’s, ‘When Nations Gather’, is the first Native American to convert to Ahmadiyya.

**“Approximately 1,000 Moslems are said to live in Chicago. Twenty thousands are scattered throughout the country.”**

- The Chicago Herald Examiner



**Ibn Yamin (Benjamin Leddbetter)**

One of the earliest members of the St. Louis Ahmadiyya community join date is unknown. He was a member of the Islamic Brotherhood Society in America before coming to Ahmadiyya. He was an eyewitness, on the American continent, to the solar and lunar eclipses prophesized in the ahadith (sayings) of the Holy Prophet Muhammad concerning the advent of the Mahdi.

*“When the eclipses were shown in the American skies (1895 in the western hemisphere), a small child who saw it kept the memory all his life, he said, he felt it to be very special. Many years later, he happened to read the claim of the Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, who said God the eclipse as a sign in his favor. Astonished, he took it as a sign of truth and dedicated his life.” - Bilal Rana*

During the next two decades, the Ahmadiyya Movement would continue to grow and influence the African-American community. African-Americans continued to struggle through the Great Depression, discrimination, Jim Crow laws and racial inequities. Through the challenging years of the 1930s, Ahmadiyya communities remained committed to uplifting and spreading the message of Islam. Dr. Mufti Muhammad Sadiq instituted a system of training local, indigenous members to be preachers and leaders. These ‘Sheiks’ were vital to the spread of Ahmadiyya in burgeoning African American communities. Robert Danin takes note, “Before returning to India in 1922[3], Sadiq had ordained at least a dozen

indigenous “sheiks” who, in his opinion, were doing their utmost to promote Ahmadiyya doctrine. Their efforts has spread throughout a network of approximately sixteen missions in cities stretching from the Mississippi to the Atlantic. Besides Sheik Ahmad Din, Sheik Ashiq Ahmad and their protégé Wali Akram, one must include Sheik Nasir Ahmad and Sheik Saeed Akmal of Pittsburgh, Sheik Ahmad Omar of Braddock, Pennsylvania, Abdullah Malik of Columbus, Ahmad Rasool of Dayton, and Shareef Ali of Cincinnati. The largest contingents were in Cleveland and Pittsburgh, each with approximately three hundred converts.” – *Black Pilgrimage to Islam*

AFRICAN AMERICAN JOURNEY TO ISLAM

... and they prayed too.

