

THE STORY OF THE FIRST AMERICAN CONVERT TO ISLAM

**Muhammad Alexander Russell Webb—A Scholar of Fame—
Social Worker—Leading Journalist—Editor of many Papers
—Consul General for U. S. A.—Founder of First Islamic
Mission and Islamic Periodical in America.**

(From our New York Correspondent)

The following is the text of an address delivered by Nadirah F. Ives Osman at a meeting of Muslims held in Steinway Hall, New York on Nov. 1943 under the auspices of the Webb Memorial Committee :

We are commemorating, as Muslims, at this meeting, the birthday of Muhammad Alexander Russell Webb. It was easily within a possibility that he could have lived to share this occasion with us, who are strangers to him, for he would only have been 96 years of age, today. He is still closely linked with the generation of most of us, and we can easily understand him, for the intellectual rebirth of the world in which he took his part, is even yet only in the stage of its throes. What he tried to accomplish, he has left for us as his contribution, for us to study.

I could give you simply an array of facts relating to his life. To me, however, this would seem inadequate to explain him, and you should still be left, puzzled over the phenomenon of his appearance on the American scene. I am, therefore, forced to be arbitrary, even though I might make some minor mistake in my interpretation, but this will be rectified either by the speakers who follow me, or by future historians. I can only tell you what I believe. I must attempt to place him in his contemporary times, albeit briefly, otherwise I think we cannot properly sympathise with him, or appreciate his true greatness.

Muhammad Webb says of himself: "I was not born, like some boys, with a fervently religious strain in my character. I will not even assert that I was a good boy. I was emotional in later years, but not mawkishly sentimental, and always demanded a reason for everything. I attended the Presbyterian Sunday school of my native town, when I could not avoid it, impatient to get out into the glad sunshine and hear the more satisfying sermons preached by God himself through the murmuring brooks, the gorgeous flowers, and the jovous birds. I listened incredulously to the story of the Immaculate Conception and the dramatic tale of the vicarious Atonement, doubting the truth of both dogmas."

November 9th, 1846, this very human little boy was born, at Hudson, New York. His father, Alexander Nelson Webb, was the proprietor and editor of the Hudson Daily Star, for over a period of 35 years.

From the center of a rich family life, which he shared with two sisters and three brothers, Alexander went forth to the public schools of the town. He was later sent away to boarding school, the "Home School", at Glendale, Massachusetts, but completed his higher education at Claverick College, which was then in existence near his home town.

At Chicago

Before the boy had reached sixteen, his literary tastes were made evident by his writing numerous essays and short stories. The Civil War came to a close, while he was still at his schooling. Fifteen years earlier, Horace Greeley, the head of American journalists, born on a rocky New Hampshire farm, who lived to achieve world fame, had thundered the advice which still echoed to our own times, "Go West, young man, and grow up with the nation," in his "Hints toward Reform." It is not surprising, therefore, that this son of another editor should leave for Chicago, when he finished college. His departure was typical of all the children of the family: one brother became a prominent physician in San Francisco; others settled in St. Louis or Unionville, Missouri. Only Alexander was to return east in later life.

In Chicago, the young man with a writing itch first turned to trade. We will see that he was always eminently practical, as well as idealistic. He engaged in the jewelry business.

Buys a Paper

Is it not the lot of man, that when the Ruler of this world wishes to quicken the mind, purify the soul and prod its potentialities, that misfortunes are sent? In 1871, Webb was burned out by the Chicago fire. He returned to New York City, connecting, for a time with Tiffany and Company. Then he returned to Chicago, to represent another large jewelry concern. Two years later, he had enough capital to purchase "The Missouri Republican" at Unionville, Mo., which he conducted for nearly three years. Moving on to a more active field, he became city editor of the St. Joseph, Mo. Gazette, associating for years, intimately, with a beloved poet of America, Eugene Fielde, and still he kept climbing to more responsible newspaper posts. We find him, at last, on the editorial staff of the Missouri Republican, of St. Louis, the second oldest and one of the largest daily newspapers in the United States.

Discards Christianity

Before Webb had gone into the newspaper business, and following the Chicago fire, the young man had disowned Christianity for himself. He was too honest to remain a hypocrite. He tells us that he then drifted into materialism, and for several years had no religion at all except the Golden Rule, which he declared he followed "about as closely as the average Christian."

"Firmly materialistic", he continues, "I looked at first to the advanced schools of materialistic science, and found that it was just as completely immersed in the darkness of ignorance concerning spiritual things, as I was." But something happened to this materialist after he entered the newspaper game.

But life itself had first beaten upon our nation. Two years following the Chicago fire, the very year Webb bought his first newspaper, and a year after after he gave up Christianity, came the Panic (or Depression) of 1873. For five years, the nation was purged, while political unrest and corruption occupied the foreground. A true psychic, Webb had known things were wrong. The Republications lost Congress to the Democrats, even in Massachusetts, by 1874, and the boom of the reconstruction period was at an end. There was nothing discussed but reform, everywhere, and social unrest. If one looked to England, one saw the fierce struggles of advancing socialism, and liberalism in religion: William Morris was revolting against the tyranny of the Machine Age; unemployment riots made head lines. In St. Louis, the local picture for Alexander Webb, the transiency of this life could be easily discerned in the superceding of river traffic by the introduction of rail. "Change and decay, in all around I see."

Studies Buddhism

In 1875, during the height of the Panic, Madame Blavatsky created a furore in New York City by founding the New York Theosophical Society. Two years later, she published "Isis Unveiled," which was at least a national curiosity and stimulus. In 1881, Webb commenced the study of Oriental religion. He had not found Christianity any more attractive, after returning to study it more carefully and truly, he tells us. He found its moral ethics most commendable, but not different from those of every other system. Its superstitions, grave errors and inefficiencies, caused him to wonder why any thoughtful, intelligent person, could accept it seriously. Oriental religions and spiritual philosophies, now engaged his time. He had access to a library of about 13,000 books, where he spent four to seven hours a day, taking time that he really needed for sleep, in his search to find God and to solve the riddle of the universe. He began with Buddhism, then he joined the Theosophical Society.

1886: There were twice as many strikes as in the previous year. Socialistic doctrines were spreading, we are told, even among western farmers. President Cleveland sent the first labour message to Congress.

Consul General at Manilla

Craving yet more time to study and experiment in religion, Webb decided to terminate his journalistic activities, which did not give him enough free time to do all that he desired. He was fortunate to secure an appointment from President Cleveland to the post of Consul General at Manilla, the chief of the Phillipine Islands. This was in 1887.

The Phillipines were then in the hands of Spain, but they had become a center of extreme mental activity. Public schools had been authorized in 1863. After the building of the Suez Canal, six years later, ambitious Phillipinos were going to Spain and other countries, to study. Since 1872, there were shoutings for independence, as well as insurrections. To Webb, now

41 years of age, it was the threshold to the new world of the East. Our business there, however, could not have been very extensive.

In the meantime, Webb had married, in the West, a widow from Cincinnati, Ohio, who had a little girl. Their family was then increased by the births of two daughters and a son. Mr. Webb took them along with him to Manilla.

Embraces Islam

Before a year had passed, the American Consul General made the discovery of certain books and documents which he had not seen in the United States, and which had been written by Muslim authors. He tells us that they aroused his most intense interest in the Islamic system. He at once gave himself up, entirely, to the study of Islam, so far as his official duties would permit. All by himself, from books, without ever having seen a Muhammadan, Alexander Russel Webb became a Muslim. Looking back over his quest, Webb described it, in later years: "I began to compare the various religions, in order to ascertain which was the best and most efficacious, as a means of securing happiness in the next life." Unconsciously, he was already fulfilling the 46th verse of the 38th Chapter of the Holy Quran: "Surely, we purified them by a pure quality, the keeping in mind of the Home in the Future Life." This explanation discloses to us the exalted quality of his thoughts.

Contact with India

A Parsee gentleman from Bombay happened to pass through Manilla, and met Mr. Webb. This was just four years after the latter had taken up his duties as United States Consul. Returning to India, the Parsee searched a Muslim correspondent for the Consul General, and intersted a certain Badruddin Abdullah Kurr, who was a member of the Municipal Council of Bombay, and also, to Mr. Webb's delight, a scholar. His new friend showed the American's letters about, and even had some published in a local newspaper. Through these printed specimens of Webb's correspondence, the attention was attracted of a wealthy Indian merchant of Medina, Arabia, one Hajee Abdullah Arab, who possessed business interests as well in Bombay, Jeddah, Calcutta and Singapore. Before long, Arab came to visit Webb in Manilla.

Resigns to Become Missionary of Islam

The Hajee (that is a Muslim who has made the pilgrimage to Mecca) was very much pleased, we are told, to see Mr. Webb and his little family. He found "the good-natured wife" of Mr. Webb, and his three children, also Muslims. A plan for the propagation of Islam in America, was discussed by the two men. Hajee Abdullah Arab was to take it upon himself, to collect the necessary funds. Webb was to resign his post as Consul General of the United States, to become the leader of an Islamic mission in America. These plans were in direct accordance with Quranic teaching: "Why should not a company from every party from among them go forth, that they may apply themselves to obtain understanding in religion, and that they may warn their people, when they come back to them, that they may be cautious." Before setting out upon his missionary work, Muhammad Alexander Russel Webb made an extended tour of India, Burma, China, Egypt, Arabia and Turkey.

(To be continued)

The Story of the First American Convert to Islam

(Continued from previous issue)

There is in existence, at the New York Public Library, a very interesting little book containing three of Muhammad Webb's addresses which he made in 1892 before large audiences at Madras, Hyderabad, Deccan, and Bombay. In the introduction, Maulvi Hassan Ali, who accompanied Mr. Webb as translator in Urdu, has written: "Mr. Webb is not a dry rationalistic Moslem, but his heart is full of the love of God and His Prophet. God has been pleased to open his heart to the secret philosophy of Islam. He knows the spirit of Islam." (Hussan Ali has here underlined this word "spirit".) "To him has been opened the sacred treasure of our religion, the treasure which was possessed by Iman Al Ghazzali and Maulana Room." Before Muhammad Webb left India, a testimonial was presented to him from the Anjuman Taide Musulmanan-e-Jadeed, of Bombay, printed upon green silk. It welcomed him to Bombay and expressed confidence in him, both as a Muslim convert, and as the future missionary of Islam to New York City or Chicago. "The fact", it declares, "that you have voluntarily sustained a serious loss, by resigning your honorable and lucrative post of Consul General at Manilla, conclusively proves the deep interest you take for establishing a mission on the American continent."

Founds Islamic Journal

February 16, 1893, Muhammad Webb returned to America, via London. Had things improved with our nation, since his absence for many years? I regret to say that matters had grown instead worse. We are told that farms were covered with mortgages, business was prostrate. Before Cleveland could begin his second term, the panic of 1893 had swept the nation and prosperity did not return for over four years. Three months after his arrival in New York City, this year of the Panic, May 12, 1893, the first number of the "Moslem World" appeared, a weekly periodical printed by the "Moslem World Publishing Company" of 458 West 20th Street, with Muhammad Webb as editor.

It was intended that this really splendid Muslim periodical should open up new fields, throughout the country—"to teach the intelligent masses who and what Muhammad was, and what he really taught, and to overturn the fabric of falsehood and error that prejudiced and ignorant writers have been constructing and supporting for centuries against Islam." Webb further explained: "The plainly apparent decay of Church Christianity and the defection from that system of the most intelligent and progressive people, in nearly all large American cities, seem to encourage the belief that the time has now arrived for the spread of the true faith, from the Eastern to the Western Hemisphere. Less than five years ago, it began its progressive march in England, with a small following in Liverpool....The number of English Muslims is rapidly increasing."

"The Review of Religion," a monthly magazine of Islamic propaganda, printed in English, had appeared in India, for the first time, a year before. "The Islamic Review" was to be published, in England, 20 years later. "The Moslem

World" only survived seven months, but it is still of interest, and alive. Webb never minced his words but wrote clearly, trenchantly and nobly. He valiantly went to the aid of a maligned and misunderstood Islam, undertaking even to defend the Sultan of Turkey himself, from unprincipled moral attacks. He distributed his magazine far and wide, over the United States, especially to editors of leading newspapers and periodicals, with many of whom he was on intimate terms. Many interesting comments and reviews were the result, which were recorded in the Moslem World, the majority being highly favourable.

Wants to Translate Quran

But not only were Mr. Webb's writings to be published by the "Moslem World Publishing Co." in magazine and book form, but translations were proposed from the Arabic, Persian, Urdu, Gujerati, etc. Instructions on Namaz or Muslim Prayer were printed. One day a Greek priest visited Mr. Webb, who produced an original manuscript entitled "Islam is the True Faith with God." When Mr. Webb learned that he was really a Muslim convert, he published the manuscript, which was sold for 25 cents. But most important of all, it was arranged that a translation of the Quran was to be undertaken into English, by the Anjuman Himayat Islam, "perhaps," Mr. Webb stating, "to be completed by the end of the year, and to be printed in a cheap form, so as to bring it within the reach of the masses."

"There is no religious system," he explained, "so little known among English-speaking people, as the Islamic." As explanation of this, he put forth three causes:

1. The natural aversion of Moslems to the English language and English-speaking nations.
2. The unwillingness of Muslims to have their literature translated into our own.
3. The strong prejudice, for the past 8 or 9 centuries, of Christians against Islam.

It was not until 16 years later, however, that Maulana Muhammad Ali, of Lahore, India commenced the translating of the Quran into English, a Muslim labour that consumed seven years of hard work. The first edition was not published until 1917, the year following Muhammad Webb's death.

Opens A Lecture Hall

A lecture campaign was inaugurated. The Lecture Hall has been fondly described, in the "Moslem World", for us, by Mr. Webb. We Muslims of New York, can fully sympathise with his pride:

"It is probably one of the cosiest and most attractive assembly rooms of its size in New York. It is fitted with neat and comfortable folding chairs, of polished oak and walnut. There is a platform at the south end, that is two feet high, and seven feet wide, carpeted with green, tapestry and with a woollen fringe of the same colour. There is an adjustable reading desk of black walnut, and an oak chair for the speaker. The room is lighted by a handsome brass chandelier, with a pearl-shaded drop light

of four burners, over the reading desk. At each end of the hall is a green flag, with a red star and a crescent in the center. On the walls are a number of artistic half-tone engravings, representing some of the most beautiful mosques and tombs in India. In the rear of the platform is the library shut off from the lecture room by glass doors. In it are a long table, for newspapers, and periodicals, and chairs. At the west end are numbers of Islamic books." Webb advertised: "In the 'Moslem World Building' will be a free library and reading room, where all honest, thoughtful men and women will be welcome, from 9 a.m. to 10 p.m." At the opening of this library, introductory remarks were made by Mr. Emin Nabakoff, a Russian Muslim. Prof. Leon Landsberg followed him. Webb always advertised a long list of books on Islam, in his magazine, but he added, however: "Not endorsed in full the statements and opinions of the authors of works."

The Lecture Hall was open to the public every Friday evening at 8 o'clock and every Sunday after noon, from 2 to 5 p.m. The first public meeting was held on Friday, October the 6th, 1893, with a large attendance. The previous month, the "Moslem World" had reported the celebration of the annual Mohammedan festival of Bakrid "at the beautiful mosque of Woking, England, where among the worshippers were Indians, Egyptians and Turks." Khwaja Kimal-ud-din was not to come to England, as a missionary to this mosque, until 1912, just 19 years later. The first prominent convert, in the British Isles as the result, was to be Lord Headley, in 1913.

At the "Moslem World Building", of New York City, lectures on Islamic doctrines and customs were given on Friday evenings, Brief addresses and replies to questions concerning Islam and its tendencies were arranged for the Sunday afternoons. It was not planned that Muhammad Webb should be the sole speaker. Several local Muslims assisted him, notably Mr. Emin Nabakoff, to whom I have just referred. Indian, Turkish, and Egyptian missionaries were to be summoned, as time went on.

Country-wide Lecture Campaign

Mr. Webb also made "parlor addresses" at homes in the vicinity of New York City, and he filled public engagements elsewhere and throughout the country. I shall just give you one sample month, to let you judge of his activity, in these out-of-town engagements.

- Nov. 3 Cohocton, Chio.
- 4 So. Carlestown, O.
- 13 Caro, Mich.
- 20 Chicago, Ill.
- 24 Streator, Ill.
- 28 Ft. Madison, Ia.
- 30 Plattsmouth, Neb.

His out-of-town lectures were booked by "The Oriental Literary Bureau" of 1122 Broadway, New York City. There are recorded in his magazine, notices of his personal appearances in New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Michigan, Indiana, Illinois, Iowa, Mississippi, Kansas and "some of the eastern and southern states." We read that he spoke at Chickering Hall, New York City, on "The Spirit of Oriental Religions" and that he also appeared at the Academy of Music, in Brooklyn, and before the New York Theosophical Society. Dr. Tunison is to tell you, later, how he represented Islam at the World Parliament of Religions in Chicago.

Islamic Study Circles

But what was to result from all this activity? It was desired that circles should be established, in all the cities and towns of the United States, for the study of Islamic literature, with careful investigation of historic facts relative to the life and character of the Prophet of Islam. The parent society, in New York, would furnish the branches with such literature and information as they might stand in need of. Some books would be furnished free, others would be supplied at the cost of publishing and postage. Each society would select its own officers and arrange its own system of dues, if these were needed. Their report would be registered at Bombay, India, by the secretary of the Indian Committee, to be given its charter and numbered in the order of its organization. In the meanwhile, a document was circulated throughout India, Burma, Turkey and Egypt, asking for contributions to funds, to be placed with the committee in Bombay.

American Muslim Brotherhood

The American Muslim Brotherhood was started, with its primary object, the study and full comprehension of the life, character, purposes and teachings of the Prophet Muhammad. Thus the convert would unite, in a bond of brotherhood, with the vast Muhammadan population of the globe, and use his talents and energy to propagate the true faith, wherever he could. It was hoped and expected that the circles would develop, in time, into branches of the Universal Moslem Brotherhood, and that from these would ultimately evolve Muhammadan communities. Webb declared, "The moral force of these communities will in time purge our whole social system and bring us, as a nation, to a more perfect understanding of the glory and power of God, and the necessity of moral development." No member would be required to subscribe to any religious doctrine, whatever, or to accept any creed or tenet not in harmony with his or her own reason and common sense. It was declared: "The first aim and purpose is the education of the members in Islamic historical and doctrinal literature." Webb's great desire was to present "the Islamic system in its purity, freed from the gross and materialistic ideas which had been engrafted upon it by misguided Muslims. The sole view of the study was to understand what it was that the Prophet Muhammad taught, what he intended to accomplish, and what he did accomplish."

An English society of the Muslim Brotherhood was established in London. The first circle of the Muslim Brotherhood in America was named "The Mecca Circle No. 1, of New York City." The credit for its organization was given to one A. L. Rawson, Esq., Woodcliff, New Jersey. Five men were chartered members. Mr. Rawson was a man well-known in Masonic Circles throughout the United States, who had travelled extensively in the East. He had visited Mecca and Medina, and had been "the first American to secure a picture of the tomb of our prophet." He also organized two more circles of 11 men in New York City. "Capital Circle No. 4" of the Muslim Brotherhood was organized in Washington, D. C. with five as charter members, of which one was a professor and two were M. D.'s. These details may be a little boring to some members of our audience, but I have felt they would be extremely interesting to Muslims, themselves.

In an early edition of the paper, Muhammad Webb had announced that he hoped soon to greet, in New York, Maulvi Hassan Ali, the interpreter of his speeches in India. Later, he disclosed, that his previous announcement about this has been premature. "The Moslem World" appears as a Moslem periodical, for the last time, November, 1893. There was no warning of its discontinuation.

All these personal facts which I have given you, with the exception of the brief reference to Mr. Webb's family, together with the Bombay testimonial, I have culled from Webb's own writings, available in the New York Public Library. Events of the latter period of his life, I have obtained either from Mr. Webb's obituary, which occupies a prominent place on the front page of the Rutherford Tribune, of Rutherford, New Jersey, of Saturday, October 7, 1916, or from his daughter, Mrs. Alyea, who has so kindly co-operated with us and come to share her memories of him with us, today, or from my personal knowledge.

Serves Turkey

In 1898, Mr. Webb removed to Rutherford News (a Democracy paper). He edited this for nearly three years, then sold it to Capt. Addison Ely, who merged it into the Bergen County Herald of Hackensack (the Captain of Bergen Co., N. J.). Mr. Webb continued to edit these combined journals for six months. His interest in Islam, however, had never abated. In 1901, he left for Turkey, after having served that Government as Honorary Consul General, in New York City. The letter is still in Mrs. Alyea, his daughter's possession, written upon the letter-head of the Turkish Legation in Washington, which expresses gratitude "not only for the enumeration of your services, but for your strong efforts to build a mosque in America, as well as a cemetery for the benefit of Islam, to which you have converted many Americans."

In Constantinople, Muhammad Webb was given the decoration of the third Order of Medjidie and the Medel of Merit. He is the only American ever given the latter decoration. He was also given the title of Bey.

Serves his country

Mr. Webb took a keen interest in public affairs, as an American citizen. "I am an American of the Americans," he had affirmed, at the same time that he had declared himself a Muslim. In 1898, the year he had removed to Rutherford and bought the Rutherford News, his name had been presented, by "The Bergen County Delegation to the 8th District Democratic Congressional Convention" at Hackensack, for nomination to Congress. Webb had withdrawn, however, in favour of the Honourable William Hughes. He served, six years on the Rutherford Board of Education, as clerk of the Board, upon his return from Turkey. He was foreman of the Bergen County Grand Jury for four months, in 1912, as well as President of the Rutherford Campaign Club and President of the Democratic Society. At the time of his death, he headed the Martindale Mercantile Agency of New York City.

Wife: A Christian

It is my great regret that the rich, inner life of this man, during his sunset hours, which had burst forth, previously into such a brilliant flowering of moral and spiritual thought, should today, still be obscured from me. I do know that he attended a kind of auxiliary circle, which was connected with the local Unitarian Church, together with his wife, although he himself never become a member of this denomination. Back in 1893, he had written: "I have seen the masses of intelligent people, drifting away into free-thought societies, ethical culture societies, non-sectarian societies. Besides these, there are the Spiritualists, the Theosophists and an infinite number of other smaller bodies. Then, too, there are the Unitarians who, I am satisfied, will adopt Islam when they really know what it is." Perhaps some such idea still persisted in the back of his mind; or he attended the meetings to please his wife; or to meet, occasionally, with spiritually-minded, emancipated, congenial friends. He was also still an enthusiastic member of the Knights of Pythias, a past Commander of the order, and one of the prominent members of the Rutherford Lodge. This was most likely a society in which he had continued from his early manhood, a society that had been formed in Washington, D. C. during the early, trying Civil War days.

Last Days

Mr. Webb has been subject to diabetes for years. On a Saturday morning, at the age of 70 years, Mr. Webb went to New York City on business. Upon his return, he complained of being ill. He continued to grow worse, until the end came, the following morning, the 1st of October, 1916. The funeral services were private. He was survived by his wife, and son, and two daughters. Services were private. It should be explained, that Mrs. Webb did not continue to share her husband's interest in Islam, in her later years. The Rev. Elizabeth Padgham, pastor of the Unitarian Church, officiated. We are told, in the obituary, that her address was most impressive, although no record of what she said can be remembered. The pall-bearers were composed of a delegation from the Rutherford Lodge of the Knights of Pythias. The "Rutherford Republican" wrote as tribute:—"Mr. Webb had passed through a prominent career. He was an ardent Democrat and took an active part in the work of his party, while a resident in Rutherford, and possessed many warm, personal and social friends aside from politics."

Assisted Maulana Muhammad Ali

When I was in Turkey in 1931, I first learned of Mohammad Webb. A book was mailed to me, there, from India entitled: "The Teachings of Islam" by Mirza Ghulam Ahmad. In the Preface, dated 1910, I read, "I cannot close this short note without an acknowledgement of the valuable assistance rendered to me in the revision of the English translation by Mr. Muhammad Alexander Russel Webb (New Jersey, U. S. A.), Maulvi Sher Ali, B.A. and Mr. Ghulam Muhammad, B.A., to whom my best thanks are due." Signed, Muhammad Ali: No one can imagine how joyful I was to see this reference to an American convert to Islam from New Jersey, for I had been born in that state, myself, and many of my relatives were still living there. The

state is large, and Muhammad Webb seemed lost to me in it, but none the less, it comforted me, far away, in a distant land, as though he were approving the position I had taken, as a convert to Islam. It is always remarkable, even to myself, why I did not write, immediately, or even later, directly to Muhammad Ali, to enquire about him. However, 1910 was the long way removed from 1941. A whole war lay between. I had the feeling that he must be dead. It was only later, when I met Dr. Tunison, that I found in his enthusiasm, again the echo of Muhammad Webb's name. But there were always so many more immediate things I had to do or to think about so that I never wrote myself to enquire, I recommended this, however, to others.

Since then I have found, with Dr. Tunison, the simple stone that marks his grave, and seen the vine of ivy that swarms his resting place. I have been touched by the sight of his last photograph, taken shortly before he passed away, a likeness that displays his shining, resigned face, crowned with snowy hair, as he stands in the midst of his family, his beard still uncut in the shaven America of 1916.

Died a Muslim

We have been assured that Muhammad Webb died a Muslim. There is such a thing, that one has been born too early, or too late. Webb died at the height of the period of an almost universal materialism. His writings, however, remain to-day fresh and advanced, a witness and an inspiration to our and to future generations. What he desired, an English translation of the Holy Quran, by a Muslim was completed two months before his death. He had known it was in preparation. Since then we have had several Muslim translations produced.

Webb lived to prove his theory: "In these days, it is intolerable that the observance of the religious customs of any sect should furnish a cause for public anxiety." By his absorption in an American community, on successful terms and there is nothing more provincial than a small town within commuting distance of New York City, especially in New Jersey), the strange, the odd, the remote, lost their terrors by contact. His sympathies and affiliations were no secret. But, then, Webb had found a haven in a state which fostered a leader for the existing Democratic Party, to which he belonged, in a college president, Woodrow Wilson, or the near-by university of Princeton.

Churchianity : A Danger to America

Webb continually was explaining away misunderstandings about Islam. "The freedom of this country," he had written, is not in half as much danger from the influx of foreigners, as it is from that spirit of selfishness, bigotry, and intolerance, that was such a prominent feature of Church Christianity, a few centuries ago." The tide was too great, in the affairs of men, for him to have made the progress that he desired. He could only accomplish what Allah willed. He did what he could. To-day, he remains for us, like an embedded monument, that we can search and find, as we brush aside, with our hands, the dust and sand of his generation.