

# **City of Detroit**

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### **The Proposed Masjid Wali Muhammad/ Temple No. 1 Historic District (Originally known as Workmen's Circle) Final Report**

**Charge:** By a resolution dated February 19, 2013, the Detroit City Council charged the Historic Designation Advisory Board, a study committee, with the official study of the Masjid Wali Muhammad/Temple No. 1 proposed historic district in accordance with Chapter 25, Article II, of the 1984 Detroit City Code and the Michigan Local Historic Districts Act.

**Boundaries:** The boundaries of the local designation are shown on the attached maps and are as follows:

**On the north,** the centerline of Burlingame Avenue;

**On the east,** the centerline of Linwood Avenue;

**On the south,** the southern boundary line, as extended east and west, of Lot 2 of J. W. Lathrup's Lawrence & Collingwood Avenues Subdivision, Liber 33, Page 9, Wayne County Records;

**On the west,** the centerline, as extended north and south, of the alley running north-south between Burlingame Avenue and Lawton Avenue. Lots 149-145 of Burlingame Park Subdivision as recorded in Liber 33 Page 11, and lots 1-2 of W. Lathrup's Lawrence & Collingwood Avenues Subdivision, Liber 33, Page 9, Wayne County Records; also known as 11529-11541 Linwood Avenue.

***Boundary Justification:***

The boundaries described above delineate the proposed district which includes the vacant parcels associated with Masjid Wali Muhammad/Temple No. 1.

***Summary:***

The proposed district consists of a single contributing building located at the corner of Linwood Avenue and Burlingame Avenue. The building sits across the street from Roosevelt School Complex, a few blocks northwest of the Boston Edison and Atkinson Historic Districts. The proposed district is located approximately 7 miles northwest of downtown Detroit.

Masjid Wali Muhammad is a mosque located at 11529 Linwood which has served several organizations since it was constructed in 1940. It originally served as a centralized community center for the Detroit branches of the Workmen's Circle—a Jewish labor fraternity. The organization outgrew the facility, and the community center was adapted to fit the needs of the Nation of Islam which designated the building as Temple No. 1. With the death of the Nation of Islam's leader, Honorable Elijah Muhammad, in 1975, a majority of the congregation converted to Sunni Islam, although some prefer to be referred to as Orthodox Islam, and the former temple was renamed Masjid Wali Muhammad and rededicated as a mosque.

***History of Jewish Migration***

The 1880s were marked by an influx of Jewish immigrants, primarily from Eastern Europe, whose arrival had an enormous influence on the older more established Jewish community of Detroit. The immigrants increased Detroit's Jewish population from 1,000 in 1880 to 34,000 in 1914 (Rockaway 1986, 51-2). Many immigrants were fleeing oppression and restrictive laws such as Russia's May Laws of 1882 which forced Jews to live in a confined settlement. Additional restrictions limited the number of Jews permitted to enter secondary schools, universities, and professions which resulted in severe economic hardships.

Organized massacres of Jews, or pogroms, also contributed to mass immigration to more welcoming communities. Many Eastern European governments, such as Russia, Romania and Galicia, turned the other way during widespread pillaging, killing and raping that characterized the pogroms at the turn of the century. With little protection or support, Eastern European Jews sought not only safety from persecution, but freedom, equality and opportunity.

Nearly two million Jews migrated to the United States between 1881 and 1914. During the early stages of Jewish migration, Detroiters expressed sympathy for the pogrom victims and outrage toward the governments that supported the discrimination and massacre of Jews, but popular sentiment soon changed as Jewish migration showed no signs of slowing down.

Jewish immigrants faced new challenges as they settled in their new communities. As Jewish migration increased, newspaper accounts began referring to the immigration as an “incursion” and “threatening tide.” An article in the *Detroit News* stated that the newcomers carried the plague and posed a health hazard. A few weeks later, the city erupted with additional misinformation, as public and religious officials pronounced that Jews brought cholera to the United States, and that they were “a pauper and lawless class,” that would undoubtedly “combine with our own worst elements to break down the American Sunday,” and destroy Christian civilization (Rockaway 1986, 58). These negative accounts helped to influence discriminatory practices that many Jews faced such as segregated housing imposed by restrictive covenants.

Local branches of Jewish fraternal orders were soon established to help provide support for Jewish immigrants, and avenues for cultural and religious expression. The early 1900s saw rapid industrialization as Detroit transformed from a modest manufacturing center to an industrial metropolis. As workers moved closer to the factories that employed them, urban areas were subject to overcrowding and unethical work practices. In 1907, the Workmen’s Circle, or “Arbeter Ring” in Yiddish, was founded to provide fraternal support for Jewish immigrants, and to raise a voice in the struggle of the American labor movement. Members soon recognized that the needs of the labor movement weren’t limited to the Jewish community. The need for an ethical work environment crossed beyond religious and cultural boundaries. A letter of introduction to the president of Local 75 United Shoe Workers during a worker’s strike in Rockford, Michigan, provides a succinct description:

Our organization was created over fifty years ago by laboring men who brought the tradition of democratic trade unionism with them from the old world. Once established in America they organized in the trades in which they were employed. To provide for their fraternal, insurance and cultural needs beyond the job they formed the Workmen’s circle—in Jewish, “Arbeter Ring” and their symbol was a ring of chain around the globe—chain denoting strength; ring, unity (Workmen’s Circle to Local 75, 1953).

### ***Workmen’s Circle***

On June 7<sup>th</sup>, 1940, three local branches of the Workmen’s Circle printed their first collaborative bulletin. The bulletin was named Circle Light and it inaugurated the union

of all English-speaking branches of the Workmen's Circle of Detroit. The Workman's Circle had just celebrated forty years as a fraternal organization supporting Yiddish culture and the labor movement in America, and the local Jewish community was actively seeking ways to strengthen and consolidate their numbers, and engage the interests of the younger Jewish community which was primarily English-speaking.

Early correspondence suggests that the English-speaking branches were initially created to further the principles of Workmen's Circle among younger members of the community who were more inclined toward communicating in English rather than Yiddish:

The purpose of the English-speaking section of the W.C. is to provide youth with an opportunity for physical, intellectual, social, and ethical development in an atmosphere sympathetic with the ideals of the labor movement (Circle Light 1940).

The first page of the new Circle Light bulletin was devoted to the official opening of the new Workmen's Circle center on 11529 Linwood, tentatively scheduled for June 25, 1940. Fundraising efforts were still in full swing to pay the \$30,000 construction cost. The various branches announced fundraising concerts at the cost of 25 cents per person at the neighboring Roosevelt School at 11526 Linwood, and a moonlight boat tour at 60 cents per adult and 30 cents per child. Community members who wanted more of a hand in the actual building soon to be erected could purchase bricks for one dollar a piece.

The new Workmen's Circle Educational Center was noted on the building permit as a "cinderblock club." The architect was listed as J. Wexler of 12538 Dexter. The new facility opened in the summer of 1940, and hosted community events, clubs, and a school for elementary aged children. An educational series based at the new facility provided a forum to discuss current events and covered such topics as "Labor Unity," "Inside Hitler's Europe," and "Social Implications of Conscription." The center also hosted regional conferences and welcomed delegates from other Workmen's Circle branches. These conferences provided an opportunity to fraternize, strengthen the organization, and underscore what the Workmen's Circle meant to its members and what image it portrayed to others.

The Workmen's Circle school located within the building played an important role in strengthening the membership and faith of younger members of the Jewish community. A bulletin dated August 29, 1956, described the importance of enrolling children in the Workmen's Circle Schools and provided an overview of the curriculum which emphasized Jewish language and culture:

The Workmen's Circle Schools offer a secular Jewish education stressing the culture—art, music and literature—and history of the Jewish people as it evolved in the past centuries. The school endeavors to relate this history to the values which Jews have held dear—individual freedom, economic opportunity and the chance to maintain and develop a group consciousness. Jewish holidays and festivals of freedom are celebrated and their relationship to the story of Jewish life is brought out. Much of the "story" of Jews is told in the language in which it was lived—Yiddish, and the child is helped to develop an understanding of this tongue and the cultural richness which it represents.

As membership grew, a second location for the Workmen's Circle Schools opened in Oak Park at the new Jewish Center, the United Hebrew School Building at 14500 West 10 mile road. Classes were held at both the Oak Park and Linwood buildings for students aged six to eleven. A two day school was also offered for children aged six to eight and a nursery was available for children under the age of five.

Although the Workmen's Circle provided educational and social services for its members, it remained a labor organization. Shifts in employment trends due to the close of the war industry led to issues of fair employment which were felt beyond their membership. Workmen's Circle set its sights on the Fair Employment Practices Commission (FEPC) which had been set up by Executive Order of President Roosevelt in 1941 to protect members of minority groups from discrimination in war industry jobs. FEPC had enabled women and minorities to gain access to jobs during the war, but it was discontinued in 1946.

In the fall of 1949, The Workmen's Circle in Detroit received a letter from New York headquarters regarding a project that could make the organization a "decisive force in the community." What followed was a list of directives for a Workmen's Circle campaign in support of fair employment practices, including the enforcement of legislation outlawing job discrimination. Included in the directive were suggestions that members commit to working with organized labor movement and all progressive organizations to push for FEPC legislation, forming a Workmen's Circle Committee for fair employment, and to engage in community activities such as conferences, rallies, and media coverage to help bring attention to fair labor practices. In taking decisive action, Workmen's Circle joined a wave of mobilization for local FEPC legislation. Included in the efforts were the NAACP, Detroit Negro Labor Council, Jewish Community Council, Detroit Interracial Committee, and Catholic organizations—all agencies whose members stood to benefit from non-discriminatory labor practices (Dillard 2007, 194).

In an effort to strengthen their numbers and further their influence, Workmen's Circle continued to form allegiances with organizations such as the Jewish Labor Committee which kept its members informed of ongoing civil rights violations and labor strikes, and provided an opportunity to introduce Workmen's Circle to the mainstream labor movement. During the United Shoe Workers strike of 1953, the Detroit branches of Workmen's Circle sent a letter of support to the president of Local 75 United Shoe Workers.

The letter explained that seven Detroit branches of Workmen's Circle had collected funds for the striking workers to be used to "successfully conclude your fight" (Workmen's Circle to Local 75, 1953). Representatives from all seven branches signed the letter which resulted in a flurry of media coverage and prompted a new branch of the Workmen's Circle—the Trade Union Branch which was described as a "melting pot of progressive minded trade unionists" (Workmen's Circle, 1953).

By the 1950s, the Workmen's Circle offered its members insurance, family health plans and social service benefits. There were children and adult camps, old age homes, and assistance with funeral services. Yet, Workmen's Circle did far more than offer supportive services to its members. In a bulletin published in the fall of 1955, Jacob

Zuckerman, president of Workmen's Circle writes of the organization's achievements, and highlights the differences between Workmen's Circle and other Jewish Fraternities. Workmen's Circle promotes Yiddish language and Jewish culture through the support of Yiddish press and literature, Yiddish theater, Jewish music, and plays a role in creating a strong labor movement. But Zuckerman concludes, "Our greatness has come from being more than just an insurance agency. It has come from the influence we have had in bringing about social and economic progress" (Zuckerman 1955).

In the fall of 1954, a special meeting was called among the Detroit Workmen's Circle branches. The purpose was to hear a report from a study committee charged with evaluating the need of the Detroit organization for a larger center. The committee discussed several options including keeping the present building on Linwood, constructing a new one or purchasing an existing structure. By 1957, the organization made their final decision. The Workmen's Circle moved to the Circle Center at 18225 W. Seven Mile Road and the empty building would come to be occupied by a new organization.

### ***History of Muslim Migration***

In the late 1800s, Muslim immigrants from European, Ottoman, and formally Ottoman countries began arriving to America. While early Muslim immigrants tended to be more transient, seeking better work conditions, pay, marriage partners, and the company of others, by the 1930s they began settling in large cities and forming Muslim associations. Once settled, these new immigrants needed to foster a sense of community to help uphold their religious and cultural traditions such communal prayer, washing and praying over the deceased, conversation in their native tongue, and news of family and friends who had been left behind (Howell 2009, 44-5).

Detroit attracted many immigrants with the promise of working in Henry Ford's factory for "five dollars a day." Many of these new immigrants took up residences near the factory in Highland Park. As families began settling in the area, communities began erecting religious edifices that represented their rich culture and traditions such as St. Maron's Catholic Church erected in 1909, and St. George's Antiochian Orthodox Church erected in 1918. This sure sign of progress did not pass by the Muslim community unnoticed. As their numbers grew, the Muslim community longed for a mosque of their own to teach Islam to their children, keep their traditions alive, and introduce their religion to Americans. A few local Muslims began setting plans in motion. They decided to pool their resources and campaign the community to assist in erecting a new mosque that could serve as a gathering place and unifying force for the Muslim community. The mosque was more than just a place to worship. It was a gathering space at the very heart of the Muslim community:

At its simplest, the mosque is a place where Muslims meet for prayer. At its most complexes, the American mosque also serves as a school, a community service agency, an athletic and recreation facility, a health clinic, an ethnic club, a spiritual retreat, and a hostel for travelling missionaries. In both their simple and complex forms, American mosques are institutions that represent Islam in the United States to Muslims and to non-Muslims alike (Howell 2009, 36).

As plans grew to build a new mosque in Highland Park, the architect Theodore H. Degenhardt was hired to design the building and render promotional drawings. Donations poured in from all over the world. The nation had witnessed its first mosque at the 1893 World Fair in Chicago. Built as more of a spectacle than a place of worship, this mosque was fabricated as a display for American audiences, and quickly torn down after the close of the fair (Howell 2009, 42).

America's first "true" mosque was the mosque built in Highland Park. The "Moslom Mosque of Highland Park," was completed in 1921 and built within walking distance from the Henry Ford factory. Newspaper accounts announced the elaborate opening ceremony, but the accomplishment was short lived. Ideological differences among the members of the mosque were exasperated when the nearby Henry Ford plant moved to the new River Rouge Assembly in Dearborn, and it was no longer easily accessible to factory workers. While accounts vary as to why this first American mosque fell into disuse a year after its opening ceremony, by the 1920s, the events had already been set in place for a strong Muslim presence in Detroit.

### ***Islam and the African American Community***

The emergence of the Nation of Islam and the mass conversion of African American believers to Sunni Islam can be traced to both religious and secular movements in Detroit's African American community. In the midst of racial oppression of African Americans which influenced everything from the availability of housing to public accommodations, secular organizations such as the Detroit Urban League, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), and the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) contributed to the stability of the African American community. Over time, several organizations diminished in influence, including the UNIA which suffered after the expatriation of its founder Marcus Garvey in 1925 (Thomas 1992, 198-9). But these organizations still left their mark on Detroit's African American community as former members such as UNIA member Elijah Poole (later named Elijah Muhammad), sought other means of community building.

The appeal toward economic and spiritual advancement was extended by more than just secular organizations. Religious communities outside of the traditional Christian Church were reaching out to African Americans as well. Mufti Sadiq, member of the Ahmadiyya Movement of Islam and one of the founders of the Highland Park Mosque, was the first Muslim missionary to make an "explicit appeal to blacks based on the race-neutral ideals of Islam" (Howell 2009, 108):

In Islam no Church has ever had seats reserved for anybody and if a Negro enters first and takes the front seat even the Sultan if he happens to come after him never thinks of removing him from that seat "I tread under the feet the Racial prejudice" said the master-Prophet Muhammad. . . .

It is a well-proved fact that Islam is the only religion that has ever destroyed color and race prejudices from the minds of the people. Go to the East and you will find the fairest people of Syria and Turkestan eating at the same table with darkest Africans and treating each other as brothers and friends.  
(Moslem Sunrise 2, 1922:41-42)

At first glance, the Ahmadiyya Movement was an unlikely ally for the African American struggle. Founded in India at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the movement's founder, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, claimed to be a *mujaddid* (reformer of the age) as well as the promised messiah of both Islam and Christianity. Its adherents believe that Ahmad was sent to end religious wars, condemn bloodshed and reinstitute morality, justice and peace.

The Ahmadiyya Movement was not the only Islamic group actively courting African Americans in the early 1900s, nor was it destined to be the most successful. The Moorish Science Temple (MST) was founded in 1913 and has been heralded as "...the first of the black proto-Islamic movements" (Howell 2009, 110; Jackson 2011, 43). The group's founder, Noble Drew Ali, was also considered a prophet who created his own holy book adapted from the Quran, and came to warn and redeem the Moors of America from their sinful ways. A Detroit chapter of MST opened in 1923. Nearly ten years later, in Detroit's Black Bottom, another religion emerged which came to be known as Nation of Islam.

### *Nation of Islam's Temple No. 1*

Members of the Nation of Islam trace their beginnings to W.D. Fard who sold silk door to door. Fard's mission was to teach African Americans a thorough knowledge of God and of themselves, to promote self-independence, and inspire a "superior culture and higher civilization" (Muhammad 1996). Meetings were initially held at the UNIA Hall at Russell and Mullet Street, which served at the launching pad for many community groups, religious, and secular movements in Detroit's African American community. Meetings were held at Woodman's Hall at Hastings and Adams Street, Bishop School on Winder Street, and 3408 Hastings Street which was the first location of the Nation of Islam Temple No. 1.

In the early 1930s, W.D. Fard met Elijah Poole in Detroit, and proceeded to train him in his mission. In recognition of his growth and dedication, W. D. Fard gave Elijah Pool a Muslim holy name, Elijah Karriem, which later became Elijah Muhammad, and appointed him Supreme Minister of the Nation of Islam (Muhammad 1996). In 1934, W.D. Fard disappeared, leaving Honorable Elijah Muhammad in charge of the new movement. Honorable Elijah Muhammad would go on to expand Nation of Islam into one of the country's largest religious bodies—"...larger than most American denominations, sects and cults," while developing its empire of schools, restaurants, stores, banks, a publishing company that printed the country's largest circulating black newspaper, farms that produced everything from beef to vegetables that were delivered across the country in Nation of Islam-owned trucks and air transport (*Detroit Free Press* 1975).

Honorable Elijah Muhammad was born Elijah Poole in Sandersville, Georgia in 1897. His father was a Baptist preacher and the son of a former slave, who farmed land to support his thirteen children. Poole left home at sixteen and took up a series of temporary jobs. At the age of 22, he married Clara Evans. In 1923, they moved with their two children to Detroit where he worked for six years in the Chevrolet factory. He was dismayed to find that African Americans were as oppressed in the north as they had been in the south. The Depression only made matters worse, as African American employees were kept at the bottom of the social pyramid in terms of housing, employment, and other opportunities, and were often the first to lose their jobs. To the dismay of many black



southerners who had migrated north, religion did not provide the comfort or the defense they had come to expect:

Northern black churches, which were predominantly middle class and largely acquiescent on racial social conditions, did not reach out to southern blacks, nor did the worship experience provided in these churches meet the expectations of poor southerners. White churches often had segregated seating and sometimes separate services for black and white parishioners. Islam offered the city's newcomers an alternative to these Christian offerings, and an alternative to the accommodations the black church had made to American racism (Howell 2009, 107).

Organizations such as UNIA had already paved the way for economic and social transformation. When Elijah Poole met W.D. Fard in the early 1930s, he was ready for a movement that would help transform the spirit of the African American community.

W. D. Fard established the first independent Muslim school in 1930, which began teaching adults reading and basic academic skills. In the years that followed, Nation of Islam's University of Islam provided an education for school aged children. The University of Islam was an independent Muslim school created in order to "revive, reform, and redeem" those who had suffered from mis-education and hostility towards African Americans in the public school system. The new school had its first permanent site at 3408 Hastings Street, over the Castle Theater in Detroit. Brother Ben Sobakhan was appointed by W.D. Fard to serve as the first principal of the new school, with John Muhammad serving as the Assistant Principal. There were a total of nine teachers, and twelve courses which included grammar, English, mathematics, reading, penmanship, and sciences.

Within the school's first few months, there were 400 students registered. As additional families began removing their children from the public school system, government authorities grew concerned and decided to intervene. On April 17, 1934, a squad of Detroit police officers arrived at the school and arrested several teachers and students. The official charge was "contributing to the delinquency of minors" and Honorable Elijah Muhammad was given 6 months probation and ordered to re-enroll the children back into the public school system, but he refused (Muhammad 1996; Muhammad University of Islam 2013).

This was not the first time that the Nation of Islam captured the attention of local authorities. In the early 1930s, the government stepped in when a local murder viewed as an alleged human sacrifice was linked to W.D. Fard. Government authorities were also concerned about W.D. Fard's close association with the Japanese radical Satohata Takahashi who established the Society for the Development of Our Own in Detroit (TDOO). Although the TDOO's initial aim was to "advance the interest of its members along the lines of Cultural, Intellectual, Social, Industrial and Commercial activities and otherwise as deemed necessary by the organization," Takahashi soon changed the group's focus, using the organization to "urge Negroes to join with all other colored people - yellow, brown, and black against all white people" (Allen 1994, 32). Takahashi and Fard's association was considered "pro-Japanese" and anti-American (Howell 2009, 241).

On May 8, 1942, Honorable Elijah Muhammad was arrested for failing to register for the draft. Ministers from Temple No. 1 and Temple No. 3 who arrived to consult with Honorable Elijah Muhammad were also arrested. In June of 1943, Honorable Elijah Muhammad began his term at Milan Michigan Federal Penitentiary. But while in prison, he continued to forward the mission of Nation of Islam—he set up a Temple class with prison inmates three days a week.

After he was released from prison in the fall of 1946, Honorable Elijah Muhammad's program for self development began to flourish as dry cleaners, department stores, barber shops, restaurants and bakeries were opened, owned, managed and supported by members of the Nation of Islam. Local businesses in Detroit included Costume Designing and Alterations on Euclid, Minor Radio and TV Repairs on Indiandale, and K. Ahmad & I. Shabazz Men's Women's and Children's Clothing (Muhammad 1996).

Healthy eating was also an important principle of Nation of Islam. Long before he published his two volume work entitled How to Eat to Live, Honorable Elijah Muhammad had actively promoted his philosophy on nutrition and healthy eating. This mindset was instrumental in the purchase of a 140-acre farm and cattle ranch in White Cloud, Michigan, and The Nation of Islam farms in Michigan, Georgia and Alabama which supplied produce and dairy products for Salaam Restaurant and Your Supermarket. This level of self-reliance would eventually take on international trade. In the 1970s, the Nation of Islam entered into an agreement with the government of Peru. Three million pounds of fish per month were imported and stored at the Nation of Islam's storage facility, Muhammad Import Fish Company. The "fish program" provided full-time jobs for African Americans in large cities across the country.

In the late 1950s early 1960s, Temple No. 1 relocated to 11529 Linwood Avenue. An alteration permit dated September 29, 1959, noted "convert private club to private school on 1<sup>st</sup> floor and assembly hall on 2<sup>nd</sup> floor." The larger accommodations mirrored the growth of the Nation of Islam across the country. Temples were opening up in Washington, Baltimore, Philadelphia, Boston, Hartford, New York, New Jersey, Cleveland and San Diego (Muhammad 1996).

The rapid growth of the Nation of Islam did not go unnoticed. In the late 1950s and early 1960s several media events brought nation-wide attention to its mission and growing popularity. In July of 1959, Mike Wallace's TV documentary "The Hate that Hate Produced," aired to a national audience. The documentary focused on the Nation of Islam which Wallace called "a study of the rise of black racism, of a call for black supremacy among a small but growing segment of the American Negro population." The series raised the alarm among many white Americans and those who were involved in the newly emerging Civil Rights Movement (The American Experience).

The following year, Alex Haley interviewed Malcolm X for a Reader's Digest article "Mr. Muhammad Speaks." Malcolm X, born Malcolm Little, had become a rising leader within the Nation of Islam. While in prison for robbery, Malcolm X went through a transformation that led him to convert to Nation of Islam. After his release from prison, he moved to Detroit where he served as minister of Temple No. 1. His brothers, Wilfred and Philbert, were also ministers at Temple No. 1. Malcolm X was appointed the national

representative of the Nation of Islam, but this appointment didn't last. In 1963, Malcolm X began meeting with Alex Haley to co-write Autobiography of Malcolm X. The book outlined Malcolm X's philosophy of black pride and Black Nationalism, but it also traced his changing attitudes after his pilgrimage to Mecca. He eventually renounced the Nation of Islam and fully embraced Orthodox Islam.

In 1975, Honorable Elijah Muhammad passed away and his son, Wallace D. Muhammad, took leadership of Nation of Islam. Long before his father's death, Wallace D. Muhammad had begun to question the "orthodoxy" of his father's teachings (Jackson 2011, 67). As the newly ordained leader of Nation of Islam, Wallace D. Muhammad lost no time in leading the followers to Orthodox Islam. Some did not support the conversion, such as Minister Louis Farrakhan who revived the Nation of Islam and the teachings of Honorable Elijah Muhammad. In 1979, Minister Farrakhan started publication of Final Call newspaper, which was reminiscent of the Nation of Islam's first official publication—Final Call to Islam. A few years later, with the assistance of donations and at a total cost of 2.175 million dollars, he reacquired the National Center in Chicago that the Honorable Elijah Muhammad originally purchased in 1972.

Minister Farrakhan spearheaded local initiatives that promoted self-reliance such as a Health Care Conference which called on health care professionals in the Nation of Islam to address the future healthcare needs of the African American community, and a Detroit-based organization called the People Organized and Working for Economic Rebirth (POWER) which led to the production of the "Clean-N-Fresh" health and beauty projects. After being diagnosed with prostate cancer, he started the Louis Farrakhan Prostate Cancer Foundation dedicated to screening and educating men about prostate cancer (Muhammad 1996).

October of 1995, Minister Farrakhan organized a march to raise awareness of the suffering of the African American community. Two million African American men gathered at the mall in Washington DC for the Million Man March. Through public speaking engagements, study groups, conferences, national and international initiatives, Minister Farrakhan began to rebuild the Nation of Islam and engage a new generation.

### ***A New Mosque in Detroit: Masjid Wali Muhammad***

When his father, Honorable Elijah Muhammad, passed away February of 1975, Warith Deen Muhammad was the "unanimously acclaimed leader." He lost no time in changing the direction of the Nation of Islam to Orthodox, or Sunni Islam—a move which has been heralded as the largest conversion to Orthodox Islam in American history. In June of that same year, he opened membership to all believers regardless of race. He dissolved the paramilitary Fruit of Islam (of which he had been a member in his youth) and replaced fasting during Christmas with the more traditional Islamic observance of Ramadan. Followers were taught to adhere to the five pillars of Islam which include prayer five times a day, giving to charity, and pilgrimage to Mecca. The University of Islam schools were renamed Sister Clara Muhammad Schools, in honor of his mother, temples were renamed "masjids" (the Arabic word for mosque), while ministers were renamed "imams" (Ruthven 2008; This Far by Faith). The building at 11529 Linwood changed its name from Temple No. 1 to Masjid Wali Muhammad, and rededicated as a mosque open for five daily prayers.

In order to retain the cohesion that was a natural part of Nation of Islam but acknowledge its conversion to Sunni Islam, Warith Deen Muhammad needed to give the organization a new name. In 1976, Nation of Islam was renamed World Community of al-Islam in the West (WCIW), and later the American Muslim Mission before settling on American Society of Muslims (Jackson 2011, 208). The Nation of Islam's newspaper *Muhammad Speaks* which still enjoyed a wide circulation was renamed *Bilalian News*, named after the first African convert to Islam. Later it was renamed *The Muslim Journal*.

Warith Deen Muhammad (who was born Wallace Delaney Muhammad) was born in Hamtramck, Michigan, and was the seventh child of Elijah and Clara Muhammad. His journey of finding his own relationship with Islam started at an early age:

When he was 13 years old Wallace was left alone while his family attended a meeting. Scared, he began to pray. But he couldn't summon an image of a God to call on for comfort. Wallace had been taught to tear up pictures of white men, even when he saw them in the paper, but pictures of the Nation of Islam's founder and "Savior" W.D. Fard showed a fair-skinned man. Wallace couldn't resolve the contradiction. Finally, he began his prayer: "Oh Allah, if I'm not seeing you correctly, please help me to see you correctly." This was the beginning of a journey on which Wallace would repeatedly question the teachings handed down by his father (This Far by Faith).

Warith Deen Muhammad completed high school at the Nation of Islam's University Islam, and when he was 25 years old, his father appointed him as minister of Temple No. 12 in Philadelphia. Warith Deen Muhammad began to familiarize the believers in Philadelphia with orthodox Islamic practices such as the basics of Islamic prayer and readings from Qur'an, although these were not practices that were typically carried out in Nation of Islam temples (This Far by Faith).

In 1961, Warith Deen Muhammad received a jail sentence for refusing the military draft. He was given the option to perform community service, but his father insisted that he serve prison time. He served a three year term at Sandstone Federal Correctional Institution, and while in prison he vowed to study Islam in order to become a stronger leader for the Nation of Islam. As he began to study the Qur'an, he noticed the stark differences between his father's teachings and mainstream Islam:

...the more he prayed, studied and read the Qur'an, the more he came to believe that Muhammad, who lived in Arabia and received the Qur'an 14 centuries ago, was the messenger of Allah and the last prophet. In accepting this, he had to reject what he had been taught. He made up his mind never again to preach that his father was the messenger of Allah and that W.D. Fard was God incarnate (This Far by Faith).

After being released from prison, Warith Deen Muhammad left the Nation of Islam to form his own group—the short-lived Afro-Descendant Upliftment Society. This move resulted in the first of several suspensions from Nation of Islam. But in 1974, as his father's health was fading, he was reinstated and allowed to teach in the temples.

Although the mass conversion of many former Nation of Islam members to Sunni Islam is largely attributed to Warith Deen Muhammad, other factors helped play a role. Prior to the 1960s, Islam in America had come to be associated with the African American community (Jackson 2011, 2). Legislation, such as the National Origins Act of 1924 had severely restricted immigration from Eastern European and Asian countries, which played a part in limiting immigration from Muslim countries. But in 1965, the government repealed the National Origins Act and the Asian Barred Zone legislation which resulted in a rapid increase of immigration from the Muslim world (Jackson 2011, 60). The new influx of immigrants accustomed to the principles and tenants of Orthodox Islam created a cultural shift in the American Islamic community. In his book Islam and the Blackamerican, Jackson describes the religious shift that took place after the death of Nation of Islam founder Honorable Elijah Muhammad:

Elijah's departure was crucial in that it coincided with the early stages of a massive influx of Muslims, especially Arabs and Indo-Pakistanis, from the Muslim world. This introduced major changes not only in the ethnic make-up of the Muslim-American community but also in the basis of religious authority by which a properly constituted Islamic life could be thought about, authenticated, and practically pursued... the new eyes, the new faces, and the new prism brought by immigrant Muslims would drastically alter both the focus and the image of Islam in America (Jackson 2011, 60).

As many former believers of Nation of Islam converted to Sunni Islam, considerable effort was devoted to explaining the differences between the two such as the concept of Allah, or God, the last Prophet and Messenger, and other fundamental practices such as prayer and pilgrimage. One of the differences repeatedly highlighted was the racial and ethnic diversity of Sunni Islam which provided a stark contrast with the philosophy of separatism and Black Nationalism which characterized the Nation of Islam:

There are many Muslims in what we call the white continent of Europe and Eurasia. People should not be fooled into thinking that to be a Muslim is to be in something small or in something limited to race. Islam is the religion that has more people who are dependents of God for the different nations and races than any other religion...Al-Islam is not a religion for any one race, it is a religion for all people (Mohammed).

Several prominent people have served as members and ministers of Masjid Wali Muhammad/Temple No. 1 including Adam Shakoor who was America's first Muslim judge and co-trustee of the Rosa L. Parks Trust, and Malcolm X (El-Amin 2013).

Although Masjid Wali Muhammad's current congregation have embraced Sunni Islam, they have not forgotten the important role that Honorable Elijah Muhammad played in leading African Americans to Islam. In the fall of 1986, members of the Political Awareness Committee and Masjid Wali Muhammad sent a letter to the Detroit City Council requesting that Linwood Avenue be renamed to reflect the rich history that transpired at 11529 Linwood. A few years later, in the early 1990s, Linwood Avenue was officially co-named "Elijah Muhammad Boulevard."

***Physical Description:***

Masjid Wali Muhammad is a reddish-brown brick building in the Art Moderne style built in 1940 and located at 11529 Linwood Avenue near Burlingame Avenue. The two-story building has a flat roof with a parapet wall facing Linwood Avenue, and is comparable in scale to the other commercial and religious buildings on Linwood Avenue. The building is flanked by green space to the north and surface parking to the south and is the only structure on its block. A residential neighborhood of two-story buildings in fair condition and mature trees is located behind Masjid Wali Muhammad, to the west.

The building has a narrow front yard set back with a thin strip of grass protected by a short, black railing that begins at the entrance bay and continues across the east façade of the building. The green space in the lot to the north of the building consists of a grass covered yard surrounded by a chain link fence with barbed wire. The surface parking lot to the south and the empty gravel lot adjacent to it is also surrounded by a chain link fence with barbed wire. Car access is permitted through a gate off of the alley.

The main entrance to Masjid Wali Muhammad is located at the east façade facing Linwood Avenue. The east façade is asymmetrical, with a recessed entry bay. The primary brickwork of the east façade is American bond, with a curved corner of stretcher bricks connecting the two asymmetrical bays. The entrance is further accentuated by a projecting canopy supported by two metal tubes on either side of the double entrance doors. The entrance bay has a set of double doors located one step above grade. Each door has a circular viewing window at eye level, and a mail slot is located on the left-hand door. Directly above the entrance doors are three vertical sets of glass block windows centered in the bay. The glass block windows are longer than they are tall, with a white sill and no visible lintel.

The bay adjacent to the entrance bay rests on a white concrete foundation which bears the etched construction date “1940.” A few feet above the foundation, a white belt course provides a sill to a row of five sliding windows on the first floor. A continuous lintel spans all five windows, and quoins connect the lintel and belt course at the periphery. The second floor windows mirror the first floor, with a few minor exceptions. The continuous sill below the second floor windows is thinner than the sill below the first floor windows, and square tabs accentuate the space between each window. A decorative square insert is centered in this bay, between the first and second floor windows. The insert has an image of a chain linked medallion circling around the initials “AR” for Arbeter Ring, or Workmen’s Circle. A wall-mounted internally illuminated sign with the words “Masjid Wali Muhammad” projects out, perpendicular to the façade, near the entrance canopy. A white coping caps the top of the parapet of the east façade.

The north façade facing Burlingame Avenue has a narrow section at the north-west corner that jogs back several feet to meet a portion of the building with a higher roof. A row of six glass block windows, longer than they are tall, stretch along the north façade on both the first and second floor. A single entry door is located on the east side of the façade, near Linwood Avenue. A gutter runs the length of the façade, with two downspouts. The recessed north-west corner of the façade has a single entry door, with another entry door directly above it on the second floor. The door at the second floor is accessed by a black metal fire escape wall mounted to the façade. A wall mounted ladder spans from the second floor landing of the fire escape to the roof above. The higher roof has a coping, with no downspout.

The west façade faces the alley, with three glass block windows on the first floor and five glass block windows on the second floor, and a parapet. The first floor windows are taller than wide, with the center window wider than tall. Between the three first floor windows are brick pilasters that terminate above the first floor windows. The five second floor glass block windows are roughly square shaped.

The south façade facing Lawrence Avenue has six glass block windows on the first floor which are mainly taller than wide. A single entry door is located in the center of the façade. A small glass block window above the door is wider than tall. On the second floor, five glass block windows that are taller than wide are centered above the first floor windows, with a small column of glass block windows located near the west corner of the building. At the east corner of the façade, the high roof jogs down a few feet. Two brick pilasters between the window bays span from the ground to the high roof. Gutters and downspouts span the entire south façade.

Since its construction in 1940, Masjid Wali Muhammad/Temple No. 1 located at 11529 Linwood has served as a fraternal organization and place of worship, and it continues to serve the community in which it is located.

**Criteria:** Masjid Wali Muhammad/Temple No. 1 Historic District meets the first and second criteria contained in Section 25-2-2:

1. Sites, buildings, structures, or archeological sites where cultural, social, spiritual, economic, political or architectural history of the community, city, state or nation is particularly reflected or exemplified; and
2. Sites, buildings, structures, or archeological sites which are identified with historic personages or with important events in community, city, state, or national history.

**Composition of the Historic Designation Advisory Board:** The Historic Designation Advisory Board has nine appointed members and three *ex-officio* members, all residents of Detroit. The appointed members are: Kwaku Atara, Melanie A. Bazil, Robert Cosgrove, Keith A. Dye, Zene' Frances Fogel-Gibson, Edward Francis, Calvin Jackson, Harriet Johnson and Doris Rhea. The *ex-officio* members who may be represented by members of their staff, are Director of the Historic Designation Advisory Board, the Director of the City Planning Commission, and the director of the Planning and Development Department.

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