

Mohammed's - Followers include 1,800 Members of Cult in Newark

Group of Black Race, Describing Themselves as Moorish-Americans, Face Mecca Thrice Daily in Supplications.

ONE sees them in various parts of the city. The men are bearded and wear red fezes. The women wear turbans of red, green and white. Members of the black race, they object to being called Negroes.

They describe themselves as Moorish-American. There are 1,800 in Newark and they comprise one of the city's stranger and most religious cults.

Three times each day—at 6 A. M., noon and 6 P. M.—the Moorish-Americans face the holy city of Mecca and with arms outstretched in religious fervor, they chant:

"Allah, father of the universe; father of love, truth, peace, freedom and justice. Allah is my protector, my guide and my salvation. By night and by day, through his holy prophet, Drew All."

The religion was founded by Prophet Noble Drew All, who asserts he is a reincarnation of Mohammed. He hailed from Chicago, where he started the cult in 1913.

Group Formed in 1928.

The Newark group was organized in 1928. The first meeting was held in Race Hall, Bank and Rutgers streets. Twelve persons attended. Members of the cult now worship in the Moorish Science Temple of America, which resembles an Islam mosque, at 230 Court street.

There are similar temples in Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Jersey City, Baltimore, Brooklyn, Augusta and Chicago. Rejecting Christianity and the Bible, the Moorish-Americans are not Mohammedans in the strict sense. They recognize the founder of Islamism as a great religious teacher, classifying him with Christ, Confucius and Zoroaster. But they have set up a prophet of their own in the person of Noble Drew All. They do, however, in the practice of their religious duties, follow more closely the teachings of the Koran and the prophet, Mohammed, than any other established belief or creed. But they do not accept the Koran as the sole and complete authority. Prophet Noble Drew All is free to make any changes he sees fit.

...limited to one wife and are married according to the law of the land. Later they are wed under laws of their religion.

Diet: Meat, Meat and Eggs.

They do not eat meat, poultry or eggs. Eggs are taboo because "they contain life." Fish may be eaten because "fish die when they are taken from the water and do not need to be slaughtered." The fish must have scales.

The Moorish-Americans do not drink alcoholic liquors or indulge in tobacco in any form. They are taught that man cannot die.

The cult frowns on divorce, but does not forbid it. Followers are taught to "obey the laws of government because you are a part of the government and must live accordingly." The code commands the faithful not to "cause any confusion or overthrow of the laws of the constitution, but to obey."

Moorish-Americans are not permitted to shave or cut their hair. There is a Moorish-American barber shop on Waverly avenue, near Broome street, where the barbers have long hair and beards and wear fezes while at work. None of the patrons, of course, are Moorish-Americans.

William Gravitt, appointed Grand Sheik by Prophet Noble Drew All, is in command of the local flock. He governs with the aid of an "adepts chamber," an advisory board made up of thirty members of the cult.

The Grand Sheik's home is spotless and pervaded with heavy incense. Various oriental objects hang on the wall. The name of each man is followed by "Bey" or "El," depending on which sounds best.

Friday is their Sabbath. January 9 is akin to Christmas and January 9 is regarded as New Year's Day. July 20 is known as Memorial Day, because "Prophet Noble Drew All passed away on July 20, 1929, and was reincarnated on August 27, that year, as Mohammed 3d."

Prophet Noble Drew All in addition to ruling his followers, sells "an old Egyptian remedy for rheumatism, indigestion, etc."

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