
Everyday Muslim Heritage and Archive Initiative (EMHAI) was established in 2013 to create an archive to document and preserve the UK's lived Muslim experiences. The organisation was established to address the noticeable absence of the historical and contemporary Muslim narrative from the archives, museums and history books in Britain.

The archive collection consists of documents, photographs and oral history interviews. At present, there are three collections that are archived in heritage institutes across the UK, placing Muslim history and heritage directly in the context of wider British history. Archive partners to date include; Bishopsgate Institute, Vestry House Museum, George Padmore Institute, Surrey History Centre, Brent Museums and Archives.

EMHAI first began to consult with the Muslim, African and Black Caribbean community in 2015 to frame the documenting and archiving heritage project 'An Exploration of Black Muslims in British History and Heritage.' Very early on, it became apparent that there was a real need to explore ways to continue a more focussed approach in bringing about the inclusion of Black Muslim heritage in national archives and discourse.

By the end of the project in 2018, thirty oral history interviews were recorded, and hundreds of photographs digitised to create the first archive collection to focus entirely on the Muslim section of the African and Black Caribbean Muslim community. The archive collection has also been used to develop an exhibition, Key Stage 3/4 curriculum-related education resources, a booklet, and a website to provide a historical insight into its diverse experiences and memories of everyday life.

Around the same time, a number of efforts from within the African and Black Caribbean community were published or launched. They include Black and Muslim in Britain which was a series of videos based on stories and dialogue from influential Black Muslim in the UK. Mustafa Briggs began Beyond Bilal lecture series to document heritage and explore Black and African history in the UK and Islamic context while also creating Black Muslim spaces.

This phase also simultaneously coincided with a proposal to collaborate from the MCB. At the time, the MCB sought to enhance the representation and engagement with African and Black Caribbean Muslims in their own organisation. The stakeholders partnership sought to amplify and build bridges. It developed several engagement events with their experiences, as Muslims in the African and Black Caribbean communities and the wider Muslim community. It was based on these interactions, which led to our organisations and more importantly, the community deciding that to develop a report would be the most effective approach.

This opportunity collectively enabled us to widen and strengthen our engagement and representation objectives in documenting and preserving the communities' history and heritage in the UK and a more integrated approach to effecting broader positive changes, including better relations in the wider Muslim community.

This report is a step in the right direction of ensuring adequate representation and preservation of the experience, history and heritage of our diverse communities without overlooking or undermining any particular segment.



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