



The New York Public Library
Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture,
Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division

Guide to the

Nation of Islam collection

1959-1976

Sc MG 780

Summary

Creator: Nation of Islam (Chicago, Ill.)

Title: Nation of Islam collection

Date: 1959-1976

Size: 0.42 linear feet (1 box)

Source: Purchase, Swann Galleries, 2008 Auction of African American material, February 2008.

Revision History: Finding aid updated by Lauren Stark.

Abstract: The Nation of Islam was founded in Detroit (Mosque No. 1) in the early 1930s. Elijah Muhammad, its spiritual and supreme leader, established the group's headquarters in Chicago (Mosque No. 2) with significant chapters in New York, Boston, Los Angeles, and Philadelphia. Malcolm X, Muhammad's most famous disciple, helped build the Nation of Islam into a national membership organization, from which he resigned in 1964. After Muhammad's death in 1975, his son Warith Deen Muhammed (Wallace Muhammad) steered the organization closer to traditional Islamic beliefs and practices; he renamed it the World Community of al-Islam in the West, and later the American Muslim Mission. A dissident group led by Louis Farrakhan broke away from Muhammed in 1978, and reconstituted the Nation of Islam using the original teachings of Elijah Muhammad. The collection consists of core Nation of Islam liturgical texts; instructions and letters from Elijah Muhammad to ministers and members (Laborers, Fruits of Islam, and Muslim Girls Training); materials from various Louisiana branches; and several compilations of radio broadcasts, Saviour's Day addresses, published articles, presentations, and lectures at spiritual meetings. Also included are religious teachings and exegesis issued as Ministers' Kits in 1975 and 1976, as part of the gradual change introduced by Warith Deen Muhammed after his father's death regarding "the teachings of the Holy Quran as they will be taught by the Office of the Honorable Elijah Muhammad."

Preferred citation: [Item], Nation of Islam collection, Sc MG 780, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division, The New York Public Library

Language of the Material: English

Processing note: Accessioned by Andre Elizee, March 2008.

Separated Materials:

Transferred to the Moving Image and Recorded Sound Division: audio and moving image materials. For more information, please contact the division at schomburgaudiovisual@nypl.org or 212-491-2270.

Creator History

The Nation of Islam was founded in Detroit (Mosque No. 1) in the early 1930s. Elijah Muhammad, its spiritual and supreme leader, established the group's headquarters in Chicago (Mosque No. 2) with significant chapters in New York, Boston, Los Angeles, and Philadelphia. Malcolm X, Muhammad's most famous disciple, helped build the Nation of Islam into a national membership organization, from which he resigned in 1964. After Muhammad's death in 1975, his son Warith Deen Muhammed (Wallace Muhammad) steered the organization closer to traditional Islamic beliefs and practices; he renamed it the World Community of al-Islam in the West, and later the American Muslim Mission. A dissident group led by Louis Farrakhan broke away from Muhammed in 1978, and reconstituted the Nation of Islam using the original teachings of Elijah Muhammad.

Custodial History

Material originally in the possession of Calvin X Kearns who started a Muhammad Mosque in Slidell, Louisiana, in 1970. Purchased at Swann Galleries' Auction of African Americana material in February 2008.

Scope and Content Note

The collection consists of core Nation of Islam liturgical texts; instructions and letters from Elijah Muhammad to ministers and members (Laborers, Fruits of Islam, and Muslim Girls Training); materials from various Louisiana branches; and several compilations of radio broadcasts, Saviour's Day addresses, published articles, presentations, and lectures at spiritual meetings. Also included are religious teachings and exegesis issued as Ministers' Kits in 1975 and 1976, as part of the gradual change introduced by Warith Deen Muhammed after his father's death regarding "the teachings of the Holy Quran as they will be taught by the Office of the Honorable Elijah Muhammad."

Key Terms**Subjects**

African Americans -- Religion
Black Muslims
Muslims -- United States

Names

Elijah Muhammad, 1897-1975
Farrakhan, Louis
Muhammad, Warith Deen, 1933-2008
American Muslim Mission
Nation of Islam (Chicago, Ill.)
World Community of al-Islam in the West

Container List

- b. 1 f. 1 Elijah Muhammad, typed signed letters 1959-1971
- b. 1 f. 2 Book of Problems (mathematics)
- b. 1 f. 3 Lessons
- b. 1 f. 4 "Actual Facts" and "Student Enrollment – Rules of Islam"
- b. 1 f. 5 Religious teachings and prayers
Instructions
- b. 1 f. 6 Ministers and Captains
- b. 1 f. 7 Laborers, Fruits of Islam (men), and Muslim Girl Training (women)
- b. 1 f. 8 Louisiana mosques
Ministers' Kits
- b. 1 f. 9 1975 March 14
- b. 1 f. 10 1975 May 1
- b. 1 f. 11 1975 July 1
- b. 1 f. 12 1975 September 1
- b. 1 f. 13 1975 October 1
- b. 1 f. 14 1975 November 1
- b. 1 f. 15 1976 January 1