



WHO ARE THE MOORS?

An Educational Introduction to History, Heritage, Nationality, and Identity

This educational presentation is designed to help readers examine the question:

“Who were the Moors in the past, and who are the Moors today?”

The word **Moor** has been used in different historical periods to describe various peoples connected with North Africa, Morocco, the western Mediterranean, the Iberian Peninsula, and the Islamic world. Its meaning has changed according to time, place, language, and the people using the term.

Within the teachings of the Moorish Science Temple of America, Moorish Americans are identified as people of Moorish descent who were born in America and whose ancestral identity was obscured by slavery, colonialism, imposed racial classifications, and the loss of national knowledge. They are taught to reclaim knowledge of their Moorish and Moroccan heritage, nationality, birthrights, and responsibilities.

The Moorish legacy is a broad and powerful subject involving history, geography, culture, science, government, navigation, trade, architecture, agriculture, philosophy, spirituality, law, and the development of civilizations.

To study this legacy responsibly, students and researchers must ask:

- Who used the term “Moor”?
- During which historical period was the term used?
- To what people, country, religion, region, or political community did it refer?

The logo features the words "Online" and "Schooling" in a stylized, outlined font, with "Online" positioned above "Schooling". To the right of "Online" is a small icon of an open book. Below "Schooling" is the phrase "For Moorish Children" in a bold, black, sans-serif font.

Online Schooling For Moorish Children

- How did Moors describe themselves?
- How did European writers describe them?
- What evidence is available in archives, treaties, newspapers, maps, court records, family histories, and historical documents?
- How do historical Moors relate to people who identify as Moorish Americans today?

These questions encourage research, critical thinking, and a careful distinction between historical evidence, religious teachings, cultural identity, and personal belief.

BIRTHRIGHTS, ANCESTRAL LINEAGE, AND HERITAGE

Knowing one's ancestral lineage and cultural heritage can provide a deeper understanding of identity, family history, community responsibility, and one's relationship to the broader family of nations.

A person's heritage may include:

- Family lineage
- National and ethnic origins
- Cultural traditions
- Religious and spiritual teachings
- Languages
- Historical experiences
- Community customs
- Family names
- Geographic connections
- Civic and political history

Birthrights may be understood culturally, spiritually, politically, or legally, depending upon the context. For educational accuracy, cultural heritage and legal nationality should not automatically be treated as the same thing.

In modern civic usage, **nationality** generally refers to a person's legal relationship with a nation or state. **Citizenship** concerns the rights,

responsibilities, and legal membership recognized under the laws of a particular government. **Heritage** concerns ancestry, culture, history, and inherited traditions.

Learning about Moorish heritage can strengthen cultural identity and historical understanding. However, an assertion of ancestry or cultural identity does not, by itself, automatically alter a person's citizenship, nationality, court obligations, property rights, or other lawful status. Lawful claims require applicable law and reliable documentation.

THE QUESTION OF RACE

The terms **Black** and **Negro** are linguistically connected. *Negro* is the Spanish and Portuguese word for *black*. Therefore, to classify a person as Negro is literally to classify that person as black in another language.

Neither term identifies a specific nationality, ancestral nation, language, or political community. They are color-based classifications that were applied to many people possessing different cultures, family histories, national origins, and ancestral lineages.

Other classifications require separate examinations:

- **Colored** was a broad historical classification used for people who were not socially classified as white.
- **African American** is a modern geographic, cultural, and ethnic designation, but Africa is a continent containing many nations, nationalities, languages, and peoples.
- **Ethiopian** properly identifies a person connected to Ethiopia, although older writings sometimes used the term broadly for African or dark-complexioned people. **Abyssinia** was an external historical name derived from *Habesha*.
- **Abyssinian** and **Ethiopian** overlap historically, but they are not exact synonyms in every period or context.

The fundamental question is not merely whether *Negro* means *black*. It does. The deeper question is: Can a color or translated color word identify a person's nationality, ancestral lineage, birthright, or civic identity?

A color may describe an appearance, but it does not identify a person's nation. Black is a color that means the absence of light, and Negro is the Spanish and Portuguese word for that color. Neither word, by itself, tells us the national name, ancestral homeland, language, culture, or political history of the people being described.

- **Negro** and **colored** were historical racial and social classifications used in laws, government records, institutions, and public language.
- **Black** is a modern racial and social identity used by many people, although it does not identify one nation, language, or ancestry.
- **African American** generally describes an American ethnic, cultural, or ancestral identity connected to Africa, particularly the descendants of enslaved Africans in the United States.
- **Ethiopian** can properly describe a person or citizen connected to the nation of Ethiopia. In older religious and historical writings, the word was sometimes used more broadly and imprecisely for African or dark-complexioned peoples.

Modern scholarship generally recognizes race as a social and historical classification rather than a set of separate biological human species. All living people belong to one human species. Nevertheless, racial classifications have had real consequences because they have been used within laws, censuses, education, housing, employment, property ownership, and social institutions.

Therefore, it is important to distinguish between:

- Human identity
- Racial classification



- Ethnicity
- Culture
- Ancestry
- Nationality
- Citizenship
- Religious affiliation
- Political status

These terms may overlap, but they are not interchangeable.

THE HUMAN FAMILY

The teaching that there is only one human race emphasizes the common origin, dignity, and humanity of all people. It challenges the false belief that physical appearance makes one group naturally superior or inferior to another.

At the same time, acknowledging one human family does not require people to abandon their nationality, culture, ancestry, or heritage. Human unity and cultural identity can exist together.

HOW CAN A PEOPLE LOSE KNOWLEDGE OF THEIR IDENTITY?

An entire people may lose access to their ancestral knowledge through:

- Forced migration
- Enslavement
- The separation of families
- The changing or removal of names
- Prohibitions against ancestral languages
- Colonial education
- Religious conversion
- Destruction or loss of written records
- Government classifications
- Racial labeling
- Displacement from ancestral lands

- Suppression of cultural traditions
- Failure to preserve oral and written family histories

When ancestral knowledge is interrupted, later generations may know very little about their original family names, languages, nations, communities, or places of origin.

This historical loss raises important questions:

- How can a people recover knowledge of their ancestry?
- Which family traditions survived?
- What do birth, marriage, death, immigration, military, census, and property records reveal?
- What information can be found in libraries and archives?
- Which claims are supported by primary documents?
- How can cultural identity be restored without replacing evidence with assumption?

The responsible recovery of heritage requires both pride and disciplined research.

CIVICS AND THE FAMILY OF NATIONS

Civics is the study of citizenship, government, public institutions, rights, responsibilities, and participation in community life.

A complete civic education should help students understand:

- The difference between nationality and race
- The meaning of citizenship
- Constitutional rights and responsibilities
- The structure of local, state, national, and international government
- How laws are created and applied
- How treaties and international agreement's function
- The importance of accurate public records
- The rights and responsibilities of parents and families

The logo features the text "Online Schooling" in a stylized font, with "Online" and "Schooling" stacked. Above the word "Schooling" is a graphic of an open book with lines representing pages. Below this, the text "For Moorish Children" is written in a bold, sans-serif font.

Online Schooling For Moorish Children

- The relationship between individuals, communities, and nations
- How to evaluate legal and historical claims carefully

Many nations and cultural communities teach their youth to preserve family history, language, customs, and civic knowledge. Passing this information from one generation to the next is an important form of cultural preservation.

“WHAT SHALL WE CALL HIM?”

Prophet Noble Drew Ali addressed the confusion created by the many names imposed upon Moorish Americans. In his discussion titled **“What Shall We Call Him?”**, he observed that journalists and public officials used numerous labels when referring to people whose proper national identity had not been acknowledged.

Some of the historical terms appearing in that discussion are degrading and are included in older source material only to document how people were described during that period. Their appearance in a historical text should not be understood as approval of their use today.

The central questions raised by Noble Drew Ali remain significant:

- Did these people possess a national name before their ancestors were brought to North America?
- Did their ancestral homeland have a name?
- Why did journalists substitute racial labels for nationality?
- How did imposed names affect the way people understood themselves?
- What can historical research reveal about their fore parents?
- How can a people correct inaccurate or degrading classifications?



Prophet Noble Drew Ali urged writers and researchers to study the history of the people before choosing a title for them. He argued that imposed labels separated people from the accomplishments and civilizations of their fore parents.

His message may be summarized as follows:

A people should not allow imposed racial labels to replace knowledge of their ancestry, history, nationality, and proper name.

THE POWER OF NAMES AND CLASSIFICATIONS

Names and classifications influence how individuals and communities are perceived. A name may communicate family, ancestry, nationality, religion, culture, political membership, or social position.

Historically, governments and institutions have used classifications to:

- Count populations
- Determine legal rights
- Regulate movement
- Assign social status
- Control labor
- Distribute or deny resources
- Establish segregation
- Record births, marriages, deaths, and property
- Identify citizens and noncitizens

Because classifications can have legal and social consequences, they should be studied carefully. Students must learn to ask who created a particular label, when it was adopted, how it was defined, and what consequences followed from its use.

Online Schooling
For Moorish Children
RESEARCH BEFORE OPINION

The study of Moorish history requires more than repeating familiar statements. It requires documentation, comparison, context, and honest evaluation.

Responsible researchers should consult:

- Primary historical documents
- Treaties and diplomatic correspondence
- Government records
- Court decisions
- Census documents
- Newspapers and periodicals
- Maps and geographic records
- Family records and genealogical evidence
- Books written during the historical period being studied
- Museum and archival collections
- Peer-reviewed historical scholarship
- Official publications of Moorish organizations

Researchers should also distinguish between:

1. **Documented historical facts**
2. **Moorish Science Religious and institutional teachings**
3. **Legal interpretations**
4. **Cultural traditions**
5. **Personal opinions and conclusions**

Making these distinctions does not weaken the study of Moorish identity. It strengthens the work by allowing every claim to be understood within its proper context.



WHO ARE THE MOORS TODAY?

Today, the word **Moor** may be used in several ways:

- As a historical description of certain North African and Muslim populations
- As a reference to the Moors associated with Morocco, North Africa, and medieval Iberia
- As a cultural or ancestral identity
- As a religious and national identity within Moorish Science traditions
- The identity of Moorish Americans born in the United States of America

Moorish Americans are Americans of Moorish descent who seek to restore knowledge of their nationality, history, culture, ancestral heritage, and birthrights.

Individual Moorish organizations may differ in their teachings, terminology, leadership, and interpretation of history. Therefore, statements about Moorish identity should identify the particular historical source, institution, or tradition being represented.

OUR EDUCATIONAL PURPOSE

Online Schooling for Moorish Children presents this information to encourage students and families to:

- Know themselves
- Study their ancestry
- Preserve family history
- Understand racial and national terminology
- Developing Civic Knowledge
- Examine historical evidence
- Respect the dignity of all people
- Separate facts from unsupported claims
- Ask meaningful questions



- Conduct disciplined research
- Pass verified knowledge to future generations

Our purpose is not to tell students what they must think. Our purpose is to give them the knowledge, vocabulary, evidence, and research skills necessary to think critically and reach informed conclusions.

KNOW YOURSELF.

KNOW YOUR HISTORY.

KNOW YOUR HERITAGE.

KNOW YOUR CIVIC RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES.

RESEARCH BEFORE OPINION.