

Transcribed Excerpt from the National Registry of Historic Places Application for the Moslem Temple, 1996

The Moslem Temple is significant under Criterion A as the first building designed and constructed specifically as a house of worship for Muslims in the United States.

It also meets the Criteria Consideration A as the oldest surviving place of worship for Muslims in America.

It was completed in 1934 by a group of immigrants from Greater Syria (present-day Syria and Lebanon) who settled in Cedar Rapids, Iowa in the late 1800s and early 1900s.

Renamed the Mother Mosque of America in recognition of its historic significance, it is today used as a mosque and Islamic Cultural and Heritage Center; in 1994 the mosque celebrated its 60th anniversary.

The Moslem Temple in Cedar Rapids is of national significance within the context of two historical trends.

First, it illustrates an important aspect of the immigration history of the United States, as it was built by a group of Arab immigrants with concerns and a history similar to that of other contemporary Arab immigrant groups settling elsewhere in the United States.

Second, and perhaps more importantly, it marks a vital starting point for the development of Islam as an established religion within the United States.

Today, Islam is the fastest growing religion in the United States, and Muslims will soon comprise (if they do not already) the second-largest religious community in the nation after Christians.

Thus, it is vital to recognize and preserve this essential piece of American religious history, which symbolizes tolerance and acceptance of Islam and Muslims in the United States.