



DAVID AHMED FAISAL

'I must defend you,' sheikh tells followers.

Islam Faith On Rise Here, Sect Says

Battered Table, Chair In Bare Room Is Braddock Mosque; New Quarters Set

By **FRITZ LALENDORF**

Fifty Negroes sat in their stocking feet and gazed toward the "Mosque," a battered table and chair at one end of the room.

Most were clad in a fez, makeshift turbans or shawls. A well-worn rug and three light bulbs were the only other furnishings.

A dime lay forlornly in a dish at one end of the table.

The occasion was the weekly meeting of the First Islamic Mosque of Braddock at Ninth and Washington Streets.

The group sat quietly yesterday listening to Sheikh Daoud Ahmed Faisal, founder, spiritual head and director of the Islamic Mission headquartered in Brooklyn.

"These people," said Ahmed, with a wave to his followers, have accepted our teachings. Why can't more do likewise?"

His followers really aren't that in the strictest sense of the word, although they work diligently to perpetuate the faith.

Islam has no membership explains Ahmed. It is an "institution" with the Mosque open "to the entire universe."

The self-proclaimed leader travels widely spreading his gospel. He has been in this country 48 years since migrating from his native Morocco.

He founded the mission in 1932 and has spent 10 years

as an honorary delegate to the United Nations.

"I don't know why I came to this country," he said. "I am heartsick about the treatment of our people here."

"People ask me about America. I must defend you everywhere. I say you have come from generations of slavery and are not yet ready."

Islam has never caught on here because it's never been taught, the spiritual leader contends. Its teachers have been continually mocked, jeered and suppressed, he said.

"Man is just now seeing the light," Ahmed added, and the sect is thriving.

The Braddock mission is growing rapidly and will move into new quarters within the next few weeks.

"Peace be with you," the converts chorused as the reporters left.