



Muhammad Ali the Muslim

Tree of Forgetfulness

- Many slaves were transported from Ouidah, in Benin, West Africa.
- They walked around the Tree of Forgetfulness. With each step they said goodbye to something about themselves; their name, family, village, tribe, language, etc, so their new master received a blank slate.
- The tree no longer exists but a memorial to it now stands in Ouidah.

Search for image:
Tree of Forgetfulness, Benin

No return

Search for image:
Gate of No Return, Ouidah

- This memorial on the beach at Ouidah is called the Gate of No Return.
- It commemorates all the African people lost to the slave trade

Search for image:
Map of West Africa showing
Benin

Search for image:
Routes of slave trade

Nation of Islam Cards

Using the cards, answer these questions:

- 1) Connect events to these dates: 1930, 1946, 1964
- 2) How does Nation of Islam support African American Muslims?
- 3) Why did some Nation of Islam members argue black Americans should live separately?
- 4) What inspired Malcolm X to argue that black and white Americans should live together in harmony?

Search for image:
Malcolm X

Search for image:
Elijah Muhammed

What attracted Ali to the Nation of Islam?

At high school Cassius Clay wanted to write an essay on 'black Muslims' but was not allowed

Clay read Nation of Islam newspapers and told his wife the ideas made sense to him

Clay saw Malcolm X speak at a Nation of Islam rally and was impressed with his words

Search for image:
Muhammad Ali prays before
fight

Clay kept his involvement with Nation of Islam secret before his fight with Liston, because it was viewed with suspicion.

The day after Clay won the Liston fight he announced, 'Cassius Clay is a slave name, I didn't choose it and I don't want it. I am Muhammad Ali, a free name – it means beloved of God, and I insist people use it when they speak to me'. Malcolm X was with him.