

MONTANA



BAHÁ'Í HISTORY

**Compiled and Written
by**

Betty J. Bennett

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PREFACE

An account of the growth of the Bahá'í Faith in Montana was prepared at the request of Dr. Lawrence Small of the Rocky Mountain College in Billings for a book he was editing on Religions in Montana. Information on the growth of the Bahá'í Faith was presented, as known at the time, by responding to his request (Sept. 1994) and his editing printed in RELIGION IN MONTANA - Pathways to the Present. Vol. Two, edited by Lawrence F. Small, Chapter XVIII, The Bahá'í in Montana, page 397. The National Spiritual Assembly approved the statement edited by Dr. Small.

The first statement for Dr. Small on the history was written with brevity in mind. It became the outline for a new beginning. The pages that follow were written from information on hand and, hopefully, may serve as a guide for the future when community records reveal more detailed teaching efforts. Newspaper accounts of events, if unearthed in newspaper morgues, would give a deeper picture of the very early teaching. Needless to say, it is impressive to visualize the teaching work of each of these early individuals, who were so dedicated at a time when the administrative framework was not there to support them. Their service rose from the desire to serve the Kingdom of God on behalf of 'Abdu'l-Baha and spread the Glad Tidings as the Tablets of the Divine Plan instructed. Prayer guided them to accomplish their work.

Bulletins from the Teaching Committee of the Bahá'í Temple Unity are the primary source of early activity except the stories of the L.E. Jones family, a personal record and account of meeting 'Abdu'l-Baha by Feny E. Paulson and that of Mr. John Wilcott. Once past the early pioneers and traveling teachers, most of the pattern of activity is with Assemblies and the teaching work of the State Teaching Committee, under its different names, beginning in 1966 through about 1992. This Committee served to assist the National Teaching Committee to carry out the goals given for each teaching plan. After becoming a Bahá'í in 1937, I was appointed to serve on an early Regional Committee around 1949-50 and the State Goals Committee organized in 1966, serving continually until this committee was dissolved, mostly as its secretary, until 1992. My

participation in teaching events and recorded statistical notes are largely used for this compilation. It has been to my benefit to have been a young girl when the first Spiritual Assembly was formed in the capitol city of Helena, followed by living in Bozeman and Butte. The latter city has allowed serving over 50 years on the Assembly, probably 40 years as the secretary and to be aided by discovering the early archives.

Indian teaching work became a focal and rallying point around which the friends in Montana, from widely separated areas, generously and joyfully supported. In the 1970's, the Committee initiated teaching trips to all seven reservations for 2-3 years and later asked the Billings and Yellowstone County Assemblies to assist with Ridvan formations on the Northern Cheyenne and Crow Reservations.

The material has been arranged chronologically as it seemed to unfold and geographically by city. The very early individuals were residents in an area for a fairly long time. The first mentioned, Mr. Peter Maus, does say he heard of the Faith in Missoula but is documented as working in Philipsburg, Helena and then Red Lodge as a miner. He was an enthusiastic teacher in each area. The L. E. Jones family resides in Anaconda in 1902 or 03; John Wilcott moves to Kendall/Winifred in 1910 and Feny Paulson is in Missoula from 1911-1918. This was followed by many dedicated traveling teachers beginning around 1917. In 1937 Shoghi Effendi gave the American Bahá'ís the First Seven Year Plan to establish a Spiritual Assembly in the capitol city of each state, beginning a pattern of established growth.

The believers who were to form the first Assembly in Helena emerged as searching souls in response to this Divine Call. The next two assemblies to form, Great Falls and Butte, are written from known background and records. A teaching committee concentrating on growth helped the other assemblies emerge.

It seems very significant to me that five teachers were named Hands of the Cause of God who visited, even briefly, in Montana; namely, Louis Gregory - 1921/22; Martha Root - 1923; Amelia Collins - 1939; Agnes Alexander - around 1948 or 49 and Dr. Rahmatu'llah Muhajir in 1976.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

From germination to completion, assembling the History of the Bahá'í Faith in Montana has covered about twenty years and only has come forth due to help from many friends. William Munoz brought me copies of early Bulletins from the Bahá'í National Archives that relayed efforts of how the early believers Emblazoned the Name of Baha'u'llah. The Spiritual Assembly of Helena gave me permission to make notes from their minutes and one of the original assembly members sent me newspaper clippings of advertising she found in her Father's papers. The Butte-Silver Bow Archives were stored in our care for easy access and the Butte and Helena newspaper items could be located and copied. It was helpful to fill in the gaps from memory of the formation of the first assembly and from serving on a State teaching committee. The computer age made it easier to keep up with the many drafts and changes in information. Still, this is a mere outline that could be enlarged from including the additional records returned to the National Teaching Committee by the then District Teaching Committee as requested. They would represent the teaching efforts by some isolated believers and groups that were not included in this compilation.

It is with gratitude that I mention others who have rendered assistance in a variety of ways: my brother Richard L. Mereness, my husband Fred J. Bennett, Llewellyn Drong, Virginia Adams Jensen, Terry Dumont, Rosa O'Rourke and Barbara Hogan.

COVER PHOTO: Pintler Mountain Range, Southwestern Montana - Rosa O'Rourke

FIRST KNOWN RESIDENT BAHÁ'ÍS

The first mention of Baha'u'llah and His followers, known as Bahá'ís was made in 1893 at the World Exposition held in Chicago. By 1894 there were established groups of believers in the United States who studied and discussed Baha'u'llah as the fulfillment of the universal Revelation of God promised in all the Scriptures. Eager to share this Message, believers traveled and taught at public meetings, in homes or wherever they found a willing listener. Montana benefited from these travelers.

MISSOULA

The enclosed historical record obtained from the National Bahá'í Archives in Wilmette, IL, and recorded under the signature of Mr. Peter Maus in September 1934, shows that he accepted the Bahá'í Faith in Missoula, MT, September 1899 and was an isolated believer. He expresses in honest, spiritual terms his conviction in his written statement: *My experience in the Bahá'í Faith, has made it convincingly plain to me, that this Revelation is the heavenly truth. It is what it claims to be, and that it will accomplish its ordained destiny. My faith and works, I build on this foundation, with certainty and bright hopes, that the Abha Light will conquer the darkness, and illumine the world. Here is to be found the light of guidance, the way of the inner and outward salvation. My talents, are in the Abha sight to see their truth, and endeavor to be an example and guide in this beautiful pathway.*

A letter from Roger M. Dahl, Archivist at the Bahá'í National Center responds to my inquiry: I checked Peter Maus' historical record card and it is unclear about where he accepted the Faith. The Archives has an enrollment list for the entire county prepared in Chicago around 1900. The list is not complete. Peter Maus is not on the list, either for Chicago or as an isolated believer. If he had enrolled in Chicago it is more likely that he would have been on the list. We only have a few letters by Mr. Maus and he does not mention where or when he became a Bahá'í in any of them. In a 1920 letter to Corinne True he does mention visiting the True house but not the year. It is most likely that he was living in Montana in 1899 and heard about the Faith through a friend or relative, probably by letter. Still it would be good to have some additional proof. Perhaps you could check some local records for Missoula, such as a city directory or tax list, to see if Peter Maus was living there in 1899. (No City Directories were found in Missoula that covered this information.)

The Bahá'í Historical Record for Feny E. Paulson indicates she accepted the Faith in 1908-09 in Washington, D.C. She indicates she was an isolated believer in Missoula, MT through 1911-1918. The reason for being in Missoula is not known, but one might think she moved there to be a pioneer for the Faith. She was able to journey to Salt Lake City to see 'Abdu'l-Baha. There are two accounts of her journey from Missoula to Salt Lake City in September/October 1912, both essentially the same. *239 Days - 'Abdu'l-Baha's Journey in America* by Allan L. Ward, p. 159, relates her story. A few additions to the same narrative are attached in the copy of her account of meeting 'Abdu'l-Baha in Salt Lake City, which were found in the archives of the Green Acre Bahá'í School and presented to the Bahá'ís of Missoula and Missoula County in 1977 by Charles Nolley. The photo copy was poor and is enclosed retyped.

It is interesting to note contributions recorded in the *Star of the West* publications. Several are listed from the volumes available for my perusal and would indicate activity in local areas in relation to the work on the House of Worship in Wilmette.

Star of the West, Book 1, Vol. I, No. 4, p.16, May 17, 1910 Mrs. True's report to the Convention of 1910 lists Anaconda among the places contributing;

Star of the West, Book 2, Vol. III, No.5, p.5, June 5, 1912 lists contributions from Helena, Anaconda, Musorela (Missoula) in 1911.

Star of the West, Book 3, Vol. IV, No.8, p.133, August 1, 1913 lists contributions from Anaconda and Missoula in April 1913.

These sources for contributions would match the Jones family in Anaconda in 1909, and 1913, possibly Peter Maus in Helena in 1911 (but there is no record of when he moved from one place to another) and Feny Paulson in Missoula in 1913. It is pleasing to note that interest in the construction of the first House of Worship in America received support from the grassroots of pioneers in Montana.

PHILIPSBURG, HELENA and RED LODGE

Mr. Maus worked as a miner and lived in both Philipsburg and Helena. It was likely in Philipsburg that he met and taught Edward Olson. Later, both worked in the Red Lodge mines and together prepared meetings for Jenabe Fazel during his visit in 1921.

A letter written by Paul Stolpe, dated June 15, 1983, from a Florida address was written to the Bozeman (MT)

Assembly and a copy sent on to me. At the time I was unable to respond to Mr. Stolpe's questions. He mentions that he and his wife (Greta) came to Florida from Gothenburg, Sweden, in February. He said he was the oldest Bahá'í member in Sweden but his second paragraph is as follows:

May be most interesting for me now is the man Edvard Olson, miner in Montana, a place mentioned also in Selected Writings of Abdu'l-Baha. In STAR OF THE WEST for 1920 I (think?—word not legible) he has a tablet to Mr. Peter Mause, that tablet also tells about two pupils to Peter Mause, Mr. Edvard Olson...I found Edvard Olson in a remote place in Sweden, and before he died, he told me that he was a miner in Phillipsburg, Helena, Montana, when he met Peter, who people had warned him for, and become convinced at once, and when a (lady?) heard it, she said: 'If you mr. Edvard Olson beleive it be thruth, it must be so, and she is may be the other one Abdu'l-Baha refer to in that tablet? Can the lady be Killius, mentioned in Star...? Edvard Olson went to relatives in Chicago and then 1920-1921 to Sweden as Bahá'í pionier. UHJ like to have information about it, when became member, (1919 I think) and the other lady, her name, I think from Sweden. In Star is mentioned visits of Charles M. Hanson, and Russel Jurgens-family from Springfield, Illinois. How can we get information needed, the data needed?

May God bless you all in the beautiful Montana!!

Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Baha, p. 205, #178, is written to a maidservant and the last paragraph says, 'If thou hast a full and eager desire to travel to Phillsburg, Montana, thou art permitted, perchance thou mayest be able to ignite a candle amid that group of miners and may make them awake and vigilant so that they may turn to God and may acquire a share from the Bounty of the divine Kingdom. I do not know to whom this tablet was written but it begins "O maidservant of God! Thy letter dated 9 December 1918 was received." We can place Feny E. Paulson as an isolated believer in Missoula from 1911-1918. Her written Bahá'í Historical Record indicates she was of Swedish origin and accepted the Bahá'í Faith in 1908-1909 in Washington, D.C. In this Historical Record she notes she wrote her name "Fannie E. or Pully in early days". This likely is the individual to whom this Tablet was written. Star of the West, Book 6, p. 154, has a Tablet (Translated by Shoghi Rabbani, May 22d, 1919) that is in response to a Supplication to Abdul-Baha from the American friends (p.156) to again visit America. It is signed by Bahá'ís in the U.S., including the name of Peter Maus as being in Phillipsburg, Montana (p.162). She may have wanted to come to Phillipsburg before she left Montana. On page 163 is a Tablet from 'Abdu'l-Baha to Mr. Maus that was translated July 22, 1919, and is addressed to him in Helena. By January 1921, both Mr. Maus and Mr. Olson are in Red Lodge working. Mr. Stolpe's conclusion it might be Mrs. Killius does not fit since Mrs. Killius became a Bahá'í in Spokane, Washington, in 1907 and says her background is English.

Star of the West, Book 6, Vol 10, No.17, p. 319, has a Tablet from 'Abdu'l-Baha written to Peter Maus:

*To his honor, Mr. Peter Maus, Helena, Montana —
Upon him be Baha'o'llah El Abha!*

He is God!

O thou faithful servant of God!

Thy letter diffused a musk-scented perfume—the perfume of the flowers and fragrant herbs of the love of God. The nostrils were perfumed and the heart was gladdened, that praise be to God, that firm and steadfast soul has become the cause of the illumination of two other ones and has led them to the fountain of life, that each of them may, in the divine orchard, become a fruitful tree, may cast an extensive shade and may extend their branches and leaves to the divine Kingdom. I pray God that both may be illumined, assisted and confirmed.

Upon thee be Baha-El-Abha!

(Signed) Abdu'l-Baha Abbas

(Translated by Shoghi Rabbani, Bahjeh, Acca, Palestine, July 22, 1919.)

Just who the two are who became "illumined" isn't known for certain. Peter Maus's letter to 'Abdu'l-Baha clearly must have shared the joy felt when a soul accepts Baha'u'llah. Probably Mr. Olson is one, but early enrollments were not always recorded. Mr. Maus, Fred Mortensen and Mr. and Mrs. Killius were teaching and in Helena at this time. The letter of Mr. Stolpe mentions visits by Mr. Charles M. Hanson and Russel Jurgens in a *Star of the West*. Mr. Jurgens was from Springfield, Illinois, and Mr. Hanson was from Duluth, Minnesota. A 1920 *Bulletin of the Teaching Committee of Bahá'í Temple Unity* gives an account of Mr. Hanson's trip into Denver, Colorado; Cheyenne, Wyoming; Billings, Montana; Williston and Minot, North Dakota; Larimore (probably Laramie, Wyoming) and Grand Forks, North Dakota, but it does not look like they traveled farther west than Billings, Montana.

The story from the *Bulletin of the Teaching Committee of Bahá'í Temple Unity* dated January 10, 1921, is written in full under the heading of *Early Bahá'í Travel Teachers*. This bulletin mentions that Mr. Peter Maus and Mr. Ed Olson, to whom he has taught the Faith, meet the 6 PM train arriving in Billings to welcome Jenabe Fazel Mazandarani, who is travel teaching in Montana. They stayed at the Plaza Hotel. Mr. Maus had published and distributed handbills advertising the evening meeting at the Coliseum. This was said to be "the first" introduction of the Faith to the people of Billings.

Following the evening meeting, *Mr. Maus was at the door distributing literature supplied by the Teaching Committee of the Bahá'í Temple Unity*, a predecessor to the present day National Spiritual Assembly. The following day, January 11, 1921, the two men accompanied Jenabe Fazel to Red Lodge, their home city of about 6000. Rooms were reserved in the Pollard Hotel and in the afternoon a meeting in the Sanitorium of Dr. and Mrs. Sanders had been arranged.

Many hundreds of leaflets advertising the three talks to be delivered here had been distributed amongst the miners.

An evening meeting in the large Hall of the Labor Temple has an attentive audience. The two Bahá'í brothers, Mr. Maus and Mr. Olson, are described as being "on fire" and made every effort to make preparations for Jenabe Fazel to speak; this included another meeting in the Sanatorium and the other in the room of Mr. Maus before Mr. Fazel left to return to Billings on January 12th at 3:00 PM.

Edward Olson's steadfastness continued after he returned to Sweden. Contact with him by Mrs. Lise Raben, Secretary of the National Spiritual Assembly of Denmark, was relayed to me when she visited her sister in the summer of 2004 in Pony, MT. It is included, not to focus on the appearance of his eccentric ways, but for his audacious teaching. She met him while she was a pioneer in Sweden and wrote this story for me:

When I was living in Sweden from 1963-1972 I met a Bahá'í from the States. Edward Olson had lived in the USA for a lifetime and in his old age he returned to Sweden. He had bought a small farm in Northern Varmland, Badabruk, Sweden. I think it had belonged to his family. When he arrived he did not know that there were any Bahá'ís in Sweden. It seemed that he had had no contact with the Bahá'í community in the USA and did not know of the development of the Faith.

He went to the local newspaper and had an interview in which he said that he was a Bahá'í. This newspaper came to the knowledge of the National Spiritual Assembly of Sweden and two members of the National Spiritual Assembly went to Badabruk to visit him and find out if he really was a Bahá'í. He was, a very strong believer, but with some weird ideas of the relationship between Baha'u'llah and 'Abdu'l-Baha, whom he thought to be God and the Son of God, 'Abdu'l-Baha was the return of Christ. When the Bahá'ís tried to tell him how it really was, he got very angry so they left him to himself.

At one time he went to the local church and in the middle of the service he got up to announce: "The Promised One has come!" I don't know the reaction of the congregation. Some non-Bahá'í friends told me that he was a pest on the train to town always trying to convince people that Christ had returned.

I visited him myself a couple of times in the sixties and he was real nice. He told me that the picture on the wall was of his fiancé. He had gone to America and when he had the money he would send it to her so that she could follow him, but it never happened. She died of consumption and he never married. He also told me that he had been working on the construction of the Mother Temple of America. I don't know when. But mostly he spoke of his years in Montana. I think he worked in mining. He always talked about "the Rocky Mountains" and that he dreamed about 'Abdu'l-Baha in America, but this is not clear to me. As he was very old he wasn't always clear in his statements. He also had many old Bahá'í books. For instance, Mirza Abu'l-Fazl's books. He was also extremely strong. He was able to lift a chair with his wrist, holding the chair by the back, lifting it

and turning it with the legs upwards. Many Swedish Bahá'í men tried to do the same, but nobody was able to."

ANACONDA

Prior to receiving bulletins of the *Teaching Committee of the Bahá'í Temple Unity* dated in 1921, which contained early teaching activity, information was gleaned from a Bahá'í book titled *Observations of a Bahá'í Traveller* by Mason Remy in the Anaconda Public Library. This is a library established from Hearst funding. It was Mrs. Hearst, a great philanthropist, who gathered friends to accompany her to visit 'Abdu'l-Baha in the Holy Land in 1898. A frontpiece photo in the book showed 'Abdu'l-Baha with a young girl, framed within a heart and entitled, *Musette Montana Jones, a little Anaconda girl*. As in other photos of children with 'Abdu'l-Baha taken in Chicago, she can be recognized wearing a fancy dress with her hair in long curls and a ribbon. In searching for further information, the Librarian said no city directories were available prior to 1916, but in that issue L.E. Jones was listed as an Electrical Superintendent at the Anaconda Reduction Works. Anaconda was a smelter city for Butte copper.

This discovery led me to question when the Jones family arrived in Anaconda. Information seemed to be at a dead-end until an *American Bahá'í* publication featured a story about Mrs. Rouhieh McComb of New York State sharing her remembrances of being a child of about eight when 'Abdu'l-Baha was in Chicago. Reading of a child with the name of Rouhieh meeting 'Abdu'l-Baha seemed to me she might be the same person in the book photo. A letter was sent to the District Teaching Committee in New York State, with a letter enclosed for Mrs. McComb, asking them to forward if they knew of her location.

One evening in 1973, the phone rang and Mrs. McComb said she received my letter. She relayed that her father was L. Ellsworth Jones and that her parents had become Bahá'ís in Chicago in 1898. The family moved to Anaconda in 1902 or 1903, where she was born in 1904. Being a sickly child, reacting to the poor quality of the air from the smelters, her Mother moved Rouhieh and a twelve-year old sister, Muriel, to California and then moved to Chicago in about 1911. Mr. Jones would come periodically to visit the family. Thus, when 'Abdu'l-Baha was to be in Chicago, they were in that city. There are several photos of 'Abdu'l-Baha with children in Chicago taken by Mr. Albert Killius and some her sister had taken because she had a camera. The above mentioned photo is shown in *Star of the West, Book 2, Vol. III, No.7, July 13, 1912, p.3* by Muriel Jones.

Mrs. McComb explained that following her sister Muriel's passing, she later married Muriel's husband, Mr. McComb and her son, Robert, was from this marriage.

While on pilgrimage with her son, the Universal House of Justice suggested she travel and tell the friends about her remembrances of the Master. Her son arranged to take her to various summer schools and brought her to the Bahá'í School in 1974, held at the Lions Camp outside Red Lodge, at the invitation of the Montana Bahá'í Schools Committee. Her son Robert showed pilgrimage slides that were outstanding and Mrs. McComb shared rock candy and a taste of rose water. These were remembrances of two things 'Abdu'l-Baha often gave out; the candy as a treat and the rose water as a remedy for an upset stomach.

In a letter of August 4, 1973, Mrs. McComb writes:

Dear Mrs. Bennett- After speaking with you on the telephone, I realized I had neglected to give you my address. If you ever write again I would want to be sure the letter reaches me. It is: Mrs. Rouhieh M. McComb, 8 Mott Place (P.O. Box 333), Glenwood Landing, L.I. New York 11547 (Phone: 516-ORI-1414)

It was a real pleasure to get in touch with you. I was very happy to learn that a trace of the Jones family was left in Montana.

My father was Labon Ellsworth Jones

My Mother was (Mrs.) Adaleria Viola Jones

My sister was Muriel Hetty Bruce Jones (later Mrs. McComb)

My husband was Lucien Seeley McComb, Sr.

My son is Robert Sherman McComb

My name was Musette Montana Jones - named "Rouhieh" in 1912 by

'Abdu'l-Baha (now Mrs. L.S. McComb, Sr.)

Thank you for your letter - I was thrilled to receive it.

Bahá'í greetings and love - Rouhieh M. McComb"

A bulletin of the *Teaching Committee of the Bahá'í Temple Unity* dated January 6, 1921, covering the journey of Jenabe Fazel from Salt Lake City to Butte, Montana, mentions that on January 6, 1921, Mr. and Mrs. Killius accompany Jenabe Fazel to Anaconda. *Mr. Catlin of the Theosophical Society welcomed the party at the station and they were taken to Hotel Montana.* Following an afternoon meeting with the Women's Club in the Hall of the Hearst Library they met Mr. L. Jones at the hotel. The family of Mr. Jones was living in New York. *He was glad to meet Jenabe Fazel and had a long and interesting talk with him.* Although there were active Bahá'ís in Butte in 1917, I found no record of reference to any interaction with Mr. Jones in nearby Anaconda (25 mi.) other than this meeting.

Mr. Ellsworth Jones retired in about 1930 and left Montana. Both parents are buried in Long Island, New York. Anaconda was a focus for teaching activity by the Butte Spiritual Assembly at various times in the 1980's. No enrollees were found and only briefly has Anaconda had a resident Bahá'í since Mr. Jones left.

A different version of the Jones family's entrance to the Faith was given to me in about 1995 while attending

the Commemoration of the visit of 'Abdu'l-Baha in Glenwood Springs, CO. Here I met a Mr. McComb, whose Mother was Muriel. He explained Rouhieh Jones was pioneering in Puerto Rico and upon the passing of his Mother, she returned to assist in the raising of his two younger sisters and then later married his Father, Lucien McComb. His Father served in the Army in Texas prior to his first marriage and he and Muriel exchanged letters in which they wrote about the Bahá'í teachings. He felt the Jones family became Bahá'ís at the time of 'Abdu'l-Baha's visit to Chicago. In a letter dated September 21, 1998, from the National Bahá'í Archives, they confirm that *both Viola and L. Ellsworth Jones are on the enrollment list. They became Bahá'ís in Chicago in 1897.*

KENDALL/WINIFRED

One of the most dedicated pioneers, as we term those who spread the Faith by moving into new areas, was John Wilcott, known as the "Cowboy Bahá'í", who brought his 70-year old Mother with him to Kendall (Fergus Co.), Montana, in 1910. He was a great nephew of Charboneau, a member of the Lewis & Clark Expedition, and had worked as a private landscape gardener on the estate of J.B. Simmons of the bed manufacturing firm. There he heard a visitor speak of a new religion, The Bahá'í Faith, and sought other Bahá'ís in order to learn. He became a charter member of the Racine, Wisconsin, Community in 1907 but would travel-teach in Wisconsin and Illinois. Understanding 'Abdu'l-Baha to desire that a Bahá'í be in each state, he moved to Montana and homesteaded a ranch of 640 acres. (The National Bahá'í Archives has not been able to verify this statement as said by 'Abdu'l-Baha.) His account of settling into this remote area is published in an early Bahá'í magazine as referenced below. The Bahá'í Schools Committee of Montana received permission to name the Montana Summer School The John H. Wilcott Bahá'í School in 1995.

Star of the West Book 1, Vol. I, No.5, Bahá'í News, June 5, 1910, p.11, states that *Mr. John H. Wilcott and his Mother, formerly of Kenosha, Wisconsin, are now settled on a claim at Kendall, Montana and expect to be located there for the coming fourteen months. They would appreciate letters from friends.* The same Book 1 Vol. I, No. 14, Bahá'í News, November 23, 1910, p 8 has a letter from Mr. Wilcott dated September 12, 1910, that relays more of how he and his Mother, age 70, gave the message to those who passed their way; namely, cowboys. They survived primitive conditions, living in a tent during the winter while he built a log house. This reprint is attached.

The Wilcotts had three children, two girls and a boy, but Ethel was the only child to become a Bahá'í. Included, is a letter Mr. Wilcott's daughter, Mrs. Ethel McAllaster Frost, wrote following her father's passing. She thought her

father was the first Bahá'í in the State, as undoubtedly did Mr. Wilcott. Ethel (McAllaster) Frost mentions her Mother was not a Bahá'í, but my Mother, Nellie Mereness, came to know her very well. When Mother moved to Great Falls in 1949 to help form the Great Falls Assembly, Mrs. Wilcott visited her son Norman who lives in Great Falls, and they became close friends. Mother felt she had accepted Bahá'u'llah in her heart. Mother's statement is added and was written because Mother felt so strongly about Mrs. Wilcott's expression of her feeling for the Faith. Mr. Wilcott was elderly when I met him in Great Falls. Now I regret that I was not conscious at that time of preserving history and missed conversing with him about his early years as a pioneer. In 1950, he came to Butte to visit Ethel and attended one of the first weekend conferences hosted in Butte, which we attended from Bozeman.

His daughter Ethel writes, *From 1910, when my father John H. Wilcott arrived in Montana as a pioneer for the Bahá'í Faith, until the summer of 1937...all of 27 years, he had never seen another Bahá'í.* In 1937, while Ethel was living with the Bahá'í family of N. Forsyth Ward in Berkeley, California,

the Wards decided to take a tour of the United States visiting relatives in New York, ending up in Winifred, Montana with the Wilcotts. Professor Ward gave a Bahá'í talk in the local High School auditorium and it surprised them to think a person could be so alone, without any form of support in a Bahá'í way, and still maintain their enthusiasm for Bahá'u'llah and the Faith. Mr. Wilcott's Mother had passed away in 1919. Roy Wilhelm and "Auntie" Victoria Bedikian kept in touch with Mr. Wilcott by correspondence but his daughter felt he was "out of touch" with the Administrative side of the Faith. He knew 'Abdu'l-Baha had passed away but knew little of the Guardian, Shoghi Effendi.

Mr. D. Llewellyn Drong gave permission to include his paper titled, *John Henry Wilcott - A Pioneer Twice Over* that tells the story of Mr. Wilcott's life and relates his homesteading experience with the history of the times in Montana.

The Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Great Falls have currently set up a fund to copy and preserve many of the historical photos belonging to the family.

BAHÁ'Í HISTORICAL RECORD

1. Name of individual believer Peter Maus

2. Reported through Spiritual Assembly Chicago
City

3. Address 702 1/2 E. 5th St. Los Angeles, California
Number Street City State

4. Birthplace Belle Plaine, Minnesota Birthdate September 28, 1874

5. Naturalization (if foreign born) _____
City and State Date

6. National origin German 7. Race American
(Whether of English or other stock)

8. Color White 9. Sex Male 10. Married? Single
Date

11. Children or dependents _____
Minor Adult Adopted

12. Religious origin (religion before becoming a Bahá'í) Catholic

13. Date of acceptance of the Bahá'í Faith Sept 1899

A. As isolated believer Yes B. As member of Bahá'í group _____ C. As member of Bahá'í Community Chicago

14. Place of acceptance of Bahá'í Faith Misoula, Montana

(SEE OVER)

15. Date of enrollment in present Bahá'í community (No. 2) October 1934

A. By transfer from previous community Chicago B. By enrollment as Bahá'í for first time E.W. McDonald

C. Subsequent transfers (leave blank) _____

16. General information you would like to have preserved in this historical record (about Bahá'í services, connection with the Cause in early days, special talents, etc.)

My experiences in the Bahai Faith, has made it convincingly plain to me, that this Revelation is the heavenly truth. It is what it claims to be, and that it will accomplish its ordained destiny. My faith and works, I build on this foundation with certainty and bright hopes, that the Baha Light will conquer the darkness, and illumine the world. Here is to be found the light of guidance, the way of the inner and outward salvation. My talents, are in the Baha sight to see this truth, and endeavor to be an example and guide in this beautiful pathway.

(Additional notes may be attached to this card)

18. Photograph
(If possible, please attach photograph to this record. Write name and date the picture was taken on back of photograph.)



taken
Sept 1934

17. Additional information (do not fill in) _____

19. Signature Peter Maus

BAHÁ'Í HISTORICAL RECORD

1. Paulson, Fery F. 2. Reported through Spiritual Assembly Washington, D.C.
Name of individual believer City

3. Address 614-23rd St. - Aurora Hills Alexandria Va.
Number Street City State

4. Birthplace Ashtabula, Ohio Birthdate Aug 18, 1879

5. Naturalization (if foreign born) _____
City and State Date

6. National origin Swedish 7. Race _____
(Whether of English or other stock)

8. Color White 9. Sex Female 10. Married? no _____
Date

11. Children or dependents _____
Minor Adult Adopted

12. Religious origin (religion before becoming a Bahá'í) Protestant; atheist

13. Date of acceptance of the Bahá'í Faith 1908-09

A. As isolated believer _____ B. As member of Bahá'í group DC C. As member of Bahá'í Community _____

14. Place of acceptance of Bahá'í Faith Washington D.C. [SEE OVER]

15. Date of enrollment in present Bahá'í community (No. 2) _____

A. By transfer from previous community 1931 B. By enrollment as Bahá'í for first time 1908-09

C. Subsequent transfers (leave blank) _____

16. General information you would like to have preserved in this historical record (about Bahá'í services, connection with the Cause in early days, special talents, etc.)

(Isolated Muscoule, Mont. 1911-1918)

Enrollment San Francisco 1923-1929

" Cleveland 1929-1931

(Name written Fannie E or Paully in early days.)

(Additional notes may be attached to this card)

18. Photograph

(If possible, please attach photograph to this record. Write name and date the picture was taken on back of photograph.)

17. Additional information (do not fill in)

19. Signature

Fery E Paulson

of \$3,666.44, and the receipts from March 21, 1909, to April 23, 1910, amount to \$20,397.95.

The contributions sent from the Orient amount to \$7,092.85. These came from India, Persia, Turkey, Syria, Palestine, Russia and Egypt. Europe and America contributed \$7,638.66. The following cities of Europe sent contributions: Berlin, Germany; Constantinople, Turkey; Paris and Denan, France; London, England. Even the little Isle of the sea, Mauritius, knew of this great world Mashrak-el-Azkar and sent her gift. "From Greenland's icy mountains to India's coral strand," literally, have come contributions. Canada on the north, old Mexico City on the south, Hawaiian Islands on the west have all added their gifts and in the United States the following places have sent contributions:

Akron, Ohio.
~~Anaconda, Mont.~~
 Anacortes, Wash.
 Arleta, Ore.
 Baltimore, Md.
 Boston, Mass.
 Bear Lake, Penn.
 Buffalo, N. Y.
 Brooklyn, N. Y.
 Bangor, Mich.
 Cortland, N. Y.
 Clarkstown, Wash.
 Clifton, Ala.
 Chicago, Ill.
 Cleveland, Ohio.
 Cincinnati, Ohio.
 Congress Park, Ill.
 Clyde, Ill.
 Dayton, Wash.
 Denver, Colo.
 Dixon, Ill.
 Enterprise, Kan.
 Englewood, N. J.
 Eliot, Ma.
 Fruitport, Mich.
 Fernandina, Fla.
 Genoa Junction, Wis.
 Grand Rapids, Mich.
 Goblesville, Mich.
 North Hudson, N. Y.
 Harvard, Ill.

Houghton, Mich.
 Ithaca, N. Y.
 Johnstown, N. Y.
 Kenosha, Wis.
 Lartine, Ore.
 Long Beach, Cal.
 Los Angeles, Cal.
 Milwaukee, Wis.
 Minneapolis, Minn.
 Muskegon, Mich.
 Newark, N. J.
 Newport, Vt.
 New York Mills, Minn.
 New York, N. Y.
 Oakland, Cal.
 Pasadena, Cal.
 Philadelphia, Penn.
 Portland, Ore.
 Pittsburg, Penn.
 Racine, Wis.
 Sandusky, Ohio.
 Seattle, Wash.
 Spokane, Wash.
 Slade's Corner, Wis.
 St. Louis, Mo.
 Turk, Wash.
 Walla Walla, Wash.
 Washington, D. C.
 Westfield, Mass.
 Western Springs, Ill.

FINANCIAL SECRETARY'S REPORT.

Mrs. Corinne True, Financial Secretary, reported that contributions had been received from the following cities since the Convention of 1911:

Minneapolis, Minn.
 Chicago, Ill.
 Cleveland, Ohio.
~~Helena, Mont.~~
 New York, N. Y.
 Racine, Wis.
 Cincinnati, Ohio.
 Washington, D. C.
 Fruitport, Mich.
 New York Mills, Minn.
 Baltimore, Md.
 Milwaukee, Wis.
 Eliot, Maine.
 Clyde, Ill.
 Turk, Wash.
 Omak, Wash.
 Portland, Oregon.
 Port Said, Egypt.
 Pittsburgh, Pa.
 New Haven, Conn.
 Walla Walla, Wash.
 Denver, Colo.
 Honolulu, Hawaii.
 St. Paul, Minn.
 Tombstone, Arizona.
 Hudson, N. Y.
 Montreal, Canada.
 Seattle, Wash.
 Philadelphia, Pa.
 Boston, Mass.
 Dixon, Ill.
 Lewiston, Idaho.
 Bangor, Mich.
 Cornwall, England.
 Johnstown, N. Y.
 Salt Lake City, Utah.
 Columbus, Ohio.
 Atlantic City, N. J.
 Mansfield Center, Conn.
 Sussex, England.
 Buffalo, N. Y.
 Eliot, Maine.
 Muskegon, Mich.
 Spokane, Wash.
 Brooklyn, N. Y.
 Genoa Junction, Wis.
 Johnstown, N. Y.
 Panama, N. Y.
 Tropic, Calif.
 Elizabeth, N. J.
 Jersey City, N. J.

Hammond, Ill.
 Oakland, Calif.
 San Francisco, Calif.
 Clarkston, Wash.
 Mansfield Centre, Conn.
 Sienna, Italy.
 West Willington, Conn.
 Quay, Florida.
 Paris, France.
 Briar Cliff, N. Y.
 Grand Rapids, Mich.
 Conklin, Mich.
 Teheran, Persia.
 Englewood, N. J.
 Utica, N. Y.
 Akron, Ohio.
 Springfield, Mass.
 St. Louis, Mo.
 Fairhope, Ala.
 Kittery, Maine.
 Pleasanton, Calif.
 Cairo, Egypt.
 London, England.
 East Rand, Transvaal,
 South Africa.
 Cicero, Ill.
 Newark, N. J.
 Pavilion, N. Y.
 Pasadena, Calif.
 Columbus, Ohio.
 North Augusta, S. C.
 Stuttgart, Germany.
 Newport, Vermont.
 Rochester, N. Y.
 Cortland, N. Y.
 Montclair, N. J.
 Kenosha, Wis.
 Malden, Mass.
 Ithaca, N. Y.
 Crystal Lake, Ill.
 Ranier, Oregon.
 West Barrington, R. I.
 Warwick, England.
 Cambridge, Mass.
 Everett, Wash.
 Summerduck, Virginia.
 Hager City, Wis.
 Anaconda, Montana.
 Musorela, Montana.
 San Mateo, Calif.
 Morenci, Arizona.

Corinne True, Financial Secretary.

[Mrs. True presented to the convention the report of the Treasurer.]

Financial Secretary's and Treasurer's Report.

RECEIPTS.

Balance on hand at the time of convention of 1912.....\$ 948.93
 Treasurer's books show total subscriptions from April 30, 1912, to April 19, 1913, including interest from bank 14,135.98
 Total receipts\$15,084.91

DISBURSEMENTS.

For land—Main Tract:
 June 24, 1912.....\$ 5,000.00
 Sept. 21, 1912..... 2,500.00
 Oct. 1, 1912..... 2,500.00
 Lake Shore Tract:
 March 3rd, 1912..... 3,000.00
 Taxes and assessments..... 3.31
 Interest 861.62
 Expenses 298.28
 Exchange paid to bank..... 13.19
 \$14,176.40
 Cash on hand, April 19, 1913.... 908.51

The Main Tract is entirely clear and of the purchase price of Lake Shore Tract (\$17,000) \$8,000 has been paid. Outstanding debt, \$9,000.

LIST OF COUNTRIES, STATES AND CITIES FROM WHICH CONTRIBUTIONS HAVE BEEN RECEIVED DURING THE YEAR:

Acna, Syria (gift from Abdul-Baha); Teheran and Ardebil, Persia; East Rand, Transvaal, South Africa; Honolulu, Hawaii; Yanla, Japan; New Zealand; Sussex, Cornwall and London, England; Paris, France; Baku, Russia; Montreal, Canada.

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

Maine: Kittery, Elliot, Vermont: Newport, New Hampshire: Dublin, Connecticut: New Haven, Massachusetts: Boston, New Bedford, Roxbury, Brookline, Rhode Island: Providence, New York: New York City, Brooklyn, Buffalo, Ithaca, Johnstown, Utica, Oswego, Cortland, Hudson, New Jersey: Montclair, Jersey City, Weehawken, Yonkers, Atlantic City, Newark, Monmouth, Maplewood, Pennsylvania: Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Maryland: Baltimore, Garrett, Silver Springs, D. of C.: Washington, Ohio: Cleveland, Cincinnati, Akron, Illinois: Chicago, Clyde, Geneva, Dixon, Michigan: Grand Rapids, Grand Haven, Muskegon, Fruitport, Bangor, Minnesota: St. Paul, Minneapolis, New York Mills, Wisconsin: Racine, Kenosha, Milwaukee, Genoa Junction, Thorp, Slade's Corner, Menasha, Iowa: Sac City; Missouri, Kirksville, St. Louis, Colorado: Denver, Kansas: Enterprise, Washington: Everett, Spokane, Turk, Walla Walla, Omak, Clarkston, Seattle, Florida: Quay, Fernandina, California: San Francisco, Oakland, Berkeley, Bakersfield, Tropic, Pasadena, Los Angeles, Long Beach, Oregon: Portland, Alabama: Fairhope, Montana: Anaconda, Missoula.

Paul Stolpe
220 16th ave. North.
Jaxonville Beach
Florida 32250
(904 249-5844)

June 15 1983

Allah-u-Abha!

Ms. P. Arlene Blumentfeld
407 South 19th Or to the ISA
Bozeman
Montana 59715

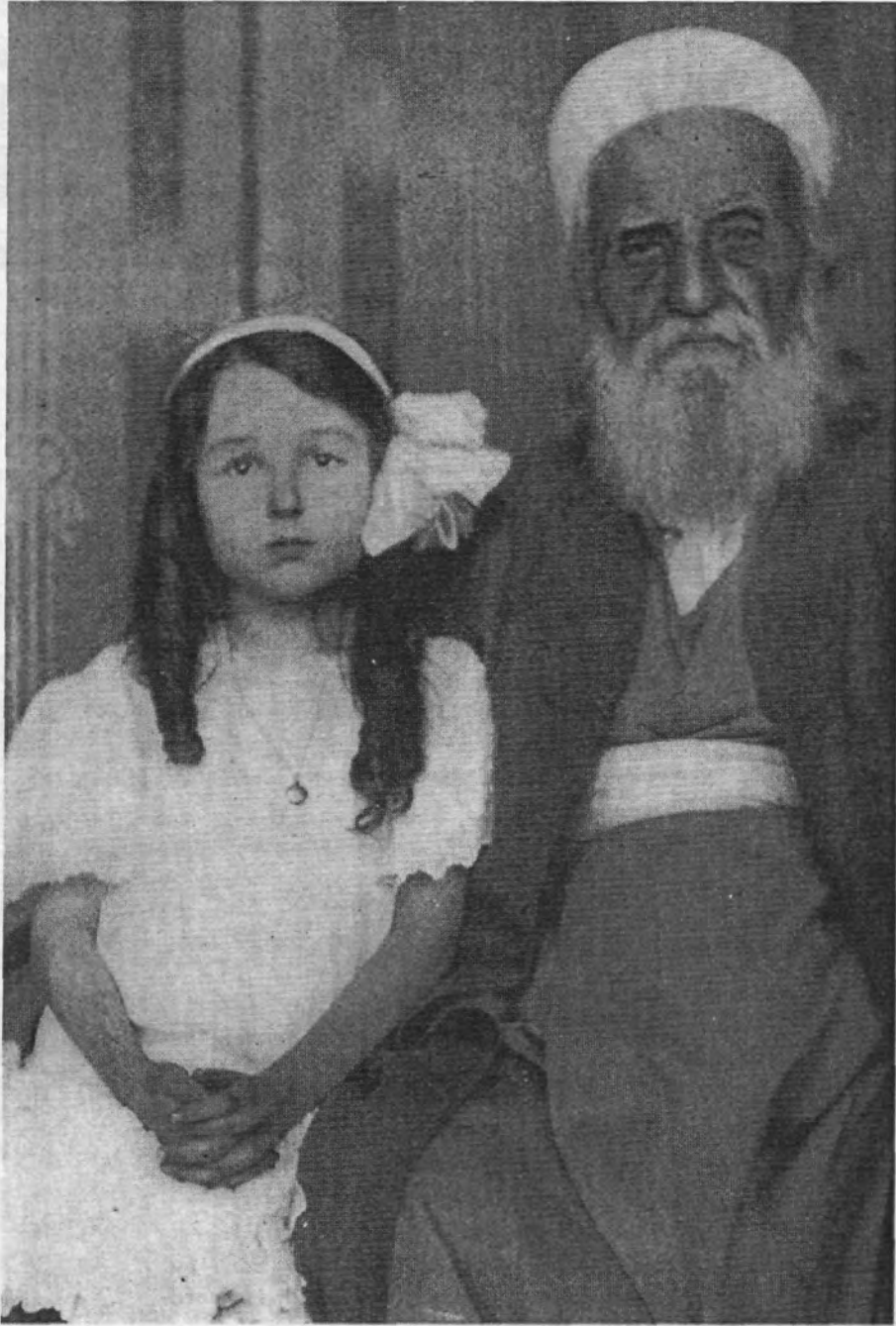
Dear baha'i Friend,

My wife Greta and I came here from Gothenburg, Sweden, in Febr. They had asked in Sweden for about life after death, reincarnation and old baha'i history in Sweden (I am the oldest as baha'i member in Sweden, was, may be, because we are members here now) and also a pamphlet about health in the baha'i view, ~~now~~ as I before retiring worked in nutrition (can see here you have the big health store: Bonanza Health Foods), and I have written 20 concentrated pages about health and hope by the deepening here 17 June and aid from all interested it will be of value. Also if you have material.

May be most interesting for me now is the man Edvard Olson, miner in Montana, a place mentioned also in Selected Writings of Abdu'l-Baha. In STAR OF THE WEST for 1920 I think he has a tablet to Mr. Peter Mause, that tablet also tells about two pupils to Peter Mause, Mr. Edvard Olson ... I found Edvard Olson in a remote place in Sweden, and, before he died, he told me that he was a miner in Phillipsbury, Helena, Montana, when I met Peter, who people had warned him for, and become convinced at once, and when a lady heard it, and she said: "If you Mr. Edvard Olson believe it be thruth, it must be so, and she is may be the other one Abdu'l-Baha refer to in that tablet? Can the lady be Killius, mentioned in Star..? Edvard Olson went to relatives in Chicago and then 1920-1921 to Sweden as baha'i pionier. UHJ like to have informations about it, when he became member, (1919 I think) and the other lady, her name, I think from Sweden. In Star is mentioned visits of Charles M. Hanson, and Russel Jurgens- family from Springfield, Illinois. How can we get informations needed, the data needed?

May God bless you all in the beautiful Montana!!

Paul
Paul Stolpe



ABDUL-BAHA AND ROUHIEH.

See article, "Abdul-Baha with the Children of the Friends in Chicago."

Copyright 1912, by Muriel Jones.



Rouhieh McComb, one of the 'living treasures' who met 'Abdu'l-Bahá during His visit to North

America in 1912, is helped onstage by Jaci Delahunt, secretary of the National Teaching Committee.

House of Worship marks 75th anniversary of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's dedication of cornerstone

Twelve Bahá'ís who met 'Abdu'l-Bahá shared their memories May 1-2 at the Bahá'í House of Worship in Wilmette, Illinois, during a celebration of the 75th anniversary of the Master's dedication of the cornerstone.

The weekend's activities, given added significance by beginning on the 12th Day of Ridván, included an address by Dr. Firuz Kazemzadeh, vice-chairman of the National Spiritual Assembly and professor of history at Yale University.

Dr. Kazemzadeh spoke of the House of Worship as the physical manifestation of the unity of mankind and a symbol of the unifying influence of the Word of God.

Quoting frequently from 'Abdu'l-Bahá's talks in America, he pointed out how the Master repeatedly referred to the Temple as

a meeting place conducive to unity among all people, in addition to its purpose as a place for worship and prayer.

Afterward, Dr. Kazemzadeh was interviewed by a representative from the *Voice of America* which planned to broadcast excerpts from his talk to more than 120 countries around the world via its short-wave radio facilities.

Saturday's events had begun in the morning with a special devotional service in the upstairs auditorium at which choirs from two area churches combined with the House of Worship's choir to provide the music.

Introduced Friday evening as the "living treasures" of the Bahá'í community, the 12 who met 'Abdu'l-Bahá shared their childhood memories of sitting on the Master's lap, receiving a hug or a

gift, or some other special thing that happened while they were with Him.

Some shared photographs of themselves with the Master, while others told of having been named by Him.

Two of the 12—Sophie Loeding of Wilmette (who in 1941 became the first full-time employee at the National Center), and Paul Voelz of Kenosha, Wisconsin—actually attended the cornerstone ceremony on the Temple grounds on May 1, 1912.

The others who shared their memories of the Master were Jean Bonn of Brillion, Wisconsin; Eva (Swingle) Daviduke of Glendale, Arizona; Joseph Ioas of Fresno, California; Monroe Ioas of Forest Park, Illinois; Donald Kinney of

See CEREMONY page 4

Ceremony

from page 1

Leonia, New Jersey; Rouhieh McComb of Sarasota, Florida; Sylvia Parmelee and Edna True, both of Wilmette; Isabelle Windust of Benton Harbor, Michigan; and Shinji Yamamoto of Madison, Wisconsin.

Miss True's mother, the Hand of the Cause of God Corinne True, was instrumental in fund-raising efforts to aid construction of the House of Worship, which was begun in 1920 and completed in 1953.

Joseph and Monroe Ioas are sons of the Hand of the Cause of God Leroy Ioas who served for a

number of years as secretary of the U.S. National Spiritual Assembly.

Miss Windust is the daughter of Albert Windust, an early Bahá'í in Chicago who was the first editor of *Star of the West*.

Mr. Yamamoto's father, Kanichi Yamamoto, was the first Japanese to embrace the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh.

'Abdu'l-Bahá gave his first talk in this country in 1912 at the home of Donald Kinney's parents, Mr. and Mrs. Edward B. Kinney, in New York City.

All of these "treasures" were present Friday evening for a program that included devotions in the auditorium followed by music, readings and warm reminiscences in Foundation Hall.

The audience also heard memo-

rized talks on the Faith presented by a trio of children—nine-year-olds Erin Bodan and Errol Doris and 11-year-old Saba Firoozi—all of whom study public speaking with Knight of Bahá'u'lláh Gayle Woolson of Evanston.

The evening ended with a recording of the Master chanting a prayer.

Saturday afternoon's public program included songs by Red Grammer, lead vocalist with the "Limelighters" who was one of the principal entertainers at last year's Peace Conference in San Francisco; and selections by santour virtuoso Kiu Haghighi, accompanied by pianist Rosamond Brenner, and vocalist Robert Reaneu.

A surprise guest Saturday evening was Barbara Breitlander of

Glendale Heights, Illinois, a great-granddaughter of Nettie Tobin, the woman who acquired and transported the stone used by 'Abdu'l-Bahá as the cornerstone during the Temple's dedication ceremony in 1912. (For the complete story of Mrs. Tobin and the stone, see *The American Bahá'í*, May 1987, p. 4.)

Mrs. Breitlander said she had little knowledge of Mrs. Tobin's involvement with the cornerstone until, several years ago, she attended a class where she met a Bahá'í couple who later invited her to a fireside at the House of Worship.

After the fireside, Mrs. Breitlander met Edna True who told her of Nettie Tobin's sacrifice and how it was rewarded by 'Abdu'l-Bahá. Mrs. Breitlander has since become a Bahá'í.—Robert Allen

August 4, 1973

Dear Mrs. Bennett, -

After speaking with you on the telephone, I realized I had neglected to give you my address. If you ever write again I would want to be sure the letter reaches me -

It is:

Mrs. Rouhiéh M. McComb
8 Mott Place, (P.O. Box 333)
Glenwood Landing, L.I.
New York 11547

(Phone: 516-ORI-1414)

It was a real pleasure to get in touch with you. I was very happy to learn that a trace of the Jones family was left in Montana.

My father was Laban Ellsworth Jones
My mother was (Mrs.) Adalera Viola Jones
My sister was Muriel Hetty Bruce Jones (later Mrs. McComb)
My husband was Lucien Seeley McComb, Sr.
My son is Robert Sherman McComb.
My name was Musette Montana Jones -
named "Rouhiéh" in 1912 by 'Abdul-Bahá
(now Mrs. L.S. McComb, Sr.)

Thank you for your letter - I was thrilled to receive it.

Bahá'í greetings and love -

Rouhiéh M. McComb.

--from John Wilcott's voluminous correspondence:

March 11, 1911 (Writing of his earlier life in the Adironsacks)

"...what enjoyment it was to be on my own host, go fishing, hunting and boating; studying different trees, wild flowers, rocks most, and insects.... I wouldn't change my study for any other. Now this great Cause (the Baha'i Faith) is another great Study which I love day by day, and it goes hand in hand with what I know of the great nature (sic).... Sometimes when I think it over I fill right up with joy to know that I know these both...."

"In among those that I am teaching are many women and children and they are begging of me to start a Sunday School. but I cannot see my way through it...."

"I got lost last week when I went after my mail. The snow was so bright and a terrible wind that I got blind then lost my trail and had to make my way in snow to my waist and in places to my neck.... I had a hard trip through the deep snow, but I now do pray God to bless all the seeds which I have sowed that others will grow from them and spread the Cause...."

"If I get a crop this summer I will be all right, but if not I will be lost. But is all in God's hands. If He sees fit He will bless us. This is a good place to try a Baha'i. He will either grow or fall. He will surely not stand still."

December 10, 1931:

"It was a great blessing to me to get such a loving letter from one that we never seen, but Baha'is seem to know each other. You know, once a Baha'i, you are always a Baha'i...."

"Sister, I have prayed every night for the Temple for twenty-two years, and also for all meetings on Sunday all over the world...."

"Many years ago when I lived in Chicago I gave freely to the Temple. I knelt on those (Temple) grounds and offered prayers. I was a hard worker for the Cause in my early days. Now I am nearly sixty years old and it makes me very sad to not be able to help."

December 25, 1932:

"I am in the house because it rained, and I cannot cut grain. We are all very happy because it rained. As it was, the garden was drying up...."

"Mrs. Wilcott said what a beautiful family you all are and those roses look so good to us all as we never see a rose here.... We all thank you for the picture and we do hope that our hard time is over. We send you all our Baha'i love, and I do pray for your happiness."

From your Baha'i brother and sister -- John Wilcott.

The John H. Wilcott Bahá'i School

An Event of Dedication

April 15, 1995

Jalal (Glory) 6, B.E. 152

Great Falls, Montana



John Henry Wilcott, 1871-1965

(Montana 1910-1965)

To The Pioneer

O that I could travel, even though on foot and in the utmost poverty, to these regions, and, raising the call of Yá Bahá'ul-Abhá in cities, villages, mountains, deserts and oceans, promote the Divine Teachings! This, alas, I cannot do. How intensely I deplore it! Please God, ye may achieve it!"

'Abdul-Rahá

Program

A Prayer "Blessed is the Spot" *A Bahá'í Child*

Welcome *The Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Great Falls*

Why Bahá'ís Pioneer *Auxiliary Board Member, Joan McBride*

John H. Wilcott, the Man, the Bahá'í
An Appreciation *Llewellyn Drong*

A Prayer "The Unity of Mankind" *A Montana Bahá'í*

The Montana Bahá'í Summer School - 1972-1994
The John H. Wilcott Bahá'í School - 1995-
The Montana Bahá'í Schools Committee

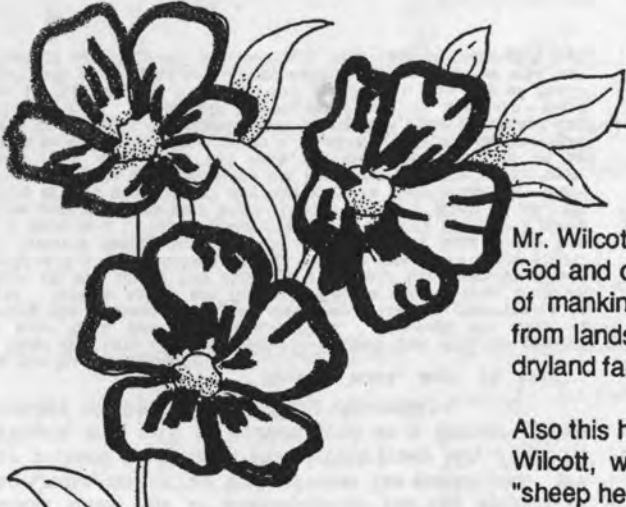
Introduction of The Wilcott Family

Comments from The Wilcott Family

Bahá'u'lláh briefly describes pioneering



Following this program, all those present are most cordially invited to the dining room for light refreshments.



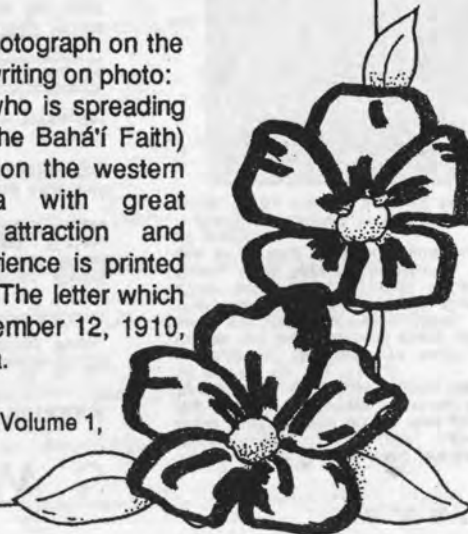
Mr. Wilcott out of his love of God and desire for the unity of mankind walked a path, from landscape gardener to dryland farmer.

Also this homesteader, John Wilcott, was known as the "sheep herders' preacher".

From a newspaper account of the Schmidt-Wilcott wedding, November 1916: "Mr. Wilcott is an honest, handsome, and very enterprising man, a man whom any woman could well be proud to call husband."

Note regarding the Photograph on the front--Translation for writing on photo: "Mr. Wilcott, Bahá'í, who is spreading the Cause of Abhá (the Bahá'í Faith) among the cowboys on the western plains of America with great enkindlement and attraction and whose letter of experience is printed herewith in English." The letter which follows is dated September 12, 1910, from Kendall, Montana.

Photo is from Star of the West, Volume 1, March 1910-September 1911.



BAHAI NEWS

ISSUED MONTHLY

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Address all communications to

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With issue No. 9 of the BAHAI NEWS, a slip with the following wording was sent to the men on our mailing list:

Dear Brother—Please read Mr. Remy's letter published in this issue of the BAHAI NEWS. A statement of what you are doing and planning to do for the advancement of the Cause in your vicinity will be a source of encouragement and may suggest ways and means to the men of other communities who are interested in the progress of the Cause of EL-AHITA in the West. A letter from you will be appreciated. Sincerely yours in His Service,
THE EDITORS.

A few interesting letters were received. One of them we publish herewith, believing it will demonstrate what can be accomplished for the spread of the Cause, no matter how adverse the conditions. We are pleased to present this letter from Mr. John H. Wilcott, who will be remembered as a former active member of the Kenosha, Wis., Assembly:

Kendall, Mont., Sept. 12, 1910.

To the BAHAI NEWS.

Dear Servants of Abdul-Baha:—I know you will be pleased to hear from this part of the West. Although the work of giving the Message is rather slow, we allow no opportunity to pass. Mother and I are the only Bahais around here that we know of, and up to this time we have only had cowboys, shepherds and a few ranchers to talk to, who live many miles apart. My nearest ranchman owned 27 miles long of land which has now been sold to the railroad company. This is the way I reach these people, which may seem strange to you: First of all, my claim is just where every one has to make their roundup. Hundreds of cattle are around us all the time. I have a full cowboy's suit, and I am out with the boys and seem to be as tough as they are, so not to be a tenderfoot. From one to eight come to my tent daily and I am now called "the preacher" for miles around. Well, this is something new to the boys—some one to talk of God to them—and yet I seem like one of them. They tell it all over and I frequently meet a new one who has heard of us. One old sheep-keeper, who used to come and rest

under a tree in my yard while watching his sheep eat, and to whom I would then talk, regretted so greatly the life he had lived that he told me he was going away from this life after living here thirty years. Before leaving, he came to bid us good-bye and we gave him a good meal. I think the seed had started to grow.

Many of the cowboys shoot game and bring it to us. Of course we have to feed many of them at times, but that is the only way we can reach them. At first some of them did not want to hear anything of God—said there was no God—but after some of the great hidden mysteries were explained to them, they became interested, and you would be surprised to see us sitting on a log outside, or in the tent, until 10 o'clock at night.

My dear mother is the only doctor around here for forty-five miles. The land is now all taken up and settlers are coming in



Translation of inscription on above illustration: "Mr. Wilcott, Bahai, who is spreading the Cause of ABHA among the cowboys of the Western plains of America with great enkindlement and attraction, and whose letter of experience is printed herewith in English."

rapidly. The cowboys told them that mother was a diploma doctor, so they have started to come after her, travelling from fifteen to twenty miles. She is not a bit slow in giving the Message. A few weeks ago when it was warm, a cowboy came and was resting by the tent. He asked mother if she had anything to read. She gave him one of our Bahai books. He cursed and said: "That is religion. Haven't you any papers?" So she gave him a newspaper from Santa Anna, which was sent to us by a missionary there, to whom I am trying to give the Message, but who has not been able to grasp it yet. Well, this paper told about God, and the cowboy, after looking at it for a while, said: "Why, this is religion—just as bad as the other book." Mother said: "This is all we have here. We live for God." When I came in with a bunch of prairie chickens he said to me: "Hello, preacher! This is a great place—nothing to read." I replied that I had just what he wanted, and going to my trunk, brought a book called "Indian Wars and Brave Deeds." Well, you should have seen that man! He was very much pleased and called for a few days until he had finished reading it. He then said: "If there is a God,

why did He let those Indians kill those poor people in such a way?" That gave me an opportunity, and now the man begins to read Bahai books and does not curse any more in our tent.

I enjoyed reading Mr. Remy's letter in the BAHAI NEWS. I was very much impressed with his statement that when one is out trying to give the Message, he needs encouragement from the other believers. I find it so here and feel that the friends should think more of this. A little of my experience would convince one of the truth of this statement. I have received one letter from Johnstown, two from Chicago, and a few from Mrs. Goodale, of Kenosha, that put new life into me to do more work.

Any literature regarding the Cause will be gladly accepted and handed to some of the new settlers here. These cowboys are all good fellows and tired of this life. They are seeking for something and do not know where to get it—it is this Message. So when any one goes out to try to give the Message, let us encourage them. In a place like this God is not known. They believe there is no God, no heaven or hell, because they have been taught so. It is not easy and one should be encouraged.

This country is wild with rattlesnakes and wolves. I have killed many snakes, but as the country is now being settled the snakes are disappearing. One was in our tent last night. We heard him rattle. We dare not sleep with an arm outside of the bed. It is getting cold; the mountains are covered with snow and we had four inches of it. We are still in a tent, but I am building a log house. Frost killed nearly all we had, but God giveth and God taketh away—praise His Name! When I go for mail, I carry a gun because of wild steers. Every one carries a gun because of cattle and snakes.

My mother is 70 years old and keeps up quite well. We have lots of hay on the ground in the tent to keep our feet warm, but we have been laid up with colds. Everything here has to be hauled from Lewistown, forty-five miles. Our nearest place is Kendall, a small town, 5,800 feet high in the mountains—a gold mining town—about ten houses built on rocks on the side of the hill. Oil costs 50 cents a gallon, potatoes 4 cents a pound, etc. Before this cold weather came I used to lie in bed in the morning and take my gun from the side of my pillow and shoot serge hens or prairie chicken. They destroyed my garden, and four or five times a day I used to go around the garden to drive them out and also the rabbits.

I have taken some pictures and send you one of myself now as I go among the boys.

Here comes another old shepherd who likes to come here—I can hear his voice over the hill calling the sheep, so I must stop writing.

We send all our Bahai love and ask your earnest prayers.
Your servant in His Name, JOHN H. WILCOTT.

In all fairness to my dear
and trustworthy friend
Johanna Wilcott and her
belief & steadfastness in
Bible there is no doubt.

I was very close to her during
my stay in Ex. Falls and heard
her express many times her belief
in His teachings & would some-
day be one of us. Due to her
husband's poor eyesight she had
for yrs. read his News Letter to him-
self along with the gleanings her

favorite book,
Johanna was self schooled in
the Faith but due to lack of
encouragement & some one to talk to

she could not express herself.
The soil of that human heart was deeply
plowed & sown with trials & tribulations

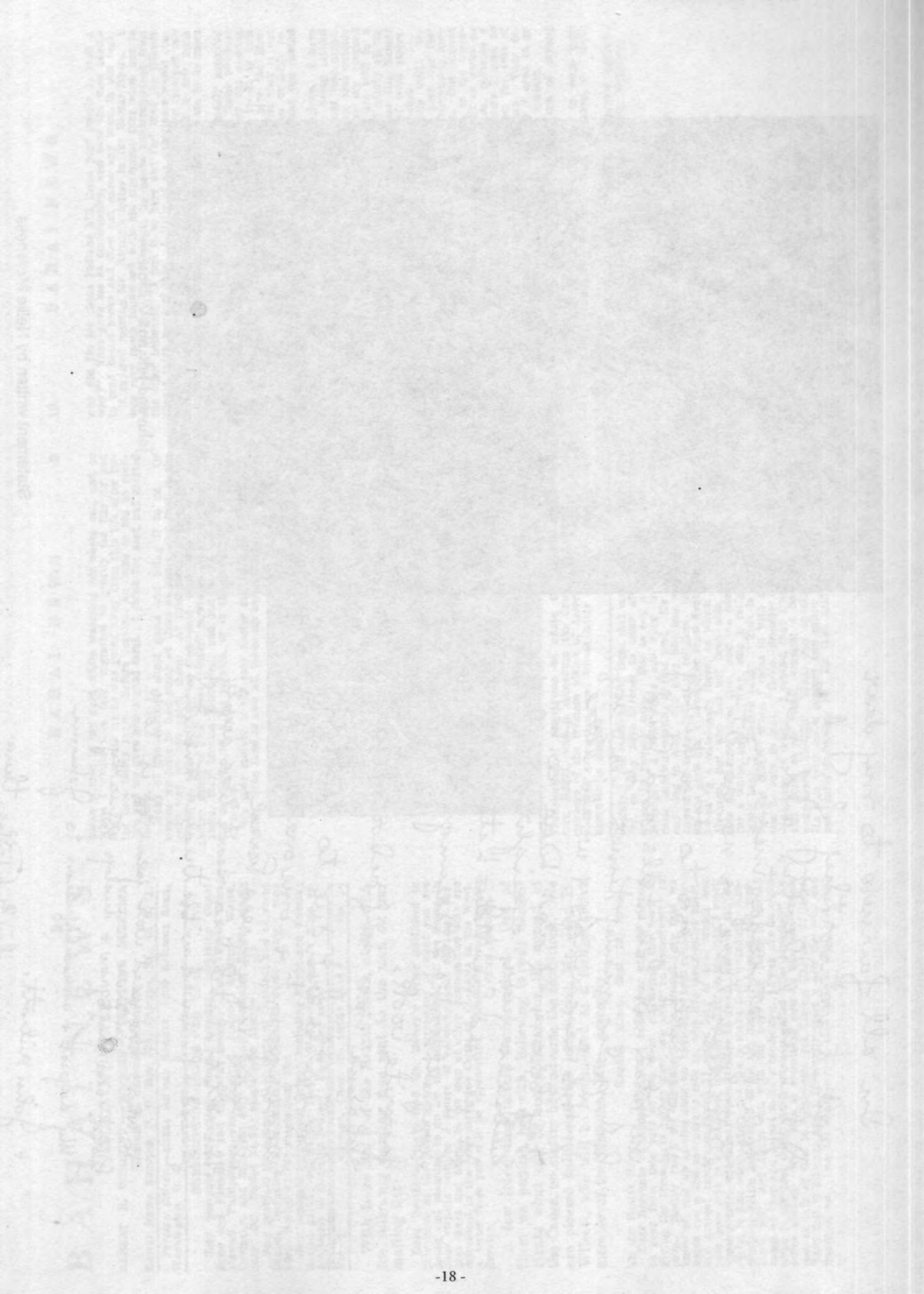
So when the seed was planted it took
hold and will ^{continue} grow & develop steadily.

My deepest & sincere affection to Johanna
& John Wilcott.
May God Bless them.
1941



John and Johanna Wilcott

Statement written by Nellie Mereness



EARLY BAHÁ'Í TRAVEL TEACHERS

It would seem that Mr. Jones in Anaconda, Mr. Wilcott in Kendall/Winifred and Miss Feny Paulson in Missoula, were not in touch with each other. There is no correspondence to indicate awareness, but if they were writing letters to the Bahá'í Temple Unity, it is possible they were informed of others in the state. Thus, it is interesting that Montana benefited from the teaching efforts of Mr. Albert and Mrs. Annie Belle Killius, both born in Springfield, Illinois, who became Bahá'ís in Spokane, Washington, on May 4, 1907. They state they were both charter members of the Spokane, Washington Assembly organized in their home on May 12, 1907, through Mrs. Isabella D. Brittingham. Mention is made of Mrs. Brittingham because of her influence on both Mr. & Mrs. Killius and later on Mrs. Ethel Hunt (Butte section), all of whom traveled to teach in this state.

Some Early Bahá'ís of the West by O.Z. Whitehead, page 131, relays: *Born on 21st February 1852, Mrs. Isabella D. Brittingham had a distinguished ancestor. Her great-grandfather, Mr. John Morton, was a signer of the American Declaration of Independence. Her father was an Episcopal clergyman. At the age of thirty-four she married James D. Brittingham, and twelve years later in 1898 she attended the first Bahá'í class held in New York City. ...Not for long content to serve the Faith in just one city, she soon made the first of her many teaching trips to other parts of the United States...* On page 134 her husband's support is mentioned, *Mrs. Brittingham's husband, James, was a firm, active Bahá'í. He worked in the office of a Railroad Company in New York City. As a result he was unable to accompany his wife on her teaching trips, but he gave her whatever assistance he could.*

Mrs. Brittingham first visits 'Abdu'l-Baha in September 1901 and made her second pilgrimage in October 1909. In January 1908, 'Abdu'l-Baha said to Helen Goodall and her daughter Ella Goodall Cooper, while they were visiting Him in 'Akka: *Give Mrs. Brittingham my best love and greetings and tell her that her services which she renders to this Cause are always before my eyes. They are written in the Book of the Kingdom, in the Heavenly Books, and will never be forgotten; and before long they will be written in the pages of the world in glorified writing, which shall be read by all people.* Another reference in the book by O. Z. Whitehead, p. 138, is written: *Her photograph hangs among those of other eminent Bahá'ís in the Mansion of Bahá'u'llah at Bahji. The Guardian has acclaimed her "immortal services" and named her a disciple of 'Abdu'l-Baha.*

The letter from the Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Springfield, IL dated February 27, 1995, indicates Mr.

and Mrs. Killius came to Montana in 1917 as early pioneers, teaching in *Anaconda, Butte, Helena, Missoula and Great Falls and accompanied Jenabi Fazel Mazindarani on his teaching trip through Montana in 1921.* Mrs. Killius' personal statement from her Bahá'í Historical Record indicates they formed groups in Butte and Helena.

A Bulletin of the Teaching Committee of the Bahá'í Temple Unity for July 1920 reflects their dedication and sacrifice to carry out their commitment of belief as follows From Montana comes a story of service which is full of real love and sacrifice: For the past two years or more Mr. and Mrs. A. C. Killius have been traveling teachers. They left their home in Spokane for the purpose only of sowing the seed of the Kingdom throughout the Cities of Montana, as this was one of the States mentioned by 'Abdu'l-Baha at that time where the Message had not been spread. In order to have sufficient means to sustain them, they sold almost all of their household belongings and this together with Mr. Killius's business of home portrait photographer enabled them to move about frequently. During this time, they have spread the Glorious Bahá'í Message broadcast, and were very fortunate in having a number of splendid articles placed in the leading newspapers of the State, and confirmations in every way successively reached them. They have served with a true Bahá'í spirit of love and devotion, and such services and offerings of love attracted many to the Cause. They have prepared a most lovely shining pathway for those who will come after them, following up their great work of seed sowing, for it is evident that they have been working, as the Master has instructed us all to work: 'With all the power and energy that God has given us.' Their present address is 511 Eleventh St. W., Great Falls, Montana.

It is probable that Mr. and Mrs. Killius, in their Montana travels, were responsible for the enrollment of Mrs. Elizabeth Symons, a school teacher, in 1917 believed to be the first believer in Butte. A more detailed account of Mrs. Symons is revealed in a letter under the Butte section written by Mrs. Betty Nelson in 1952 when she was asked by another Bahá'í (George Miller) to recall her memories of Mrs. Symons. In her letter, she writes of Mr. and Mrs. "Gillies" coming to Butte. Betty Nelson was from Austria and wrote phonetically, with this letter being written some twenty-four years after the passing of Elizabeth Symons; thus, this would most likely be the Bahá'í she is referring to. Through the continuous efforts of Mr. and Mrs. Killius, Mrs. Elizabeth Symons, with support from her husband Frank, also a Bahá'í, held many meetings in their home at 42 W. Center in Centerville (Butte). She was available to assist in the continual deepening of those attracted to the Faith from

other travelers.

Mr. Albert Killius is shown as the delegate with Mrs. Killius as the alternate delegate from Helena in 1919 to a National Bahá'í Temple Unity, which body preceded the current National Bahá'í Convention that elects members of the National Spiritual Assembly. A 1921 *Bulletin of the Teaching Committee of the Bahá'í Temple Unity* reflects their involvement with Jenabe Fazel during his teaching trip to several Montana cities in January of that year. *Letters from Mrs. Killius, Mr. Mortensen and Mr. Maus giving some details of the great work in Montana fill us with joy as we read of the beautiful services of all the friends. Sacrifice was the keynote of their endeavors; they were willing to sacrifice anything and everything to make the visit of the great teacher a success. Mr. Killius wrote, 'We completely suspended our business ten days before Christmas and through the entire stay of our beloved teacher, Jenabe Fazel. Mrs. Killius left a sick bed to do all in her power. Though we were a little delayed in making arrangements, our efforts were crowned with success.' When the element of real sacrifice enters into the work, how the Confirmations pour down and how the blessings of the Kingdom become evident on all sides! Mr. Mortensen's letter was full of the joy of the spirit and he emphasized the fact that on all sides, everywhere in Montana the people spoke of the great love emanating from Jenabe Fazel. He writes, 'Ahmad is also great, and all thought they were wonderfully united and a good combination to work together for the Great Cause. Assemblies are about to begin in Butte and in Anaconda, and a study class in each City. We are witnessing the beginning of real life.' Mr. Peter Maus of Red Lodge and his co-worker, Mr. Olson are serving continually and arose with heart and soul to further the divine plan of teaching. Mr. Maus shared with us their printed programs and excellent leaflets which they had printed in sufficient numbers for all meetings. The publicity work was splendid.*

Bahá'u'llah instructed that, 'Good deeds bear witness to the Truth of Words'. There is no doubt but what the Cause has been spread in the great State of Montana both by deed and word.

An October 1920, *Bulletin of the Teaching Committee of Bahá'í Temple Unity* mentions that, *A report has been received from Mr. Charles M. Hanson of Duluth, Minn. containing an account of his trip through some parts of the West. The first week of service he spent in Bahá'í work with the friends in Denver. Then Cheyenne, Wy. was visited, and Mr. Hanson found that while there were no confirmed Bahá'ís, that some preparatory work and seed sowing had been done by teachers in the Cause who had visited there some weeks earlier. Billings and Havre, Montana; Williston, Minot, Larimore and Grand Forks, N.D. were also visited. There are no resident Bahá'ís in any of these places. Mr. Hanson suggests that if Bahá'ís could go and live in these Cities they would find the field very fertile.*

In studying this report, it would seem that Mr.

Hanson's reference to "preparatory work and seed sowing" reveals that following his visit to Denver he found the other cities had been visited by Bahá'í teachers. I believe that "Larimore" probably should be Laramie, Wyoming, not in North Dakota. Undoubtedly, he was a very early teacher to visit Billings and Havre. By January 1921, Peter Maus and Edward Olson from Red Lodge prepare for Jenabe Fazel's visit in Billings and Red Lodge.

Fred Mortensen describes himself, "as involved with boys of hard character" and in trouble with the law when he was rescued by the man handling the case for his defense. He later, "rode on the bumpers between the baggage cars of the train" to meet 'Abdu'l-Baha in New England. This story is told in the book, *Some Early Bahá'ís of the West*, by O. Z. Whitehead, p. 114. He is known to have arrived in Helena at least by 1919 where on February 15th, the *Montana Record-Herald* published an article, *that gave credit for the conception of the League of Nations to an unspecified King of France, and also stated that the idea of a League 'peacefully reposed under the dust of ages until after the great war broke out...' Three days later a forceful letter, which Fred had written with the encouragement of the friends in Helena, appeared in the People's Forum of this newspaper which clearly stated that the Founder of the Bahá'í Faith had revealed the basic principles of the League at least fifty years before its establishment...*

The Mother of Fred Mortenson's wife, Kathryn, was Frieda Bryan whose home was in Helena. Charles Bryan, her husband, was not Kathryn's father, but both were well known to us when Mother and I became acquainted with the teachings in 1937. They later became members of the first Spiritual Assembly. Frieda mentioned to me about Fred Mortensen visiting her in earlier years at which time she insisted he not speak about his religion in her home. At different times Fred would come to Helena and worked for the newspaper. His interaction with traveling Bahá'ís was an unparalleled effort. He returned to Helena in around 1941-42 with two of his children when I first met the family.

Fred was an outspoken man and audacious in obtaining publicity. It was a time when most items submitted were published in their entirety. An account of the activities he arranged for Louis Gregory's visit in 1921 is recorded in, *To Move the World* by Gayle Morrison, p. 119. The services he rendered Jenabe Fazel in 1921, Louis Gregory in the winter of 1921-22 and that of Martha Root in 1923 are mentioned in the Teaching bulletins in more detail.

In 1921, Mr. Jenabe Fazel Mazindarani, an Iranian scholar, came to the U.S. at the request of 'Abdu'l-Baha. From teaching events in Salt Lake City, on January 2nd and 3rd he traveled to arrive in Butte on January 4th, the first of several cities to be visited in Montana. The *Teaching Bulletin of the Bahá'í Temple Unity* for January 1921 is quoted, since it incorporates the individuals who arose to assist with preparations for Jenabe Fazel's trip through Montana.

January 3rd, 1921. Tonight at 12 Jenabe (Fazel) leaves

for Butte, reaching there tomorrow at 5 p.m., hoping and feeling sure that new doors of service will be opened, new souls be attracted and new opportunities offered. He is joyous, smiling and resigned to the will of God.

The Thornton Hotel, Butte, Montana, January 4th, 1921. Talking with a tourist on the train about the art of writing he said: 'When you write to your friend, let him read your smile in your letter, for he cannot see the smile on your face.' This is true in all our relations in life. We must make the people feel our happiness, see the change that has come in our mode of thought and service. Jenabe Fazel has this power to a preeminent degree. People in his association feel peculiarly happy and those who are away from him likewise are magnetised by his love and devotion to the Cause. All day he has been traveling. The vast desert and mountains were covered with snow but the air was clear and the sun shining. It was indeed a most gorgeous sight to see the trees laden with the fleecy cloud like snow. On the way he said: 'Snow is the sign of purity, virginity and innocence. 'Abdu'l-Baha desires the friends, to entertain pure guests in the chambers of their minds, to welcome virgin ideals in the galleries of their hearts and to adorn their beings with the jewels of innocent deeds. Those who are actually characterized with these attributes are real Bahá'ís, otherwise they are pretenders and wolves in sheep's skin.'

At 5 p.m., the train entered the station of Butte and lo and behold! who was here? Mr. and Mrs. Killius from Great Falls and Fred Mortensen from Helena with the words of 'Allaho Abha' (sic) on their lips. Wasn't this simply thrilling? Already a number of articles have appeared and the three meetings to be delivered in Butte announced. The reporters of the "Standard" and "Butte Miner" called and had long interviews. Both reporters are interested in the Cause, the former knowing Mr. J. (George) Latimer and other friends in Portland.

At 8 p.m., the first meeting was in a colored Church, — Shaffer Chapel, A.M.E. at Platinum and Idaho Streets. The talk was on the, "Oneness of the World of Humanity". The Pastor of the Church was overjoyed with the message. Many white people were in the audience and this added to the charm and attraction of the meeting. It was a sweet gathering of love and all the people were drawn to the Cause. Wish everyone had heard that heavenly message. Our three Bahá'í friends are happy for at last the spiritual teacher has reached this part of the United States. Glory be to 'Abdu'l-aha!

The Thornton Hotel, Butte, Montana, January 5th, 1921. The City of Butte is a mining town of about 50,000 population. Thousands of people work in the mines, but just at this time on account of a slump in the price of copper, many mines have shut down and consequently there are many unemployed. During the war one could not find a room in Butte; now there are 3500 empty houses. But a hope is expressed at this period of industrial sleep shall soon pass and again the mines will be working at full speed. Jenabe Fazel gave two lectures in the course of the day. One in the Good Templars

Hall at 3 p.m., on the Bahá'í Movement and its Principles, and another in the Theosophical Society in Leonard Hotel. Both meetings were well attended and the people were delighted with the lectures.

Here Jenabe Fazel met the sister of Mrs. K. (Kathryn) Frankland of California, and another friend who was taught by Dr. D. Evelyn of San Francisco. It is interesting to note how people in different parts of the country have heard about this glorious Cause. In the course of his remarks Jenabe stated: 'The old Cycles of the world were characterized with three attributes; Ignorance, tyranny and hate. People were encircled with the army of hate. In the cycle of Baha'u'llah three other qualities have come to replace the old ones: knowledge, justice and love. The Bahá'ís who are the standard-bearers of the New Era must spread the lights of knowledge, sing the melodious songs of justice and mercy, and diffuse the Fragrances of the flowers of love. The people of faith live in three ascending stages. Some live in the state of self-abnegation, others dwell in the abode of self-sacrifice, while those who are real Bahá'ís fly in the atmosphere of self-immolation. This last state is the highest station in the kingdom of Baha! Blessed are those who attain thereunto and abide therein for aye.' Mr. and Mrs. A. Killius and Mr. F. Mortensen have been with Jenabe for hours and enjoyed his association. These three blessed souls have done a great deal to make the Cause well known in the State of Montana. They have travelled and lectured and written articles for the newspapers of different cities, and are indeed of those who are firm in the Covenant. They have no other thought save the promotion of the heavenly Message and are the incarnation of celestial devotion.

The same January 1921 bulletin continues the travel account.

Hotel Montana, Anaconda, Montana, January 6th, 1921. The Cause of God takes Jenabe Fazel into strange and unheard of places. This morning accompanied by Mr. and Mrs. Killius he left for Anaconda. Mr. Cadin of the Theosophical Society welcomed the party at the station and they were taken to Hotel Montana. This morning the "Butte Miner" had an account of yesterday's meetings and the "Anaconda Standard" announced the two meetings in that city. A beautiful invitation card was sent out, on the back of which was tastily printed the 12 Principles. At 3:30 p.m., the first lecture was delivered before the members of the Women's Club in the Hall of the Hearst Library. The President of the Club, a bright and cultured woman, introduced Jenabe Fazel and he delivered his inspiring address on the heroic and noble life and work of Kurrat-Ul-Ayne (sic) and the progress of the women of Persia. The members of the Club were unusually wonderful women. Most of them are from the east whose husbands are technicians and managers in the Smelting Plant. To say that they enjoyed the lecture is a true assertion. They asked many questions about the Bahá'í Movement and its promotion in the East.

When we returned to the hotel we met Mr. L. Jones whose family lives in New York. He was glad to meet Jenabe and had a long and interesting talk with him. At 8 o'clock the party went to the Theosophical Hall, which is kept in the utmost cleanliness and beauty. The room was filled to the door and the eagerness of the audience was unimaginable. Jenabe's lecture was full and comprehensive in regard to the invisible tyranny that traditions and creeds exercise over the minds and souls of men. This is the age in which these fetters must be broken. This is the cycle in which the spirit freed from these chains must soar in the free atmosphere of divine sanctity. This is the New Era in which the rays of the Orb of Truth must dispel the darkness of prejudices. It was a very fruitful meeting. Because the train for Helena leaves early tomorrow morning, we returned to Butte by taxi covering a distance of 25 miles. The night was bright and the stars shone with unwonted brilliance. As the taxi rolled on the smooth road Jenabe spoke about the power of 'Abdu'l-Baha and His favor and mercy to these unworthy servants.

Hotel Harvey, Helena, Montana. January 7th, 1921. *Jenabe Fazel got up early this morning in Butte and accompanied by Mr. and Mrs. Killius and Mr. F. Mortensen started for Helena, the capital of Montana. The "Anaconda Standard" and "Butte Miner" had splendid articles about yesterday's lectures. In Helena the papers have been more than wonderful. Already several articles and announcements of the meeting to be held in the Auditorium have been published in the "Helena Daily Independent" and the "Record Herald".*

No sooner had Jenabe arrived about 11:30, than the reporters were informed and they all came and had their interviews; the "Record Herald" publishing a fine article. Reverend Eugene Cosgrove also called and had a long talk with Jenabe, expressing regret that the great spiritual teacher will not be here on Sunday to address his flock. Although there was the Inaugural Ball given to the New Governor of the State and a few other functions — the Auditorium was filled with nearly 400 men and women. Every one expressed a pleasurable surprise at the large audience including the newspapers. Only the power of 'Abdu'l-Baha could bring together such a representative gathering! The lecture was on the "Ideals of the New Age and the Bahá'í Movement".

The response was wonderful, the listening attitude of the people most admirable, the newspaper reporters writing the whole speech. After the talk more than half of the audience came forward and expressed their assent and belief in the Teachings. It was the largest, public Bahá'í meeting so far held in Montana, and the Cause is now introduced to the people. This is undoubtedly the result of the untiring labor of our three Bahá'í brothers and sister in the last few years. The "Helena Daily Independent" published a full page article with the photo of 'Abdu'l-Baha on February 2d, 1919, which has had a wide circulation. Mr. Ben Heraldson, the City Editor, interviewed Jenabe yesterday and showed a spirit of kindness and sympathy, which made our hearts very

happy.

Helena is a beautiful city, and its people charming and courteous to strangers.

Park Hotel, Great Falls, Montana. January 8th, 1921. The "Helena Daily Independent" of this morning contained one of the finest articles on this trip. It carried the full report of the speech last night in the auditorium and it will be read by thousands in the whole State of Montana. It is one of the few articles which will have a permanent educational and historical value. Jenabe Fazel left this morning, accompanied by the three friends, for Great Falls. It was about 2:30 p.m., when the train entered the station and to their delight and surprise they found more than 6 members of the New Thought Centre there to welcome Jenabe. From the station they came to Park Hotel and Jenabe spoke with these friends on Pantheism and its true meaning in accord with the Bahá'í Revelation. They were made most happy and uplifted through his subtle and divine discourse. Immediately a reporter of the "Tribune" came and received an extended and wonderful interview, which may appear in tomorrow's Sunday Edition. The "Tribune" of December 26th already contained a half page article with the photos of the Temple, 'Abdu'l-Baha and Jenabe Fazel—a most comprehensive account of the Cause.

The "Tribune" and "Daily Leader" of today likewise had fine news notices announcing the meetings. Mr. and Mrs. Killius are most happy and their services in this State have already brought most glorious results. This evening at 8 o'clock Jenabe spoke to a crowded hall in Edison's before the members of the New Thought. They are very receptive, and listened to the lecture on Self Mastery with the greatest attention. Afterwards they asked many questions on Soul-culture, telepathy, etc. to all of which excellent answers were given. Again Jenabe Fazel had to meet and overcome the narrowness of a minister who talked about the blood of Christ and its redemptive power. It is very strange how this theory persists. Jenabe said: 'If the people do not embody in themselves the life and teachings of Christ, his blood will not save them. Not those who call on the name of Christ are saved but those who live in accord with the will of the Father. Character must be transformed, regeneration must be experienced, spiritual vision must be obtained and divine insight gained. No one can be saved by proxy. Each soul must carry his own cross.'

Park Hotel, Great Falls, Montana. January 9th, 1921. Days are rolling into eternity with the swiftness of light and the services rendered in the Cause are written with the pen of gold on the tablets of the hearts. Mr. and Mrs. Killius have been the essence of love and service. During the last few days they left their work and were with Jenabe Fazel in Butte, Anaconda, Helena and Great Falls, arranging meetings, interviewing newspapermen and doing everything possible to gather the people to listen to the talks of the great teacher. Mr. Fred Mortensen likewise was with Jenabe in the above places and with cheerful helpfulness contributed largely to the success of this journey. Today

at 3 p.m., Jenabe spoke before a large audience in the Palace Theatre on the "Oneness of the World of Humanity and the Removal of Prejudices from Amongst the Religions." Mr. Killius introduced him and spoke very beautifully. All the members of the New Thought Centre are very much attracted. They are near the Cause and filled with the spirit of earnest investigation. After the meeting they kept Jenabe answering many questions.

At 8 p.m. another lecture was given on the spiritual work of Baha'u'llah and 'Abdu'l-Baha, in the large Masonic Temple Hall, comfortably filled. Here also the audience felt the throb of the New Ideals, the raising of the hope to a newer and wider plane of the unity of science and religion. The people were most vitally interested, the seeds are sown, and assuredly God will cause their growth: the sun of reality will shine upon them and the breeze of Providence will blow from the four directions. The listeners were appreciative and the words found receptive places.

Assuredly for Mr. and Mrs. Killius and Fred Mortensen these glorious meetings were the fulfillment of their prayers and hopes. The Tribune of this morning contained a fine article on "World Unity and its Universal Principles". Tomorrow morning Jenabe Fazel leaves for Billings and Red Lodge to sing his songs in other fields.

Plaza Hotel, Billings, Montana. January 10th, 1921. Getting up early in the morning to catch the train has become Jenabe Fazel's habit by this time. Hence, he was up at 6 a.m. to start for Billings at 7:50. Mr. Killius and two New Thought friends were there to bid him farewell. Jenabe was sad to leave these good friends who had done so much to spread the message of love and peace.

Fred Mortensen was there, too, and although separation was unavoidable there was this consciousness—that in the Bahá'í family the feeling of union is strong and permanent. All day the train speeded along snow-covered deserts, mountains, and fields, passing through innumerable towns and villages. What vast State! Its agricultural and mining future is great. On the train two persons who had heard Jenabe's lectures joined him and for two hours a discussion on religion continued. One of them said: 'Some lady friend telephoned me yesterday that a Bohamadan had come to divert the people from Christianity. You must go and defend it. When I came and listened to your lecture, I realized you are teaching the truth. May God give you the power and strength to continue it.'

At 6 p.m. the train arrived at Billings and the beloved mother, Peter Maus, and his friend to whom he has taught the Cause, were at the station to welcome the teacher sent by the Centre of the Covenant. Our brother had published and distributed handbills, advertised the meetings in the "Gazette" and rented the Coliseum Hall for the meeting. Jenabe Fazel was brought to the Hotel Plaza where rooms were reserved for him and after dinner they all went to the Coliseum. A goodly number of men and women had come and they listened to the good tidings of the glorious Message.

After which they asked questions. This was the first time

that the Cause was introduced to the people of Billings and the people were genuinely interested. At the end of the meeting Peter Maus was at the door distributing literature supplied by the Teaching Committee. It was a fruitful gathering and no doubt out of this seed-sowing, great results will be forthcoming.

Pollard Hotel, Red Lodge, Montana. January 11th, 1921. Travelling in the path of God brings the greatest joy and satisfaction. It is the most wonderful stimulus to high striving and noble effort. In all these American cities the call of the kingdom of Abha is raised as never before, the people listen to the message of Peace with eagerness and wherever Jenabe Fazel appears the ears are attuned to the music of spheres. This morning Mr. Maus and Mr. Olson accompanied the teacher to Red Lodge - their home city of about 6000 inhabitants. They left Billings at 9:15 a.m. and arrived here about noon. Rooms were taken in the Pollard Hotel and after lunch, they went to a meeting in the Sanitorium of Dr. and Mrs. Sanders.

Many people had come to listen to the lecture on "Physical and Spiritual Healing". Jenabe Fazel gave a very instructive talk. No matter where he is or what manner of an audience he is addressing, he attracts the souls to the Kingdom of God. Many hundreds of leaflets advertising the three talks to be delivered here have been distributed amongst the miners — so that they all know about the coming of the Persian philosopher. In the evening at 8 p.m. the second lecture was given on "The Solution of Economic Problems" in the large Hall of the Labor Temple.

Men and women had come to listen to the interpretation of this subject by an Oriental thinker and they received much food for thought. They were most attentive. The audience was composed of clean young men, desirous to know. 'In the Bahá'í Movement' the speaker said, 'you find the spiritual solution of every subject. It is the panacea for all the ills of humanity. When you study the Principles of this Universal Religion your eyes are opened, your ears are unstopped, your mind illumined, your hearts enlightened, your consciousness expanded and your tongue unloosed. It is a banquet where you will find every kind of food. It will satisfy the hunger of the world, and allay the thirst of all mankind. Baha'u'llah through His Teachings united all the religions, taught internationalism, unfurled the flag of universal peace, and filled the ears of the listening ones with the melodies of the Bird of Paradise. Blessed are those who hearken to this call.'

Billings, Montana. January 12th, 1921. The days in Montana are brought to a close not with regret but with a feeling of joy and satisfaction. The seeds of Truth were scattered in this Western state and the Principles of the Cause were proclaimed in the meetings and the press. Jenabe Fazel was a candle of illumination, a voice in the wilderness and a herald throughout all these cities. The two Bahá'í brothers in Red Lodge, Mr. P. Maus and Ed Olson were on fire and made every effort to prepare the way for the teacher of the things of spirit. Before leaving Red Lodge at 3 p.m. two very beautiful meetings were held; one in the Sanitorium, and the other in the room of Mr.

Maus. He invited a number of his friends to listen to the Message of Light and Jenabe gave them effectively the life and teaching of Baha'u'llah who came to unify the hearts of mankind. "Purity of thought, purity of word and purity of deed are the great laws of life, laid down by Baha'u'llah" he said.

The people in this city will soon inquire about the Persian Bahá'í Teacher who lived in their midst for a while. At 3 o'clock Jenabe bidding farewell to his two heavenly hosts, left for Billings, arriving there about 5:30. Here he gave his last lecture on "Scientific and Religious Education" in the Trade and Labor Hall. They were all immensely attracted to the Cause and wanted to have a teacher stay in their midst and spread these universal Principles. They had never heard of this Cause and the Revelation came to them like a benediction.

Literature was distributed and many gave their addresses, anxious to get more for their friends. This meeting was a wonderful "God-speed of Montana" to Jenabe. He came out of the Hall radiantly happy, for the work was so richly blessed. The Power of 'Abdu'l-Baha was manifest in every movement and the lights of the Sun of Reality are being scattered. At 11:13 p.m. the train pulled out of Billings for Spokane. Jenabe Fazel is praying for the confirmation of all the friends and wishing that they will pray for him, too.

A quote from Book 6, *Star of the West*, Vol. II, No. 15, December 12, 1920, p.257, distinguishes between two well known teachers with similar names. 'Abdu'l-Baha writes Roy C. Wilhelm *His honor Fazel is a revered person. He has been growing for a long time in the Cause. Next to his honor, Mirza Abdul Fazl, he is the best informed of his contemporaries. He has no aspiration save service to the Cause of God. He is a scholar, he is appreciative and grateful to thee.*

In the winter of 1921/22 another highly regarded speaker, Mr. Louis Gregory, came to Montana as a part of a large journey he was undertaking. A letter from 'Abdu'l-Baha had expressed the hope that he might become, "the means whereby the white and colored people shall close their eyes to racial differences and cause the guidance of both races." 'Abdu'l-Baha encouraged his marriage to a white woman and described it as "an introduction to the accomplishment" of good fellowship between blacks and whites.

His arrival from Salt Lake City to Butte and Helena added to the still evident interest from the meetings with Jenabe Fazel. While in Butte, Mr. Gregory stayed in the home of Dr. J. W. and Mrs. Armetta Duncan, since hotels did not accommodate other races. Dr. Duncan was an East Indian and a leader with the Theosophists. Mrs. Duncan did not join the Faith but from the time I met her in 1950 until her decline in health in the 1980's she attended most of the public meetings.

The Bulletin of the Teaching Committee of Nineteen, March 1922 relays: (This bulletin is titled differently but it was included with the previously quoted bulletins and is a continuation of Louis Gregory's teaching trip.) *Thus we now see the Bounties descending as Mr. Gregory travels on through*

Montana — the first stop being at Butte, the City of mining fame. Mrs. F. H. Symonds (sic) gave perfectly splendid cooperation in this City, and was instrumental in arranging three very effective meetings open to the public, for the most part: the first, with the Theosophists; the second with the Spiritualists; and the third at her own home, calling together those most attracted. The audiences were all responsive and enthusiastic. The colored Baptist church opened its doors for all Sunday services.

Several Women's Clubs of the City united in arranging a large meeting at the City Y.M.C.A.

Mr. Gregory writes that 'many friends of Jenabe Fazel and Mr. and Mrs. Killius attended these meetings.'

Another experience there was a visit arranged by Mr. Symonds (sic) to one of the mines, four hundred feet below ground, and the few miners present at the time listened with respectful and close attention to a brief talk.

Helena was the next city favored with the 'Glances of the Merciful' and here our enthusiastic and devoted brother, Fred Mortensen, had been paving the way for such a seed-sowing as would rejoice the heart of every believer in the world. Mr. Mortensen is interested in just one thing, namely: 'how to flood the dry fields of the hearts' with the Water of Life, and he determined to have an intensive spiritual campaign. A portion of his report of the work follows:

The week of Brother Gregory's visit has come to a close, and it is evident that the blessings of the Center of the Covenant have been poured upon this community through the presence of the illustrious Louis.... From the moment of his arrival he found Helena no place for rest.... The first meeting was on Sunday afternoon in the Colored Baptist church to a large and enthusiastic audience, the subject being the 'Oneness of Mankind'... To me it was as clear as the sun that 'Abdu'l-Baha was the Speaker, and Gregory the instrument of contact. The Power of the Covenant was so great that no seeker could deny; and those souls attended every lecture thereafter. Every lecture (of which we had eight in six days) was well attended and all the comments I heard were simply those of extreme contentment and satisfaction... Among the public lectures were those given at the Unitarian Church; the Y.M.C.A., another at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Ed. Miller; one at Edison Hall, and also another at the Truth Center. Later in the same report Mr. Mortenson noted: *The lecturing was but one part of the work here, for I kept Mr. Gregory so busy writing articles for the newspapers that he must have remained up and at work most of the nights.*

The bulletin continues with an excerpt of Mr. Gregory's view of the Helena teaching. *Fred Mortensen, young, strong, devoted— led me such a pace that temporarily the use of my right arm was lost through writing so much and so fast. Truly he is 'Frederick the Great.' The Montana Editor who gave so much publicity is a Texas Democrat. I met him personally and found him very congenial and ready to help in every way possible. The great Jenabe Fazel whom he met last year prepared the way.*

The Bulletin went on to report: *The Press work accomplished through the combined efforts of Mr. Mortensen and Mr. Gregory was a wonderful service, for some of the articles were widely read through the very large circulation which some of the papers have in that State. Mr. Mortensen is a great believer in 'the Power of the Press' and he has proven many times his ability in getting splendid articles into the papers - articles which have carried the seeds of Truth far and wide.*

In, *To Move the World* by Gale Morrison, p. 119, we learn that Fred Mortensen, who had contributed much to the establishment of the first Bahá'í group in Atlanta, had moved to Helena. Having worked with Mr. Gregory in the South, he was well aware of the range of 'Brother Gregory's teaching abilities. How perfectly combined their energies were for this teaching trip in Montana.

Sometime in 1922 Mrs. Mary Richardson, described in a *Bulletin of the Bahá'í National Teaching Committee*, March 22, 1923, as a radiant Bahá'í of Seattle, who has been teaching the Cause in Montana for nearly a year, was adding to the spiritual climate that preceded the arrival of another great teacher, Miss Martha Root. Speaking of Miss Richardson, the Bulletin continues: *Guided by 'Abdu'l-Baha to spread the Cause in Montana, she goes from city to city, earning her living selling face creams (and part of the time as an actress) and 'living the life'. She sells Bahá'í literature at every lecture.*

Described as, *like a school in salesmanship to see her do it; she buys the books with her own savings and sells them at exact cost. She talks about the books until every listener wishes to possess one. Mrs. Richardson also lectured several nights a week and prayed the Healing Prayer nine times at nearly every public meeting, with 'good healings in this ten minute part of the service.'* Prior to the arrival of Miss Martha Root, she came to Helena two weeks in advance to help prepare for this visit. By then Fred Mortensen had married and his wife Kathryn, 'a new and very sweet young sister, a little bride, worked faithfully and efficiently' along with her husband and Mrs. Richardson in preparation for Martha's visit.

This Bulletin gives tribute to the reception of the Faith: *Montana: is one of the 'top-o-the-world' States. Its people like its mountains are big in thought and in ideals. As one sees the mining of the world in that high land, one can only ponder Baha'ó'llah's Words: 'Put thy hand into My Treasury, then will I lift My Head radiant above thy treasures.'*

The pioneer souls in Montana are building the Cause well. Mr. and Mrs. A. C. Killius sowed the seeds. They gave their very health and business to begin the work. Fred Mortensen in Helena has long been a Prince of the Cause.

The same Bulletin of March 22, 1923 describes what took place: *Fred (Mortenson) was on 'The Montana Record-Herald' and helping out with the press work on 'The Independent' during Martha's visit. Through his efforts in Helena Bahá'í articles were used two, three and four a day—articles on the Temple, on the different Universal Principles*

and general feature stories as well as news stories. 'The Montana Record-Herald' has the second largest circulation of any paper in the State. No State in the country has had the deluge of Bahá'í publicity that Montana had from Feb. 4th to 17th. The stories towered on the pages, dignified, impressive and numerous, - a spiritual symbol of the rugged Rocky Mountain peaks.

The Legislature was in session in Helena, the capital, and people were gathered there from every section.

The first public talk was at the Rotary Club luncheon on 'The League of Nations of the Future.' State senators, members of the Governor's staff and distinguished guests from several other states were present.

Lectures were given each evening in Edison Hall during Martha's stay. Fred Mortensen speaks every Friday night in the Truth Center on Bible Prophecies. He is a very fluent speaker.

Mrs. Richardson accompanied Martha to Butte, where the latter was the guest of dear Mr. and Mrs. Frank Symons. Both are beautiful Bahá'ís.

Among the lectures in Butte were the talk at the Spiritual Science Church; another to fourteen hundred boys and girls of the High School Assembly; still another address was to the Spanish section of the High School; a lecture in the Unity Center; and in the Young Men's Christian Association Hall. One of the lovely encouraging signs, is that at all these lectures, the people are so interested that they come again and again. Another important talk was one to the Club Women of Butte. The Spiritualist Church received the talk most sympathetically, the President is much attracted to the Bahá'í Cause, even the Bahai hymns were sung at this service.

Anaconda, Montana was the next City visited, and here as well as elsewhere Mrs. Richardson helped arrange some of the meetings. Theosophical Hall, where the first lecture was given was crowded, some of the people sat on the floor and on tables. On her return to Butte, meetings were held in the Bethel Baptist Church;— the Methodist Church in the same neighborhood closing its doors and all joining in the Bahá'í service. Later a talk was given at a special meeting of the League of Women Voters. 'All love Jenabe Fazel and Louis Gregory. It is glorious to meet the Bahá'í pioneers of Montana.' In Anaconda Mrs. Richardson passed around to the audience typed slips (done by Mr. Wolcott of Spokane) containing the words of the Bahá'í Benediction Hymn, Words of the Healing Prayer and Words of the Prayer for Thankfulness. The audience joined in these during the service, and they had the slips to take home.

The following year a September 1924 *Bulletin of the Teaching Committee* relays the efforts of Mr. & Mrs. Howard MacNutt: *Mr. and Mrs. Howard MacNutt and party started from New York in July on a motor trip across the United States, primarily for the purpose of spreading the Message. Preparations were in the making for some time for this truly important teaching tour, and an itinerary had been arranged which included all important Centers enroute. Likewise a program of surpassing interest and spiritual beauty was planned, to be carried into the world of accomplishment through those*

continued 'fresh confirmations' promised to Mr. MacNutt by 'Abdu'l-Baha with such tenderness and loving solicitude. We have in our possession copies of many of these Tablets.

One so fortunate as to be the recipient of these Bestowals, must of course arise 'to do what is required by the Lord.' Public and private addresses and talks were delivered in Detroit, Lansing, Muskegon, Chicago, Kenosha, Racine, Milwaukee, St. Paul, Minneapolis, Helena, Butte, Great Falls, Spokane, Seattle and Portland, and soon the party will be in San Francisco. Mr. MacNutt's comment on the trip is brief but significant: 'Praise be to God! for this wondrous opportunity for service in the Heavenly Cause. 'Abdu'l-Baha's blessed Presence and Protection overshadowed and guided' throughout. We had a wonderful vision of Him in the mountains which we will record at another time.'

An April 10, 1924 Bulletin of the Teaching Committee mentions Mrs. Richardson in a remembered record: MONTANA: Mrs. Mary Richardson of Seattle has spent three winters working for the Cause of GOD in Montana. Her pure and illumined services cannot be too highly praised and commended. She is a deep student of the Bahá'í Teachings, she knows the Teaching herself very well, she is a public speaker of exceptional ability, and she is an enthusiastic and fearless server in the great field of teaching. She pays all her own expenses travelling from City to City working and teaching; during the day time she sells toilet articles, and never a night but finds her before the public giving a lecture. She has spoken before the Theosophists, Spiritualist, Open Forum Meetings, special

meetings arranged for her, in some instances invited to return again and again to give another talk, also she has given the Message in ever so many churches of the colored people.

In Great Falls, Helena, Butte, Lewiston (Lewistown) and other Montana Cities, she has left a host of friends, some of whom will try and carry on and water the precious seeds she has sown.... In Helena she was entertained at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Fred Mortensen where the regular Friday evening meetings are held. Mr. Mortensen works on the Record-Herald newspaper and has been very successful in getting fine articles in the newspapers each week which enables him to reach people far and near. We have seen many of Mr. Mortensen's articles, and through them, we believe, he is rendering distinguished services to the Cause.

In Butte Mr. and Mrs. Frank Symons open their home for meetings, and through their efforts, through the great work of Mrs. Richardson and other travelling teachers, the Cause is well and favorably known in that City. Mrs. Richardson is surely a very 'live-wire' and a magnet, for we hear through all reports that she attracts very large audiences everywhere, the halls and churches being crowded to the doors. The ABHA Light is shining in Montana, but only the Master can measure the extent of her very beautiful and confirmed work in its fullness. However, results are so apparent on all sides that one can readily see how one true, firm, selfless soul arising in the service of the Kingdom, fortified with the Holy Utterances and on fire with the Light of the New Day, can awaken thousands, directing them to the Path of Real Life.

BAHÁ'Í HISTORICAL RECORD

1. Albert C Killius 2. Reported through Spiritual Assembly Springfield I
Name of individual believer City
3. Address 617 So. English Ave. Springfield Illinois
Number Street City State
4. Birthplace Springfield Illinois Birthdate August 8th 1872
5. Naturalization (if foreign born) _____
City and State Date
6. National origin German 7. Race Anglo Saxon
(Whether of English or other stock)
8. Color White 9. Sex Male 10. Married? Yes June 10th 1903
Date
11. Children or dependents None _____
Minor Adult Adopted
12. Religious origin (religion before becoming a Bahá'í) Lutheran
13. Date of acceptance of the Bahá'í Faith May 4th 1907 Spokane Washington
- A. As isolated believer No B. As member of Bahá'í group _____ C. As member of Bahá'í Community _____
14. Place of acceptance of Bahá'í Faith Wife and I both charter members of Spokane Was
Assembly organised in our home May 12th 1907 by I. D. Brittingham. [SEE OVER]

15. Date of enrollment in present Bahá'í community (No. 2) August 11th 1928
- A. By transfer from previous community _____ B. By enrollment as Bahá'í for first time _____
- C. Subsequent transfers (leave blank) _____

16. General information you would like to have preserved in this historical record (about Bahá'í services, connection with the Cause in early days, special talents, etc.) 18.

While in Chicago in 1912 during Abdul Baha's visit we had the privilege of taking His picture. We sent seven hundred photos and fifty paintings to be given free to Oriental believers visiting Abdul Baha while in Egypt. Also gave a great many to American believers.

(Additional notes may be attached to this card)

17. Additional information (do not fill in)
- _____
- _____



19. Signature

Albert C Killius

BAHÁ'Í HISTORICAL RECORD

1. Ms. Annie Belle Killian
Name of individual believer
2. Reported through Spiritual Assembly Springfield Ill.
City
3. Address 617 S. English Ave. Springfield Illinois
Number Street City State
4. Birthplace Springfield Illinois Birthdate Mar. 31-1873
5. Naturalization (if foreign born) _____
City and State Date
6. National origin English 7. Race Anglo Saxon
(Whether of English or other stock)
8. Color White 9. Sex Female 10. Married? Yes. June 10 1909.
Date
11. Children or dependents No. _____
Minor Adult Adopted
12. Religious origin (religion before becoming a Bahá'í) Episcopalian
13. Date of acceptance of the Bahá'í Faith May 4, 1907 at Spokane Washington.
- A. As isolated believer No. B. As member of Bahá'í group _____ C. As member of Bahá'í Community _____
14. Place of acceptance of Bahá'í Faith Through Ms. Brittingham Assembly organized in our home in Spokane Wash. May 12, 1907. We left there Nov. 13, 1917 to travel and teach in dark states according to Abdul Baha's instruction. Traveled through Montana Fair & one half year. [SEE OVER]

15. Date of enrollment in present Bahá'í community (No. 2) Aug. 11-1928
- A. By transfer from previous community Duluth Minn. B. By enrollment as Bahá'í for first time _____
- C. Subsequent transfers (leave blank) _____

16. General information you would like to have preserved in this historical record (about Bahá'í services, connection with the Cause in early days, special talents, etc.)

I served the Cause over 28 yrs. We organized the Springfield Ill. Assembly May 23, 1919. We also formed groups in Beula and Helena, Montana and taught at Charles Hansen through whom the Duluth Minn. Assembly was organized May 23, 1918. In 1916 we traveled from Spokane Wash. to Boston Mass. giving the message to all our relatives on both sides. We traveled for an month with Joseph Bagel over state of Montana and his wife lived in 1920. Many long articles and cuts appeared in Montana Newspapers during our stay there.

(Additional notes may be attached to this card)



17. Additional information (do not fill in)

19. Signature
Ms. Annie Belle Killian

SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY
OF THE
BAHÁ'ÍS OF SPRINGFIELD
POST OFFICE BOX 1841, SPRINGFIELD, ILLINOIS 62705

February 27, 1995

The Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of Great Falls
c/o Kay L. Maloney
1404 4th Avenue North
Great Falls, MT 59401-1418

Dear Baha'i Friends:

Information in the Springfield, Illinois, Baha'i Archives indicates that Mr. and Mrs. Albert C. Killius, natives of Springfield, were early Baha'i pioneers who opened the State of Montana in 1917. They taught in Anaconda, Butte, Helena, Missoula and Great Falls and accompanied Jenabi Fazel Mazandarani on his teaching trip through Montana in 1921.

Mr. Killius was a professional portrait artist and photographer, who photographed 'Abdu'l-Baha in Chicago in 1912. One of his most famous photographs appears as the frontispiece of Volume II (1926-1928) of Baha'i World. He and Mrs. Killius attended the unveiling of the Tablet of the Divine Plan in New York in 1919 and founded a Baha'i Community in their hometown of Springfield, Illinois, on May 23, 1919. They returned to Springfield in 1928 where they spent the remainder of their lives. Annie died in 1946 and Albert in 1961. Both are buried in Oak Ridge Cemetery in Springfield, near the tomb of Abraham Lincoln.

Currently, research is underway in Springfield with the goal of publishing a book on the lives and influence of these early Baha'i teachers, who received many Tablets from 'Abdu'l-Baha, and who furnished Him with 700 photographic prints and 50 oil paintings developed from the negatives of 'Abdu'l-Baha taken in Chicago's Lincoln Park.

Also, a rather extensive archival exhibit featuring Mr. Killius' work has been circulating central Illinois over the past year. The exhibit premiered at Knox College in Galesburg, Illinois, last July. It will return to Knox College again at Heartland Baha'i Summer School this coming July. Also, there is a good possibility that some of these photographs will be featured at the National Baha'i History Conference in Wilmette this coming June.

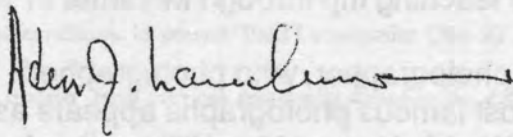
Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of Great Falls
February 27, 1995
Page Two

At this time, the Springfield Baha'i Archives is seeking as much information as possible about these early Baha'i teachers in the West. We would appreciate any help your community could give us from your records and archives. Please let us know if you have histories, letters, reports, newspaper clippings, photos etc. of these early "Heralds of the Testament." We will be happy to share with you the completed story when it has been completely developed and documented.

Since this project is moving rather rapidly, we would appreciate a reply at your earliest convenience, indicating whether information is available. The actual documentation and transfer of copies of materials can follow.

You will be in our thoughts and prayers, as we all move forward to victory in The Three Year Plan.

With Baha'i Love and Appreciation,



Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of Springfield
Aden J. Lauchner, Corresponding Secretary and Archivist

PHONE: (217) 546-6895
FAX: (217) 585-1457

Cash Proof March 31, 1919

| | |
|--|---------------------|
| Certificate of Deposit dated May 24, 1918 | \$ 35,665.95 |
| Certificate of Deposit dated June 15, 1918 | 61,998.22 |
| Certificate of Deposit dated February 3, 1919 | 10,000.00 |
| Cash balance, Northern Trust Co., March 31, 1919 | 7,021.18 |
| Deposited April 7, 1919 | 3.00 |
| Total cash | \$114,688.35 |
| Cash balance March 31, 1919 | \$114,688.35 |
| Liberty Bonds received | 28,050.00 |
| War Savings Stamps | 325.00 |
| Promissory Notes | 120.00 |
| Total available funds | \$143,183.35 |

The Secretary reported the following applications from Assemblies desiring

membership in the Bahai Temple Unity. The Executive Board recommended that they be admitted. Helena, Montana; Yonkers, N. Y.; Duluth, Minn.; Atlanta, Ga.; Asbury Park, N. J.

On motion duly made and seconded, it was voted unanimously to admit the above mentioned Assemblies into full membership in the Unity.

The Chair called upon Walter Bohanan to report for Kenosha, Wis.

Mrs. Breed read the report of the Credential Committee as follows:

| NAME OF ASSEMBLY | DELEGATE | ALTERNATE DELEGATE |
|----------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| Asbury Park, N. J. | Juliet D. Sherman | |
| Atlanta, Ga. | J. Elmore Hays | |
| Atlantic City, N. J. | Viola I. Eiselstein | |
| Bakersfield, Calif. | Mary A. Morton Replogle | Sophia Apsley |
| Baltimore, Md. | Roland R. Mann | Mrs. E. Dorrida |
| Berkeley, Calif. | A. Frankland | |
| Beverly, Mass. | Alice H. Ober | Edw. D. Struven |
| Boston, Mass. | Alfred E. Lunt | Wm. H. Randall |
| Benton Siding, B. C. | Mrs. Grace Ober | Alfred E. Lunt |
| Brooklyn, N. Y. | Frank E. Osborne | Bertha Herklotz |
| Buffalo, N. Y. | Margaret Sprague | |
| Cambridge, Mass. | Harlan Foster Ober | M. Althea Dorr |
| Chicago, Ill. | Mary Lesch | Leroy Ioas |
| | Corinne True | Dr. Zia M. Bagdadi |
| Cleveland, Ohio | Pauline Barton-Peeke | Mrs. E. Louise Smith |
| Denver, Colo. | Dr. Zia M. Bagdadi | Corinne True |
| Detroit, Mich. | Mrs. Mabel S. Rice-Wray | Mrs. Grimwood |
| Duluth, Minn. | Mrs. Albert C. Killius | Albert C. Killius |
| Fruitport, Mich. | Mrs. Iva Smack | Mrs. Mary Frazer |
| Genoa Jct., Wis. | Zeenat Bagdadi | Dr. Zia M. Bagdadi |
| Geyserville, Calif. | Dr. F. W. D'Evelyn | Roy C. Wilhelm |
| Glenolden, Pa. | Mrs. Mary J. Revell | Mrs. W. C. Revell |
| Grand Haven, Mich. | Martha Richter | |
| Helena, Mont. | Albert C. Killius | Mrs. Albert C. Killius — |
| Honolulu, H. I. | Agnes Alexander | |
| Ithaca, N. Y. | Hattie B. Townley | Chas. M. Remy |
| Jersey City, N. J. | Wm. H. Hoar | Frederick G. Hale |
| Johnstown, N. Y. | Ella C. Quant | Chas. M. Remy |
| Kenosha, Wis. | Bernard M. Jacobsen | Mrs. Chas. Redeen |
| Los Angeles, Calif. | Frank B. Beckett | Roy C. Wilhelm |
| Minneapolis, Minn. | Mrs. Chas. Greenleaf | A. H. Hall |
| Montclair, N. J. | Mrs. Victoria Bedekian | Anna VanBlarcom |
| Montreal, Canada | Lizzie V. Cowles | Annie Savage |
| Muskegon, Mich. | Mrs. Iva Smack | Mrs. Mary Frazer |
| Newark, N. J. | Henry Grasmuk | Annie B. Bettinger |

(Continued on page 331)

APR 23 1936

BAHÁ'Í HISTORICAL RECORD

1. *Frederik Mortensen* 2. Reported through Spiritual Assembly CHICAGO City

3. Address *7116 St. Lawrence Ave* *Chicago* City *Ill* State

4. Birthplace *Fort Dodge, Iowa* Birthdate *Feb. 7-1887*

5. Naturalization (if foreign born) City and State Date

6. National origin *Danish* 7. Race *White* (Whether of English or other stock)

8. Color *Fair-Blonde-Blue eyes* 9. Sex *male* 10. Married? *yes* *Sept. 30-22* Date

11. Children or dependents *Five* Minor Adult Adopted

12. Religious origin (religion before becoming a Bahá'í) *Christian*

13. Date of acceptance of the Bahá'í Faith *Summer - 1909*

A. As isolated believer B. As member of Bahá'í group C. As member of Bahá'í Community

14. Place of acceptance of Bahá'í Faith *Minneapolis, Minn.* [SEE OVER]

15. Date of enrollment in present Bahá'í community (No. 2) *Spring - 1925*

A. By transfer from previous community B. By enrollment as Bahá'í for first time

C. Subsequent transfers (leave blank)

16. General information you would like to have preserved in this historical record (about Bahá'í services, connection with the Cause in early days, special talents, etc.)

My most sacred memory - is my personal contact and visit with Abdul Baha at Green Acre, Maine. (1912)

(Additional notes may be attached to this card)

18. Photograph
(If possible, please attach photograph to this record. Write name and date the picture was taken on back of photograph.)



17. Additional information (do not fill in)

.....

.....

19. Signature
Fred Mortensen

17A. OCCUPATION *Newspaper (mailing)*

EXPONENT OF AN UNIVERSAL RELIGION UNITING ALL CREEDS IN ONE TO LECTURE IN BUTTE ON TOUR OF THE UNITED STATES FROM OLD PERSIA

Interpreter Used by Dr. Mazandarani to Explain the Mission of His Supporters.

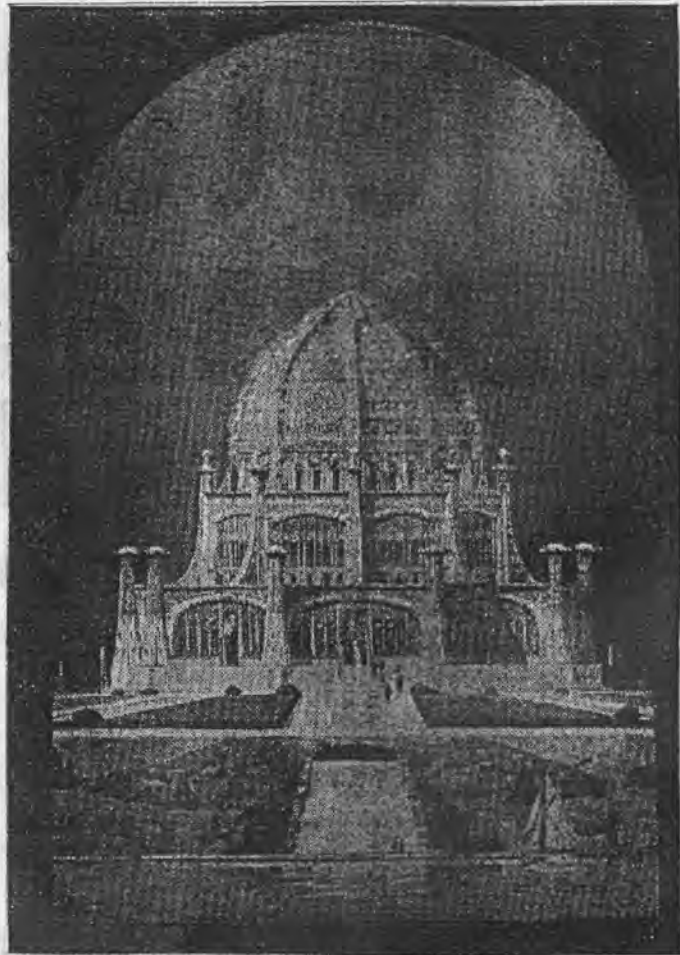
BELIEVING that the world war has advanced the cause of world fraternity to such an extent that the time is opportune to launch a campaign for the amalgamation of the nine great religions of the world, Dr. Jenabe Fazel Mazandarani of Persia will lecture in Butte Jan. 4, as one of the points on his tour of the United States.

His doctrines which are embraced in the Bahai movement, preach that all of the great religions are fundamentally similar and if not completely amalgamated should at least be "united in a common religious spirit" and to this end a site has been purchased in Chicago for the erection of a temple of worship.

"In the Bahai movement," says the New York Times, "there are assumed to be nine of the great religions, and each of these has a separate entrance to this temple through one of its nine doors on its nine sides, over which is inscribed a welcome in the language of the race to which that religion chiefly belongs. The building is not intended for preaching, but rather a place of worship and music and beauty. There is no other creed than that of the brotherhood of man, and no other organization than a body of temple trustees. In effect the religion is embodied in the temple to a degree that has never been true of other great churches. Notre Dame is an expression of Paris, St. Peter's of the Pops. Louis Bourgeois had tried to make his an expression of all who may gather there in recognition of one God, and, unconsciously, perhaps, has wrought into his pure line decorations the symbols of many religions such as the Swastika cross, the Greek cross, the Roman or Christian cross, the five-pointed star and the nine-pointed star symbolizing the Bahai idea of uniting the nine great religions in one. These one may pick out in the intricate ornamental figures of the section of the dome.

"In using pure mathematical line as the motif of his decoration, Mr. Bourgeois has departed from the use of vines, leaves, flowers and human and animal figures which have been the inspiration alike of the Greek, Roman and Gothic styles of architecture. He says he got his inspiration from studying astronomy and thinking of the beautiful overlapping curves which the planets trace as in different planes and orbits they circle around the sun, while the whole solar system moves forward so that these ellipses become spirals. One day when he was on the seashore he thought of what lovely curves these celestial bodies were tracing in the ether, and sketched his ideas on the smooth sand. A moment later a great wave washed the whole thing out. It was 25 years later that he finally embodied his "new conception" in this intricate design.

The design is that this building, including the dome and the columns at the base that look like Eiffel towers, should be of grouped terra cotta, illuminated at night from within, so that these designs and symbols will be strikingly printed by the light against the black sky. There is a lantern space at the top of the dome, just below the unique external ribs that meet in a Gothic point, suggesting hands clasped in prayer above the dome of a human head. It was Bernard himself who suggested the design for the globe lamps that are set around the base of the dome.



PROJECTED BAHAI TEMPLE.

"The design really consists of three units, one for the first story, one for the second story and one for the dome, which are repeated on each of the nine sides. The history of these three units, created from the bottom upward, with increasing elaboration of beauty, is the history of Mr. Bourgeois's achievement. It was 12 years ago that he first spent about 10 days of time in evening work in making drawings which were submitted in the competition in Chicago. Three years ago the drawings reappeared at the Bahai convention in Boston, but did not attract attention. One of the delegates asked the architect why he did not elaborate them. As the war had brought building operations to a standstill and he was out of a job Bourgeois decided that this was the time for him to work out his great idea of a beautiful home for the spirit which he felt ought to be stirring in the world. He had only his home at West Englewood, N. J.—an artist's delightful bungalow, surrounded by a garden filled with Dorothy Perkins roses—and this he mortgaged to buy a little store for sale of ice cream and the like, which his wife could operate while he worked and from which he might secure his living. A bushel of roses he sold to buy plaster for his

carving. "By a sudden inspiration he conceived the design for the unit of the first story, and drew it in an hour. But he felt it must be reproduced in plaster to be appreciated. He had never carved plaster before, but he learned from a friend in a single Sunday. It took him three months to carve this elaborate unit. He felt it was beautiful, but he knew that the second story must be still more beautiful, and he could not for the life of him think how he could design the second story and make it more beautiful till the first story had been carved, when another inspiration enabled him to draw the second story.

"The first story is Roman in its window arches and general plan, while the second is more Greek, though the uptilting of the line over the windows suggests the roof of a Chinese pagoda. The fact is, all forms of architecture, Greek, Roman and Gothic, as well as Chinese, Indian, and what not, have been used and blended into a single

MONDAY MORNING

THE BUTTE MINER

JANUARY 3, 1921

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whole by the purely original application of the mathematical lines of astronomy. Religious symbols have always been drawn from the mystic movements of the stars, and that is why Bourgeois, without consciously intending to do so, found that his artistic inspiration had led him to embody the symbols of many religions. These have been 'discovered' since his model was placed on exhibition. The conscious mathematical line would have been a failure, but the inspiration of the artist has enabled him to get out of this unpromising material a new artistic conception.

"The dome, with its greater elaboration, required six months to carve. Bourgeois had thought he could do the entire temple in three months. Before he had cast his model units and put the whole in place with his own hands he had spent three years of feverish work, crowding the efforts of five ordinary years into these three, against the most discouraging comments of his friends, who told him how unlikely he was to succeed in such a competition—he an unknown worker for architects—and how useless for other purposes his designs would be if he failed to win the competition. He had the support of the faith of his wife, however, who was herself an artist.

"When the competition last April at the Bahai convention in New York finally narrowed down to the design of Bourgeois and that of another the committee felt unwilling to decide without expert advice. The one design was the work of a Beaux Arts man, striking and original, but following the conventional lines that architecture has followed for the last 700 years. The dome was that of a Turkish mosque. Bourgeois was strongly opposed to having any artist or architect of national reputation, who must necessarily be a Beaux Arts man, pass upon his original and new conception, but he was forced to yield, and H. Van Buren Magonigle was called in.

"The first thing Magonigle asked about was the placing of the buttress of the second story over the door of the first, apparently with no support. The model more than the picture makes the first story look like a solid base pierced by the door opening, and the variation that is secured by placing these angles opposite the center of the inward curves of the first story made the artist warmly defend his plan. In the end Magonigle told the committee that if they wished a striking and original design which embodied all styles without unduly favoring any, but uniting them into an original unity well symbolizing the spirit of the religious movement for which the temple must stand, they could have no choice but to take the Bourgeois model. The delegates themselves realized that a church with the dome of a Turkish mosque would inevitably be thought of in Christian countries as Mohammedan.

The building will require several million dollars to erect, and may prove a work of as many years as some of the cathedrals of Europe.

THE BUTTE MINER
TUESDAY MORNING

JANUARY 4, 1921 PAGE 5

Jenabe Fazel Masandarani

Will deliver a number of free lectures in Butte, on January 4th and 5th, inclusive. This celebrated philosopher from the Imperial University, Toheran, Persia, is traveling throughout the United States and Canada with a two-fold purpose. First, the promotion of the principles of Brotherhood, Universal Peace, Universal Education, Universal Language, the Solution of the Economic Problem, etc. Second, to study the economic, educational and religious conditions of America.

A Cordial Welcome Is Extended to the Public

Tuesday, Jan 4th, 8:00 p. m.—Shaffer Chapel, Platinum and Idaho. Subject: "Oneness of the World of Humanity."

Wednesday, Jan 5th, 2:30 p. m.—Good Templars' Hall, 215 North Main. Subject: "The Bahai Movement and Its Universal Principle."

Wednesday, Jan. 5, 8:00 p. m.—Theosophical Society, Leonard Hotel. Subject: "The Underlying Unity of All Religions."

Free Admission

No Collections

PERSIAN EXPLAINS BAHAI MOVEMENT

Twelve Principles of Universal Religion Narrated by Lec- turer From Far East.

Dr. Jenabe Hazel Mazandarani, philologist and educator of Persia, spoke last night at Shaffer chapel to a good sized audience composed about equally of colored and white residents of Butte. His address was delivered through an interpreter, Mr. Abdul Sohab, who is himself a lecturer of considerable ability.

Dr. Mazandarani spoke very enthusiastically of Persia before and after the war and explained in detail the 12 principles of the Bahai movement, which has for its purpose the uniting of the great religions of the world in one.

The visitor stated that the life of the Persian is as yet quite primitive, there being no great organized industries as in many more modern nations, and consequently there are no labor unions, strikes walkouts, or industrial controversies. The regeneration of Persia started about 75 years ago, when a young man calling himself "Bab," meaning "The Gate," brought a great reform into the religious life of the country. Bab, he said, was uneducated from the human standpoint, but he had made a great study of sciences and culture and paved the way for a great teacher who was to come. At this time, he declared thousands were killed through the narrowness and bigotry of less liberal elements, and Bab himself was martyred.

After Bab's death, a great spiritual teacher, Baha-O-Llah, who had an unusual mind and exceptional knowledge, brought a holy light into Persia, laying the foundation for the Bahai movement, which teaches that religion must be in accord with reason and the sciences of the ages.

"However, the government and the Mohammedans were very hostile to him and the Mohammed clergy caused his exile and took his property from him. Baha-O-Llah took refuge in Acca, Palestine, accompanied by his son, Abdul Bahai. The most remarkable part of his life, said the visitor, was the 24 years that he spent in prison in Acca. Thousands came to the prison to visit him and he never lost his sweetness of disposition nor sacrificed the beauty of his life.

Followers of the Bahai (meaning light) became an organization advocating his principles, chief among which was a mission to do away with religious prejudices and to unite all creeds in one. They held that all prejudices were due to misunderstanding, and that it is only misunderstanding which separates people into creeds. Principle No. 2, the speaker said, is that religious teachings must be in accord with science and reason, otherwise it is mere superstition. Principle No. 3 is that religion must advocate love and unity. Other principles are "equality of men and women," "all political, economic and social difficulties must be so adjusted that people may become as one family," "establishment of parliament of man and the creation of the United States of the World," "creation of an international auxiliary language as a bond of unity and life," "discouragement of discord, force and violence," and the belief that the past ages were ages of darkness and ignorance and that the present age is the age of knowledge and light and the time when the "wolf and the lamb shall lie side by side."

Today Dr. Mazandarani will address the theosophical society in the evening and will make a public address at Good Templar's hall, 215 North Main street, at 2 o'clock in the afternoon.

ANACONDA DEPARTMENT OF THE BUTTE MINER

THE BUTTE MINER

FRIDAY MORNING

JANUARY 7, 1921 PAGE 8

PERSIAN THEOLOGIAN DELIVERS ADDRESSES

Dr. Mazandarani of University
of Teheran Talks to
Women; Theosophists.

Anacanda Bureau.

Prof. Janabe Fazel Mazandarani, disciple of the Bahai movement and who holds a chair of philosophy in the Imperial university at Teheran, Persia, delivered two talks in Anacanda Thursday. His first address was delivered before the Woman's club in the Hearst free library at 3:30 o'clock in the afternoon. In the evening he spoke to a public gathering which was held under the auspices of the local Theosophical society. In view of the fact that he speaks no English, his remarks were interpreted by Achmed Schrab, former secretary to the Persian legation at Washington.

Dr. Mazandarani, who is one of the most prominent and active exponents of the Bahai faith, came to America eight months ago to lecture on the movement before clubs, universities and civic bodies. He is traveling at his own expense to spread the doctrine of universal brotherhood as defined by the original Bahai teachers, Baha O-Llah and Abdul Baha.

In his opening remarks the professor gave a descriptive sketch of the past and present life in Persia, where the movement he is interpreting, originated. It was the teachings of Baha, or Bab, that were responsible for the regeneration of this native land. Since its inception, 75 years ago, the movement has spread, and from an archaic position, Persia is again assuming a position of rank in the modern world.

According to Dr. Mazandarani, the fundamentals of the Bahai movement are centered about the original teachings and prophecies of Baha O-Llah and his successor, Abdul Baha, who now resides on Mount Carmel in Palestine. According to the latter the four great essentials necessary to make the prophecy a reality are: First, a universal religion; second, a universal language, binding all nations of the earth together; third, universal education, and fourth, the parliament of men.

The Bahai movement here termed is the spirit of this age and the essence of the highest ideals of all times. Some of its vital principles are the oneness of the world of humanity, independent investigation of the truth; the foundation of religion which must be in the cause of unity, and must be in accord with science and reason; the equality of the sexes, universal peace, the abolition of prejudice, all should partake of knowledge and education, solution of economic questions, a universal language and a universal tribunal.

The year, 1921, he considers will be later looked upon as one of the greatest in the history of the world, as it will mark the creations of the united nations of the earth. Great steps will be taken in the matter of disarmament, and huge sums heretofore contributed to the manufacture of munitions of warfare will be used for the protection of labor and the building of schools and other places of learning. The foundation for the unification of all creeds will begin to be realized, and religious prejudices, due to misunderstanding, will be overcome. All political, economic and social difficulties will be so adjusted that the people will become as one family.

"Our movement is progressing with astonishing rapidity, and now has many adherents in the United States and Canada," the professor said. "The second temple of our religion is now in the course of construction in Chicago. Nine is symbolic of the Bahai faith, and the new temple will have nine entrances, nine gardens and nine avenues," he concluded.

What has impressed him more than anything else during his tour of America is its great system of education. The fact that each village and remote community has its school appears wonderful to him, and the vocational features that are being followed he considers a move in the right direction.

THE BUTTE MINER

TUESDAY MORNING

JANUARY 3, 1922 PAGE 6

BAHAI LECTURER WILL TALK IN BUTTE TONIGHT

Louis G. Gregory, of Washington, D. C., one of the national lecturers of the Bahai movement, is giving a series of free lectures in the city in the interests of universal peace and brotherhood. His address this evening will be at the Theosophical room in the Leonard hotel, the subject is "The Seven Valleys." The lecture will be of interest to the public which is invited.

LECTURER TALKS ON POWER HOLY SPIRIT

Miss Martha Root Tells of
Teachings of Baha'o'llah as
Taught by His Son.

"The Power of the Holy Spirit" was the subject of an address delivered by Miss Martha L. Root, magazine and newspaper writer of Pittsburg, Pa., at the Knights of Pythias hall Sunday night. Miss Root is an ardent believer in the universal principles taught by Baha'o'llah of Palestine as the solvent for present-day world disturbances. She explained his teachings on the oneness of humanity; independent investigation of truth; the foundation of all



MISS MARTHA L. ROOT.

religions in one; universal education; universal peace; a universal auxiliary language; a new solution for the economic problem; the abolishing of all prejudices.

"The one infallible standard for education which never fails," Miss Root said, "was the help of the Holy Spirit. Through the help of the Holy Spirit certainty can be obtained. God's greatest gift to humanity is the bounty of the Holy Spirit. It is when, through meditation, the Holy Spirit shines on the intellect that the human spirit catches the reflection of the divine cosmic spirit and then, through comprehension, meditation and action, the greatest discoveries, arts and books may come into reality. Read the holy word, pray, meditate and then act," Miss Root said, "was the way to progress."

She gave the lines from the wisdom of the ages: "In the silence characters are formed and developed." "In the silence geniuses are born." "In the silence great truths shall come to thee and thy soul be blessed with the rich increase of celestial knowledge." "In the silence all perplexities shall vanish, all troubles cease, all sorrow assuaged." "Into the silence, then, and commune with self; find there thy mission in the world."

The lecturer spoke of the teachings of Baha'o'llah as taught by his son, Abdul Baha, who visited America in 1912. This son said there is a sign of God in every phenomena. The sign of the intellect is contemplation and the sign of contemplation is silence, because it is impossible for man to do two things at the same time—he cannot both speak and meditate. When one meditates he is speaking with his own spirit. In that state of mind he speaks to his own spirit and his spirit answers; the light breaks forth and the reality is revealed.

"Through the faculty of meditation," she said, "man attains to eternal life; through it he receives the breath of the Holy Spirit—the bestowal of the spirit is given in reflection and meditation. This faculty brings forth from the invisible plane the sciences and arts. Through the meditative faculty inventions are made possible, colossal undertakings are carried out; through it governments can run smoothly. Through this faculty man enters into the very kingdom of God."

Miss Root, who is en route to China, had delivered lectures in 13 cities, many of them before various Rotary, Kiwanis and Lyon's clubs. In China she will become correspondent for several newspapers and magazines.

Miss Root arrived in Butte Sunday afternoon from Helena, where she spoke before the Rotary club and four other organizations of the Capital city. She will remain in Butte three days, and Monday will talk on the subject, "Harmony of Science and Religion." At the Y. M. C. A. Tuesday she will deliver an address on "The League of Nations of the Future," and Wednesday she will speak on the subject, "Universal Principles of the Bahai Cause" at the Silver Bow church. Thursday evening Miss Root will be in Anaconda, where she will deliver an address on "The League of Nations of the Future."

MISS ROOT SPEAKS ON BAHAI MOVEMENT

Noted Lecturer Delivers Address in Silver Bow Church
Wednesday Evening.

"The Universal Principles of the Bahai Movement," was the subject on which Miss Martha L. Root, magazine and newspaper writer of Pittsburg, Pa., spoke last evening in Silver Bow church. In giving the story of the movement she said that in 1844 there arose in Shiraz, Persia, a young Persian who called himself the Bab or Gate. He exhorted the people to purity of life and announced to them the coming of a great one who would shortly bring a universal message to mankind.

"The priests feared," Miss Root said, "the loss of their power should such liberal ideas be spread, so they used their influence against the Bab, who was imprisoned and finally shot at Tabriz in 1850."

"Before the Bab's death there appeared a rich and powerful man, possessing great knowledge and wisdom. He proclaimed himself a believer in the new teachings and was later accepted as the one whom the Bab had told the people to receive, Baha'o'llah, for such was the name by which he was known also excited the animosity of the priests and he was imprisoned, exiled and finally sent with his family and some seventy followers to the worst of Turkish prisons at Acca, Palestine. Imprisonment in this distant place was accomplished through the co-operation of Turkey and Persia, according to their custom of religious affairs."

"The Bahai teaching," Miss Root said, "is conservative. Its aim is the brotherhood of man, but it is not in sympathy with the breaking down of all degrees and distinctions between men as taught by radical thinkers."

Miss Root spoke yesterday afternoon at the "Y" before club women of Butte on the subject, "Progress of Women in the Orient."

She will give a lecture tonight in Anaconda in Theosophical hall on "The New Viewpoint of Immortality." Saturday morning she leaves for Spokane.

PERSIAN PHILOSOPHER LECTURES FRIDAY AT THE CITY AUDITORIUM

PROF. MASANDARANI, FOUNDER OF THE BAHAI MOVEMENT
AND OF THE BAHAI FAITH

Prof. Masandarani, lecturer and philosopher of Persia, will lecture at the Auditorium Friday evening on the "Ideals of the New Age."

Prof. Masandarani came to America last May to travel extensively over the United States and Canada, studying the religious, educational and economic conditions of America. He has a course of 22 lectures on as many subjects of the "New Age." He has lectured to thousands of people at churches, synagogues, theaters, to clubs of business men and women and to various societies. Often, it is said, hundreds of people are turned away, not being able to obtain standing room at his lectures.

The lecture will be unique, in that the professor will wear a Persian costume, and speak in the Persian language. His words will be taken as spoken from his lips by his interpreter and immediately translated into English.

Receives Much Praise.

From St. Paul comes the report that "The professor spoke before the members of the Kiwanis club. The luncheon was in the Athletic club—a most wonderful building costing a million and a half—fitted in the most luxurious manner. Around the table sat more than 100 persons of the most prominent members of the industrial, banking and business institutions. Both in the beginning and the end of the talk every one got up and cheered the teacher from the seat. It was a never-to-be-forgotten scene. The lecture captured their imagination, hearts and minds."

At Minneapolis he spoke before 400 members of the Business Women's club. The meeting was in a large, beautiful restaurant and the speaker had to stand in the center of the hall, now facing one group and then another. He spoke on the "White Dawn of a New Age." "They were all beside themselves with joy," says the report, "and looked around Masandarani, thanking him for his brilliant spiritual talk. It was a triumph of the spirit."

Prof. Masandarani is promulgating the following 12 basic and universal principles that were given to the world over 60 years ago by Baha Ollah.

Twelve Basic Principles.

- "The Oneness of the world of humanity."
- "Independent investigation of truth."
- "The foundation of all religion is one."
- "Religion must be the cause of unity among mankind."
- "Religion must be in accord with science and reason."
- "The equality of men and women."
- "The abolition of all prejudice of whatever nature."
- "Universal peace."
- "All mankind should partake of knowledge and education."
- "The solution of the economic question."
- "A universal language."
- "A universal tribunal."

Mr. and Mrs. Albert C. Killius, former residents of this city, are here arranging for meetings and will meet Prof. Masandarani and party at 11:30 and bring them to this city Friday noon.

The lecture will be free and no collection will be taken. It was said, The public is invited to attend.

"NEW VIEWPOINT OF IMMORTALITY", THEME OF BAHAI LECTURE

"The New Viewpoint of Immortality" was the subject of a lecture here last night by Miss Martha L. Root, a magazine and newspaper writer of Pittsburg, who is en route to the Orient. She will lecture again this evening at 8 in Edison hall, her subject to be "The League of Nations of the Future," the theme she presented at yesterday's Rotary luncheon. The lecture will be free, and the public is invited.

Miss Root, last night, after commenting on the teachings of



Miss Root

Bahai O'llah, founder of the Bahai movement, quoted the appended:

"But concerning that which thou hast asked about the spirit and its everlastingness after its ascension, know that it will ascend at the time of its departure until it enter the presence of God in a form which, throughout all centuries, times, and throughout all circumstances and events of the world, will remain unchanged. It will be everlasting as the perpetuity of the kingdom of God; His sovereignty, His power and His might, and from it will appear the traces of God, His qualities, providences and favors. The hand of the divine Bounty will cause it to enter into a station that cannot be comprehended by expression, nor be explained by all the creatures of the existence.

"Blessing be upon the spirit who departed from the body purified from the doubts and superstitions of the nations. Verily, it moves in the atmosphere of God's desire, and enters into the supreme paradise.

"All the angels of the supreme paradise attend and surround it, and it will have fellowship with all the prophets of God and His saints, and speak with them and tell them what happened to it in the cause of God, the Lord of the Universe. If anyone could realize what hath been assigned for it in the kingdom of God, the Lord of the Throne and the Dust, he would immediately yearn with a great longing for the unmovable, exalted, holy station."

BHAI LECTURER SPEAKS AT UNITARIAN SUNDAY

Mr. Louis C. Gregory of Washington, D. C., a member of the board of lecturers of the Bahai movement in America, will speak at the Unitarian church next Sunday evening at 7:30 on the subject, "Harmony Between Religion and Science."

Mr. Gregory has been identified with the Bahai movement for about eight years, and has traveled through Egypt, Persia and other countries of the Orient, so that he has a broad fund of information upon which to draw in support of his subject.

The lecture is free and the general public is cordially invited.

FIRST ASSEMBLY IN HELENA

When one considers the spiritual energy that was unleashed in the city of Helena with the early traveling teachers already mentioned, it is possible to understand "the sweetness of thy melody.... attract(s) the hearts of all men.... the scattering angels of the Almighty shall scatter abroad the fragrance of the words uttered by his mouth, and shall cause the heart of every righteous man to throb." The soil had been ploughed for the time to come when Shoghi Effendi would give the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States and Canada their first teaching plan in 1937 that included the formation of Spiritual Assemblies in each of the capitol cities of the states and provinces.

The pieces were beginning to fall in place when Ruth and Charles Adams with a daughter (Ruth Virginia) and a son (Charles) moved to Helena in 1934. The Adams became Bahá'ís in Denver, Colorado, in 1918. Mr. Adams worked for Western Union and lived in an apartment where a Bahá'í family by the name of Blacek lived and received the message from them. Their daughter Ruth Virginia was born in Denver. Later, they moved to Phoenix, Los Angeles and to Helena. Living in Helena was Mrs. Frieda Bryan, whose daughter had married Fred Mortensen. She had enrolled as a Bahá'í on February 6, 1935, and that totaled three adults with the Adams' daughter being around 18. However, it was with the Guardian's first Seven Year Plan given in 1937 and the arrival of a pioneer, Lorrol O. Jackson, to Helena that we know meetings were advertised and held weekly at the YWCA with some interested seekers. Mrs. Edwina Powell, whose deceased husband had at one time been the Unitarian Minister in Helena, had become a Bahá'í and returned to visit friends and assisted in teaching.

From a newspaper clipping September 1, 1937, we read, *Mrs. Jackson will open a series of weekly meetings at the YWCA Tuesday evening, Sept. 14, and the public is invited to attend.... For the present Mrs. Jackson will hold meetings and conduct classes in Esperanto at the YWCA....* This article was one column wide and nearly 10" in length with the bold caption, "BAHÁ'Í FAITH TO BE INTRODUCED TO THIS STATE" and appeared in one of the daily publications, *The Montana Record-Herald*.

On Sunday, September 12, 1937, a large article with a 4" x 4 1/2" photo of the House of Worship in Wilmette was included that wrote about the temple and along side it was a separate article headed, "SERIES OF BAHÁ'Í MEETINGS START TUESDAY EVENING" with Mrs. Jackson speaking on "Security for a Failing World."

A handwritten record of this meeting by Charles Adams (C.Q.A.) describes the details: *The first Public Meeting*

of the Bahá'ís was held in the Y.W.C.A. at 8pm Sept 14, 1937. The subject was "Security for a Failing World." Mrs. Lorol O. Jackson was the speaker. Sent to Helena by the Teaching Committee of the N.S.A. Mrs. Jackson was introduced by Chas. Q. Adams of 221 Pine St. Opening music and The Benediction was played by Miss Davis.

Mrs. Jackson and myself had previously interviewed the Editor of the Helena Record Herald (i.e. Montana Record Herald) who received us cordially. We were introduced to the City Editor Mr. — by Milo McNeil. This paper gave the Cause several first class writeups actually using for his copy the exact words of Baha'u'llah. Mr. Casper (reporter) interviewed Mrs. Jackson and of course he was really responsible for the several writeups and a picture of the Temple.

Present at our first public meeting were a Mr. Burton (we feel that he might have been a reporter for the "Helena Independent" the other Helena paper who would give us no publicity - besides Mr. Burton- were Mrs. Bryan, Miss Davis, Mrs. Chas. Adams and son Charles N. Adams, Mrs. Bryan's daughter, myself, Mrs. Jackson and an elderly gentleman who did not stay thru the talk. Total - attendance "9".

It being my first experience as Chairman and I felt it very difficult to introduce the speaker to such a small number. Mrs. Jackson surely must have found it difficult to speak under such circumstances. Nevertheless we all did the best we could towards starting Bahá'í activities- I felt it was a "test" of our faith and suggested that we continue to advertise and meet each Tuesday until we had finished the 9 lectures.

It was just a little touching to know that all of us had held such high hopes for a good attendance. Mrs. Jackson and Mrs. Adams took great pains in preperation (sic) of the Speakers dress and flowers for her table and Miss Davis practised the music 3 days before so she could do a good job. It was also her first appearance before the public, poor kid. Chas. N. Adams (age 13) was official "attendance counter" supplied with a long pencil and a large book - when a stamp would have been sufficient - But it was a Beginning. CQA.

An undated news article titled, "BAHÁ'Í MEETING IS CONDUCTED AT 'Y'" must have been published on Wed. September 15, 1937, since it is a 5" article covering Mrs. Jackson's *First of a series of weekly meetings being conducted by Mrs. Lorrol Oliver Jackson, who came here from Seattle on a mission for the Bahá'í World order, was held last evening at the YWCA with a group of interested Helena citizens.*

September 16, 1937, the *Montana Record Herald* is headed "Bahá'í Books Are Given to Library" by Mrs. Jackson, representative of the Bahá'í Faith. *The books presented are The Bahá'í World, The Promise of All Ages, Baha'u'llah and the*

New Era, Foundation of World Unity, and Security for a Failing World.

A handwritten account by Charles Adams of the second meeting on Tuesday September 21, 1937 records: *Tuesday Sept. 21, 1935.* (Must mean 1937 as it is a continuation of this sequence of meetings) *Advertised Meeting — Y.W.C.A.*

No newspaper publicity since last Monday. 8pm time meeting scheduled to begin. It began to rain but we were on hand anyway. Mrs. Jackson, Miss Ruth Adams, Mrs. Chas. Adams and myself. No formalities this evening as it was after 8pm when the first person arrived. Attendance tonight 9 - Mrs. Mahan, Mrs. Brown, Mrs. Bryan, Mrs. Jackson, Mrs. C. Adams, Ruth V. Adams, Mrs. Allison, Mrs. Hubbard, Myself. Mrs. Hubbard has attended Bahá'í Meetings in other places and leaves (sic) tomorrow for Oklahoma. Mrs. Jackson's talk being informal covered many angles of the Cause - discussions were in order. A number of Questions were asked. Meeting closed and all were invited to meet again Thursday Sept. 30th. We feel this will be a better day for meeting because of so many other activities, Lodge and Card parties, etc. C. Adams.

September 24, 1937, news article announces, *that regular weekly lecture meetings have been changed from Tuesday evenings to Thursday evenings....*

The Adams family, Mrs. Frieda Bryan, Mrs. Jackson and Mrs. Powell were the core of Bahá'ís in Helena in the fall of 1937 when Mrs. Lorol Schopflocher of Canada arrived to give a public talk. Mrs. Schopflocher relayed to my Mother (Nellie Mereness), at the time she was living in Hilo, Hawaii during 1953-1957, that as the plane was landing in Helena she decided to get off and give a public talk.

My Mother and I attended this lecture as our first introduction to the Faith from a newspaper article. My Mother said she didn't understand what was said but she liked it. The following day she called on another friend, who was also searching, to tell her about it. Her friend, Helen Robinson, became spiritually ignited under the guidance of Mrs. Powell and she also attended the regular study classes held at the Adam's home. Mother and I attended these study classes, too.

What seems unusual to me now when I search through these early notes, is the interested individuals Mr. Adams says attended these YWCA meetings, were people I never met nor did they attend the study group composed of individuals who did enroll. From the time of Mrs. Schopflocher's talk, the interested adult seekers were: my Mother, Nellie Mereness, Helen Robinson, Mrs. Bryan's husband Charles, Mr. & Mrs. Buerner (later changed to Burner), Mr. Walters and Mr. and Mrs. Goldthorpe (the Goldthorpes dropped out). These were the individuals who signed their cards at Ridvan in 1938 with the idea of forming the first Spiritual Assembly.

However, the records of the Spiritual Assembly when reviewed, said they had been granted their request to remain

a group while they learned to function as an Assembly and the first Assembly was recognized as being formed at Ridvan 1939. By this time the pioneer, Lorrol Jackson, had moved on to Butte to assist in the formation of another, and the Adams' daughter, Virginia, who turned 21 in September 1938, was eligible to serve. Mr. Walters, an elderly man, moved out of Helena for a period of time and the members of the first Assembly were Ruth, Charles and Virginia Adams, Frieda and Charles Bryan, Beatrice and Gerhard Buerner, Nellie Mereness and Helen Robinson. A photo can be found in, *The Bahá'í World, Vol. VIII 1938-1940, p318.*

The story of this first Assembly's formation was written in a letter to the Helena Spiritual Assembly on the occasion of their 50th Anniversary in 1989 when they sought early information. These added notes have only brought to light that some who attended the YWCA meetings were not among the serious students.

By Naw Ruz of 1938, this community was thriving with their observance of feasts, holy days and children's classes. A news release titled, "NEW YEAR PROGRAM WILL BE MARKED BY LOCAL BAHÁ'Í GROUP" details a program of music, poems, Hidden Words and readings followed by a playlet, *The Fairies' Gift for the Feast of Nawruz.* The play was written by Mrs. Jackson and presented by the class of nine children and myself, a high school sophomore. The children's class was made up of children of contacts and those who were already considering themselves Bahá'ís. It was a joyous occasion to be remembered since the mothers had worked on costumes to make it grand. A photo captioned, "First Bahá'í Children's Class in Helena - 1938" was taken in a studio to add to this newspaper record. When Mrs. Jackson moved on to Butte she left the children's class for me to conduct. By 1940 the class photo changes showing new faces of children from Bahá'í families. (Pages of the early publicity from a scrapbook are shown.)

Individual stories have been written on my Mother's (Nellie Mereness) and my entrance into the Faith, followed by my father (Mason Mereness) in December of 1939; for Ruth and Jack Saunders in November 1939 and Mrs. Saunder's brother, Fred Bennett, in February 1940.

This community of early Bahá'ís as an assembly, anxiously pursued teaching efforts by renting a room in the Grandon Hotel, holding a men's study group on Sunday evenings, a women's study group Thursday afternoons, a regular study group for all every second and fourth Friday evening and made every afternoon from 2 to 5 and evenings from 7:30 to 9 available as a reading room. By September 1939, they had found a nicer room in the Horsky Building and made available a library for reading from 2 to 4:30 Monday, Wednesday and Fridays and from 8 to 10 Monday evenings for general discussions. Regular study lessons were held every Thursday evening, presenting a different subject each meeting.

A children's hour was held every Sunday morning at

10:00am; they carried out fireside circles in member's homes and the Assembly met twice a month. Publicity was obtained for all events since this was a time when newspapers were open to more detailed reporting of activities. The first youth group was meeting on Friday evenings with non-Bahá'í youth attending and, under the auspices of the Assembly, they held a symposium in January 1940 observing International Bahá'í Youth Day at the Y.W.C.A. on the subject of, "The Dawn of a New Day". A photo of this event includes two assembly members, a pre-youth and four non-Bahá'í youth. It is with the illustrations shown. One of the youth considered himself a Bahá'í (Fred Bennett) and enrolled soon following this event. It was regretful to me, as the one enrolled youth in the community, that an untimely case of chickenpox prevented my participation.

One of four models of the House of Worship in Wilmette was purchased and a photo of this Bahá'í Temple Model, exhibited in the Knox Flower Shop in 1940, is shown in *The Bahá'í World 1940-1944, Vol. IX, p. 794.*

The incorporation of the Helena Assembly was accomplished through the efforts of Mr. Charles Adams. The goal was completed on April 19, 1940, and a copy of this certificate is in, *The Bahá'í World 1940-44, Vol. IX, p.398.* Mr. Adams cleared the legal path for the first Bahá'í marriage on March 22, 1942 of his daughter, Virginia Ruth, to Ernest Jensen. Mr. Jensen later enrolled in Oregon. The first Bahá'í funeral was held for my father, Mason L. Mereness, who passed away on September 1, 1941, and was read by Mr. Adams.

Mr. and Mrs. Adams moved to the Portland area in 1943 and Mr. Adams passed away in 1945. Mrs. Adams remarried and again widowed, but remained in Tigard, OR, near her daughter, Virginia Jensen. We last visited with the

Jensens and Ruth in 1991 when Ruth Adams Wenstrom was 92. She passed away January 8, 1992, at the age of 93.

With the individual stories is one included by Mrs. Helen Robinson who became so ablaze, she encouraged her husband to move to Alaska to pioneer, and there he became a Bahá'í. Together they pioneered to Sweden, and she responded to a call at the beginning of the Ten Year Crusade given by The Guardian in 1953 to go to a virgin area by being asked to go to Sitka. For a time they were in Boise, Idaho; Peachland, B.C. Canada; and finally moved to Mountain Home, Arkansas, to be close to their son, where both are buried.

Jack and Ruth Saunders with three children enrolled in 1939 and were very active. Studying with them and enrolling shortly after was Ruth's brother, Fred Bennett. The Saunders moved to Great Falls in 1946 and Mother (Nellie Mereness) moved there in 1949 forming this first Assembly at Ridvan 1949.

The Great Falls Assembly records were lost, and the National Bahá'í Archives lists the year of recognition as 1949 from the LSA directories in the National Bahá'í Library. The Saunders later returned to Helena and then on to Billings and served on both Spiritual Assemblies. For several years they gave the greatest of service teaching and assisting with the annual Ridvan formations of the Assembly on the Northern Cheyenne Reservation. Their last place of service was in Victor, Montana, where they helped form the first Ravalli County Group.

A record of the enrollment of the early Bahá'ís that formed the Helena community gives the year of several individual's enrollment. Mr. Walters had moved to Wolf Creek and is not shown on the list but he was in Helena in 1937-38:

| <u>NAME</u> | <u>ENROLLED</u> | <u>MONTH</u> | <u>YEAR</u> |
|-----------------------|-----------------|-----------------------------|-------------|
| Adams, Charles Quincy | Denver, Colo. | | 1918 |
| Adams, Ruth E. | Denver, Colo | | 1918 |
| Adams, R. Virginia | Helena, Mont. | Sept. (21 st Br) | 1938* |
| Bennett, Fred J. | Helena, Mont. | Feb. | 1940 |
| Bryan, Charles | Helena, Mont. | | 1937 |
| Burner, Beatrice | Helena, Mont. | April | 1938 |
| Burner, Gerhard John | Helena, Mont. | Feb. | 1938 |
| Endress, Gladys L. | Helena, Mont. | March | 1942 |
| Mereness, Betty Jane | Helena, Mont. | Jan. (21 st Br.) | 1943* |
| Mereness, Nellie T. | Helena, Mont. | Oct. | 1937 |
| Mereness, Mason L. | Helena, Mont. | Dec. | 1939 |
| Pool, Gretchen F. | Helena, Mont. | Nov. | 1942 |
| Saunders, J.K. | Helena, Mont. | Nov. | 1939 |
| Saunders, Ruth M. | Helena, Mont. | Nov. | 1939 |

*Youth enrollments were not recorded until one applied on their 21st Birthday for adult membership in the community.

Travel teachers began to come to Helena and Butte by 1939. Mrs. Powell assisted in the teaching work for about three years carrying out public meetings, deepenings and writing radio talks she often asked me to read. Among those who traveled to lecture and spoke to the Lions Club was Beulah Storrs Lewis. She had lectured for Chautauqua, was known for her work with civic and women's clubs, was a dramatic interpreter as a graduate of the Manchester School of Fine Arts, England, and a dynamic exponent of the Bahá'í teachings. She made more than one visit to Montana and was always welcomed for the attention she focused on the teachings. See *Bahá'í World*, Vol. XI, 1946-50, p. 503 a Memorium for Mrs. Lewis.

Other visitors to be remembered were Charles Mason Remey and Reginald King, who were excellent speakers in the years prior to their defection. Millie Collins honored us with her visit with such a gentleness and love. Mrs. Sara E. Witt and Mrs. Florence H. Cox came from California for periods of time. Harlan Ober, Dr. Edris Rice-Wray and Mrs. Amelia Bowman, who was the aunt of Amelia Heaton in Great Falls, and Margery McCormick arrived to focus attention on the Faith. Soon, Bahá'ís from the Seattle area were coming more frequently, either as returning delegates from their area to the National Convention or as members of a Regional Teaching Committee, which included Montana.

It is interesting to note that often entire families entered the Faith and some times several in succession. The first Assembly and early community had families active in meetings and children's classes. My Mother quickly went to all her friends and four became Bahá'ís at a time when her family rejected the Message. Her father said he thought he could have understood it if he was younger and he is photographed with an early gathering of the friends in our back yard. Sometime in 1947 six individuals entered the Faith at once. By 1955, Mrs. Florence Mayberry had been appointed to the Auxiliary Board and began to visit Montana frequently, becoming the lifeblood in our growth.

The Helena Assembly for a number of years focused on joining a group of black people from Helena and Butte to observe, "Black History Week". One of the individuals was Mr. Ad Banks, who was possibly the first black Bahá'í to enroll in Montana. Mrs. Ruth Saunders had earlier participated with his wife in the Parent Teacher Association and was acquainted with them. It was as the receptionist in the office of a doctor, along with Tracy Blair, a lab technician, that Ad came into closer contact with them as Bahá'ís.

When Ad would arrive at 5am to clean the office, Tracy would come and read to him from *Bahá'u'llah and the New Era*. Ad began to attend firesides at the Saunders' home, and when he was ready to enroll, he asked another lady who was attending, Mrs. Ethel Williamson, if she would like to join with him. She recalled she didn't feel ready at the time. Ad enrolled in 1960 and she entered in the spring of 1961

or '62 and served as Secretary of the Assembly for many years, passing away on December 4, 1997 at the age of 92.

In 1966 the Assembly (as a goal of the current teaching plan) confirmed the legalization of Bahá'í marriages from the Attorney General's Office: 48-116. *By whom marriages may be solemnized. Marriage may be solemnized by either a Justice of the Supreme Court, Judge of the District Court, Justice of the Peace, priest, or minister of the gospel of any denomination, or the mayor of any city. Marriages may also be solemnized by religious societies according to the usage of such societies.*

In recording something of the background of the Helena Assembly, I would like to mention my brother, Richard Mereness, who was six years my junior but eager at an early age to be identified with being a Bahá'í.

When I was in my early teens, I would endeavor to take him to Sunday School while I attended the church services at the Episcopal Church. He soon began to slow down behind me and would get so far behind I would send him home. It seems he did not believe the Bible stories told in a literal way and this was his way of not participating any more. He was nine years old when we first learned of the Faith, but he accepted the story of The Bab and Bahá'u'llah and the principles. No children's books were written at that time, but we did hold a children's class, I recall, using stories from the *Dawnbreakers* for the lessons. We had seven to ten children most of the time.

Our father died suddenly when he was thirteen and left him with a great vacancy in his heart. By eighteen, he moved on to Army service following World War II with the occupation of Japan in August 1946 and was discharged in November 1947. He lived with us in Bozeman for a short period while attending college and then dropped out.

His spiritual growth had a jump start when he joined us to attend a summer session sponsored by the Bahá'ís of Canada in Banff, Alberta. Florence Mayberry was a newly appointed Auxiliary Board Member, and she was the featured speaker in 1954. Florence's memory for quoting from Bahá'u'llah's Writings, along with her explanations, had the effect upon him of being a rose unfolding. When he returned home he ordered the primary books for his library. In 1957 he moved to Alaska and being in this dynamic community, living and serving in their Center, then being elected to the Alaska National Spiritual Assembly increased his capacity to serve.

In 1960, he made his pilgrimage, and shortly after returning he answered the appeal for pioneers in Norway. It was while pioneering he met his future wife, Rigmor Quistgaard, from Copenhagen, Denmark, and they continued pioneering in Stavanger, Norway. Returning, he entered college again in 1962, graduating with his Masters Degree in 1966 and found an opening in the Helena High School at a time when that community needed members. Their home was a focal point for activity and his skill for being articulate was useful.

After twenty-four years, he retired in 1990, responded to an appeal to go to China and then moved to Russellville, Arkansas, where they helped form a group. Both are actively involved in teaching and Ruhi courses. In 2002, they responded to an appeal by the Austrian National Spiritual Assembly and were able to fill a pioneer goal in Travnik, Hertzegovina by providing a place for meetings and witnessed the enrollment of the first believer in that city.

MRS. LORROL JACKSON TO SPEAK NEXT WEEK

The second in a series of three talks on the great personages of the Baha'i world order will be presented next Thursday evening at the Y.W.C.A. by Mrs. Lorrol O. Jackson, whose subject will be "Baha'u'llah, the Glory of God."

Last Thursday evening Mrs. Jackson spoke on "The Bab," who arose in Persia in 1844, announcing himself as the forerunner of the great mediator, Baha'u'llah, who came to guide humanity to the thousandth year of peace.

"As you know the physical sun by its splendor, by its light and heat, so we know God, the spiritual sun, when he shines forth from these great mediators, by his attributes of perfection, by the beauty of his qualities and by the splendor of his light," Mrs. Jackson said.

MRS. LORROL JACKSON WILL SPEAK TONIGHT

Mrs. Lorrol O. Jackson, Baha'i teacher here, will give an address on "Baha'u'llah, the Glory of God," at 8 o'clock this evening at the Y.W.C.A.

Mrs. Jackson received word yesterday that MAJUNA ROOD, a niece of the late Elthu Rood, who was in Shanghai when the Sino-Japanese war broke out, is safe in Manila following some exciting experiences. She is a journalist who is traveling all over the world on a two-year mission for the Baha'i world order.

BAHA'I MEETING TO BE HELD THURSDAY

"The Baha'i Teaching on Evolution" will be the topic for consideration at the next regular meeting of the Helena unit of the Baha'i World Order at 8 o'clock this evening in the Y.W.C.A. parlors, announcement is made by Mrs. Lorrol O. Jackson, leader.

Last week the subject "The Baha'i Teachings on Life After Death" was presented and attracted much interest among those attending. The order uses a scientific and logical approach to the vital problems of life and the various phases of its teachings.

BAHA'I TEMPLE AT WILMETTE WILL BE COMPLETED IN 1944

The national assembly of the Baha'i order for the United States and Canada has awarded the contract for the exterior ornamentation of the gallery section of the Baha'i temple near Chicago, to the John J. Early Studio of Washington, D. C., at an estimated cost exceeding \$100,000, according to word received here by Mrs. Lorrol Jackson, leader of the Baha'i faith in Helena. The work is to be started immediately and will be completed in 18 or 20 months.

This contract is the third which the Bahais have entered into for temple construction since 1932, the two previous contracts having cost approximately \$225,000. When the gallery section is completed under the present contract only the main story and surrounding staircase remains to be finished. Bahais are confident that this exterior work and the landscaping will be completed by 1944, the 100th anniversary of the birth of the Baha'i faith in Shiraz, Persia.

Started in 1921

The temple of this universal religion is the first to be built in the western hemisphere. It is located on the shores of Lake Michigan at Wilmette, Ill., just north of Chicago. The foundation was laid in 1921, and the superstructure built at a cost of \$400,000, was completed and dedicated 19 years from the date on which 'Abdu'l-Baha, son of the founder of the faith, dedicated the grounds while on a tour of America in 1912. Total cost of the building to date has been \$889,000.

The Baha'i temple, designed by the late Louis J. Bourgeois, is a nonagon, or nine-sided structure, embodying architectural elements which have attracted widespread attention. It will eventually be the center of a group of auxiliary buildings dedicated to the service of mankind.

MRS. LORROL JACKSON SPEAKS THIS EVENING

Mrs. Lorrol O. Jackson, Helena Baha'i leader, will speak on "The Baha'i Solution of the Economic Problem" during the regular weekly meeting at 8 o'clock this evening at the Y.W.C.A.

Mrs. Jackson came here recently from Seattle to interest people in this vicinity in the Baha'i world order. She lectures each Thursday evening on some topic of current interest, speaking from the viewpoint of the Baha'i faith.

MRS. SCHOFFLOCHER, WORLD TRAVELER TO SPEAK HERE TONIGHT

Mrs. Lorol Schofflocher of Montreal, Canada, international representative of the Women's International Association of Aeronautics and the Baha'i World order, who has just completed a world tour during which she lectured in 27 countries, will speak this evening at 8 o'clock on "The Future We Face."

No admission will be charged for the lecture, which is open to the public and will be held on the mezzanine floor of the Pfister hotel.

Mrs. Schofflocher's address will deal with world conflicts looming at the present time, the statements of modern scientists about God as an intelligent creator, the spiritual future of mankind and the world as she found it on her recent tour.

The speaker is on an aerial tour of the United States and is carrying on her work as the representative of both aeronautics and the Baha'i faith, with which she has been identified for the past 12 years.

BAHA'I FAITH TO BE INTRODUCED TO THIS STATE

Religion of the East Teaches Unity of All Creeds.

Plans for the establishment in Montana of a community of the Baha'i faith, the organic aim of which is to promote the unity of mankind, were announced today by Mrs. Lorrol Oliver Jackson, a teacher, and organizer of the faith, who recently came here from Seattle.

Mrs. Jackson will open a series of weekly meetings at the Y. W. C. A. Tuesday evening, Sept. 14, and the public is invited to attend. As a universal language is one of the principles of the Baha'i faith, she will also organize weekly classes in Esperanto.

Mrs. Jackson expects to make her home in Helena. She is residing at 44 North Park avenue, apartment 4.

The 12 basic principles of the Baha'i teaching, given more than 60 years ago by Baha'u'llah, are the oneness of mankind, independent investigation of truth, the foundation of all religions is one, religion must be the cause of unity, religion must be in accord with science and reason, equality between men and women, prejudice of all kinds must be forgotten, universal peace, universal education, spiritual solution of economic problems, a universal language, and an international tribunal.

"The essential aim and purpose of the cause of Baha'u'llah," Mrs. Jackson said today, "has both spiritual and social significance. The primary cause of the world's division and strife is lack of spiritual knowledge and absence of faith in the one God of all mankind. Recognition of oneness, the only influence that can create enduring brotherhood on earth, depends on spiritual regeneration. The teachings of Baha'u'llah, like those of the Christ in His day, have power to transmute human nature, to purify hearts, and to illumine minds."

For the present Mrs. Jackson will hold meetings and conduct classes in Esperanto at the Y. W. C. A. She is working here under auspices of the National Spiritual assembly of the Baha'is of the United States and Canada, with secretariat at Evergreen Cabin, West Esglewood, N. J.

The Baha'is of the world, Mrs. Jackson said, are building a unique temple, or house of worship, on the shores of Lake Michigan at Wilmette, Ill., just north of Chicago. This beautiful structure is the first of its kind in the western hemisphere, and has attracted the attention of architects all over the world.

10/1/1937

Montana Record Herald

Baha'i Order to Meet on Thursday

"Baha'i Teachings on the Life After Death" is the subject of a lecture to be delivered by Mrs. Lorrol O. Jackson, Baha'i teacher, at her regular weekly meeting at 8 o'clock Thursday evening at the Y. M. C. A., she announced today.

These Baha'i meetings have been well attended, and considerable interest has been manifested in the movement here, Mrs. Jackson said. The lectures are free, and open to the public. They will be continued throughout the winter.

Mrs. Jackson came to Helena from Seattle not long ago in an effort to establish a colony of the Baha'i world order here.

10/14/1937

BAHA'I MEETING IS CONDUCTED AT "Y"

First of a series of weekly meetings being conducted by Mrs. Lorrol Oliver Jackson, who came here from Seattle on a mission for the Baha'i World order, was held last night at the Y. W. C. A. with a group of interested Helena citizens attending.

Mrs. Jackson discussed the subject, "Security for a Failing World," in which she showed how when civilization faces a crisis, danger can be avoided by application of the fundamental principles of the Baha'i faith, or the teachings of Baha'u'llah. In these teachings, according to Mrs. Jackson, "certain regulations are revealed that insure the welfare and well-being of all humanity. Just as the rich man enjoys his rest and his pleasures, the poor man must likewise have a home, be provided with sustenance, and not be in want. Until this is effected, happiness is impossible."

Mrs. Jackson explained that the Baha'i message is not an invitation to a new religion, nor a path to immortality, but a call to religious unity.

9/15/1937

Baha'i Books Are Given to Library

Gift of five books, all dealing with the Baha'i world order, has been made to the Helena public library by Mrs. Lorrol O. Jackson, representative of the Baha'i faith here.

The books are "The Baha'i World," "The Promise of All Ages," "Baha'u'llah and the New Era," "Foundation of World Unity," and "Security for a Failing World."

All but the last named are immediately available to book borrowers. The other will be on loan within a few days.

10/16/1937

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MRS. JACKSON WILL SPEAK ON THURSDAY

Announcement that regular weekly lecture meetings have been changed from Tuesday evenings to Thursday evenings was made today by Mrs. Lorrol O. Jackson, local representative of the Baha'i World order.

The meetings are held at the Y. W. C. A. at 8 o'clock, and are open to the public.

Mrs. Jackson's topic for next Thursday evening will be "The Bab, the Gate of the Spirit," the first of a series of three on great personages to whom revelations have been made.

Last Tuesday evening Mrs. Jackson spoke on "The Need of a Divine Educator" before a good attendance. In conformity with one of the 12 fundamental principles of the Baha'i faith, she is endeavoring to form classes in Esperanto here.

The principle referred to is that calling for a universal language as an auxiliary tongue for the world and a powerful force for unity, better understanding, and peace among all nations.

NEW YEAR PROGRAM WILL BE MARKED BY LOCAL BAHAI GROUP

Monday marks the beginning of the Baha'i New Year, and in Helena it will be observed by the Baha'i group with a program at 8 o'clock in the Y. M. C. A. ballroom, Mrs. Lorrol O. Jackson, local Baha'i representative, announces.

"It will be the 94th year since the Baha'i revelation was given to the world and a new dispensation began," Mrs. Jackson said. "The Baha'i children's class will entertain at this 'nawruz' (New Year) fete. They extend a cordial invitation to all interested to attend."

Mrs. Helen Robinson will act as chairman of the meeting, and the following program will be given:

Piano solo, by Miss Betty Mereness.

Poem, "The Creed of the World," by Beth Nelson.

"Hidden Words," by Donna Robinson and Lloyd Nelson.

Song, "Tell the Wondrous Story," by the children of the class.

Poem, "In a Garden," by Betty Nelson.

Selection, "To Live the Baha'i Life," by Doris Nelson.

Piano solo, by Joy Erickson.

Poem, "Softly His Voice Is Calling," by Beverly Bright.

Poem, "True Vision," by Florence Ryan, Patsy Erickson and Dick Mereness.

Reading, "The Glorious Youth," by Betty Mereness.

Playlet, "The Fairies' Gift for the Feast of Nawruz"; prologue and epilogue by Betty Mereness, playlet by the children.

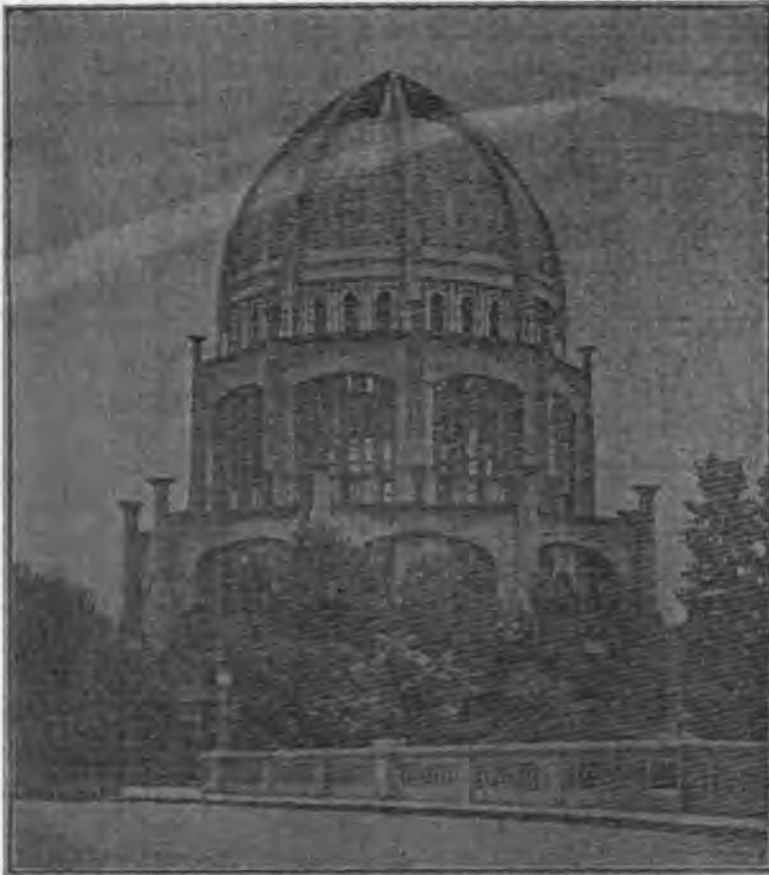
Refreshments will be served by members of the "royal family," the "queen" and her attendants.

10/24/1937

BAHA'I WORLD ORDER.

Mrs. Lorrol O. Jackson, teacher, 44 North Park avenue. Regular lecture meeting at the Y. W. C. A., each Tuesday evening at 8 o'clock. All are welcome.

BAHA'IS BUILD TEMPLE



This unique and symbolical house of worship, being built by the Baha'is of the world at Wilmette, Ill., has attracted thousands of visitors. The photo shows the structure, not yet finished, as it appears today.

First to be built in the western hemisphere, the unique temple being erected by the Baha'is of the world at Wilmette, Ill., just north of Chicago on the shores of Lake Michigan, has attracted thousands of visitors from all parts of the world since it was opened, according to Mrs. Lorrol Oliver Jackson, representative of the Baha'i faith here.

The late Louis Bourgeois, the architect, explained that the designs and details were inspired by the teachings of Baha'u'llah, founder of the Baha'i faith—the oneness of mankind and the unity of all religions.

The temple is a nine-sided structure with nine doors, nine ribs in the dome and, when finished, nine fountains and walks leading to it. All its dimensions and measurements are divisible by nine, symbolizing inclusion of the fundamental teachings of all of God's messengers to mankind, Mrs. Jackson said. Viewed from an airplane, the temple would appear like a great star, and when lighted at night all its nine points will gleam brilliantly.

"The essential purpose of the temple is to provide a meeting place for all who seek to worship God," Mrs. Jackson said. "As the Baha'i faith has no paid ministers or priests, the worshippers entering the temple will hear no sermon and take part in no ritual, but will be free to meditate and listen to readings from the text of the holy books."

In the future the temple will be surrounded by five or more accessory buildings, devoted to such activities as a school for science, a hospice, a hospital, and an asylum for orphans. These services will be dispensed to all, irrespective of race, color, nationality or creed.

"The Baha'i house of worship is the material manifestation of a great outpouring of spiritual forces and typifies, in symbolic form, the Baha'i teachings of unity of all religions and all mankind," Mrs. Jackson said. "As Baha'u'llah has said: 'Let not a man glory in this, that he loves his country, but rather let him glory in this, that he loves his kind.'"

SERIES OF BAHA'I MEETINGS START TUESDAY EVENING

Taking off her subject, "Security for a Failing World," Mrs. Lorrol Oliver Jackson, who recently came here from Seattle to work in the interests of the Baha'i movement, will speak Tuesday evening at 8 o'clock at the Y. W. C. A.

The meeting is the first of a series of weekly sessions at which Mrs. Jackson will explain the principles and teachings of Baha'u'llah and endeavor to form a colony of the faith here. Everyone is invited to attend.

"Security is needed," Mrs. Jackson said today in announcing Tuesday's meeting. "As one of Europe's pre-eminent thinkers has said: 'The world is passing through the greatest crisis in the history of civilization.' Another has written: 'We stand before either a world catastrophe, or perhaps before the dawn of a greater era of truth and wisdom. It is in such times that religions have perished and are born.'"

"Nearly a century ago Baha'u'llah said: 'Soon will the present-day order be rolled up, and a new one spread out in its stead.' And Michael Pupin, writing in Scribners, declared: 'The spiritual powers of the human heart are the only powers which are destined to banish and exterminate selfishness and greed, hatred and fear, from the soul of man.'"

"The teaching of Baha'u'llah are the source of spiritual education for humanity in its present stage of development *** destined to establish cooperation, amity and justice when the world has learned the bitterness of servitude to the principles of competition and struggle dominating the past."

In the United States and Canada, Mrs. Jackson said, there are 58 local Baha'i spiritual assemblies, and more than 20 local groups. The American National Spiritual assembly has been a legally incorporated body since 1927. It succeeded the body known as Baha'i Temple Unity, formed in 1909.

The first Public Meeting of the Bohais was held in the J.W.C.A. at 8pm Sept 14-1937

The subject was "Security for a Failing World"

Mrs Loral O. Jackson was the Speaker, sent to Helena by the Teaching Committee of the N.S.A. Mrs Jackson was introduced by Chas. Q. Adams of 221 Pine St. Opening music and the Benediction was played by Miss Davis.

Mrs Jackson and myself had previously interviewed the Editor of the Helena Record, Herald who received us cordially. We were introduced to the City Editor

Mr. by Milo McNeil. This paper gave the Cause several first class writeups actually writing for his copy the exact words of Boha Ullah. Mr Casper (Reporter) interviewed Mrs Jackson and of course he was really responsible for the general writeups and a picture of the Temple.

Present at our first public meeting were - a Mr Burton (we feel that he might have been a reporter for the "Helena Independent")

The other Helena paper who would give us no publicity - besides Mr Burton - were (Bohais)

Mrs Bryan - Miss Davis Mrs Chas Adams and son Charles N. Adams - Mrs Bryans daughter, myself - Mrs Jackson and an Elderly Godeman who did not stay thru the talk.

Total attendance "9"

It being my first experience as Chairman and I felt it very difficult to introduce the speaker to such a small number. Mrs Jackson purely must have found it difficult to speak under such circumstances. Nevertheless we are glad the best we could towards starting Bohai activities =

I felt it was a "test" of our faith and suggested that we continue to advertise and meet each Tuesday until we had finished the 9 lectures

It was just a little teaching to know that

all of us had held such high hopes for a

good attendance, Mrs Jackson & Mrs Adams took great pains in preparation of the speakers dress and flowers for her table and Mrs Davis practised the music 3

days before so she could do a good job - It was also her first appearance before the public, poor kid. Chas N Adams was offered "Attendance Counter" supplied with a long pencil and a large book - when a stamp would have been sufficient

But it was a disappointment -

Tuesday Sept 21-1938

Advertised meeting - Y. W. C. A.

No newspaper publicity since last Monday.

8pm time meeting scheduled to begin.

it began to rain but we were on hand anyway. Mrs Jackson, Mrs Ruth Adams, Mrs Chas Adams and myself.

No formalities this evening as it was after 8pm when the first person arrived.

Attendees tonight. 9 - Mrs Mahan Mrs Bowen

Mrs Bryan Mrs Jackson Mrs C Adams Ruth V Adams Mrs Allison, Mrs Hubbard, myself.

Mrs Hubbard has attended Bohai Meetings in other places and leaves tomorrow for Oklahoma.

Mrs Jackson's talk being informal covered many angles of the Cause - discussions were in order a number of questions were asked.

Meeting closed and all were invited to meet again Thursday Sept 30th we

feel this will be a better day for meeting because of so many other activities

Lodge & Card parties etc.

Adams

Charles Quincy Adams
221 Pine St -

Charles M. Bayard
507 - 6th Ave

Joe Walters 75 Pine St -

~~George Figgie~~

Helen Robinson
1045 No. Warren

Freda E. Bayard
507 - 6th Ave

Nellie Mereness.

1043. Breckinridge St.

Ruth S. Adams.
221 pine st.

Chas Adams

Wink Adams Tolson 1938



Helena Community photo taken in the Summer of 1939 in the Mereness backyard.

BACK ROW: Ruth Adams, Nellie Mereness, Mason (Ty) Mereness, Frieda Bryan, Charles, Bryan, Gerhard Burner, Beatrice Burner holding Boyd Lee, Charles Adams, Helen Robinson, Betty Mereness (youth), Charles Adams, Jr., Virginia Adams.

FRONT ROW: Donna Robinson, Dick Mereness, Glen Burner, Thomas Thompson (non Bahá'í visiting his daughter, Nellie Mereness), Ethel Mortensen with Max and Morris Burner, Joseph Walters, Ray Mortensen, Florence Bryan.

HELENA ASSEMBLY - 1939

FRONT: Nellie Mereness, Charles Adams, Ruth Adams
 ON ARMS: Virginia Adams, Helen Robinson
 BACK: Frieda Bryan, Charles Bryan, Gerhard Burner, Beatrice Burner



HELENA MONT.

1941-1942 - BAHAI ASSEMBLY



CH BRYAN | G Burner | Frieda Bryan | Nellie Mereness | Fred Burner | M L MERENESS | Ruth Adams | C Adams | JACK SANDERS

First Children's Class - 1938, Helena

BACK: Betty Mereness

MIDDLE: Nelson girl, *Dick Mereness,
Nelson girl, *Florence Bryan,
Nelson girl.

FRONT: Nelson boy, Erickson girl,
*Donna Robinson,
Erickson girl

(*Bahá'ís)



1941 Children's Class

BACK: Jack Saunders, Martha and
Jim Poole, Florence Bryan

FRONT: Donna Robinson, Glen Burner,
Dick Mereness



1942 Children's Class

BACK: Dick Mereness, Florence Bryan,
Jack Saunders, Betty Mereness.

FRONT: Max Burner, Barbara Saunders, Boyd Burner,
Jeanine Saunders, Morris and Glen Burner



First Bahá'í Marriage
 - March 22, 1942
 Earnest & Virginia (Adams) Jensen,
 Jack Saunders and Betty Mereness,
 Attendants



Youth Symposium January 1940 observing International Bahai Youth Day

*Virginia Adams, Shirley White, Jim Sparling, *Helen Robinson, Fred Bennett, Shirley Broderson,
 Florence Bryan (*LSA Members)



1991 - Virginia Adams Jensen
and daughter (Tigard, OR)



1991 - Fred Bennett and Ernest Jensen

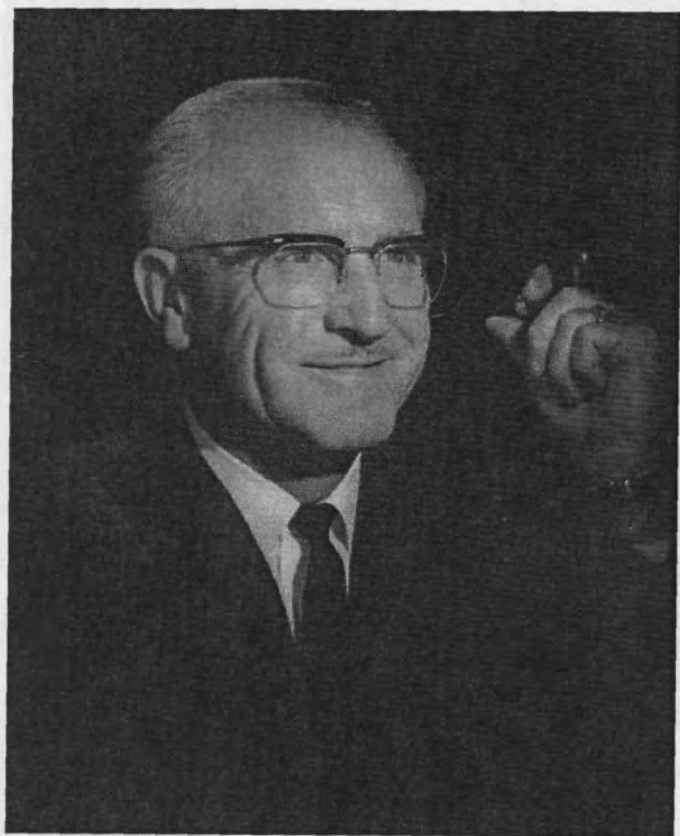


1991 - Ruth Adams Wenstrom Age 92

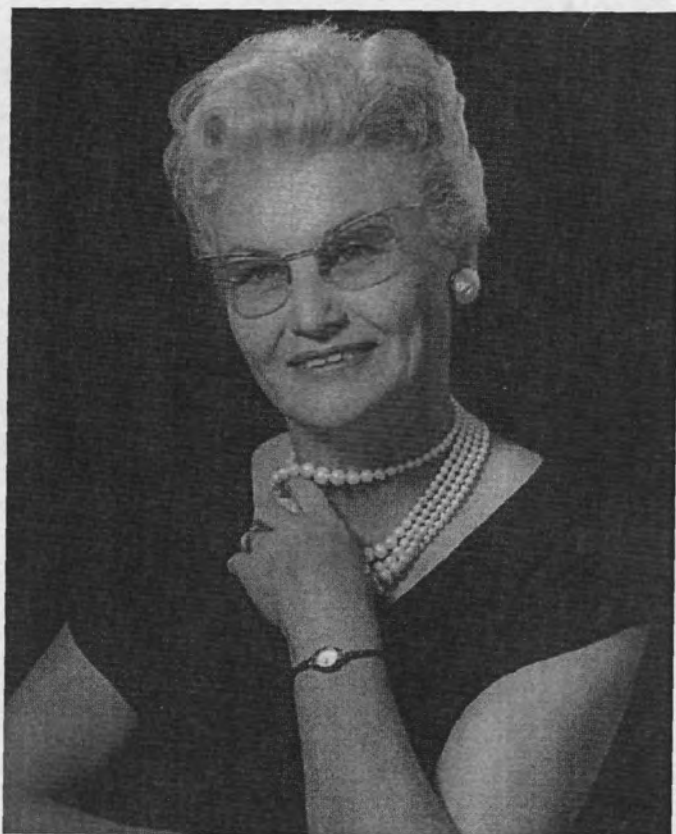
Pioneer to Helena for First Year Plan
Joyfully in His service Lorrol Jackson



Helen Robinson



Jack K. Saunders, Sr.



Ruth M. Saunders

Taken in Helena (1952?)

Rob Robinson, Helen Robinson,
Nellie Mereness,
Kathryn Franklin (who came to
Great Falls to teach for several months)
---unknown



Lorrol Jackson & Nellie Mereness
Leaving to pioneer in Hawaii



Helena Fireside:
Steve Sewell, Ruth Saunders, Walter James, Lyle James,
Ethel Williamson, Mrs. Banks, African Guest, Ad Banks

Helena 1947 Birth of Baha'u'llah Commemoration in home of Beatrice and Gerhard Buerner.

STANDING: Helen Kottas, Gladys Endress, Beatrice and Jerry Buerner, Nellie Mereness, Julia Harstad and daughter.

SEATED: Ivan Cottrill, (?), three Buerner boys, Gretchen Poole, Leo Kottas.

FRONT: Lyle James. Balance are Guests. Photo taken by Walter James, James Studio Photographer



Negro History Week - Feb. 1953 - Helena

BACK: Fred Bennett (2nd), Jack Sunders (4th), Walter James (6th).

MIDDLE: Ruth Saunders (2nd), Barbara Saunders (4th) white blouse ?

FRONT: Jeanine Saunders, Gwen Sullivan, Pamela Bennett (4th), Nellie Mereness (5th), Betty Bennett (8th).

NEGRO
HISTORY
WEEK

PROGRAM for NEGRO HISTORY WEEK

Prayer for All Nations
Baha'i Prayers Richard Mereness

Significance of Negro History Week
Chairman Ivan Cottrill

BIORGRAPHICAL SKETCHES

"Dr. Ralph Bunche" Matty Hayes

"Louis Gregory" Lyle James

"Mary McLeod Bethune" Corene Hernandez

Address Doctor George S. Morrell

Concluding Prayers Ad Banks

Musical Selections on piano *****
***** Robert Wand

COMMITTEES

| | |
|-------------------------|--------------------|
| Program Committee | Pictorial Displays |
| Ivan Cottrill, Chairman | Mrs. Howard |
| Jeanine Saunders | Mr. Howard |
| Robert Gagnon | |
| Gwen Sullivan | |
| Dick Mereness | |
| Lyle James | |

| | |
|---------------------|--------------------|
| Music Arrangements. | Refreshments. |
| Robert Howard | Mrs. Ad Banks |
| Walter James | Mrs. Jack Saunders |



1947 Helena Bahá'í Community:

STANDING: Walter James, Lyle James, Leo Kottas, Helen Kottas, Ivan Cottrill, Norma. Lewis (?)

SEATED: Julia Harstad, ?, Beatrice Buerner, Gerhard Buerner (later Burner), Gladys Endress, Nellie Mereness Gretchen Poole

Vicky CURTIS

BUTTE

Butte records reveal no known believers until 1917 with the enrollment of Mrs. Elizabeth Symons. Her husband is also known to be a Bahá'í but records at the National Bahá'í Center cannot confirm a date for either of them. The City was exposed to the Faith from the various early traveling teachers. It is believed that Mr. and Mrs. Killius were responsible, and the personal statement from Mrs. Killius' Bahá'í Historical Record indicates they formed groups in Butte and Helena.

A letter from Paul Stolpe received in 1983, that has unclear print, does mention that he met Mr. Edvard Olson in Sweden, and that Mr. Olson said he was a miner in "Philipsbury (Philipsburg), Helena, Montana, when he met Peter" (Maus). Another undated copy of a page from a *Star of the West* lists Mr. Maus in Philipsburg. It is Mr. Maus and Mr. Olson who made the arrangements for Jenabe Fazel Mazindarani in Billings and Red Lodge in 1921. Mr. Albert Killius is shown as being a delegate from Helena (Montana) in 1919 and his wife as the alternate. With Butte the copper mining center of the state and Philipsburg, Anaconda and Helena nearby with related mining activity, it is probable that this City benefited from their visits and efforts.

A picture of the background of Mrs. Symons and her husband and the early teaching efforts can be gleaned from the attached letter in the handwriting of Mrs. Betty Cutts Nelson, dated February 15, 1952. The letter was written in response to an inquiry to her made by Mr. George D. Miller, who retired in April 1948 to homefront pioneer in Butte. Betty Nelson (as I knew her) was from Austria and wrote in the manner she spoke. She was a short, stocky woman, totally devoted to Baha'u'llah, full of love for whoever came into her home or presence. She worked as a domestic for the head of the Butte Water Co.

Betty describes Elizabeth Symons, "as a tall, stately looking woman, with auburn hair" who as a young woman was a schoolteacher. She identifies her acceptance of the Faith as 1917 from traveling teachers, Mr. and Mrs. "Gillies", who she thought were the first to bring the Bahá'í Faith to Butte. It seems likely that "Gillies" is phonetic for Mr. and Mrs. Killius. Mrs. Symons had many friends to whom she conveyed the Faith and held many meetings in her home with as many as 28 attending the meeting with Mr. and Mrs. Howard McNutt when they passed through in 1924. A 1948 letter from Louis Gregory mentions Mr. and Mrs. Symons.

From City Directories found for 1916, Mrs. Symons lived at 830 Kenwood (Walkerville); in 1917 at 42 W. Center (Centerville); in 1923, she is shown as a widow living at 41

W. Center (Centerville). In 1925 she is shown at 33 W. Center. None of these houses existed when we tried to find them for a photograph.

She corresponded with the Greatest Holy Leaf as some early believers did. Mrs. Nelson's letter says Mrs. Symons died of cancer in July 1928, but a Directory for 1928 says she died July 25, 1927 at the age of 60. An undated newspaper clipping in the archives mentions her body was cremated in Spokane. Her sister, Louise, gave Betty Nelson some of her books but seems to have burned letters and books, which would have been precious records.

While living in Bozeman, we attended the 1950 "Summer Session" which Butte hosted at Mrs. Nelson's home at 1708 Texas Avenue and met Mrs. Armeta Duncan for the first time. She was an almost constant attendee at Bahá'í meetings from the time we moved to Butte in September 1950 and mentioned the large meetings she attended in the Symons home.

A more detailed account of Mrs. Duncan is written in the *Butte's Heritage Cookbook*, p.4, from which I have gleaned a few facts about her. Mrs. Duncan's family were descendants of slaves, and she arrived in Butte in 1905 as a companion to a wealthy lady, married a man from Celon (now Sri Lanka), who was a Dr. of Chiropractic, raised four children and was known for her association with the Montana Federation of Negro Women's Clubs. She devoted her life to the community, endearing herself to both white and black.

The Negroes supported two churches: the Baptist on Galena and Idaho and the Methodist on Idaho and Platinum. Whenever doings at the Church involved the children, Mrs. Duncan would get out her baby buggy and fill it with hot casseroles she had prepared. She would always throw in one or two lumps of coal so the children would be sure to be warm. These churches were open for meetings with Louis Gregory during his visit. Louis Gregory stayed in the home of Dr. and Mrs. Duncan since hotels did not accommodate other races. Dr. Duncan was a Theosophist but most of the early Bahá'ís spoke at their meetings. Her name is listed with the 1932 group, probably because she attended meetings but she never enrolled.

Looking at the persistent efforts of Mr. and Mrs. Albert Killius and Mrs. Mary Richardson, who settled into an area to help form a nucleus, we can see that once an enrollment occurred, there was a "spot" where other well known teachers could be directed. Mrs. Symon's home was the focal point in Butte and excellent activity was sustained with the visits of Jenabe Fazel, Louis Gregory, Martha Root,

Mr. and Mrs. Howard MacNutt and Mrs. Orcella Rexford Ford. Two letters from Martha Root indicate follow up to her visits. Betty Cutts Nelson, was married to Mr. Cutts at the time she enrolled, probably in 1923. An undated letter, not in her handwriting, must have been dictated to an individual to write a, "Sketch of my life" in which she speaks of where she was born and how she learned of the Faith. At the writing of the letter in 1935, she was living in Sand Springs, Montana, and married to Mr. Nelson. She relays that she, "*met Mrs. Mary Richardson in 1923 and learned of the Cause from her*".

A much later letter written in 1952 has her recalling becoming a believer in 1922. I think the memory written in the earlier letter might be the more correct year. One of her letters mentions a Mrs. Bullet and a Krist Carlson as being Bahá'ís in the Butte community while Mrs. Symons was here.

Another family that was firm and a part of Butte history is that of Matthew and Evalina Caldwell along with their five children. The Caldwells were living in Helena at the time Martha Root traveled through. The story as told to me by their son, Jenabe, was that a friend wanted Mrs. Caldwell to attend a lecture but Mrs. Caldwell resisted because she had children to care for and her husband worked evenings. It was only to satisfy her friend that she agreed to attend. Jenabe said his Mother never mentioned the speaker's name but she came home describing to her husband about a plain woman who spoke heavenly and said Christ had returned.

It was his understanding they wrote The Greatest Holy Leaf of their acceptance of Baha'u'llah, but the children never found letters that would indicate this. Jenabe believed his Mother had an Indian background (Beaver Tribe), but this was a time when one hid this background and she never spoke of it. She was born in a sod house in Aurora County, South Dakota, Sioux Indian country. Her schooling was through the 3rd grade and she possibly is the first Native believer in Montana.

Nothing establishes when the Caldwells moved to Butte. A March 1926 letter from the Bahá'í Publishing Company is addressed to Mrs. Caldwell in Cooke (City), Montana. Mrs. Symons writes them in Cooke (City) on June 23, 1926, and mentions, "*There are only three confirmed believers here, so we are not so very active. Will be delighted to have you come and call on us when you come to Butte next month.*" Mrs. Symons also writes in the same letter, "*We had a short visit from Mr. Albert Vail on his return trip from San Francisco last week.*"

On September 21, 1926, Ida A. Finch addresses a letter to the Butte group. "*Dear Friends*" and writes she was staying with Mrs. Latimer in Portland who, "*keeps me quite busy talking and teaching. You ought to have someone come and stay with you long enough to attain at least 9 members so that you would be entitled to a vote in the conventions.*" She

continues, "*You probably know Mrs. Cutts, as she is an active worker alive with the spirit. You ought to be able to attract to you many souls. Let us hope it may be so.*"

Thus, it would seem that by September 1926, the Caldwell family moved to Butte from Cooke City. This would make Butte a community of five Bahá'ís with Mr. and Mrs. Symons, Betty Cutts and Mr. and Mrs. Caldwell. Both Mr. and Mrs. Caldwell were strong believers. They are buried in the Mountain View Cemetery in Butte. Jenabe, Evelyn and Betty (Caldwell) Penner were the only children to remain Bahá'ís. An older sister, Irene, and her husband Richard Hoffman were in the community when we moved here in 1950, but years later withdrew.

What does unfold is the loving contact that is made with the Caldwells and Betty Cutts in letters with news of Bahá'í activity and much encouragement from Ida A. Finch in Seattle, Mrs. Latimer in Portland and even a gift of literature was sent from Mrs. Richardson. Mrs. Latimer sees that another individual mails them the marriage service of Charles Reed Bishop and Helen Pilkington. These letters also give this group the larger picture of what is happening on a national level and how Bahá'ís are responding to the appeals of the National Spiritual Assembly to raise money for the Mashriqu'l-Adhkar. They were receiving the *Star of the West* with offers of assistance from Pauline A. Hannen who was in the Business Office for that publication. Auntie Victoria Bedikian shared her love with so many isolated believers with her messages of verses from the Writings and Lessons for Children and Youth, always decorated with roses. She even included a decorated envelope with tea enclosed to be shared at Feast.

Correspondence in 1928 focuses on the National Spiritual Assembly's appeals for support for the Unified Plan of Action, calling on all the believers to sacrifice to raise the necessary funds needed to resume construction on the House of Worship. The Spiritual Assembly of Kenosha, Wisconsin sends Naw Ruz Greetings and adds their emphasis for this great need to be met.

A letter from the New York Bahá'í Assembly (December 10, 1929) refers to the recent letter from Shoghi Effendi asking for the Temple Fund to reach the goal of \$400,000 and speaks of the "precious remnant of the Mercy of Baha'u'llah, the Greatest Holy Leaf who with the world growing dim before her sight patiently awaits like a delicate and exquisite bird to take her eternal flight from us to the realm of everlasting glory and dominion". They propose a, "united and collective sacrifice for her sake, who is indeed the emblem of sacrifice in our midst" in meeting this goal, "with absolute faith, devoted love, and divine self abnegation, crown her life with the fulfillment of her utmost hope and longing." The picture in letters is shown as a count down with about \$80,000 needed in the next three weeks.

The National Treasurer requested all Assemblies throughout America to devote the Feast on New Year's Eve

to "our supreme purpose". Even into January (1930) Fred Mortensen writes from Chicago giving encouragement and mentioning that the Chicago Assembly had their Feast in the "Loop" and raised \$2,000 at the December 31st Feast. A letter from Asbury Park Bahá'í Group in Asbury Park, New Jersey, sends a message out on December 31, 1929, asking, "with prayers, and renewed enthusiasm, go forth to help in the greatest task of our time, the construction of our beloved Temple at Wilmette...."

As a last minute appeal, the Bahá'í Temple Committee of Wilmette signed by Louis Bourgeois, Chairman, Corinne True, Edward Struven and Zia Bagdadi tried to bring the friends to a clear understanding of the challenge in completing the goal so that the preparations needed for beginning construction will not be delayed during the good weather needed for construction.

They report that just \$20,000 is now the final amount to be achieved and relay many of the sacrifices from Bahá'ís around the world that have helped in bringing the goal so near to completion. This letter suggests that all the body of believers should meet to pray that the remaining amount may be raised at once as failure would, "thus become the cause of utter disappointment to the blessed hearts of the Guardian and the Greatest Holy Leaf..."

The good news comes in a letter probably from the Bahá'í Temple Committee since it is signed "Zia." It relays that building operations were resumed for the completion of the Bahá'í Temple on September 17, 1930. The dedication for the continuing of the work was held with the anniversary of the Birth of the Bab. Receipts to the Bahá'í Fund reflect that the Butte community was among the lower wage population whose contributions, taken from income needed for raising a family, had to be a sacrifice.

Possibly the beginning of a "habit" many Bahá'ís took upon themselves stemmed from a letter from the National Teaching Committee dated January 29, 1930. This mentions that in correspondence from the Guardian just received by an American believer Shoghi Effendi was not well. He had written the following phrase: "though not yet fully recovered from my severe illness..." The National Teaching Committee letter continues "it will surely come with a shock to every believer to hear that Shoghi Effendi has been so seriously ill, and that perhaps through his wish it was not known." The letter quotes words of 'Abdu'l-Baha, "It is incumbent upon you to take the greatest care of Shoghi Effendi..."

The letter from the National Teaching Committee signed by May Maxwell as Secretary, goes on to say, *It has been suggested by some members of the National Teaching Committee that the friends throughout America and Canada unite in daily prayer at the noon hour and at nine at night during the Navel Conference now in process in London, a Conference on the results of which may hang such portentous events of the future.* Without reference to a specific prayer, it is probably the one Shoghi Effendi invited the friends to

say on his behalf. This prayer is published in *Bahá'í Administration*, p.51 (1945 edition) and included in a letter dated November 14, 1923 from Shoghi Effendi addressed *To the beloved of the Lord and the handmaids of the Merciful throughout America, care of the members of the American National Spiritual Assembly.*

I, for my part, as I look back to the unfortunate circumstances of ill-health and physical exhaustion that have attended the opening years of my career of service to the Cause, feel hardly gratified, and would be truly despondent but for the sustaining memory and inspiring example of the diligent and ceaseless efforts which my fellow-workers the world over have displayed during these two trying years in the service of the Cause.

I cherish the hope that, from now on, the Beloved may bestow upon me all the strength and vigor that will enable me to pursue over a long and unbroken period of strenuous labor the supreme task of achieving, in collaboration with the friends in every land, the speedy triumph of the Cause of Bahá'u'llah. This is the prayer I earnestly request all my fellow-brethren and sisters in the Faith to offer on my behalf.

A letter from Ida Finch (Seattle) dated June 3, 1931, to Mrs. Harriet Boulet seems to be written to a newer member of the Butte Community. In writing to Mrs. Boulet, Mrs. Finch mentions the joyful hospitality of Mrs. Betty (Cutts) Nelson, saying, *We were so surprised to see in the lunch bag such surprising things as glass dishes, spoons, towel, and last but not least, the abundance of food prepared for us with real Bahá'í love and thoughtful consideration.* This is such a true picture of this woman's large sharing heart.

When the letter from the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States and Canada on July 18, 1932, relayed the message of the Guardian's cablegram giving the grievous news of the passing of the Greatest Holy Leaf, they included a news release and asked Assemblies and Groups, *to hold Memorial gatherings on Sunday, July 24th and take steps to convey to Shoghi Effendi in this hour of profoundest grief some suitable expression of their sorrowful loss and renewed consecration to the Faith of Bahá'u'llah.* It is Mrs. Nelson who writes the letter to Shoghi Effendi on behalf of the Bahá'í Group and while her written words may be phonetic, her heart speaks out for this small group in Butte, as the following unedited letter:

ALLAHO ABHA
Bahá'í Group
Butte Mont U.S.A.
July 26. 932(sic)

To Aur Beloved Guardian and the Holy Houshold:

With Great sorrow and Regret we expres our Simpathy to aur Beloved ones of aur Great loos of aur Beloved Bahiyyih Khanum. the news saddaned us greatly. we miss her and Oh has much more you miss her over there. Aur Beloved ones I(?) cannot Describe the great loos she is to the Bahais

True and the world. But the Great Consolation we have that she is with us fills our hearth with Divine joy. When she appeared and said, I am with you She was not of this World and yet she lived in it and went through untold sufferings. She was indeed glad to live in this World she was eagerly waiting for that happy Moment of Unification of our Lord Bahá'u'lláh in the Supreme Kingdoms of Abhá. But we must carry on with the Great Task that is put before us and She The Bahiyih Khanum will True her will be stronger with the Renewed Comformation of Exalted Bahá'í Kingdom so great we should be that all of the None Bahá'ís should wander and ask themselves What is this so Great lets see and investigate Dearest Brother Shoghi and the whole Family our Humble Prayers are with you and Pray to our Lord to Except our prayers to be worthy to be excepted in the most high Divine Threshold of oneness to make us one in hearth and spirit that when we finish the high work that is put before us be worthy to meet the one that we just lost among our midst. Dear and Most Beloved in His service and our hearth Brother Shoghi our little and Humble Group of Believers are in number six of us Confirmed Believers But we expect soon increase in our number as they are 7 to 8 Souls that are attracted to the Cause we have 4 children that are studying the Teachings which they will make firm and beautiful workers in Future for the Cause we were unable to form the Assembly yet but we are in Great hopes that we will be able to do it soon year ago a Family got converted in the Cause 5 in all but they moved away and another Friend also got in to the Cause But He also left town our Assembly seemingly do not grow but the work going on just the same and we will when the time comes we will have a nice Assembly and Also Dear Brother and Co Worker in His Cause our Beloved Guardian we are sending you the clippings of the paper The announcement of our Memorial Services Held in our Group for our Beloved Greatest Holy Leaf as Recuastead it is not as it should be Printed But that's Best we could do under Present Circumstances Humble yours in His Service signed Mrs. William Nelson

Mrs. Caldwell must have been listed as the Secretary of this group and through his assistant Shoghi Effendi replied:

*The Bahá'ís of Butte,
c/o Mrs. Evalena Caldwell,
P.O. B. 247
Butte, Montana, U.S.A.*

Beloved Friends in the Cause,

Your beautiful message of July 26th was received and greatly relieved the Guardian from the burden of grief that weighs so heavily upon his tender heart. His loss is, indeed, immense. But his joy is also great. For the friends have demonstrated their undying attachment to One who, throughout the tumultuous stages of her precious life, exemplified in the most befitting manner, the teachings and the principles of the

Faith.

May the memory of her life comfort our weary souls and inspire us with renewed faith and hope.

*With Bahá'í greetings,
(Signed H. Rabbani)*

In the handwriting of the Guardian was written:

Dear co-workers: I was touched by your message coming from such a distant spot, and fragrant with the perfume of a splendid devotion to God's sacred Cause. I will, most assuredly, remember you in my prayers, that your highest hopes may be realized, and that your lives may increasingly reflect the glory of the Bahá'í Revelation.

*Your true brother,
Shoghi*

As indicated in the letter to Shoghi Effendi at the time of the passing of The Greatest Holy Leaf, there were six believers in Butte. When the pioneer to Helena, Lorrol Jackson, helped bring about the first Spiritual Assembly she wrote the Butte friends on May 12, 1938, *There are eleven believers in all here now and when they are firmly fixed upon a solid foundation of the Teachings then I shall be ready to go somewhere else—whether it will be to Butte or not, I do not yet know, wherever the Teaching Committee see fit to send me, I shall go and do my feeble best.*

There were sufficient numbers and activity to sustain the Helena community and carry it forward until its formal recognition in 1939. The National Teaching Committee must have confirmed her move to Butte, and this was finally the "individual" much correspondence always spoke of as the kind of assistance Butte needed. There were two families from Helena (Frieda and Charles Bryan and Ruth and Jack Saunders) who came to Butte to assist with firesides and on occasion each community invites the other to attend a gathering or a celebration. A note of a meeting in the home of Mrs. A. R. McClouds (sic) (Dorothy McLeod's Mother) says Mr. and Mrs. Jack K. Saunders from Helena discussed, *The New Age and Universal Education* with 24 guests attending. Later, a fireside in the home of Mrs. R. A. Miller with Mr. and Mrs. Charles Bryan speaking on Universal Peace had 10 guests.

Among the travel teachers assisting this community were Lorol Schopflocher stopping in May 1934, Beulah Lewis November 1940, Sara Witt came several times from Santa Monica, but it seems that Orcella Rexford lectured in December 1942 on health and numerology and afterward spoke to interested individuals about the Faith. Both Alma Higgins and Alta Krueger followed up with Alta Krueger staying a month giving three lectures at the Finlen Hotel and five class lessons at the Montana Power auditorium. See *Bahá'í World*,

Vol. XI, p 495 for Orcella Rexford.

Mason Remey stopped in October 1944, and Harlan

Ober in 1945. It possibly was when Orcella Rexford combined her health lectures with a follow-up meeting on the Bahá'í Faith that these lectures attracted additional believers so that the formation of an Assembly could take place at Ridvan 1944.

Those members of the first Spiritual Assembly were: Matthew H Caldwell (Chairman), Anna Dotti (later Miller-Vice-Chairman), Mrs. L. C. Foltz (Secretary), Dorothy L. McLeod (later Brodshaug-Treasurer), Mrs. Evalena Caldwell, Mrs. Richard G. Hoffman (Irene-Librarian), Betty Nelson, Miss Ethel Works and Joan Palmer. No photo has been found of this first assembly.

A series of pioneers has enabled Butte to keep a Spiritual Assembly status with loss of the assembly just once. It is a predominately Catholic town. For many years copper mining was the main industry, attracting a large ethnic mixture from Europe in the early 1900's with work available in the underground mines.

Even during World War II, servicemen could be discharged in order to work in the mines. The City was sectioned by ethnic groups, with their own neighborhood Catholic Church. It supported the Serbian Orthodox, Greek Orthodox, Jewish Synagogue and two black churches, as well as the various denominations of Protestant Christianity. This changed in 1957 when the underground mines were closed and an open pit form of mining began, forcing people to move to an area known as "the Flats". It also broke up some ethnic neighborhoods, although many had intermarried and sought new areas to live in.

Changes in the Bahá'í membership appeared the year after the Assembly formation, with some leaving the Faith. There is not a record of when the pioneer Mrs. Jackson left Butte, but she does not seem to be here in 1945. Mrs. Joan Palmer was the Secretary in 1945 and the Assembly sought assistance to reinforce their ranks. Jack and Ethel McAllaster arrived in Butte in 1946 following his release from service in World War II. Ethel McAllaster is the only child of John Wilcott that became a Bahá'í. She has served in U.S. communities, South America and Ponce, Puerto Rico, where she currently lives (2004) and most likely will stay the balance of her life.

Mr. George D. Miller of Washington, D.C. retired in 1948 when the Guardian called for individuals to leave certain named large cities, and arrived in Butte in time to reinforce the Assembly at Ridvan. A separate story is written about this very dedicated man. In 1950, the McAllaster's moved to Great Falls and again the Assembly was in jeopardy. We were living in Bozeman during the years my husband was attending Montana State College and felt the job opening and our arrival in Butte in September of 1950, was because Baha'u'llah placed us here.

There were not many jobs available in his teaching field, but an opening came when another teacher was called to serve in the Navy Reserves and Fred's application was on

file. The Superintendent, formerly from Helena, only served one year in Butte, and he endeavored to get outsiders into the Butte school system. In Fred's application he did associate the name of Mrs. Saunders as being a sister and someone he had known in the Helena schools.

The following school year a vacancy was available but the School Board was divided in voting to rehire this "outsider" to fill the position. We had our first child in May 1951 and it was necessary to have a job in order to stay. The Assembly responded to our request for prayers and gathered to pray for our situation. The next morning the paper said the Chairman of the School Board had resigned and another member had fallen down the elevator shaft and broken his leg. These were the members opposing Fred's rehiring. We have taken seriously our responsibility to help keep the Assembly formed and while others have had to leave due to employment, we have felt the positive effects of staying in a community and raising our family here. We reached out to find a way to pioneer in 1953 at the beginning of the World Crusade but were asked by the National Teaching Committee to remain in Butte because the Assembly would be jeopardized.

Harold and Ethel Hunt came from Washington, D. C. Harold arrived about 1949 and Ethel in the early 1950's to be a part of the strengthening. Both were strong teachers and long time members of the Washington, D.C. community. Harold died in July 1961 and Ethel in 1976. Knowledge is limited about them. Ethel had a Jewish background and came from Russia when she was 18 years old. She marched for women's rights during Woodrow Wilson's presidency and became a Bahá'í through the influence of Mrs. Brittingham of New York City. Her first husband walked away from the family and when she was without support she turned to her parents. They said they would help her only if she returned to Judaism.

She awakened her three children who were asleep in the vestibule and they spent the night in the park. She supported her family on income as a seamstress and following the accidental car death of her daughter, coming at a time when she was without a savings, she resolved to save half of everything she earned. In her family, if she had been a boy, she would have been a Rabbi. She knew Hebrew Scriptures and the New Testament and attended many churches in Butte. This resulted in ministers being acquainted with her bold assertion that Baha'u'llah was the return of Christ.

At her funeral, a retired Episcopal minister, Father Fargher, came and asked to say a prayer for her as we stood around her casket. She left a legacy of audaciousness for her Lord. Harold traveled as a salesman, always visited Bahá'ís where he traveled, and was equally audacious in teaching. Ethel and Harold, with George Miller, added teaching strengths from having been in a larger Bahá'í community.

Other individuals have influenced the Bahá'í community life. Mrs. Gloria Wenk arrived from Louisville,

Kentucky in 1962, with her four boys. She later moved to Quebec in 1964 because of her knowledge of French to assist Canada following the World Crusade. She consulted with the Assembly about the jeopardy such a move would bring.

The Assembly felt she was the French-speaking pioneer the Canadian National Spiritual Assembly was seeking and should go. All felt sure God would assist us to fill her vacancy. Her replacement came with the enrollment of Irma Donaldson, a black lady, originally from Tennessee. Irma increased our opportunity to be visible in an interracial way to many people. My Mother (Nellie Mereness) inquired of the manager of her apartment building if he welcomed this minority. Irma knew briefly of the Faith but moved quickly into knowledge when she lived next door to Mother. Reading from *Release the Sun*, she knocked on Mother's door at 4:00 am to say she believed and wanted to be a Bahá'í. Deepening followed when after work she would arrive to read, *God Passes By* with us. Later, we attended two National Conventions together, and she was able to hear, *Hand of the Cause of God*, William Sears. She was outspoken about Baha'u'llah, especially to her black friends. Her passing in 1985 and her suffering from rheumatoid arthritis left us with a void in our hearts.

In 1981 Carolyn and George Galinkin, with their family of six children (five adopted), moved from Bozeman and were active with the Native American community and as social workers. Following George's stroke, they retired to Portland in 1997. We had four families employed at the Magneto-Hydrodynamics Government project (MHD) and suddenly they were fazed out of a job. These individuals were Dr. Donald and Sandy Cott, with three children; Dr. Jahan and Leigh Lohrasbi, with three children; Dr. Wayne and Kathy Daniel, with four children and David and Melinda Shoop, with two children. With six families and three others, we were a strong community in teaching children and youth classes.

Largely through the efforts of George Miller, over a period of nearly 24 years, the Assembly rented a narrow advertising space the size of a door window. An attached box to the door, lighted 24 hours, was used for a display of the Writings. George carefully cut the letters with a razor, using neon colors for attention. This display was near the bus station where people walked. He also kept a literature box at the Bus Depot supplied with pamphlets.

A lady from Oregon wrote, "*At an over nite bus stop at Butte, Montana, I found free literature. My attention was called to it because such a number of people brought others to this literature stand. I took some, and find Bahá'í Teachings On Life After Death a booklet I can use to send others. I have one I am sending to a dear friend in Iowa—age 84. A friend here wants a good plain message to read to her husband. Could I get a few copies, please?*"

Acceptance of the Bahá'í teachings has been slow in spite of continued introduction by well informed teachers.

The appointment of the Auxiliary Board Member, Mrs. Florence Mayberry, to include Montana in her territory was most reinforcing for our spiritual life. She presented the first publication of the Universal House of Justice, *The Proclamation of Bahá'u'llah*, to the Chief of Police on behalf of the Assembly. With the presence of covenant-breakers in the state, Dr. Peter Khan visited several times to strengthen the friends in the Covenant.

In September 1984, the Assembly planned a large regional conference with the Counselor Mrs. Velma Sherill; newly retired Counselor from the International Teaching Center, Florence Mayberry; Auxiliary Board Members, Margaret Gallagher, Opal Conner and National Assembly Member, Judge James Nelson. Judge Nelson was honored prior to the Conference by inviting judges and lawyers by special invitation from the area to meet him, but not a single one responded locally. It was successful for the Bahá'í response.

Teaching has included a large billboard with the message "Wage Peace"; large Naw Ruz parties that have had eighty guests held in an historic mansion; presentations of books and videos to the Public Library; participation in the Butte-Silver Bow Prayer Breakfasts; sponsoring of a children's art display at the Art Chateau; a Race Unity picnic in the park to honor the Native Americans; Musical performances by Gordi Munro and Dan Seals, both followed by firesides; Sandpainting with Navajo Sandpainter Mitchell Silas on two occasions; a Hoop Dance performance by Dallas Chief Eagle; presentations of the Peace Message to the Montana Tech College President, to the local City-County Commissioners and Chief Executive; sponsoring a presentation on the Plains Indians' values, beliefs, traditions with Bear Chief (Harold Gray); marching in several Fourth of July Parades with banners, and a decorated and bannered truck, passing out 2000 handmade cranes with a Bahá'í message; a mobile float along with the Bay Area Workshop Dancers; free musical concert with Heartfriends in the park; and many printed prayers in English and Spanish with other advertising. We focused on the Urban Native American population, preparing end of the month dinners when their funds were low, and assisting financially and personally in their Pow Wows. This has been a sample of this small community's effort to make the Faith known.

Looking ahead, the goal to incorporate has not come about yet. The adoption of a City-County form of government in 1977 has assisted our community base. Looking back, we feel blessed to see the signature of Shoghi Effendi written on contribution acknowledgments, progress reports on construction along with the encouragement written by Assistant Secretaries and occasionally the added sentence written in the Guardian's hand. One phrase we hold before us is written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi: "Butte is a very important city and must have a virile and vigorously functioning Assembly." (April 22, 1955, to Miss (Mrs.) Betty

Bennett, Treas., Butte Bahá'í Assembly.) Some of these messages are shown.

The effort to preserve past records, especially as Bahá'ís aren't always constant residents within a community, has enabled me to appreciate the value of records and write more about the background of the Faith in Butte than the other cities. When many of the early letters were found (by now in boxes in the garage) I realized they were thinking of a future time when their information would be meaningful. The Helena Assembly has also stored the early Assembly journals in a sealed barrel.

The Mountain View Cemetery has become the final resting place for many of the believers. Those known are Matthew Caldwell (in the Veteran's section); his wife Evalina Caldwell; Baby Hoffman, their grandchild; Joan Palmer; Harold and Ethel Hunt; George D. Miller, Nellie Mereness; Irma Donaldson and John McMeekin. Dorothy Brodshaug, Evelyn Caldwell and Lua Daniel are in the Mount Moriah

Cemetery and Mrs. Mabel Sawdy, a Bahá'í who passed away in Butte, may be in the St. Patrick Cemetery. Visitation and prayers at their resting places is always a pleasant experience.

Thinking about the Assembly at the time of the passing of Shoghi Effendi brings into focus a lesson of strength possessed by the older members in the community. They had been associated in Washington, D.C. with other believers who lived during the life time of 'Abdu'l-Baha. When the first telegram from Ruhíyyih Khanum arrived, calling for prayers for Shoghi Effendi, we gathered for an evening of prayers. The second message of Shoghi Effendi's passing brought us together again for prayers. These were days of not knowing who we would turn to, but our community knew we would remain faithful and follow the guidance given to the Bahá'ís by the Chief Stewards, the Hands of the Cause of God. Our goal is always toward becoming the "vigorously functioning" assembly Shoghi Effendi encouraged of our institution.



Ethel McAllaster, Betty Nelson, Mrs. Duncan, Irene & Dick Hoffman.
FRONT: Jack McAllaster, Harold Hunt



Evalina & Matthew Caldwell

Irene Hoffman, Evelyn Caldwell,
Betty Penner and Jenabe Caldwell are
the children of Evalina & Matthew
Caldwell.



Evelyn Caldwell



Betty Penner & George with
Dorothy (McLeod) Brodshaug



Ethel & Harold Hunt

Elizabeth Johnson (Tacoma, WA),
annual visitor to Butte with Irma Donaldson.



George Miller and
Elizabeth Johnson (Tacoma visitor)

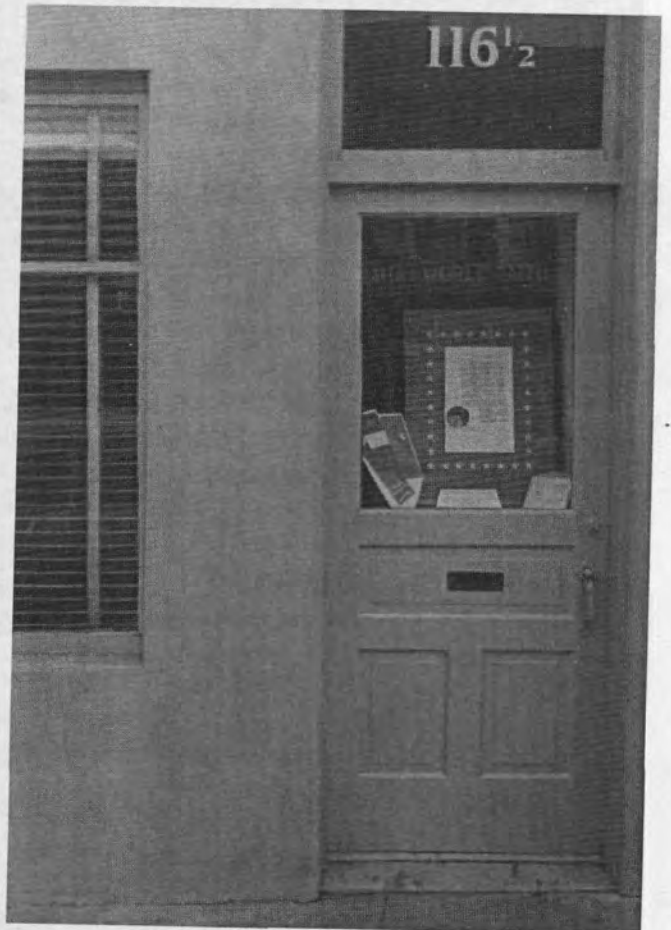
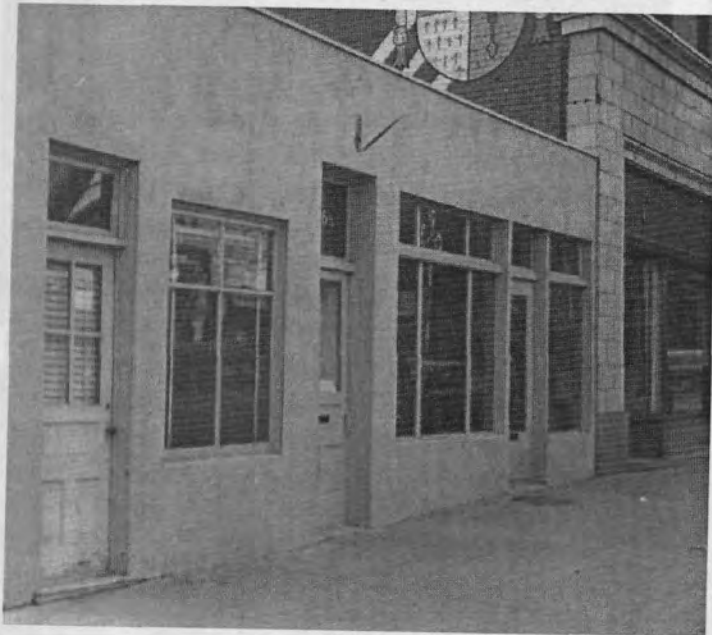


1948-John Wilcott, Betty Nelson, "Auntle Victoria",
Ethel and Jack McAllaster (Butte)

Mrs. Victoria Bedikian, known as "Auntie Victoria", lived in Montclair, New Jersey. She met 'Abdu'l-Baha in 1912 and He asked her to devote her art to the Faith. Later, Shoghi Effendi encouraged her. She wrote to children in many lands. I remember receiving these reproduced drawings in color on thin paper, *The Bahá'í World*, Vol. XIII, p.884 tells of her life of dedication. She came to Butte and this photo was taken Oct. 10, 1948 by George Miller. Note: Mr. Wilcott was visiting his daughter, Ethel McAllaster at the time.



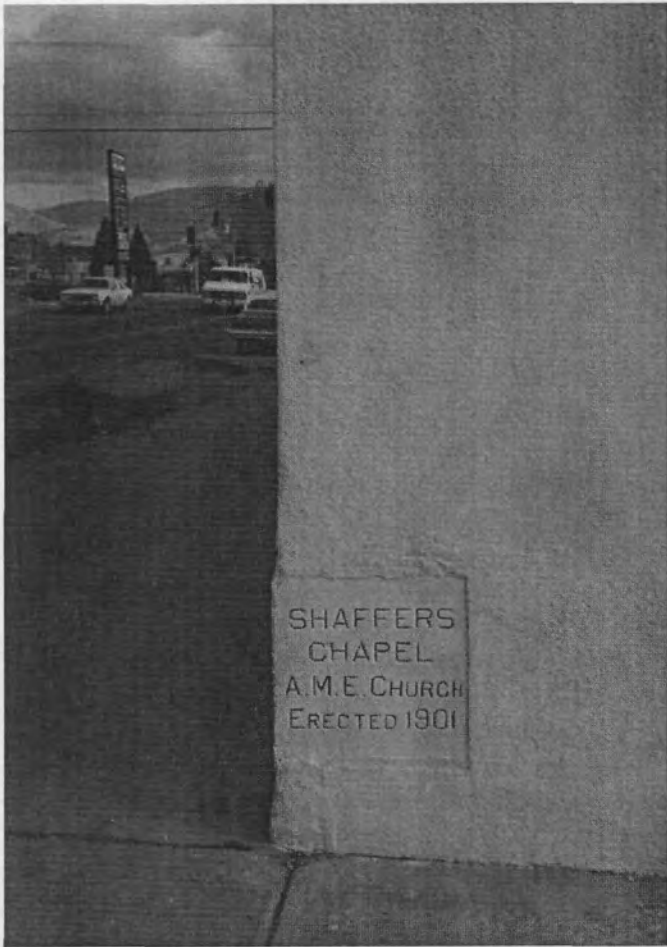
1989 Fourth of July Parade



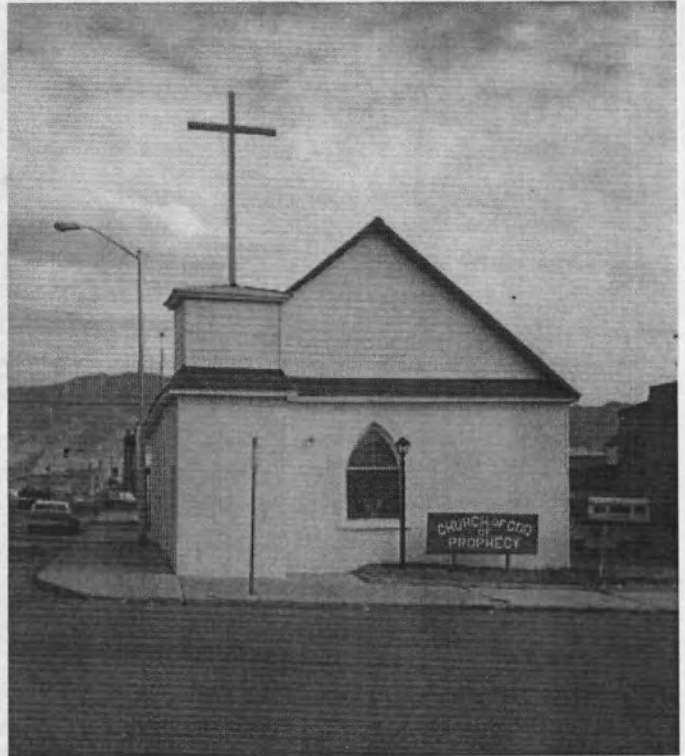
Door window at 116-1/2 Broadway used for teaching displays by the Spiritual Assembly over 22 years. Displays prepared by Mr. Miller.



"World Peace Day" Proclamation by Governor Tim Babcock, September 19, 1965. Butte display November 23, 1965.



Louis Gregory and Martha Root spoke at this A.M.E Church, Shaffers Chapel, located corner of Platinum and Idaho, Butte.



Home of Mrs. Armeta Duncan, 715 W. Park, Butte, where Louis Gregory stayed in 1922.



YMCA Building, 405 W. Park, Butte, where many meetings have been held.



Last home of
Betty Nelson (1950)
1708 Texas, Butte
where first
first summer
conference held.



Home at
604 W. Park, Butte
With upper apartment
as residence of
George Miller



Front left,
George Miller;
Third from left,
Dorothy Baker;
Fourth -
Adrian Crampton;
Youth Group at
Green Acre, 1940

1984 Auxiliary Board Conference, Butte: Judge James Nelson (NSA); Paul Pettit, former Aux. Bd. Member; Florence Mayberry, Resigned International Teaching Counselor; Velma Sherrill, Counselor; Margaret Gallagher, Auxiliary Board Member for Protection and Opal Connor, Auxiliary Board Member for Propagation.



1984 Auxiliary Board Conference, Butte (9/14-16).
 BACK: Judge James Nelson, *Wayne Daniel, Paul Pettit, *David Shoop,
 *Melinda Shoop, *Carolyn Galinkin, *Fred Bennett, *Betty Bennett, Arlene Blumenfeld
 (Bozeman), Counselor Velma Sherrill, (?) *Kathy Daniel, *George Galinkin,
 FRONT: ABM Margaret Gallagher, Former International Teaching Center Counselor,
 Florence Mayberry, ABM Opal Connor. (*Butte LSA)

? = LINDA CHAQUETTE

GREAT FALLS

Great Falls was the third assembly to form in 1949, as recorded in correspondence of three members of the Helena Bahá'í community, who were members of the new assembly and helped bring about its formation. No early archives are available for this Assembly but the National Bahá'í Office records this formation as being recognized in 1949. One member, Mrs. Gail Avery Davis, later pioneered to Sitka on the Baranoff Island becoming a Knight of Baha'u'llah. Great Falls was a chosen site for early teaching efforts as mentioned in the bulletin of the, *Teaching Committee of the Bahá'í Temple Unity* for July 1920. Mr. and Mrs. A. C. Killius left their home in Spokane, Washington, to travel/teach in Montana and had the address of 511 Eleventh St. W., in Great Falls.

From Montana comes a story of service which is full of real love and sacrifice: For the past two years or more Mr. and Mrs. A. C. Killius have been travelling teachers. They left their home in Spokane for the purpose only of sowing the seed of the Kingdom throughout the Cities of Montana, as this was one of the States mentioned by Abdul Baha (sic) at that time where the Message had not been spread. In order to have sufficient means to sustain them, they sold almost all of their household belongs and this together with Mr. Killius's business of home portrait photographer, enabled them to move about frequently.

During this time they have spread the Glorious Bahá'í Message broadcast, and were very fortunate in having a number of splendid articles placed in the leading newspapers of the State, and confirmations in every way successively reached them. They have served with a true Bahá'í spirit of love and devotion, and such services and offerings of love attracted many to the Cause. They have prepared a most lovely shining pathway for those who will come after them, following up their great work of seed sowing, for it is evident that they have been working, as the Master has instructed us all to work: 'With all the power and energy that God has given us.'

No record of believers from the efforts of Mr. and Mrs. Killius are known. In 1945 Mrs. Amelia Belzer Heaton arrived with her husband and three children and was an isolated believer until Jack and Ruth Saunders of Helena and their family came in 1946, followed by Nellie Mereness in 1949.

In 1989 we visited Amelia in Kalispell and she relayed how she became a Bahá'í. She had the experience of meeting Shoghi Effendi on pilgrimage in 1953, helping form assemblies in Kailua-Kona, Hawaii; Boulder City, Nevada and living in Tallahassee, Florida; Thomassville, Georgia; Scottsdale, Arizona; Germany; Lakeside, Missoula and Kalispell, Montana. Amelia's Aunt, Amelia Bowman, was a

Bahá'í and well known for her activity in the U.S. and later as a pioneer to Norway. Amelia Heaton's parents lived in Great Falls and prior to her marriage to John Heaton, she joined her parents on a trip to the New York World's Fair. They stopped in Wilmette to visit the unfinished House of Worship.

In New York the Bahá'ís had a booth at the Fair and here she met Lorol Schofflocher, who gave her the message and a New Era to read. They traveled on to Green Acre in Elliot, Maine where her Aunt, Amelia Bowman, was present. She said she always had looked for a religion that didn't have divisions and she tried to prove Baha'u'llah wrong before enrolling in 1939 at Green Acre.

At the time her knowledge of the Faith consisted of knowing Baha'u'llah was the Messiah and that it took nine people to form an assembly. In March 1953, she obtained permission for a pilgrimage. Her parents objected to her going alone and she asked permission for her Aunt Amelia Bowman to join her. Shoghi Effendi's reply was, "Approved." Proclamation was to be a new thrust in Bahá'í effort given at the beginning of the 1953 Ten-Year World Crusade as it was referred to (more correctly, Ten-Year International Bahá'í Teaching and Consolidation Plan - 1953-1963). Amelia remembered Shoghi Effendi saying, "proclaim the Faith to the masses." She received additional income from her Father's business in Great Falls that allowed her to be generous in carrying out bold advertising in some of the communities she lived in. She mailed her notes of statements she remembered Shoghi Effendi saying to her during pilgrimage along with a history of her areas of service to the National Bahá'í Archives. She is buried in a Ronan (Montana) cemetery and arranged for her headstone to have a nine-pointed star with "Bahá'í" centered in it. She wanted this to be her last effort to teach the name of the Faith she loved.

Following Ruth and Jack Saunder's move to Great Falls, they soon attracted a young couple, Sue and Howard Gilliland. Howard was a survivor of the Battan Death March in the Philippines during World War II. Names of others attracted brought the number of believers to eight whereupon Nellie Mereness rented her home in Helena, found work in a Great Falls hospital laundry to make possible the formation of a new assembly. The National Bahá'í Archives does not have an election form showing the names of the members nor a photograph. Unfortunately, the local records were not preserved in order to name the nine who brought this assembly into formation.

In 1952 Kathryn Franklin, one who radiated special love from having met 'Abdu'l-Baha, arrived to spend several

months in this City. Her method of teaching was remarkable and effective. Individuals who extended a kindness or assistance to her would be invited to her apartment for tea. Here she gave them the Bahá'í message over tea. Those not interested were thanked for coming and escorted to the door; then she returned to those who showed interest. Jenabe and Elaine Caldwell had recently moved to Great Falls and Jeb wanted very much to witness her teaching. Her apartment was small but she finally gave in to his persistent appeals by telling him he would have to sit under the wall sink. He did with his feet in, legs pulled up and head tilted. Her teaching efforts resulted in six new believers.

Helen Shane and her 80-year old Mother, Mrs. Lena Bell, were among them. Mrs. Hildred Jones had recently become a Bahá'í through Kathryn Frankland's visit. Hildred and Mrs. Bell had been farmers at Eden, south of Great Falls, and while visiting her friend, Hildred invited Helen and her mother to attend Mrs. Franklin's meeting. Helen recognized one of the Bahá'ís at the meeting, Jack Saunders, as the person who had recently sold her son an insurance policy. They were among the six that enrolled in 1952. After some objections from her husband about becoming a Bahá'í, Helen requested of the National Office to remain on the rolls but not be active. She respected his feeling because he was a good person and she knew he didn't understand what the Faith represented. Following his passing she returned to activity, always a strong member of community and at times served as the Secretary.

In 1966, she was appointed to the State Goals Committee, where we served together until she left in 1970 to work for the International Bahá'í Audio Visual Committee in Victor, New York. She was always a beautiful, dedicated and radiant believer who deepened and benefited from exposure to Bahá'ís from around the world. Her health forced her to return to Great Falls in June 1978, where she again was elected Secretary and involved in community life and teaching. She eventually lost her sight and much hearing, spending her final year in a rest home.

Another Bahá'í, Roger Schultz, would come visit her when he got off work in order to read Baha'u'llah's Writings to her. It was necessary for him to place her head on his chest so he could shout the words in her ear. Helen passed on to the Abha Kingdom June 4, 1998, at the age of 93. Her personal narrative is included with the separate stories.

William (Bill) Musler is mentioned in the Missoula history as first coming to Montana in August 1954. Bill, along with John Morgan, moved to Great Falls in 1959 to work as sales promotion and advertising manager for The Paris Department Store. He was an artist who created window displays as well as Bahá'í book covers he was asked

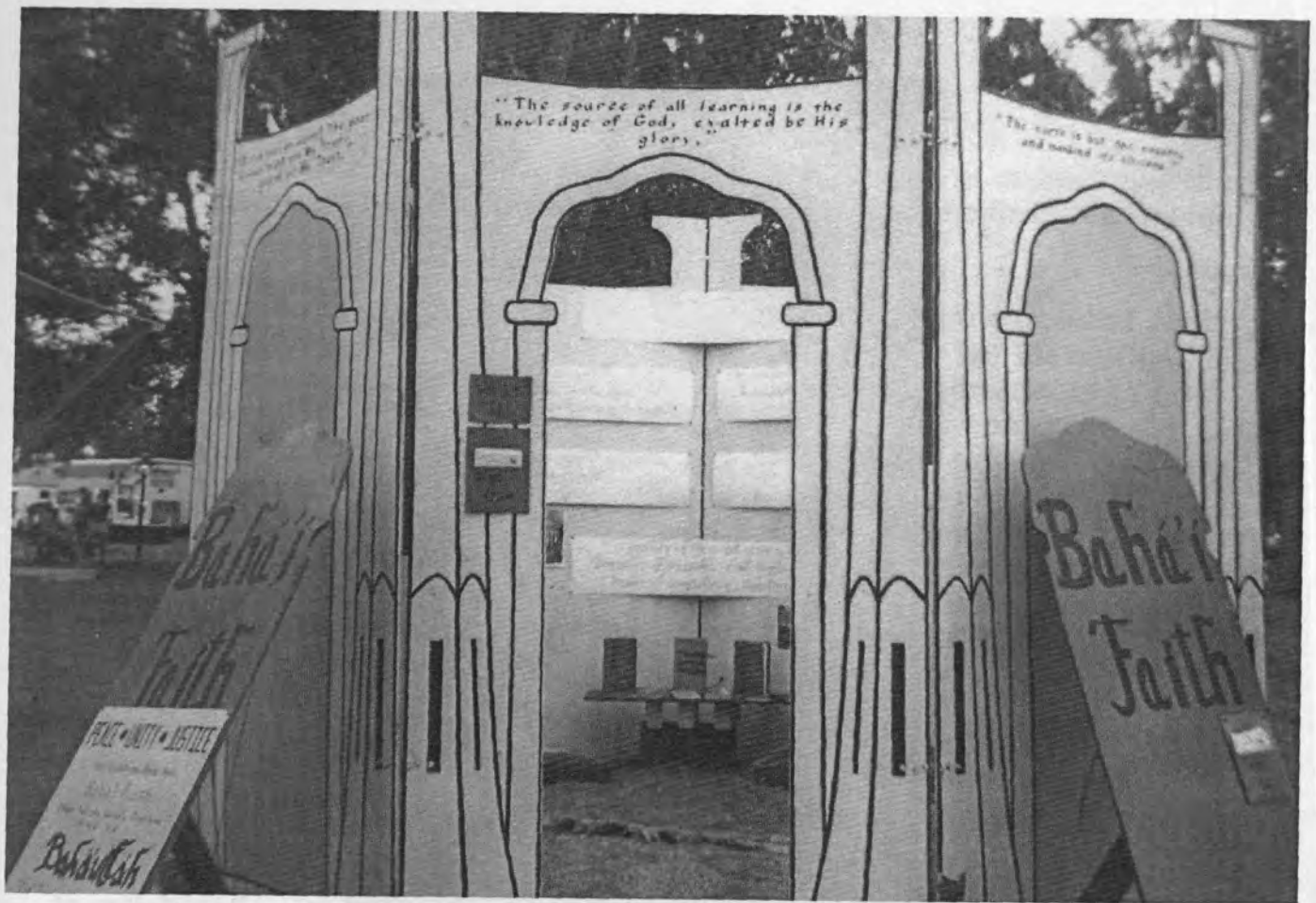
to prepare. He frequently entertained with his guitar and sang; but more than anything, his teaching efforts reflected a pure, spiritual quality that left a special touch with any gathering he participated in.

In our early attempts to reach people on the Blackfoot Reservation at Browning, he opened many doors with his charcoal drawings of children. When his sister was widowed suddenly with three girls to raise, he went to Texas and brought her to live with him in Great Falls. His pureness of spirit helped her awaken to the teachings of Baha'u'llah and she became a Bahá'í in September 1965. She later remarried to a serviceman from the Air Base who had become a Bahá'í and they served in Turkey during his service period. After her husband's retirement they moved to Missouri. Her secretarial skills were offered to Florence Mayberry, the retired Counselor, when she was writing her book. For a time, she served as an Administrative Secretary for the Regional Council for the Central States.

After going on pilgrimage in 1967 or '68, Bill left to work for the International Bahá'í Audio-Visual Center in Victor, New York in October 1968. His talents as an artist were used in cover designs for Bahá'í brochures. Mr. Richter, Manager of the International Bahá'í Audio-Visual Center, gave tribute by saying, "Bill was one of the most creative and most prolific artists ever to serve the Cause." His sudden passing in September 1970 was unexpected, but those who crossed his path were exposed to an extraordinary force of love. It was through Bill that Helen Shane was invited to come to work for the Audio-Visual Center, however; he passed away just before she arrived.

Another pillar for teaching in Great Falls was Mrs. Karen Sheffels (later Whisenhunt). She enrolled March 21, 1970. She had fasted twice before enrolling and opened her home for firesides that attracted many young people who eagerly joined her when she attended teaching trips to the nearby reservations in the early 1970's. Her activity always extended to working to help carry out the Ridvan formation on the Blackfeet Reservation at Browning. For a time she was a member of the District Teaching Committee. Following marriage she moved away from Great Falls in 1978, lived in other communities and later moved out of Montana. In the same year, Helen Shane returned from Victor, New York to add reinforcement to this community.

Kay and Mike Maloney (Kay a Great Falls native and Mike from Fort Benton) returned to Great Falls in the early 1980's, following pioneering in Micronesia where Kay served on the National Assembly for that area. The obituary from the newspaper and the eulogy given by the Auxiliary Board Member Katherine Williams, reveal Kay's strong teaching influence in the Great Falls community in spite of poor health.



Great Falls State Fair Display

A6 ■ THE MONTANA STANDARD, BUTTE, SATURDAY, DECEMBER 2, 2000

Civil rights activist Maloney dead

GREAT FALLS (AP) — Civil rights champion Kay Maloney is dead at the age of 63.

She died of heart problems Thursday.

Maloney served as executive director of the Downtown Business Council in 1983 and received the Montana NAACP chapter's Thurgood Marshall Award in 1992.

She graduated from Central Catholic High School in 1955 and attended the College of Great Falls and University of Minnesota.

She married Michael Maloney in Great Falls in

1956. She was head of the secretarial pool at the University of Minnesota Hospital while her husband completed his education. After eight years in Altoona, Pa., she and her husband went to Micronesia on a mission for their Baha'i faith.

After returning to Montana, she was with the Conrad Housing Development for two years and then returned to Great Falls as director of City Center Corp. from 1983 to 1989.

Her husband, who was blind, prompted her involvement with the Montana

Association for the Blind, of which he had been a member since the late 1940s. Together, they were also Community Hotline volunteers, including in-service training in suicide prevention, and were involved in the NAACP, Human Rights Network, the Baha'i faith, Campfire Girls, Crisis Hotline, Neighborhood Housing Service and Community Concert.

Her husband died in 1996.

She married Don Calkins of Iowa in October 1997. He survives, as do two sons.



William Musler,
Pioneer to
Missoula and
Great Falls



Fireside: Helen Shane, Great Falls; Hazel Mori, Pioneer to Philippines;
Betty Bennett, Butte; and Kay Maloney, Great Falls

In Memory of Kay Maloney

"Wert thou to attain to but a dewdrop of the crystal waters of divine knowledge, thou wouldst readily realize that true life is not the life of the flesh but the life of the spirit." -Bahá'u'lláh

I didn't know that when I stopped in to see Kay Maloney at the hospital on November 29 that I was coming in one of the final hours of her life on this plane. Kay was a fighter, but I believe she was preparing herself for her journey. Hours later, in the early morning of Thursday, November 30, Kay passed to the next life.

I first became acquainted with Kay when I flew into Montana for a job interview in Havre. Kay joined me at the airport, treated me to lunch with others, and immediately started connecting me with others, with Bahá'ís and with others associated with organizations that supported one or more of the Bahá'í principles.

And that was Kay. Kay's unswerving commitment to Bahá'u'lláh, her ability to translate His Teachings to action, and her practice of reaching out to the greater community as a means of living our Faith are impressive testaments of living one's Faith.

In collaborating with other organizations, Kay was involved in Human Rights, services to the Montana School for the Blind, the NAACP in Montana, the Great Falls Downtown Merchants Association, and others. In serving in this way, Kay she carried forward her love for Bahá'u'lláh and her conviction in promoting the oneness of mankind.

Above all, Kay was an organizer. In the years I served with her on the Montana Bahá'í Schools Committee, it was primarily Kay who followed through with making contacts and seeking out possibilities for speakers, venues, resources and methods of disseminating information. It was also during that time that Kay insisted that the Bahá'ís of Montana should find ways to obtain computers and get connected to the Internet so that all could be in better communication one with the other. Many of us remember receiving daily e-mails from Kay making sure we had access to all information that may better help us serve.

An important legacy Kay leaves us is in her joy in welcoming each person, each precious soul, into her home and heart. She never placed herself above others and never placed others above her Lord. She saw all as interconnected and interdependent. In this way, she lived her commitment to family, community, and to the oneness of humanity. And in this way, I was introduced to a diversity of people in Montana whom I've not otherwise seen come together with joy and fellowship.

In this glorious year dedicated to the memory of 'Amatu'l-Bahá Ruhiyyih Khanum, we have been called upon to strengthen ourselves and our community by building upon the achievements we've gained, particularly in the areas of systematic growth, Institute Training, community development, and children & junior youth. We can use Kay's strengths to give us concrete examples of ways we might respond.

- In a sense of humility, sincere love and with wisdom, we can individually and collectively reach out to the organizations and individuals in our communities who have been marginalized through racial or cultural discrimination, particularly the Native American community.
- Each one of us can be involved with the Institute Training process. It is the source of strength for our future endeavors and was one of Kay's greatest loves. We may not understand its full implications yet, but obedience and faith will allow its impact to be realized.
- We can each find one means of service to the Faith through greater community service.
- We can serve our families through serving our Faith, and serve our Faith through serving our families. A seeming conflict means we're out of focus & need to reconnect with the Text, pray, meditate, and regroup.
- As a lasting tribute to Kay, we can each rise to the call of the House of Justice to grow in our ability to respond with systematic action. ("Unremitting faith, prayer, the promptings of the soul, Divine assistance -- these are among the essentials of progress in any Bahá'í undertaking. But also of vital importance to bringing about entry by troops is a realistic approach, systematic action. There are no shortcuts."—Ridván 155) Kay knew this strength better than most of us in Montana.

In the past few years we have increasingly felt the void left by Kay's debilitation as well as that caused by the emigration of other long-serving Bahá'ís. I call upon each of us to rise up in Kay's memory to fill that void and thus welcome a new generation of "God-intoxicated lovers" to the threshold.

"We come thus to a bridge between times. The capacities developed through a century of struggle and sacrifice by a handful of intoxicated lovers of Bahá'u'lláh must now be applied to the inescapable tasks remaining to the Formative Age, whose many epochs of unremitting labour will lead to that Golden Age of our Faith when the Most Great Peace will envelope the earth."(Universal House of Justice, Ridván 157/April 2000)

submitted by Katherine Williams, Auxiliary Board member for Propagation -
Montana and Saskatchewan

Knight of Bahá'u'lláh Gail Davis

By Laurie Cropley Hill and Susan Stark Christianson

Gail Fiske (Avery) Davis was born in Helena, Montana on September 29, 1903. She became a Bahá'í in 1949 in Great Falls, Montana after hearing about the Faith from her sister, Gretchen Pool.

"My sister became a Bahá'í first," said Gail. "She wrote me letters and sent me pamphlets, but I couldn't be bothered."

"When I went to Great Falls," Gail shared, "the people who had lived across the street from Gretchen lived close to the hospital (where Gail was a nursing student). They invited me over to their house for a study class every week. I agreed with everything, but I thought it didn't have anything to do with me. Then in 1949 they needed one more Bahá'í to form their Assembly." At that time, Gail decided to embrace the Faith.

Gail has three children, Sam Wallace Fiske of Minnesota, Winifred Campbell of Montana, and Alice Machesney of Sitka. Gail has 11 grandchildren, 23 great grandchildren and five great-great grandchildren. When Gail decided to attend school to become a nurse, she was already a grandmother. Gail's children were grown by the time she decided to come to Alaska and did not make the move with her.

Gail attended the National Bahá'í Convention in 1953. She remembers having written to Shoghi Effendi prior to attending that Convention, asking him where she should go to pioneer. "I remember Rúhíyyih said (at that Convention) 'Don't write to the Guardian to ask him where you should go. He's too busy. Write to the committee.'"



Photo:
"Knight of Bahá'u'lláh"
Gail Davis, in her
Alaska Native
Sisterhood cap and sash.
Gail is a lifetime
member of the Alaska
Native Sisterhood, a
designation received
after 25 years of
membership.

When the goals were announced in the message to the Convention, Gail decided to pioneer to Baranoff Island. Since Baranoff Island was a virgin territory for Bahá'ís and a goal of the plan, by going to Sitka, Gail became a "Knight of Bahá'u'lláh."

Gail shared that she never felt very comfortable with the designation of being a Knight of Bahá'u'lláh. "I didn't suffer any hardship to come up here," she stated. "The hospital here was more sophisticated than the one I left. I'm just now beginning to feel more comfortable with accepting that (title)."

"When I got to my goal," she said, "it wasn't my goal! I was across the channel at a government installation on Kaponski Island. They had to get that straightened out." Gail had gone to Mount Edgcombe Hospital as a nurse. Mount Edgcombe Hospital is actually across the bay from Sitka. After two years at Mount Edgcombe, Gail became an x-ray technician for Sitka Community Hospital.

At the time Gail came to Baranoff Island, the area was officially assigned as a goal of the Canadian National Spiritual Assembly. According to Janet Smith, secretary of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Alaska, when the National Spiritual Assembly was formed here Sitka, Kodiak and the Aleutian Islands were not under the jurisdiction of Alaska.

In 1963 Gail went to London to attend the Great Jubilee. "I had to go to London to get permission (from the Canadian National Assembly) to form a Local Spiritual Assembly in Sitka," said Gail. She remembers consulting with the Canadian National Spiritual Assembly and recalls that Sitka was permitted to form their first Local Assembly before the ninth member actually arrived in Sitka.

Gail married Albert Davis, a Tlingit Indian, in Sitka in 1957. She met him on a boat excursion trip outside Sitka to see sea lions. After marrying Albert, Gail became a member of the Alaska Native Sisterhood. She is now a lifetime member, having been a part of the organization for more than 25 years.

Gail lists among the highlights of her Bahá'í life knowing Dr. Dean Fraser and his wife Zella Fraser, who came to Sitka in the 1950s. For many years they were the only other Bahá'ís in Sitka. Dr. Fraser was a dentist at Mount Edgcombe Hospital. "The Frasers were really wonderful people," shared Gail. "I did a lot of visiting with Dean and Zella."

Another highlight Gail remembers is taking a boat trip around Baranoff Island to visit Grace Bahovec, a Bahá'í living in the village of Baranoff on the other side of the island. "I went on a boat for twelve hours so that I could celebrate the Martyrdom of the Báb with another Bahá'í."

"I am thankful," said Gail, "the world is more tolerant and that it's possible to be a Bahá'í openly! I'm glad that being a Bahá'í doesn't influence whether I get a job anymore."

"Never be afraid to admit you are Bahá'ís," she added.

OTHER ASSEMBLIES

The National Bahá'í Archives has provided a listing of the years they record assemblies being formed, as follows:

| | |
|-------------------------------|--------------|
| Helena | 1939 |
| Butte | 1944 |
| Great Falls | 1949 |
| Billings | 1960 |
| Northern Cheyenne Reservation | 1971 |
| Yellowstone County | 1972 |
| Missoula | 1972 |
| Bozeman (formed during year) | 1972 |
| Kalispell | 1973 |
| Missoula County | 1975 |
| Miles City | 1976 |
| Blackfeet Reservation | 1976 |
| Fort Peck Reservation | 1978 |
| Flathead County | 1978 |
| Crow Reservation | 1980 |
| Lewis & Clark County | 1981 or 1982 |
| Ravalli County | 1988-1993 |

The first assembly in Helena rose up from ripe soil with the first Seven-Year Teaching Plan given to the American Bahá'ís by Shoghi Effendi in 1937. Nine people came together that first year to fulfill one of the goals, which was to establish a Spiritual Assembly in the capitol city of each state. The pioneer to Helena moved on to Butte where there was a nucleus of Bahá'ís to help bring that assembly into fruition by 1944 and three Bahá'ís from Helena became part of the Great Falls formation recognized in 1949.

With the focus on teaching and opening new centers as goals given to the Bahá'ís during the Ten-Year Teaching and Consolidation Plan (1953-1963), one would have thought that with the momentum shown during the first Seven Year Plan, more assemblies would have been formed during the ten year period. Bahá'ís were attracted to the city of Missoula, and it is interesting that by March 1955 nine individuals had arrived in a few months time. Then changes occurred just before Ridvan and Missoula did not form until 1972.

Following the National Convention in 1953, with the dedication of the House of Worship by Amatu'l-Baha, Ruhiiyyih Khanum, and the call for pioneers to spread out to foreign lands and homefront pioneering goals, Virginia Foster was the first to come to Missoula by August 1954. She writes the unusual story of the nine adults and one youth who arrived within three months time. Her story is sectioned with the individual stories. By Ridvan 1955 for some reason, the number is at eight. One who arrived is Edward Koyl. From early years in Kalispell, he became a Bahá'í in Chicago

in 1934, entered the service but returned to Missoula and the state he was raised in by August 1954. His employment took him to Billings before Ridvan 1955. His history is included separately.

Two others who left Chicago, John Morgan and William Musler, drove west to Montana and through Missoula and then south to Texas in their search for the spot they wanted to pioneer. Traveling through Texas they recalled they both liked the "feel" of Missoula and returned in August of 1954. Bill worked at the University in the Public Information Department. He and W. C. Kay became the city co-chairmen for a large United Nations Eleventh Anniversary Observance, titled a *Path to Peace*.

This was held on Sunday, October 21, 1956. The program had speakers from foreign countries, prayers offered by twelve religions, as well as dances in native costumes. John Morgan represented the Bahá'í Faith. It was a significant event for the Bahá'í community to be involved in and some very fine teaching took place. A full report is shown from a copy of the, *Area Bulletin for the Northwestern States*, November 1956. Another insight was written on an inside page that shows how the Bahá'ís were viewed by other individuals. *Rewards for outstanding effort for UN observance here include the promise of a complete feature story when the local assembly is formed from formerly antagonistic newspaper.... Chamber of Commerce listing of Bahá'í Faith in its directory.... Write up of the program in Methodist student paper "Tower Tidings", pastor of which church is Rev. Wilson President of the Ministerial Association.... MSU student mentioned that the proposed UN program reminded him of a book he was reading. A query disclosed it to be a 1936 edition of the Bahá'í World found in the Dean of Religion's study at the University. On the shelf beside it was The New Era, which he is also reading!! This student lived in Bierut with his parents who were missionaries, and served as Master of Ceremonies for the UN Day program.... the Jews in Missoula feel the Bahá'ís are really Jews.... An Evangelical Minister said: 'You Bahá'ís seem like Christians to me'. Missoula had a strong nucleus for teaching but the assembly did not form. In 1959 Bill Musler and John Morgan moved to Great Falls and added strength to that community.*

Bahá'ís were gradually moving to Billings and with the arrival of Mary and Ivan Cottrill, who were returning from a period in Kauai, Hawaii, they made the nine needed for an assembly at Ridvan in 1960. By 1972, Yellowstone County formed, bringing the first two assemblies side by side.

Bozeman was first opened in 1946 through 1950 by

ourselves when Fred entered college. Area Bahá'ís were called upon to help us hold public meetings. Mary Collison from California attracted the most individuals at a meeting held in the Baxter Hotel around 1949 or 50. We were followed by Dick and Rigmor Mereness from 1962 – 1966; David and Jeanette Phelps in 1968; Carole and Charles Anderson in 1969 and Carolyn and George Galinkin in 1971. With George a professor on the campus they were able to help the Bahá'í students evolve to assembly status in 1972.

In 1966 the National Teaching Committee appointed teaching committees in each of the states under the title of State Goals Committees. The appointees were Richard Mereness (Bozeman), Helen Shane and Marion White (Great Falls), and Fred and Betty Bennett (Butte). The Committee was invited to participate in a briefing being held in Bismarck, North Dakota, which was nearly 700 miles away. Marion was unable to attend and very soon he transferred out of the state, but four of us met in Bozeman and began our drive on Friday evening and throughout the night, arriving in the morning. Sunday we began the return trip, mapping out visitations at isolated centers on our route home. Our discussion grew to planning an invitation to the friends for a meeting in a central city (Helena) on the following weekend to discuss what our goals should be.

It was from this conference that the friends expressed the desire to have an honoring and tree planting ceremony on the Blackfeet Reservation in Browning over the Labor Day weekend, which was just two weeks away. This is covered in more detail under the narrative about Reservation teaching.

The name of the Committee changed during the 25 years it existed, but the focus was on the development of isolated centers and groups, increasing the number of assemblies, to keep everyone informed of activities with a monthly bulletin, and to develop a plan to reach the Native Americans on their reservations. In the 1970's most of the state became involved in teaching on a reservation close to them, in follow-up work or in hosting teaching teams who circled the state. This is when the largest growth in assembly formations takes place.

Montana is a sparsely populated state to draw home front pioneers from but four families from Eugene, Oregon area arrived in Missoula in 1971 and they infused us with spiritual reinforcement and their presence made the difference in more than one community. Soon, they were deeply involved in our teachings efforts on the reservations. The Northern Cheyenne was the first of the Reservation assemblies to form and is written under "Reaching the Native American People."

Within a ten-year period circumstances changed and the twenty plus people who were able to travel on a weekend

were not available. We also noted that the reservation Tribal Halls began to close to use as a meeting place. Even where the Native American Bahá'ís arranged for the hall it did not show as being reserved when we arrived. We needed the Tribal Halls for the meetings and as a place to put our sleeping bags and have our meals.

The follow-up consolidation was weakened. We sought pioneers but few could stay very long. Hand of the Cause of God, Dr. Muhajir told a gathering in Billings in 1976 that teaching in Montana was like pioneering in a foreign land. At the height of enthusiasm the friends were focused on making Montana the first Bahá'í state.

In 1975 the District Teaching Committee conceived the idea of printing a small newspaper titled *A PORTRAIT: The Montana Bahá'í Community*. The motivator was George Dannells, a Montana State University student gifted with journalism interests. In a teaching activity George visited many communities to interview the Bahá'ís to gain knowledge of their backgrounds, work and interests. The information was put together in this publication to be used by the Bahá'ís as a teaching medium to show Bahá'ís come from many backgrounds and interests united in a common goal of unity. The people interviewed were very focused on promoting the teachings and were the bedrock for much of the growth in the '70's. A copy of this publication is included with the Addendum.

In 1966, there were 67 adults, 3 Local Spiritual Assemblies, 4 groups and 10 isolated centers.

In 1968 we were asked by the National Teaching Committee to open 15 localities over a three-year period and in 1971 to open 13 more localities.

By 1971 we show 177 adults, 25 groups, 17 isolated centers, 6 Assemblies with 3 incorporated and another Assembly ready to form as soon as trailer space within the city limits is located.

A 1978 tally lists 12 Assemblies after 4 had been lost.

A 1982 status from the National Teaching Committee shows 13 Assemblies.

In 1983 we had a total of 15 Assemblies.

Movement and changes in the pattern of growth have rearranged most of the communities by the time of this compilation. We have seen strengthening under the direction of Auxiliary Board Members and their Assistants. Currently a new Committee for the State, under the direction of the institution of the Regional Bahá'í Council for the Western States, is supporting the Council's efforts to prepare us for the process of Entry by Troops. This learning/deepening is being brought about through Ruhi Institutes and Assembly Development Programs.

John Morgan Bahá'í at podium first religious speaker
L TO R: Catholic, Episcopal, Mormon and ME.
11th Ann. U.N. Missoula 1956



International M.S.U. Students of Argentina, Ecuador, El Salvador and Honduras
11th U. N. observance Missoula 1956

AREA BULLETIN FOR THE NORTHWESTERN STATES

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Secretary: Helen H. Wilks, 12710 11th Ave. N.W., Seattle 77, Washington

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MISSOULA, MONTANA SETS SHINING EXAMPLE IN
UN DAY OBSERVANCE

The Missoula Group of seven Baha'is planned a city-wide observance of U N day on the theme "A Path To Peace" and were able to win the full cooperation of the leaders in education, religion and government in the city as well as the support of three radio stations and the newspapers.

The program outlined by co-chairmen Chris Kay and William Musler was presented to officials at Montana State University, including President Mc Farland and the Deans of Music and Religion. They permitted the use of the new and beautiful University Music Hall which seats 400, and the appointment of two university co-chairmen from the International Relations Group on the campus. The latter, in turn, opened the door to an audience with a large group of foreign students who almost unanimously expressed their willingness to appear on the program. Five Baha'i members attended the meeting with the foreign students.

Contact was then made with some forty leaders of various Christian and Jewish sects, including the Presidents of the Ministerial Association and the Council of Churches, both ministers. They were told that the Baha'is wished to plan a program of prayer and in honor of the UN which would unite the classes, races and creeds of the city on an equal basis: the symbol of a small UN. The hope was expressed that the purpose to create greater respect and understanding between all groups in Missoula might be fulfilled. Hearty endorsement from the church leaders was secured and offers to assist.

Radio station KBTK played one-minute recordings submitted to them throughout UNweek including a prayer selected from Baha'i World, Vol. for years 1952-54 and recorded by Nathelle Orr. KGVO gave an interview on their top news program: Editor's Desk. Fifteen minute interview held on station KXLL also. All three stations gave publicity and news releases at station breaks and in conjunction with the UN recording of Lowell Thomas.

Other publicity included three newspaper articles including a front page story from copy submitted by the Baha'is; a handsome display of international art pieces, contribution of Maughan's Gift Shop, announcements on church bulletin boards and bulletins and from church pulpits, and two letters from the White House in recognition of Missoula's all out effort in behalf of U.N. These were in response to letter and follow-up wire of William Musler, and included the President's UN Day Proclamation.

The UN program itself held in the Music Hall at the University heard the reading of the President's UN Proclamation by Mayor Hart who added his own, talks by foreign students on UN, their own countries and the U.S., Songs and dances in traditional dress and composition, and readings in alphabetical order from various denominations from their own Holy writings. UN flags donated by the state chairman were on display. Other contributions included hand printed programs, photographs, etc.

Missoula's last year's program held in the American Legion hall with more than a hundred citizen's on committees failed to achieve an objective which was accomplished this year, by seven Baha'is--alone!

" O men; This is a matchless Day. Matchless must, likewise, be the tongue that celebrateth the praise of the Desire of all nations, and matchless the deed that aspireth to be acceptable in His sight."
---- Gleanings Page 39

" Drink ye from the hands of the All-Merciful the Wine that is life indeed. O people of Baha. Ye are indeed they with whom it shall be well."
p. 46

Montana Bahá'í Regional Teaching Conference, Helena, October 7, 1951:
 BACK: Evalina Caldwell, Mrs. Stewart, John Morgan, ?, Amelia Heaton, Harold Hunt,
 Gretchen Pool, Jerry Burner, Julia Harstad, Walter James, Ruth Saunders, Betty Bennett.
 FRONT: Jack McAllaster, Fred Bennett, Evelyn Caldwell, Barbara Saunders,
 Ethel McAllaster, Gail (Avery) Davis, Jeanine Home, Nellie Mereness



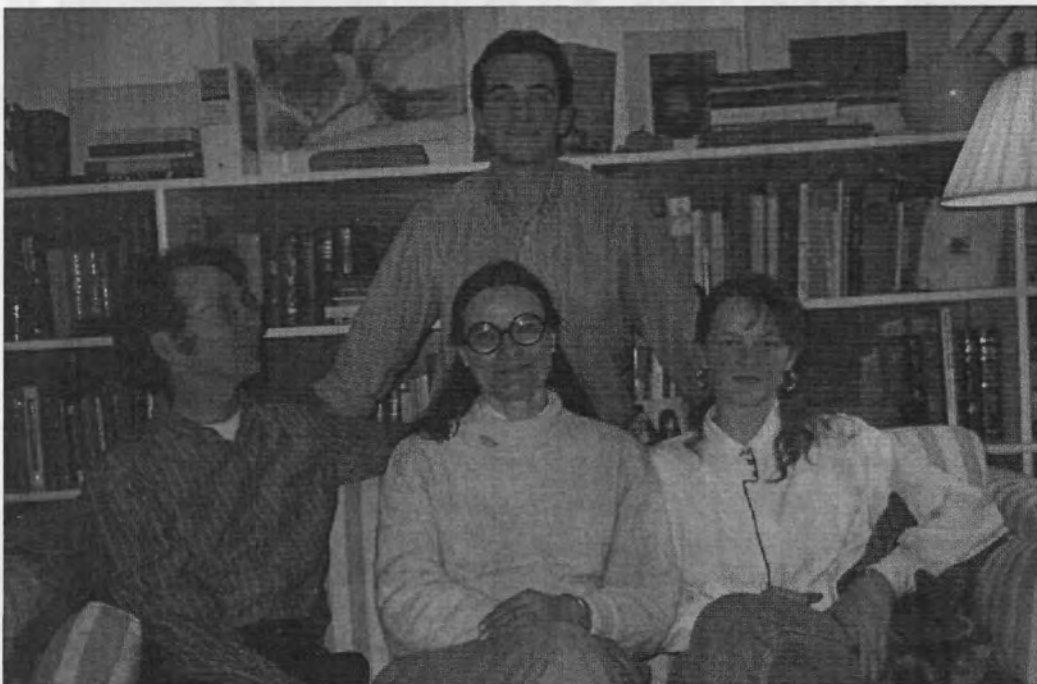
First State Goals Committee appointed in 1966. Fred Bennett,
 Betty Bennett, Helen Shane, Marion White and Richard Mereness.



Visiting Butte:
Gloria Wenk, pioneer to
St. Pierre et Miquelon, N.
Scotia and Hazel Mori,
pioneer to Philippines,
August 1992.



August 1992
Deepening with Hazel
Mori (Philippines) at
St. Ignatius property
of William and
Sandy Munoz.



Keith, Terese, Nathan and
Leslie Blanding (former
Pioneers in Deer Lodge) -
1991 in Oregon. Keith
former member of Dist.
Teach. Com.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE SUMMER SCHOOL

A letter written by the Montana District Teaching Committee, dated March 21, 1979, explains how the need for a Summer School unfolded:

From the minutes of the Montana District Teaching Committee files, the then State Goals Committee first planned a summer study session for July 4, 5, 6, 1969 as a camping experience. This was held in a campground at Park Lake near Helena

The following year we met at the Squaw Rock Campground on Rock Creek out of Philipsburg the weekend of July 17, 18, 19, 1970. Each time a program was planned for children and adults and everyone took care of their own cooking arrangements. Mostly people with young families responded, but it was directed to anyone who would be interested in a study session along with the outdoor recreation.

The need for a summer school was behind these beginnings and the summer of 1970 some members of the Billings Community visited the Rocky Mountain Summer School Committee's sessions held out of Boulder, Colorado. In November 1970 our Committee asked the Billings Spiritual Assembly to work out details for a summer school and see if they could find a site and assume this responsibility. The Billings Assembly made arrangements for a summer session at the Lion's Camp out of Red Lodge, MT under the supervision of this Rocky Mountain Summer School Committee. The first year, 1971, they (RMSSC) arranged for teachers and the courses and the following year, a committee from the Billings Assembly worked out the program and teachers in conjunction with this same Committee. After 1973 a Montana Bahá'í School Committee was appointed by the National body handling that for the National Spiritual Assembly.

Except for one year (1975), when the sessions were held at a Methodist Camp up the Boulder River out of Big Timber, the sessions have remained at the Lion's Camp out of Red Lodge. This is probably due to being the only available facilities they have found.

The site has changed but a committee appointed under the National Spiritual Assembly has been able to offer summer studies for 30 years. It has now been named The John H. Wilcott Bahá'í School in honor of Mr. Wilcott's dedicated pioneering to Montana in 1910. To date, the Bahá'ís do not have their own property, but have used a Methodist camp out of Livingston that solicits groups. While it was limited to those who can live in a cabin with separate wash houses, it attracted families and individuals, binding hearts with an unusual spiritual force for those who attended. Reduced attendance forced this Schools Committee to cancel the 2004 sessions.

In the early years two Winter Schools were held; the first planned for the Red Lodge site in December 1972 was moved into Billings due to broken pipes and the second was carried out at the Yogo Inn in Lewistown in December 1985.

The Schools Committee has offered sessions frequently over the Easter Holiday weekend, using the facilities of the Ursuline Center in Great Falls, and calling upon individuals with recognized ability to present deepening subjects. The December holiday has been used to make youth or children's classes available. Mr. Chuck George from Illinois has returned year after year, offering his services to cook for these youth or children's rendezvous.

REACHING THE NATIVE AMERICAN PEOPLE

Vinson Brown, author of many books published under his Naturegraph Company in Healsburg, California, traveled over much of western North America visiting Indian tribes to study their prophecies, visions and customs and write them down. Just when he first included Montana Reservations in his travels is not known, but he did stop to visit in Butte sometime in the 1960's on his way to the Northern Cheyenne Reservation. Many prophecies he compiled are related to the coming of Baha'u'llah and His promises for mankind. Brown's books have linked ancient knowledge to the latest Message from God.

In Montana, we have seven reservations that circle the state and several urban centers for those who have moved off their reservation. We have been slow to reach out to the Native Peoples in spite of the promising words about their destiny given to us by 'Abdu'l-Baha.

Mr. George Miller pioneered to Butte from Washington, D.C. by Ridvan of 1948, following the Guardian's appeal for believers to leave the large cities and pioneer to home front areas. The Bahá'ís in Great Falls prepared a booth for the State Fair in August of that year and George gave his assistance by helping with the booth. Here he had an opportunity to meet members of the Blackfeet tribe, take pictures of them in their tribal dress and follow up by presenting the photos to the individuals.

Later, in the 1950's he enlisted the help of a friend to drive him to the Flathead Reservation for an event and met members of the Salish-Kootenai tribe and again took photos he could present to them. He later befriended these people when they were invited to Butte for a civic celebration. The small amount they were paid by the city would not have covered the expenses they incurred to come.

George visited them at the spot where they had set up a large tepee and asked me to come with him in order to lead their cars to a restaurant where he purchased dinner for the party. There were at least two cars of occupants. One lady was not feeling well and did not come in the restaurant, but George brought a carton of soup out to her.

In June 1961, under the sponsorship of the American Indian Committee, with Nancy Phillips as Secretary, he arranged to meet Sampson Knowlton, an indigenous Bahá'í from Canada. This Committee provided the financial assistance needed for Mr. Knowlton to attend. Together they stayed in a motel and walked the town of Browning on the Blackfeet Reservation for two weeks, teaching and showing slides in various homes. Sampson was related to several families in Browning and of the same tribe, being known as North Peigans and South Peigans divided by a border. For

years George was known as the white man that walked with Sampson. This was the first planned teaching event on a Montana reservation other than the contacts made by Vinson Brown.

From arrangements made during this first journey, five of us joined two or three Native believers from Canada over the Labor Day Holiday for a teaching follow-up in September 1961. George Miller came with us and Harvey Evans and William Mussler arrived from Great Falls. Bill's artistic skill centered on drawing large charcoal portraits of the faces of the Indian children, who were eager to participate and proudly took them home. This became a link to their parents, who were visited. Several of the children were from one family that George had met while he was with Sampson earlier in the summer. One Indian youth in the 8th grade read a Bahá'í prayer in Blackfeet, which was recorded.

The Tribal Hall had been obtained for a public meeting, and Sampson and another Bahá'í, Guy Yellow Wings, who had accompanied Sampson, were providing the contacts. However, most of them had been in a bar, so by the time they arrived they were really under the influence. At first they were disturbed and questioned how we had obtained their Tribal Hall for a meeting. I'm sure Sampson obtained the hall, but their anger was toward us who were white. Wisdom told us to be silent, say the Remover of Difficulties and graciously go about serving them some very strong coffee, fruit and cookies.

Soon things settled down and Sampson and Guy Yellow Wings began responding in their native tongue. We listened to Guy Yellow Wings speak Blackfeet and periodically say Moses, Jesus, Muhammad. Thus, we knew the message of progressive revelation was being given. The meeting ended very friendly and arrangements were made to meet Mr. Bird Hat, a medicine man, the next day. He did not arrive after a long wait and we did not know how to find him, so we eventually had to return home, which was a five-hour journey. It was a learning experience for us, but we did make friends. Sampson and George kept in contact as Sampson met friends from Browning and at times would ask George to write or send literature to an individual.

For ourselves, we began in 1946 to attend the Western Canada Summer School held in Banff, Alberta. In Canada, teaching on the Reserves resulted in believers during the 1950's. This was when Sampson Knowlton had responded and became a believer. From meeting the Native friends in Canada at these sessions, we would host them for lunch at a campground in Banff or stop at Ft. McLeod for a visit.

In 1963 an invitation to attend a gathering in Tuscon,

Arizona, on the Navajo Reservation attracted seven from the Crow Reservation in Montana. Ethel Hunt, an older Bahá'í in our Butte community attended. Most of these individuals accepted the Faith, but I'm not sure they came away registered. They came forth as Bahá'ís at a later time.

From 1961 to 1966 only the efforts of individuals were pursued but the desire to carry out teaching seemed to be on many minds. Our newly formed State Goals Committee became duly "fired up" from the Bismark meeting with Dr. Daniel Jordan of the National Spiritual Assembly, Thelma Jackson of the National Goals Committee, Beth McKentry, Auxiliary Board Member, as well as being with other newly appointed committee members. On the trip home we scheduled a gathering in a the central city of Helena for Sunday, August 21st, 1966, 10:00 A.M. at the Western Life Building, Pow Wow Room. Everything fell in place and the Bahá'í population centered in Western Montana responded by attending on the short one week notice.

The friends focused their energy on a tree planting ceremony on the Blackfeet Reservation at Browning for the following weekend over the Labor Day Holiday. In Great Falls a pine tree was purchased that had survived a flood caused by a dam breaking. The site selected was a small city park, and for the occasion, Mr. Earl Old Person, Tribal Chairman and the Mayor of Browning each spoke. Greetings were read from the American Indian Service Committee and from Mr. Chester Kahn of the Navajo Reservation along with prayers.

Bill Musler had prepared a quotation beautifully printed on a tanned skin that was presented to Mr. Old Person and was hung in the Tribal Hall. Prior to the event, the Bahá'ís stopped people on the street and invited them to the ceremony. Small cards with, "Blessed is the Spot" were given away. About 25 Bahá'ís were assembled and then camped in an area near the Museum where many of the local people came to visit with us. One father was very concerned for his son and we said prayers on his behalf. Teaching efforts were continued over Easter and Labor Day of 1967.

Under the Nine-Year Plan, the first plan given to the Bahá'ís from the newly formed Universal House of Justice in 1964, the North Plains Indian Teaching Committee was formed with Mrs. Audrie Reynolds as Secretary. She was from England and had married an American following the World Congress in 1963. Her great interest had always been Native peoples, and they were pioneering on the standing Rock Reservation at Ft. Yates, North Dakota. In May of 1969, she made a teaching trip to the Blackfeet Reservation in Browning and the Blood Reserve at Cardston, Alberta bringing with her two Native Bahá'ís, a brother and sister, John and Ada Marie Halsey. She always encouraged them to do the speaking, but in the beginning they were very shy, and she did the talking. It was only after several trips that

they began to speak forth. This Committee planned four conferences:

| | | |
|------------------|------------------------|---------------|
| Fort Yates, N.D. | Standing Rock Res. | 9/5-7/70 |
| Browning, MT | Blackfeet Res. | 10/17-18/1970 |
| Poplar, MT | Ft. Peck Res. | 10/24-25/1970 |
| Lame Deer, MT | Northern Cheyenne Res. | 1/23-24/1971 |

The National Teaching Committee sought pioneers for the Blackfeet Reservation through ads in the American Bahá'í and Peter and Karen Crago, with their two children Erika and Ivanhoe arrived in nearby Cut Bank in July, 1970. Also, Diane and John Hellson moved to Cardston, Alberta in May, 1970. Diane was Native American and these individuals were the effective teachers close to Browning. By February 1971 James Francis Manyhides (known by both names) and his wife Mary Ann; Thomas Gallineaux and Peter-Stab-by Mistake had enrolled and Mrs. Margaret Many Guns in November 1971 .

Thus, there were believers when the first conference in Montana with Mr. Brandy Watson of the North Plains Indian Committee was held in Browning. Our State Committee showed the Assembly was elected on August 1, 1975, but the date of 1976 was listed in the National Archives. First time reservation assemblies were permitted to form any time. Again, the formation papers may not have been sent to the National Teaching Committee because the two files do not match. An unfortunate accident on July 6, 1976, killed eight, a Bahá'í family and another Bahá'í. The victims included the daughter and son-in-law and grandchildren of the Many Hides. The image of the Faith changed in the sight of some following this sad event. The Many Hides remained firm in their belief.

Prior to the next conference scheduled at Poplar on the Ft. Peck Reservation with Brandy Watson following the one at Browning, a Vista worker and pioneer, Mary Steil arrived in Poplar in March 1970. Dan Defender from Ft. Yates made a teaching trip to Poplar along with some enrollees from the Ft. Qu'Appelle Institute in Saskatchewan in May 1970.

In August 1970, Dick and Gloria Watson arrived as pioneers and these individuals were available support for the Poplar Conference. Reba and Ray Ogle were among the first to enroll, date unknown. In 1971, an assembly was formed in Poplar but lost by the following year. It didn't reform again until 1977 as the Ft. Peck Reservation Assembly. Here again, Committee records differ with the Archives Office. However, there were some believing souls that were always available to assist us when teaching trips were made. It was the only reservation where the individuals awaited our arrival and prepared food. Those coming always brought food for all, including for those we extended an invitation to attend an evening meeting.

The Browning and Poplar Conference dates were not known far enough in advance for our Committee to make preparations to attend. We mentioned to Audrey Reynolds

that if she could give us sufficient notice when another would be held we would participate. She made an advance trip with John and Ada Marie Halsey to Lame Deer on the Northern Cheyenne and secured the Tribal Hall for an event on January 23-24, 1971.

Bahá'ís from Canada, North Dakota, Wyoming and Montana were gathered together to hear the stirring words said by Audrey, Loretta King, a member of the North Plains Committee and currently a Member of the Continental Board of Counselors, along with Angus Cowan, the Auxiliary Board member living in Canada. Angus became a most valuable teacher lending his assistance on many reservation events and one year responded to our invitations to come every month that year.

We met and divided ourselves into groups of 3's and 4's and covered the town by going house to house to give our oral and written invitation to the public meeting that evening. The reception in homes and for the meeting was rather astounding to us—very receptive, friendly and unsuspecting. All ages arrived for the meeting from toddlers to elderly people. A few minutes were spent in greeting and briefly explaining the Faith, Baha'u'llah's new message. Then the films,

It's Just the Beginning and *A New Wind* were shown and the first film repeated for some late arrivals. Following hospitality, thirteen people signed cards. We were able to arrange a follow-up meeting the next weekend with Bahá'ís from Miles City; the weekend after that with individuals from Billings. The North Plains Committee's approach was used and the State Committee planned a schedule that included five of the six remaining reservations. This included the:

| | |
|-------------|----------------------|
| Blackfeet | February 13-14, 1971 |
| Rocky Boy | February 27-28 |
| Ft. Belknap | March 13-14 |
| Flathead | March 27-28 |
| Ft. Peck | April 10-11 |

From the time some of the friends began joining the teaching teams on the Northern Cheyenne and were informed of the future schedule, the State soon became galvanized into action. We were able to obtain the use of the Tribal Halls for each of the planned dates. The friends brought sleeping bags for the floor and their own food and cookies so we could serve at the public meetings.

We would arrange to have a follow-up the next morning if possible, to reinforce any enrollments and in most cases could ask the closest assembly to be responsible for future visits. It wasn't always possible for the teaching teams to return regularly because of the distances involved. The Fort Peck Reservation was eight hours travel time for us from Butte, with three ten-minute gas stops. Usually we left by 4:00 am on a Saturday in order to arrive around Noon, organize into groups to give out invitations, return for a meal and the evening meeting.

Sunday mornings were follow-up and we began the return trip by 2 PM. Each reservation had its own spirit of reception to our efforts. Sometimes pranks were played on us and once at Browning we had a window broken and a threat made against us. We felt this was due to alcohol and the reservation police interfered. The pioneers from Cut Bank brought James Many Hides from Browning to St. Ignatius with them and three youth related to Mr. Many Hides enrolled.

In June of 1971, Hooper Dunbar, a Counselor in South America, had heard of our teaching successes on the reservations, and arranged to come to the State. Dick and Rigmor Mereness of Helena, with their family of three children and a local youth, met Mr. Dunbar in Billings on June 17th. They had a fold-up tent trailer for accommodations and a long station wagon.

No meeting could be planned at Crow Agency on the Crow Reservation or at Lame Deer on the Northern Cheyenne. On the outskirts of Ashland, which was just outside the Northern Cheyenne Reservation, an indoor rodeo arena was available. They divided into teams and covered the area, inviting people to an evening meeting where Hooper Dunbar would speak. Jack Saunders from Billings assisted by picking up people he knew from his previous trips to Lame Deer to bring to the meeting. They delayed beginning until Jack had arrived with people.

Hooper Dunbar gave a simple message and brought greetings from the Native Americans of South America to the North American Native people. They served coffee and cookies following the talk. One enrollment took place that always amazed Dick. Johnny Wolfe seemed to understand the message in spite of his inebriated condition. He was with two ladies, a mother and daughter, who had become Bahá'ís but they sat by themselves and gave support to his body as he listened to Hooper Dunbar.

Dick went over to him and greeted him and the man said, "Baha, Baha. In my language that means 'Let me see.'" He asked questions, talked about the principles, particularly oneness. Slowly his eyes seemed to clear up, his mind took over and he became more and more coherent and wanted to become a Bahá'í and wanted to know how to contribute.

The dates of June 21st-23rd were spent between Poplar and Wolf Point on the Ft. Peck Reservation. Mr. Dunbar loved to swim and he joined some people in the river. Lowell Nation was a youth in the group. He was hostile at first but after engaging in a conversation with Mr. Dunbar soon became a friend. Lowell had nothing else to do and was invited to join them on their journey. Hooper Dunbar never left Lowell, sleeping on the ground with him and they became inseparable. The only Bahá'í Native people who prepared food and welcomed them were the new Bahá'ís at Ft. Peck in Poplar. This was Reba and Ray Ogle, Romaine Firemoon and Effie Two Bulls (there may have been others) who had prepared a turkey dinner for them. Carol Koelzer

and her boys from Miles City came up to assist with the evening meeting.

From Poplar/Wolf Point they traveled to the Ft. Belknap Reservation on June 24th. Here, the mosquitoes were so fierce they abandoned camping and moved to a hotel for the evening. The meeting was held in Harlem, which is off the reservation. There were enrollments from our first event in March, but if any support was received for this event, it would have come from nearby Bahá'ís.

Rocky Boy was the next reservation visited on the 25th where they found their way to a Native gathering at a Sun Dance. Here they were met with resistance. The people wanted to know who they were to interrupt their gathering with a white man's beliefs. They left in respect to the Sun Dance gathering. At our first meeting in February, we attracted a brother and sister who joined us in March at the Ft. Belknap gathering.

The following day they continued on to the Blackfeet Reservation stopping at Cut Bank to see if the Bahá'í pioneers could assist them on that reservation. They could not, so they traveled on to Heart Butte for a meeting that fell apart. The father of the youth who began the journey with them picked up his daughter in Browning and was mostly upset that they were late in meeting him at the exact time and place he arranged. With no meeting in Browning, they camped overnight at Heart Butte. Prayers were said on all reservations. There were no Bahá'ís to assist in planning a meeting on the Flathead Reservation. Richard Hockley from Challis, Idaho, met them in Missoula on June 29th to pick up Hooper Dunbar and Lowell Nation following a meeting. He took them to the Lapwai Reservation in Idaho and then on to family property at Paradise Pines, Idaho. Lowell Nation stayed on with the Hockley family for a while and the circumstances of his return to his reservation are not known. The journey took about two weeks and Mr. Dunbar said Montana was about twenty years behind South America.

We knew much was needed to be accomplished, but we were delighted to have made a beginning. A Committee note mentions that at the meeting in Browning held in February of 1971, eight were enrolled that evening. Wherever an effort was made to invite the people to a meeting, the Committee found that a number would attend and someone enrolled. Once the planned dates were decided, we found individuals to arrange for the use of the Tribal Halls. A bulletin informed all Bahá'ís of the events. We always had the support of individuals from Ft. Yates when we met on the Ft. Peck and sometimes from Canada. There developed a core of people, Committee members and others, who committed to showing up for these events. Even the weather cooperated that winter with storms moving in before or afterward.

The one Reservation that remained unopened was the Crow. Plans were made to focus a full week on that area and include the Northern Cheyenne at the same time,

because they were so close. We arranged to rent a hall from December 26, 1971, through January 2, 1972, at Hardin, which was near the Crow Reservation. One of our Committee members was well acquainted with Bahá'ís from the South, and they were invited to assist us. Two cars of experienced individuals in the early efforts of mass teaching in the South arrived; a young couple, of which the husband was a professional musician, were returning to Nevada after having been teaching in the South, joined the effort; people from Oregon came and some were Native Americans; a number of in-state people, who were free from work this time of the year, were a part of the group and the Auxiliary Board member from Canada, Angus Cowan and his wife, Bobby, added their efforts. Terese Blanding volunteered to be the cook.

We soon learned that there was a misunderstanding in the price quoted for rental. What we thought was a week's rental turned into a daily rental. We knew it was not possible to cancel the event because individuals had begun traveling. We concluded we could only explain our situation when everyone arrived. The group's solution was to contribute a dollar amount for breakfast and a soup (stew) dinner and everyone handle their own lunch. Terese made dark rye bread daily that was filling. Some wild game was furnished for the soup, and with cutting these corners, the cook was able to make up the rent difference from contributions minus food costs.

We set up groups praying throughout the night, with individuals setting alarms or making arrangements to be awakened so that they could take their turn. A gathering for all began at 7:00 am followed by a session led by the Auxiliary Board Member, Angus Cowan, and then an evaluation of the previous day. We divided into teams that covered all the towns on both reservations. The people from the South walked the streets of Hardin talking to individuals. Street teaching is not very successful in Montana winters.

Those who traveled out to an area were given a sack lunch. The first day, they located a meeting hall for a specific night: met with the police to inform them of their purpose, and some were assigned to meet with the Tribal Leaders to receive permission. The second day, the teams returned to their area, going door to door to invite people to the meeting. The third day, they returned and held the meeting. Each team had a different experience, but on the whole, considered that everyone received the Message very positively.

Those in town had prayers again at 2:00 pm, songs, a Teaching Committee Report, a session with the Auxiliary Board Member and then returned to the streets of Hardin again. The evening session began at 7:00 pm to prepare for a Public Proclamation Meeting, which was conducted by the people from the South. At the last proclamation meeting, many of the Bahá'ís living on the reservation were brought in from the various areas for that evening and were returned, following the meeting. The days were long, and I recall my

husband tried to nap so he could make the return trip. Some younger, energetic men volunteered to do this and he was most thankful.

On this final evening two individuals from the Crow Reservation came to the Hall. One was a young man whose path the Bahá'ís had crossed during the week. He raised his hand that he would like to be a Bahá'í. This was James Door. Then an older man spoke to him in his Crow tongue and Chester Other Medicine indicated that he wished to be a Bahá'í. That evening was very moving.

Our time in Hardin was about up and we knew we needed to be in the area longer. One of the ladies from the South said she could stay two weeks and about two others volunteered. One Bahá'í family from Lame Deer, Doreen and Alvin Birdhat, who had enrolled in January, offered their home for these individuals to stay in since they could go to the home of relatives. The young woman was a paraplegic from an auto accident, who moved about in a wheel chair, and her husband was a deaf mute.

The deepening team who lived in their home said the temperature dropped to around 20 below and their sleeping bags froze to the floor. It is interesting that the service and love shown to the Birdhats by Ruth and Jack Saunders during Doreen's continuing illnesses with hospital stays in Billings, was remembered by a member of her family. Years later, as an angry and belligerent patient in the Veteran's Hospital at Ft. Harrison, he mellowed when he learned the nurse attending him was a Bahá'í and knew the Saunders. This was my sister-in-law, Rigmor Mereness.

From late January 1972 through March, The Army of Light, a teaching team who had been in Alaska, came to the state to lend their assistance. They began in Missoula and circled the State, stopping on the reservations.

The State Committee would join them at a reservation teaching event. When they departed for Oklahoma one Indian Youth from Poplar traveled with them, Willard (Terry) Youpee. His is a story of becoming a Bahá'í because his grandparents from the Fort Peck Reservation recognized the teachings of Baha'u'llah as being the truth. They knew living on the reservation was difficult for young people and encouraged him to follow this religion as a pattern for living. Tragic as it unfolded, after returning to his reservation from a winter with the Bahá'ís in Oklahoma, he got caught up in wrong ways and ended up being sent to prison. At the time, the pioneer Saba Nolley, attended his trial for his support. Unfortunate as this seems, he has realized life produces tests and he has come to understand freedom as 'Abdu'l-Baha spoke of His days in prison. We have exchanged letters over the years, and we were pleased he could accept books sent directly from the Publishing Trust. These have helped center his spiritual path on a level the Native American seems naturally directed toward. After more than 25 years in prison he is soon to be released into a Prerelease Center. Both Charles and Saba Nolley have stayed in close contact with

the Bahá'ís on this reservation following their move to the Chicago area where Charles has served the National Center.

One of the strongest teaching events sponsored by the State Committee was held in Wolf Point on September 9-10, 1972. Twenty-three Bahá'ís were present with invitations extended to the Indian Teaching Committee of Canada, District Committees of North Dakota, Idaho and Wyoming. The conference was intended to be more Native directed than non-Native for the purpose of learning from them how we could do a better job in reaching the Native people. The Native people conducted the meeting and discussed issues. We listened, learned, cooked and served them. A Summary of this conference is included.

Pioneers have been on the reservations for short periods. Dr. John Cromer and his wife, Winifred, were at the Ft. Belknap Agency in July 1975 and teaching was reinforced with their efforts. The Short Obligatory Prayer was translated into Assinibone by Mrs. Florence Cole, who had become a Bahá'í. We came for a Unity Breakfast at their home in April 1976, which was advertised as open to the public and to which we had been invited to speak. Later, we walked with Winifred around the Agency, stopping at Lillian Shortman's home. She was a plain woman, had endured ridicule, but opened up and invited us into her home, which was full of pets.

We met her elderly father for the first time and heard some unusual stories from him. Later in the year, the Cromers brought Lillian to a conference in Bozeman where a film was shown. I asked Lillian to sit in front where she could see and hear better and afterward asked her if there was a book she would like. She selected one; however, it was much later that I learned she could not read. She liked the Message and said she wanted to tell her father about it. He said it was the truth and their prophecies told of it. They both became Bahá'ís as well as Lillian's son.

Lillian's father was to be 97 in August when he passed away on June 22, 1979. On our last teaching event on his reservation, he asked to be taken to different homes so he could invite people to the meeting. He wanted to have a Spiritual Assembly formed, but this never developed. Lillian was able to attend a Summer School outside of Red Lodge, where she led a group of us on a nature walk to point out the uses of various plants we usually ignored. She also attended the Delegate Convention in Butte. She and her son stayed with us. She was among the many true friends we made on the reservations.

By 1977, Charles and Saba Nolley were pioneering at the Ft. Peck Reservation. Saba is Persian and it was found that Persians were met with openness by the Native Americans. Her parents, Mr and Mrs. Ayman, who have given exemplary service in Iran and the U.S., came for a visit, and they were shown great respect and assisted the teaching efforts during their stay. Following the Nolley's presence on the reservation, we did a teaching event by

having a Pow Wow. This was the first time we witnessed and were enthralled by the Hoop Dance performed by Kevin Locke, who came to this event.

Teaching teams under the direction of the Billings and Yellowstone Counties Assemblies established an assembly on the Crow Reservation in 1979 and enrolled a large number of believers. None of the Assemblies on the reservations functioned as an administrative body, but we were encouraged to see that they were formed each Ridvan. The Billings and Yellowstone County Assemblies took on the responsibility of assembly formations for both the Northern Cheyenne and Crow Reservations each Ridvan. While Ruth and Jack Saunders lived in Billings, they would pack a large cooler of sandwiches, fruit, cookies and drinks and prepare for a picnic. It meant going to each house to locate the residents, traveling dirt roads very difficult with muddy ruts from the spring thaws. If members couldn't come, they would obtain a signature. James and Hannah Ant always welcomed them. Ruth stayed with shy Hannah during her hospitalization in Billings and James stayed in their home.

There have been many more efforts than are being recorded here. The Crow Fair in August is a time when Bahá'ís have brought their tents to set up on the fairgrounds so they could mingle with the families. Carolyn Johnson (Billings) found great joy in her association at the Fair.

In the '90's, Dan Gieger became a Bahá'í with deep ties to this Reservation. It is most laudable that following his marriage to Diana Virostko in Billings that Diana became the Administrative Assistant to the Project Manager, Mr. Fariborz Sahba, for the Mount Carmel Projects Team. They both served at the World Center. It is disappointing that in the thirty years since a Committee began teaching in earnest that the souls we depended upon have passed on and teaching efforts have not been sustained. We think that where

the American Bahá'í has been received in a home that it has been a continuing teacher.

The Blackfeet Reservation in Browning has become the home of Laura and Robert Hanson with both involved in the school system. Robert has made an effort to learn their language, which has only been allowed to be spoken in the schools since our early teaching efforts. Annually, they enlist Bahá'ís to assist them to provide the service of cool drinking water for the July Pow Wow. Having pioneers on a reservation is the most effective way to teach.

Currently (2004) living in Hardin is Dr. Deborah Sogge-Kermani and her husband, Mahmud. They have hosted prayer meetings in their home and are attracting souls, along with feeling support from other Bahá'ís who have moved to their area. Hardin is on the border of the Crow Reservation and Dr. Sogge-Kermani works at the Crow Agency Hospital.

Jeanne and Dale Morrow have been on the Flathead Reservation at St. Ignatius for several years. Three of their children completed high school locally. They have prepared the way for traveling teachers in a positive way, including Red Grammer and The Spirit Path Runners, and host a regular prayer breakfast.

Now that it is a new century, we can reflect that these early stirrings and teaching efforts were directed to many "blessed spots". Some have come into existence and faded away. We are now clustered into the section known as the Western States, blessed by 'Abdu'l-Baha with a prayer for growth, that includes efforts from more than one generation. Presently, we are under the outstretched arm of a new Institution, The Regional Council for the Western States, and they are leading us into the process of Entry by Troops and we will respond. It has been impossible to name the souls who helped create all the growth in communities, but God knows who you are. It is just the beginning.

Labor Day 1961 - Blackfeet Reservation, Browning: William Musler, Betty and Fred Bennett, unknown, Guy Yellow Wings (Peigan), Sampson Knowlton (Peigan), George Miller, Harvey Evans (taking photo). This trip followed the earlier efforts of Sampson Knowlton and George Miller.



Banff, Alberta Conference: Gloria Wenk (Butte) and Elizabeth Johnson (Tacoma) with young friends.



1966 Labor Day Tree Planting - Blackfeet Reservation, Browning.
 CENTER: Left-Tribal Chm., Earl Old Person
 RIGHT: Browning Mayor. Others unknown
 First State Goals Com. Teaching on a
 Reservation



Presentation of a Scroll with Baha'u'llah's
 Words to Tribal Chief, Earl Old Person
 (center) and Browning Mayor.
 Lady unknown. First State Goals Com.
 teaching on Blackfeet Reservation.



Travel teaching trip with Counselor Hooper Dunbar, June 1971 provided by Dick and Rigmor Mereness (left) and children Barbara, Ty (seated with Lowell Nation) and Lisa (3rd child). Taken on Ft. Peck Reservation. Standing (tallest in back), Dan Defender from South Dakota, 2nd from right back row, Carol Koelzer, Miles City. Others not known.

"Army of Light" Team - 1972
 BACK ROW - R: Caldwell boy is
 Grandson of Butte Caldwell family.



"Army of Light" team.
 RIGHT FRONT: Williard Terry
 Youpee (Sioux),
 new enrollee, Poplar



Hannah and James Ant
 (standing)
 No. Cheyenne at Lame Deer



Elizabeth Johnson with
 Sampson Knowlton (Peigan) in
 Banff, Alberta. Both traveled to Montana.



District Teaching Com. Proclamation for Crow and Northern Cheyenne Reservations at site in Hardin, MT, Dec. 26-31, 1971 FRONT: 4th from R (standing) Angus Cowan, ABM, later Counselor.



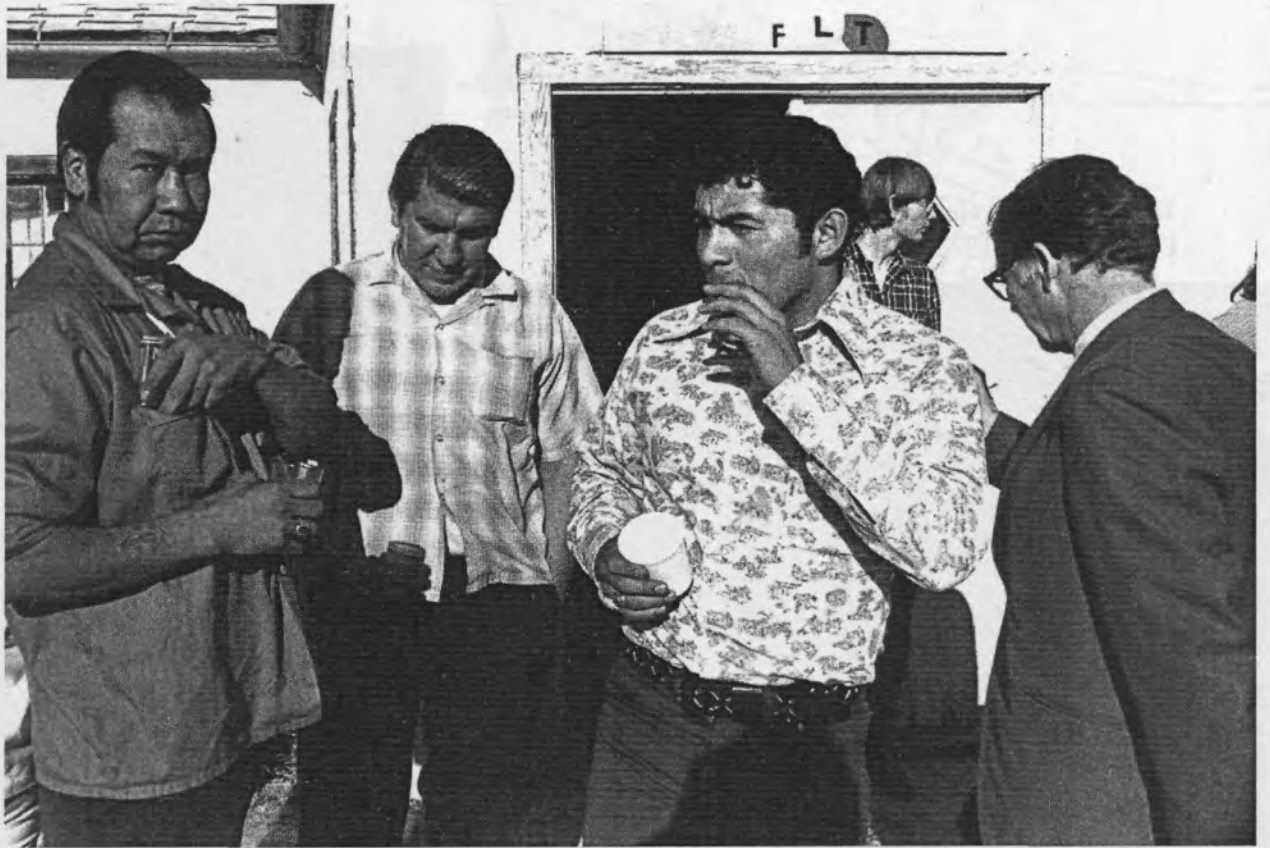
Second from left - James Door, First Crow Believer Proclamation at Hardin, MT 1971.

Presentation to Crow Tribal
Nation Council Chairman,
Edison Realbird.
Dec. 1971/Jan. 1972
Hardin teaching week.



Presentation to Hardin City Council by Annette Young Dec. 1971/Jan. 1972 Hardin teaching week.

Phil Ides, Toby Tyler, ??, Angus Cowan, Counselor Dec. 1971/Jan. 1972 Hardin teaching week.



Bobby Cowan, Wife of Counselor Angus Cowan Dec. 1971/Jan. 1972 Hardin teaching week,

Annette Young, So. Carolina
Dec. 1971/Jan. 1972 Hardin teaching week.



Terese Blanding, Cook and Betty Bennett
Dec. 1971/Jan. 1972 Hardin teaching week.



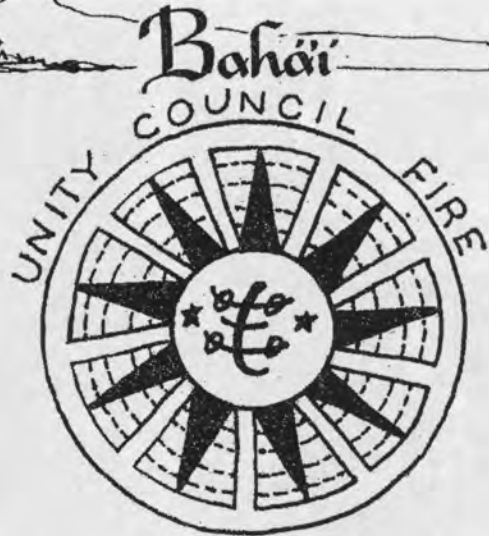
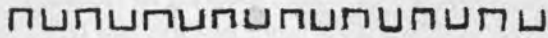
Mary E. Steil, Poplarz Pioneer Dec. 1971/Jan. 1972 Hardin teaching week.



Bahá'í

LAME DEER, MT.

SEPTEMBER 17-18-1977



"SO GREAT IS THE LIGHT OF UNITY THAT IT WILL ILLUMINE THE ENTIRE EARTH.."

O' GREAT SPIRIT,
Whose voice I hear in the winds,
And whose breath gives life to all the world,
hear me! I am small and weak, I need your
strength and wisdom.

LET ME WALK IN BEAUTY, and make my eyes
ever behold the red and purple sunset.

MAKE MY HANDS respect the things you have
made and my ears sharp to hear your voice.

MAKE ME WISE so that I may understand the
things you have taught my people.

LET ME LEARN the lessons you have hidden
in every leaf and rock.

I SEEK STRENGTH, not to be greater than my
brother, but to fight my greatest
enemy — myself.

MAKE ME ALWAYS READY to come to you with
clean hands and straight eyes.

SO WHEN LIFE FADES, as the fading sunset,
my spirit may come to you
without shame.



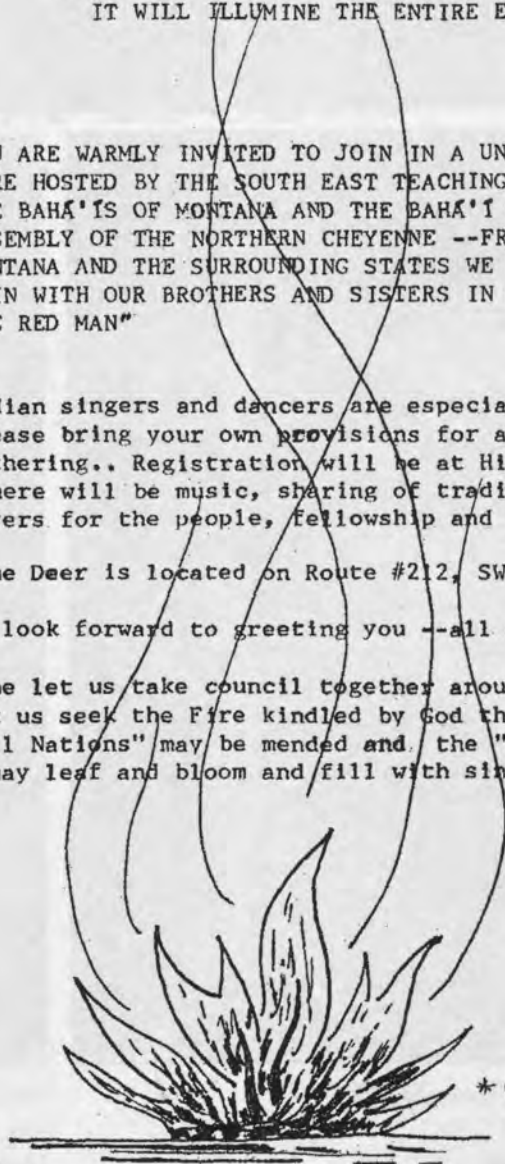
YOU ARE WARMLY INVITED TO JOIN IN A UNITY COUNCIL
FIRE HOSTED BY THE SOUTH EAST TEACHING COMMITTEE OF
THE BAHÁ'ÍS OF MONTANA AND THE BAHÁ'Í SPIRITUAL
ASSEMBLY OF THE NORTHERN CHEYENNE --FROM ALL OVER
MONTANA AND THE SURROUNDING STATES WE WILL COME TO
JOIN WITH OUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS IN THE "LAND OF
THE RED MAN"

Indian singers and dancers are especially welcomed.
Please bring your own provisions for a camp-out *
gathering.. Registration will be at High Noon.
There will be music, sharing of traditions, talks,
prayers for the people, fellowship and love.

Lame Deer is located on Route #212, SW of Miles City

We look forward to greeting you --all are welcome

Come let us take council together around the fires...
let us seek the Fire kindled by God that the "Hoop of
All Nations" may be mended and the "sacred tree
may leaf and bloom and fill with singing birds.."



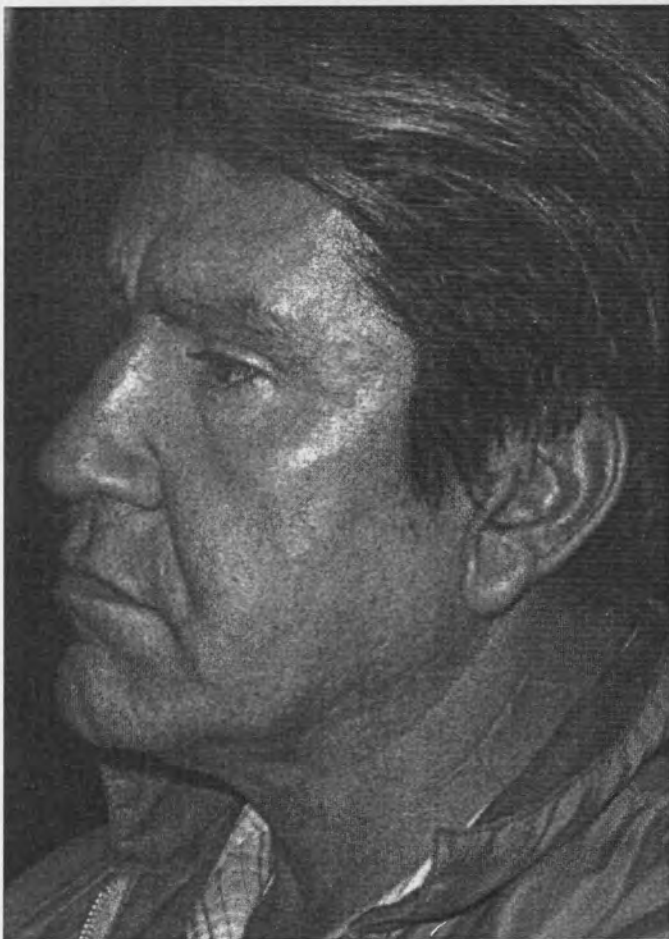
* Community Center
by Catholic Church



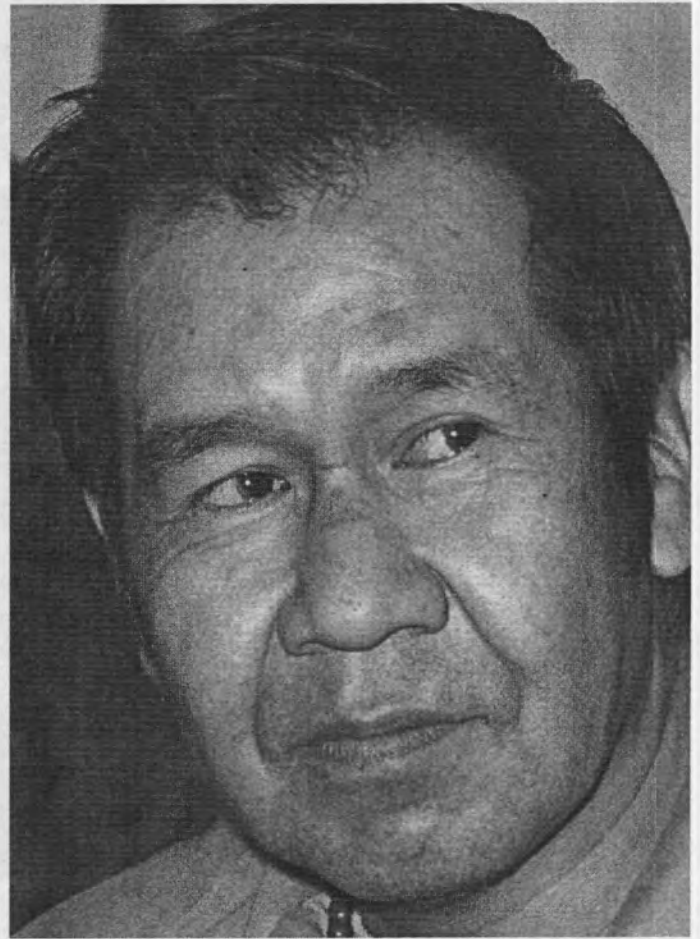


1957 Dr. Melane (sp?),
first pioneer to Crow Res.
at Crow Agency Hospital -
1957, speaking in Helena
in home of Ruth and Jack
Saunders.

(L-R: John Morgan,
Dr. Melane, Betty Bennett,
Bill Musler and unknown
from back view)



Tobey Tyler, Makah, Neah Bay, WA
Dec. 1971/Jan. 1972
Hardin teaching week.



Phil Ides, Makah, Neah Bay, WA
Dec. 1971/Jan. 1972
Hardin teaching week.

FORT BELKNAP CAMP CRIER



Volume 7

No. 18

Fort Belknap Agency, Harlem, Montana

April 30, 1976

15 cents per copy

You are invited to
a Unity Breakfast
Saturday May 1st,
Eleven A.M. at Cromer's
House # 100 Ft. Belknap.
Sponsored by Bahá'í
Faith. Phone 2355 for
reservations. "O thou
kind Lord, Unite
all, let the religions
agree, make the na-
tions one." Abdu'lBahá

The Harlem News

75th Year No. 16

Harlem, Blaine County, Montana

Wed., Apr. 21, 1976

Bennetts are speakers at public meeting

On Saturday, May 1, the local Fort Belknap Bahai Community will host a Unity Breakfast open to the public. Fred and Betty Bennett from Butte, Montana will be special speakers. They plan to show slides of their pilgrimage to the Holy Land and discuss the destiny of America.

Fred Bennett is a Senior counsellor at East Junior High School in Butte, Montana where he has worked with the school system for more than 26 years. He was raised in Livingston, Montana and loves to fish, camp and garden.

Betty Bennett is a native Montanan raised in Townsend. She became a Bahai in Helena in 1937 when she was fifteen. She now works as a secretary at Montana Technical Institute in Butte and has raised 3 daughters, including a set of twins.

Fred states he was attracted to the Faith because of its social teachings, including the independent investigation of truth, the complementary nature of science and religion, and the establishment of a universal auxiliary language.

Betty says she became a Bahai in response to her minister's announcement that Christ would return in our lifetime. "When Bahai" made the statement that he is the return of the Christ Spirit, and it was upheld with investigation, I felt that I had found truth."

Everyone is invited to come hear these interesting speakers. Please call 2355 for breakfast reservations.

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MEETING 'ABDU'L-BAHA IN SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH

September - October 1912

by

FENY E. PAULSON OF MISSOULA, MONTANA

Photocopied from the Pilgrim's Notes in the Archives of the Green Acre Bahá'í School, July 9, 1977, by Charles Nolley. Retyped for the Montana History Compilation by Betty Bennnett, Butte

Presented to the Bahá'ís of Missoula and Missoula County for the Feast of Kamal, 134 B.E.

MEETING 'ABDU'L-BAHA IN SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH

Travelling from Missoula, Montana by the Chicago, Milwaukee, Ry., making connection with Oregon Short Line going south, I arrived in Salt Lake City in a little less than twenty-four hours. The accommodations secured at the Young Womens Christian Association were exceedingly modest in furnishings. The room was so large that the four occupants were lost to each other. The entrance hall was crowded with scaffolding, tarpulins, and canvas, light dim—all dirty because of the remodeling. Then the food: A dead fly in the German fries, a chicken wing with all the feathers (so it seemed), roaches at the soda fountain; I was grateful for the hard rolls and tea.

The telegram sent me announcing the date of arrival failed to state the name of the railroad; whether Grand Central and on which of the five sections, or the Oregon Short Line. Hence, I spent most of my second day making the street car circuit, station to station, reading schedules of train arrivals.

'Abdu'l-Baha arrived in the late afternoon of September 29, 1912 on one of late sections of the Grand Central R. R. With Him were Mirza Mohmood, His secretary, M. Ali Akbar, M. Sohrab, Dr. Fareed and our Japanese Bahá'í friend, Fugita. 'Abdu'l-Baha was wearing the customary abba and turban; the others fezes. It was an oriental picture in an occidental setting. I saw at the far length of the station platform where the day coach passengers usually alight from trains. 'Abdu'l-Baha liked to ride in the day coach and, too, it was less costly. They awaited my approach. The Masters powerful greeting! "Allaho Abha!" rings and vibrates potentially its meaning "Glory of God," awakening the soul to spiritual strength and remaining always with one.

It was decided to ride in the motor stage of the new Salt Lake City Hotel. On this ride the Master inquired of my trip down from Montana and then replied: "I will pray at the Threshold of the Blessed Perfection that you will always be taken care of." Somehow these words conveyed the thought that there would be need of protection in the future

as there had been the past. The Salt Lake City Hotel was very expensive and 'Abdu'l-Baha was very economical.

Our group walked to the Kenyon Hotel where the price was more satisfactory. The room 'Abdu'l-Baha used as reception room had a roll-type desk across the room near one end, and chairs on both sides against the two walls. No doubt it was used by salesmen to exhibit their goods.

It was the week of the convention of the Mormon Church; the annual State Fair. The city was thronged with people from Utah, adjoining states, and beyond. According to M. Sohrab (whom I knew in Washington, D.C. as Persian translator on Tablets from the Master), the following day 'Abdu'l-Baha stopped at the Mormon Tabernacle where the National Irrigation Congress was in session and where 'Abdu'l-Baha was invited to a seat on the speakers platform with those prominent in irrigation work. 'Abdu'l-Baha soon left and attended the state fair the remainder of the day.

The program for this busy week called for a parade with beautiful electrically lighted floats in Agricultural motifs; and also the showing of the prize winning stock at the fair. The parade used the street car tracks and so these were roped off. The sidewalks on both sides of the street, the windows and balconies of the business blocks were crowded with people eagerly waiting for the dark of the night to behold the spectacle. Attention was focused on that roped-off open space—when at dusk the flowing-robed figure of the Master with majestic bearing followed by His oriental companions, walked up the open space. A reporter responded to the unusual happening. The following day there appeared a first-page story in the paper. People here as elsewhere are too occupied to listen to the Message of Baha'u'llah that the Center of the Covenant had come so far to give them. The Light of the world had come and there was none to see; the Voice of the Shepherd was here and none to heed.

The following day I received the phone call I had been awaiting. The interview took place in the small room with the roll-top desk and chairs. Recall my mentioning the dirty hall at the Y.W.C.A. and the battle I had with food? The Master's first words were "Luxury and comfort are not the all important things in this life."

The Master served tea, saying, "This is the Lord's Supper you are having with me." An institution of the Christian Church the thought of which would cause me self-conscious agony, I now was having with the Center of the Covenant.

He also said, "I am your Father." That was to take the place of the father I had never remembered, and whom I had so often tried to recall.

'Abdu'l-Baha was the Supreme Psychirastist.

At the end of the interview the Master took a Bahá'í stone, pressed it to His forehead, then placed it on each of my eyes, His lips moving silently in prayer or blessing. He also gave me a locket-sized likeness of Himself as a father gives a treasure to one of His children.

These details of mine are personal. Although the details of each person in the presence of 'Abdu'l-Baha are individually different, they are the means to the same end—spiritual progress. Incidents forgotten and hidden in the recesses of one's being, in His presence, are in a flash perceived and unobtrusively aired, alchemized as it were, removing veils that inhibit necessary spiritual development. The problems and burdens that were but stepping stones in the past become non-essentials in the light of His divine love.

The interview was over. M. Sohrab asked me to accompany him while he shopped for food on their trip from Salt Lake City to San Francisco. I recall only that he ordered a leg of lamb to be roasted and called for. In answer to my question: "We eat when the Master speaks of wanting food."

During the long wait in the passenger station 'Abdu'l-Baha spoke in Persian until the train pulled in. Of the region in which I lived then, He said, "It is dark, very, very dark." He asked me, "You will write Ahmad?" Each of the four letters to Ahmad during World War One, after 'Abdu'l-Baha's return to Haifa, brought a blessed Tablet from the Master.

He gave our Bahá'í friend Fugita instructions to remain to see that the baggage was safely on the train following and bade me stay with him. 'Abdu'l-Baha left. Destination San Francisco. After a short stay, it irked me to remain longer even with Fugita's good company. Needless to say, any travel I have done since has brought me trouble and weeks and even months of delay with baggage. Life would be easier if we knew the wisdom of obedience. Lack of obedience is a great weakness.

The Master did not forget me but along His journey on the way to the Holy Land, I received a postcard from Niagra Falls; from England, newspapers on the Master's activities in London, and a postcard from Geneva, Switzerland. He thus sent news items of His visits and works to one lone Bahá'í in the Rocky Mountain Region of Montana. These are very cherished (sic) recollections.

Signed: Feny E. Paulson.

MONTANA BAHÁ'Í PIONEER PASSES

February 28 of this year (1963) marked the passing of John Wilcott, aged pioneer for the Bahá'í Faith and also early Montana pioneer, in Great Falls hospital after a slight stroke at the age of 92. His body was interred in the Winifred Cemetery on his own property where he lived for the past 54 years.

He was born in Jay, New York in 1871 of a Canadian-French Mother and an English-French Father. He was a great nephew of the Charboneau, a member of the Lewis and Clark Expedition who took the renowned Inidan woman Sackajawea for a wife. He spent his early life in the Adirondack Mountains, Ausable Forks and the area of Lake Placid as his Mother's home was in Montreal.

He married at 17 but was separated soon afterwards. Two children of this marriage died in infancy. He became an artist and worked in New York State as an art sketcher and artist for advertising companies (in those days not known by that name). He worked in jewelry stores brocking jewelry and in furniture stores designing decorative parts. After his divorce with his young wife he drifted with an uncle into the woods of Wisconsin living the ways of a trapper. He could relate stories of these experiences by the hours.

Later, in the early 1900's, thinking of settling again, he used his art in the display of flowers, etc., and became a great Landscape gardener (books of this work can be found with his son, Norman Wilcott, in Great Falls). His last job in this line was that of private landscape gardener on the estates of the late J. B. Simmons, Bed Manufacturing Head and the Daughter, a Mrs. Lance.

While working in this last position someone visited the place and accidentally talked of a new religion, The Bahá'í Faith. From that day forward his one thought in life was the promotion of this new work of God.

He sought out other Bahá'ís to learn all he could. In 1906 in Racine, Wisconsin, he became a member and served on the First Spiritual Assembly there. He helped teach the Faith through eastern Wisconsin and on into Chicago and other Illinois areas. While there he learned that the actual son of the new Prophet was coming to America. This was 'Abdu'l-Baha. But before he would arrive (1912) he wanted one Bahá'í in every state of the United States. Mr. Wilcott was torn between his desire to remain in Chicago and meet this majestic person or obey Him and be one of those to go forth. Being a faithful Bahá'í the latter conquered. He convinced two friends, John Behrens and Thornton Chase to go with him. In 1910 they left for the Great Far West. Mr. Behrens choosing Idaho; Chase, California; and Mr. Wilcott our beloved State of Montana.

However, he did not travel alone. He took his aging mother who had also embraced his Faith. They "landed" in Fergus County two miles north of what is now known as Winifred. Here they both took up homestead which gave

them 640 acres for a ranch.

At that time Montana was an unsettled, wild country of snakes, sagebrush and jackrabbits. He carried a revolver at all times (this is also in the hands of son). Lewistown, 40 miles away was the only trading center. He would hitch up a team or two of horses and travel this treak through the old mining town of Kendall...a trip of two days, one way! He built a large log house and a bunk house (which stands today). To his many Bahá'í friends in the east he was known as the cowboy Bahá'í and his picture and stories are publishing in the first volume of the western history of the Faith.

Not knowing much about lands and farming he sunk his fortune into fruit trees, flowers, shrubs, etc. at a loss of all after one and two Montana winters. With the help of hired hands he turned to dry-land farming. He built up the usual farm with the usual equipment and animals. He and his family existed through the winter kills, the army worms, the droughts, the scorching sun, the smut, the grasshoppers, the hail and any other blight that might hit Montana farmers. Having visions of his gracious 'Abdu'l-Baha he vowed to remain all his life in this one spot.

In 1916 he met and married the little beautiful 21 year old Johanna Schmidt (he was then 40). She was visiting friends in Montana and had 6 years before just arrived from Germany.

His mother died shortly afterwards and is buried beside his wife and himself on the Winifred property. (Mrs. Wilcott died in November 1962 in Lewistown. She never became a Bahá'í).

Three children blessed this marriage. A son and two daughters. They live in scattered parts of our hemisphere. A daughter, Wanda, lives with her two boys, Greg and Craig in Anchorage, Alaska. She is not a Bahá'í. Norman, the son, lives in Great Falls at 1516 2nd Ave. N. and has become a renowned interior decorator and contract painter there. He is active in the city and states affairs. He and his wife, Lola, have two children, Reggie and Bonnie. They also do not profess the Bahá'í Faith. Mr. Wilcott was living with them at the time of his passing.

The other daughter, Ethel, is a Bahá'í and has been teaching the Faith of her Father for the past 28 years. She embraced the Faith in Berkeley, California in 1937 when she left Winifred to go on to college. She has traveled throughout the U.S. and two years in Bermuda teaching and lecturing for the Faith. She has resided with her daughter, Sally, for the past 4 years in South America in Bolivia, where she has witnessed the enrollment of people in masses to her faith. Thousands of Indians of the Alti Plano in the high Andes are embracing the Faith daily as well as people all over the world. She made her home in Cochabamba 3-1/2 years and the last 6 months in Santa Cruz, an uncivilized

tropical town where she has enrolled more than enough members to assure the needed assembly in April. It was for this reason she could not return to be with her aging father before his death.

She states that the work of her father and the hundreds like him has not died, but has multiplied a thousand fold. The people now have a fuller meaning of religion, God, Christ and the other prophets of God. In the Bahá'í communities all over the world the people of all races, classes and nationalities live in harmony and love.

(These words were prepared by Ethel McAllister, his Bahá'í daughter and were recopied for State Goals Files by Secy. Betty Bennett. They were read at a Montana Conference in Helena, December 4th, 1966 by Mrs. Nellie Mereness, who was a close friend of Mrs. Wilcott. She remembers that Mrs. Wilcott could very well have been a Bahá'í if someone other than family members had been close enough to teach her. She believed in the teachings for she had read Mr. Wilcott his newsletter for years when he was not able to.)

John Henry Wilcott: A Pioneer Twice Over

By Mr. D. Llewellyn Drong

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Part 1: Early Years

*"Abdu'l-Baha says little about destiny,
but teaches much about will."*

The region of the Adirondacks is one of ancient mountains, eroded by nature's forces to smooth rounded forms and covered everywhere with broadleaf and conifer forest. Nearly every peak is below the tree line so the effect is a richness of trees that is the arborist's counterpart to the richness of grasses of the prairies. In the northeast portion of what, today, is the Adirondack Forest Preserve flows the Ausable River, a small drainage that has cut deep, dramatic gorges in the limestone that forms the very bones of the earth. Here is Essex County, an area nearly the size of Delaware with only thirty-seven thousand people. In its northern portion lies the village of Jay, on the Ausable River, twenty-six straight-line miles west-southwest of Burlington, Vermont across Lake Champlain.

In this beautiful setting in 1871, Eliza (Frazier) Wilcott received an early present on Christmas Eve of a son. He was named John Henry Wilcott.

'Abdu'l-Baha says little about destiny, but teaches much about will. If we accept that will is a prime determiner of the course of a person's life, then one of the lessons of John Henry Wilcott's life is how will can determine a courageous and steadfast course of action and leave an example of living by one's convictions.

From John Wilcott's daughter (Ethel Frost, a Bahá'í pioneer in Puerto Rico) and from the archives of the U.S. Bahá'í National Center, we learn that Eliza Frazier was a French Canadian, "the French part going directly back to Napoleon." It is by a previous marriage that she acquired the name Frazier and gave birth to William, John Wilcott's half-brother, and a number of half-sisters. John's father appears to have been English and Scottish, so it comes as no surprise that in nineteenth century rural New York that John's upbringing would be in the Presbyterian Church. The detached observer may feel justified in believing that the Calvinist work ethic was thoroughly ingrained in John during his formative period and showed itself to good effect in later years.

Of John's childhood and education nothing has been discovered as of this writing. From family members, however, it is learned that as a young man John spent time and earned some living as a trapper along the St. Lawrence River and traded with Canadians. Frost tells us, "From what I can figure out he must have spent a great deal of his life with his uncles

around these mountains hunting etc. on up into Cheasapeake Bay {sic} and Lake Charbonneau which carries the name of his great, great uncle. Yes, the one that went with Louis{sic} and Clark on their expedition." In time he found opportunity to develop talent as an artist. Ethel Frost tells us, "Dad also worked somewhere in New York as a commercial artist for furniture companies. I have seen drawings of his beautiful designs for the carvings on the backs of chairs which was the 'in' thing in those days. And he worked for jewelry companies chasing the intricate designs. He painted in water color, pencil and India ink." In later years, as a family man, this artistic ability would awaken the talents of his son who produced paintings and drawings of striking quality.

John's artistic ability may well have led him to his work as a landscape gardener for the Simmons Bed manufacturing firm. There he worked for the Lances, the family of Mr. Simmons' daughter. At least some of his work was around the Lance home. The Lances were apparently hospitable to John who sometimes received a piece of pie or the like at the greenhouse via a family servant.

While the order of events cannot be determined from the records and notes at hand, it is possible to determine that in his twenty-fourth year, John Wilcott resided in Providence, Rhode Island. The marriage certificate for his first marriage records that as his place of residence when he married Nellie Mae Stevens of Keeseville, New York. It is conjectural, but possible, that John met Miss Stevens while still in New York since Keeseville is a short distance away from Jay, located on Lake Champlain's shores. If that was the case, it seems it may have been their decision to begin life together in Providence. The marriage is recorded as being in Keeseville on the eleventh of July 1894 and conducted by J. H. Clark, Methodist Minister.

But the marriage was not to endure. Family members recount that one child was born to the couple but died. Later, Nellie Mae divorced John. The next segment of his life seems to be in Saginaw, Michigan, and then Chicago. No mention is made of Nellie Mae in either place. Assuming the end of the marriage in the East, John's move to Michigan may represent an effort to start life anew, but no record of his time in Michigan other than his being there is at hand. Whatever the case, he appears next in Chicago where he became a devout member of the Salvation Army. There we find the first indications of John Wilcott's outlook on the world and on people. Frost says, "I do not know if he personally knew Booth or not {William Booth, founded the Salvation Army in London's East End, never left England.

Ballington Booth and Evangeline Cory Booth, William's son and daughter, spent some time working in America: auth} but he revered him and his teachings of a 'World Army' uniting all peoples and all religions in one. He considered him a Bahá'í before his time."

Apparently, at this time in his life, John Wilcott discovered the Bahá'í Faith. Frost recalls him speaking of that time and referring to a tent. Since his move to Montana was before 'Abdu'l-Baha's visit to America, this must have had to do with other gatherings of the time. Frost recalls his mentioning old friends of the period such as Thornton Chase, Carl Sheffler, Roy Wilhelm, John Behrens (who would later pioneer to Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, at the same time John Wilcott moved to Montana, and with whom John maintained correspondence) and a Mr. Reimer whom, it turns out, was the father of Marguerite Sears, wife of the Hand of the Cause. Roy Wilhelm was John's principal teacher in the Faith and sustained a correspondence with him that lasted for years. According to his Bahá'í Historical Record and attached biographical questionnaire, John's acceptance of the Bahá'í Faith was in July of 1908. He expresses uncertainty as to exactly where since he stated, "either Chicago or Wisconsin." Very likely, he had contact with Bahá'í communities throughout the area. Frost tells us that, "I have an idea that his mother was living in Wisconsin, perhaps with her son and that dad would visit her and interested her in the Faith 100% so that when he decided to go pioneering and homesteading in the west, she was glad to go with him, even tho elderly" {sic}. This marks the beginning of son and mother working together for the Faith. This can be seen later in their move to Montana which they undertook together, presumably at John's instigation.

Frost goes on to tell us, "It was Racine, Wisconsin in 1907 that dad was a charter member. I remember a picture that said 1907 so assume that was the date." Racine and Kenosha were communities comprised of primarily working class and middle class people according to Robert Stockman's history of the period. From that, we may get some appreciation of what he was doing in life. Also, the Bahá'ís in America had rebounded from the effects of the defection of Ibrahim Kheiralla who had attempted to appropriate the leadership of the Bahá'ís in the West to himself. Stockman recounts the late part of that decade as a time of stability and some growth for the Chicago and southern Wisconsin area. So, this was a good time for a new Bahá'í to become acquainted with the Faith and Bahá'í community as well as to acquire stalwart personal friends in the Faith.

John Wilcott was quick to be involved in the Faith. Richard Hollinger in his Community Histories says, "In 1908, at the request of the Chicago House of Spirituality, a Temple committee was appointed, consisting of three men and two women. By August 1908, they had raised about two hundred dollars and had another two hundred in pledges." John Wilcott was listed as one of the members.

He continued supporting this effort of the American Bahá'ís long after this as Frost indicates, "He would have us, as children, save our pennies to send to help build the temple." Hollinger further mentions John as part of one of the supporting families of the Kenosha community, possibly meaning John and his mother, Eliza, as a family.

It is at this point that Frost mentions, "...a letter came from Abdul-Baha {sic} stating that he wanted a Bahá'í in every state when he arrived in the United States," and, "Before dad went pioneering, maybe just the year before, he made an extended trip to the west visiting Berkley {sic}, Oakland and San Francisco. He was with Mrs. Goodall Cooper, Kathryn Frankland and many others. I think this must have been in 1909. This, naturally helped convince him to pioneer." At this stage, it is useful to consider some other events transpiring in American history that likely had a bearing on John H. Wilcott's selection of a pioneer post.

Part 2: Montana and Marriage

*"A man can be a Bahá'í much easier when
he understands all of God's work"*

In 1877 the U.S. Congress reconsidered the Homestead Act, which provided settlers with 160 acres (a quarter section) of land. This was sufficient to the wetter climates of certain parts of the country, but not to dryer areas of the west where it took more land to yield the same harvest taken from the wetter areas. To remedy this, the Congress passed the Desert Land Act of 1877, which provided 640 acres (one section) at \$1.25 an acre to a farmer who showed productivity within three years and irrigated part of the land.

In South Dakota efforts were moving forward in the development of dryland farming. This was an area of critical concern to western farmers striving to make a living in a relatively dry part of the nation that had earned the reputation of "the Great American Desert." While the western prairie had much less annual rainfall than the lands east, it did have enough to sustain agriculture of a careful, considered kind. The dominant issue was always the one of providing enough moisture to raise crops.

By 1900, Hardy Webster Campbell of South Dakota had become well known as a farmer who had explored techniques for preserving moisture in the ground. He had devised a subsurface packer that loosened the topsoil, thus creating a mulch-like layer that would retain moisture in a simultaneously tamped subsoil, especially after discing and harrowing after each rain. By 1905 Campbell's methods became broadly known, including in Montana

By 1908, led by the Milwaukee Road, railroads serving Montana in collaboration with Montana businessmen began

major promotional campaigns. This was a result of the optimism bred by the aforementioned developments. Michael P. Malone and Richard B. Roeder in their *Montana: A History of Two Centuries* list a heady combination of chambers of commerce, banker's groups, newspaper editors, real estate boomers, the state Bureau of Labor, Agriculture and Industry, state college experts, the Milwaukee Road and the three James J. Hill railroads—the northern Pacific, the Great Northern R.R. and the Burlington R.R. ...giving rise to "advertising resources that no one else could match." Malone and Roeder go on to say that the railroads "...used nearly every conceivable method to publicize the fertility of the northern Great Plain and to lure in farmers. They offered prizes for crops and livestock, sponsored farm exhibits, ran agricultural display trains around the country, and spread advertising leaflets and brochures throughout the United States and Europe." The result, of course, was a mass migration of would-be-farmers beginning in 1908. Indeed just north-central Montana had between a thousand and fifteen hundred homestead filings monthly during 1910. On only one spring evening, 250 homesteaders detrained in Havre. The population of Montana rose from 243,329 in 1900 to 376,053 in 1910. The popular idea amongst many of them was the settlement and civilizing of the last great wilderness in America.

It was in this period that John Wilcott arrived in Montana. He settled north of Kendall, which is, in turn, north of Lewistown, a town serviced by the Milwaukee Road. A few years later, the town of Winifred would be established close to and north of his 640-acre homestead, but at the beginning his trade would be in Kendall. He wound up with a section of prairie typical of the area. Near a knoll was a creek variously called Dog Creek, for the prairie dogs residing there, or Sage Creek. A very few small trees grew near the creek and it was there that he and his Mother set up a canvas wall tent which would be their home for a considerable time. It is from here that he wrote to the friends back east through the *Bahá'í News*. The letter was published in the November 23rd, 1910, edition and prefaced by the editor:

A few interesting letters were received. One of them we publish herewith, believing it will demonstrate what can be accomplished for the spread of the Cause, no matter how adverse the conditions. We are pleased to present this letter from Mr. John H. Wilcott, who will be remembered as a former active member of the Kenosha, Wis., Assembly:

Kendall, Mont., Sept. 12, 1910

To the *Bahá'í News*.

Dear servants of Abdul-Baha: — I know you will be pleased to hear from this part of the West. Although the work of giving the Message is rather slow, we allow no opportunity to pass. Mother and I are the only Bahais

around here that we know of, and up to this time we have only had cowboys, shepherds and a few ranchers to talk to, who live many miles apart. My nearest ranchman owned 27 miles long of land which has now been sold to the railroad company. This is the way I reach these people, which may seem strange to you: First of all my claim is just where every one has to make their roundup. Hundreds of cattle are around us all the time. I have a full cowboy's suit, and I am out with the boys and seem to be as tough as they are, so not to be a tenderfoot. From one to eight come to my tent daily and I am now called "the preacher" for miles around. Well, this is something new to the boys — someone to talk of God to them — and yet I seem like one of them. They tell it all over and I frequently meet a new one who has heard of us. One old sheep-keeper, who used to come and rest under a tree in my yard while watching his sheep eat, and to whom I would then talk, regretted so greatly the life he had lived that he told me he was going away from this life after living here thirty years. Before leaving, he came to bid us good-bye and we gave him a good meal. I think the seed had started to grow.

Many of the cowboys shoot game and bring it to us. Of course we have to feed many of them at times, but that is the only way we can reach them. At first some of them did not want to hear anything of God — said there was no God — but after some of the great hidden mysteries were explained to them, they became interested, and you would be surprised to see us sitting on a log outside, or in the tent, until 10 o'clock at night.

My dear mother is the only doctor around here for forty-five miles. The land is now all taken up and settlers are coming in rapidly. The cowboys told them that mother was a diploma doctor, so they have started to come after her, traveling from fifteen to twenty miles. She is not a bit slow in giving the Message. A few weeks ago when it was warm, a cowboy came and was resting by the tent. He asked mother if she had anything to read. She gave him one of our Bahai books. He cursed and said: "That is religion. Haven't you any papers?" So she gave him a newspaper from Santa Anna, which was sent to us by a missionary there, to whom I am trying to give the Message, but who has not been able to grasp it yet. Well, this paper told about God, and the cowboy, after looking at it for a while, said: "Why this is religion — just as bad as the other book." Mother said: "This is all we have here. We live for God." When I came in with a bunch of prairie chickens he said to me: "Hello, preacher! This is a great place — nothing to read." I replied that I had just what he wanted, and going to my trunk, brought a book called, "Indian Wars and Brave Deeds." Well, you should have seen that man! He was very much pleased and called for a few days until he had finished reading it. He then said: "If there is a God, why did He

let those Indians kill those poor people in such a way?" That gave me an opportunity, and now the man begins to read Bahá'í books and does not curse any more in our tent.

I enjoyed reading Mr. Remy's letter in the Bahá'í News. I was very much impressed with his statement that when one is out trying to give the Message, he needs encouragement from the other believers. I find it so here and feel that the friends should think more of this. A little of my experience would convince one of the truth of this statement. I have received one letter from Johnstown, two from Chicago, and a few from Mrs. Goodale, of Kenosha, that put new life into me to do more work.

Any literature regarding the Cause will be gladly accepted and handed to some of the new settlers here. These cowboys are all good fellows and tired of this life. They are seeking for something and do not know where to get it – it is the Message. So when any one goes out to try to give the Message, let us encourage them. In a place like this God is not known. They believe there is no God, no heaven or hell, because they have been taught so. It is not easy and one should be encouraged.

This country is wild with rattlesnakes and wolves. I have killed many snakes, but as the country is now being settled the snakes are disappearing. One was in our tent last night. We heard him rattle. We dare not sleep with an arm outside the bed. It is getting cold, the mountains are covered with snow and we had four inches of it. We are still in a tent, but I am building a log house. Frost killed nearly all we had, but God giveth and God taketh away – praise His Name! When I go for mail, I carry a gun because of wild steers. Every one carries a gun because of cattle and snakes.

My mother is 70 years old and keeps up quite well. We have lots of hay on the ground in the tent to keep our feet warm, but we have been laid up with colds. Everything here has to be hauled from Lewistown, forty-five miles. Our nearest place is Kendall, a small town, 5,800 feet high in the mountains – a gold mining town – about ten houses built on rocks on the side of the hill. Oil costs 50 cents a gallon, potatoes four cents a pound, etc. Before this cold weather came I used to lie in bed in the morning and take my gun from the side of my pillow and shoot sage hens or prairie chicken. They destroyed my garden, and four or five times a day I used to go around the garden to drive them out and also the rabbits

I have taken some pictures and send you one of myself now as I go among the boys.

Here comes another old shepherd who likes to come here – I can hear his voice over the hill calling the sheep, so I must stop writing.

We send all our Bahá'í love and ask your earnest prayers.

Your servant in His Name,
John H. Wilcott.

This letter reveals much about John Wilcott's first year in Montana. The mountains he mentions were to the west and were the source of logs for his cabin which he hauled back a few at a time over many miles. It seems he may have acquired them from someone in Kendall. Frost says that he brought logs from the Missouri Breaks area which is also thirty to forty miles away. Kendall was a day's drive away by wagon and had the only post office and stores for miles. The frost he refers to apparently killed his cherry, apple and other fruit trees which he had brought with him from Wisconsin and which his family remembers as part of his stories. He also brought his camera. He had added photography to his skills and talents somewhere along the journey of his life, and we have photographs of him just at this time. The best known picture of him, which is featured in the 1910 *Star of the West* article, shows him on his work horse with chaps, hat and holstered pistol. Many Bahá'ís of the present day may remark as to his carrying a gun, which is prominent in that and other pictures he had taken of himself (presumably with his mother's assistance), but the character and wildness of the land as he describes it illustrate how the gun was a tool of the cowboy of the time. This was ordinary throughout the West. Modern fiction and movies grossly mislead on this point.

He describes one of his mother's roles as a doctor which clearly helped them make a place for themselves amongst the people. Frost describes her as a "bush doctor", knowledgeable about herbs and related treatments. Her valuable abilities amidst the people throughout the area doubtless brought them in touch with many farmers, ranchers and people in the towns.

As to John Wilcott gaining the reputation as a preacher, Frost relates that John seemed proud of being referred to as the sheep herder's preacher. Perhaps it was appreciated in a humorous way since, as Frost reminds us, the Sears and Roebuck catalogue was known as the sheep herder's Bible. Frost says that John did not know enough about the Faith to teach but relied upon his certainty of Baha'u'llah in his efforts. This estimation must be viewed in the context of the time. Customarily a person had to learn a reasonable amount to make his declaration of belief while, simultaneously, there was relatively little information about the Faith available in English.

John Wilcott became a prolific letter writer, preparing several in a day. A few have been preserved and filed by the Bahá'í National Archives. The following letters, which tell so vividly his story, are partially edited for some of the spelling and punctuation to render it easier to read by the modern eye.

(9)Kendall, Montana
March 11, 1911

Allah o Abha

Dear Brother Windust your letter at hand. It filled us with joy to read its content. I enjoyed reading about the snow and angel's feather. I sent it to Kenosha to be read because I really felt it would do them good to read it. Also many other letter which I have received. Some are very good and deep. In my last mail I got 25 letters. I am getting letters from all assemblies. I answer all and send pictures and they all seem to enjoy hearing from out here. We have still very deep snow in front of our house. The snow is higher than the house and the house is 10 feet high. I am sending you some pictures so you can see. If you love snow you would enjoy being here this winter. It would surely do you good – or any one that is tied up in a city.

Here I am alone with God day after day. I do nothing but lie down and read. Mother is off on another case 23 miles from here to a small town called Dear Trail – Some settlers from Watertown N.Y. All I've done this winter was to split 4 hundred (illegible) for fencing and dig a well. We had to shovel 9 feet of snow to get to the ground so to dig. This is as bad as the North Pole. I got lost last week when I

went after my mail. The snow was so bright and a terrible wind that I got blind, then lost my trail and had to make my way in snow to my waist and in places to my neck.

Sunday I walked two miles to give the Message to two young men from Ohio who I have been teaching all summer and winter and thought they had it good. But Sunday I taught them extra good and when I was all done I learned that one of them did not believe a word I had taught him; and still more, he did not believe in God. My heart sank. But I felt that God will bless the words I had spoken to them and in time they will wake up. They come from Christian families. I had a hard trip through the deep snow, but I now do pray God to bless all the seeds which I have sowed that other will grow from them and spread the Cause.

Brother, I know what it is to be locked up in a office or shop. I spent many days in one and used to feel that I could do any other kind of work and how often I would wish to be free out in the open air way off in woods or desert to see what God's hands has done – and at last I broke loose and studied much. That is how I became a gardener. I spent 3 years off in the mountains studying all God's work, worked at a Mr. Willbank cottage in the Adirondack Mountains. Hardly any pay but oh, what enjoyment it was to be my own boss, go fishing, hunting and boating, studying different trees, wild flowers, rocks, most {sic} and insects. What great enjoyment no one knows only those that has been through it all. And I would[n't] change my study for any other.

Now, this great Cause is another great study which I love day by day and it goes hand in hand with what I know of the great nature. So every thing becomes plain to me and some time when I think it over I fill right up with joy to know that I know these both. A man can be a Bahá'í much easier when he understands all of God's work. It comes to him so plain that he can see it easy and makes it easy to tell others of this truth. If every Bahá'í could make a study of flowers, trees, rocks, birds, most [sic] and all God's hand work he would become the happiest man on earth. We are all driven too hard in this world and no time to look at God's grand work which is for us to understand and know. And I have just begun – I mean to push on and study more of it. I wish I could have all the Bahá'ís with me. On a trip in California I saw wonderful things that thousands of others could see. Because they did not understand God's work I saw so much in one place that I felt ready to die, thinking I had seen all of God's grand work. Here where I am isn't much to see, only great prairies and mountains. But in other parts of Montana God has left great things for us to enjoy.

Well, Brother, write again [illegible] time. Love to you all, also the Assemblies.

Your Brother Wilcott.

If I get a crop this summer I will be all right, but if not I will be lost. But it is all in God's hands. If he sees fit he will bless us. This is a good place to try a Bahá'í. He will either grow or fall. He will surely not stand still. I believe one winter is about all I want up here because of my Mother. She is all discouraged with the deep snow and cold and lonesome life and she is old and wants a better home than this for what few years she has got to live. But it was my health and teaching that brought me here and I [illegible] God will bless me for it all.

In among those that I am teaching are many women and children and they are begging of me to start a Sunday school. But I cannot see my way through it, because as it is we have hard work to live because there is no many that come here to eat because they know a Christian will not turn them out and they are really starving. Three families here are going around from settlers to settlers begging for food and if I would start a school I would have to feed many more. And what can a man do when he hardly can get enough to live on himself? And yet we cannot teach other and not live the life, so I feed all that comes so far. I am depending on my crop of wheat.

John Wilcott's postscript in this letter can be understood more with this Quote from Malone and Roeder about a sampling of the homesteaders of This time: "Beyond dispute many of them lacked farming experience, and This simple fact undoubtedly caused hundreds to fail. In a sample of fifty-eight farmers in a

'typical township' of Montana's north-central 'triangle' regions, agricultural expert M.L. Wilson found in 1922 only twenty-three who listed their former occupation as 'farmer'. Among the others, Wilson found two physicians, two school teachers, three 'Maiden Ladies', six musicians, two wrestlers, and one 'World Rover.'" Doubtless, John and Eliza found themselves witnessing the difficulties of those who had failed early and were forced to consider the risks impinging on themselves.

(9)Kendall, Montana
June 26, 1911

Allah o Abha

Dear Brother, your letter at hand. Dear Brother, the reason I did not send for the Star of the West is because I am at present out of cash. I have 22 cents to my name. I need and would like the Star but cannot afford it just now, and will have to wait till I get ahold of some money some where. I am still working in the Cause. I have some new neighbor [to] enlist in it.

God has given us a good crop so far. My wheat is up to my neck.

My mother has been very sick but is now better.

Always remember if I do not read the Star I am with you all just the same and my prayers are for all the friends that they may become strong.

I am gaining in health fast this summer and working hard building fences to keep cattle out.

I am sending you a view of my place taken a few days ago. It looks different than it did in winter. I have a fine garden as good as any town east.

We would like to hear from Chicago if ever you get a chance to spare a few minutes.

Your Brother and Sister in the Cause, John H. Wilcott
[illegible] love to all.

The next portion of the story can be picked up by Frost.

"Somewhere between 1914 and 1916 he met my mother. He went to a ranch 20 miles away to buy some vegetables and he met her in the cabbage patch cutting a large cabbage. She was a beautiful 21-year old German girl (he was 43) years old at that time). She was accidentally there taking care of a relative's relative who had just had twins. She expected to return to her brothers in St. Louis and then on to her parents in Germany, but dad convinced her to marry him so they were married November 11th, 1916 ...Mother taught father how to run the ranch, plant gardens, wheat and other crops. She insists that he never knew how to hitch up a team of horses when she met him! They raised chickens, turkeys, geese, pigs, cattle, etc ..."

"My mother and grandmother never got along and dad had to build a separate place for my grandmother ...I

was born the next September. My grandmother died a year later from hardening of the arteries. (I see dad has on the tombstone of my grandmother, 1919. I think it was 1918 because my sister was born in January 1919, and she died right before then). My brother was born two years after my sister."

The woman Ethel Frost is introducing here is Johana Schmidt who came from St. Louis, Missouri. She was the mother to the only children John had. Ethel's sister was named Wanda, her brother, Norman. All three are still alive at this writing.

By this time, Winifred, two miles away, was an established community, for the wedding was held there at the M.E. (Methodist Episcopal) parsonage on November 14th according to a local newspaper clipping. John Wilcott presented his wife with an opal diamond wedding ring during the ceremony. A large quantity of flowers was brought up from Helena and was cause for remark by many. Johana had a huge bouquet and wore a light blue silk gown. John had a full dress suit. The couple was conveyed to the Wilcott home by an automobile owned and driven by friend Hubert Armstrong. Thirty guests attended the wedding dinner. In the evening the townspeople serenaded the couple. The local Times newspaper described Johana as cultured, charming and amiable and John as honest, handsome, enterprising and "a man whom any woman could well be proud to call husband." In this frontier setting, all of this made for a most impressive occasion.

John wrote:

Nov. 21, 1916
Winifred, Mont.

Allah o Abha

Dear beloved Brothers and Sisters in the Cause. I am very happy and wish you all to know of it. I was married Nov. 14. I am sending you a copy of our marriage [sic] which you may use if you see fit to do so. I am doing well out here and God has taken away from me this year and yet he has given me the sweetest girl around. We both love Him and try hard to do what He wishes us to. My wife is not a Bahá'í or has she heard of it. But she is a good true girl and I know she loves to do what is right.

I am your Brother in the Cause and would love to have some Believer write to Mrs. Wilcott in German if there is such in the Assembly.

Yours very truly,
Mr. and Mrs. Wilcott

There is only little indication of what difficulties arose between mother and wife. There is nothing to indicate that it was anything grim, although family members express sorrow over much of what transpired after John's marriage to Johana. Eventually, when the original cabin was moved

from the ground near the creek to the top of the nearby knoll and added on to, Eliza set up housekeeping in the old cabin which became a wing attached to the larger new one. The root of any difficulties has been said to lie in Johana's views on the Faith. However, she remained with John to her death in 1962. Frost recounts,

"...I was not raised a Bahá'í and my mother, being very opposed to the Faith, destroyed most everything. I did see some little books or pamphlets with the number nine on them and knew my father cherished them and would tell people about them. Also my father had a hand made Greatest Name, embroidered in purple silk thread. He said it was made by a Hindu princess and the last we knew of her is that she was old and lived in St. Louis, Missouri. Well, this Greatest Name dad had framed in a very heavy black and gold frame. He said that this was the Bahá'í colors and the way it should be. And for a side interest, this Greatest Name was not destroyed and hung above my bed and I am the only one to have become a Bahá'í!"

However, many years later, an observation made of Johana tells a much different story. Nellie Thompson Mereness, a Bahá'í from Butte who had lived in Great Falls from 1948 through 1953 met Johana and John during their visits to their son there. She wrote,

"In all fairness to my dear and trustworthy friend, Johana Wilcott and her belief and steadfastness in Baha'u'llah there is no doubt. I was very close to her during my stay in Great Falls and heard her express many times her belief in His teachings and would someday be one of us. Due to her husband's poor eyesight she had for years read his newsletter to him along with the Gleanings, her favorite book. Johana was self schooled in the Faith but due to lack of encouragement and someone to talk to she could not express herself. The soil of that human heart was deeply plowed and furrowed with trials and tribulations. So when the seed was planted it took hold and will continue to grow and develop eternally. My deepest and sincerest affections to Johana and John Wilcott. May God bless them.

N."

The religious climate during the time of raising children within the family is recalled by Frost. She writes,

"My mother considered herself a German Lutheran and tried to bring us up that way. No one really taught us anything. Oh we learned the Lord's Prayer and a "now I lay me down to sleep" for nights.

"I was the only one interested in God or religion and would walk 2 miles to attend a church. The folks got me an old organ and I played all the hymns every Sunday for hours and sometimes mom would sing along with me.

"...I do remember he would have us save our

pennies for the building of the temple. Mother never objected to that. He also taught us to say the 'Mashriqu'l Adhkar" and would tell us of the first one that was built in Russia. He talked about meetings in Chicago and Kenosha and that he was a charter member of the first assembly in Racine, Wisconsin and about a Wisconsin family that knew him, the Voltz, and who have one of his paintings (He was an artist). Then he told how Thornton Chase, John Behrens and he headed west for the faith in 1910.

"...No, no one went to church but I. My mother would go with a neighbor on Easter Sunday. We always celebrated Easter with all new clothes etc. and of course we celebrated Christmas all the way."

Certainly, many of John's remarks in his letters support Mereness' view. In one documentable instance, quoted below from a December 25, 1932 letter, he even signs his correspondence, "From your Bahai Brother and Sister

Part 3: Faith and Hard Times

"Now, dear Sister, you know times are very bad."

Farmers in Montana had a good period from 1909 through 1916, and 1917 was good for most, because the plains saw ample rainfall and large harvests, and the World War in Europe was stimulating demand for wheat, keeping prices high. Malone and Roeder quote the editor of the Montana Churchman to convey the air of optimism in the state in 1907: "That time [cowboy days] has gone forever. Already in her westward march Civilization has planted her feet firmly on this territory. Ten years from now 'the West' will be as the womb of the earth, teeming with people, seething with industry, alive with manifold activities - the center of population and civilization!" While the vision of the editor may have been excessive, the tone was characteristic of the time. When spring of 1917 arrived, the United States entered the World War, and to assure farmers that productivity would not drive prices down and result in farmers scaling back food production, the U.S. Congress set price floors. Wheat could not go below \$2.00 per bushel. So farmers were inspired to plow fallow ground and pasture lands.

But that season, drought began appearing on the High Line, the northernmost strip of prairie Montana. By 1919, high winds were blowing away the loose topsoil produced by Hardy Webster Campbell's dryland farming methods. Over time through 1920, Europe was back to meeting most of its own food needs and prices for crops dropped. The winter of 1919-20 saw thousands of farm families in Montana without sufficient means to get through the winter. Those with hope or without better prospects hung on, but many left. Governor Sam Stewart called a special session of

the legislature to try to provide relief but could only come up with an issuing of bonds for road building to provide some work, and those failed to sell well.

Eleven thousand farms in Montana were vacated, twenty percent of the farms in the state. Twenty thousand mortgages were foreclosed. Half of Montana's farmers lost their land. Banks, overextended during prosperous days, failed until less than half of them remained. Malone and Roeder tell us that Montana had the highest bankruptcy rate in the United States from 1920 to 1926 and was the only state to lose population during that time. Memories of the promises and boosterism of the railroads inspired a children's rhyme about Jim Hill, majority owner of the railroads that encouraged and brought the homesteaders to Montana's plains:

Twixt Hill and Hell, there's just one letter;
Were Hill in Hell, we'd feel much better.

From John Wilcott, this typed letter:

Allah o Abha
Winifred, Montana
Dec. 9, 1919

To the Bahai News:

My dear brother-

We are having very hard times here as we did not get a crop for four years now, and at present we hardly know where to get our next meal. The stores have cut off credit, and the county will not help any more till Spring. I thought perhaps by letting you know how we are here that there maybe some of the friends that could get together and help us out in a box of old clothes and some food. If we can stand this winter, God willing we may get a crop this coming year. It makes me feel bad to see my two little babies wanting for food and my mother just alive waiting for her to pass away, and not food enough to give her, and such cold weather - 40 below today, the coldest winter that Montana ever saw. Mrs. Goodale has sent us \$10 and Mrs. Peckman \$5, and they are going to send some old clothes. I thought perhaps that some of the friends could get together some clothes and perhaps a little box of food that would help us out. If my heart wasn't broken I wouldn't write this, but I cannot see my dear little ones suffer for both clothes and food. The Bahais should not be beggars, and I do not want to beg, but when there isn't any work to get and the banks take all you have away except your land, and that is mortgaged so deep that you can't get another cent on it, and the winter so cold and no coal to be had, I tell you it makes a man write such a letter as this. Please speak to some of the believers that you think may help us out.

We did not raise even one potato, not one kernel of

wheat. I have nothing to feed my horses, but the bank has the mortgage on them and they no doubt will take them. Hoping to hear from you soon,

Your brother in His Cause, John H. Wilcott

From Chicago, this prompt reply:

Chicago, Dec. 15, 1919

Mr. John H. Wilcott,

Winifred, Montana

My dear Bahai brother:-

The Bahá'í News Service have just turned over your letter of December 9th to me. I have just sent a telegram to Mr. J.W. Latimer, Union Station, Portland, Ore., and asked him to send immediately clothes, food, etc. We will also send some clothing from here. We are sending a check to Mr. Latimer to cover the expense. Please let me know when you receive these things, also would like to hear from you before this regarding your circumstances. We are indeed very sorry that these trials have come upon you, and will do our utmost to come to your assistance.

I wish we had known before.

With Bahai love,

Your brother in service,

Secretary

Ethel Frost draws out some positive memories from this time.

"He received and corresponded regularly with Roy Wilhelm, his spiritual father. Times were hard on the farm when the crops failed etc. so I suppose (I don't know) that Mr. Wilhelm would send him money to help out. I know that he would send boxes of old clothes gathered from the Bahá'ís of the east and my mother would make them over for us children. We girls were the best dressed children in school with silks, satins and chiffon dresses!!!"

In 1924 John Wilcott suffered bankruptcy. Papers show procedure scheduled first in Kendall and then in Lewistown. An irony in the bankruptcy is that in 1924 the rains returned. It was a good omen, for a while at least. The next year John was able to afford their first automobile, a Maxwell.

Malone and Roeder explain that the period from 1922-29 was one of improving economy nationwide and so a period of improvement for Montana as well. With the end of the drought in 1924 Montana farmers and ranchers that remained showed a more radical and vocal side, much in reaction to the apparent inaction of the government during the catastrophic drought. An active Communist movement even grew amongst farmers in the northeast corner of the state. While this was a minority and was not a meaningful force to most Montana farmers and ranchers, it

is a sign of the mood of the times. This period, however, during which much of the worries and burdens of the previous years could be thrown off and energies channeled to growth and development, was only a respite. In 1929 the drought resumed and the Great Depression began.

This was the drought of the infamous Dust Bowl. Farmers literally watched their and others' farms move downwind while they could only stand by, rubbing their neighbor's property out of their eyes. The Red Cross responded to requests by half of Montana's fifty-six counties for assistance. It was severely challenged to meet the needs. Its average food grant from 1930 through 1932 was ten cents a day. At times, John was getting less than half of that for himself and his family. Prices failed profoundly. Malone and Roeder cite that a quantity of wheat worth \$100 in 1920 sold for \$19.23 in 1932. Meat, wool, sugar beets, everything raised in Montana suffered the same. They said, "Back in the good years of the later 1920s, the [Daniels County] county seat, Scobey, had once advertised itself as the world's largest wheat shipping point. By the spring of 1933, after four years of sub-par rainfall, thirty-five hundred of the counties' five thousand people needed relief assistance. After touring the eastern reaches of the state in August 1931, Governor John Erickson could only bury his head in his hands, lamenting, as an associate later recalled, "that if only someone could find a solution to the problem, he would gladly embrace it." Many who remained after the earlier drought and depression sought their solution by leaving.

It is clear from his letters that John Wilcott pondered his circumstances heavily during this time. In those letters one can see his staunch commitment to the Faith, his courage, his struggle to do the wise thing, his love of family, his sorrow and his grit. Following are excerpts from some of his letters of 1931 and 1932 that pick up the story here.

November 8, 1931

My dear Bahá'í Sister, your letter received and I was very glad to hear from you. Sister, I feel as though I know you well as all Bahais ought to feel; and in that case I shall be very plain to you. It breaks my heart not to be able to give to this beautiful Temple of ours. 25 years ago I knelt many times on the Temple ground and prayed for this Temple. I also gave very freely \$50.00 at a time. Sister, for 3 years we haven't got a crop. This year we did not raise even a garden, and now we are getting help from the Red Cross. They allowed us only \$6.00 for a month — \$1.25 each. There is 5 of us. Every one here is suffering. I went 20 to 25 miles after my wood for winter and dug my coal 10 miles from home. The children hardly have clothes for winter. My children don't know what 5 cents looks like. My Bahá'í Sister, if we only could help in this great Temple I would be very glad to do so and I feel very sad that I cannot do so.

We are the only Bahai out here and I read all books

that Roy Wilhelm sends me so I keep posted on all that is going on.

Mr. Wilhelm got me a job on a Bahai's farm last spring, but it was impossible to take the job because of no money to go with. At present my rent is free here and we have a few chickens and a few cattle we get on with, and butter. No eggs yet. But there is no feed for the cattle and no sale for them now. We are trusting God and doing the best we can, and there are many others just like us on the Red Cross. But we are afraid that the Red Cross won't last long as they have more than they can feed.

Sister, my little children send Bahai love to you and wish to thank you for these papers you sent them Last Christmas. I would love to hear from you again.

From your Brother in the Cause. Allah o Abha

December 10, 1931

It was a great blessing to me to get such a loving letter from one that we never seen. But a Bahai seem to know each other [sic]. You know, once a Bahai, you are always a Bahai. Your letter was very good and kind and it went to the heart. You know I write to very few Bahais. My most great friend is Roy Wilhelm. He has written to me and kept me posted on the Bahai work for 22 years.

Now, dear Sister, you know times are very bad. It is so good of you to want to help us, but I beg of you to go easy as perhaps you may need all yourself, as everyone does. Of course, whatever you send will be a great help to us this

winter and the children will so much enjoy it.

This is the hardest year we ever say [sic] and we are both hard workers.

I have prayed every night for the Temple for 22 years, and also for all meetings on Sunday all over the world. There was a time when I knew most all the believers in U.S.A. Miss Martha Root 22 years ago sent me a box of books from Phi[adelphia]. B.M. Jacobson of Kenosha, Wisconsin was my teacher. He did a good job. I was also ready for this message [sic]. When I get time I shall hunt up my work in California as I was one of the first ones to go to California and meet the believers and talk to them. If you are an old believer you will see in the Star of the West my picture, also my experience out here among the cowboys. I have given this message among all my neighbors and in those days I had to walk many miles to do so. My old Mother was with me. He came here to help me give the message. She was a doctor and 50 miles was the nearest doctor. She did well, gave the message to hundreds.

...Mrs. Wilcott send her love to you, also the children.

December 16, 1931:

...and I am trying to get out of this country if I ever can. What kind of a place is it where you live? Is it out in a farm country or is it in a town? Is there any work out there? I talk to you as if I know you because you are a Bahai. We all send love to all of you.

January 9, 1932:

My dear Bahá'í Sisters, your most welcome letter came. It was surely a beautiful letter full of the spirit of God. [I]t was news to me that you could take the Bahai lessons in this way. When I left Chicago 22 years ago there was no such thing as giving lessons by writing and I am surely surprised what good believer you are. I do wish I could help you in books. Perhaps I have some that you have not and I can spare them. I have two of some kinds. Have you got a book called Some Answered Questions? By Abdu'l Baha?...How wonderful it is to think of you both way out there trying to learn of the great Cause in the way you are doing it, when here I am giving the message to many and showing them proofs of it and letting them read books on the Cause and yet they will not pay any attention to it. They are all Christian and I am nothing because I go to no church.

Mrs. Wilcott and children enjoyed reading those lessons and how wonderful they are.

We are thinking of going away from this place. I have a few places to go to but it takes money. The Bahai [sic] has a farm in Michigan and they want a Bahai farmer on it. Then Roy Wilhelm in New Jersey offers me a job on his place as a landscape gardner [sic], which is my trade. There is no use staying here for each year gets worse. I came here with 5 thousand and today I haven't got only 15 head of cattle, a wife and 3 children which I am thankful for.

Sisters, we send to you our deepest love and prayers that you will always be steadfast in this great Cause. Remember, once a Bahai, always a Bahai.

From a Bahai Brother not worthy of being called a Bahai.

April 2, 1932:

My dear Bahai Sister, Auntie Victoria,

I have received 2 or 3 letters from you and I haven't answered them yet. I thank you for writing and also for the tea. I drank the tea while I was sick. I had the flu for one week and I was very sick. We are all very well now.

I have been trying to sell out so I could go away from here but it is impossible to do so till fall. Then perhaps I shall go if the place is open [sic].

We received letters from many Bahais who you sent our names to and we were very glad to hear from them. We received a box from a children's School in Bingham, N.Y. which my children answered. You had given them

our name. We will send them one of our pictures which will please them. I am sending you one that I know you will like. It is us, and you will know just who we are. It was taken Feb. 29, 1932, in our yard. No snow at that time, but the next day for a week it snowed and blew, so all the roads was impossible to travel. But now we have no snow and we are getting ready to go to work in the fields. But it doesn't look to good to me. Everything is too dry. I lost one horse and another is dieing, and if the government do not get that feed here soon, there will be lots of cattle dead here. Cattle are dieing for the want of feed.

The Red Cross is feeding us, but this is the last month. I have two cows that are fresh and we get our milk and butter but no feed for them. They are shipping in 4 cars of feed. If it ever gets here it will help us. This feed is feed is for cattle.

Well this is all now. I have written, today, 7 letters to Bahais.

I am your Brother in the Great Cause,
John H. Wilcott, Winifred, Montana

April 2, 1932:

...I want to thank you for sending me those writings. Please do not go to that work of writing all that for me.

I gave your last one to a minister here that I have been trying to get him interested in the Bahai for 18 years [sic]. But he is a hard one to do anything with.

I also got a letter from Mrs. A. Duffy, R.F.D.#6, Norwich, Connecticut - a very fine believer, 75 miles from any Bahai. I also heard from M.Ruth [Ruth Moffet]. Did you receive any books from Roy W.? I tried to get them for you through Roy and he has not said, yet, if he had them or not. I hope and pray that you will have food luck with your work there. Let me hear from you again.

John F. Behrens, R.#5, Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, is a fine believer. He is now 65 and I knew him 30 years ago as a Bahá'í will loved to you all.

In His Name, John H. Wilcott and family

December 25, 1932:

...My little sister from Los Angeles is here making us a visit. She is 58 years old and full of life.

I have been very busy this summer. We have a good crop and a very good garden. Mrs. Wilcott is very busy canning garden stuff. I have a boiler of corn on the stove now while they, my wife and sister, are visiting a neighbor. I am in the house because it rained and I cannot cut grain. We are all very happy because it rained. As it was, the garden was drying up. Mrs. Wilcott said what a beautiful family and you are all beautiful, and those roses look so good to us all as we never see a rose here. My

sister can't figure out just where you live unless it is near Frisco.

My little girls send their love to your dear boy. They think he's so sweet ...

I am thinking of living in California as I have two farms, one ranch offered me. They are not very large, 10 to 50 acres. Perhaps I cannot get a living on them.

We all thank you for the picture and we do hope that our hard time is over. We send you all our Bahai love, and I do pray for your happiness.

From your Bahai Brother & Sister, John Wilcott

There was, by the time of this letter, some relief from the drought. That break lasted through 1933. Harsh drought returned for three of the following four years.

Part 4: Insight

"...an upright man who had a meaningful insight into the world."

Ethel Frost offers a view into some of the family life of those years. It is a bright insight of moments amidst period of obvious hardships and the ups and downs of fortune.

"We walked to school when dad couldn't take us. Otherwise we went in the buggy, wagon or sled in winter. I think it was 1925 that he bought his first car, a Maxwell. Even then we would be snowed in in the winter and have to stay with people in town to attend school."

"I suppose our lives would be considered very dull. Mom, dad and hired help worked in the fields of our 650 acre ranch. We had cattle, horses (not riding ones), pigs to feed, cows to milk, eggs to gather, ducks, turkeys and geese to kill and dress, gardens to plant and hoe, etc. Dad butchered so we had our own meat and mom canned every kind of vegetable and bought fruit in fall to can; also meats, smoked hams, pickles and sourkraut. I guess it was a regular life, busy on a big ranch.

"We never even had water that could be used for drinking and cooking. Dad hauled it from Winifred. He had a stone boat to get from a creek if it hadn't gone dry. Temperatures were 110 in summer to 60 below."

"In the fall we also had to go to the woods to cut trees for winter firewood. My brother got old enough to go with dad, then they had to chop it all up and store behind the stove for the winter and cooking."

"We had a big 'pot-belly' stove in the livingroom that many times burned bright red to keep us warm. Our bedrooms would always be cold and in the mornings there would be ice around our mouths where we'd breathe under the heavy woolen comforters mother made. Dad would come in the morning and carry each of us out to the stove to get dressed".

"The stove in the kitchen was always hot, winter and summer. Mom always cooking, baking bread or ironing with the irons heated on the stove. And in those days they ironed the sheets too. Mom actually killed herself working so hard."

"Threshing time was exciting. The big threshing rigs, trucks and all the neighbors would go from farm to farm harvesting. The women cooked night and day making pies and cakes, frying chicken roasting pork, etc. etc. I'm sure all of the children enjoyed these times the most."

"The winter is the only time I saw mom and dad resting, not as we do today. At night mother would be braiding rag rugs or piecing tops of quilts and dad would make and cut the blocks for her. They made us popcorn and rootbeer. We could have one apple each night as they bought them by the box for the winter. Oh and we didn't have candy, etc. like the children today, we had a Hershey bar when dad went to town and maybe an orange and some candy at Xmas."

Frost adds more insight into John Wilcott's struggles for the Faith and his formidable isolation. She indicates that he never saw another Bahá'í for thirty-five years except for his mother. It was therefore an outstanding occasion when Professor Ward and family visited and gave a lecture in the school house in Winifred where John's children had attended school. She says, "Dad was proud and as enthusiastic as when he entered the Faith!" She adds, "After my husband became a Bahá'í it was grand for father as we constantly kept him in touch with things. It was hard for him to understand Shoghi Effendi, as it was for a lot of the so-called, 'Abdu'l-Baha Bahá'ís." John's isolation during the Ascension of 'Abdu'l-Baha and the establishment of the Guardianship meant that an important transition in the Faith passed him by. Ethel Frost moved to Butte, Montana, during or after 1946 where it was much easier to be in contact with Bahá'í affairs. John occasionally visited Butte some long time after his daughter's move and 'so were privileged to have him meet many Bahá'ís'."

Arithmetic dictates that the Ward visit was in 1946. About 1948, Victoria Bedikian, known to the friends of the time as "Auntie Victoria had sustained considerable correspondence with many Bahá'ís, especially children, for years. As a lover of children, she often added special features in her correspondence for them. Frost remembers letters, "with all her little pretty drawings all made on a hectograph pad." It apparently was because of a network of Bahá'í children's groups that she had set up that Victoria was able to assist the Wilcott family as per the April 2, 1932, letter quoted above.

Finally, one especially interesting detail seems appropriate here from Ethel Frost's remembrances that comes from the days of 'Abdu'l-Baha: "He obeyed everything that Abdul Baha told him. He told him he must 'stay at his post' thus nothing could drag him away. He also told him that he could drink whiskey because it was so cold there and

dangerous with the snakes etc ...it was the cheapest and easiest to buy in the wilderness. You could not convince him that he couldn't till the day he died!" This can make a little sense in the context of the prohibition on drinking in the West not being instated until the early days of the Guardian.

John Wilcott's life in the 1940s and 1950s appears to have become a much more comfortable one. Frost says, "Dad farmed until he retired with the government pension at 65 years of age." That would have been 1937. It may have been this time when his section of land was divided. John gave a portion of it to the town of Winifred to be used for a cemetery. To this time, however, it all remains agricultural land except the site of the homestead where the cabin remains and John, Johana and Eliza are buried. Frost recalls, "When I left home in 1936 our ranch consisted of 640 acres." Today, there are 160 acres which is leased for ranching by the family.

He did continue to do odd jobs for people and get pay for them, or bartered work for goods. John acquired Civil Conservation Corps certificates for welding and sign painting in 1938 and presumably put them to good use. Of course, they always had a garden, and some income came from the leasing of land to area ranchers. Johana, twenty years younger than John, was a certified mid-wife and, doubtless, had contributed much toward the income of the family for years. She continued her practice. Grandchildren of John and Johana recall, on their visits in the 1950s, having a lot of company their own age of children that Johana had helped deliver and whose parents were close friends. The cabin remained a very nice home that John kept up. Built of log, it was two stories, chinked with concrete and solid. It was heated by a very fine and ornate wood stove. The second well on the homestead since 1911 went dry during the 1930s so John commenced hauling water on a regular basis from a neighbor. He used milk cans and the arrangement met their needs into the 1960s. In 1962 John had electricity and telephone installed at the cabin.

Snapshots of the family going back to the 1920s and coming down through the 1950s offer windows on pieces of family life. When not working, John maintained the habit of wearing a nice shirt and tie. A family picnic picture shows John and Johana with the three children dressed as if on a Sunday after church, blankets spread for a pleasant time on the grass. Another shows John with a pipe. As an aside, it is intriguing to find, amongst his personal things, his old Alsatian pipes. These were the old fashioned German style of pipe with the tightly curved bit, long cherry wood shank, deep ornate bowl with a lid and decorative cords. Other pictures show farm life, feeding the chickens, moving hay, fixing the roof. One shot shows the result of a successful bird hunt with a good number of pheasant spread out on the autumn snow.

One particularly striking feature of John in all the photographs of him is his inherent dignity. There is no

apparent stoop of age, but always a straight-standing, strong willed and dignified man in them all. He had a full head of hair into his old age which turned fully white. The whole image is one of an upright man who had a meaningful insight into the world.

On the old family homestead are three graves. One is Eliza's, who died in 1918, the first woman Bahá'í to settle in Montana for the purpose of teaching the Faith. One is of Johana, a woman who was strong of heart and who impressed others as one as committed to Baha'u'llah's message as her husband. A woman who, forgoing her return to the comforts and lifestyle of St. Louis, married and stood by her husband loyally through the harshest of years, saw to the raising and well-being of her children and ministered to the needs of her neighbors and of mothers on the prairie. She died in 1962 at the age of seventy. Between the two is the grave of John.

After the death of Johana, John was brought to Great Falls by his son, Norman. Having spent so much of his life in wild areas and countryside, he was never satisfied with life in even a little city and so stayed in this home almost entirely before his death by old age. But even at this time of his life the Faith was a motivating force to him. Frost recounts that he wanted his death to be the last way that he could teach the Faith, through a Bahá'í funeral. But because the children were scattered, Ethel to Puerto Rico and Wanda (who is not a Bahá'í) to Alaska, Norman, whose religious convictions also laid elsewhere, provided a proper Methodist service for John. Nevertheless, a brief note to Ethel Frost in 1945 (as the only living Bahá'í in the family) stands as John's own testimony to his convictions unto death.

April 16, 1945

Ethel, I want you to do this for me after I am dead. I want you to see that on my stone I shall have the greatest name. You all may get a stone together, but the name must be on it. Please as you are the only Bahai. I may get a stone made before I die and save you that trouble.

Love, your father

P.S. Don't say any thing about this.

P.S. I am having a stone made for mother's grave. It has the greatest name on it and I hope to have one like it when I die. It costs 80.

(drawing was included in the note showing an upright stone eighteen inches wide and two and a half feet tall. Frost notes, "Dad didn't know couldn't have Greatest Name".)

Today, the family, diverse in their religious convictions (only Ethel is a Bahá'í) and with the variety of viewpoints and feelings every family has, expresses a common pride in John Wilcott. Bahá'ís see him as a Bahá'í pioneer to Montana, settling in a place to teach and establish the Faith in an act of personal sacrifice, fortitude and Faith in God.

His family, however, know him personally as a pioneer of the American West, a homesteader whose will with grit, determination and that same faith in the God of us all planted himself in the Montana prairie and let himself become a part of it. This was a man whose determined will brought him to the West and, with faith, brought him through all the trouble the West could give him. John Henry Wilcott was truly a pioneer twice over.

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The Bahai Movement

IS IT THE COMING UNIVERSAL RELIGION?

By JEAN MASSON.

The Bahai movement has a number of converts throughout Montana, of whom there is a small group in Helena. It is a world movement, which is spreading rapidly in Asia and in parts of Eastern Europe. Whatever the religious viewpoint of the reader, it will not be denied that the prophecies of the leaders of the Bahais have been fulfilled in marvelous manner.—Editor.

The Holy Land has just been released from the relentless grip of the Turk. Communication was made possible between Palestine and the west after many months of interrupted intercourse. And then through the British embassy came the message over the cable to America.

"I have much pleasure in informing you that I have received a telegram from the government stating that His Eminence Abdul Baha Abbas is in Haifa and that he is in good health and is well cared for."

Press notices in early October were sent out over the country through the British Bureau of Information, that British troops came upon Abdul Baha in Haifa.

Who is Abdul Baha, that he should be the subject of telegraphic and press information immediately upon the complete defeat of the Turks and the establishment of communication?

Predicted War.

At Leland Stanford university, in October, 1912, this same Abdul Baha predicted the great war:

"We are on the eve of the battle of Armageddon, referred to in the 16th chapter of Revelation. The time is two years hence, when only a spark will set aflame the whole of Europe."

"The social unrest in all countries, the growing religious skepticism, antecedent to the millenium, are already here. Only a spark will set aflame the whole of Europe, as prophesied in the verses of Daniel and in the Book of John."

"Before 1917 kingdoms will be annihilated, cataclysms will rock the earth. Then all nations shall be as one faith and all men as brothers and these fruitless strifes and ruinous wars shall pass away, and the 'Most Great Peace' shall come, and man shall not glory in this, that he loves his country, but rather in that he loves his kind."

On Sunday, May 12, 1912, in Grace Methodist Episcopal church, New York city, this same Abdul Baha gave utterance to this momentous warning:

"Just now you can say Europe is a battlefield; like ammunition ready for a spark. And one spark can set aflame the whole world."

"Before these complications and

who is this Abdul Baha, with the son of the sect, who so unerringly could prophesy world events?

Fifty years ago his father, before him, the great Baha'ollah, out of a prison in the Holy Land, sent letters to the kings of Europe, calling upon them to establish universal peace and righteousness among men. He warned them of approaching calamity. He predicted the downfall of Napoleon III, then at the zenith of his power; of the emperor of Austria; of the Sultan of Turkey.

To Kaiser.

"To the emperor of Germany he wrote:

"O banks of the river Rhine! We have seen you drenched in gore, because the swords of retribution were drawn against you; and ye shall have another trouble. And we hear the lamentation of Berlin, though it be today in manifest glory."

Neither England, nor Russia, nor Persia, nor America was ignored by the prophetic and mandatory pen of Baha'ollah.

To England he wrote through England's queen Victoria:

"Verily, we see you increasing your expenditures every year and placing the burden thereof upon your subjects. This is nought but manifest injustice. Fear the sighs of the oppressed and his tears and do not burden your subjects above that which they can bear, neither ruin them to build your palaces. Choose for them that which ye choose for yourselves. Thus do we expound unto you that which will profit you, if ye are of those who enquire. They are your treasurers. Beware lest ye exercise over them that which God hath never done, and entrust such treasures into the hands of thieves. By them ye eat, rule and conquer, and still you make yourselves great against them. Verily, this is nought but an astonishment."

"O assembly of rulers! Improve the concordance among you, then you will need neither many soldiers, nor their accoutrements, but to a certain degree, whereby ye will protect your empires and countries."

To America.

To America this authoritative pen wrote:

"Assist with the hands of justice the broken-hearted (oppressed) and crush the great oppressors with the scourges of the commands of your Lord, the powerful, the wise."

And the rulers—some of them repented to Baha'ollah, and some of them have fallen, in unerring fulfillment, apparently, of the utterances of Baha'ollah.

Baha'ollah and Abdul-Baha?

You will hear their names around the world today, if your ear is sensitive to spiritual verities. To know them you must first know the Bahai movement, of which they and the great Bab are the central vivid figures.

And you cannot investigate the Bahai movement without immediate association with the Mashrakol-Azkar, the great Bahai temple, that shall rival in beauty and perfection all other temples of historical import.

Recently there has been an exhibition at the National museum in Washington a series of architectural designs of the Mashrakol-Azkar, executed by Charles Mason Remey.

Other architects from the east and middle west, from Canada, have submitted designs embodying their conception of this great institution, the Mashrakol-Azkar—an institution unparalleled in religious and architectural history.

An institution that commands the attention of noted American architects; that has inspired one of them to make nine different studies of the same subject; an institution known in the orient as well as the occident;



ABDUL-BAHA
Son of the Founder and Present, Leader of the Bahai Movement

that shall take visible material form on Lake Michigan, in the very heart of the continent—the Mashrakol-Azkar—what is its significance? What does it mean today to a world, searching, searching, as never before, for the reality of life; seeking after God, if happily we may find Him?

What It Means.

Mashrakol-Azkar, translated from the Arabic into English, means the dawning point of praises of God. It is a creational idea that marks the beginning of a new historical era—an era of mutuality of service to God and man, of co-operation, the end of destructive competition, the beginning of the realization of the Christ teachings.

No appreciation of the Mashrakol-Azkar can be had without knowledge first of the Bahai movement, for its history is inextricably interwoven in the development of the great structure. You will hear today of the Bahai movement in every part of the world. Representatives of all races and nations are its adherents. If you are a Bahai, the name is open sesame around the world; even to the jungles of India. You will hear of the movement not only in every civilized country of the world, but in the outlying posts of civilization, in unexpected islands of the sea, up in Alaska, down in uttermost Africa, so universal is its diffusion—a dynamic movement that penetrates, by virtue of its tremendous truth and vitality, silently, ceaselessly, resistlessly, into the great heart of humanity.

The Bahai Movement.

The Bahai movement had its origin in 1844, when, on the 23d day of May, a Persian youth, calling himself the Bab or Gate, arose among his countrymen and proclaimed the coming of the universal Teacher of Men, the Great One, whose appearance had been anticipated and prophesied by all the Scriptures of the world, who would lead humanity into all truth. He called men to prepare themselves by self-purification for the recognition of the Great One, when He should appear among them.

It was a skeptical Moslem world that greeted the proclamation of the Bab, for his teachings meant assuredly the overthrow of ancient Islamic institutions. And so, after a mission of six years, having lived a blameless, unsullied life, the Bab was martyred in the public square of Tebriz. To the end he held tenaciously to his faith in his own personal

mission as herald of the Mighty One, soon to stand forth, revealed to the world as the Manifestation of God. His very name, indicative of His station, the Bab announced—Baha'ollah, Arabic for the Glory of God.

His Exile of 40 Years.

In 1852, Mirza Husein Ali of Nur, a man of ancient, distinguished Persian lineage, began an exile of forty years from his native land. Persecution and imprisonment had been his portion at the hands of his government. For, where the Bab ended his work, Mirza Husein Ali assumed the responsibility for the spiritual guidance of humanity. Today, throughout the world, he is known as Baha'ollah, "Him whom God should manifest" in fulfillment of the prophetic utterances of the Bab. And the message he has given to the world, out of the depths of his spiritual consciousness, is known as the Bahai Revelation.

The Holy Land was the scene of the last exile and imprisonment of Baha'ollah. At the instigation of the merciless Islamic government, with his family and a few followers, he had been ruthlessly sent forth, divested of all his estates, first to Bagdad, then to Constantinople and Adrianople, and, finally, in 1868, to the Turkish penal colony of Acca, nine miles north of Mt. Carmel on the Mediterranean coast—"the most desolate of the cities of the world."

The horrors of the Turkish prison, the tragic sufferings of the exiles are historical facts—horrors and sufferings that would have dissuaded ordinary men from pursuing their spiritual mission to the world. Yet, in the midst of it all, as throughout the life of the brilliant protagonists of the Bahai movement, those marvelous souls manifested only an amazing patience and sweetness of spirit. No resentment against their keepers! No resentment against their government?

Two years of imprisonment in the barracks of Acca were followed by nine years of close confinement for Baha'ollah, within the town in an abode, the threshold of which the great prisoner was not permitted to cross. This was the external life of him whom today multitudes of people believe to have been the most extraordinary figure of any age.

Greater Freedom.

Before his death in 1892, there were a few years of somewhat greater freedom, within a radius of 15 miles, which included Carmel and the village of Behje, his final resting-place.

No less extraordinary a figure than Baha'ollah is his son, Abbas Effendi, known to the world as Abdul-Baha, Arabic again for the Servant of God. He was born on the very day of the Bab's proclamation. And, at the age of eight, he began, with the exile of Baha'ollah, his long, extraordinary career of persecution, banishment, imprisonment, which ended only in 1908, when, by the overthrow of the Turkish government, he was granted his freedom. Fifty-six years an exile from his native land! Forty years a prisoner in the "most great prison" of Acca!

The New Leader.

By the death of Baha'ollah, Abdul-Baha became the leader of the Bahai movement. To this station he had been accredited by his father, both verbally and by written document. His peculiar function in the movement is interpreter of the Revelation of Baha'ollah and exemplar for the world of the Bahai life.

In 1911-1912 you will remember, Abdul-Baha, at the age of 68, journeyed to Europe and America, to spread the message of Baha'ollah in the occident—that tremendous message of internationalism and religious unity, a basic principle of the Mashrakol-Azkar. Statesmen, scholars, people of every degree of intellectual and spiritual attainment recognized his greatness and power.

Back in 1892, before the passing of Baha'ollah, wrote Edward Granville Browne of Cambridge University, concerning Abdul-Baha: "About the greatness of this man, no one who had seen him could entertain a doubt."

And since that date Abdul-Baha has been the subject of many interviews and many articles. But no journalistic analysis has been able to penetrate the mystery of a life of martyrdom for a spiritual ideal, a conscious spiritual mission to all the world.

War Begins.

When, in 1914, the European war burst forth in all its fury, friends of Abdul-Baha, anxious for his safety, urged him to leave his home of Mt. Carmel and accept the greater security of America—a hospitality which he refused to accept. For the people of Palestine had need of him. And there, on the mountains of God, in a war-ravaged land, he dwells, sending forth dynamic thoughts of love to a suffering humanity and a devastated world.

It is difficult to write dispassionately of Baha'ollah and Abdul-Baha, who sacrificed their lives, political and social freedom, all physical comfort, for the propagation of ideals, the establishment of principles which are the common talk of men today. Easily do we inherit them from these great souls. Our statesmen today are interesting government and social reconstruction in terms of the universal. In the middle of the last century, Baha'ollah gave the creative impulse to the new order of civilization that should include all humanity and was the new order in upon us. The old swiftly passing.

Baha'ollah from the prison of Acca, proclaimed his great revolutionary principles of world government and social readjustment to the crowned heads of Europe and to the common people. These principles include the oneness of the religions of the world; the oneness of humanity; the universal brotherhood of man; universal peace; the harmony of religion and science; the search for truth and the abolition of all prejudices, religious, national, racial, social; the equality of the sexes; equal educational advantages for both; equalization of the means of livelihood; social, industrial, economic reorganization; the establishment of justice among men. He urged the creation of a universal language. He emphasized the necessity of a parliament of man, a universal tribunal of justice or arbitration to adjust international affairs.

He taught purity of life, selfishness, personal sacrifice and service to humanity.

There is inherent in the utterances of Baha'ollah, as there is in the words of Abdul-Baha, a vitality, a power that compels attention, a creative quality that somehow makes them the effective, dominating influence in human hearts. Tyrannical, medieval efforts of enemies to suppress the cause, to destroy its leaders, have been futile.

And we have, today, millions of Bahais who believe, with an indissoluble faith, that in the Bahai movement only will the world find relief from its tragedy. Has it not recreated them, transformed their individual lives? Does it not make every Bahai assembly of the world an international group in itself, the hope of all races and nations? The construction of such a

Supreme Unity.

Of this supreme unity of nations and races, this oneness of humanity and religion, the Mashrak-ul-Azkar is symbolic. It is the Bahai movement in action, in service.

Commanded Baha'ullah, in his book of laws for the world, the Kitab-i-Akdas:

"O concourse of creation! O people! Construct homes (or houses) in the most beautiful fashion possible in every city, in every land, in the name of the Lord of Religions. Adorn them with that which becometh them—not with pictures or paintings. Then commemorate the Lord, the Merciful, the Clement, in spirit and fragrance. Verily, by this mention, by this commemoration, the breasts shall be dilated, the eyes illuminated, the hearts gladdened, and thus shall you pray the Orient of Praises, in the Mashrak-ul-Azkar, (i. e., the Source of Praises).

Teach your children who hath been revealed through the Supreme Pen. Instruct them in what hath descended from the Heaven of Greatness and Power. Let them memorize the Tablets of the Merciful, and chant them with the most melodious voices in the galleries built in the Temple of the Mashrak-ul-Azkar. The prayers of the Lord shall be chanted in a manner to attract the hearts and souls.

"Blessed is he who listens unto the River of Life!"

In response to this command, the first Mashrak-ul-Azkar of the world was built in Ishkabad, Russian Turkistan. The second will be established on the shores of Lake Michigan, just north of Chicago. And every Mashrak-ul-Azkar convention has for its impelling motive the construction of this great, impressive institution.

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A World Movement.

It is not a local, not a national, but a world proposition, this building of the first Mashrak-ul-Azkar of the Occident. Bahais of every race and nation have contributed to the purchase of the site and the erection of the initial fund for the regular of the ceremonies, the House of Worship, the Bahai Temple.

A significant place in the history of the Bahai movement, the first Mashrak-ul-Azkar of America will hold. Says Abdul-Baha:

"This organization of the Mashrak-ul-Azkar will be a type for the coming centuries, and will hold the station of the Mother."

Several years ago, the Bahais of Chicago set up a sign for the temple grounds explanatory of the institution, whose walls would soon begin to rise upon the site. Wayfarers read and wayfarers understood somewhat of the exalted purpose of the Mashrak-ul-Azkar.

"These grounds are the site of an edifice to be erected as an evident standard in America of the oneness of humanity."

"Its doors will be open to all nations, races and religions."

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Here, for the first time in history, religion and science will become harmonious, each the handmaid of the other, both showering their spiritual gifts on all humanity.

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Service to humanity, hospitality—slogans of the Bahai movement. Hospitality which, as to the Temple grounds, has been overwhelmingly accepted.

When, in the future, the Mashrak-ul-Azkar stands before the world, in all its completeness, it will comprise this Temple of Worship with numerous accessories for service—the externalization of the great principles, so emphatically, so insistently proclaimed by Baha'ullah—a college for the higher scientific education, a school for orphan children and a hospice, and other institutions, where art and music and science, and truth shall find their highest, most brilliant, freest, most perfect expression.

The Mashrak-ul-Azkar will be more than a university, more than an institution conceived by men, established by men. From it shall emanate the most advanced scientific knowledge, which shall harmonize in its entirety with our developing religious consciousness, our heritage from the teachings of Baha'ullah and Abdul-Baha. There is no empirical knowledge.

The Mashrak-ul-Azkar shall be the standard for human achievement. Here art and music and literature shall have their beginning and their glorious fruition. And, under its powerful influence, life shall be forever changed, forever glorified.

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Whatever architectural plan will be chosen for the Bahai Temple, it will emphasize, in its structure, essential features of the Bahai Faith. Great beauty of design, the expression of nine, the perfect number, throughout the structure. Nine entrances will distinguish the Bahai Temple from all other temples of the world, symbolic of the religious paths by which the Bahais of the world have come into the realization that religion is one, that humanity is one, that God is One, Father of all. Beautiful flower gardens shall adorn the grounds, and fountains of pure water. Beauty and majesty of outward expression. The whole surmounted by a towering dome, it, too, a symbol of the great unity, as conceived by Baha'ullah.

The Bahai Temple will carry its message far up and down the shore of Lake Michigan, far out to sea, its dome will be visible, the first landmark sighted by sailors coming into port, the last seen by them, forthfaring. And from afar, inland, will rise upon the vision this lofty monument to the

through Baha'ullah. Into the Bahai Temple, this Holy of Holies, this sanctuary of the living God, the Bahai will go for prayer, for worship, for spiritual refreshment. This is the first requirement. It comes forth renewed and strengthened, and stimulated to greater service for humanity, through the various accessories of the Mashrak-ul-Azkar.

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Heretofore, in our quest for light and truth, we have stumbled and groped blindly. Today the scales have fallen from our eyes. We are clear of vision, dauntless of soul. Destruction all about us. Yet do we feel the infusion of new vivid life blood into the dead body of the world.

Destruction all about us—to make way for the brilliant era of reconstruction before us.

"A new era of divine consciousness is upon us. The world of humanity is going through a process of transformation. A new face is being developed. The thoughts of human brotherhood are permeating the depths of hearts and a new spirit of universal consciousness is being profoundly felt by all men." (Abdul-Baha)

The new statement of truth and life, the new interpretation, is made with tremendous, overwhelming, irrefutable power by Baha'ullah and Abdul-Baha.

In the Bahai movement lies the hope of the future. "It is the essence of all the highest ideals of this century." (Abdul-Baha). Ideals that are not mere abstractions, but the impelling force of dynamic action in human life.

It Is Reality.

The Mashrak-al-Azkar, the first institution of the new age, is the expression of Reality—reality of worship, reality of service, reality of brotherhood, reality of internationalism.

"Just as the external world is a place where various peoples of different hues and colors, of various faiths and denominations, meet; just as they are submerged in the same sea of favors, likewise all may meet under the dome of the Mashrak al-Azkar and adore the one God in the same spirit of truth, for the ages of darkness have passed away and the century of light has arrived." (Abdul-Baha)

The true, strong and sound mind is the mind that can embrace equally great things and small.—Johnson.

"Even when a man realizes his hopes," said Uncle Eben, "he generally wishes he had hoped for something else." —Washington Star.

Is It The Coming Universal Religion?
By Jean Masson

The Bahai movement has a number of converts throughout Montana, of whom there is a small group in Helena. It is a world movement which is spreading rapidly in Asia and in parts of Eastern Europe. Whatever the religious viewpoint of the reader, it will not be denied that the prophecies of the leaders of the Bahais have been fulfilled in marvelous manner—Editor

The Holy Land has just been released from the relentless grip of the (illegible words) Turk. Communication was made possible between Palestine and the west after many months of interrupted intercourse. And then through the British embassy came the message over the cable to America:

“I have much pleasure in informing you that I have received a telegram from my government stating that His Eminence Abdul Baha Abbas is in Haifa and that he is in good health and is well cared for.”

Press notices in early October were sent out over the country through the British Bureau of Information, that British troops came upon Abdul Baha in Haifa.

Who is Abdul Baha, that he should be the subject of telegraphic and press information immediately upon the complete defeat of the Turks and the establishment of communication?

Predicted War.

At Leland Stanford university, in October, 1912, this same Abdul Baha predicted the great war:

“We are on the eve of the battle of Armageddon, referred to in the 16th chapter of Revelation. The time is two years hence, when only spark will set aflame the whole of Europe.

“The social unrest in all countries, the growing religious skepticism, antecedent to the millennium, are already here. Only a spark will set aflame the whole of Europe, as prophesied in the verses of Daniel and in the Book of John.

“Before 1917 kingdoms will be annihilated, cataclysms will rock the earth. Then all nations shall be as one faith and all men as brothers and these fruitless strifes and ruinous wars shall pass away, and the ‘Most Great Peace’ shall come, and man shall not glory in this, that he loves his country, but rather in that he loves his kind.”

On Sunday, May 12, 1912, in Grace Methodist Episcopal church, New York city, this same Abdul-Baha gave utterance to this momentous warning:

“Just now you can say Europe is a battlefield; like ammunition ready for a spark. And one spark can set aflame the whole world.

“Before these complications and (balance of sentence illegible).”

Who is this Abdul-Baha, with the vision of the seer, who so unerringly could prophesy world events?

Fifty years ago his father before him, the great Baha’o’llah, out of a prison in the Holy Land, sent letters to the kings of Europe, calling upon them to establish universal peace and righteousness among men. He warned them of approaching calamity. He predicted the downfall of Napoleon III, then at the zenith of his power; of the emperor of Austria; of the sultan of Turkey.

To Kaiser.

To the emperor of Germany he wrote:

“O banks of the river Rhine! We have seen you drenched in gore, because the swords of retribution were drawn against you; and ye shall have another trouble. And we hear the lamentation of Berlin, though it be today in manifest glory.”

Neither England, nor Russia, nor Persia, nor America was ignored by the prophetic and mandatory pen of Baha’o’llah.

To England he wrote through England’s queen Victoria:

“Verily, we see you increasing your expenditures every year and placing the burden thereof upon your subjects. This is nought but manifest injustice. Fear the sighs of the oppressed and his tears and do not burden your subjects above that which they can bear, neither ruin them to build your palaces. Choose for them that which ye choose for yourselves. Thus do we expound unto you that which will profit you, if you are of those who enquire. They are your treasurers. Beware lest ye exercise over them that which God hath never done, and entrust such treasuries into the hands of thieves. By them ye eat, rule and conquer, and still you make yourselves great against them. Verily, this is nought but an astonishment.

“O assembly of rulers! Improve the accordance among you, then you will need neither many soldiers, nor their accoutrements, but to a certain degree, whereby ye will protect your empires and countires.”

To America.

To America this authoritative pen wrote:

“Assist with the hands of justice the broken-hearted (oppressed) and crush the great oppressors with the scourges of the commands of your Lord, the powerful, the wise.”

And the rulers—some of them responded to Baha’o’llah, and some of them have fallen, in unerring fulfillment, apparently, of the utterances of Baha’o’llah.

Bahá'ollah and Abdul-Baha.

You will hear their names around the world today, if your ear is sensitive to spiritual verities. To know them you must first know the Bahá'í movement, of which they and great Bab are the central vivid figures.

And you cannot investigate the Bahá'í movement without immediate association with the Mashrakol-Azkar, the great Bahai temple, that shall rival in beauty and perfection all other temples of historical import.

Recently there has been on exhibition at the National museum in Washington a series of architectural designs of the Mashrakol-Azkar, executed by Charles Mason Remey.

Other architects from the east and middle west, from Canada, have submitted designs embodying their conception of this great institution, the Mashrakol-Azkar—an institution unparalleled in religious and architectural history.

An institution that commands the attention of noted American architects; that has inspired one of them to make nine different studies of the same subject; an institution known in the orient as well as the occident; that shall take visible material form on Lake Michigan, in the very heart of the continent—the Mashrakol-Azkar—what is its significance? What does it mean today to a world searching, searching, as never before, for the reality of life; seeking after God, if happily we may find Him?

What it Means.

Mashrakol-Azkar, translated from the Arabic into English, means the dawning point of praises of God. It is a creational idea that marks the beginning of a new historical era—an era of mutuality of service to God and man, of co-operation, the end of destructive competition, the beginning of the realization of the Christ teachings.

No appreciation of the Mashrakol-Azkar can be had without knowledge first of the Bahai movement, its history is inextricably interwoven in the developmet of the great structure. You will hear today of the Bahai movement in every part of the world. Representatives of all races and nations are its adherents. If you are a Bahai the name is open sesame around the world; even to the jungles of India. You will hear of the movement not only in every civilized country of the world, but in the outlying posts of civilization, in unexpected islands of the sea, up in Alaska, down in uttermost Africa, so universal is its diffusion—a dynamic movement that penetrates, by virtue of its tremendous truth and vitalness, silently, ceaselessly, resistlessly, into the great heart of humanity.

The Bahai Movement.

The Bahai movement had its origin in 1844, when on the 23d day of May, a Persian youth, calling himself the Bab or Gate, arose among his countrymen and proclaimed the coming of the universal Teacher of Men, the Great One, whose appearance had been anticipated and prophesied by all the Scriptures of the world, who would lead humanity into all truth. He called men to prepare themselves by self-

purification for the recognition of the Great One, when He should appear among them.

It was a skeptical Moslem world that greeted the proclamation of the Bab, for his teachings meant assuredly the overthrow of ancient Islamic institutions. And so, after a mission of six years, having lived a blameless, unsullied life, the Bab was martyred in the public square of Tabriz. To the end he held tenaciously to his faith in his own personal mission as herald of the Mighty One, soon to stand forth, revealed to the world as the Manifestation of God. His very name, indicatory of His station, the Bab announced—Baha'ollah, Arabic for the Glory of God.

His Exile of 40 Years.

In 1852, Mirza Husein Ali of Nur, a man of ancient, distinguished Persian lineage, began an exile of forty years from his native land. Persecution and imprisonment had been his portion at the hands of his government. For, where the Bab ended his work, Mirza Husein Ali assumed the responsibility for the spiritual guidance of humanity. Today, throughout the world, he is known as Baha'ollah, "Him whom God should manifest." In fulfillment of the prophetic utterances of the Bab. And the message he has given to the world, out of the deeps of his spiritual consciousness, is known as the Bahá'í Revelation.

The Holy Land was the scene of the last exile and imprisonment of Baha'ollah. At the instigation of the merciless Islamic government, with his family and a few followers, he had been ruthlessly sent forth, divested of all his estates, first to Bagdad, (sic) then to Constantinople and Adrianople, and finally in 1868, to the Turkish penal colony of Acca, nine miles north of Mt. Carmel, on the Mediterranean coast—"the most desolate of the cities of the world."

The horrors of the Turkish prison, the tragic suffering of the exiles are historical facts—horrors and sufferings that would have dissuaded ordinary men from pursuing their spiritual mission to the world. Yet, in the midst of it all, as throughout the life of the brilliant protagonists of the Bahai movement, those marvelous souls manifested only an amazing patience and sweetness of spirit. No resentment against their keepers! No resentment against their government?

Two years of imprisonment in the barracks of Acca were followed by nine years of close confinement for Baha'ollah, within he town in an abode, the threshold of which the great prisoner was not permitted to cross. This was the external life of him whom today multitudes of people believe to have been the most extraordinary figure of any age.

Greater Freedom.

Before his death, in 1892, there were a few years of somewhat greater freedom, within a radius of 15 miles, which included Carmel and the village of Behje, his final resting place.

No less extraordinary a figure than Baha'o'llah is his son, Abbas Effendi, known to the world as Abdul-Baha, Arabic again for the Servant of God. He was born on the very day of the Bab's proclamation. And at the age of eight, he began, with the exile of Baha'o'llah, his long, extraordinary career of persecution, banishment, imprisonment, which ended only in 1908, when, by the overthrow of the Turkish government, he was granted his freedom. Fifty-six years an exile from his native land! Forty years a prisoner in the "most great prison of Acca!

The New Leader.

By the death of Baha'o'llah, Abdul-Baha became the leader of the Bahai movement. To this station he had been accredited by his father, both verbally and by written document. His peculiar function in the movement is interpreter of the Revelation of baha'o'llah and exemplar for the world of the Bahá'í life.

In 1911-1912 you will remember, Abdul-Baha, at the age of 68, journeyed to Europe and America, to spread the message of Baha'o'llah in the occident—that tremendous message of internationalism and religious unity, a basic principle of the Mashrakol-Azkar. Statesmen, scholars, people of every degree of intellectual and spiritual attainment, recognized his greatness and power.

Back in 1892, before the passing of Baha'o'llah, wrote Edward Granville Browne of Cambridge university, concerning Abdul-Baha: "About the greatness of this man no one who had seen him could entertain a doubt."

And since that date Abdul-Baha has been the subject of many interviews and many articles. But no journalistic analysis has been able to penetrate the mystery of a life, martyrdom for spiritual ideal, a conscious spiritual mission to all the world.

War Begins.

When, in 1914, the European war burst forth in all its fury, friends of Abdul-Baha, anxious for his safety, urged him to leave his home on Mt. Carmel and accept the greater security of America—a hospitality which he refused to accept, for the people of Palestine had need of him. And there, on the mountain of God, in a war-ravaged land, he dwells sending forth dynamic thoughts of love to a suffering humanity and a devastated world.

It is difficult to write dispassionately of Baha'o'llah and Abdul-Baha, who sacrificed their lives, political and social freedom, all physical comfort, for the propagation of ideals, the establishment of principles, which are the common talk of men today. Easily do we inherit them from these great souls. Our statesmen today are interesting government and social reconstruction in terms of the universal. In the middle of the last century, Baha'o'llah gave the creative impulse to the new order of civilization that should include all humanity and was the new order is upon us. The old swiftly passing.

Baha'o'llah from the prison of Acca, proclaimed his

great revolutionary principles of world government and social readjustment to the crowned heads of Europe and to the common people. These principles include the oneness of the religions of the world; the oneness of humanity; the universal brotherhood of man; universal peace; the harmony of religion and science, the search for truth and the abolition of all prejudices, religious, national, racial, social, the equality of the sexes; equal educational advantages for both; equalization of the means of livelihood; social, industrial, economic reorganization, the establishment of justice among men. He urged the creation of a universal language. He emphasized the necessity of a parliament of man, a universal tribunal of justice or arbitration to adjust international affairs.

He taught purity of life, selfishness,(sic) personal sacrifice and service to humanity.

There is inherent in the utterances of Baha'o'llah, as there is in the words Abdul-Baha, a vitality, a power that compels attention, creative quality that somehow makes them the effective, dominating, influence in human hearts. Tyrannical, medieval efforts of enemies to suppress the cause, to destroy its leaders, have been futile. And we have, today, millions of Bahá'ís who believe, with an indissuable faith, that in the Bahá'í movement only will the world (word illegible) relief from its tragedy. Has it not recreated them, transformed their individual lives? Does it not make of every Bahai assembly of the world an international group in itself—people of all races and nations? The extension of such a (balance of line illegible).

Supreme Unity.

Of this supreme unity of nations and races, this oneness of humanity and religion, the Mashrakol-Azkar is symbolic. It is the Bahá'í movement in action, in service.

Commanded Baha'o'llah, in his book of laws for the world, the Kitáb-el-Akdas:

"O concourse of creation! O people! Construct homes (or houses) in the beautiful fashion possible in every city, in every land, in the name of the Lord of Religions. Adorn them with that which beseemeth them—not with pictures or paintings. Then commemorate the Lord, the Merciful, the Clement, in spirit and fragrance. Verily, by this mention, by this commemoration, the breasts shall be dilated, the eyes illuminated, the hearts gladdened, and thus shall you pray the Orient of Praises, in the Mashrak-el-Azkar. (i.e., the Source of Praises).

"Teach your children who hath been revealed through the Supreme Pen. Instruct them in what hath descended from the Heaven of Greatness and Power. Let them memorize the Tablets of the merciful, and chant them with the most melodious voices in the galleries built in the Temple of the Mashrak-ol-Azkar. The prayers of the Lord shall be chanted in a manner to attract the hearts and souls.

"Blessed is he who listens unto the River of Life!"

In response to this command, the first Mashrak-ol-

Azkar of the world was built in Ishkabad, Russian Turkestan. The second will be established on the shores of Lake Michigan, just north of Chicago. And every Mashrakol-Azkar convention has for its impelling motive the construction of this great, impressive institution.

A World Movement.

It is not a local, not a national, but a world proposition, this building of the first Mashrak-ol-Azkar of the Occident. Bahais of every race and nation have contributed to the purchase of the site and the creation of the initial fund for the reception (sic) of the central building, the House of Worship, the Bahai Temple.

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Washington Star

FIRST BAHÁ'Í FUNERAL SERVICE-HELENA

for

Mason Leroy (Ty) Mereness

By The Spiritual Assembly of Helena

(Died September 1, 1941)

Delivered by Charles Q. Adams:

MUSIC

VOCAL SOLO

O Lord! We have turned our faces towards Thy Kingdom of Oneness, and are drowned in the sea of Thy Mercy.

O Lord! Illumine our spirits, that we may see Thy light in this dark night, and make us happy with the wine of Thy Love in this wonderful age. O Lord! Make us hear Thy Call, open before our faces the door of Thy Heaven, that we may see Thy Glory, and be attracted to Thy beauty. Verily, Thou art the Generous, The merciful, the Forgiving!

Friends: We have come together today in a memorial service for our departed brother, Mason L. Mereness, who has passed on to the Abha Kingdom where he will continue in the service of God, and make greater progress in the perfections of the Spiritual World.

Mr. Mereness was born in Delavan, Wisconsin on February the 11th, 1886. He came to Montana in 1911. He first settled in Butte, later moved to Townsend where he was married in 1916, thence to Helena where he resided until his passing.

"Ty" Mereness, as he was known to his many friends, served the local Carpenters Union for many years as secretary. He was a member of the F.O.E. Ty was a firm and steadfast member of the New World Order of Baha'u'llah, serving as its recording secretary and member of the Local Bahá'í Spiritual Assembly, to which he devoted many hours of study and service to God.

Mr. Mereness is survived by his widow, Nellie, and two children, Betty and Richard, all of Helena; a sister Mrs. Albert Blodget of Delavan, Wisconsin; and a brother Howard of Williams Bay, Wisconsin.

The Bahá'í Teachings—which our departed brother loved so devotedly, declare the oneness of the world of humanity. This Oneness as taught by Baha'u'llah, refers not only to me still in the flesh, but to all human beings, whether embodied or dis-embodied. Not only all mankind now living on the earth, but all in the spiritual world as well, are parts of one and the same humanity; and these two parts are intimately dependent, one on the other.

Spiritual communion one with the other, far from being impossible or un-natural, is constant and inevitable. To the Prophets and Saints, this spiritual communion is as

familiar and real as are ordinary vision and conversation to the rest of mankind.

'Abdu'l-Baha, the son of Baha'u'llah, the founder of the Bahá'í New World Order, says that for man, while in the body, and after putting it off, there is progress in perfection and not in state, because, there is no higher state than a perfect man to which he can transfer himself.

I will read briefly from the writings of Baha'u'llah:

"Know thou of a truth that the soul, after its separation from the body, will continue to progress until it attaineth the presence of God, in a state and condition which neither the revolution of the ages and centuries, nor the changes and chances of this world can alter. It will endure as long as the Kingdom of God, His Sovereignty, His Dominion and Power will endure." (Gleanings 155)

"Every composition is necessarily subject to destruction or dis-integration and that is what we call death." This physical body is a composition of elements, and according to the Law of God, it must at some time decompose, but the inner and essential reality of man, the soul or spirit, is not composed of elements, and therefore it cannot become de-composed. It is not all elemental composition subject to disintegration, or death.

(P.U.P., Vol. 11, p 410)

Death, therefore, is applicable to a change or transformation from one degree to another. There never is for man annihilation. Man is everlasting, ever living. And when we speak of death, it is only an imaginary ter, implying change. Man only through his ignorance is afraid of death. (P.U.P., Vol. 1, p 84-85)

'Abdu'l-Baha, further states:

"The Kingdom of God is the world of vision, (i.e. things are visible in it), where all concealed realities will be disclosed. How much more the well known souls will become manifest. The mysteries of which man is heedless in this earthly world, those will he discover in the heavenly world, and there he will be informed of the secret of truth; how much more will he recognize or discover persons with whom he hath been associated. Undoubtedly, the holy souls who find a pure eye and are favored with insight, will in the Kingdom of Lights, be acquainted with all mysteries, and will seek the bounty of witnessing the reality of every great soul, even they will manifestly behold the Beauty of God in that world, likewise will they find all the friends of God, both those of former and recent times, present in the heavenly assemblage."

FIRST BAHÁ'Í MARRIAGE
IN THE STATE OF MONTANA

March 22nd, 1942, 1:30 P.M.

In the home of Nellie Mereness at 1043 Breckenridge
Helena, Montana

Bride: Miss Ruth Virginia Adams

Groom: Mr. Ernest Charles Jensen

Bride-groom: Mr. Jack K. Saunders

Maid of Honor: Miss Betty Mereness

Local Assembly

Representatives: Charles M. Bryan

Charles Adams (Father)

Declaration Required by *Montana State Law*:

Do you _____ take this man to be your lawful
wedded husband? I Do

Do you _____ take this woman to be Your lawful
wedded wife? I Do

Chairman, Charles M. Bryan read the introductory prayers,
and the Bahá'í Marriage Tablet:

“O Lord, O Lord, render us successful through Thy
conquering power in that which Thou lovest and
approvest so that we may become standards of guidance,
signs of Thy Kingdom, to beseech Thy realm of might,
to be submissive in Thy service, severed from aught
beside Thee, diffusing Thy fragrance, united in Thy
Cause, of one accord in Thy religion, and firm in Thy
covenant.”

—0—

“The bond that unites the hearts most perfectly is loyalty.
True lovers once united must show forth the utmost
faithfulness to one-another. You must dedicate your
education, your talents, your fortunes, your titles, your
bodies and your spirits to God to Baha'u'llah, to each
other. Let your hearts be as spacious as the universe of
God.

Your thoughts must be lofty, your ideal luminous your
mind spiritual, so that your souls may become a dawning
place for the Sun of Reality. Let your hearts be like unto
two pure mirrors reflecting the stars of the heaven of
love and beauty.

O Beloved of God, may your home be a vision of the
paradise of Adam, so that whosoever enters there may
feel the essence of purity and harmony, and cry out from
the hearts, ‘Here is the home of Love, Here is the palace
of love, Here is the garden of love.’”

Bahá'í Ceremony:

(To the Groom) You will repeat “Verily, We are content
with the Will of God.”

(To the Bride) You will repeat “Verily, We are content
with the Desire of God.”

Closing prayer Read by Secretary, Charles Adams:

“Glory be unto Thee, O my God! Verily, this Thy servant,
and this Thy maid-servant have gathered under the
shadow of Thy Mercy and they are united through Thy
Favor and Generosity. O Lord, Confirm them in Thy
servitude, and assist them in Thy service. Suffer them to
become the signs of Thy Name in Thy world and protect
them through Thy Bestowals which are inexhaustible in
this world and in the worlds to come. O Lord, they are
supplicating towards the Kingdom of Thy Mercifulness
and invoking towards the realm of Thy Singleness. Verily,
they are married on obedience to Thy command. Cause
them to become the signs of harmony and unity till the
end of time. Verily, Thou art the Omniscient, the
Omnipresent, and the Almighty.

Alla O Abha

About one hundred twenty-five persons attended the
reception. Twenty-eight Witnessed the marriage.

NELLIE T. MERENESS and MASON L. MERENESS

by Betty (Mereness) Bennett

The seeds of a great spiritual need had been awaiting germination within Mother for years when she first heard the Bahá'í message in the fall of 1937. It came to a climax when she told me her need for truth was so great that she prostrated herself on the floor and asked God if there was a truth to help her find it

Shortly after that she noticed a Bahá'í public meeting advertised at the Placer Hotel in Helena. She said she wanted to attend and asked me to remind her so she wouldn't forget. The speaker was Mrs. Lorol Schopflocher, wife of the later to be appointed Hand of the Cause of God, Siegfried Schopflocher. In 1954, while Mother was pioneering on the big island of Hawaii in Hilo, she again met Mrs. Schopflocher, who told her she had decided as the plane was landing to get off and give a public meeting.

We both attended this meeting and Mother said afterward she didn't understand what they said, but she liked it. My recollection is only of a story about a healing from saying the Remover of Difficulties. We met some of the Bahá'ís that evening, thus, Mother was able to call a woman by her name when she passed her on the street in town the next day.

This was Mrs. Edwina Powell, whose husband at one time had been the Minister of the Unitarian Church in Helena (later to become the Public Library and currently turned into a performance theatre). She and her husband had moved from Helena by the time she heard of the Bahá'í message and became a Bahá'í. Mr. Powell liked the teachings but died without becoming a Bahá'í. Mrs. Powell had returned to visit friends and found a group studying. Mrs. Lorol Jackson came to Helena from Sioux Falls, S.D. (and possibly had made a temporary move to the Seattle area to visit Bahá'í friends) sometime in 1937 as a pioneer in response to Shoghi Effendi's first Seven Year Teaching Plan. In this plan efforts were directed to form Spiritual Assemblies in each of the capital cities of the states.

Mother almost let Mrs. Powell pass her on the street, but decided to stop her and ask for something to read. Mrs. Powell suggested *Baha'u'llah and the New Era*. However, Mother returned it the next day and said what she was interested in was something by the Founder. Mrs. Powell insisted she wasn't ready for such a book, but Mother insisted that was what she wanted, saying she had to read what the Founder said. She was finally given *Gleanings* and knew immediately it was what she wanted. All the balance of her life she loved to read out loud from the *Gleanings*. I think it was her favorite book.

The day following the meeting she visited a younger friend, Mrs. Helen Robinson, who had been ill the night of the public meeting. She knew her friend was searching and she was sure she had found what they both wanted. Helen

did become ignited, truly on fire and pioneered to Alaska, Sitka and Sweden. Her story is written separately. Helen studied with Mrs. Powell that winter and considered her the one who deepened her.

Mrs. Jackson had been holding weekly meetings at the YWCA, although Mother had never noticed them advertised. A Bahá'í family, Charles and Ruth Adams and their children, Virginia and Charles, Jr. had arrived in Helena in 1934 but had enrolled in Denver in 1917. Frieda and Charles Bryan attended the meetings at the YWCA along with another couple, Beatrice and Gerhard (Jerry) Buerner (later changed to Burner). Jerry had arrived from Germany following WWI and Beatrice was a Canadian lady. A man by the name of Joseph Walters and a Mr. and Mrs. Goldthorpe were also attending. Frieda Bryan was acquainted with the Bahá'í teachings through her son-in-law, Charles Mortensen, who rode the rails to visit 'Abdu'l-Baha. Whenever he visited from Chicago she had told him not to mention his religion to her. She had enrolled February 6, 1935 but her husband, Charles, was not a member. This group of people began studying in earnest following the meetings by Mrs. Schopflocher with weekly meetings at the home of Charles and Ruth Adams. I can recall the great charts that Charles prepared on Bible prophecies and how the evening was completed by feasting from a table laden with food. The home of the Adams family was very simple, sparse even, and I have wondered since what sacrifices were made to prepare for such a group. Charles and Ruth were so full of love we were all enamored.

The Helena Assembly gave me permission to review some files, which showed Mother and Charles Bryan enrolling in 1937; Burners in February and April of 1938. I do not know why the name of Helen Robinson was not shown on this list. However, I was told by several that they signed enrollment cards at Ridvan (1938) and forwarded them together as forming a Spiritual Assembly. Information from a later review of the Assembly minutes reported they had requested to remain a group while they learned how to act as an Assembly; thus, the recognition for the first Assembly is given for Ridvan 1939. The members of the Assembly were: Charles, Ruth and Virginia Adams; Charles and Frieda Bryan; Beatrice and Gerhard Buerner; Nellie Mereness and Helen Robinson.

Mother began to take the message to all of her friends, beginning with Helen Robinson and followed with a neighbor, Mrs. Jessie Woods and a hometown friend, Mrs. Gretchen Pool and Julia Hartpence. Her own family members rejected it for the most part, with only one sister who would listen and an elderly father, who probably would have absorbed it with time. For her husband, Mason L. Mereness, she did not push the books, but he could not

help notice her changed spirit and she noticed that books she left around were not always in the position she left them. In December of 1939 he quietly announced his enrollment before Feast as a surprise to her. He was not a well man and died of a heart attack September 1, 1941. He was Recording Secretary of the Assembly at the time. His Bahá'í funeral service was a beautiful teaching opportunity and probably more like a proclamation than a funeral service.

In 1949 she rented her home at 1043 Breckenridge and moved to Great Falls to assist with the formation of the Great Falls Assembly. In December 1953, after selling her home, she pioneered to Hilo, Hawaii to assist with the consolidation work needed in the teaching plan. Her friend, Lorrol Jackson, asked to accompany her and is buried in a small cemetery outside of Hilo after she passed away October 1, 1965 at the age of 88. Mother returned to Montana in the spring of 1957 to see her son, Richard L. Mereness, before he moved to Alaska. With grandchildren part of her family now, she remained in Butte and served on the Spiritual Assembly until her passing December 8, 1975 at the age of 85-1/2.

Born May 11, 1890 in Meagher County, later considered Broadwater County outside of Townsend, MT, she was raised with two sisters and two brothers. Stories indicate she was the most spirited of the group, always able to defend a younger brother with a sure-aimed rock. She was never spelled down in the school spelling bee and promoted to the next grade more than once. However, by the time she reached the 8th grade her parents felt she was too young to enter high school and she had to remain in the 8th grade for three years. She did pass the State Teachers exam at that time. Her parents were farmers/ranchers on a good piece of land outside of Townsend and kept their girls close at hand until they married, which she did on July 16, 1916.

Her spirit was always ahead of the times and her quickness of mind was always a lesson for me. After finding herself a widow at the beginning of WWII, she went to work in a laundry at Fort Harrison outside of Helena and later on rented out rooms to women who worked nearby at the State Capitol building. In 1943, even with her arm in a cast, she and I took a train to attend the Geyserville Summer School. This travel during the War often ended up sitting on a suitcase in the aisle as the trains were filled with service men. She always managed to find us a seat by moving quickly and telling people to watch out for her broken arm. We three family members (Mother, brother and myself) travelled by bus to attend the 100th Anniversary of the Declaration of the Bab in Wilmette. Following the 1953 Convention, which she attended, she decided to pioneer in Hilo, Hawaii and in 1961 she attended the Dedication of the House of Worship in Kampala, Uganda and then journeyed on to make her pilgrimage at the World Center. The precious articles had not been moved to the new Archives building and her great joy was having Mulla Husayn's sword placed in her hands and being so close to every item she was shown.

She later told me she placed her hands in Baha'u'llah's shoes in the Mansion and prayed. Her life had not been without physical pain and discomfort from operations, but her spirit was always so completely turned to Baha'u'llah that she never complained.

She passed away from two strokes that occurred within a period of a month. One of her wishes was that she hoped she wouldn't be buried on a cold, wintery day when her family would be subjected to the weather. The day of her funeral on December 9, 1965 was like a day in Hawaii, with such a warm breeze we didn't have to wear coats. The next day winter moved in. Her three granddaughters, daughter-in-law and myself, husband and brother felt honored to carry her casket.

It has occurred to me that we, who are the believers, the pioneers or assembly members in small communities, would be able to leave a clearer record for the future if a diary of events were kept. Mother wanted to record her work in Hawaii but it came out in conversation and I was not wise enough to save her letters. She was very well received on the Big Island by being invited into local homes and always maintained a friendship with a Japanese and a Chinese lady for years after returning. One woman, who had been a Superintendent of Schools, would call for her and take her to different places on the Island. She was able to obtain radio time for guest speakers as well as newspaper publicity. In 1955 she returned to Butte, MT upon the birth of twin granddaughters and stayed with us for eight months, undergoing a serious surgery while here. When she learned that Florence Mayberry was scheduled to come to Hilo, and even though not strong from her surgery, she made a hasty return in order to be able to make preparations for publicity. She loved Hawaii and the people and mentioned she didn't miss the Montana winters. It was a sacrifice to return to the States, but she established herself in a small apartment in the uptown area of Butte and everyone on the floor knew about Baha'u'llah. Soon she became a member of the Spiritual Assembly and was instrumental in creating the trust and love needed to welcome a young black woman into the Faith by clearing the path for this lady to obtain a room next to hers. Her teaching firesides were heart felt, one on one, and often late at night or whenever someone knocked on her door. With mostly retired people in this building, she was the one person the older people turned to for consultation or help.

Her six grandchildren brought her great joy, although my brother Richard's children were young when she passed. Perhaps her greatest repayment being the loving relationship she had with each one. Her assistance to me in sewing for three girls and filling in every need was what she loved doing. She always held great interest in learning about scientific advancements. She bequeathed to each of us a spiritual strength and vision for the future that grew from her living example of dedication to Baha'u'llah.

HELEN ROBINSON

A Bahá'í History

(Helen asked her friend Evelyn Huffman, Member of the National Spiritual Assembly of Anchorage, Alaska, to prepare this history of her Bahá'í services.)

From the time of her declaration in Helena, Montana on November 21, 1937 through Edwinna Powell Clifford, a travelling Bahá'í teacher whose meeting she chanced to attend with a friend and who then remained in Helena for three days to assist this 'flame' that had been lit, to the present time (November, 1973) Helen Robinson has been an ardent lover of Baha'u'llah never faltering in giving His message to all who crossed her path. Little wonder that this flame grew ever brighter through the years with such spiritual giants to teach her - her beloved Edwinna Clifford, Leroy Ioas and Amelia Collins (both to later become Hands of the Cause), John and Louise Bosch (whose donated property became the Geyserville school property) and others. She had the bounty as well of attending the Geyserville summer school several times - and later with her husband after his declaration. On one such occasion she met the precious Martha Root, one of the greatest teachers the Bahá'í world has known who travelled the world over and became the first to attract royalty - Queen Marie of Rumania - to the Faith.

While first and foremost a dynamic teacher of the Cause, Helen served in many administrative capacities almost from the time of her enrollment:

*In 1938 she was elected to the first local Spiritual Assembly of Helena, Montana.

In 1939 she was appointed to the Regional Teaching Committee of Montana.

In 1942, after her husband's business had taken the family to Nevada, she was appointed to the Regional Teaching Committee of Nevada and California.

In 1943 the family moved to Alhambra, California so that Helen could make the ninth member of that Assembly thus saving it.

In 1943 she was appointed to the National Teaching Committee.

In 1944 at the request of the National Teaching Committee that she assist the newly emerging Alaskan community, the Robinson family moved to Anchorage and in April Helen became a member of the first elected Assembly in Alaska. (It must be noted that this move was made at great sacrifice, particularly as Robbie - Helen's husband - gave up a position of long standing in which he had built up considerable seniority.)

In 1945 Donna Mae Robinson, the Robinsons daughter, became the first declared Bahá'í youth in the Territory of Alaska.

In 1946, after many years of bending with the will of

Baha'u'llah as a friend of the Faith (moving to Alhambra, California so that Helen could help to save that local Spiritual Assembly; moving to Alaska so that she could assist in establishing the Cause in the "Great Land", assisting financially for firesides and other meetings and always giving Helen greatly needed moral support, Helen's husband Wilbur A. (Robbie) Robinson declared his faith in Baha'u'llah officially. "My world became another world," Helen declared, "Without Rob I could never have made it."

In 1947 both Helen and Robbie were elected to the Anchorage Assembly and were members of that body at the time of its incorporation in 1948.

In 1949 Helen was elected president of the Anchorage Woman's Club - a club which was a great force for good in the community. Through this organization Helen was able to call the attention of the Faith to many prominent citizens of Anchorage.

In 1950 Helen was elected Alaska's delegate to the United States National Bahá'í Convention. During the Robinson's residence in Alaska their home was the center of many types of firesides and other meetings, and many declared their Faith in Baha'u'llah there.

In 1950 the Robinsons left Alaska for Boise, Idaho where they both worked on the local Spiritual Assembly in Ada County - outside of Boise - for fifteen years. It was here that Robbie, Jr. became an enrolled Bahá'í and through him much youth activity took place in the Robinson home.

In both 1951 and 1952 Helen was elected one of Idaho's delegates to the National Bahá'í Convention in Wilmette.

In 1953 when the beloved Guardian launched the Ten Year World Crusade and the Plan was read at the National convention, Helen arose along with 100 other souls offering her services as a pioneer in the world encircling Plan. She arrived in Sitka on September 5, 1953. Sitka was one of the Crusade goals under Canada named in that Plan; thus Helen became a Knight of Baha'u'llah as did those others who pioneered to the far-flung goals named by the Guardian in the Plan. (In 1963 Helen had the bounty of attending the World Congress in London which celebrated the victorious conclusion of the Ten Year Crusade, and at that time these "Knights" who gave so much to establish the Faith throughout the world, were honored). Helen was able to remain at her post in Sitka for only a period of months after which

she returned to Boise, Idaho and resumed her pioneering efforts there with her husband.

In both 1957 and 1958 Helen was elected president of the Boise Women's Columbian Club, a club with a membership of 300 and whose formation dated back to the Columbian Exposition of 1928. As president of this club she was able to introduce the study of world religions including the Bahá'í Faith into that group as well as presenting the Faith through prominent speakers on several occasions.

Working from their home in Boise, the Robinsons were able to make trips to Nevada to assist the Indians on the Pyute Reservation. In 1958 through her efforts in contacting President Eisenhower about the plight of these people 19 wells were drilled on the reservation.

In 1960 Helen and Robbie pioneered to Sweden and helped to form the local Spiritual Assembly of Malmo in that country. While in Europe they made the pilgrimage to the Holy Land. During this pilgrimage a talk with Hand of the Cause Ruhyyih Khanum concerning the importance of reaching the Indians convinced them that they should return to the United States where they could be accessible to these peoples.

From 1964 to 1969 the Robinsons pioneered in Canada settling in Peachland, British Columbia. They bought a large home in this small town which again served the Faith as a center for large area firesides for such travelling teachers as Hand of the Cause William Sears, Auxiliary Board members Angus Cowan, Ted Anderson and others.

In 1969 the Robinsons again answered the call to pioneer this time to the virgin area of Mountain Home, Arkansas where they remain to this date. Although this has been a very difficult post, the Robinsons have been very successful in the important task of making friends for the Faith.

Who can estimate the worth of one's deeds? It can truly be said that the Robinsons have given their all to the Cause of Baha'u'llah - and the seeds they have spread throughout many states and three countries will long continue to yield the harvest, and surely the concourse on high upon whose assistance they have so relied will acclaim them for a task well done.

* Most of the members of this first Spiritual Assembly in Helena, Montana always referred to 1938 at the first formation. However, a reference in the minutes of this Assembly says they remained a group learning to function as an Assembly by permission of the National Teaching Committee and this Assembly is recognized as forming in 1939.

The "friend" who brings her to the meeting with Mrs. Edwina Powell Clifford was Mrs. Nellie Mereness in whose home Helen had a room prior to her marriage to Robinson. I believe she was in nursing and I have a memory of her caring for me at age 6 when I had my tonsils removed. (Betty Mereness Bennett)

Narrative retyped for inclusion in Montana Bahá'í History December 2001.

"ALL are God's Servants and All Abide by HIS Bidding"

(Narrative by Helen Robinson, pioneer from Helena, MT to Alaska)

April 1953 at the Annual Bahá'í Convention when pioneers were asked to volunteer for the World Crusade, I was one of those who accepted the challenge, knowing full well that anyone who did so would reap the full cup of tests, for was this not the most priceless of privileges to serve in this Great World Crusade on virgin soil. My confidence was without measure, as I went forward to sign up as a volunteer, knowing full well my family had their rights in the matter; but also knowing that we could work this out to the satisfaction of all concerned.

Eighteen years ago, had I not promised that if God saw fit to allow me to live long enough to raise our children until they did not need me any more...I would do anything HE asked and was not this the TIME? My heart burned with longing to fulfill the promise to its fullest measure. Consultation with my husband and son, now in College, the decision was made that come June 1954 when our son-in-law, Mike Burroughs, just out of the Air Force and now in T.V. School in California would be graduated and could God-willing take Mr. Robinson's place in our Radio and T.V. Wholesale Business and we could then pioneer together. We decided that to go to the Indians would be perhaps the best, as while Rob helped the Indian boys learn radio to make contacts, I could help the Indians in the teachings through service of somekind. The papers were filled out and sent to the N.S.A. for their consideration, and accepted as planned.

In June we received an excerpt from a letter written by the Guardian's Beloved Wife, whom I had the privilege to meet at the Temple, and vowed to make her my life example. I felt I understood for the first time in my life how the British could worship a Queen...she was indeed a QUEEN among women, a shining star to follow.

This excerpt showing the Beloved Guardian's disappointment that the volunteers had not gone out immediately fired me with action. I cabled the Guardian, saying "I will go immediately wherever you want me to go." His reply came next day. "Any virgin area." At first I was disappointed he didn't say the exact place...it would have been so easy to just get up and GO! I was soon to realize the great wisdom in this. CONSULTATION with the family proved our best place would be in Alaska as my capacity was limited because of language and being a simple person, the simple people would listen...we had already served almost seven years in Anchorage and with Eskimo and Indian contacts we were very much at home. (The first Indian maiden to come in the Faith in Alaska, Miss Agnes Parent, teacher of Alakanuk, Alaska, now Mrs. Wallace Harrison, came through our household.) The purest Eskimo tribe we had the privilege to meet and entertain in our home in

Anchorage and still correspond with, are fine contacts. These are a few of the reasons we chose Alaska.

Calling Horace Holley by phone, to step up the paper work, I volunteered for Kodiak, which was already taken. I then volunteered for Baronof Island as I felt that so few people would want that outpost and there were so many Indians there. The Western Hemisphere and the Canadian Committee accepted me as the pioneer to go to Sitka, Baranof Island. The sailing date from Seattle was set for September 24, 1953.

Mrs. Gay Stewart came to call on me and after consultation we called Horace Holley to say she would go to Juneau and that we would travel together and help each other get settled.

My exaltation was short lived as the TESTS began at once. On June 30th, I received a letter from my daughter in California that their little baby had LEUKEMIA and had from three to six months to live! I called her to let her know I would come down there right away by the next plane. (Donna had been notified also by the Assembly there in Temple City that their ninth member was dying from cancer and would she serve, as there was no other member in the community. I felt we could work this out so she could serve and I could help, and wrote Jesma Herbert of this just a few days before this tragic news arrived about the baby.)

I called Alma Heath a Bahá'í friend and told her the tragic news. She said, "But Helen, have you forgotten Dr. Thursten." I admitted that I had and he being a Bahá'í would help. Alma said, "I'll call him for you." She called back and said Dr. F. H. Thurston said he had cured LUEKEMIA and could cure LEUKEMIA and to get the baby to him as soon as possible. I was jubilant and called Dr. F. H. Thurston for instructions and he again told me he could and had cured LEUKEMIA. I called the Pasadena Memorial Hospital and talked to the head nurse, hoping a mistake had been made but she assured me the three specialists had all concurred...it was in the bone marrow and nothing could be done for Stevie except keep him happy. Another transfusion would have to be given when this one had run its course. After calling five times to California to talk to the parents and with instructions from Dr. F. H. Thurston, the baby was flown here with his mother the next day....nothing could stem the tide of his little life and he bade us farewehis life. FOUR days later I left for my post in Sitka, Alaska, on September 23rd. After a Bahá'í Party given by Jene Pace for Mrs. Gladys Stewart and I and our friends and contacts, we left by train that evening for Seattle. The next day we boarded the Denali Alaska Steamship for Alaska! Just before we sailed a letter was handed to me from the ship's steward from Miss Honor Kempton with her great love and enthusiasm for

anyone contributing to the work in Alaska. Also, and with the greatest joy, Mrs. Lorrol Jackson came on board all the way from Marysville, Washington to bid us goodbye. SHE had been my teacher in Helena, Montana back in the golden days when I first became a Believer. She gave me a vial of the "Atar of Roses" to make our voyage complete. God bless her, she too was leaving at her age, and it is golden, to pioneer with Nellie Mereness in Hilo, Hawaii. We three had been together in the early days in Montana...when Lorrol was a Pioneer teacher there at the time. This made our voyage complete with happiness, as we set forth on our journey. To me it was GOING HOME but to Gay it was her first trip NORTH. Our joy and prayers went out over the waves and we were on our way. We felt so humbly grateful for this great privilege and only prayed that we would not fail in what was expected of us.

When we docked at Ketchikan, we hurried as fast as we could to see all and record all the information we could to send in to the committees to help whoever may arise for this spot. In Juneau we had three hours, so we were able to apply for employment for Gay and also look up past contacts of mine for Gay to start with. The President of the Womans Club there was from Boise and Gay knew her husband as she had worked with him there. I contacted the Womans Club and was invited back when I came to the city, (being a past president of Anchorage Womens Club, has opened many doors.)

Gay sent her cablegram to the Beloved Guardian, she had arrived and put her belongings in storage! She was so thrilled with Juneau!! OUR hearts met at last, as now she knew a little how I felt about this great rugged land of Alaska...so beautiful it hurt.

Gay and I arrived the next morning in Sitka! Beautiful Sitka the gem of the ocean, "Sitka By the Sea". NEVER this side of heaven do I expect to see anything more beautiful than that little town nestled among the green and blue of the sky, on an island so small you can see across!

I cabled the Beloved Guardian! My joy knew no bounds knowing this too would make him happy knowing another post had been filled. Gay was to stay with me a few days and then return to her post after I got settled, which she did. Employment was waiting for her in Juneau when she arrived.

The first morning in Sitka as the sun was coming up we said our prayers and thanked God for our many bounties and beseeched HIM to use us in any way He saw fit. We were really asking for IT! My confidence knew no bounds, and perhaps being just a simple human there was a lot of ego there too, but to save my face let us say my Faith in the guidance I was to receive was without measure. I went down the street to a bakery to get rolls for breakfast while Gay put the water on for coffee. (We had a housekeeping room in the Sitka Hotel, as we met the owners on Board our ship as they were returning to Sitka from their trip OUTSIDE, and

went with them...home! To be so escorted home you can see what I meant by confidence.)

I told the lady in the bakery (who was to become one of my best friends) that I had just come in on the Denali and would need to find some employment. She explained how the fishing season had been bad for three years and that the men were all out of work. Their wives found work and she doubted that I would be able to find anything. Then she said, "Oh, you know, a lady was in here just a few minutes ago who owns the Star Cafe...an Indian lady and she said she had to have help as her girl did not show up this morning and she herself was sick." I thanked my new found friend and headed down the street to the Star Cafe. It was nice and neat and busy also. I asked a darkskinned lady if I may speak to the manager. She said in surprise, "Is there anything wrong?" "Oh no," I said, "I just wanted to apply for work as I just got in early this morning on the Denali." To my very great surprise she said smiling at me like the sun had just come up, "Oh dear me, you are an answer to my prayer"! "I have just been operated on and was not supposed to come down here but my husband is in Juneau and our help did not show up this morning. You just can't trust some of the Indian girls, she was probably out all nite! Can you come to work immediately, so I can go home? The cook can help you find things." I said, "I have never done this in my life, wait tables that is, but I don't see why I couldn't, do you?" She decided that I was to come as soon as I could get there.

Dashing over to a store, I bought my first white nylon uniform, one only as I could wash it out for the next shift...cost nine dollars. Thank goodness, I had walking shoes, so I was fixed.

When I got back to the hotel with the rolls, I thought Gay would die of excitement when I told her I had to go to work as soon as I could change my clothes. She said, "But I prayed you would find work but not until we had a day to look over the place!"

Thus began my work in Sitka...my first contact was this cook, who was a young man dying from the dread disease that is supposed to be so rare...LEUKEMIA. Through helping him and making him see it was the OPEN DOOR was the greatest of privileges I had while there in Sitka. (He died April 1954.)

Before Gay left she helped me move to the Cathedral Apartment on the third floor, to a one room kitchenette and private bath apartment. It was right across the street from the very ancient Russian Greek Orthodox Cathedral. The Cathedral of St. Michael of the Greek Orthodox Church was begun in 1844 and dedicated in 1848. The onion shaped dome with the cross on it was in the center of my picture window, as I gazed out to the sea Northward.

I must tell you about the scene that is etched on my memory and if I had the talent to paint, I would certainly do so. Looking out the window from the third floor there was nothing to obstruct my view but the cross....Russian

Greek Cross....and that was only a symbol of the obstruction I was to face literally from the followers of the same. From my picture window was the beautiful ocean, dotted by dozens of small wooded islands, with the ever present sea gulls flying over them. The waves would dash themselves against the rockbound coasts and break in white-mist as they receded again they sparkled like a million diamonds in the sunlight....then it would rain gently at the same time as a big double rainbow would dip one end into the sea in front of me and the other end was lost in full glory on the peak of a distant mountain chain called the "Big Sisters," The emerald islands; the blue, blue, skies; the gently falling rain and the double rainbow was all anyone could ask for, for company.

As I stood alone after Gay had left, I thought to myself, the people here must be fine, must be spiritual, how could they be otherwise with such a bounty, such magnificent beauty!

Then there was the first walk in the grove of TOTEM POLES, sixteen in number at the memorial park where the Indians made their last stand before the Russians took over "Little America", almost 68 years ago this month. Historically, Sitka is one of the oldest communities on the Pacific Coast of North America and is the second oldest town of Alaska, founded in 1799 by Alexander Baranof, a Russian trader. It was the capitol of Russian America at the time Alaska was purchased from Russia by the U.S. in 1867. Following the formal transfer of Alaska to America, which took place at Sitka, the town became the first capitol of the District of Alaska from 1884-1906.

All these events were acted out by the natives at Community Hall and it was a great thrill as I attended the celebration with the towns people all dressed in colorful costumes - Indians, Mayor and officials and all.

There was the monument to the signing of the treaty. Sowards Folly they called it then. The Forest of the Totem Poles reminds one of the redwoods in California, the foliage is so dense.

The first week, I ready everything I could find at the library on Sitka, finding out that it was a city of ten thousand when San Francisco was only a fort. Kings and Queens and dignitaries of the court of then known world came here to dance in the Ball Room on the hill...where now an old Russian cemetery lies and is preserved. There you read the names of a Princess of Russian descent and the first governor of the Capitol of "Little America."

To the South I could see a Mountain very much like the Japanese Mt. FujYama. Then just across the channel not more than five hundred feet was the Island of Mt. Edgecome. It was at one time a U.S. Naval Base but now belongs to the Alaska Indian Service. There is a very fine hospital and schools there for the natives. Many people work on this island but of course, the first choice, if they can fill the position, must go to the native.

It was wonderful to see the people of this Island. No one was shabby, the children were well dressed even though this was a very hard time for everybody with the fishing season again being a failure.

The biggest school in the town was the "Sheldon Jackson" owned and operated by the Presbyterian Church. This was the Church that persecuted our Honor Kempton when she first went to Anchorage. To my great surprise and my first obstruction...Rev. Armstrong came into the Cafe on his trip to visit the outlying posts of their church...he is now head Bishop of their church in Alaska. He said, "You are Mrs. Robinson, are you not?" "Oh Yes," I said, "I remember you from Anchorage, our Womans Club board used to meet in your church." He said, "How long do you intend to stay here?" I informed him I was not sure but at least three months the first ime. He left. That evening I had a date with a lady to go to the Presbyterian Church to see slides, "Children of the World". She had been so very friendly, taking to the Womans Club with her and I was able to tell about, and then she wanted me to go to her church with her etc. That evening ended it, as I am sure Rev. Armstrong got to her.

The pictures were by Amos Berg, a photographer from the Geographical Magazine. I asked him questions afterwards and asked if he had taken a picture of the Temple in Chicago. He said he had and expected to run a series of Temples etc. sometime from all over the world.

When the owner of the Sitka Cafe returned he resented my being there, I feel quite sure. He was a Philipine married to this Indian maiden, the Palayos. I worked there three weeks, then he said the girl I took the place of really needed the work, so while he hated to do so, he would have to let me go. This gave me an opportunity...I told him I really didn't have to work as my family supported me in my mission...but it made me feel like I was really doing it, if I supported myself....I never wanted to deprive the people of Sitka of their work. We then became friends...however he was a very staunch Roman Catholic, his wife a Russian Greek Orthodox member. As long as I don't talk of religion I'm fine. Now their cook was this young man who had LEUKEMIA and they saw him change from a dejected human being to a very resigned and happy person. He showed the Temple pictures and talked about the teachings. One nite we showed the Temple picture...that is slides and the Holy Gardens. One of the Indian girls, Lillian Howard, said, "Why I thought Mount Carmel was in Heaven!" They loved the pictures. Mrs. Littlefield, another Indian contact came to visit me.

Several of the friends in Alaska sent me contacts they had in Sitka and I called on them. Everybody was so very friendly to me. The Village is really mostly Indian and some Eskimos and Aleuts, but I felt at home. THIS WAS THEIR HOME BUT THEY DID NOT MAKE ME FEEL LIKE I WAS A FOREIGNER. Two Indian girls from Jenabe

Caldwell's Island Unalaska came to Mt. Edgecumbe and it was my pleasure to have them to lunch, but only talked indirectly about the teachings as they would be going back home and Jeb would know what he wanted to do about that part of it. Friendship is a wonderful thing and I firmly believe it is the greatest of teachers. They will ask about what you are...given a little time!

The next day after I was through at the Star Cafe, I went to work at the Sitka Cafe. This was owned and operated by a Mr. Cotton, a white man...He had two girls quitting and I came in just in time. After all I WAS EXPERIENCED NOW I REMEMBER/ He hired me right off and then the TESTS began. The native Cafe had treated me with the greatest respect and remain my friends to this day. Mr. Cotton, I am afraid, was not the nicest man in town...he was completely materialistic. However, I must be thankful as it was this man that introduced me to a teacher in the schools there, a lovely lady by the name of Mrs. Austin who was from Bellingham, Washington. She had lost her son in Korea and was most unhappy. Mr. Cotton sat her in my booth when I was having dinner on my day off. Mrs. Austin and I became very good friends. She said, as she looked out my picture window..."You know, I never knew it was so beautiful here in Sitka until you came with these teachings...and I have been here four yuears!" That is four school terms, as she returns to Bellingham in the summer to an invalid husband whom she supports. She said she would become a declared believer when she had studied enough...however, I could see she has many prejudices to overcome.

The Mayor's wife and I became very good friends. They had lived in Nome and knew my Eskimo friends there. She and another lady in an office next to her dress shop said they wanted to study. I told them I would start an afternoon and evening class, whatever they wanted. They told me they would send their friends up to the apartment.

The Librarian and I had many fine talks and I showed her our books in the library and asked her if she had read them. She said she belongs to a church but had lost faith in religion as there were so many false people in them. Maybe she will read.

Then there was a nurse who needed the teachings so badly. Her daughter had played the harp for Bahá'í Public Meetings for us in Anchorage when we lived there. She will slowly see these teachings no doubt when her personal difficulties are worked out.

Every day after work, (got off at three in the afternoon) I would hurry to the apartment and re-dress and go down the street shopping...at least shopping for souls. I can say there was not one store or shop that did not get a piece of literature or a friendly chat.

One day a man in the P.O., a native, smiled at me so friendly I was embarrassed. He said I have noticed you, always smiling....I am a missionary and I would like you to come

out and meet my wife who is also a missionary. We had a wonderful talk and he went away with a pocketfull of literature...however, we didn't meet again...afterall he has his job to think of!

I have tried in this fireside chat to give you a glimpse of the Sitka experience.

Now I had written to Leroy Ioas and told him many things...one thing of the job I had. He said, "Sylvia and I will pray for you a position more to your liking." That was my undoing because I got FIRED. Never had this ever happened to me!

This is a story in itself, but I believe was one of the reasons Baha'u'llah sent me to Sitka. Mr. Cotton drove his help like slaves. He worked the girls overtime and never wanted to pay for it. Many stories, I will not repeat, went around about him. I took the part of a youngster who was ill...and he said to me, Mr. Cotton that is...said, "I'm not running a charity house." And, "I don't like your attitude. You can leave." MY EGO was crushed....besides I had written home that I did not need any more help. It was agreed when I left home that my husband would pay my way up and back and I was to earn my own keep if humanly possible. The work at the SITKA was inhuman....and I thought many times how it would be if I HAD to work here forever, and again, if I was a colored lady and had to take the abusive language and had no where else to turn! It WAS an experience! Anyway I did need a rest. My friends at the Star Cafe said I should be proud to be fired from such a place! They said they hated for me to go there but felt that they should not say "why". That evening several of the people including my friends from the other Cafe came to me and asked if I would do them all a favor. WOULD I please report Mr. Cotton and his abuses to the union. I told them all what I came up here for and that I could not do anything that was not in harmony with our teachings. Then they told me the most serious stories, actions of this white man among the natives. How he abused minor native boys, etc. They said people were afraid of him and anyway they needed the work. I was shocked but not too surprised. His restaurant was the biggest and best in town. I had to join the union to work. These people really had a case against Mr. Cotton for abuse of union laws and I knew it so I reported that much to them.

I applied through the Indian service for a nursing job at Mt. Edgecumbe and was accepted. Also gave my employer, an Indian of high caliber, Mr. Walkingstick, the literature.

I went to Juneau and helped Gay Stewart as I had promised the teaching committee and Gay. This Juneau experience has its own story to tell. I worked in the Mercantile store for the Christmas rush and gave everybody the message. Contacts that used to come to Honor Kemptons in Anchorage in the early day recognized me and got her address in Geneva from me. My girlhood friend and her husband took Gay and I out to dinner and were helpful

in many ways. It was a short stay but a lively one.

On December 5th, I found myself in Anchorage at the State Convention. It was truly a home coming. Everybody was at the airport to meet me...even the small children. I will never forget their faces...when I asked, "What time is it? It is no very dark!" When they said 3:30 p.m. I just couldn't believe it...after all hadn't I lived here in this very place for almost seven years....and only three years ago, we had gone OUTSIDE! I had forgotten how it got dark so early, and I only remembered how it stayed LIGHT all night in the summer months.

My stay in Anchorage was just one long fireside and very, very happy to say the least. My greatest happiness was to see the "seeds" we had sown grown to such tall trees and the most active members of the communities.

In Anchorage I won a radio as a door prize the the opening of a new business owned by a Negro couple. This radio I sent to our Eskimo friends in Nome.

On December 20th, I took the plane straight to Boise, Idaho to spend Christmas with the family. I was told I had three months that I could be gone from my post...when the three months were up I was beseeching Baha'u'llah to find a way for us to return...that is my husband and I. In the meantime, I wrote to dear Gail Avery and she went to Baronof Island as soon as possible, arriving in February. She went to work at Mt. Edgecumbe and I know has the great capacity to win friends and as a registered nurse can make many contacts and serve the Indian people. God grant her the greatest of confirmations....and please reserve the tests.

Or do they mature us and help us to grow so we can serve to a greater measure:???

The TESTS came in rapid succession from unexpected quarters so that I was not able to return or do anything but "tread water" for several months....NOW, we are planning to go to Alaska in June 1955. In retrospect I can see clearly now it was all in the plan.

P.S. I had a letter from our friends of the Star Cafe, the Palayos, that Mr. Cotton shocked all Sitka when the government moved in on him and sent him to the penitentiary for Sodomy and for the evasion of the income tax. AMEN

May we visit all our friends there this summer GOD-WILLING.

Respectfully,

In His service

Signed: Helen M. Robinson

Another Bahá'í couple (by the way a Doctor and his wife) and teenage daughter have arrived in Sitka. Praise be to God...we are only wires that reach out to places and when we have done what was intended other wires replace us, so you see...there is no indispensable WIRE.

WHAT A SHOCK TO THE EGO!

(Recopied by Betty Bennett to include with the Montana History. Helen and her husband Rob, after Alaska, pioneered to Sweden, Peachland, B.C. Canada, Boise and finally in Mountain Home, Arkansas, where they are buried.)

RUTH AND JACK SAUNDERS

by
Betty (Mereness) Bennett

This narrative is not intended to capture the complete character and spirit of Ruth and Jack Saunders. A group of people sharing memories would be a fuller account. They shared their lives and home with so many and their door was always open. Thus, their children were raised with a first hand example of hospitality. My purpose is to leave some record of the sincerity and responsibility they exhibited as Bahá'ís, which springs from my loving memory of them. The two fold obligation in the Bahá'í Faith of "steadfastness in His love" and "strict observance of the laws He hath prescribed" was a mantle worn from the beginning. They set an example for hospitality; endeavored to be loving; generous and sensitive to friends and family members; served on assemblies with dedication; taught with enthusiasm, consistency and patience; and were ever ready to sacrifice something of themselves.

Ruth Mae (Bennett) Saunders was born July 13, 1906 in Wilsall (MT) and Jack Kenneth Saunders was born August 8, 1907 near Kila (Kalispell area), moving to Livingston when he was 16. They met in high school and were married May 1, 1929. During the years between their marriage and introduction to the Faith, Jack worked in the grocery business as a clerk, manager and salesman.

It was in 1939 that I first became acquainted with them. They had three children, Jack Jr., Jeanine (Horne) and Barbara (Peters). These children attended the children's class I conducted after the Bahá'í pioneer to Helena (Lorrol O. Jackson) moved on to Butte. Following my marriage to Ruth's brother, Fred J. Bennett, they were like second parents to me.

Hospitality was a natural response with them. Friends and visitors were really enjoyed and their presence gave Ruth an opportunity to bake a cake or, on the spur of the moment, a batch of fudge. Even during the period when Ruth's health was failing and she was bedridden, she inquired if her family had served visitors coffee and cookies.

Their home was always open to help family and non-family members. Ruth had a natural ability to sense people's needs and both she and Jack showed great care for others. Ruth's sister and youngest brother lived with them for a while; her older brother was cared for when he was being treated for a brain tumor; her father spent his final days with them; and Jack's parents were under their care for a period of time. A young man they introduced to the Faith was treated as a son and stayed with them for a while. I remember being ill and Ruth putting me to bed and caring for our baby for a couple of days.

Meals were always special. Guests were an occasion to set the table with good china and silverware on a white

or lace cloth. Ruth was an excellent cook, but the simplest meals were served with flair. With a host at each end of the table, Jack would carve the meat and Ruth would pour the coffee. Family dining was always given importance. Their children from a very young age were mannerly, well behaved, and such a pleasure to be with. Many firesides began around their table.

Ruth had a high energy level and willingly shared it with others. She gladly cleaned cupboards, upholstered a chair or sewed a garment. Mostly, I remember cutting out and sewing flannel nightgowns to be worn by bed time. If Ruth came for a visit she involved herself in some task that would be helpful. Someone to visit with seemed to increase her work level.

Before meeting Jack, Charles Adams, a long time Bahá'í, often informed the Helena community about the teaching progress of a salesman that came to his grocery store. With each sales visit Mr. Adams would give Jack a little more of the Message. On one visit, Mr. Adams felt Jack was missing the importance of Baha'u'llah's station and repeated something to the effect that Baha'u'llah was the return of Christ. Jack recalled deciding to listen carefully to what Charles Adams was telling him. He and Ruth determined to keep an open mind while they read and studied.

As a young girl of 17, I recall the first meeting Jack attended was the Commemoration of the Martyrdom of the Bab held in the home of Gherhard (Jerry) and Beatrice Burner (1939). He was a distinguished looking man in his early thirties, well groomed, dignified and courteous as well as a very attentive listener.

Ruth, on the other hand, recalled her first meeting was the Birthday of the Bab (1939). Jack planned to bring her, but he found he had to work. However, he still wanted her to attend. She said, "You mean alone?" Gathering her courage, she came by herself. On arriving at the home of Jerry and Beatrice Burner, the sounds of loud noises from four small boys settling down for bed seemed to fill the house. She recalled the front room had apple boxes to sit on. (My memory had forgotten that). Jerry was from Germany, and Ruth remembered being glued to every word he said as she strove to listen and understand him. She and Jack continued to study and read as they were really looking for a way to bring up their young family.

They were already teaching by talking to their friends and family. Sometime the latter part of October (1939), Ruth's brother, Fred Bennett, came to visit them. He agreed to listen with an open mind to the Bahá'í message. They were all present at the Birthday of Baha'u'llah observance

for an evening party of dinner and games held at the home of Charles and Frieda Bryan.

Jack and Ruth were not in the habit of drinking but one episode showed the change they were ready to make in relation to Bahá'í laws. Jack said they were invited for Thanksgiving dinner to the home of Helen Robinson, who was a Bahá'í, but whose husband, Rob, was not at that time. Rob asked them if they would like some wine and Jack recalls saying, "Since I'm not a Bahá'í, I guess I wouldn't be breaking any laws." But they decided they wanted to enroll the next day.

The Helena Assembly records show they were accepted into membership on December 3, 1939 and her brother, Fred Bennett, enrolled shortly after on February 8, 1940. At that time the Helena Assembly rented a room for a center in the Horsky Building on 6th Avenue near Main St. (now Last Chance Gulch) and this must have been where the Assembly met. Ruth said she thought surely they'd have some coffee and cake, but they met with the Assembly and the Assembly said, "Well, we're through with you, so you can go."

The Helena Assembly records show Jack was elected to the Assembly at Ridvan 1940 and both are shown in a photo of the 1941-42 Spiritual Assembly. They served until their move to Great Falls in July 1946. They were members of the first Spiritual Assembly of Great Falls formed in 1948. During their stay in Great Falls they were able to attract and enroll a young man and his wife and a single man in the Air Force. In 1951 they returned to Helena, again becoming members of the Spiritual Assembly. A good friend, recently widowed, responded to their love and support and enrolled. At the Dr.'s office where Ruth and another Bahá'í worked, they both were instrumental in attracting the first black Bahá'í. Their home was always a center for teaching activity. For more than a year Jack was in a position to travel the state and readily became a travel teacher, visiting communities and isolated Bahá'ís: In December 1961 they joined us on pilgrimage and further tilled the soil that translated into service.

A change of jobs took Jack to Billings in 1966. Unfortunately, Ruth damaged her heart overworking in cleaning, painting and wallpapering a house they purchased. Most of her years in Billings were spent within the limits of her physical ability, but her spirit allowed her to soar and do a great many things in service. They were elected to the Billings Spiritual Assembly and for a period of time Ruth served as Chairman. Over the years, both served as Chairman and Ruth as a Secretary, also.

It was while they lived in Billings that they demonstrated true Bahá'í service by assuming the responsibility needed to do follow-up teaching work on the Northern Cheyenne Reservation at Lame Deer. On Saturday, January 3, 1971, the North Plains Indian Committee carried out their first meeting on this reservation at Lame Deer,

which resulted in about thirteen enrollments. I was present at this meeting and, as a member of the then named Area Teaching Committee, we continued introducing the Faith at the remaining six reservations during the balance of that year. The Assemblies of Billings and Yellowstone County were closest to the Northern Cheyenne Reservation and were asked to consolidate the teaching needed. However, it was primarily Jack and Ruth who became responsible for the Ridvan formation for the Northern Cheyenne Assembly.

Later, on another occasion, Jack recorded a teaching trip to Lame Deer shortly after the first meeting as follow-up on Saturday, February 13, 1971. He and three other Bahá'ís endeavored to gather the newly enrolled members for a public meeting. Leaving the three accompanying him at the home of Doreen and Alvin Bird Hat, he went to find out if a meeting room had been obtained as requested. Most of the day was spent in trying to find individuals who were responsible for the room arrangements and after crossing a melting creek several times, hoping his car wouldn't break through the ice, he secured a meeting room about 5 in the afternoon. He returned to move his Bahá'í companions and slide projector equipment to the room, to eat a quick sandwich and then left in order to begin notifying the Indian Bahá'ís of the meeting and to pick up those who requested a ride. By 9 PM the meeting was about ready to begin and it was followed by serving cookies and coffee. He negotiated with the caretaker for them to sleep on the floor, returned people to their homes in several trips and was back at the hall about 12:30 AM. Excitement precluded sleep until 2 AM, followed by a fitful night in the sleeping bag on the floor. After rising at 7 AM, more coffee and sandwiches, they left town about 9:30 AM to return to Billings.

Most of the time Jack and Ruth invited other Bahá'ís to come with them on teaching trips, but frequently they found it necessary to go alone. At Ridvan they would take a cooler filled with sandwiches along with cookies, fruit and coffee and go to each home to gather the Bahá'ís for a picnic and have the Assembly election. Some adversity often accompanied a trip to the reservation. Dirt roads to homes were deep mud ruts, especially in the Spring. With or without advance notification, they usually made more than one trip to locate people. Gathering all of the community members would take several trips and required patience and time. They never thought of their help as forming a "paper assembly." They knew the assembly wouldn't function administratively, but the importance of helping with the formation was the driving force behind them.

They accepted the hospitality or conditions in each home they visited. Ruth told of visiting elderly Jim and Hannah Ant in Lame Deer. Both the Ants were seated at a table and had a pot of mashed potatoes and probably gravy. Jim Ant kept dipping into both. Jack asked what he was dipping and Jim told him it was dried meat and asked Jack to try some, which Jack did.

Another time they stopped and the Ants were drying fresh meat on lines strung across the room. Ruth had to duck under the meat dripping with blood to see them and some landed in her hair. This was a scene of great contrast as Jack and Ruth were always meticulously groomed, each with beautiful white hair. Their distinguished outer appearance complimented their warm and friendly manner and very loving hearts.

They frequently demonstrated kindness, consideration and selfless care. When Hannah Ant came to Billings for a cataract operation, Ruth and Jack asked him to call them when he had Hannah settled in the hospital so that Jack could come get him and he could stay with them in their spare bedroom. This he did. While Hannah had her eyes bandaged, Ruth would visit and read to her. It was the only time Hannah conversed as she always refrained from talking when visitors were present.

Doreen Bird Hat, a newly enrolled Cheyenne Indian from Lame Deer, was often hospitalized with bed sores at either the Crow Agency Hospital or in Billings. She was a frail girl who had lost both legs in a car accident and lived in her wheel chair or on a mattress. Alvin, her husband, was a deaf mute. One of the times Doreen was hospitalized in Billings, Ruth and Jack heard Doreen say it was to be Alvin's birthday that week. They bought Doreen a dress and arranged with the hospital to bring her home for birthday cake with Alvin, who was staying with them.

During one of Doreen's hospitalizations, she was not expected to live. Ruth sat up with her all night for several nights. Doreen was a very frightened girl away from her home and Alvin and Ruth's presence was a great comfort to her. Doreen lived to return home, but died in 1972 or '73. This kindness was remembered years later by a family member. Ruth always considered it important to be by a person's side when they were ill. She sat with many friends in the hospital, attended her Father in his last days and helped

us when our daughter was hospitalized from an accident.

It was economically advantageous for them to move to Victor (MT) upon Jack's retirement in 1972. Here they helped form the first Ravalli County Group. About three years later, Ruth's health began to fail from cancer. She took treatments from her daughter's home in California but finally returned to Victor knowing her days were limited. In a period of six months she planned a family reunion, supervised some decorating in the house, distributed her valued possessions and greeted those who called. Her family members and longtime Bahá'í friend, Ethel Williamson, attended her the last three months. Every evening she requested they read prayers with her when she was settled for bed.

Ruth passed away July 30, 1977. Her services were held at the Whitesit Chapel in Stevensville (MT), which she had selected. She liked this chapel from the time she and another Bahá'í delivered funeral kits. Most of her service was arranged by herself and, at her request, read by Fred and Betty Bennett (brother and sister-in-law). She had always planned to host a fireside and have us present the subject. I felt her funeral service became that fireside, reaching far more than a living room would have held. A lovely floral spray, made by her daughters and daughter-in-law from her garden covered the casket. At the cemetery Charles Nolley sang "Would You Give Your Heart to Baha'u'llah"...so fitting for a woman who truly did. She is buried in the cemetery at Victor.

Jack passed May 19, 1994 at a Hamilton Rest Home where he was cared for in the Alzheimer's Unit. During the years his son, Jack Jr., lived in the home in Victor, he often would take his Father on outings or short fishing trips. His service was held at the Whitesit Chapel and he is buried along side Ruth in the Victor Cemetery.

March 27, 1989

Dear Mother Assembly of Montana,

On this occasion of the 59th anniversary of the formation of the first Bahá'í Assembly in Montana, I would like to share my memories of those early Bahá'ís who helped form the first assembly in Montana at Ridvan in 1939, a few events that were part of its development and our Mereness family's introduction to the Faith.

It is with joy that I reflect on our early happy meetings and with gratitude that this bounty came to me while still a youth. Some of my notes were made when the Helena Assembly gave me permission to look for some historical information a few years ago.

Shoghi Effendi's first Seven Year Plan was given to the American Bahá'ís at Ridvan 1937 saying, *Its supreme immediate objective should be the permanent establishment of at least one center in every state of the American Republic and in every Republic of the American continent not yet enlisted under the banner of His Faith.* (Messages to America 1932-46, p.7)

The Bahá'í World, Vol. VII, p.47 indicates Mrs. Lorrol O. Jackson arrived in Helena in August 1937 in response to the Guardian's teaching plan. While the National Teaching Committee's 1938 Annual Report mentions Mrs. Jackson as being from Seattle, she arrived from Sioux Falls, S.D. and *at that time there were three registered Bahá'ís there.* Early meetings were held at the YWCA on North Park. Sometime during the fall Mrs. Edwina Powell, whose deceased husband had been the Unitarian Minister in Helena, also returned for a visit. She had become a Bahá'í after leaving Helena.

Mother (Nellie Mereness) was the one in our family who was earnestly searching and responded to a Bahá'í notice of a public meeting at the Placer Hotel, probably in September or October of 1937. Mrs. Lorol Schopflocher of Montreal, and wife of later to be named Hand of the Cause of God, Siegfried Schopflocher, was the speaker. Mother said she didn't understand what was said but she liked it. The next day she passed Mrs. Powell on the street and stopped her to request something to read. She was given *Bahá'u'llah and the New Era* but returned it the following day with the request to read something by the Founder. Mrs. Powell felt she was not ready for this kind of strong literature but Mother insisted and instantly "believed" when she began reading from *The Gleanings* Following the public meeting, Mother visited her friend, Helen Robinson, who had been ill the night of the public meeting, to tell her she thought she had found what they were both searching for.

Shortly afterward we were pursuing our investigation with a fireside in our home at 1043 Breckenridge. Mrs. Jackson responded to my request to know how the Bahá'í Faith began. As a girl of 15 I had understood from our Episcopal minister, Dean Daniels, that Christ was expected to return and he had said prophecies pointed to it happening during our lifetime. Mrs. Jackson replied "Yes" to my

question, "Does Baha'u'llah claim to be the return of the Christ Spirit?" I instantly "knew" this was the "truth". Enrollment as a youth must have been an afterthought as I was accepted in membership as a youth on September 17, 1939 and presented the book *'Abdu'l-Baha in New York* But I always considered myself a Bahá'í from the night of the fireside in our home in 1937. When I reached 21 I informed the Assembly of my adult status. This was the procedure used at that time.

All throughout that winter study classes were held. For the most part they were held at the home of Charles and Ruth Adams. Charles taught with charts and prophecies and was a Bahá'í of knowledge and spiritual insight. Both he and his wife had become Bahá'ís in Denver in about 1917/18 and had been in Helena for a number of years. The study evenings always ended with refreshments that were large feasts following spiritual feasting. It is not clear from Assembly records which three Bahá'ís were registered at the time of Mrs. Jackson's arrival. The three could have been Ruth and Charles Adams and Mrs. Frieda Bryan. Mrs. Bryan was acquainted with the teachings since her daughter from a previous marriage, Kathryn, was married to Fred Mortensen who had traveled the rails to visit 'Abdu'l-Baha. She said for years she refused to listen to the message. Fred Mortensen is a part of the early Bahá'í history of Helena and was responsible for full page articles and meetings in the 1920's. A list of enrolled Bahá'ís as of April 21, 1938 shows Charles Bryan enrolled in 1937 but gives no date for Frieda. She may have been the third individual enrolled with the Adams. Mother is listed as enrolling in 1937 in one place and 1938 in another, but she considered herself a Bahá'í in the fall of 1937.

Those who studied and attended the firesides with the Adams were Frieda and Charles Bryan, Beatrice and Gerhard (Jerry) Buerner (later legally changed to Burner), Helen Robinson, Mr. Frann Goldthorp, Mrs. Effie Goldthorp, Joseph Walters, Nellie Mereness and Virginia Adams and myself as two youth. With the three registered and eight adults who studied, eleven names are listed as being Bahá'ís as of April 21, 1938. Assembly records do not seem to list Mrs. Jackson but she served as a Teller at the April 21, 1938 Ridvan election.

The minutes of the Bahá'í Group dated April 21, 1938 say the regular yearly election took place and read: *Regular Feast of Risvan (sic) was held on this date. Words of 'Abdu'l-Baha were read explaining the Feast of Risvan (sic). After closing the feast the regular yearly election took place.*

The Annual Report of the Secretary (p.38, Book I) mentions *April 21, 1938 the National Teaching Committee authorizes the formation of a Bahá'í Group to study and to act as a Local Spiritual Assembly until the group should become well enough grounded in the teachings of Baha'u'llah to accept the responsibilities of a regular elected Spiritual Assembly*

By Ridvan 1939 Mrs. Jackson had moved on to Butte

to help bring another assembly into focus. Virginia Adams became 21 in September of 1938, making her eligible for election at Ridvan 1939.

The minutes continue to say they observed Nineteen Day Feasts and other days of commemoration—*“passed through and overcame many difficulties and that every original member of the group have remained true and steadfast, thus enabling us to form on the 21st of April, 1939 the First Spiritual Assembly in the State of Montana.”* Also added is *“We are extremely grateful for the assistance given us by the able teacher(s) Mrs. Lorrol O. Jackson, by Mrs. Edwina Powell and Mrs. Lorol Schopflocher and the National Teaching Committee.”*

Assembly records show on April 21, 1939, “Ballots were distributed for election of the First Local Assembly in Montana.” Members elected were:

| | |
|-----------------|------------------|
| Virginia Adams | Frieda Bryan |
| Nellie Mereness | Charles Adams |
| Charles Bryan | Gerhard Buerner |
| Helen Robinson | Beatrice Buerner |
| Ruth Adams | |

Two members of this original Assembly are known to be still living: Ruth Adams Wendstrom and her daughter, Virginia Adams Jensen. Both live in Tigard, OR 97223 (11230 S.W. Tigard St.)

Perhaps this would be an appropriate point to mention some of the steadfast qualities I remember about Lorrol Jackson as a pioneer. She was a tall, silvery-white haired woman, of strong stature, whose eyes sparkled with her love for Baha’u’llah. She always wore a smile and her dedication was complete in her reliance upon God. Her monthly income amounted to \$25/month and I believe her one room apartment cost her \$10/month. It is difficult to realize how she could live on the balance for food and necessities, but she was both resourceful and sacrificial in her ways. I recall she cemented rubber half soles and heels on her shoes to make them wear longer. Her portable typewriter was put to use typing prayers and special passages. The prayer she gave us for our first fast is still the one I prefer to say. Our Father was aware of her limited means and would always say to Mother that she should ask Lorrol to dinner so they could assist her to manage and he would know she had eaten. She assembled the children, about 9 (2 of whom were from a non-Baha’i neighbor family of ours) along with me, and held regular classes. She wrote a children’s play titled “The King” in which she designed that my brother, Dick, would play the part of the king and always called him “her king” after that. The mothers made costumes and it was put on in grand style for Naw Ruz. When she moved to Butte I took over the children classes and within a year or so about five other children of newly enrolled Baha’is were added. After the formation of the Butte Assembly in 1944 she moved to Marysville, Washington and in December 1953 she accompanied mother to Hilo, Hawaii when the Guardian called for pioneers for the World Crusade in 1953. She was

76 and mother was 63 by this time. Mother returned to Butte in 1957 and Lorrol remained until her death on October 1, 1965 at the age of 88 and is buried in a small cemetery outside of Hilo where Fred and I found her grave in 1983.

The Helena Assembly was the first to become incorporated in the state, completing this goal on April 19, 1940. A copy of this certificate is in *The Baha’i World 1940-44*, Vol. IX, p. 398.

Some of the early growth of the community is reflected in enrollments that often included families and friends. In 1939 Ruth and Jack Saunders enrolled on December 3rd and they had three children, Jack Jr., Jeannine and Barbara; December 22nd my Father, Mason L. Mereness, and Emmett Summers enrolled. February 7th, 1940 Fred Bennett, Mrs. Saunder’s brother, enrolled. During 1942 Gladys Endress enrolled on March 9th, Jessie Wood on March 15th and Gretchen Pool on November 3rd, the latter two were friends of Mothers. November 17th Ray Mortensen, son of Fred and Kathryn Mortenson, was in Helena and declared his intentions of becoming an adult member on his 21st birthday. Growth leaped in 1947 with seven people enrolling at about the same time.

Youth activities were incorporated into the Assembly’s teaching schedule by late 1939. Three youth were enrolled and weekly youth meetings were held in a room in the Horsky Building, which was rented for activities by the Assembly. A January 1940 public meeting focused around a World Youth Day event with a panel discussion presented by 2 of the Baha’i youth, 3 non-Baha’i youth who attended the meetings, an Assembly member and a pre-youth. Chicken pox made it untimely for me to participate in this meeting. A photo of this event is included in the film strip *The School of Badi’*, *The Story of American Baha’i Youth and Their Forerunners*

There were other “firsts” that came under the administrative functioning of the nascent institution. In September 1941, the first Baha’i funeral service was held for my Father, Mason Mereness. We all remembered it as being a powerful, radiant fireside at a funeral home. March 22nd, 1942 the first Baha’i marriage ceremony was held for Ruth Virginia Adams to Ernest Charles Jensen, who were married in our home at 1043 Breckenridge. Ernest was not a Baha’i at the time but did formally enroll in 1979. Through the efforts of Charles Adams, a letter was obtained from the Attorney General’s office giving the Helena Assembly permission to perform the first Baha’i marriage according to the Laws of the State of Montana. Instructions for Baha’is in the Armed Services were not clear when World War II broke out. Fred Bennett enlisted on December 9, 1941 (his birthday) and it was in August 1942 that he complied with instructions from the National Spiritual Assembly given to the Helena Assembly to apply for non-combatant service, and he transferred to the Medical Corp.

On January 9, 1944 Dick Mereness was enrolled as a

youth of 16 and in February he sketched the Wilmette House of Worship, which was printed and used by the Assembly for a Naw Ruz card.

My service on the Assembly began at Ridvan 1944 and continued until shortly after marriage to Fred Bennett on December 28, 1946 and our residence was then in Bozeman while Fred attended college.

The Assembly minutes record a verse that extended their best wishes that we cherish and was written in the handwriting of Beatrice Burner, Rec. Secy.

"Now may the light that shines in Baha'u'llah
Shine in your souls and guide you near and far,
So may the love which faith and hope restore
Abide with you both now and evermore,
And may the Holy Spirit now impart
The radiance of love illumined hearts."

Beatrice Burner died very suddenly in November 1947, leaving four young children for Jerry to complete raising.

Ruth and Charles Adams left Helena in 1944 for Portland, OR; their daughter, Virginia, having left in the fall of 1942. Charles passed on to the Abha Kingdom on November 12, 1945.

In 1946 Ruth and Jack Saunders moved to Great Falls and in 1949 Mother moved to help form the first Spiritual Assembly of Great Falls. In May 1951 the Saunders returned to living in Helena and Ruth was instrumental in attracting Tracy Blair, a lab technician in a Dr.'s office where she worked as a receptionist (date unknown); and later, Ad Banks, the first black Bahá'í, in the fall of 1960. Both she and Tracy would teach Ad and he then attended firesides in the Saunders' home. To strengthen the teaching, Tracy went to the office with Ad at 5AM when Ad came in to clean, following behind him and reading from *The New Era*. Another member of your current assembly, Ethel Williamson, was also attending firesides at the same time and recalls Ad asking her to join with him; however, she didn't feel ready at that time. She had been extended much love, kindness and friendship by Ruth and Jack following the passing of her husband in 1957 and while she felt "unworthy" to be a Bahá'í, she did enroll in the spring of 1961 or '62.

My experiences of growing from the status of youth to serving on this Spiritual Assembly were strengthening. In addition to being asked to conduct the children's classes, the Assembly nurtured me by often asking me to give a talk for a public meeting. Being a very shy girl, I would memorize a written talk in order to carry out their request. How far reaching for the Assembly to place a youth as a spokesperson!

Spiritual seeds were planted in early years from visits from such wonderful teachers as Fred Mortensen (1920), Louis Gregory (1922), and Martha Root (1923). At one time Roy Wilhelm was in Helena and visited the Governor. In March 1939, Millie Collins, a member of our N.S.A., stayed for three days and talked about her recent visit with

the Guardian. From that early visit Millie Collins remembered us when we made our pilgrimage in December 1961, some two weeks prior to her passing. Bahiyih Randall Ford, Harlan Ober, Edris Rice-Wray, Alta Kruger, Evelyn Witt and later Florence Mayberry are a few of those who have traveled and taught here.

Perhaps the earliest seeds were planted by Fred Mortensen. He was instrumental in bringing Louis Gregory to Helena and Butte. From *To Move the World*, a biography of Louis Gregory, page 119, is written:

From Utah Louis Gregory traveled north to Montana, stopping in Butte and Helena. In both cities he met a full speaking schedule. Fred Mortensen, who had contributed much to the establishment of the first Bahá'í group in Atlanta, had moved to Helena. Having worked with Mr. Gregory in the South, he was well aware of the range of "Brother Gregory's" teaching abilities. "From the moment of his arrival he found Helena no place for rest.", Mr. Mortensen reported. "Every lecture (of which we had eight in six days) was well attended and all the comments I heard were simply those of extreme contentment and satisfaction." Louis Gregory's talents as a writer were also put to use in Helena. "The lecturing was but one part of the work here." Fred Mortensen added, "for I kept Mr. Gregory so busy writing articles for the newspapers that he must have remained up and at work most nights." As a newspaperman himself, Mr. Mortensen was committed to furthering the interests of the Bahá'í Faith through the medium of the press. "Fred Mortensen, young, strong, devoted... led me such a pace that temporarily the use of my right arm was lost through writing so much and so fast." Louis Gregory recalled with affection. "Truly he is "Frederick the Great." As a result of their combined efforts, articles on the Faith were circulated through much of the state.

We can all rejoice in the history of this first Bahá'í institution in Montana. The early pioneers and travel teachers leave us a spiritual legacy. Each of the present members of the Assembly are, in the words of Shoghi Effendi, "the spiritual descendents of the heroes of our Faith", May we be viewed, not only as a part of Helena's history, but as helping to carry out the spiritual destiny given to the American believers to usher in the World Order of Baha'u'llah and ever give thanks for being given such a bounty.

"By the righteousness of God! Should a man, all alone, arise in the name of Baha and put on the armor of His love, him will the Almighty cause to be victorious, though the forces of heaven and earth be arrayed against Him." Tablets Divine Plan, p. 4.

With sincerest wishes you will always be a strong and virile spiritual assembly.

Bahá'í love,
(signed)

Betty Bennett, 2127 Garrison Ave., Butte, Montana

- PROGRAM -

HOW TO AND HOW NOT TO... TEACH THE FAITH

A 3-Act Bahá'í Melodrama

Written and Produced
By

THE REGIONAL TEACHING COMMITTEE OF THE BAHÁ'ÍS OF MONTANA

In Collaboration With
The Bahá'í Assemblies of Helena and Great Falls,
The Bahá'í Group of Butte, and
Isolated Bahá'ís of the State of Montana

*

PREMIERE PERFORMANCE

*

Sunday, April 12, 1953, 10:00 A.M.

The Saunders' Residence
221 Adams Street, Helena

*

A programme for other entertainment and refreshments is given on inside.

*

N.B. - Popcorn may be eaten in the lobby only.
Chairs have been refurbished recently, so please curb that urge to park "exhausted"
gum underneath upholstery - wax wrappers will be provided on request.

A few remarks by one believer of Helena, Montana,
made during the observance of the Anniversary of the Birth of
Baha'u'llah, held in that city on Wednesday, November 11, 1953

It was the old house where I had played as a little girl and from which I had gone off to kindergarten with my mother holding my hand. A wonderful kindergarten where we sang "Good Morning Merry Sunshine" every morning. And one child stood by the window with a large glass prism and made the sunbeams dance into the dark corners of the room.

The home from which I had gone to grade school and high school; started off to college; in which I had had a beautiful wedding and gone away to many places.

Now I was back with my son as the head of the household—My life seemed like a tight little circle with a knot like a stone in the middle of my heart.

My friend on the steps was talking gently and steadily—I couldn't make any sense out of it and didn't try to—but gradually the stone in my heart seemed to melt away—and like a stone dropped into water started a series of rings widening out in larger and larger circles out and out into a distance beyond sight.

She talked to me often and others talked in groups and we studied.

The name, Baha'u'llah, became familiar. Came to mean "The Promised One of all the World—the teacher and educator of all Mankind." Prophecies became clear and

understandable in their fulfillment by The Bab and Baha'u'llah. The early prophets and Manifestations were the kindergarten teachers. The others were the grade and high school teachers ever increasing their teachings with the development of the world. And Baha'u'llah the educator of all mankind for this age.

So, today, we celebrate the Birthday of Baha'u'llah.

(Readings from "Baha'u'llah and The New Era" pages 54-56)

So, we celebrate with reverence and also with joy and happiness with our friends here.

And we rejoice that we have here our friend who sat on the steps and told us about the Bahá'í Faith. We wish her Bon Voyage and Happy Landing and all that "sorts stuff". We know that she will sit in the dusk with other lonely souls and give them the glad Tidings. She will stand with the prism in her hand that catches the sunlight and shines it into the dark corners. And we know that her words will start new waves that spread in ever widening rings to encircle the world with love and Unity.

(Written by Gretchen Poole with reference to her friend, Nellie Mereness, who was leaving to pioneer (consolidate) in Hilo, Hawaii)

In Remembrance
of
the
Greatest
Holy
Leaf



My Martha

I love you & think of you often. I sent
Beth a letter & her old address, but it has come
back to me! How do everything with all of you?
I am sending a little dress to Josephine. Any
of the girls which can use it - may you
all carry on, & be happy in Babaullah's love!

Here are some petals from the Orange tree
planted by our Beloved Bdd in His Residence.
Court-yard in Shiraz, Persia. (See Photo in
Nabil's Narrative P. 54)

O my Beloved One! O Allah's Messenger!
If you be the glory of the world!
In my Guardian's guidance
Cheerful Victoria

Betty Nelson writes
of 1st Butte believer, letter dated 2/15/52
Elizabeth Symons, 1917.

Information about Elizabeth Symons.

She was a tall stately looking
woman with auburn hair. School
Teacher in her youth become a
Bliver from traveling Bahais
man and wife by the name of
Gillies they were the first ones to
bring the Bahai faith to Butte
she received the Message and exse
septed at about 1917. I become a
bliver in 1922 in November Mrs
Symons have made a lots of
friends to whom she conveyed the
faith Mrs Bullet from South Ariz.
ona Ltr become a bliver but
she droped of went to California
where she resides now I dont know
Mrs Bullet's first name than there
were a Pushman man his name
were Krist Carlson he become fir
mly in faith of Bahauallah he
have given to me after Mrs
Symons death after the Burden.

called this
he Mrs Mrs.
Albert
Gillies,
traveling
teachers?

was shifted to me he have
supported the Temple which the
Foundation was in progress than
about 1924-25-26 he went after
words to the Hills and become
Ill and died shortly after
Mrs Symons passed on when Mrs
and Mrs Harold Mc nut have pass
ed true Butte on there way I think
South we had a about 28 peple
in our gettings at Mrs Symons
home her husband ^{represented} represented
Abraham Lincoln and none Bahau
but had no objection to the faith
Mrs Symons Iron hand seen to that
she was a devoted lover of the faith
of Bahoullah have ben corresponding
with the Greatest Holy Leaf at that
time. I was very young in faith
it took long time to grasp the
importance of ~~at~~ the faith was
not organized as is to day,
my husband at that time which
I was married to John Cutler he

become a bliver in the faith he
passed on in 1926 - Mrs Symons
passed on in 1928 in July I don't
know the Date Mrs Symons have
left Books which her Sister given
to me and the valuable tablets and
some Books and letters Louise
Mrs Symons Sister which come
from California have destroyed
by burning them before I know
at that I saved what I could
after I meet her Mrs E Symons
have left no pictures of her
self she dyed of Cancer in her
Liver she was a very good friend
of mine, she had a meeting in
her home ^{late} Orsela Rexford Ford
have talked and showed some
snap shots of different types
of the Alaska from which she
come her husband a Dentist
Mr Brown now Bahai was
on that trip honeymoon, and
we had at E & S home that about

22 peple and good many have
peaset on since and I lost
track of them I think that all
that I can tel you about Mrs
Symons. and fawer is the History
Concern you about me I gess you
have ben told by others they per
haps know more than I doo
conserning my salpe and af
there is anything I left out
you write and ask me I will
write and tel you af I can
I have repeatedly mention of
my Johnny becoming a Bahai
but it seems there were no involm
ent cards as it is now soo my
word have to be taking for af
not just skipet I hope this will
help you Mrs Caldwell dont know
much is I doo bicause she come
to Butte after I were a Bahai
and her and Mrs Symons did
not clash together for many
rizons which I dont need to say

In so I brought out the main
points that are important
and the rest can be omitted
I lived and done all I could
for the Blessed cause talked in
different gatherings and
Churches but my family
difficulties have barrowed
me from many things that
I wanted to do and could
not Antie Victoria got one
of my Portraits which she said
would place in Corciyves. I
dout know very much more
and since you come to Britte
getter what you can out of
at my home woz open to a
Bahai Travelers alwaysse and
it woz a Great pleasure hav-
ing them well as the Sumner
Session on Texas we which
could not be possible with
out your support and efforts
but thank God that I have

had an opportunity to stretch
out my arms to those that
serve the majestic cause
of Bahauallah I ^{and love} miss Butte
Because there where the first Rays
of Divine Sunshine have
Illumined my hearth and soul
and I shed that Sunshine on all
those that leth me, as I write this
lines my Eyes are filled with
Tears I am asking Bahauallah to
forgive and overlook all the
mistakes ^{made unknown to all} and strenghtain the
faith in City of Butte and when I
af ever come to that City be greeted
with love from those that had hate
and jealousy about my person
Alaho, Akhbar,

A LETTER FROM BAHIIYYIH KHANUM, THE GREATEST HOLY LEAF,
TO THE FRIENDS OF THE LORD AND THE HAND-MAIDS OF THE
MERCIFUL THROUGHOUT THE WEST. HAIFA, MARCH 30, 1924.

Beloved Friends:

It has been my share ever since the divine call to a better and nobler life was first sounded amid the cities of a heedless and distracted Persia, to be a witness to the stirring and heartrending events that form part of the annals of our dear Cause and that stain its pages throughout with innocent blood. The memory of that youthful and God-sent herald, the Bab, who faced execution with nobility and heroism for the uplift and true regeneration of mankind, lies vivid in our thoughts, and His blessed remains resting on the slope of Mount Carmel keep the recollection of His short but glorious life still more fresh. The torture and ghastly deaths that the innumerable martyrs of the Cause so willingly chose unto themselves, and the manifestations of an unflinching faith and an undaunted fortitude that crowned the life of those blessed souls and that still lie untold to many, haunt me every day. The thought of our Lord Baha'u'llah brought up with the luxury known only to few, and yet choosing to spend many a month in a choking dungeon away from His kindred and loved ones, and then carried as a homeless exile until He was taken to the penal town of Akka and imprisoned there as a religious criminal, fills my heart at once with a deep affliction and an overpowering veneration. And the numberless ordeals and hardships, deprivations and torments that our dear Master Abdu'l Baha so patiently and quietly bore are vivid before my eyes.

After having witnessed all these painful events and after having passed through them all it was again my share and that of the holy mother and the holy leaves to suffer the bitter bereavement and cast all human bonds away that attached us to our Lord Baha'u'llah. The separation was too great for our feeble hearts and yet with His help and consolation we patiently bore it; but the effect of His last days on earth and of the bounties that He has showered on every one of us had not yet been wiped away from our hearts when we were afflicted with another calamitous event so great for our frail and feeble frames that we thought we would surely succumb to a loss so much beyond our imagination. The farewell days of our master Abdu'l Baha, His touching yet mysterious goodbye to a family that had had its little share of His brimful cup of a life-long sacrifice and that had stood by Him in the darkest hours ever known; His excessive love for His zealous fellow-workers and followers in every country, and His genuine yearning to see the Cause He adored on the highway of universal acceptance are all I think beyond human expression.

Let us then, affectionate brothers and sisters, ponder for awhile upon the underlying reason that had made God's divine Messengers prefer a life of torture to one of ease, and those blessed martyrs, so many of them cut off in the springtime and promise of their youth, choose death with faces radiant with joy. What did the Bab sacrifice His promising youth for except out of a burning desire to have mankind live in unity and peace; and what was the spirit that animated those bold and heroic martyrs but love and adoration to a Cause they wished to triumph? What made Baha'u'llah, born and brought up in opulence, fling away all earthly possessions and choose upon Himself unspeakable hardships and deprivation, save for an earnest appeal to the world at large to turn their hatred for one another into genuine love and to make a world seething with blood a peaceful home for God's children; and why did Abdu'l Baha who could

have chosen a life of ease and comfort, prefer to lead a crusade against the strongholds of human hearts and make a direct appeal to individuals as well as groups that unless we love one another with all our might and with all our heart we are absolutely doomed. He carried a crusade not with a sword of steel but with a sword of love and affection. And if we dare call ourselves Baha'is it simply means that we have to follow in their wake. It means that we must always have the public weal in mind and not give up ourselves wholly to our inclinations and desires, and it means that we must picture before us the perseverance and self-sacrifice of those early volunteers and make a whole-hearted effort to be like unto one of them; and it shall be only in this way that we can safeguard this great Cause of God.

This in brief, is what our beloved Guardian, Shoghi Effendi, is patiently and eagerly expecting from every single one of us. This, he says, should mark us from all other men and this should differentiate us from those to whom religion is something to believe in and not to inspire to action.

Our beloved Guardian was away in England when Abdu'l Baha's glorious life on earth was ended. The news of His departure was deeply felt by Shoghi Effendi, and to one who was so near and dear to the Master, this separation meant more than to many. Weak in health and over-powered with grief he arrived in the holy land and the home wherein his Master lived was now deep in sorrow. And in those darkest hours of bereavement the life-long enemies of our Master, stirred by their idle imaginings, started their foretold and illfated activities. This saddened Shoghi Effendi's heart very much and he decided to choose seclusion for some time. Away from his family and his friends all by himself, he thought over the problems that face the Baha'i Movement today, through prayers he sought help from his Lord and Master and he decided upon the temporary organization that would safeguard the interests of the Cause and that would encourage the dear friends to spread this Message and to live the life it teaches. For many months he was thus away, when feeling encouraged by the firmness and perseverance of the friends throughout the world and over the happy way they proved the activities of God's enemies to be fruitless and of no avail, he returned back to the Holy Land fresh and hopeful and started helping and guiding us with a marvelous fervor and animation.

Finding that the individual letters were too many to answer in person and not wishing the progress of the Cause to be hampered by the slightest thing he sacrificed sending his personal messages of love and encouragement to the individual friends and he expressed his heart-felt sentiments in general letters to Assemblies and countries. The organization of the Assemblies was thus moving rapidly forward, the Cause was being spread in every country and Shoghi Effendi's heart the happiest for it all. Such were the conditions when he received to his utter astonishment letters that he noted showed lack of love and unity among the loved ones of Abdu'l Baha. It grieved him very much to see some of those whom the Master so dearly loved, bear ill feeling towards one another and through their lack of love and unity and through denial to follow the advice of their Spiritual assemblies, relegate the whole standard of the Cause to a mere philosophy of life. Such news had great effect upon his tender heart and it reflected upon his physical health. Whereupon the wish and desire of the friends then present in Haifa, and through mine and the family's insistent appeal, he consented to take a rest during the hot summer season.

All the happy news that we had received from abroad and that we had forwarded to him so filled his blessed heart again with encouragement and joy that upon his return from his summer rest he resumed his work with an astonishing zeal and activity. His heart was joyful and in his evening meetings with the friends he always shared the news he had received from abroad and through his encouraging words he instilled such a fervor in every single one present that they all felt they would fly away and share in this noble task. Indeed his love for those earnest workers had grown so great that he had decided to make an effort and append to the answer of each letter a short personal message in his own handwriting.

Again the unexpected took place and the news reached from some centers that the spirit which Abdu'l-Baha said should characterize every Baha'i community does not prevail and that many have belittled the guidance of the different spiritual assemblies. His heart was thus sore and depressed and he again decided to seek seclusion until the friends realized their great responsibilities and make an effort toward real unity. I and the members of the holy family did all in our power to give him the happy news we had received from some countries and we begged him to change his decision but he said: "My heart is very sensitive to such things. Inasmuch as I am rejoiced when I hear of true love and fellowship among my brothers and sisters, in an equal measure if not more I am grieved when I hear that such is not the case. It is quite true that every Baha'i heart swells with love and adoration at the mention of the Bab, Baha'u'llah or the Master's name, and stands firm and true to the last Will of Abdu'l-Baha, and for that I am very thankful to them, but you agree with me that this alone cannot be the emblem of this world Cause. There should be love and sympathy among the individuals of every group and true affection for one another should be the stamp for their hearts. Suppose a non-Baha'i should ask us as to what should denote a Baha'i and to differentiate him from everybody else, and were we to answer a hero-worship and adoration to the Center of the Cause that makes a Baha'i willing to give up his life and property, he would be sure to answer you that that alone will not bring about the regeneration of the world. That alone will not wipe out international hatred fostered for ages past, and will not solve the economic plight before which the world stands aghast today. And were we to tell him that our religion proclaims certain principles that no one can challenge or deny, we would be told that principles alone are no proof of its effect either, and not until the Bahai's first translate these principles into their own everyday life and live according to the standard of the Cause they proclaim, will they be qualified to invite the whole world to come and follow their teachings. It is when the Baha'is prove their religion by no greater argument but actions and deeds that we are sure to be promulgating the Cause and that men will come and willingly join our ranks." And when he said, "Many are carefully watching today the life and behaviour of the Baha'is and many are trying to estimate the true value of the Baha'i Movement and the effect that it shall have in future through the ideas and self-sacrifice of its followers. The friends must therefore be very careful to wipe out of their ranks all feeling of hatred or misunderstanding and to replace it by genuine love. Just as discord among the friends has deeply grieved me, in every manner will their unity and harmony fill my heart with joy and win over my life and strength to themselves. I shall now leave and when I see that the conditions have changed and that sincere affection is the reigning force in every Baha'i community, I shall at once return and cooperate with them with my heart and soul. Send this

message to all my friends abroad." After these touching remarks, two weeks ago he again left us to ourselves.

Now brothers and sisters remember what our Master Abdu'l-Baha tells us in His last Will. Let us recollect the passage where He asks us not to do anything that will depress and grieve Shoghi Effendi or mar the shining brightness and radiance of his heart, but always to try to help him in raising this lofty edifice of world-brotherhood. May we not keep that always in our memory and strive forward toward a unity that shall not only win the heart of every non-Baha'i, but shall to a larger and larger measure gladden our own and dear Guardian. My days are numbered and my life is flying to a close and yet I feel certain that those dear ones abroad will accept this eager and humble appeal, and will make me cherish the hope that before I am called away and ready to separate in body from you, I can see genuine love and unity prevail among those my Master so dearly loved and I can witness with human eyes my Guardian's heart overflow with joy. This is what I beseech you and may it be fully realized.

Your sister and fellow-worker,

(sealed) Bahiyih

allah 'Q' abha

(ENVELOPE ADDRESSED TO
MR. & MRS. CALDWELL
IN COOKE CITY, MT)

Butte Mont.

6/23/26

Dear Bahai Friends

Received your very welcome letter some time ago & attended answering sooner. Time flies so rapidly that we do not realize when a week then a month is gone. We had a short visit from Mr. Albert Vail on his return trip from San Francisco last week.

There are only three confirmed Believers here, so we are not so very active. Will be delighted to have you come & call on us when you come to Butte next month.

Will close with Bahai Love & Greetings to your dear family in His Cause.

Faithfully Your Sister

Mrs. L. H. Symons

319 No. Washington St.

Butte, Mont.

Sketch of my life

Betty Nelson

Sand Springs

Montana

I was born Kanyana, Austria
Jan 13th 1890. At the age of 17 yrs
came to the United States. Was
born and reared a Catholic.
Was dissatisfied and attended
various meetings of different
gatherings, and became a
Socialist and took a very
active ^{part} for a time in that
movement. As it was lacking
in religion, I became interested
in Christian Science. Still I
did not know what I wanted
Then I attended Spiritualist
Lectures. Learned from one of the
congregation about a Baha'i
teacher being in town. For many
years I had visions of a

(2)

white city, but did not realize
where it was, also had visions
of our Temple. On another occasion
while ill in a Hospital,

The words were impressed into
my consciousness while coming
out of an anesthetic. "Baha U'llah
the Father and Prince of Peace
had come. But I could not
remember afterwards much
about it, and left me wondering
I met Mrs Mary Richardson
in 1923 and learned of the
cause from her. I became
satisfied and began to study
Baha's literature, I became
Sec; of the Local Group following
the death of Elizabeth Symonds
in 1927. Worked for the cause
to the best of my ability until

(3)

a year later I resigned and
left Butte for a time. After
returning to Butte, I met
and married my present
husband, and adopted his
7 yr old son (Warren Nelson) and
am rearing him as a Bahai.
I have dedicated my life to
the Cause and am very happy
& contented in life to be a
servant Baha at the Bahai's
threshold.

Yours in His Service
Betty Nelson

"AUNTIE" VICTORIA BEDIKIAN

In order to understand the far reaching role "Auntie" Victoria played in writing and keeping in contact with isolated individuals and groups, along with all the children of early families, an article about her follows as printed in *The American Bahá'í* September 1982. Her letters to the small community in Butte, as well as to ourselves in Helena, were a constant outside contact filled with creative writings, encouragement and decorated with colorful drawings.

The American Bahá'í

September 1982

the Champion builders



VICTORIA BEDIKIAN

In spite of deafness and a lack of material possessions, Victoria Bedikian's artistic and writing talents resulted in teaching work that reached children and adults all over the world with the Message of Bahá'u'lláh.

Born February 9, 1879, in Boise, Idaho, Victoria Bedikian's loss of hearing as a child caused her to abandon her musical training and turn instead to art.

BECAUSE her husband, Madris, admired Abraham Lincoln, Mrs. Bedikian painted many portraits of President Lincoln that were given to the mayors of cities in New Jersey for their city halls.

In 1912 she met 'Abdu'l-Bahá when the Master visited her husband's oriental art shop in Montclair, New Jersey. 'Abdu'l-Bahá asked that she devote her art work to the Faith, which she did from that time until the end of her life.

Although Mrs. Bedikian had no children of her own, she adopted a son and cared for as many as 40 orphans in her home.

It was one of this group of children who first called her "Auntie Victoria," a name that she cherished and was known by for the remainder of her life.

In a Tablet addressed to Mrs. Bedikian, 'Abdu'l-Bahá wrote: "None is more favored in the Abhá Kingdom than thee for the work thou hast done for the children..."

In the early years of her Bahá'í activities Auntie Victoria wrote to children in many countries, and organized children's "Gardens of Fellowship," naming each garden after a particular flower.

THE GUARDIAN, Shoghi Effendi, told her that these gardens of fellowship would serve as seeds for future Bahá'í communities.

Auntie Victoria also inspired the editing and publishing of a magazine entitled "Children of the Kingdom" that featured articles about and photographs of children's gardens in all parts of the world.

Mrs. Bedikian was among the editors of Volumes II through X of *The Bahá'í World*, specializing in the editing of photographs.

Following 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Ascension in 1921, the beloved Guardian guided her work for the Cause, as the Master had done previously.

In 1926 Shoghi Effendi wrote to the National Spiritual Assembly of the U.S. and Canada regarding the construction of the Mother Temple of the West, asking that Mrs. Bedikian "...concentrate for the present all the resources of her mind and heart upon this vast and vital undertaking.

"I have urged her," he continued, "to direct her energies to this lofty purpose, and by the aid

of her most valuable letters arouse both the East and the West to a fresh consciousness of the significance and urgency of the object you have set yourselves to achieve."

IN 1927 Auntie Victoria traveled to the Holy Land with Mrs. Keith Ransom-Kehler where they were the guests of the Guardian during their three-month stay.

In 1945, although she was then 70 years old, Auntie Victoria undertook an extended teaching trip via Greyhound bus that took her four times across the U.S. She visited Bahá'ís individually and in groups, encouraging them in their various activities.

Mrs. Bedikian was obliged to spend the last three years of her life in Atlanta, Georgia, following a heart attack that she suffered in August 1952.

Nevertheless, her inspirational letters and drawings continued to flow to all parts of the world until her death on July 3, 1955.

Upon learning of her passing, the Guardian sent a cablegram to the Spiritual Assembly of Atlanta in which he said; "Praying progress soul indefatigable, wholly consecrated promoter of the Faith. Her services unforgettable."

The letters that follow are "heart" letters words spoken on paper either from Mrs. Caldwell or Betty Nelson. It was through communication with Auntie Victoria this group was helped to be like "a mine of inestimable value" in the midst of Butte's Copper Camp. They responded by doing their share in building the House of Worship and stayed connected with other Baha'is. It was an active community from the time of Mrs. Elizabeth Symon's enrollment in 1917 through their assembly's formation in 1944, even though the Helena community matured into being the first assembly to form

It takes the reading of these love letters to feel the spirit that animated them and reinforced them to teach until their efforts were cause for rejoicing when they reached assembly status.

The first letter is dated September 28, 1931 from Evalena Caldwell, Secretary and reproduced as written. The other letters have been typed out to make reading easier and with the hope the addition of an occasional coma and period hasn't changed the meaning.

Jan. 29, 1932

Dear Auntie Victoria,

Alaho Abha. Your loving letter at hand. We always get strength and inspiration from your beautiful letters. Irene is writing you. She addressed the envelope so you see my 10 year old writes better than her mother. Dear Auntie we all love you so. I got a letter from Mrs. Anita ?noles, and she tells me she surely loves you. Received quite a few letters from the Friends, thanks to your thoughtfulness. Mrs. Betty Nelson of 505 W. Galena, she used to be Mrs. Cutts, wants me to tell you she thinks of you often. She is a real worker in the Cause and is my helper in trying to get an assembly started here so Auntie Darling if you can find time drop her a few lines. We surely enjoy every letter we receive. I think it is wonderful that God has let us know about His wonderful Cause and that we can give to the Temple and thanks for your prayers for of all things we love best is to pray and we know that your dear prayers will sure be answered and that with their help we will surely have an assembly here. That is our aim at present. Ever in His Name. Your loving co worker.

Mrs. Evalena Caldwell
247 Walnut St.
Butte, Mont.

February 12, 1932

Alaho Abha
Dear Auntie Victoria

Oh Auntie how you help us to do our duty towards the Cause and inspire us to Love Baha'u'llah and our Dear Master 'Abdu'l-Baha Thank you so very much, I received a snap shot of 'Abdu'l Baha from Mrs. Nellie S. French of Pasadena, Calif And it is sure just what we wanted. Mrs. Maybell Swope, Ferndale, Wash. her husband's name is Fred and the children are Maybell age 8, Demurze age 6, Johney age 4, Muril age 2 1/2, Dick 4 months. Dear Auntie when Mr. Caldwell is home we have a Baha'i feast every day for it is so much easier to get an understanding from the Blessed Words when he reads them as I cannot read very well so you see we miss him when he has to go away to work, which he does about 10 months out of the 12, and that is why to (me) we seem to grow better when he is home.

Irene is so proud of her correspondence with you. She will write next Sunday. Dear Auntie tell me how to form a report to the National as I really do not know how to proceed. Will it be alright to just tell them what we are doing the same as I do you? For instance, we have our Sunday school at 2 o'clock every Sunday. Am teaching the babies the 12 Baha'i Principles and how to Live the Life so they can repeat them and also we have one of the long prayers and some of the short ones. Then Daddy reads us one of the stories about some one in the Oriental Rose. Last Sunday it was Qurratu'l-Ayn, then we sing one of the Baha'i hymns, then say the Greatest Name 95 times and end with the Benediction. At the 19 day Feast the 7 we meet at Mrs. Betty Nelsons we read the letters I had received during the month and some from Race Amity and some from other writings. We had refreshments, discussed the condition of the world of today as it is affecting the community and how Baha'u'llah's Words are being fulfilled, then said the Greatest Name 9 times and came home. As we started at 6 and did not leave until 20 after 11 there is only one thing we never know when to go home when we get together, Will hold the next feast the 2(nd) here in my home. Please pray for us to increase our numbers so we can have an Assembly. Present at last feast were Mr. and Mrs. Nelson, our host and hostess; Mrs. Harriet Bolette, Warren Nelson, Irene Caldwell, Mr. Matt Caldwell and myself, Mrs. Evalena Caldwell.

Auntie Darling, what will you say if I tell you of what I saw while Betty was reading. We were all setting around the

table. Mr. Caldwell at the head, to his left, Mr. Nelson, on his right Irene, next to Mr. Nelson was Warren, I was at the foot of the table facing east, Mrs. Bolette at my right and Betty on my left. I tell this so you will understand what I saw on the table was nothing but the Baha'i Books. But this is what I seen in the center of the table was a bowl of Golden Yellow Roses and foliage, one for each of us. From them was a ray of light. On the end of each ray going out to each of us was a heart and in that heart was a flame of light. Wasn't that a beautiful picture that was my vision I saw as Betty read? Well, I don't know Darling if you enjoy those glimpses of the Divine world or not but to us they are joy inspiring. May Baha'u'llah Bless You for your Great Help to us Lone Groups and let you stay with us till we are stronger is the wish of this Group and Sunday School of Butte.

Ever Your Servant
In His Name, Sect.
Mrs. Evalena Caldwell

The following letters are written by Mrs. Betty Nelson:

March 11th (1939 on envelope)

Dearest and Beloved Auntie!

Your sweet and Precious letter received with joy sometime ago. Pardon my silence Beloved. I am always thinking of you and all of us love you dearly. Our precious Lorrol is with us this winter and we all trying to get people together and we will in due time. With unshakable Faith in Baha'u'llah we must and will gain victory. It's hard Auntie Beloved, the people are as dead and don't listen. O Thou Divine Providence, preserve thou and protect us! O Thou who art our Shield, guard us and defend us from all ill. Thou art, indeed the true protector, the Unseen Guardian, the Celestial Watcher, the Heavenly loving Lord. All my love of Baha'u'llah that is given me by Him Baha'u'llah in my heart am sending it to you our Beloved and Lorrol and Evelina all join in this lines praying for help and strength. Yours in His Love. Betty

Betty Nelson
607 1/2 So. Dakota
Butte, Mont.
May 15', 1938

Alaho' Abha!

Dearest and most Beloved Auntie!

Your Precious letter and drawing received and filled my heart with love. Your sweet messages Auntie are a real treat to me well as to those that we share them with. Auntie Dear its those unspoken words that are between the lines Beloved are a rare treat to those that recognize them. Every time I hear from you my Beloved my heart raise up to thank Baha'u'llah for this great blessing to know Him and His people, to know the great message and to be blest with such wonderful Friends. Auntie, I have a Sunday school class of seven children. We going to take some pictures and we will send you a picture latter on of them. Those pretty pictures you have send me Auntie I wrote a prayer on the back of it and give each of them one copy. Oh Auntie there is a little 5 year old girl in my class. Auntie she is a beautiful child, she won my heart and her Mother is very intelligent young lady and how she love the Cause and like to read about it. Auntie Beloved thanks a million for them pretty drawings. They are so precious. I save most of them, put them in a file. Because when to come to think of it Auntie, in no matter what angle we save the world there is no Salvation with out the Divine Plan of Baha'u'llah. There is no life can enjoy real life or happiness without knowing Him. I love to tell people about Him. I love to tell them what I can to cheer them up, to help them to recognize His Call to everlasting life, to awaken them and share this Great Blessing with all the world. Auntie I am very happy, happy to be alive. Praise be the God of all the world. Praise be the Precious the Greatest the Highest the Baha'u'llah. Give my love to all the Friends. Lovingly in His service. Betty

7th August 1938
Butte, Montana

Beloved Auntie!

Here I am coming with my delayed letter on which I am asking your pardon Beloved. Enclosed you will find the picture of the group of childrens study class in Butte. One is missing out of it. We could not get them all together and those with the emblem of the Greatest name did not come out and we took this not expecting to use them. I hope they do. If not we just have to wait for another opportunity to take some more. Auntie Darling its so much to write to explain all. Mrs. Lorrol Jackson is coming to help us to establish a study group here and Auntie I am so happy over it all. Lorrol is such good Baha'i. To know her is to love her. O God Open Thou the doors, Prepare the means, make the path safe and pave the way. Auntie Dear write to us again. Its such pleasure to hear from you Beloved. I feel a great love for my Baha'i Friends, it's a true bond and is so sweet. Oh Auntie no one knows how sweet is a Friendship in the Baha'i world only those that knows. Thanks Beloved for the Beautiful Painting you have sent me. All your Precious letters are kept in Archive. Mrs. Caldwell and Family are enclosing their love jointly with mine to to all. Those are Dear ones over there so far from us. I must close for this time with Oceans of Baha'i love. In His service.

Your sister Betty

Alaho Abha

21 Sept 1938

Betty Nelson
607 1/2 So. Dakota, Butte, Montana

Alaho Ablia

My Dear Own Auntie,

Your Sweet letters and Paintings received with joy. Last Friday the Sept the 9th we have held our Baha'i study class meeting and we have had a very Beautiful Harmony, Peace and Unity amongst us. It was published in papers and next Sunday we going to start the Sunday School Class (the children). Auntie my Beloved pardon my silence. Could not write sooner because have been so busy that I find no time. Now things are normal again and answering all my important mail. Thank you Beloved for the Beautiful Paintings you sent me. We are auntie all of us very happy in His Love and service. Always your loving group in Butte. Humble your Betty

Sept 1st, 1939

315 W. Granite
Butte, Montana
Betty Nelson, Childrens Secy.

Abhas love and Greetings

Beloved Auntie

Pardon my Silence! My thoughts and my love is with you always. Lorrol is gone to Spokane, Wash. and we miss her very much but she is coming back sometime after the 5th. We'll be glad to have her back again. Auntie I received your nice drawings, They are Beautiful and also is yourself There is not much progress have been made in here, but I and Lorrol are in Finn belief that eventually the Doors will be open to us. Lorrol have been a great comfort to me. I hope that I myself also are comfort to her. I love her so much, All I have to say for this time. Thanking you once more for your Cheerful and Beautiful letters. Always loving you, happy in His Cause. Betty

Nov. 6th, 1939

Butte, Mont

Allaho Abha

As I read last Martha's letter, Beloved Auntie, I am thinking of you. I am with you tonight in my thoughts more than ever before. Our Dear, Dear, Precious Martha (Root) ascended to a supreme happiness, joy and rest. Onto which we all hope to attain but how well she have done her work. May God grant to each and every one of us a Portion in which she enjoys, which she well deserve. Beloved Auntie, at last I have a news to tell you. We have had a display of Books and the Temple Picture in one of the downtown Drug stores and there was also some (? moureres) and we have taken some snap shots of it also. And above all things Auntie, the Baha'i Friends from Helena have paid us a visit last Friday the 5th Nov. and Oh Dearest we have had a such glorious time. And I am so happy over it all. We went to my house 15 of us in all, 5 that have come outsiders, and it was heaven. We had lunch and refreshments and then the Precious Friends gone home. Now I think Auntie we will get some where. Our Dear Lorrol is just Darling. I myself could not get along without her I love her very much. Tonight I feel longing to write to you Beloved. May Baha'u'llah be our guide and send upon us peace and unity that unity that nothing can undone, that we may love each other more and more and eventually die in Him Baha'u'llah. Oceans and Oceans of love to you Dear and all the Precious Friends over there. From us all, lovingly in His service always.

Betty

10th Nov.

Betty Nelson
607 1/2 So. Dakota
Butte, Mont

Beloved Auntie,

Your nice letter received with joy and the valuable addresses...which I answered 3 and will answer them all. The Beautiful Temple Flowers passed it on to Lorrol. She is with us. Came to help us to establish a Spiritual Assembly in our City. We are so happy to have her with us. She is having 5 girls to start with. She is starting an Esperanto Class and hopeful to turn them into a Baha'i youth group. Its so difficult with people. But we are firm to hold on to His garment and hopeful, and know we cannot fail. Oh God I Pray to Thee with the fragrance of Thy mercy and the Sunrise of Thy love to give to me and to those that sought Thy Glorious face of that befits (?) bounty obedience. O Lord I am poor, immerse me the Ocean of Thy wealth, I am Thirsty, grant me the Chalice of Thy favors, ask Thee by Thyself and by Him whom Thou has chosen to manifest Thee to gather Thy servant together under the shelter of Thy love to feed them from its fruit, and teach them Thy melodies. Verily Thou art God and there is no God but Thee, the Precious, the Wise. Million thanks for the Beautiful Paintings. Aunties they are so nice and precious to my heart. The (?) lily you sent me I will frame them because Auntie they are so beautiful. May Baha'u'llah bless you Beloved for your kind heart. May Baha'u'llah crown your head with everlasting glory, may Baha'u'llah's blessing follow you wherever you may go for you are like a radiant Star amongst us, like a shining lamp lit up by His love for His people. We are Blest from above with a Friend like you, Auntie! Now I must close sending you Oceans of Baha'i love and our dear Lorrol and Mrs. Caldwell's Family joining us. Your Sister always. In His service, your Betty

Waukegan, Ill
24th October 1940

Alaho Abha

Beloved Auntie! It has been such long time that I have written you that I am ashamed of myself, but Darling do forgive me. I have been busy and not being just physical well and have seen our Beautiful Temple and have met some of our Baha'i Friends and heard Mr. Horace Holley speak in the Temple. I am so happy now I will be able to bring the showers of Blessings of Baha'u'llah with me to Butte. The Temple when I first glanced at my heart missed a beat. Thanks be to Baha'u'llah for the wondrous revelation and the glorious gift of a most Beautiful Edifice. I feel humiliated and thankful to Baha'u'llah and God for knowing such a wonder and Beauty of His majestic revelation. I am going home to Butte in a day or 2 but with me I am taking a memory that will live forever in my heart and mind. You know Auntie I love Chicago and the surrounding cities because here is much more opportunity to work for the Cause as it is in Butte, Mont. I have meet 2 very beautiful souls that I give the message to and I know it sink in their hearts well as consciousness. Oh I don't like Butte any more. All the efforts I put in that city and we haven't Assembly yet but I know it will come in time but I know I haven't patience. I am too eager. Thanks be to Baha'u'llah and His promise that our efforts are not in vain, Auntie Dearest and my Beloved. Take this little gift from me. I must close with ocean of His love, Yours in His service.

Betty
315 W. Granite Street
Butte, Mont

Butte, Mont 1941
April 22nd

Allaho Abha

Beloved Auntie!

Your sweet and Precious Painting and your letters received with joy. Pardon my silence Darling we have been very busy. We had a nice Nawruz and last night a blessed Ridvan. We have had a 2 extra attendance. Lorrol have spoken very beautiful and I have spoke also, a little, The Spiritual vibration was very strong and Lorrol and myself have rejoiced. I hope that in due time we will be able attract enough souls to form an Assembly. Oh Auntie, has my heart calls out to our Lord. Baha'u'llah to open the doors, prepare the means, make the path safe and pave the way. Oh God, Oh God open Thou the doors, prepare the means, make the path safe and pave the way. Love to you Darling from all of us. Lovingly in His service.
Betty.

Butte, Mont
July 9, 1943

Precious Auntie!

Pardon my Silence Dear one, my dear dear Auntie, This city is awakening. We are going to have Assembly. We have 9 believers and more are coming. Oh Darling, what a joy it is to know that we at last going to have a Group that's worthwhile. There is a lady her name is a Mrs. L. C. Folds. She lives on 415 W. Iron, Butte, Mont.. She is a very sweet woman enrolled into the Cause last January and the other one her name is Dorothy McLeod. She is also a new one come in. She lives on 2031 Utah Ave., Butte, Montana. This are the noted ones. My dear, dear Auntie I am so happy over it all. Darling, my health have been so very bad that I had to go to Dr. to take an Ex Ray and the Dr. have discovered that my gallbladder is poisonous and I have to have it out. So Darling, pray for me that I man gain health for the Precious, Precious Cause of Baha'u'llah. I am very happy that this Dr. have discovered my ailment that all these years Drs. have failed to discover. Now my life might be new. Thanks be to the Majestic King, thanks be to an Adored one. Thanks be to the Dear, Dear God, Baha'u'llah. Auntie I can't write no more. I am so happy and feel blessed by him who is the Cause of my being. Pray for me darling Auntie that I may get well once more and live for His Precious Cause. I maybe of more use in the future as I have been in the past. With all my love devoted to His Beauty and happy in His Cause. Lovingly, Betty
Write to Mrs. Betty Nelson, 13224 N.W. 18th Ave., Portland, Oregon
P. S. Auntie love. Thanks for your lovely letters and paintings. I love you. B

October 8th, 1943
My Dearest Auntie!

Your both letters received with joy. Thanks a million for your sweet letters. I have come from Portland and they discovered in the Clinic by the X Rays that my gallbladder did not function and had not enough gastric juices in my stomach to digest my food and also my thyroid gland did not work. I am some what better, but not good yet, but I think that the ordeal of a pain of my teeth Pyorrhea set in them and today I had the last 4 out. It was a terrible thing to go through Auntie but as I set on the Dentists office on the chair I raised my heart to Baha'u'llah and asked for help and have had no pain whatever and I am alright, am happy tonight. Praise and Glory be to one that have given me life and care of his loving kindness Baha'u'llah. And I have received a letter from a very Beautiful Lady that I have met 2 years ago and it was such lovely surprise Auntie. She is a Baha'i and she is visiting with me now. And Auntie I love her more than I can put in few words on this paper and I am so happy. She said I know there was a purpose of me coming to you. Her Mother knows a weed that she have helped a lots people with gallbladder trouble and people that was ready to go on Operating Table and after they took a drink of that tea they would no need of no operation. They would just get well, and Auntie that's how God works mysterious way wonders to perform. We have 4 to 5 prospects in our City to come in to the Faith and I am so overjoyed over everything that I am just bubbling over. Everything is Harmonious and all is well after while this people will be so United in the love of Baha'u'llah that will be a Pride to the Baha'is. Just think Mrs. Caldwell is sweet now and cherished a lot and we are so happy and thanks be to God. The Doors are opened and we will have a Glorious Group; a group of very loving and sweet people and now my Darling, Auntie my loving and sweet Angel, this little sweet Lady is also writing you a letter enclosed with mine. I told her about you her name is Clara Finger. Her husband is a Baha'i also. I am closing now with Oceans of Baha'i love to my only Darling Auntie. May God shower you with all the good things of this life and life to come. Happy in His service. Betty

Butte, Mont
July 7th 1944

Darling Auntie and my Precious one.

My Heavenly Blessed Friend. Your letters one after another have received. Thank you for them my loved one. I have looked for you at the Centenary but you was not there. What detained you Dear one? It was Heavenly, it was Glorious, it was something that the Language (word ?) can't express. Oh how I enjoyed it and the Friends was Wonderful, it was heavenly to meet the Loved ones of God. I have viewed the Portrait of our Blessed Bab, have been the Archives, and precious (?) the Prayer Beads of Bab and the locks of Hair of Blessed Perfection of Baha'u'llah. Oh Dear one. What a Blessed Privilege that one can go 15 hundred miles to the Glorious Temple of Baha. I have enjoyed the Gift of going and impressed the Beautiful Edifice into my heart and mind and everything is before me that I have seen. I live in it Auntie, my heart is Singing in Praise of Baha'u'llah, The Precious one. The dear Gift to the World, the Treasure of the World, the Wealth of the World, the Life of the World. Baha'u'llah may my life be sacrificed for His loved ones. Write Dear Auntie write. I love you. Lovingly in His service.

Betty
315 W. Granite, Butte, Mont.

P. S. Our Group is doing alright here and it will do still better latter on. Alaho Abha

Care of American Consul,
Berlin, Germany.,
January 4, 1929.

Dearest Friends in El-Abhá:

Alláh-o-Abhá! Love to you all! This letter also is to ask you please to send four letters of Bahá'í greetings to four Congresses. They are:

Congress of The Esperanto Society of Germany, which is to be held March 21, Frankfort-sur-Main, Germany.

Third Biennial Conference of World Federation of Educational Societies which meets in Geneva, Switzerland, July 26.

The New Education Fellowship Conference which is to be held in Copenhagen, Denmark, August 6--16.

Twenty-first Universal Congress of Esperanto which will be held the first week in August, in Budapest, Hungary.

If these letters are somewhat similar (but not exactly the same) it will not matter, for they are different Congresses. Some of these letters may be read aloud at the Congresses and all will be filed. It gives us a great Bahá'í opportunity. The letters of greetings sent by you to the Universal Congresses of Esperanto, have created a fine impression and been a great help to our Cause.

You can send these letters direct to the Congresses, but I think it will be better if you send them to me, for it would give me the chance to make carbon copies of them for newspapers, and to translate them into different languages for the Press. Also, sometimes we arrange that they are read at special sessions --for example, in our Esperanto Congresses they are read at our special Bahá'í sessions which are well attended. Dear Julia Culver helps to translate them and to get them typed. Sometimes they have been published in several newspapers and magazines.

I am mailing this mimeographed letter to our beloved Guardian Shoghi Effendi who always promptly responds, am sending it also to Dr. August Forel, to all the National Spiritual Assemblies, to the Spiritual Assemblies of different cities throughout the world. I realize how busy you all are, yet most courteously I would begyou to write these letters AT ONCE and send them NOW, then everything can be done properly and WELL. The promptness and thoroughness of our work as Bahá'ís creates an impression that does not go unremarked. You can put all these letters, properly addressed in their separate envelopes, put them into one large envelope and mail them to me

Martha L. Root,
CARE OF AMERICAN CONSUL,
Frankfort-sur-Main,
Germany.

With Bahá'í love to you and prayers for you in your great work,
Yours humble in His Covenant,

Martha Root.

Care of American Consul,
Berlin,
Germany.
Feb. 3-29.

My beloved Friends:

Alla-o-ibla! Thanks for your
dear letter. Today, I write to tell Mr.
Staitelo, for it will make him happy.
He worked hard to translate those
booklets. I think Bulainillals those
booklets in both Serbian & Croatian
are circulating now in Yugoslavia.

If you write to

Mr. Roy C. Wilhelm,

104 Wall St.

New York City

you could buy some of these
booklets in Croatian in New York.

Or if there is a Croatian newspaper
in Butte, I think they would print it
as an article & you could buy
some copies of the paper.

Today it was 20 degrees below zero
where I am (today I am in Breslau
East Germany, but I wrote "Berlin"
on this letter so you would have
my regular address. Well, I certainly
thought of Butte & all the dear friends
and how we must to the lecture
when it was more than 20 below zero!
that night in Butte.

My mother's shall Rep. me warm that night &
it did and does tonight.

I had such a lovely time in Gutter
I shall never forget the dear friends,
no not in all eternity!

With deepest Bahá'í love to you all

Your sister

In His Command,
Martinus Rook.

I lecture on "The
Bahá'í Movement"

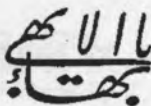
Feb. 28th in
Berlin University.

enclose prospect

BAHAI NATIONAL TEACHING COMMITTEE

Mr. Charles Mason Remey, *Chairman*.
Mr. Leroy Ioas, *Vice-Chairman*.
Mrs. Shanaz Waite.
Mr. Harlan Ober.
Mr. George Latimer.
Mrs. Helen Bishop.
Mr. Stanley Kemp.
Mrs. May Maxwell, *Secretary*,
1548 Pine Ave., Montreal, Canada.

Under the supervision of
THE NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY



Outline Bureau:
Mr. Reginald Collison.
Mrs. Marion Little.
Mrs. Doris McKay, *Secretary*,
R. F. D. 2, Geneva, N. Y.

January 29, 1930

Through the Secretary

To the Spiritual Assembly and Friends of Butte,

Beloved co-workers:-

In a letter from the Guardian just received by an American believer he writes, "though not yet fully recovered from my severe illness."

It will surely come with a shock to every believer to hear that Shoghi Effendi has been so seriously ill, and that perhaps through his wish it was not known. The question is inevitably arising in each one "are we close enough in heart and spirit to that beloved one?" Are we so vitally connected with him who is the heart and centre of the Cause of God, that we are conscious and aware of the significance and implication of the Words of Abdul Baha in the Will and Testament. Addressing us all He says: "Oh ye the faithful loved ones of Abdu'l'Baha! It is incumbent upon you to take the greatest care of Shoghi Effendi, the twig that hath branched from and the fruit given forth by the Two Hallowed and Divine Love-Trees, that no dust of despondency and sorrow may stain his radiant nature, that day by day he may wax greater in happiness, in joy and :

spirituality, and may grow to become even as a fruitful tree." Beloved friends we have become so accustomed to the protection and administration of our Guardian, that it is no doubt difficult to realize our responsibility, the sacred trust he is to us, and our profound spiritual relationship to Him.

Surely the well-being of our Guardian is the source of our strength, progress and peace, and his illness and suffering must pierce the inmost heart of all.

It has been suggested by some members of the National Teaching Committee that the friends throughout America and Canada unite in daily prayer at the noon hour and at nine at night during the Naval Conference now in process in London, a Conference on the results of which may hang such portentous events for the future.

May we, during this period of prayer, draw inwardly nearer to our beloved Guardian than ever before, and uniting prayer with action raise the last balance for the Temple so dear to his heart.

Faithfully and humbly yours,

The National Teaching Committee,

May Maxwell
Secretary

*Eveline Calder
Butte Montana*

Montclair, N.J. USA
Box 175
Oct. 3. 31.

"MAN HAS A SACRED POWER-
WHICH PERMITS HIM TO DISCOVER
THE INNER SIGNIFICANCES-"

'Abdu'l-Bahá Div. Phil. 34.

* * * * *
* * *

My Evelina-

You made me very happy to write to me such a nice long letter.
The letter from Irene Grace was such a joy.
Tell those children I have an important message to give to them, with the few of you who are now in Butte and are loving and serving the Holy Threshold.

It is only for the sake of communion- and for the completion of our Mother Temple that I am able to ask you, knowing that you are poor in all save God as I am, too. Some rich people cannot give to God, and the more they get, the less they can give. As they hoard, their souls become adamant- colder and colder, until they sit upon their gold and their spirit is dead.

Now we who are poor give more.
Our hearts are right with God.
We want to see all humanity saved!
So we give our 'widow's mite' and forget that we have little.
That is spiritual wealth!
That is what carried us direct to the Kingdom of Abhá,
as soon as our life below is done.
We knew how to give-
To sacrifice?
We were severed from all else save God,
And our poverty became our riches,
Our Triumph was severance and love!

Now this is the New Plan of our National Spiritual Assembly
In enclosed letter from our Guardian you will see that his wish is that the Plan become universal- world-wide, so that the Masriqu'l-Adhjár may be built before the appointed time.

When you meet in your next meeting, when you have a Feast, a 19 Day Feast, or any happy meeting, child and adult together, just take a paper and write down the names of each whom will give a certain amount, no matter what amount it may be, but regularly, monthly, in the spirit of sacrifice. Do without an earthly thing, to win the grace of heaven. Give unto the Lord with all your hearts, and you shall be satisfied! honored! blest!

Let me know who gave-
And how much-
then let our prayers mingle in thanksgiving,
that Bahá'u'láh has opened our hearts
and made us rich in giving in spite of our poverty and loss!

God will give to him who gives unto Him
Have FAITH, and His Love will lead, His Bounty provide-

Eagerly awaiting you letter again, and one for me from Irene, Lovingly,
in our great Guardian's Guidance,
in Abha Love and service,

(NO SIGNATURE - FROM AUNTIE VICTORIA)

NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY OF THE BAHÁ'ÍS
OF THE UNITED STATES AND CANADA

General Secretariat
EVERGREEN CABIN, WEST ENGLEWOOD
New Jersey, U. S. A.

July 18, 1932

To the Baha'is of the
United States and Canada

Beloved Friends:

The Guardian has sent this cablegram:-

GREATEST HOLY LEAF'S IMMORTAL SPIRIT WINGED ITS FLIGHT GREAT BEYOND. COUNTLESS LOVERS HER SAINTLY LIFE IN EAST AND WEST SEIZED WITH PANGS OF ANGUISH PLUNGED IN UNUTTERABLE SORROW HUMANITY SHALL ERELONG RECOGNIZE ITS IRREPARABLE LOSS. OUR BELOVED FAITH WELLNIGH CRUSHED BY DEVASTATING BLOW OF ABDUL-BAHA'S UNEXPECTED ASCENSION NOW LAMENTS PASSING LAST REMNANT OF BAHÁ'U'LLAH ITS MOST EXALTED MEMBER. HOLY FAMILY CRUELLY DIVESTED ITS MOST PRECIOUS GREAT ADORNING. I FOR MY PART BEWAIL SUDDEN REMOVAL MY SOLE EARTHLY SUSTAINER THE JOY AND SOLACE OF MY LIFE. REMAINS WILL REPOSE VICINITY HOLY SHRINES. SO GRIEVOUS A BEREAVEMENT NECESSITATES SUSPENSION FOR NINE MONTHS THROUGHOUT BAHÁ'I WORLD EVERY MANNER RELIGIOUS FESTIVITY. INFORM LOCAL ASSEMBLIES AND GROUPS HOLD BEFITTING MANNER MEMORIAL GATHERINGS EXTOL A LIFE SO LADEN SACRED EXPERIENCES SO RICH IMPERISHABLE MEMORIES. ADVISE HOLDING ADDITIONAL COMMEMORATION SERVICE OF STRICTLY DEVOTIONAL CHARACTER AUDITORIUM MASHRIQU'L-ADHKAR.

SHOGHI,

That the friends may in the depths of their hearts draw near the spirit of this exalted Baha'i soul, we enclose a copy of the communication which The Greatest Holy Leaf addressed to the believers throughout the West in the year 1924, when the Guardian had absented himself from Haifa.

The Temple Program Committee has been requested to arrange for the Commemoration Service in the Central Hall of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkar, and to send notice to each Assembly and Group.

Will all Assemblies and Groups hold local Memorial Gatherings on Sunday, July 24, and take steps to convey to Shoghi Effendi in this hour of profoundest grief some suitable expression of their sorrowful loss and renewed consecration to the Faith of Baha'u'llah.

May we all be worthy to receive from the heavenly world some portion of that supreme love which, throughout her long life, burned so purely in the soul of Bahiyih Khanum.

Yours in love of the Faith,

The National Spiritual Assembly

By: *Horace Holley*
Secretary

One of the last survivors of the era of terrible persecution which marked the birth of the Baha'i Faith in Persia eighty years ago has departed this life at Haifa, Palestine, the American National Spiritual Assembly has been informed in a cablegram just received from Shoghi Effendi, Guardian of the worldwide Cause founded by Baha'u'llah to establish the ideal of the oneness of mankind.

"Not since the passing of 'Abdu'l-Baha in November, 1921," the Assembly announces, "have members of the Faith been so profoundly moved as by the loss they now sustain in the death of Bahiyih Khanum, daughter of Baha'u'llah, our last human link with the soul-stirring events which marked the origins of this universal Faith - events of such spiritual heroism, involving the martyrdom of more than twenty thousand men, women and children, that they recall the rise of the Christian religion.

"Born in 1847, three years after Baha'u'llah's forerunner, the Bab, had inflamed Persia with his proclamation that a 'new age' had dawned, Bahiyih Khanum, daughter of Baha'u'llah, the prophetic leader whom the two governments of Persia and Turkey combined to keep in exile and imprisonment for more than forty years, from earliest childhood lived a life of such devotion, inner peace and steadfast faith that the Baha'is of East and West alike regard her as the holiest woman in the world's history. To many thousands of believers who have visited Haifa since the Young Turks revolution in 1908 freed 'Abdu'l-Baha and his family, Bahiyih Khanum has exemplified the very perfection of spiritual love.

"Members of the Faith in all countries are now entering upon a period of nine months' suspension of religious festivities in mourning for the departure of this great soul, whose loss might well be lamented by an age oppressed by so many grievous problems and bereft of the guidance of a truly inspired faith."

The interment, the National Assembly is informed, will be near the Shrines of the Bab and 'Abdu'l-Baha on Mount Carmel, overlooking the Bay of Haifa and Akka.

Mrs. Evalena Caldwell

P.O. Box 247,

Butte, Montana,

U. S. A.



September 10th, 1932.

The Baka's of Butte,

% Mrs. Evalena Caldwell,

P.O. B. 247,

Butte, Montana, U.S.A.

Beloved Friends in the Cause,

Your beautiful message
of July 26th, 1932 was received
and greatly relieved the Guardian
from the burden of grief that

weighs so heavily upon his
tender heart. His loss is, indeed,
immense. But his joy is also
great. For the friends have
demonstrated their undying
attachment to One who, throughout
the tumultuous stages of her
previous life, exemplified in the
most befitting manner, the teachings
& the principles of the Faith.

May the memory of her life
comfort our weary souls & inspire
us with renewed faith & hope.

With Baha'is' greetings,

H. Kabbani

Dear co-workers:
I was touched by your
message coming from such a
distant spot, & fragrant with
the perfume of a splendid devotion
to God's sacred cause. I will most
assuredly remember you in my
prayers that your highest wishes may
be realized & that your lives may
increasingly reflect the glory of the
Baha'is' Revelation.
Your true brother,
Shoghi



Haifa,
Israel,
January 1,
1952

Miss Betty Bennett, Treasurer.

Butte Bahá'í Assembly.

Dear Bahá'í Sister:

Our beloved Guardian has received your letter of December 6th, with its two enclosures; and has instructed me to express to you, and through you, to those who have made these contributions, his deep appreciation. He is truly greatly encouraged to see the steady progress being made toward the completion of this holy Edifice.

Assuring you all of his prayers for your happiness and for the success of your efforts in the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh,

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

R. Ralehami

P.S. - Receipts are enclosed covering the two contributions for the Shrine.

May the Beloved bless
* reward all who have
contributed towards this
holy enterprise, &
enable them to promote
at all times the best
interests of His Faith,
Your true brother.

Reghu



Haifa, Israel
April 22, 1955

Miss Betty Bennett, Treas.,
Butte Baha'i Assembly,

Dear Baha'i Friends:

Your loving letter of April 5th was received by the Beloved Guardian and he has directed me to acknowledge it on his behalf.

The contribution which you have made for the Archives Building and the Persian Temple are greatly appreciated. Receipt is enclosed herewith.

The Beloved Guardian rejoices over the victories being won all over the Baha'i World. He is hopeful that the "lagging" on the home fronts, will be overcome by the Baha'is generally in renewed teaching efforts. The goal is more Baha'is, more Assemblies!

The Friends should not delay in this "most important of all work", feeling they have until 1963 to disperse - to teach - to establish new Assemblies. They should win the goals now. In foreign fields, new Assemblies are being established daily - why not on the home front?

Butte is a very important city and must have a virile and vigorously functioning Assembly.

The Assembly must encourage every individual to treble his or her teaching efforts. The most effective method of teaching is for the individual to consecrate himself to the teaching work, search out sincere, pure-hearted souls, establish contact

with at least one person, then gain his confidence and after this teach the individual, until he becomes a firm supporter of the Faith.

Public Meetings, newspaper articles, Radio are all excellent. They publicize the Faith, but only individual contact, confidence, service and teaching confirms souls at this time.

The Guardian assures you of his prayers in your behalf. He sends you his loving Greetings.

Faithfully yours,

Leroy Lewis

Assistant Secretary.

GEORGE D. MILLER

George D. Miller, a pioneer to Butte, Montana for over 34 years, passed to the Abha Kingdom November 4, 1982, shortly after his 90th birthday on October 11th. He retired from Government service in Washington, D.C. as a senior clerk for the Federal Bureau of Standards in 1948 in response to the Guardian's appeal for believers to leave the larger cities and pioneer in other needed areas. A tiny diary, with two entries, revealed that on February 10th, 1948, after returning from work, he prayed that God would accept and make him worthy to be a pioneer in answer to the Guardian's appeal. The second entry on April 13, 1948 said, "arrived in Butte, Montana today." He effected his own retirement papers the day following the action of Congress to allow retirement at age 55 and agreed to come to Butte, whose newspaper image was that of a rough copper mining camp with lots of cold weather. He found the magnitude of the claims to be less than advertised and began to steadfastly work at changing the hearts of those who had taken on the qualities of the rock.

He was born in Reading, Pennsylvania, graduated from that high school in 1911 and took a Civil Service exam in 1912 to begin his career with the Bureau of Standards. His first job was as a secretary-clerk and later he was moved to chief clerk handling public relations in the testing bureau. He was drafted in World War I, discharged in April 1919 and returned to the Bureau of Standards with a transfer to the Information Section.

He had wanted to become a doctor, as did one of his brothers who died earlier, but found it necessary to work and give some assistance to his mother, who had children at home, George being the fifth out of nine. He studied law for one year at Georgetown University. His introduction to the Bahá'í teachings came while he was enrolled in law at Georgetown University in 1914 and was living in a home where a Jewish man also had a room. This man took him to many kinds of meetings, including Bahá'í. The gentleman chanted so loud George decided to move to a room in the home of a Bahá'í lady. He felt he became a "believer" sometime in 1916 while reading the "Hidden Words", although there was no formal enrollment procedure at the time.

By 1919, after he was discharged from the Army, he remembered the Bahá'í meetings and inquired about them upon seeing a Bahá'í and became active from then on. He was elected to the Washington, D.C. Assembly in 1925, serving as Secretary from 1925 - 1947 and assisted with the incorporation of that Assembly. He served as Secretary of the Butte Assembly for many years and as a member from 1948 until Ridvan 1981, when his health was declining and he was in a rest home.

It is interesting that while taking a walk in Washington, D.C. in 1912, he recalled seeing several Persian

gentlemen outside the home of a Mrs. Drum and he believes that 'Abdu'l-Baha was among them. However, he had not heard of the Faith at that time.

He served on a Regional Teaching Committee when he first arrived in Montana and always expressed an enthusiasm to reach the native Indians as encouraged by Shoghi Effendi. His first opportunity came when he met Blackfeet while assisting with a Bahá'í booth at the State Fair in Great Falls in the summer of 1948. He took pictures and then presented them to the individuals. In the 1950's, he made a trip to the Flathead Reservation for an event and met members of the Salish-Kootenai tribe. He later befriended these people when they came to Butte for a civic July 4th celebration. In 1961, under the sponsorship of the American Indian Committee with Nancy Phillips as Secretary, he arranged to meet a Peigan Bahá'í (Blackfoot tribe) from Canada, Sampson Knowlton, and together they lived in a motel and walked the area of Browning on the Blackfoot Reservation for two weeks teaching and showing slides in various homes. Sampson was related to many in Browning. This was the first real teaching event on a Montana Reservation. (Note: It is not known the beginning date that Vinson Brown first visited the Northern Cheyenne Resrvation in Lame Deer). He was remembered for years after that when Bahá'ís traveled to Browning. About a month later, from arrangements made while on the first trip, a group of 5-6 of us joined with Sampson Knowlton, Guy Yellow Wings and possibly another Canadian believer, in a weekend teaching event. William Musler, pioneering in Great Falls, would make large charcoal drawings of the faces of children he attracted with his talent. The children took the drawings home and a link was made to their parents, who were visited. One Indian youth in the 8th grade read a Bahá'í prayer in Blackfeet, which was recorded.

While a member of the Butte Assembly, George carried out the preparation of large poster displays used in a small rented window that was near the bus depot on Broadway. The display was a large box attached to the door glass that remained lighted 24 hours and was sponsored by the Assembly for about 22 years. The displays were large posters of the Bahá'í Writings, Hidden Words or Prayers, artfully laid out, that gave references to meetings and books in the Public Library, which at the time was in the same block. His poster letters were hand cut with a razor blade so his fingers were often sore or cut. He was known to work best a night and often worked on these until 2 or 3 AM.

Another exacting project involved making 35mm slides of the photos in the "Dawnbreakers" to be used for teaching. He also made slides of most of the displays.

While in Butte he organized the Butte-Anaconda Chapter of the National Association of Retired Federal Employees and served as president for 11 years. He

continued as Education Committee chairman for many years afterward. His interest in education led him to pursue legislation to obtain college free tuition for the elderly by first initiating the adoption of a resolution in his local NARFE Chapter in 1962. This led to his financing and writing letters to Congressmen in all the other 49 states to accomplish presenting this before each state legislature. His second edition of the publication "College and University Degrees for the Retired and Elderly" reflected that by 1982, 35 out of 50 states gave state support for this free education.

He was known for his philanthropic support to individuals in need, assisting more than one family with burial expenses. He frequently bought a meal for someone on the street in Butte and purchased children's clothing for the Indian families he met in Browning. His monetary

support would be given for Regional or District Committee projects to place continuous publicity in isolated area newspapers and for the last year of his life, had been underwriting the publishing of Bahá'í Prayers in Spanish in the Butte newspaper for the Assembly.

Mr. Miller never married and was survived by a brother in Abington, PA at the time of his passing. He bequeathed a sum of money to the Butte Assembly that was invested in a Certificate of Deposit, with the interest being used in teaching work, charity or assisting a Bahá'í to attend a Summer School. His striving to do every task with perfection and with a pureness of motive are qualities, we who knew him, can never forget and always reflect on.

(Statement prepared by Mrs. Betty Bennett, December 1982)

LOUIS G. GREGORY
LITTLE AKKA
ELIOT, MAINE

3 November, 1948

Mr. George D. Miller

Butte, Mont.

Dear Bahá'í Brother:

Both the book, which I had entirely forgotten, and your interesting letter reached me in due course. I am glad that ^{it} has served others, yourself included. It is well to study our minority problems, both in the light of social sciences and the illumination of the divine teachings. Thanking you for your thoughtful offer, there is no need of a new copy.

I am glad you are in Butte on your retirement and as a pioneer settler. I recall spending a week there in 1921, year of the Master's ascension. There was a very small Bahá'í group there at the time. So long ago, I do not recall the names. The wife was Irish and an ardent Bahá'í. The husband was the very image of Abraham Lincoln. He was a miner and one day took me

J.P. Hope the enclosed compilation will aid your teaching service.

to visit the mine where he worked. We descended 500 feet. I declined his offer of 1000 ft. Since then I have always had a sympathy, and understanding of the dangers and difficulties of such work.

I recall our pleasant association in Washington and here. Once you stayed up to an unearthly hour to meet my bus, arriving from the South. Such signs of loving service powerfully influence the progress of the Faith.

Mrs. Gregory and I, advanced in years, have, for the most part, given up travel. But we try to do our part here where so many of our friends appear during the G. H. season. There is also a Baha'i local assembly and community.

Mrs. Gregory joins me in Abha greetings and cordial best wishes to you and your shining circle in Butte. Louis G. Gregory

YOUNG BAHÁ'Í CONFERENCE

July 27-28, 1963

Butte, Montana

Theme: WHAT IN THE WORLD AM I?

SATURDAY – July 27

2:00 PM CREATOR, CREATION & ME
2:45 PM

15 minute break

3:00 PM FOUR KINGDOMS
3:45 PM

15 minute rest

4:00 PM CHILDREN SELECT DEVOTIONS FOR
SUNDAY MORNING SONGS AND MUSIC

6:00 PM PICNIC DINNER

SUNDAY – July 28

9:30 AM DEVOTIONS

10:00 AM ATTRIBUTES OF GOD AND KNOWN ONLY
THROUGH MANIFESTATIONS

15 minute rest

11:00 AM CONSULTATION
11:45

15 minute rest

12 Noon INSPIRATIONAL TALK AROUND THE
DAWNBREAKERS, HEROES
OF THE FIRST BAHÁ'Í CENTURY

1:00 PM LUNCH AND FAREWELL

COMMENTS OF A BAHÁ'Í

Helen Shane

In the spring of 1952 a farm neighbor, Hildred Jones visited my mother, Lena Bell, and me. She explained she had something wonderful and very exciting to tell us. She gave us the message of the Bahá'í Faith informing us there soon would be a traveling teacher, Kathryn Frankland, coming to Great Falls who could give us a much better idea of the Faith. Baha'u'llah, 'Abdu'l-Baha and The Bab were very strange sounding names to us.

Kathryn Frankland, a small, elderly, delightful lady wearing a body brace conducted weekly, public meetings at the old YWCA building on First Avenue North and also held many teaching meetings daily in her rented apartment. My mother and I declared in October 1952. We became members of the LSA of Great Falls where Elaine and Jenabe Caldwell were part of the community and later Knights of Baha'u'llah.

In 1963 I had the bounty of attending, together with three Bahá'ís from Great Falls, the First World Congress held in London, England. Our departure flight was from Chicago, thus giving us the opportunity to become overwhelmed by the beauty and special spiritual essence of the House of Worship in Wilmette, Illinois. The Congress was held in Royal Albert Hall. Many impressive happenings to remember about that—a very young boy, son of one of the Moroccan prisoners, spoke to that huge crowd,—Samandari, the small man with the clearcut, commanding voice who told of his experiences with 'Abdu'l-Baha, —The Australian aborigines telling of the rapture they felt at being members of the Faith. The incident that has stayed in my mind was when Ruhiiyyih Khanum was addressing the Congress telling of the steadfastness of the Guardian and His many accomplishments, her voice was sort of faltering when up an aisle came an African male chorus singing Allah'u'Abha to comfort her. There were many times when it was hard to fight back tears. So many times it has seemed unreal that I have been privileged to share in beautiful, happy and joyous occasions with others because of our love for Baha'u'llah.

"O Son of Man! Put thy hand into My bosom, that I may rise above thee, radiant and resplendent."

There were special times — gatherings for DTC meetings and on two occasions attending National Spiritual Assembly meetings at the House of Worship in Wilmette, Ill.

By being Local Spiritual Assembly secretary for ten years I sort of kept abreast of things. Names such as Charlotte Linfoot, Edna True, Thelma Jackson, Daniel Jordan and Glenford Mitchell became very familiar. Our own Montana State Conventions are times to get re-acquainted and check on everyone's well being and reminisce about trips to the Blackfeet Indian reservations, etc.

In 1966 I was accepted for pilgrimage to the World Center in Haifa, Israel. The experience of traveling that far was challenging, exciting and most rewarding. My niece, a senior in high school traveled with me. We flew to London where we stopped for a visit with my daughter and her family, which was a very special part of the trip. Then we went on to Germany (East Berlin and Frankfurt), where AnnaLesa Bopp helped us locate the train station and we took a train out to see the House of Worship. It was a cold, wintry December day and a little 6 year old boy came to unlock the door. It was good to be inside and we were fascinated by the unusual architecture and beauty. We preferred to stay and knew we should keep on with the flight schedule to Copenhagen. On arrival we were met by Loyce Lawrence, who was pioneering in the polar region of Norway and had come to attend a conference. She had previously lived many years in Hollywood. Amelia Bowman also came from Stavanger to attend the conference. They arranged a bus tour for us. Amelia Bowman was raised in Augusta, Montana. Of interest we saw the botanical gardens, the State Art Gallery, the Little Mermaid and beautiful, ancient churches. The guide told us approximately 2% of the population attend church. Loyce Lawrence and Amelia Bowman took us to the Bahá'í Center where we spent a pleasant evening and met many believers including the mother of Rigmor Mereness. She was Mrs. Lily Quistgaard. She lived at the Center. Our next stop was Turkey and there was a problem continuing directly on. We were told the delay was because of the war and we were a day late landing in Tel Aviv. A taxi driver offered to take us on to Haifa. There were soldiers carrying guns along the road. Every so often a tired soldier would beckon for a ride and cab driver would accommodate him. We were relieved when we got to the hotel in Haifa and an elderly man with a rattly bunch of keys obligingly let us in. Because of the position of our room in the hotel I could not see the precious sight of the Shrine of the Bab until the next morning, but there it was in all its splendid glory. Something unexplainable goes through one's body at the sight. In those days the custom at the World Center was to have nine Persian Bahá'ís and nine Bahá'ís gather from other countries at the same time for their pilgrimages. It kept someone busy all the time interpreting. One little Persian lady from Teheran told of the remains of the Bab being kept in the home of her ancestors until it was safe to journey on to Haifa months later. I had a pleasant surprise upon being settled in the pilgrim house when I was told my room mate would be Lauretta Haynes. Lauretta had been a pioneer to the Crow Indian Reservation here in Montana and I had not met her. Being in Haifa and visiting the many Holy Shrines, the Most Great Prison and saying prayers in

the Shrine of the Bab, the Shrine of 'Abdu'l-Baha and the Shrine of Baha'u'llah is a most unforgettable experience. From the moment of arrival the beauty of everything and the welcome feeling was apparent. Grounds were so neatly kept and one observed workers who were responsible for the splendid order and good feeling it gave one. Each person we came in contact with appeared to be filled with love and happiness. My first thought was what a perfect place for little children. We saw some of the Hands of the Cause daily and had a meeting with members of The Universal House of Justice. It was very difficult to believe it was a reality! The Hands would be with us at mealtime, on tours of the Holy Places and at the social evening gatherings. Their humility and thoughtful kindness was always very evident.

"O God, my God! How can I glorify or describe Thee inaccessible as Thou art; immeasurably high and sanctified art Thou above every description and praise."

This is how I felt while being in Bahji visiting Baha'u'llah's Shrine and spending two days and two nights in the Mansion, enjoying the beautiful gardens and the attractive Collins Gate. At night looking across to Haifa and seeing the Shrine of the Bab so splendidly lighted gave one the feeling of being in the midst of grandeur and majesty. I can see it all so plainly even unto this day.

In the fall of 1969 I had gone to Victor, N.Y. to assist at the International Bahá'í Audio-Visual Centre—established by The Universal House of Justice in 1967 to make use of the teaching opportunities presented by the new media including creating, producing, storing, indexing, marketing and distributing. I was encouraged by William Musler to lend assistance to the Institution. Bill had been there about a year helping out in all aspects of the art department. I was assigned to work with the identity pieces and symbols of the Faith in the jewelry department. As the demand for materials grew I also helped preparing filmstrips and filling orders to all parts of the world. This required packaging and preparing for mailing and shipping. Special regulations had to apply to sensitive areas. Actually, it was an impressive review in geography. I have many pleasant memories of the eight years I was in upper New York state and IBAVC.

During those years I was privileged to attend two International Conferences in the '70's. The first one in Reykjavik, Iceland where the city was heated by the underground hot water springs and the roofs of the houses all were of a bright red tile. The conference sessions were intensely interesting recounting the trials, efforts and successes of the believers to get the Faith well established. A number of the Knights of Baha'u'llah from Norway related some of their endeavors to continue the teaching work in spite of weather conditions they would encounter. Pages could be written about the Lava-strewn areas of Iceland, the stately glacial mounts and the open areas where we would see the really wooly sheep. A few years later Meredith Smith and I attended the African International Conference held

in Nairobi, Kenya, Africa. After leaving Rochester, N.Y. we were routed through Haifa, Israel. It was especially interesting to see the up-dated changes at the World Center and to renew acquaintances with some who were still serving there. It took forever to get through customs at Tel Aviv and when we arrived in Nairobi it was dark. The first thing to greet our eyes the next morning were the beautiful trees with the gorgeous pink blossoms. There was much activity by people on their way to work seeming glad to be alive as they took firm, quick steps. This same characteristic attitude was noticeable in the Africans who took part in the conference, especially in the children sining the songs. As is customary in large gatherings of the Faith where there are Persian families present, the Persian men take responsibility for the children, even the tiny ones. Many women took part in the conference sessions. Hand of the Cause, Dr. R. Muhajir was one of many in attendance. At any recess time, he was always surrounded by young people. We were privileged to meet Mrs. John Allen, mother of Dwight Allen, and we were invited to a gathering hosted by Mr. and Mrs. Enoch Olinga. Meredith and Elton Smith had worked closely with them. We were taken on tours to the Masai Village and the Wild Life Park—saw The Great Rift but did not get to see the Indian Ocean.

While I was in Victor, Marjorie and Bill Richter, who were in charge of IBAVC, traveled to many surrounding areas and I was often asked to accompany them. I had glimpses of area around Toronto, many places in Massachusetts, Vermont, and surely many scenic areas in New York. I also delighted in boating on the St. Lawrence Seaway. One late fall we had a 10 day vacation on the small island of Isla-Mujeras near Mexico City and at Cozumel. At the Center we frequently were favored with visitors. Among them were Hugh Chance, Dr. David Rhue, Amos Gibson, Bill Sears, John Robarts, Hooper Dunbar and pioneers from Venezuela, Trinidad, San Salvador, Australia and Holland. It was a special bounty to have Hand of the Cause of God Khadem appear in the Rochester area often. I attended Steve Yamamoto's wedding in Rochester, N.Y. and often spent time with the families of Marjorie and Bill Richter, Deane and Ray Waite, Hany and Maleha Bahá'í and Lauretta Haynes. It was such a treat to see the beautiful colors and now to remember Upper New York State. My life has been so enriched by these memorable events and the desire to help the reality as voiced by the Supreme Rulers, of an ever-advancing civilization. The thoughtfulness and understanding of Nellie Mereness, Betty and Fred Bennett, Rigmor and Dick Mereness, Hildred Jones Rowe, Karen Whisenhunt and my family have been very much appreciated.

Signed: Helen Shane

O My Friend!

*Thou art the day-star of the heavens of my holiness,
Let not the defilement of the world eclipse thy splendor.
Rend asunder the veil of heedlessness, that from behind
the clouds thou mayest emerge resplendent and array all
things with the apparel of life."*

Written 5/19/92 and recopied by Betty Bennett

BAHÁ'Í FORT MISSOULA

An Early History of Missoula
December 1954- Virginia Foster

"I testify that no sooner had the First Word proceeded, through the potency of Thy will and purpose, out of His mouth, and the First Call gone forth from His lips than the whole creation was revolutionized, and all that are in the heaven and all that are on the earth were stirred to the depths. Through that Word, the realities of all created things were shaken, were divided, separated, scattered, combined and reunited, disclosing, in both the contingent world and the heavenly kingdom, entities of a new creation, and revealing, in the unseen realms, the signs and tokens of Thy unity and oneness...." Prayers and Meditations, pg295

In the light of the above words, it is with much tenderness, that one hopes to recall the evidences of this Holy Purpose and Direction in those parts of the planet where one's footsteps have been led.

In the year 109 of the Bahá'í dispensation (1953) in the month of Beauty (April and May) there gathered in the midmost heart of the North American continent, in a city called Chicago, some 2000 Bahá'ís to commemorate the Holy moments of the beginnings of the new Most Holy Cycle.

The 2000 who gathered from all parts of the globe were to have the privilege of hearing from their Guardian, by the presence of his wife, the precious and fiery 'Amat'l-Baha, Rhuyiyh Khanum.

The Word had ignited the hearts of first 18 Letters of the Living in the early days of the Bab, during the Creative Hours between the year 1 and the year 6. Nineteen years later came the Proclamation that was to carry with it during the ensuing 29 years, the Laws and Ordinances, the directives and essentials for the cycle ahead — for the generations yet unborn. The creative energies unloosed, found their way to the western world, and found the spoken arena at the World's Fair of 1893.

The creative forces found homing spots in a few receptive hearts, who were led back to the Holy Land by way of pilgrimage and returned aflame to the western continent. In twenty years' time, the creative energies had freed from the bonds of imprisonment the adored person of the Beloved Master, 'Abdu'l-Baha, and led His holy footsteps to the soil of a waiting western world.

The Holy Fire leaped from heart to heart. Although the western world responded unconsciously to the magnetism and love of the Mystery of God, 'Abdu'l-Baha Abbas, still it remained for the most part unconscious of His reality. With His passing into the Abha Kingdom, the Tree of Life shook, and leaves not tightly alive and verdant, fell, with the shaking.

But the Holy Fire continued to blaze, and new forms

arose in the advent of a divine organism with perfect institutions to serve the needs of a new creative age.

In the year 93 (1937), an apostolic call went forth from the Holy Spot of Mt. Carmel, in the Directive of its Guardian, to the believers, however small in number — to move into new areas of the globe with this Holy Fire. By the year 100, both the South and North American continents had sparks of fire giving light in the dead areas of states, provinces and republics.

Then the European area ignited and finally, by the Bahá'í year 109, the Flame was directed to every island of the seas, many dark areas of the Asiatic, East Indian, southern and northern spheres of the globe.

From the picture of the world of geography and social order — we turn to the journey of the soul, and those to whom the Holy Fire is entrusted from age to age — for Baha'u'llah had written that the qualities of the disciples in every age return, and the Names and Attributes of God become apparent again as the Word revitalizes through the Spirit of Faith and the breaths of the Holy Spirit.

In a high mountain-encircled valley of Montana, off the beaten paths of the world's caravans, lay isolated Missoula. A country still young, filled with Indians, a state university and white people who had absorbed Indian ways, although carrying the name of Christianity, thinking in terms of mining, forests and game.

The Holy Flame which burst over a hundred years ago in "Elam" was destined to first touch this isolated spot through the prayers and footsteps of a few Bahá'ís from the city of Butte. These spurts were occasional but real. Then, all of a sudden, within a period of three months, there were believers — nine adults and one youth — to hold the Fire closely to the dead brush of the area until it became aflame with the enlightenment and healing of the new age.

It is the story of these souls we would record for those generations, yet unborn, whose destiny it will be to write the history of the world in its new divine form.

Unknown to each other, unknown to any teaching channel, each of these hearts found himself drawn as though by a magnet to this valley. A divine restlessness besets every pair of feet that makes the journey of the heart to that Holy Mountain, Carmel. Tedious at times is the journey of the

soul which is so beset by the Love found there, but never, ever after, is one moment of rest permitted from the station of servitude.

Born in this valley of earthly parents 40 years ago was Edwin Hale Koyl. Life took him to Kalispell until he was 14. Then in his late teens he found himself in that historic city of Chicago. In a short time, his path crossed that of a family (Rice-Wray-Ives) who were aflame and alive as Believers. Two souls contributed to his life — Marguerite Bruegger and Dr. Zia Baghdadi. Zia was very close to the person of 'Abdu'l-Baha and interpreted for Him while the Master was in the United States. He had come here from Baghdad, Persia (Note, Iraq not Persia). As a baby Zia had sat on the lap of that Holy Woman, Tahirih, Letter of the Living of the Bab. Later Zia's father had been entrusted by 'Abdu'l-Baha with the sacred task of transferring the Holy Remains of the Bab to Haifa, where the Master had prepared the Mausoleum on Mt. Carmel. The Master with His own hands had performed this Holy Task of transfer. The story has been recorded in one of the Bahá'í World books — it tears the heart in the reading.

It was Zia Baghdadi, to whom 'Abdu'l-Baha referred, when in Chicago on His historic visit, and when the Covenant Breakers were attempting to destroy His Work. It was Zia of whom He spoke to Mother True and said in the railroad station on Michigan Avenue, "Zia is my son, you can trust Zia." and he spoke in English. Zia served as one on the committee of three to pass on the authenticity of the Master's Tablets held in the archives of the United States — to be later published in three volumes. He passed into the Abha Kingdom, a pioneer in Augusta, Georgia.

The qualities of a Bahá'í teacher often reflect or find expression in the student.

Edwin was to serve for 17 years in that heart of the North American continent and in the activities of the Most Holy House of Worship in Wilmette. Then his path took him to Los Angeles on the West Coast by way of New York City, where he was entrusted with a copy of the diary of Juliet Thompson, who also was close to the life and days of 'Abdu'l-Baha.

Edwin was to serve on the Los Angeles Assembly for two years before it was time to return to his native valley isolated in the northern mountain reaches of his country in August 1954, to be a pillar of strength in holding the Holy Flame aloft.

In the heart of the middle western state of Wisconsin was born Virginia Camelon Foster in Fond du Lac; at a time when a Hans Christian Anderson (unknown to each other ever on this plane) possessed a Tablet from 'Abdu'l-Baha which was received in 1901 in South Superior, Wisconsin.

Her path took her to the shores of Lake Michigan for university training in 1922. Two years later she became attracted by the Bahá'í Fire through the association of Albert

Vail. During a period of twelve years, she sat at the feet of many Bahá'ís who had been close to the Master and she accumulated much of the Spirit, Love and Flame found in the lives of the Holy Household. Mother True, Dorothy Baker, Horace Holley, Alfred Lunt, Montefort Mills, Stanwood Cobb, and endless others, whose lives wove in and out of that area, were part of the pattern in which she participated. In 1936 she became a believer and service took her into the national publicity; public relations and guiding at the Temple - teaching took her first into the Wisconsin and Michigan area and later throughout the United States and parts of Canada under the National Spiritual Assembly

The Centenary of 1944 finished that aspect for her and led her to the West Coast for ten years. There she gathered in her teaching path a large group of young people, who caught a spark of the Fire and themselves were moved by the creative energies into distant fields.

Ridvaniyyih Ives and Orcella Rexford had played an important part in her training of public presentation and other services, both in early U.S. pre-Centenary work and at Louhelen School. In July 1954 she left the West Coast for the northern area and found herself attracted to Missoula in August 1954.

One of those souls inspired by his initial contacts with the teaching fire in Los Angeles was Keith de Folo, who took his reflection of these energies to New York City, setting up gatherings of young people. Among those were Connie and Chris Kay and Don Winski. In the Spring of 1954, Connie and Chris Kay came to the West Coast and lived in Los Angeles. They wrote to the Assembly there, asking to declare themselves. In May 1954 they were accepted by that Assembly. Their attachment to the zeal of the hour led them to be blown to this isolated valley on October 9, 1954. Several years prior to going to New York City, Chris had lived in Great Falls, Montana, and had felt a love for the area. Late in September, 1954, Don Winski, who had declared in the spring of the year, drove across the country to Los Angeles to pick up the Kays and drive with them to Missoula. All three hearts were warmed by the Master's promise of the destiny of the American Indian in the future when touched by the Fire of Revelation. They were drawn as by a magnet to this city, although they were the only Bahá'ís who were in close touch with the national directive body.

Born in Chicago area were two young men: John Morgan and Bill Musler. The new age drive of "Search" drove John into many schools of thought, many hours of restless probing of "Holy Books", took his person finally to an art school in Florence, Italy, and around the world and back to Chicago. One day while walking down the street, he saw an old friend of former years in a car and ran down the street calling her. She was a Bahá'í. His path had taken him also through the gamut of grief, for in one year he had lost both parents and his wife.

In his early days of quenching his thirst at the fountain of Baha'u'llah, he found himself attracted to a young artist who also lived on the near north side of Chicago. The young artist had also searched intensely into many byways. Born into Catholicism, he knew two basic laws — the power of prayer and the worth of obedience. But the Reality of his age, the Center of Life, was his quest. Being highly gifted in artistic and creative expression, he was driven to find the answers for the conditions of the heart in his generation. He found, over a lone dinner in a restaurant, a new acquaintance, destined to become his Bahá'í brother, John Morgan.

In the summer of 1954, these two set out on a 2000 mile jaunt, which took them through Montana, down to Texas, where they felt they might settle, touching the magic soil of loveable Mexico. But something, not their own thinking, drew them back into this tiny isolated valley of Missoula. They arrived in early August of 1954. They brought with them the confirming warmth of living so close to that Most Holy House of Worship in the world, and the special heart quality found by those who associate with believers in Chicago, so served and loved by 'Abdu'l-Baha, during the days of His ministry.

In northern California, just southeast of San Francisco, was a family in the early 1920's, who hired a carpenter to do some special work for them. Cecil, one of the daughters of the house, became especially attracted to the philosophy and learning of this man, who was a Bahá'í—Mr. Smith. The family also love him and in due course of time held Bahá'í meetings in their home. This daughter later found herself in Los Angeles, and still deeply attached to the Teachings she had found, studied closely with Loa Schaeffer, one of those eternal candles lit in that area. The creative energies of the Word brought to her a friend who was to become both her husband and Bahá'í brother, Fred Dennis. In 1946 these two set out for the East and in time became a part of Kentucky's first Assembly in Louisville.

The Wind of God blows hard and many are taken for service in many places to contribute with a touch of special qualities needed for given conditions. There was added to these two dear souls, a third — a baby boy. It was destined for these three to inhale the fragrance of Michigan, where the Master had also been, and the summer school at Louhelen, and the service in Grand Rapids.

Early in 1954, the Edge sisters left Grand Rapids: one to make the pilgrimage to Haifa and bring back that special Fragrance from speaking with the Beloved Guardian and the precious moments permitted in the Holy Shrines. This special Fragrance reached these three dedicated souls — and soon the creative energies brought them to Missoula — that little isolated valley, high in the mountains — unbeknownst to any others or to themselves, that the Fire was here, and would love their addition.

In the heart of the baby boy (now grown 14 years)

there burned the desire to be of service to the German Bahá'ís in their divine tasks behind the Iron Curtain — a worldly term used for certain restrictions imposed temporarily on freedom of thought and motion between peoples in certain areas of the globe.

Among the German Bahá'ís there is one — Dr. Karl Schuck — who became enamoured in Los Angeles and was close to the path of Virginia Foster. Dr. Schuck, serving in the spiritual heart of Europe (Frankfurt) may well assist this tender heart when the Winds of God blow him in His direction — if it be Germany.

There is one still, who comes drawn by a love that is unexplainable. We await her arrival — Marguerite Bruegger. Born on Prince Edward Island, having lived in Pasadena, California, and being at one time a part of the Pasadena Playhouse, her path took her finally to Chicago. Warmed by the love of Baha'u'llah, attracted too by the Fire found in the groups gathered about Albert Vail, her soul ignited. The paths of Edwin Koyl, Virginia Foster and Marguerite were very close. There (they) were to separate and leave Chicago. Marguerite went to "the most difficult spot" after prayer, in answer to the Guardian's request of early dispersal in the 1930's. Her prayers led her to Fargo, North Dakota. Virginia was blown a couple of years later into travelling through the nation, once crossing the path of Marguerite by stopping for some teaching service in Fargo, by then a well established Assembly. Edwin was to stay in Chicago serving the Temple and the Assembly.

Marguerite felt a love for the destiny of the American Indian peoples and went to Devils Lake, North Dakota. Virginia had contacted the Indian peoples through a Yakima Indian sent to her and many representatives of all nations in the National Congress of American Indians.

During the summer of 1954, while Virginia was resting for health reasons in northern Montana, she answered a heart-felt longing to see her friends and Bahá'í sister. This was not permitted, but within a few months, Marguerite was destined to come to Missoula to live — in December 1954.

John Morgan, who arrived in the Summer of '54, is part Cherokee.

For the moment, in the eternal story of mankind, we who stand at the Threshold of a New Age, cannot know all the meanings — or indeed any of them. The hearts that now are attuned to the Greatest Name in this spot, know only:

"The Sun of Truth is the Word of through which it may reflect. For example: Its light when cast upon the mirrors of the wise God, upon which depends the training of the people of the country of thought. It is the Spirit of Reality, and the Water of Life. All things owe their existence to it. Its manifestation is ever according to the capacity and coloring of the mirror gives expression to wisdom; when reflected from the minds of artists it produces manifestations

of new and beautiful arts; when it shines through the minds of students, it reveals knowledge and unfolds mysteries.

"The Word is the fire of God which, glowing in the hearts of people, burns away all things that are not of God. The minds of the lovers are ever aflame with this fire. Outwardly it is burning fire, while inwardly it is calm light. This is the Water which giveth life to all things."

The Master once wrote of the Indians: "for these souls may be likened unto the ancient inhabitants of the Arabian Peninsula, who, prior to the Mission of Muhammad, were like unto savages. When the light of Muhammad shone forth in their midst, however, they became so radiant as to illumine the world. Likewise, these Indians should they become educated and guided, there can be no doubt that they will become so illumined as to enlighten the whole world."

Mrs. Florence Mayberry, Deputy of the Hands of the Cause, stopped for one evening's visit with the friends and her comment was: "You have left your homes, you have come into a new area — a goal city. You are teaching and I feel that there is a most unusual harmony and unity in your group. There is nothing for me to do here...." November 4, 1954.

The area abounds in Quakers. In the five months of Bahá'ís living in this valley, many, many friends have been made through association. The Quakers have great sound qualities of character. If they become ignited with the Fire of Revelation, it might well be said that the U.S. government

was used as an instrument of Baha'u'llah to gather them together during the time of the last World War (II) in order that they might hear of Bahá'í. These people were isolated because they were objectors to war and were pacifists. The Guardian once is reported to have said to a pilgrim many years ago: "There will be many Bahá'í heroes, but few Bahá'í saints." — for saints not only know of Revelation and have a great Fire, but they also have those great qualities of character. These the Quakers already seem to have mastered. Our prayer is "Inshallah."

"Not ours, puny mortals that we are, to attempt, at so critical a stage in the long and checkered history of mankind, to arrive at a precise and satisfactory understanding of the steps which must successively lead a bleeding humanity, wretchedly oblivious of its God, and careless of Baha'u'llah, from its calvary to its ultimate resurrection — ours rather the duty— to labor serenely, confidently and unremittingly — to the operations of the forces which — as directed by Baha'u'llah, are leading humanity — to the loftiest summits of power and glory." Promised Day is Come, pg 129

(Recopied for inclusion in the Montana History compilation by Betty Bennett, December 2001)

THE OTHER SIDE OF THE MOUNTAIN

Edwin H. Koyl

I would assume that I was not the only youngster growing up in Kalispell in the nineteen twenties who might have gazed at the beautiful Swan Range to the east, and wondered what lay beyond. Like many other families in those days, ours did not have an automobile; as it turned out, up to the time I was fourteen, all my traveling had been on a north-south axis, meaning to and from Missoula.

Adding to the mystery of what lay to the east was the fact that my mother, born in West Virginia, had spent most of her maiden life in Indiana and Illinois. My father, also was an easterner, a native of Montreal. I've long maintained that it was by the grace of God, and the Sheboygan Shoe Company, that I was born and raised in Western Montana; as you might have guessed, my father was a traveling shoe salesman.

I gleaned some information about the world "beyond the horizon", as it were, from my folks; there was constant interchange between them and their respective families. Suffice it to say that my curiosity was healthy.

I go back this far in recounting my Bahá'í life because it really started right here in Kalispell. My mother passed away in early nineteen twenty-four, when I was nine. I went to live in a boardinghouse; for the next three years I was "absorbed" into the Roe family, of which I still feel a part. It was during that period that there occurred an incident that I have come to look upon as the first spiritual experience of my life. The incident was isolated, so totally unrelated to anything going on around me at the moment. I was leaving the house one day, munching on a cracker; as I descended the porch steps, the thought crossed my mind that "Everyone must make a contribution to humanity". There it was: right out of the blue, right there in the open. I did not spend much time thinking about the incident; too many mundane things clamored for my attention. But it stuck with me.

Starting with my mother's passing in nineteen twenty-four, the next eight years were a time of great movement for me. Kalispell, Missoula, Kalispell again, Indianapolis, Regina, and finally, Chicago. It necessitated constant adjustments to new situations; it was a time of growth. And, at last, I saw what was on the other side of the mountain. It was somewhat better than I expected; our geography books of the time described the whole area from the Mississippi River to the Rocky Mountains as The Great American Desert!

Getting settled in Chicago was no mean accomplishment, especially in the depths of the Great Depression; however, with the help of my sister, and various aunts and uncles, to say nothing of a good group of cousins, I put in a two-year stint at the school of hard knocks. I tried to get involved in church affairs, to carry on where I'd left

off in Regina, but I just couldn't find the key.

My introduction to the Bahá'í Faith came at a youth luncheon held in connection with the nineteen thirty-four Convention. Back in those days, the Conventions started on Friday and were over by Sunday noon. We youths would hold our luncheons, then attend the afternoon lecture, and then the "party" would continue at someone's home. Such fellowship! Such love! I was quite overwhelmed by all this; such a contrast to what I had encountered when, during the previous two years, I had tried to get back into the old Epworth League routine.

Among the many things that impressed me about the Bahá'í Faith, along with the love that radiated from the friends, were the answers I found to questions I had been asking myself for four years, or longer. I was in Indianapolis when the depression started; by the time I moved to Chicago, many questions had crossed my mind; for instance, why all this want in the midst of so much plenty? And then, after observing the nineteen thirty-two presidential campaign, I could see that the answers were not to be found in the political realm. No, the hearts of men had to be changed! So, imagine my delight upon reading my first Bahá'í literature; upon experiencing the love in Bahá'í meetings among people of such diverse racial and economic circumstances! Seemingly, I had found a true frame of reference for the solution of these problems: a spiritual one.

Another factor that so impressed me was the time element involved from the date of revelation of this great Cause. Imagine! Only ninety years from its first mention.

From nineteen thirty-four until nineteen fifty-two, I was privileged to serve in the Temple area. I recall that back in the mid-thirties, all the Bahá'ís in Chicagoland belonged to the Chicago community; sub-division boundary lines meant nothing. Being a part of that group was a rich experience. And the experience was even richer when one considered all the friends who came to the Conventions in Wilmette, from over the United States and Canada.

Among those who stand out in my memory was Dr. Zia Bagdadi, who at one time was personal physician to 'Abdu'l-Baha. He was so representative of that group of friends whom we came to refer to as " 'Abdu'l-Baha" Bahá'ís. What a privilege it was to talk with these friends who had seen, and heard, and been blessed by the Center of the Covenant!

I look back on those eighteen years in the Chicago area as being immensely rewarding. Friendships were formed that even to this day, almost fifty years later, are heart-warming.

Mention should be made of my experiences in the armed forces during World War II. I was stationed for the

first year at Camp Grant, near Rockford, Illinois; one was not exactly out of touch, being so close to Chicago. And I had my share of Bahá'í visitors, on the post. After that, I was stationed almost in the heart of New Orleans for four months. The group there was delightful. We met in America's oldest apartment building, facing historic Jackson Square.

Of singular interest was an experience in Sydney, Australia, in September of nineteen forty-three. On my first pass into town, I started inquiring about the whereabouts of the Bahá'ís. I was referred to this person, and then to that person, and on the fourth phone call, I had on the line a Mrs. Stanley Bolton, whom I had met at the Chicago Center, when she and her husband were on their way home from Haifa, in nineteen thirty-six. Within an hour and a half she had ten Bahá'ís around a luncheon table! The group included Noel Walker, with whom I am still in touch.

I had a brief two weeks in Brisbane, but it didn't take me three days to find a Bahá'í. Forty-five minutes, to be exact. As an added bounty, we went out that evening to see the pioneer Bahá'í of Australia, Mrs. Hyde Dunn.

I had a long "dry spell" up in New Guinea, where for a period of two years, I didn't get an opportunity to mention the word Bahá'í. However, the friends in the States kept me well informed about what was going on; especially, the Centennial observance in nineteen forty-four.

Late in nineteen fifty-two came a time for moving on, so I left Chicago for Southern California. But not in a direct line; my sister was residing in Florida. But the road to Florida leads through New York City, if one had never before been there, and I hadn't. Highlight of my stay in New York was an afternoon spent in the company of Juliet Thompson, and her delightful companion, Daisy Smythe.

I had a very pleasant twenty months in the Los Angeles area; plenty to do, many lovely Bahá'ís, and beautiful weather. One incident stands out in my memory above all else; not too long before I decided to come "home" to Montana, we of the Los Angeles area were favored by a visit of Hand of The Cause Mr. Samandari. The evening was very moving; it was highlighted by Mr. Samandari telling

us of being in a group of believers who were an audience of Baha'u'llah's. He told of Baha'u'llah handing him an orange. Imagine! Here was a man who, as a youth, had actually seen and heard and been favored by a Manifestation of God!

Before the evening was over there was a brief exchange of greeting between Mr. Samandari and myself, and he bestowed upon me a very special gift. I shall not forget him.

And now, I am back in Montana, the only state in which I really feel "at home". Also, back in my home town of Kalispell; not everyone gets to return to his home town after an absence of fifty-two years. My Bahá'í life, since being back in Montana, has been at a lower key than previously, but filled with many friendships. Kalispell is such a delightful place. It is large enough to have many cultural activities, and progressive enough to have an active social program for the dis-advantaged. And all this in a valley of great beauty. I can understand how my father, as the story goes, going home to mother, in Missoula, might have said, "Ruth, you just have to see this place!" Ergo, we promptly moved to Kalispell!

Not long after my return in late nineteen eighty, I was chatting with a friend of long standing, about my experiences. Said he: "Yes, I can remember when you left here. By the way, what did you find on the other side of the mountain?"

I thought for quite a few minutes before answering, then I said: "The Kingdom of God on Earth!"

Written by Edwin H. Koyl
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Retyped for inclusion in the Montana History compilation
by Betty Bennett (Dec. 2001)

RED LODGE RADIO PROGRAM AND RESULTS

A report to the District Teaching Committee Bulletin 9-11-75

By Ivan Cottrill

The Yellowstone County Bahá'í Assembly had Don Olson check into the possible use of the Red Lodge Radio Station to determine costs, availability, etc. Don found that we could purchase a half hour time for \$7.50 on Sundays. We consulted and decided to purchase time for an infinite period.

This was to be a talk program, live, where we would solicit public participation. We would patch them on the air and would answer questions about the Faith. Don Olson, whom I am sure is no stranger to many of the friends living in the Missoula area as Don declared his allegiance to Baha'u'llah over the radio in Missoula, and myself, were to be the subjects and would handle the programs. Don and I found the radio station a little apprehensive about this sort of programming but, when they found out that Don had a first class license, they decided they would try it and then after the first program they felt very much at ease and, I believe, that nearly everytime we went to do a program one of us was offered a job.

We did not get immediate response to this and the programs turned out to be a half hour where we simply talked about the many aspects of our Faith, and of course, the principles were mentioned as directed by our Assembly. We did get some indirect feedback when people asked the station manager if he would ask us about some subject and we then would answer that as though it were a question from a listener. We were on every Sunday morning from 9:30 to 10:00 AM... which reminds me of another funny thing. When Don and I arrived to do the first program, the Station Manager, Mr. Wally Olds, said to me, "Are you sure you guys can go in there and talk for a half hour?", and I assured him we could do it and then after he was completely at ease.

The Billings Bahá'í Assembly also voted to support this program with some financing and we also asked various members of that Assembly to join us in the program; Bob Entzminger went with us several times; then we had Vern

Tuttle a couple times; also, we had Linda Culhane with us on the occasion when we talked about womens rights, etc. and I felt that Linda did an excellent job as did both Bob and Vern.

Don Olson assumed the position of narrator and would ask leading questions and the others would answer. Don is a past master at this and I felt that it was a very worth while endeavor; lasting 17 weeks, and we were able to make some very worthwhile contact with both the Station Manager, Mr. Wally Olds and Wayne Hamilton, the Disc Jockey, with the result that Mr. Olds is reading Gloria Faizi's little book

The Bahá'í Faith, An Introduction and Wayne is reading Thief in the Night. We had only one real solid call for information and we did mail her some information along with an invitation to ask for more. So far she has not requested further info. We also placed three books in the Red Lodge Library, Bahá'í World Faith, Foundations of World Unity, and God Loves Laughter, and we advised people that we did do this so that they could seek more information through this media if they wanted to know more.

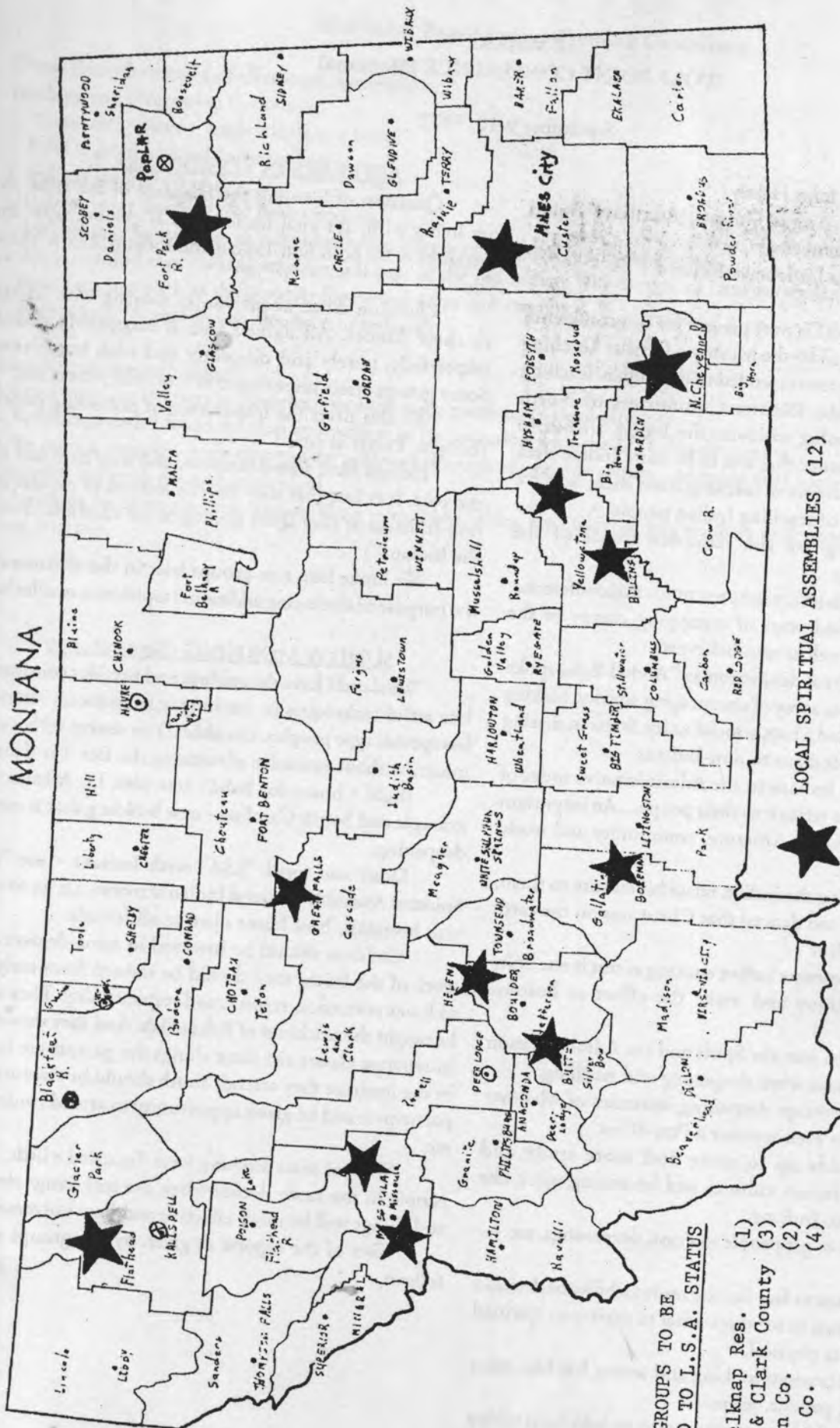
It was a real learning process for both myself and Don, so I feel that he and I really got the most good from this; that is the immediate good. Who knows who listened and what will be the result. Perhaps results will not come for years, but, at least, a lot of people heard about the Faith and perhaps some day it will bear fruit.

I could ramble on for pages but I would like to thank the Billings Assembly for their financial support and also thank those individuals who helped make the program with their time and effort a success.

In His Service,
Ivan Cottrill
Rte. 3 Bennett Ave.
Billings, Montana 59101

October 1, 1978

MONTANA



GOAL GROUPS TO BE RAISED TO L.S.A. STATUS

- Ft. Belknap Res. (1)
- Lewis & Clark County (3)
- Lincoln Co. (2)
- Valley Co. (4)

Lost Assemblies:

- Blackfeet Res.
- Kalispell
- Poplar (now called Ft. Peck Res. L.S.A.)

LOCAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLIES (12)

- Billings
- Bozeman
- Butte-Silver Bow
- Flathead Co.
- Fort Peck Reserv.
- Great Falls
- Helena
- Miles City
- Missoula
- Missoula Co.
- Northern Cheyenne Res.
- Yellowstone Co.

GOAL: 15 NEW LOCALITIES

SUMMARY
WOLF POINT CONFERENCE (Montana)

September 9-10, 1972

Chairman - Mr. John Halsey
Guest - Mr. Angus Cowan, Auxiliary Board
Member
Recording Secy.- Miss Littlebrave Beaton

Twenty-three Bahá'ís were present for this conference which has been arranged by the Montana District Teaching Committee and invitations extended to the Indian Teaching Committee of Canada, District Committees of North Dakota, Idaho, Wyoming to invite the Indian friends to participate in a conference that was to be more Indian than non-Indian for the purpose of learning from them how we could do a better job of reaching Indian people.

The following are the recorded notes of the Conference Secretary:

Twenty-three Bahá'ís were present for this conference. First thing was to find ways of untapping energy of the inactive believers as well as non-believers.

Stress on Spiritual distinction as "Abdu'l-Baha spoke of, and living the life as a way of encouraging activity. Making the Faith attracting and a happy social unity. Stress in sharing cultural learning of Indians to non-Indians.

Help to train Indians in the Administrative order of the Faith and how to relate it to their people...An important factor in building family structure, community and world structure, of course.

When teaching the Indian relate his culture to them, i.e. "Wovoha" says and danced that Christ was on the earth again, to go seek Him".

We should promote Indian dancing as this is one unity that all Indians enjoy and make the effort to become involved.

We should be sure the Spirit and the Administration are ever close at hand when deepening and teaching.

We can encourage deepening institutes of whatever many days. Maybe even sponsor a Pow-Wow.

This all adds up to more and more study and consideration of Indian cultures and becoming more like Indians to relate to Indians.

We can try to get people to Feast, deepenings, etc. — encourage!

Help Indians to fear less the responsibility of decision making - help them to see this is vital to their own spiritual freedom as well as physical.

Go to reservations looking and acting less like other groups. Be neat, patient, relate.

Have more Indians as opposed to non-Indians taking the Words of Baha'u'llah to the reserve. One possibility of being effective is one (tribe) moving to a foreign reserve.

AFTERNOON SESSION: Sept. 9:

Question of learning the language of the tribe you are living with. It's vital importance is gaining trust and recognition for both non-Indian and Indians. Learn "thank you".

Question asked about whites dancing with Indians in their dances. All agreed this is acceptable if done respectfully, purely and diligently and with humbleness. Some groups stress importance of costume, others not.

We also stress the importance of possessing positive thought. Prayer is vital.

Indians have administration, and they have had it in the past. It is just that they haven't learned to express it to non-Indians; or they aren't seeking to see administration in the Indian.

We broke into two groups later in the afternoon for the purpose of discussing additional topics on a smaller basis.

SUNDAY MORNING - September 10

We should have deepenings and firesides consistently. Use artful techniques in teaching at firesides on reserves, - less speaker type peoples. Use ahlis (?) on reserve with movies, music, without extensive advertising the fact it is Bahá'í.

Build a house for Bahá'í activities, i.e. Mexico as an example and South Carolina - new building that is used for deepening.

Don't use word "LSA" with Indians - use "Local Spiritual Assembly". Attend Indian activities, i.e. go to wakes, visit hospitals, have home open to all friends.

Children should be involved in some degrees of the work of the Faith; they should be trained from early years to know reverence, respect, and responsibility. They should be taught the teachings of Baha'u'llah. And they should learn in separate classes the same things the parents are learning in the institute they attend. Youth should be encouraged to participate and be given opportunity to attend conferences, etc.

Ways of mass teaching were discussed a little. Let the people in the town decide when the gatherings should be and things will be more effective and flow universally.

Two of the reports as given by the groups recorder follow:

Wolf Point Bahá'í Indian Planning Conference

Group Recorder's notes of afternoon consultation:

Teaching and Deepening Criteria

1. "Stand still - listen - teach a little at a time"
2. Bahá'ís should attend Indian affairs.
3. Indians are unified in dancing.
4. Indians want teachings for their children.
5. Indians may be spiritual as individuals, but they need spiritual group experience.
6. Keep in mind that Indians who are still part of the old Indian Way are apt to have better Bahá'í behavior than the Bahá'í teacher, such as the capacity for consultation and reverence.
7. Remember: "Abdu'l-Baha's reference to Indians.

Administrative possibilities:

1. Send traveling teachers to Reservations with some predictable regularity.
2. Encourage each LSA to develop an Institute in co-operation with the DTC for deepening.
3. Be careful to assign goals that can be achieved through reasonable efforts, assuming that success will automatically increase the goals for each individual.
4. Assemble teaching materials (tapes, films, pamphlets, slides, etc.) for traveling teachers to depend upon whether they use it or not.

NOTES AND SUGGESTIONS FOR DEEPENING AND REACHING THE INDIAN POPULATION

On September 2-3 in Wolf Point, Montana- we met to get help from each other in finding a way to pull the Indian away from the Looser's Script and become again aware of his spiritual responsibilities, and advance to Baha. Besides taking notes that represented the whole group we each took notes. I am sending these, my personal notes in case they may be of help to plan another meeting or our next action.

This meeting was a knowledgeable one and if all we could do was to get together to see how many tribes were represented in the Faith it would be a success, as many Indians wonder how many or if there are really Indians in the Faith. The sharing of experiences in their teaching efforts with friends and relatives is helpful to reassure the importance and give strength for them to continue to teach the Faith. Now that we have our work in front of us and know what our main problems are, the next meeting may be set up in various parts i.e. always lots of prayers together.

1. A deepening on Administration i.e. functions and responsibilities of Local Spiritual Assembly/ discuss ways of handling and helping an unhealthy all-Indian Local Spiritual Assembly to function in the community. Responsibility to the National Spiritual Assembly, and a lot of misunderstood procedures of this handling of the Faith (this could take up one morning or afternoon). Indian people on the whole may understand by reading

how to function with the Institutes of the Faith but may not be certain as to how to ACT. An Indian community is going to be different than a non-Indian community and must be aware that that is alright for there are no set ways to do things when having meetings etc. I get the feeling that we are still a little in the stage of "I'm not sure it's alright because I'm an Indian and the White people are doing it better". We at the meeting may not have felt this as the Indians were most often heard here, no doubt the feeling for some communities in the United States are like this.

Have a special deepening or meeting in which the youth may gain that extra enthusiasm, or let go of barriers in order that they too know that it is necessary
2. and obligatory for them to adhere to Laws and principles.

This could better be called a drawing out time for the Indian Bahá'í youth into action of this gathering.

If younger children come, have a class as well.

The meeting at Wolf Point was set up in a positive way and it is good to have an Auxiliary Board Member or someone from the National Teaching Committee, National Spiritual Assembly, or District, or Regional Teaching Committees to be on sight at the meetings. The next meeting should also include South Dakota, depending on place held and flexibility space to hold everything.

Concerning the idea of a POW-WOW:

'I desire Spiritual Distinction for the Bahá'ís' -
'Abdu'l-Baha

The Indian Pow-wow is a celebration of Unity - or that's what it has been in the past. If Bahá'ís plan to set up a Pow-Wow they must stay away from any commercialism and concentrate solely on creating what many people now call a UNITY FEAST out of the dance. The Bahá'í Unity Dance Feast will allow all peoples to dance in whatever they care to wear (traditional costumes or everyday wear within reason); they must concentrate on displaying or being in UNITY in this day and age. There can be a sharing of one's customary food with all, and all participating to make it an international ONENESS. This is best to leave as a Pot-Luck. The Bahá'ís must make it known in full what the Bahá'ís are doing. The purpose of the dance, that all are invited and that there is no drinking, and that they will even have prayers. The best time of day could be arranged by making sure that it does not last into late hours as do the regular Pow-wows do, so as to help make sure there is no trouble and that the children be in at a decent hour so as to promote the teaching of handling and caring for children in a responsible way. Everything at a Unity Dance Feast should be volunteered by the participants with the exception of coffee, tea, milk, juice, which could be handled as the Bahá'í contribution. Have lots of literature out and get the Bahá'ís to involve

themselves in JOY. They may have to rent a building if there is no other alternative place of having the Dance.

If any of this helps the ideas are yours. WE in North Dakota will be happy and responsible to help you for any further meeting or teaching efforts and feel free to call.

Allah'u'Abha!

Littlebrave Beaton
P. O. Box 634
Bismarck, North Dakota 58501

John Halsey - Indian Teaching Committee
Fort Yates, North Dakota 58538

Bernard Pretend Eagle - Indian Teach. Com.
Fort Yates, North Dakota 58538

Copied, Karen R. Sheffels
Montana DTC member
December 26, 1972

(Recopied for Montana History Narrative by Betty Mereness
Bennett, December 2001)

**TEACHING REPORT
FORT PECK RESERVATION, MONTANA**

APRIL 5, 1977

April 2-3, were joyous and momentous days for the struggling Bahá'ís of the Fort Peck Reservation. The Friends of Montana gathered from no less than a dozen communities for the Poplar Bahá'í Celebration, two days of loving fellowship, study and teaching.

The conference was finally held after a year of frustrated efforts that had been very trying for both the District Teaching Committee and the Bahá'ís of Poplar. The twofold goal of the conference was to deepen the believers in the fundamental verities of the Faith and to attract new souls to the Faith in order to re-establish a Local Spiritual Assembly within the boundaries of the reservation.

The District Teaching Committee was instrumental in planning the deepening sessions which covered the lives of Baha'u'llah and 'Abdu'l-Baha, the Ancient Covenant, the administrative order, Bahá'í life, and teaching. These programs were well researched and presented by various members of the Montana Bahá'í community.

The Indian Bahá'ís of the Fort Peck Reservation planned and implemented the teaching program in a unique fashion that they felt was appropriate for teaching the Faith to the native people here. They strongly felt that it was important for a lot of Bahá'ís to come in order to demonstrate the unifying power of the Faith in action. They wanted to sponsor an Indian dance with all of the Friends present and they carried out all of the complex arrangements that accompany this type of event in the reservation community.

The principal form of publicity was the personal invitation and the Poplar Bahá'ís spent a great deal of time personally informing people of the conference. Formal invitations were prepared and delivered personally to a large number of people. Tribal officials and leaders were notified and invited. Law enforcement packets (Public official's information kits) were presented to the tribal law and order committee, the chief judge, chief of police, and BIA special investigator. Additional Bahá'í literature was presented whenever possible. Posters proclaiming "The Glorious Spiritual Destiny of the American Indian People" were placed in four reservation communities and radio announcements were utilized.

A group of people from Frazer who had expressed an interest in hearing about the Faith offered to sing for the dance and were invited with their families to come early and share dinner with the Bahá'ís before the evening gathering. The public meeting began with prayers in Assiniboine and English followed by two reels of The Green Light Expedition. A number of people were moved to tears by this beautiful film and have requested to see the remaining

two reels. The remainder of the evening was given over to singing and dancing and the people opened their hearts to the Bahá'ís by sharing their songs, teaching their dances and explaining their traditions with the utmost dignity and courtesy. A copy of Tokens from the Writings of Baha'u'llah was presented to Mr. Jerome Fourstar, a leading Assiniboine spiritual figure, and it was accepted very gratefully with thanks to the Bahá'ís for calling attention to the spiritual matters in life and the sharing of their spiritual teachings. Near the end of the evening, a meal was served to all present, as is the custom, and everyone gathered in a large unity circle to sing Allah-u-Abha and have prayers before the traditional closing dance.

The tremendous spiritual energy that was released by this gathering is being strongly felt on the reservation and we are receiving new reports each day. The greatest stirrings have come from the all Indian community of Frazer where the people have maintained more of the traditional ways. The Bahá'ís were invited to an Assiniboine religious ceremony the following day which lasted for many hours and provided a wonderful opportunity to strengthen the newly formed bonds of affection and respect. Numerous calls and requests for more Bahá'í activities have poured in to Reba Ogle, one of the first Indian believers, and the soul who has more than any other, kept the Faith alive on this reservation for many years. She is a pillar of strength to all those around her and is overjoyed at this answer to her prayers and countless tests. The Bahá'ís have been asked to come to other reservation communities to hold meetings, they have been invited for dinners to tell individual families about the Faith, they have been requested to meet with the town council of Frazer, and very significantly, there has been an interest expressed by school board members to have Bahá'í teachers hired in the schools.

Currently the Bahá'ís are meeting daily to follow up these priceless opportunities and are planning to take a good number of people to the program that is being planned on the Blackfeet Reservation, 400 miles to the east, in two weeks. A Bahá'í group is being officially re-established in Poplar, and a children's program has been inaugurated.

There is at this point, an excellent opportunity for the settlement of pioneers on the Fort Peck Reservation that should be seized by the national Bahá'í community. Saba and Charles Nolley are settled for a time on the reservation and would be able to be of considerable assistance in helping other pioneers to establish themselves. Please rejoice with us and assist us with your continued prayers.

In His service,
(signed) Charles Nolley

Box 82, Poplar, Montana 59255

LUKE SHORTMAN

Luke Shortman, GroVentre, from the Fort Belknap Reservation passed away at 2:30 AM on June 22, 1979 at the age of 96. On August 15th he would have been 97. He was buried June 25th on the Reservation where he desired to be.

Luke became a Bahá'í in October, 1976 at the age of 93. He said at the time that his daughter, Lillian, did not influence him to do so, but that as he learned what Baha'u'llah said, that he felt this religion was the nearest to his Indian religion. We were privileged to have Luke attend the District Convention on October 1st in Great Falls and participate in the election of the delegatae for the 1979 National Convention. He was overwhelmed from that visit with the truth manifested of the bond between the Bahá'ís and said it was real love and he knew it was true. The week following the Convention, a teaching event was held in nearby Harlem and he asked to be taken to visit some of his acquaintances in order that he could invite them to the evening meeting. Those friends who were able to stop and visit him and hear his stories gained an additional wealth from his being.

He was born on the Ft. Belknap Agency (old Agency) and with his family would travel from Glasgow to Missoula (Many Waters). His wife died in 1960 and he has lived with his daughter Lillian. In his younger years he was known to walk from Great Falls to Chinook (some 134 miles) and on to the Bear Paw Mountains - often declining a ride. He worked as a painter around Harlem for years and in November the family would move back to the Hays area. He leaves two daughters and a son living and twelve children have preceded him in death. His health has declined the last four years, more since his stroke two years ago, but he was hospitalized only the last month.

His daughter Lillian is a Bahá'í as well as her son Aloysious. Some of the Bahá'ís from Havre presented a Bahá'í ring to be buried with Luke. His goal of being a member of the first Spiritual Assembly on this Reservation was not realized, but we feel as the friends learn of his passing that they will surely offer many prayers for his spiritual unfoldment in the Abha Kingdom.

(Written by Betty Bennett 6/29/79)

Additional Materials

included w/ Betty's

Montana Bahá'í History

The Baha'i World XIV, pp. 341-42 contains a Tablet from 'Abdu'l-Baha dated October 1919, addressed to Helen Goodall and Ella Cooper that includes greetings to Mr. and Mrs. Killius. This is included in a Memoriam article written about Charlotte Gillen that indicates Mrs. Gillen also traveled through Idaho, Montana and Wyoming in response to the *Tablets of the Divine Plan*. It is mentioned that *She stopped in small towns, spoke to women's clubs, penitentiaries, wherever there were listeners.*

She would be another travel teacher that was not known when the section on Early Baha'i Travel Teachers was written. 'Abdu'l-Baha's Tablet follows:

Convey to Mr. and Mrs. Killius, Mrs. Charlotte Gillen and Mr. Hyde Dunn the utmost love and kindness on my behalf. On their behalf I address the following supplication:

O Thou Omnipotent Lord! These souls have given up their rest, their happiness, their joy and their comfort, have left their (homes) in order to raise the call of Thy Kingdom upon the seas, the plains and the mountains. They are giving the Glad Tidings of Thy Manifestation, are bestowing sight to the eyes, hearing to the ears. They are unloosing the tongues, vivifying the dead and purifying the unclean. O Divine Providence! Be Thou their companion during their travels, for they are helpless and lonely and they are firm in Thy love. Thou art the Powerful and the Omnipotent.



A PORTRAIT:

The Montana Bahá'í Community

Unity in Diversity--

Basic Principle of the Baha'i Faith

All of the photos in this publication are of Baha'is--followers of Baha'u'llah, founder-prophet of the Baha'i Faith. These Baha'is all make their home in Montana. Some were born here. Many moved here. They live in Montana because they like it.

If you leaf through the following pages, you will discover that Baha'is are not easy to categorize. Some were their hair long, and some wear it short, and some just don't have any hair. There are those Baha'is who are college educated, and there are those who have had no formal education whatsoever. Men and women, young and old, rich and poor, learned and illiterate, white and black and brown--the Baha'i Faith cuts across all strata of society, unifying mankind.

Unity--this is what the Baha'i Faith is all about. Baha'u'llah, founder of this new Faith, said that before we can solve the problems that face us, be they war, poverty, racism, sexism or pollution, mankind must first be unified.

Baha'is are different from one another and there is beauty in this. Baha'is believe in unity, but not uniformity. They believe in oneness, not sameness. We are like flowers of a garden, Baha'u'llah said. How much prettier that garden is when the flowers are each different one

from another rather than of the same variety and hue.

As world religions go, the Baha'i Faith is very young--it has only been 131 years since the Bab, a youth of 25 and the predecessor of Baha'u'llah, first declared the coming of the New Day. Founded in Persia in the middle of the last century, the Baha'i Faith has since spread to just about every country and territory in the world--more than 333 in all. There are Baha'is in every state in the United States. Indeed, there are Baha'is in more than half of the counties in Montana.

Who is Baha'u'llah? Born in 1817, the son of a Persian nobleman, He declared His mission publicly in 1863, and he died in 1892, after many years of exile and imprisonment.

What do Baha'is believe? They believe that God is one. There isn't one God for the Christians, and another God for the Moslems and still another God for Native Americans. There is just one God and he is the Father to us all.

Just as God is one, all religions are one. Christ, Moses, Abraham, Zoroaster, Buddha, Krishna, the Bab and Baha'u'llah--they came at different times to different geographical areas, but their purpose was the same: to reaffirm the eternal covenant that exists between God and man.

Each was a different Manifestation of the same God.

God is one, all religions are one, and, in this day, mankind is one. Succeeding one another, the Prophets of the past have each united a larger segment of the whole of humanity. In this day, the Promised Day, Baha'u'llah, the latest Manifestation from God, speaks to all of humanity.

Why are Montanans particularly attracted to the Baha'i Faith? There are undoubtedly many reasons, but here are just a few:

Montanans love the outdoors and see evidence of God in the sun on the mountains in winter time and in the rain on the wheatfields in June. Baha'u'llah himself loved the outdoors, and he knew that the environment would be protected and the earth would become an Eden for all only when mankind had found unity of values.

Montana is a predominantly rural state. Farming and ranching are major sources of income here. Baha'u'llah placed great emphasis on the place of agriculture. Speaking of his own country of Persia, he said that the leaders of government should encourage the people to take up agriculture.

Montana possesses a rich Indian heritage. There are no less than seven Indian reservations in our state. In both North and South America the Baha'i Faith has begun to demonstrate its ability to unite Indian and white. Why? Because the cultural heritage of all peoples is appreciated in this Faith, be they of Norwegian, African or Indian background.

Finally, women have had a special role to play in the making of the state of Montana. Women have worked as hard as the men in the establishment of ranches and farms across the vastness of our state. In the teachings of Baha'u'llah the station of women is equal to that of men--this is a fundamental truth in this day.

The following portrait of the Montana Baha'i community is by no means complete. There are Baha'is whose faces are missing from these pages. There are Baha'i groups that are not represented here. But we hope that these pictures will still give you a glimmering of the new race of men and women that is emerging here in Montana and around the world.

The Baha'i Faith may be new to you, but it shouldn't be viewed as odd or strange. Because the Baha'i Faith is made up of people just like you, people who like to hike and fish and ski, people who work at the same kinds of jobs that you do, people who love life and wish to make this a better world--a Kingdom of God on earth, if you will.



JUDY PANETTA, of Billings, is presently selling life, disability and independent retirement insurance for a Billings insurance company. A graduate of the University of Wyoming, she taught school for a year in Wyola, Mont. Previous to that she taught school in Hyannis, Mass.



BILL MOORE, of Great Falls is employed as a parts man in a wellknown farm machinery store in his hometown. His interests are music--he plays flute--and photography.



JOY BACHMAN, of Bozeman, came to Montana from Bloomington, Illinois, where she was a dining hall supervisor for a nursing home. Among her hobbies are collecting embroidered handkerchiefs, ceramic figurines and music boxes.



BETTY ENTZMINGER, of Billings, has a deep-rooted love for African violets. There are more than 300 plants in her home and in the greenhouse that was recently erected to hold the overflow. She was an accredited African violet judge for three years and has been a member of various chapters of the African Violet Society--in California, in Florida and in Utah. Betty Entzminger was born in Paris, Texas, and attended Oklahoma A & M, majoring in fashion merchandising. She worked as an assistant buyer in Wichita, Kansas, a telephone service representative in San Francisco, and an office assistant in a real estate firm in Quincy, California. She and her husband would like to get into the commercial greenhouse business in the indefinite future.

BOB ENTZMINGER, of Billings, has worked for the U.S. Forest Service for more than 20 years and is currently assigned to the Surface Environment and Mining project. He majored in forestry at Oklahoma A & M as an undergraduate, attended the American Institute of Foreign Trade in Glendale, Arizona, for graduate study and worked for a lumber import-export firm prior to his current employment. With his son's help, he built the greenhouse in which the African violets grow.



GARY WOLFE, of Butte, is a student in mining engineering at the Montana College of Mineral Sciences and Technology. His family moved to Anaconda from New Castle, Wyoming, when he was in the 8th grade. They later made their home in Butte. Wolfe has worked as a used car salesman. He has also, with his wife, managed a shoe store in Kalispell. He is very interested in hunting and fishing.



PETER GORMAN, of Helena, travels extensively in Montana as a field technician for the Water Quality Department of the state Department of Health. He has lived in Helena for two years since graduation from Unity College in Maine. His home town is Baltimore. Somewhere along the way he picked up a strong interest in birdwatching, biking and climbing. He is currently studying French on the side.



CAROL ALTIMUS, of Gallatin County, once set sort of a record in her Gregg shorthand class in high school--she transcribed 120 words a minute for five minutes straight. It was a good sign, evidently, because she has held a wide variety of secretarial positions since then. She was a secretary in the personnel department of the Bureau of Indian Affairs in her hometown of Billings. She was also secretary for Child Services and Development of the Community Action Program there. At Eastern Montana College in Billings and in Glasgow she was secretary for the Mountain Plains Education Center, which did research and planning in the area of career education. In fact, she was named

the best secretary in the Mountain Plains program. She has two years of college, having attended both Eastern Montana College and the University of Montana in Missoula. She is presently working for Leaf Products, a company owned in part by her husband that markets nationally boat motor covers or "prop socks." She enjoys cross-country skiing, ping pong, fishing, ice skating and, above all, sewing.



DAVA MANSIKKA, of Great Falls, is a teacher assistant with the Headstart program. Born in Wolf Point, raised in Glasgow, she graduated from Great Falls High School.



SANDRA BREACH, of Bozeman, has a degree in education from Illinois State University. She came with her husband to Montana in 1972 to help form the first Local Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of Bozeman. She is presently employed as a cafeteria worker at Montana State University.



NICK BRACKETT, of Billings, works for the U.S. Postal Service as a letter-sorting machine operator. From Yakima, Wash., originally, he served in the United States Air Force for 12-and-a-half

years, living for many of those years in Germany. One of his last positions with the Air Force was that of aerial photography specialist.



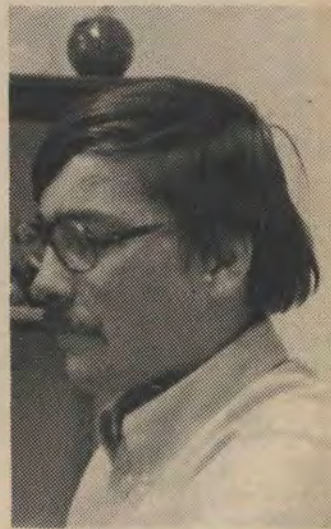
GARY PETERSEN, of Hamilton, is a forester employed by the United State Forest Service as district silvaculturist for the West Fork Ranger District. His responsibilities include tree planting and thinning and timber stand inventory. He also serves as a member of the Equal Employment Opportunities Advisory Committee for the district. Born in Western Wisconsin, he held a wide variety of different jobs in that area while going to high school and college. He worked as a logger, farm hand, janitor, carpenter, employee in a food warehouse, and assistant assembly line foreman in an electronics manufacturing plant. Despite the work load, he attended Wisconsin State University at Stevens Point, finishing in '68 with a B.S. in Natural Resource Management. Moving to Montana, he entered grad school in forestry and was a

teaching assistant in forest soils at the U of M. Obtaining his M.S. in 1970, he began work with the Forest Service. A homeowner in Hamilton, he is taking pottery classes and enjoys big game hunting, hiking and fishing. Archeology is another long-standing interest.

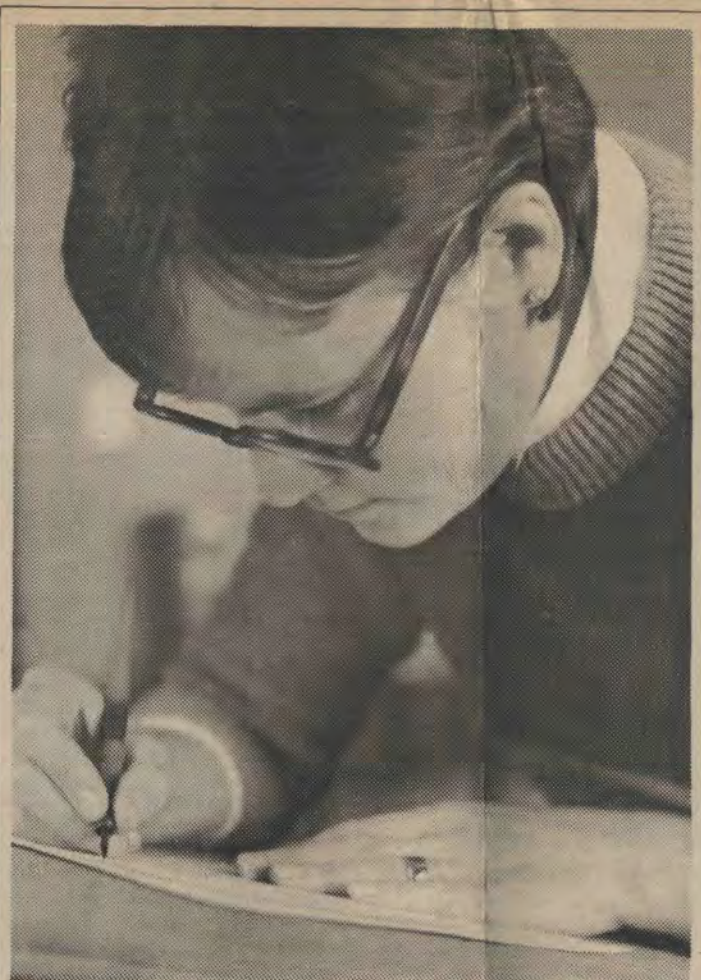


MARISA MAPPES, of Deer Lodge, has been director of a family planning clinic for more than two years. She recently completed training at Harbor General Hospital in Torrance, Cal., to become a women's health specialist. Although her early years were spent in Wisconsin and Washington, she attended grade school and high school in Missoula and went on to the University of Montana where she graduated cum laude in 1964 with a B.A. in Spanish. She was a graduate assistant for the Spanish Department at the University of New Mexico in Albuquerque while enrolled in the graduate school. She taught Spanish in Taos, New Mexico, in 1967 and

1968, and it was here that she was introduced to the art of weaving. Rapidly becoming proficient in it, she has had her weaving displayed in many galleries in the state. She was asked to participate in the "Bodycraft" showing in Portland, Oregon, several years ago, and has had her work displayed at The Unique gallery in Colorado Springs as well. Coming to Deer Lodge in 1971, she was the Powell County correspondent for a Missoula daily newspaper before taking her present position in family planning. She maintains in her Deer Lodge home a weaving studio appropriately called "The Golden Fleece."



DICK CARBONNEAU, of Bozeman, has worked for one fast-food restaurant chain in three separate locations in Montana. Assistant manager of one franchise in Missoula, he later moved to Helena and then to Bozeman to manage the restaurants there. His outside interests are swimming and snowshoeing, and he especially enjoys working with kids. In the Massachusetts communities where he grew up, he was very active in Boys Club. He has served as a camp counselor, and he was swim director of the Boys Club in Lawrence, Mass. As a senior in high school he was president of the Kiwanis Club. After graduation from high school, he worked as a mechanic for a large company, attended the Lowell Technological School in Lowell, Mass., for a year, and then moved to Florida to be director of a Boys Club there. Drafted, he served in the Air Force for several years as a computer operator. He is presently in the Montana National Guard. Dick Carbonneau is the father of a five-year-old son, Eric.



TERESE BLANDING, of Deer Lodge, is a calligrapher whose work has been distributed nationally and who has had many gallery showings in Montana. Her calligraphy has been shown at the Copper Village Museum and Art Center in Anaconda, the Ketterer Art Center in Bozeman, the Hockaday Center for the Arts in Kalispell, the Art Attic in Missoula and the Park Street Gallery in Helena. Her stitchery has been exhibited in the Smithsonian Institute in Washington, D.C. Born in the back seat of a car near Coulee Dam, Washington, she grew up in Missoula. For three years she was a fine arts major at the University of Montana, minoring in German and French. She spent part of 1966 and 1967 in Europe as a cook and governess in Italy, a cook in Germany for a household of 12, and briefly, as a hospital cook near the Aswan dam in Egypt.



LAURA HANSON, of Miles City, was born in Indiana and lived in Seattle for six years before coming to Montana. She enjoys sewing, painting and planting trees. She and her husband own 40 acres of land near Roundup they have plans to develop.



HELENA
Baha'i gathering, ~~Great Falls~~, 1947

First Baha'is in Montana in 1903

The Baha'i Faith is very much a part of the state of Montana, and has been for more years than many people may realize. The Baha'i Faith traces its beginning to Persia (today known as Iran) in the 1840's. The new message was first brought to the United States in the 1890's.

Among the first American Baha'is was the Ellsworth Jones family who entered the Faith in Chicago in 1898. It was this same Ellsworth Jones who came to Montana with his family in 1903 to work for the Anaconda Copper Company as superintendent of the electrical reduction works in Anaconda. The Jones family were probably the first Baha'is in Montana. Ellsworth Jones himself died in 1937, and only his daughter, Rouhieh McComb, is still living of the original Jones family. She was born in Anaconda in 1904.

Rouhieh McComb now makes her home with her son Robert on Long Island on the East Coast, but she was in Montana recently to talk and show slides at the 1974 Montana Baha'i Summer School. Mrs. McComb has the distinction of having met 'Abdu'l-Baha, the son of Baha'u'llah, when he was in this country in 1912. There are pictures of her, a bright-eyed eight-year-old child, sitting in his lap in Chicago.

It was in the same year of 1911 that a Baha'i by the name of John Wilcott moved to Winifred in Central Montana. He had been an artist and designer of formal gardens, but he had moved to Montana to work as a cowboy.

One of the first mentions of the Baha'i Faith in a Montana newspaper was in the Helena Independent which devoted a full page to the Faith in 1919. There was evidently an active Baha'i community in Helena at that time.

Butte was a center of Baha'i activity in the 1920's, but it wasn't until 1937 that the Montana Baha'i community really began to grow. In Helena Baha'i "residences" were held in the homes of Charles and Ruth Adams and Charles and Frieda Bryan. It was during this time that one of the oldest living believers in the state at present, Nellie Mereness, entered the Faith. She was 47 at the time. She is now 85.

Helena elected its first local spiritual assembly, the nine-member local administrative body of the Baha'i Faith, in 1938. The Adams, the Bryans, new believers Nellie Mereness, Helen Robinson, Gerhard and Bea Burner, and Lorrol Jackson from Sioux Falls--these were the

members of this first local spiritual assembly in the state of Montana.

The next assembly to be formed was in Butte in 1944. The Helena assembly in 1947 was the first to be incorporated. In 1948 the Local Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of Great Falls was formed. Since that time assemblies have been formed in Billings, Missoula, Bozeman, Yellowstone County and Missoula County. There have also been assemblies elected in Kalispell, Poplar and Lame Deer. The most recent assembly elected was the Local Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of the Blackfoot Reservation which formed in August of 1975.

In addition to these assemblies, there are Baha'i groups in many other parts of the state--in Boulder, Miles City, Havre, Ft. Belknap Agency, Hamilton, Deer Lodge, Flathead County, Gallatin County and Park County, to name a few.

From 1903 to the present, Baha'is have been a part of the state of Montana. With each passing year the Montana Baha'i community continues to grow. Where once there were only a handful of believers, now there are hundreds. Where once there was just one Baha'i center in the state now there are dozens.



Baha'i gathering, Missoula, 1955



CAROL KOELZER, of Miles City, had only three teachers through the 8th grade, because the school she attended in Rucker had only two rooms. During her high school years she worked at Gregson Hot Springs. At age 14 she was a ranch cook for a crew of 15 men, and she babysat for three children all day long as well. Graduating from Girl's High School in Butte, she married and began raising a family. After moving to Miles City, she began on-the-job-training to become a surgical technician. She currently assists in a doctor's office. She is president of the Miles City chapter of the Association for Children with Learning Disabilities. She is also a pianist who is equally at home with classical or ragtime.

NEWT KOELZER, of Miles City, will tell you he is a junk man if you ask him. Indeed he is, but he also prepares hides and furs for sale and maintains his own trapline during the winter months. A man who enjoys working with his hands, he once built a six-foot long replica of the Battleship Missouri. He also makes hand-tooled rifles, including muzzle-loaders. He is a skilled carpenter and cabinet-maker, electrician and general mechanic. He picked up these skills while growing up in West Yellowstone where his parents developed homestead land into a resort area. He once worked as a business machine's repairman in Butte.

STEVE KOELZER, of Miles City, attends junior high school there. He enjoys hunting, he is a cross-country runner, and he has taken up ballet.



LINDA CULHANE, of Billings, operates computerized bookkeeping equipment for a photo film service. Born and raised in Great Falls, she has spent her whole life in Montana except for brief stays in California and Minnesota. For more than a year-and-a-half she worked for a retail shoe chain, selling shoes and doing bookkeeping in the JaVee's stores in Billings, Great Falls, Deer Lodge, Kalispell, Helena and Butte. A rockhound since childhood--or "pebble pup," as she calls it--she enjoys nothing more than picking agates in a gravel pit. She is presently learning to speak Yiddish, another interest.



ROSE OVERTON, of Great Falls, is in her own words, a "swamper" for a Great Falls restaurant. What that means isn't exactly clear, but it probably means "one who cleans up." Born in Big Sandy, she's lived in Iowa, Washington, Idaho and Oregon, besides Montana. Besides a swamper, she's been a dishwasher, cook, babysitter and salad girl.

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IVAN COTTRILL, of Yellowstone County, is general manager of a steel and industrial hardware company in Billings. He raises Arabian horses as a hobby and is here shown with his three-year-old stallion, Sirtep, who has won many ribbons.



LAURA KRAFT, of Yellowstone County, is the daughter of Ivan Cottrill and also a horse-lover. She is the owner of the prize-winning five-year-old stallion Na Nukama. The horse is very gentle, the result of the extensive training received. Laura Kraft and her husband own acreage near Shephard, Montana.



RIGMOR MERENESS, of Helena, was born and raised in Copenhagen, Denmark. She went to work for a shipping firm after high school, and soon met her future husband at a Baha'i conference in Sweden. Coming to Montana in 1961 with her husband, a native Montanan, she went to work for the Montana State University Library and then for the Department of Languages at MSU. While in that community she also taught Norwegian for the Department of Continuing Education. Living in Helena now, she works for a large department store in Accounts Payable. As a hobby, she builds houses with her husband and is very familiar with a sixteen penny nail. When not at work or pounding nails, she enjoys camping, bicycling and sailing.



PETER VAUGHN, of Missoula, is a self-employed resource consultant specializing in forest economics, forest management and forest land and timber appraisals. He is affiliated with a number of professional associations including the Society of American Foresters and Xi Sigma Pi, the forestry honor society. Presently working towards a master's degree in forestry, he has a B.S. in business management from the University of Montana. Prior to coming to Missoula in 1966, he attended the Monterrey Peninsula College and the Los Angeles

Harbor College in California. His professional interest is in the area of developing methodology and techniques for the utilization of residue from logging and wood processing practices. His recreational interest include hunting and fishing. He would like to get into ranching and has a special interest in child education.



JOHN CROMER, of Ft. Belknap Agency, is a physician working for the Indian Health Service. Organic gardening is a consuming love, and he is also deeply interested in Indian folklore and prophecy. He once worked as a carpenter for Wycliffe Bible Translators in Columbia, South America. Before coming to Montana, he worked for the National Institute for Occupational Safety in Cincinnati. He got his M.D. at the University of Nebraska, and his B.S. at the University of Southern California at Los Angeles.



WINIFRED CROMER, of Ft. Belknap Agency, is a physician working as a volunteer on the staff of Ft. Belknap Hospital. She is also a mother of two and a housewife. Before coming to Montana earlier this year, she was on the faculty of Cincinnati General Hospital and taught a class in emergency medicine. She

did her internship at Good Samaritan Hospital in Cincinnati. She got her M.D. and her B.A. in medicine at the College of Medicine of the University of Nebraska in Omaha. Born in Iowa, raised in Phoenix, she is a yoga instructor and an accomplished quilt-maker.



DEANNA JENNE, of Arlee, is working for her bachelor's in anthropology at the University of Montana. She has participated in an archeological dig in the vicinity of Fresno Dam west of Havre.



GEORGE GALINKIN, of Bozeman, has been an assistant professor of social work at Montana State University since 1971. He holds positions on many Montana committees. He was recently appointed Board Member Representing MSU on the Inter-Unit Committee on Cooperation between the University System and the Department of Institutions. He was president of the Montana Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers for 1974-1975. He is president of the board for District IX [Park, Meagher and Gallatin Counties] of the Human Resources Development Council, secretary of the board of directors of the Gallatin Council on Health and Drugs and a member of the Montana Association of Social Concerns. George Galinkin is also the author of the Book "Public Welfare in Montana: A Personal View," published in April 1975 by College & University Press of Washington, D.C. From Toms River, New Jersey, originally, he studied music for

many years, specializing in voice, before obtaining a B.A. in sociology from the University of Washington in 1955. In 1957 he received a master's degree in social work from Louisiana State University, then worked in the fields of child welfare and psychiatric social work. In 1963 he was employed as a social worker for the United States Public Health Service Hospital in Ft. Worth, Tex., working in the area of drug and alcohol abuse. In 1968 he became chief social worker at the Narcotics Treatment Center of

Tacoma-Pierce County in Washington State. There he was responsible for developing the treatment at the narcotics center Narcotic Addict Rehabilitation Act. In 1969 he became chief of treatment at the Narcotics center and was responsible for the in-patient and out-patient treatment services. In 1970 he was awarded a National Institute of Mental Health Fellowship in Community Mental Health to study at the University of Washington School of Social Work



FRED WALKER, of Miles City, likes to hunt, but he does it the hard way-- with a muzzle-loader. A graduate of Montana State University with a degree in agricultural business and economics, he is a sales representative for a feed company. On the weekends he likes to tinker. He has built several radio-controlled boats up to 50 inches in size. Born in Casper, Wyoming, he worked on a ranch from the age of 13. After several years in the Navy assigned to the submarine service, he returned to ranch-related work in the Gallatin and Paradise valleys, before attending MSU.

CHERYL WALKER, of Miles City, was born on a 500-head cattle ranch south of Livingston. A horse-lover since she was five, she now not only rides them, but paints them and does bronze castings of them. She picked up her love for Western art from her parents. She is now a parent of her own with a six-year-old son, Mike. She has worked for the Zoology and Entomology Department at Montana State University as a secretary.



ROBERT HANSON, of Miles City, is a lineman, cable splicer and telephone installer for Mountain Bell. Before coming to Montana, he worked for Pacific Northwest Bell in the Seattle area. He is married and has two daughters.

Arkansas prior to coming to Montana. One paper she edited, with her husband, won "third place in general excellence" in the Arkansas Press Association's yearly competition.



RAY LANDSIEDEL, of Missoula, grew up in Deer Lodge and is now attending the University of Montana. Past summers he has worked as manager of a Montana truck stop. He is an electronics buff.



JAMES DOOR, Hardin, Montana



DICK COTTRILL, of Yellowstone County, is an art teacher at Billings West High School. He particularly enjoys painting wildlife and old buildings. He has one more quarter to go to get his master's degree.



CINDY MONTGOMERY, of Havre, is publisher of the Milk River Free Press, a monthly newspaper. She has had extensive newspaper experience, having worked for several newspapers in



LESLIE KUTZLER, of Billings, was born in Billings but graduated from Dawson High School in Glendive. She attended Minot State College in North Dakota, majoring in speech pathology. She plays organ and enjoys reading on Bible prophecy.



CHESTER OTHER MEDICINE, Hardin, Montana



KIRK KRAFT, of Yellowstone County, is a real estate salesman.



PAM WOLFE, of Butte, obtained a teaching certificate in home economics from the University of Montana in 1974 and was a member of the home economics honorary society, Kappa Omicron Phi. Born and raised in Butte, she graduated from Butte High School in 1969. For a year she lived in Kalispell where she managed, with her husband, a shoe store there. Her interests include sewing, macrame and folk-dancing.



FRED BENNETT, of Butte, would go fishing 365 days a year if he could. If he isn't fishing, camping or sailboating, he is tending the garden behind his home. Senior counselor at East Junior High School, he has been with the Butte school system more than 26 years. When he came to Butte in 1950 after obtaining his degree from the state college in Bozeman, he worked as an industrial arts teacher. He also taught math and history before becoming a full-time counselor. Born in Wilsall, Montana, he was raised in Livingston. During World War II, he served in the Philippines, on Okinawa, in Alaska and in Hawaii.



KEITH BLANDING, of Deer Lodge, was a sheepherder before he ever began teaching in the Powell County High School. He bought his first herd of sheep when he was 19 back in his home state of Michigan. Moving to Montana in September of 1962, he worked for the Chevallier Sheep Company of Canyon Creek. In 1963 he built his own cabin in the vicinity of Lincoln and lived in it until he was drafted in 1964. A non-combatant trained as a dental technician at St. Sam Houston in Texas, he was sent first to Ft. Lewis in Washington and then to Vietnam in a medical detachment. After his discharge from the army in 1965, Blanding stayed in Vietnam as a civilian, teaching English to Vietnamese. During this time he assisted the staff of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of Vietnam. In April of 1966 he went to Bangkok, Thailand, to assist in the Baha'i teaching work there on invitation of the National Spiritual Assembly of Thailand. Returning to the United States late in that year, he found work as a longshoreman in Tacoma, Washington. He entered the University of Montana in 1967, majoring in English and psychology, and graduated in 1970. Since September of 1970 he has lived and taught in Deer Lodge where he is presently building his own home.



SANDRA MULBERGER, of Missoula County, is a respiratory therapist at St. Patrick's Hospital in Missoula. She is from Colorado originally and includes among her interests horseback-riding, hiking and weaving.

his fiddle-playing. Nolley recently obtained a bachelor's degree in anthropology from the U of M and is presently working on his master's.



JAMES Many Hides, of the Blackfeet Reservation, entered the Baha'i Faith in 1971. He died within the past year but will be donly remembered by the Montana Baha'is.



MITCH LINNE, of Miles City, has a degree in geology from the University of Montana and now works for the Bureau of Land Management. He has lived in five other western states besides Montana--Washington, Oregon, Idaho, California and Arizona, and has lived on the East Coast as well. His interests include motorcycles, hunting, fishing, photography, amateur radio and archery.



JEFF THURSTON, of Helena, has been working in shoe sales for more than two years and is presently managing a Helena store. From California, Thurston grew up in Reedley, Sangor, San Luis Obispo and Orange. After graduation from Orange High School, Thurston entered the Air Force, serving for a year-and-a-half in Turkey and then two years at Malmstrom Air Force Base in Great Falls. Returning to California after the service, he attended the Fullerton Junior College. He returned to Montana in 1971 and got married on the banks of the Flathead river. He attended Flathead Junior College and worked for a horse gear and western wear store. Thurston has an infant son and enjoys reading for relaxation.



DAVID KUTZLER, of Billings, is a senior in nursing, working at Billings Deaconess Hospital as a participant in the Montana State University Extended Campus nursing program. Raised in Glendive, he was an army medical corpsman prior to entering the MSU program. He must really enjoy nursing, because he reads medical literature in his spare time. Of course, he finds time for reading science fiction also.

in history from Illinois State University. He enjoys hiking and working with youth.



SHIRLEY MOORE, of Great Falls, enjoys raising houseplants, but mostly she enjoys raising Sam, her two-year-old. A graduate of Marycliff High School in Spokane, she attended the College of Great Falls as an English major.



BOB BLUMENFELD, of Helena, is a desk clerk and night auditor for a large motel. He was raised in Skokie, Illinois, and has a B.S.



CHARLES NOLLEY, of Hamilton, is technical director of the University Center at the University of Montana in Missoula. He acquired his proficiency in electronics while still in high school in his hometown of Miles City. Nolley is well-known as a lover of bluegrass music, and he plays many folk instruments, including mandolin, guitar, autoharp, banjo and fiddle. He has won awards for



GAIL DRONG, of Bozeman, prepares food as day manager for a large, popular Bozeman restaurant. She came to Montana with her husband from South Carolina where she had worked in electronics and tobacco processing and had also taught school. Drong has an M.A. in teaching from John Hopkins University. She taught in the public school system in Baltimore, before going to South Carolina. She obtained her bachelor's degree from Bluffton College in Bluffton, Ohio. Her home for her first 18 years was a farm near Vermillion, Ohio, filled with apple, cherry, peach and plum trees. Her current interest is in the women's movement. She is involved in a local women's group.



VERNYCE DANNELLS, of Missoula, formed a group called "Move Together" in high school as a means of fostering racial understanding. As a result of her affiliation with this group, she was asked to speak at the "Forum for Progress" sponsored by the Milwaukee Journal. And within a short time was invited to participate in an issues and answers program on local television called "Milwaukee Report--The Communication Gap." During summers she attended the University of Wisconsin in Madison as a special student even though she was only a sophomore and junior in high school. During the summer of 1968 she attended a special seminar on race at the U of W, Milwaukee campus. She went to Reed College in Portland, Oregon, on an Alumni Scholarship. Since 1970 she has sold women's apparel in a Seattle department store, worked as an office assistant in a Seattle YMCA and also sold fabric in the same city. She demonstrated and sold sewing machines in Milwaukee and made model garments for a department store there. Coming to Montana in 1972, she worked in Bozeman's largest bank as a teller. At Montana State University she worked as a personnel assistant in the personnel department. In Missoula she has worked as a secretary for the University of Montana. She is now a full-time student at the U of M in radio and TV. Her interests are sewing, writing poetry and dancing.



CINDY TYSER, of Flathead County, is a registered nurse employed at the Flathead Health Center. She came to Montana from Nebraska because of a love for the outdoors--in particular, hiking, camping, backpacking and cross-country skiing. She obtained her nursing degree from the University of Nebraska College of Nursing in Beatrice, her hometown. Throughout her years of school, she worked at Mennonite Deaconess Hospital in Beatrice.



BETTY BENNETT, of Butte, is a native Montanan who was born in Townsend. She became a Baha'i in Helena in 1937 at age 15. After marrying in 1946, she worked as a secretary for the Union Bank in Helena, the Federal Reserve Bank, Western Union, the Department of Agriculture's Production and Marketing Administration in Bozeman, and the Otis Elevator Company in Butte. She then devoted 18 years to raising three daughters, including a set of twins. For the last six years she has worked as a secretary for the Petroleum Department at Montana Tech in Butte.



PAT NOLLEY, of Flathead County, was born in the town of Poole in Dorset, England, but she doesn't remember it much, because she moved to Miles City with her parents when she was only two-and-a-half. Graduating from high school in Miles City, she went on to the University of Montana to get a B.A. in history, British history at that, and then worked in the Missoula area for several years. She was an assistant accountant, a janitor, and also a secretary for the Religion Department at the U of M. She returned to school to get a master's in guidance and counseling, and she is now in her second year as a high school counselor in Kalispell.



GLENNIS ERICKSON, of Billings, sells the jewelry made by her husband and daughter in their family-owned store. Born in Miles City, she has lived in just about every major community in Eastern Montana. She has a degree in education and has worked as a ticket agent, has run a kindergarten, has been a teller in a savings and loan and an office manager for an insurance company.



DON ERICKSON, of Billings, is working on a special jewelry order. He has many years of jewelry- and watch-making experience, but he hasn't always been in this line of work. He was once a lighting expert for a major utility, and he once managed a garage.



DON OLSEN, of Yellowstone County, has two loving children and is the owner of a mobile home sales lot in Billings. A former radio man from Missoula, he has a first class broadcasting license.



KEN OPITZ, of Billings, is an orthotist, or brace-maker, in a three-man orthopedic supply and manufacturing shop. It was selling perscription shoes for a Montana retail shoe company that got him interested in brace-making. He had been a shoe salesman in Billings and Spokane for more than six years.

