

## Story of William Aosse

**William Aosse - Born November 4, 1919, in Quasqueton, Iowa, Died April 29, 2012 in Iowa City, Iowa**

My father, Sam, and his brothers - William, Abdoo and Mike, immigrated from Syria-Lebanon, which was then still part of the Ottoman Empire, in 1907 coming through Ellis Island. Settling in the Midwest, Uncle William led the way for working as peddlers and opening stores. Though my family moved often, we lived for a while in Cedar Rapids, where I attended Taylor School. My family is Muslim. Would you believe that Cedar Rapids is the home of the oldest building in the United States built as a mosque-a Muslim place of worship? Since 1895 Muslims have immigrated to Cedar Rapids in search of the American dream. We met for worship in each other's homes. In the 1920s we were able to rent a temporary space. In 1925 we took the name "The Rose Fraternity Lodge."

In 1934, despite the strains of the Great Depression we were able to construct our very own place of worship. We worked hard to raise the money and even received donations from as far away as Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. We named the new building the Mother Mosque. We finally had a permanent place in which to practice our religion with others.

*Courtesy of The History Center; Linn County Historical Society*