

FROM THE CROSS TO THE CRESCENT: REACHING THE WEST BANK

QUINN: We lived in a residential neighborhood. Our address was 421 North 8th Street. It was walking distance to downtown. One block off the state highway that went through town. But it had trees and all single-family homes. I had a bike and I would ride my bike everywhere in La Crosse, especially right after we arrived and I hardly knew anyone. That was how I got around. So I had a lot more mobility than ever before in my life. It encouraged me to explore the town and one day I rode across the Mississippi River Bridge into Minnesota. There was a small town there named La Crescent. [I don't think there was any linkage to the Muslim faith, but it is interesting that the town on one side is named for the Cross and the other the Crescent]. Anyway, I recall being so excited that when my bike wheels entered Minnesota that I hit a bump and toppled over onto the highway. I was so scared that there might be a car coming behind me that might run me over, that I hurriedly scrambled off the road and safely onto the gravel shoulder.

It was a little like my exploring the Botanical Gardens in the Bronx and almost being hit by a New York Central train. But looking back, I think it reflected some innate desire to go off exploring that seemed to always be a part of me. It was a passion that was abetted by the radio I listened to in our living room late at night, when I would carefully turn the dial trying to pull in some far off station and listen intently for its call sign and location.