



THE STATE CAPITOL BUILDING

Sacramento, California. View from the northeast side. 'Abdu'l-Bahá visited here during his stay in the city in 1912. He is believed to have stood under one of the trees on this side. (California State Library, California Section.)

A HISTORY OF THE SACRAMENTO BAHÁ'Í COMMUNITY, 1912-1991

by Peggy Caton

The Sacramento Bahá'í community was the first Bahá'í group established in the Sacramento Valley of California and has played an important role in the development of other Bahá'í communities in that region. It has grown in size from only a few believers, in the 1920s, to over one hundred Bahá'ís, in the 1990s. During this time, it has evolved from a relatively homogeneous group into a more complex urban community, characterized by demographic diversity and differing perspectives.

These developments in the Sacramento Bahá'í community have not been unique in American Bahá'í history. In many ways, its history reflects the changes that have taken place in the wider Bahá'í community over the last sixty years. This essay is an attempt to study this process of continuity and change at a local level.

'Abdu'l-Bahá visited Sacramento for two days in October of 1912. Although this visit received considerable attention from local residents and newspapers, there is no record of anyone becoming a Bahá'í in Sacramento at that time. Nor is there any evidence of Bahá'í activities following his stay there.

Nonetheless, his visit to the city later became a symbolic link to 'Abdu'l-Bahá for the believers and an important part of the historical identity of the Bahá'í community that developed in Sacramento a few years later.

'Abdu'l-Bahá's Visit to Sacramento, October 25-26, 1912: The turn of the century was a time of religious exploration in America. In the nineteenth century, many Americans had begun embracing metaphysics, faith healing, and Eastern religions and philosophies. Among the new religious movements was Christian Science, founded by Mary Baker Eddy. Some of Eddy's students eventually began their own teaching and branched off from Christian Science. Emma Curtis Hopkins and others developed a movement which came to be known as New Thought.¹ This was a Christian-based healing movement that taught that God is All-Good and that human beings share in the Divine Essence of God.² New Thought adherents eschewed dogma, drew inspiration from many spiritual sources, and were usually open to new spiritual ideas. Bahá'ís during this period came into contact with persons involved in New Thought and were invited many times to give presentations on the Bahá'í Faith at their meetings and conventions.³

In 1887, Hopkins taught a large number of students in the San Francisco area. One of these students, Annie Rix Miltz, founded the first Home of Truth in San Francisco.⁴ Miltz was a charismatic leader who taught, toured, and wrote books.⁵ She had some correspondence with 'Abdu'l-Bahá. The Home of Truth became the main form of New Thought on the Pacific Coast.⁶ Each Home of Truth was independent, though all were affiliated with and influenced by Miltz herself.

Among the Homes of Truth was one operated by Christine Fraser in Sacramento from 1903 to 1921.⁷ Fraser was

active in the New Thought movement, spoke at the New Thought Alliance Convention in Los Angeles in 1912, and was frequently praised by Militz on her stopovers in Sacramento.⁸ Although there is little information available on Fraser's origin or background, the 1910 census reveals that she was unmarried, white, a native-born American, and that she would have been forty-eight years old in 1912. Her occupation is listed as teacher at the Home of Truth.⁹ The Home of Truth in Sacramento held services every Sunday and Wednesday and held healing sessions every afternoon and evening.¹⁰

According to Mírzá Maḥmúd Zarqání, a member of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's entourage who kept a diary of his travels in America and in Europe, it was Fraser who invited 'Abdu'l-Bahá to speak in Sacramento.¹¹ There is no record of how she contacted 'Abdu'l-Bahá, but she may have heard of his visit to San Francisco and gone there to see him.¹²

In 1912, Sacramento was the fourth largest city in California, after San Francisco, Los Angeles, and Oakland.¹³ It was an important center of commerce and trade, as well as the capitol city of the state. The population stood at about 45,000.¹⁴ At the center of town was the beautiful, round-domed capitol building, surrounded by a large park containing trees from all over the world. Victorian homes lined the park, and nearby there were a number of large mansions built by wealthy residents, such as Charles Crocker and Leland Stanford.

'Abdu'l-Bahá left San Francisco early on the morning of Friday, October 25, 1912. According to Maḥmúd's diary, he said farewell to the Bahá'ís in an emotional address and then boarded his train with a number of believers from the Bay Area, Portland, and Seattle, who had literally begged to accompany him to Sacramento.¹⁵ Brown notes that 'Abdu'l-Bahá was seated in a chair car: "As usual He refused the



HOTEL SACRAMENTO, c. 1912

The hotel where 'Abdu'l-Bahá stayed and lectured during his stay in Sacramento, October 25-26, 1912. (California State Library, California Section.)

comfort of a Pullman, saying, 'We are the army of God.'¹⁶ His entourage included: Mírzá Maḥmúd, his secretary; Dr. Ameen Ullah Fareed and Ahmad Sohrab, who acted as translators; Mírzá 'Alí Akbar; and Fugita, a Japanese Bahá'í. Also present were Mrs. Ella Cooper and her mother, Mrs. Helen Goodall, as well as other American Bahá'ís.

Maḥmúd Zarqání records that 'Abdu'l-Bahá spoke to the Bahá'ís during the train ride to Sacramento and that they arrived in the city at about noon.¹⁷ 'Abdu'l-Bahá was met at the Central Pacific Arcade Station by Christine Fraser and Carrie Yoerk, a Sacramentan from a prominent family who was also associated with the Home of Truth. They took him, with his entourage, by car to the Home of Truth¹⁸ and invited him to remain for lunch and stay for the night. Goodall and Cooper, along with the other Americans, went directly from the train station to the Hotel Sacramento where they were to be staying and where 'Abdu'l-Bahá was to speak that night.

Harriet Cline had arrived separately from Los Angeles and was already at the Home of Truth when 'Abdu'l-Bahá arrived there at about 11:00 a.m. She later recalled that she was the only American Bahá'í present at the luncheon. However, there were a number of New Thought people there, and they were very interested in the Bahá'í Faith. 'Abdu'l-Bahá retired to a private room to rest after lunch. At about 3:20 p.m., Cooper, Goodall, and others arrived from the Hotel Sacramento. It seems that his luncheon at the Home of Truth had come as a surprise to 'Abdu'l-Bahá, since Cooper later related that he called her into his room to scold her for arranging the meeting without consulting him, and so requiring that he separate himself from the other Bahá'ís and leave them waiting at the hotel.¹⁹

It seems that Cooper and Goodall were unhappy with the idea of 'Abdu'l-Bahá remaining overnight at the Home of

Truth, even though they had arranged for the luncheon. Because of their objections, he declined Fraser's invitation. He explained that it was his custom to stay in hotels and that he did not want to separate himself from the rest of his group.²⁰ He invited Fraser to dine with him at the hotel and to share the platform with him when he spoke that evening. He spoke again briefly to the assembled guests and then departed for the hotel.²¹

At 5:00 p.m., 'Abdu'l-Bahá was interviewed at the Hotel Sacramento by a reporter from the *Sacramento Union*. He spoke to the reporter about universal peace, the basis of divine religions, and the principles of the Bahá'í Faith.²² After the interview, he went for a walk in Capitol Park. Seeing the trees, he is said to have commented on how like those in the Holy Land they were.²³ The Bahá'ís of Sacramento, in later years, kept an oral tradition that 'Abdu'l-Bahá gave a short talk among the trees and blessed an evergreen tree on the north side of the old capitol building below the upper tier of the northeast (or northwest) steps.²⁴

The Hotel Sacramento, newly built in 1909, was the grandest of the hotels along K Street. It had a large lobby, and one newspaper reporter observed that 'Abdu'l-Bahá was mobbed there by women who literally worshipped at his feet.²⁵ From the Mezzanine Floor of the hotel 'Abdu'l-Bahá observed people shopping in the outer boutiques, and he seemed displeased with the spectacle. He made some informal comments concerning these activities, the difference between human beings and animals, and the need for divine civilization in such a materially advanced and preoccupied society:

Regard how negligent these people are! All the insignificant objects are considered by them as means of happiness. How negligent they are! Like unto animals, they eat, they sleep, they walk, they sing, they dance, and, according to their belief, they think they are having a good time.

Nay, rather, the animals are preferred to them, for they enjoy the expanse of the desert. They graze on the green meadows. They drink from the cool spring. The flight of birds is higher. Their enjoyment of objects of life is great, but the blessing and enjoyment of man are through the Divine benediction, the bounties of God and the love of God.²⁶

At 8:30 p.m. that same evening in the Hotel Assembly Hall, 'Abdu'l-Bahá talked about the purpose of his mission, the history of the Bahá'í Faith, and its basic teachings. He emphasized the underlying unity of reality that is the foundation of all religions. Christine Fraser gave a lengthy introduction to his talk and said a Bahá'í prayer.²⁷ Later, at 9:30 p.m., 'Abdu'l-Bahá gave another informal talk in the parlor on the mezzanine. He spoke about materialism and the need for spiritualization, particularly with reference to America.²⁸

Early the next morning, Saturday, October 26, 'Abdu'l-Bahá spoke briefly to the chambermaids in his hotel room, anointed them with violet water and gave them fruit.²⁹ Mrs. Latimer brought a message to him from some Japanese believers in Portland, and he conveyed his greetings to them through her.³⁰ 'Abdu'l-Bahá met again with Harriet Cline before she took a train for her home in Northern California. He insisted that she take some fruit as she would be hungry on the trip. During her train ride, she missed the lunch stop and ate the fruit, as 'Abdu'l-Bahá had predicted.³¹

'Abdu'l-Bahá gave a second talk in the hotel Assembly Hall at 9:30 a.m. He spoke of the need for international peace and expressed the wish that it would first be established in California: "May the first flag of international peace be upraised in this state."³² After the talk, he was interviewed by a reporter from the *Sacramento Bee*.

Several newspaper articles appeared about 'Abdu'l-Bahá's visit—in the *Sacramento Bee*, *Sacramento Union*, and *Sacramento Star*.³³ It seemed that his stay in the city caused quite

a stir in some circles. One article states: "The novelty of seeing American women prostrate themselves before the Baha'i leader, clad in long flowing robe and turban, was a sensation for the patrons of the hotel. They stood in open-mouthed amazement at the proceeding."³⁴

Mr. T. J. O'Kelly, a prominent businessman in Sacramento and a Christian Scientist, took 'Abdu'l-Bahá for a ride around the city in his car.³⁵ They returned at noon for lunch at the cafe in the hotel. A meal was prepared for twenty of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's guests, including the Bahá'ís from out of town, his entourage, and three guests from Sacramento (Fraser, Yoerk, and O'Kelly).³⁶ Mírzá Maḥmúd mentions that the hotel proprietor came in and praised the effect that 'Abdu'l-Bahá had on Sacramento: "What I have seen of the majesty of this Being is that although no one knew Him in this city, yet in the course of twenty-four hours He has created a stir in the city and attracted its people."³⁷

After lunch, 'Abdu'l-Bahá spoke briefly to the friends and left for the train station. His train departed for Denver in the early afternoon.³⁸ Ramona Brown, Ella Cooper, and a few others were permitted to accompany him to the train station, where they waved farewell.³⁹ As he was leaving, 'Abdu'l-Bahá said: "A spiritual commotion has for the time being been created in this city. Let us see what God desires."⁴⁰

Establishment of the Community, 1923-1940. Ali M. Yazdi may have been the first Bahá'í to live in Sacramento.⁴¹ Yazdi, a Bahá'í from Iran who had immigrated to the United States, moved to Sacramento on February 18, 1923, to work for the Southern Pacific Railroad Company.⁴² Within several months, however, he had moved on with his work to live in various locations in the High Sierra Mountains. He returned to the San Francisco area in 1925.⁴³

The first Bahá'í group was organized in Sacramento

around September of 1924.⁴⁴ There is no record of how this group was established. However, there is some evidence that it may have come about as a result of the Bahá'í teaching efforts of Orcella Rexford.⁴⁵ Rexford was a professional lecturer who gave talks on such topics as health and healing, food, diet, and color. It was common for her to give a series of nine lectures in a particular location. For the first eight, she would charge an entrance fee. But the ninth lecture, on religion, would be free. She would deliver the Bahá'í message in the most dramatic way at the last lecture and then gather those who were interested in further investigation into a study group or club.

The first group called itself the "Bahai Assembly of Sacramento"⁴⁶ and consisted of twenty-two members. According to a newspaper article, the Assembly had for its objects: "the promotion of world peace and the universal brotherhood of man together with religious and racial tolerance among the people of all nations." There is no suggestion in the article that the Assembly considered itself to be a religious community.⁴⁷ This group was not recognized by the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís as "an organized Assembly," and its status appears to have been somewhat ambiguous.⁴⁸ Some of the members of the Assembly did not consider themselves to be Bahá'ís until some time later.⁴⁹

The Bahai Assembly did, however, sponsor three lectures on the Bahá'í Faith delivered by the famous Bahá'í teacher, Faḍl-i Mazandarani (Mírzá Asadu'lláh Mazandarani, often referred to by American Bahá'ís as Jenabe Fazel [for, Jináb-i Faḍl]), in February of 1925. Faḍl was in the city for three days and delivered three public lectures, one in a Jewish synagogue.⁵⁰ He left Sacramento to continue his teaching tour in San Francisco.

It seems that it was some time afterwards, possibly during 1925, that Henry Kuphal and his wife, Frances Kuphal,



Sacramento Bahá'í Archives.

FRANCES CLINE KUPHAL

moved to Sacramento. They had lived in Boise, Idaho, from about 1918 to 1923, and had been active Bahá'ís there. They moved to California, and Frances Kuphal was a delegate to the Second Annual Bahá'í Conference and Congress in the Western States, held in September 1924. She was also a representative to the Western States Teaching Conference in October of the same year.⁵¹ The Kuphals eventually settled in Sacramento and remained there for the rest of their lives. They were important members of the Sacramento Bahá'í community for decades.

Before her marriage, Frances (Cline) Kuphal, a Canadian citizen, had become a Bahá'í in Glendale, California. The Clines were a well-known Bahá'í family in California in the early part of this century. However, Harriet Cline, Frances's sister-in-law, indicates that Frances had not shown any interest in the Bahá'í teachings before 1912. Her conversion to the Faith came as a result of meeting 'Abdu'l-Bahá during his short visit to the Los Angeles area in 1912. The Cline family had had an opportunity to meet with 'Abdu'l-Bahá during his visit to Southern California. At this meeting, 'Abdu'l-Bahá insisted that Frances be brought to a lecture where he was to speak. She was very impressed by the meeting and became a Bahá'í shortly after that.⁵²

From Glendale, Frances moved to Idaho where she met Henry Kuphal, a German immigrant who had come to Idaho from Montana. They were married in 1918, and Frances became an American citizen after that. Apparently introduced to the Bahá'í teachings by his wife, Henry Kuphal accepted the Faith in 1919 in Idaho. The Kuphals moved to California in 1923 or 1924.⁵³

Through the teaching efforts of Ali Yazdi and the Kuphals in Sacramento, James and Carmen O'Neill became Bahá'ís. Also, Carmen's son, Elmer Dearborn, and her mother, Mrs. Emma Dearborn, entered the Faith.⁵⁴ The O'Neills and Mrs.

Dearborn (as well as a Mr. I. Dearborn) had been listed as members of the Bahai Assembly of Sacramento in 1925. But this group appears to have died out, and it seems that there was little continuity between this Assembly and later Bahá'í activities. Like the early Assembly, however, the Bahá'ís in Sacramento did not openly pursue their work as an independent religion, as illustrated by Frances Kuphal's report to the *Bahá'í News Letter* in the summer of 1926. She explained that one of the Bahá'ís was teaching the children at the Daily Vacation Bible School in Sacramento:

Mrs. O'Neil's [sic] work in the school was to give the talk or sermon. She taught the children the most important thing was to live the life. It was most impressive to hear them recite from our Bahai Big Ben.⁵⁵

She received an enthusiastic reply from the National Spiritual Assembly.⁵⁶ The Dearborn and O'Neill families soon moved to the San Francisco Bay area in 1928.

In 1930, John and Valera Allen moved to Sacramento.⁵⁷ Valera Allen had become a Bahá'í in San Francisco in 1925. A year after she married John, they came to Sacramento. When the Kuphals, now the only other Bahá'ís in the city, came to call, they simply assumed that John Allen was a Bahá'í, and he joined in all the Bahá'í activities.⁵⁸

Before her marriage, Enola Allen (Leonard), John's sister, had attended a religious training school in San Francisco with Valera, her future sister-in-law. Enola went on to become a Methodist minister and pastor of a church near Petaluma, California. There she married, and moved to Sacramento in 1932. Through association with her brother and his wife, as well as with the Kuphals, Enola became a Bahá'í in 1934. Eventually, John and Enola's sister, Cordelia, also became a Bahá'í, as did their mother.

The Bahá'ís of Sacramento in the early 1930s were a small but active group. They were mainly educated, middle-

class or upper middle-class, white women. They were all dedicated Bahá'ís, excited by the new movement. Enola Leonard later remembered the community at this time as a happy, unified, loving, and close-knit group of friends. They observed the Nineteen-Day Feasts, held regular study classes, and organized public meetings for prominent Bahá'í speakers, such as Marion Holley and Leroy Ioas.⁵⁹ They gradually increased their numbers. Marguerite Mosier became a Bahá'í and joined the community in 1932.

Though there were a number of published Bahá'í books by this time, the Bahá'ís supplemented this literature with typed and mimeographed sheets that were circulated in the community. These sheets contained Tablets (letters) of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, records of his talks, and other materials that were not published and were difficult to find. The Sacramento Bahá'í Archives now holds several scrapbooks of such sheets, compiled by Frances Kuphal and others.

The Sacramento Bahá'ís participated in Bahá'í activities in other parts of California. One of the believers, Leota Gallagher, was wealthy and owned a large Buick. The Bahá'ís in Sacramento would pile into it and travel to the Bahá'í Summer School at Geyserville, to San Francisco, even to Bakersfield for Bahá'í meetings.

In the hot summers of Sacramento, the Bahá'ís held regular study classes in Enola Leonard's backyard, under a black walnut tree. They might read from Esselmont's *Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era* or discuss various aspects of the Bahá'í teachings. The most controversial issue raised at these meetings was speculation concerning whether or not the Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith, Shoghi Effendi (who had no children), might be hiding a secret heir and would reveal this information at some time in the future. Informal gatherings of this type characterized much of Bahá'í community life in Sacramento before 1960.⁶⁰



THE FIRST SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY OF SACRAMENTO

elected on April 21, 1938. Standing (l. to r.): Ada Wells, Mildred Owens, Henry Kuphal, Margaret Moser. Seated (l to r.): Leota Gallagher, Myra Bradley, Frances Kuphal, Enola Leonard, Elizabeth Duffy. The Assembly sat for this photo in front of the tree under which 'Abdu'l-Bahá had stood in 1912.

Organization and Reorganization, 1938-1940: In late 1937, Myra Bradley and Stella Wainscott accepted the Faith, bringing the number of Bahá'ís in Sacramento up to ten. One other person was reported to be seriously interested. The National Teaching Committee informed the Sacramento group that they now had enough members to form a local Spiritual Assembly at Ridván (April 21) and urged them to continue their study of Bahá'í Administration and particularly the by-laws of the Assembly.⁶¹

The first local Assembly was elected at a meeting of the community in April of 1938, with Prof. N. Forsythe Ward of Berkeley assisting as a representative of the National Teaching Committee. Sacramento became one of only nine local Spiritual Assemblies in California.⁶² The first Assembly, eight women and one man, posed for its official photograph under the tree in Capitol Park that they believed had been visited by 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

After the election of the Assembly, the Sacramento Bahá'í community grew rapidly. Within a year, the number of Bahá'ís in the city was raised to fourteen. Two days after the Assembly was reelected in 1939, Sacramento hosted a regional teaching conference attended by eighty believers from various parts of the state. The conference was held at the Hotel Sacramento, on the same mezzanine where 'Abdu'l-Bahá was known to have delivered his informal talks in 1912.⁶³

After the conference, the Bahá'ís and their guests were invited to a "Bahá'í tea" at the State Fair Grounds.⁶⁴ There Marzieh Carpenter⁶⁵ spoke to about two hundred people on the subject of "What Iran Has Contributed to World Peace." In addition, a member of the Sacramento community who was an organizer of garden clubs had arranged for a Bahá'í exhibit as a part of the Sacramento Annual Flower Show at the Fair Grounds. The Bahá'í display featured a model of the Wilmette Bahá'í Temple in a floral setting and background,

and with the theme "Flowers of All Nations." The Bahá'í display was situated in the center of the hall and attracted a great deal of attention. The teaching conference and tea were considered an outstanding success. A photograph of the floral display was sent on to the Guardian by the National Spiritual Assembly and was published in *Bahá'í News*.⁶⁶

In January of 1940, the Sacramento Bahá'í community still counted fourteen members, thirteen of them women. But the community showed the first signs of its future diversity by including the name of one black youth (marked "colored" on the membership list) who had "signified his intention to join our group when he is twenty-one years of age."⁶⁷ At that time, only adults could be considered as registered Bahá'ís.

During this year, however, the National Spiritual Assembly advised Sacramento of instructions received from the Guardian which required that all local Spiritual Assemblies confine their jurisdictions strictly to legal city limits. Only believers living within the city limits of Sacramento could officially be considered as part of the community, eligible for election to the Assembly. The new rule split the community in half. The number of believers was only brought back up to nine by the enrollment of two new Bahá'ís who lived within the city limits. The Assembly secretary noted that they were "sincere friends who had been studying for quite a long period." Their declarations of faith "saved" the Assembly.⁶⁸

After the crisis was over, the Assembly secretary reported in 1941, that "the believers in this vicinity have met this test admirably."⁶⁹ Two of those left outside eventually returned to the community by moving inside the city limits: Enola Leonard in 1944 and Florence Keemer in 1946.⁷⁰ During this period, the activities of the Sacramento Bahá'í community consisted of a regular schedule of Feasts and Holy Day observances, study classes and firesides, punctuated by an occasional public meeting with an out-of-town Bahá'í speaker.

Community Development, 1940-1960: For many years after 1940, Frances and Henry Kuphal acted as the mainstays of the Sacramento community. They were affectionately referred to as "Auntie Frances" and "Uncle Henry." Frances Kuphal, in particular, was looked upon by the believers as a kind of mother figure. She was a considerate and loving person who acted as the community's link to an earlier generation of Bahá'ís, and to 'Abdu'l-Bahá himself.

Also in 1940, another Bahá'í woman moved into Sacramento from Spokane, Washington. Her husband would not become a Bahá'í for another twelve or thirteen years, but she immediately became an active member of the Bahá'í community. She was a capable, professional woman who worked in the office of the Western Pacific Railroad. Her husband was a carpenter at McClellan Air Force Base.⁷¹ Another long-standing Bahá'í moved to Sacramento in 1946. She was a Canadian dress designer. In 1947, she was elected as chair of the local Spiritual Assembly.

Correspondence with the National Spiritual Assembly during the early 1940s shows intense concern over relatively mundane matters of Bahá'í administration: membership, enrollment, statistics, address changes, news of local events, Assembly elections, and annual reports. The minutes of the Assembly reveal a steady concern with the details of running its ongoing activities. The Assembly made its decisions concerning study classes and teaching activities, refreshments at meetings, publicity, the local Bahá'í library, official correspondence, and the like. In 1940, the Assembly asked the National Spiritual Assembly to clarify for them whether a Bahá'í should be permitted to contribute to her former religious group.⁷² In 1944, during World War II, the Assembly agreed to sponsor a telephone call for a serviceman.⁷³ Issues of functions and administration dominated the Assembly's business. The Bahá'ís of Sacramento were coming to see their



Sacramento Bahá'í Archives.

BAHÁ'ÍS IN SACRAMENTO

gathered on July 9, 1953 to commemorate the Martyrdom of the Báb. Hand of the Cause Mr. Musa Banani is seated center, holding the Greatest Name. Back row (l to r.): Florence Keemer, Patricia (Keemer?), Nicki Bourget, Cordie Baker. Next row, standing (l. to r.): Mrs. Messier, Mr. Wells, Frances Kuphal, Henry Kuphal, Peggy Springer, Mildred Owens, Josephine Graham, Ada Wells, Fred Chindahl, (Nollie?) Green, and her daughter. Next row, seated (l. to r.): Louis Bourget, Amin Banani, Musa Banani, Mrs. Samireh Banani, Evanne Chindahl. Front row, seated (l. to r.): Maerea Chindahl, (Denise?) Bourget, (Delan?) Bourget, and the daughter of Patricia (Keemer?).

religion as governed by a set of prescribed procedures. Functioning in accordance with these procedures was given the highest importance.

In 1947, a new young couple became Bahá'ís. The husband was the grandson of Louis Bourgeois, the architect of the Bahá'í House of Worship in Wilmette, who had himself been a Bahá'í. However, the young man did not remember much about his grandfather. He did know that his mother had brought the remains of Bourgeois with her when they had moved to Sacramento.⁷⁴ He had only become interested in the Bahá'í Faith during World War II, while stationed in New York. There he attended some Bahá'í meetings. Both he and his wife entered the Faith after his return to Sacramento.⁷⁵

The couple was somewhat out of place in this community of older Bahá'í women. They recalled later that the community had become something of a ladies' social club. The Bahá'ís gathered to drink tea, read from the Bahá'í scriptures, talk about gardening, and say prayers. They were uncomfortable that the community seemed to be uninterested in expanding its activities beyond its own boundaries.

The new couple was more interested in social action. They were not content with the usual round of Bahá'í meetings. At some point, during this period, the wife suggested to the community that the Bahá'ís should undertake some kind of social welfare work. The new chairman at that time gently put the idea to rest, suggesting that perhaps it would be better to devote the community's energies to completing the Bahá'í Temple (still under construction) and to strengthening their own group.⁷⁶ There was clearly a difference of perspective and approach, perhaps rooted in a difference in generations.

One incident in particular brought some of these differences into the open. In 1952,⁷⁷ the young Bahá'í couple arranged for a Bahá'í booth at the State Fair in Sacramento. It

was a simple exhibit which made use of a model of the Bahá'í Temple and displayed the Bahá'í principles and quotations about progressive revelation.⁷⁸ The project was successful.⁷⁹ However, either the booth had been organized without the local Assembly's consent, or else someone disapproved of what the couple had done. Neither the husband nor the wife finally understood what the problem was, but they were both called before the Assembly.⁸⁰ Though they remained active Bahá'ís for some time, the couple eventually withdrew from the Bahá'í Faith, saying that they no longer believed in organized religion.⁸¹

In 1954, Frances Kuphal passed away. Although her husband continued to live in Sacramento until his death in 1965, the focal point of Bahá'í activity moved to another family. The couple from Spokane, both now Bahá'ís, became the pillars of the community. In 1958, the Spiritual Assembly of Sacramento agreed that all Bahá'í meetings would be held in their home, unless someone else asked to host a function.⁸² The couple gave generously of their time and money in support of Bahá'í work. The wife especially became a strong, even a dominant, force in the Sacramento Bahá'í community.

In 1957, another relatively young person became a Bahá'í. She had learned of the Faith in Fresno, and continued her study of the Bahá'í teachings after moving to Sacramento with her husband in 1952. After her election to the Spiritual Assembly, disagreements again came to the surface. As a new and enthusiastic Bahá'í, she felt that the functioning of the Assembly did not live up to the ideal that she had read about in the Bahá'í books. She was shocked to find that a single individual held such a dominant position in the local community. Her concerns resulted in disagreements on the Assembly.⁸³

Differences of opinion about administration finally came to a head in 1959, when the Assembly requested assistance

from the Area Teaching Committee of the National Assembly. The Assembly requested assistance in resolving a difference of opinion concerning the correct Bahá'í procedures with regard to committees, but the roots of the problem were much deeper.⁸⁴ A Bahá'í teacher from Fresno was sent to help. She visited Sacramento in March and April of 1960, holding deepenings on administrative procedures and principles. A letter sent to this teacher by the Assembly secretary explains her view of the problems on the Assembly:

An assembly is a body of nine "members" all with different backgrounds therefore with an ability to throw light on a different part of the picture. All can be inspired, in addition to their background of experience and studies in the writings, with knowledge from God, through Bahá'u'lláh. Through the Divine Hosts of Inspiration (pure souls on the other side) by the agency of the Holy Spirit directly. It seems to me absolutely vital that this point be brought out and emphasized, otherwise a caste-system is set up within the Assembly. Otherwise, the members will have a tendency to lean on a member who has been a Baha'i a long time and/or has had an opportunity to study under well-known Baha'is at summer school, etc. This discounts the condition of the soul-mind entirely and brings the members into the straight jacket of each member's estimate as to what the other one knows. Again, we're back to personalities, to the "older members" and the "younger members." We are told that only God can judge the condition of our souls. Since the "heart" (soul-mind) is the seat of our reality, of our learning, how then can we be in a position to judge another man's true learning/knowledge. Only God can do this.⁸⁵

In 1959, the couple that had been at the center of Bahá'í activity in Sacramento became inactive. Although the issues disrupting the community are not apparent from the Assembly records, the acting secretary referred to "heartaches and turmoil" in the community in a letter to the Bahá'í Area Teaching Committee.⁸⁶



Sacramento Bahá'í Archives.

NAW-RÚZ 1964

Poster outside Sacramento Memorial Auditorium announcing the public meeting.

The community was further disrupted by the disturbing behavior and disappearance of one of the members of the Assembly.⁸⁷ Eventually, this believer was located and voluntarily placed herself in a mental hospital for a time.

Pivotal Bahá'í Community, 1961-1968: The early 1960s was a period of tremendous activity in the Sacramento Bahá'í community. It was also a period of rapid change. A new generation of Americans was entering the Bahá'í Faith in the United States and changing the way the community viewed teaching, deepening, procedure, and morality.

In 1960, a black man and a Persian man were elected to the Sacramento Assembly, greatly increasing its diversity. At that point, the community numbered about twenty. But problems with inactivity, personality clashes, and other issues continued. In early 1961, the National Spiritual Assembly sent Florence Mayberry, a prominent Bahá'í teacher, to visit Sacramento and seek to heal the community's difficulties. Her visit seems to have had the desired effect, for she was able to report to the National Assembly that there were signs of improvement.⁸⁸

During this time, the couple that had become inactive began to participate in Bahá'í activities again and became an important part of the community. Soon large public meetings were being organized in Sacramento which drew fifty to one hundred people, including Bahá'ís from outlying communities, from northern and central California, and from as far away as Reno, Nevada. Sacramento was able to schedule a number of prominent and popular Bahá'í speakers at these meetings, such as Eulalia Bobo, Marion West, and Dwight Allen. These speakers would attract Bahá'ís from far distances. Sacramento became a hub of Bahá'í activity. On March 21, 1964, the community held a large public meeting to commemorate the Bahá'í New Year (Naw-Rúz) at the Sacramento

Memorial Auditorium. This was the largest public hall in the city, where major concerts and sports events were held. In addition to the Bahá'í speaker, a well-known Bay Area pianist, Marilyn Raubitschek, was the guest performer.⁸⁹

In 1965, a new couple entered the Faith in Sacramento. The husband of this couple was an enthusiastic new believer and he soon brought a friend of his into the Sacramento Bahá'í community.⁹⁰ Both were black. They began to teach the Faith vigorously, appealing to young people and others who were socially conscious. They were an effective teaching team.

The husband of the older Bahá'í couple that had become active again died in 1966. His wife remained an active Bahá'í, however. The (second) new black believer later recalled that he met her for the first time the morning after he had become a Bahá'í, and very shortly after her husband had passed away. She greeted him at her door, and said: "Isn't God wonderful! He took [my husband] and replaced him already." He said that she was smiling and radiant at the funeral.⁹¹ Eventually, however, after a second marriage, she became inactive again and moved out of Sacramento.

The new couple held regular firesides in their home from 1967 to 1968. These meetings were very informal and relaxed. People were free to come and go during the meeting, and the firesides were open-ended. The speaker, usually the friend of the couple who had become a Bahá'í, would start the fireside by going over the Bahá'í principles found on the back of the Bahá'í Temple card⁹² and then would ask for questions. The firesides attracted from twenty to fifty people, from Sacramento and the surrounding areas, and it became customary for them to last all night. Often those who were left in the morning would go out to breakfast together.⁹³ Those interested in the Faith were both black and white, although those who became Bahá'ís were mostly whites. The firesides

accelerated growth for the Sacramento Bahá'ís, with fifteen enrollments in 1965-1966, and thirty-five in 1966-1967. Among those new Bahá'ís were young people who would shortly form the core of the active Bahá'í community of Sacramento and become the center of youth activities for the Sacramento Valley.⁹⁴

There was resistance in the community to these new teaching methods. Some Bahá'ís felt that the new believers were being allowed to enter the Faith too quickly. A year of study before enrollment had been common in an earlier period. The new teaching was unrestrained, and those who were becoming Bahá'ís were from new social, economic, and racial backgrounds, which clashed with the white, middle-class standards that were the norm in the Bahá'í community. For example, one of the teachers convinced a prostitute whom he had met at the Greyhound Bus Station in Sacramento to declare her acceptance of the Faith. However, the Assembly declined to enroll her in the community, because of her profession.⁹⁵ The Assembly became concerned about maintaining control of the teaching activities under its jurisdiction. Eventually, they asked the teacher to stop teaching at the bus station.

Interested seekers who came to the all-night firesides were not deterred from bringing alcoholic beverages. Rumors began circulating in the community about this, and other issues. When the Assembly wrote to the couple about the drinking, they withdrew from all activity. The fireside and the teaching associated with it were discontinued. By early 1968, the Assembly had agreed that all-night firesides were no longer necessary, and perhaps had been undesirable.⁹⁶

The fireside incident was really the final event in a series of growing conflicts between old and new members of the community concerning such issues as teaching methods, deepening, and sexual morality, caused partially by generational

differences and partially by differences of race and social class. However, this brought matters into the open, causing a good deal of conflict and confusion. In April of 1968, a petition was circulated in Sacramento that asked the National Spiritual Assembly to help resolve the problem of disunity within the Bahá'í community. Later that year, the Assembly made a number of efforts to deal with the problem of inactivity, both on the Assembly and in the community. By the end of 1968, however, the majority of believers were still inactive and the community was in disarray.

Youth Movement, 1969-1975: In the late 1960s, despite the serious difficulties that the Bahá'í community of Sacramento was facing, a wave of young, new believers began entering the Bahá'í Faith in the United States. This development would soon allow the Sacramento community to once again become a locus of Bahá'í activity for the surrounding area. The history of the community from its beginnings has been characterized by a cycle of intense activity, followed by conflict and disagreement, the collapse of Bahá'í activity, and then rebirth.

The counterculture of the late 1960s and early 1970s found its fullest expression in the San Francisco Bay area, not far from Sacramento. Large numbers of young Americans revolted against the values, assumptions, and styles of middle-class culture. They were idealistic, enthusiastic, and believed in the need for dramatic and immediate change in the world. This mood in the country led many young people to accept the Bahá'í Faith. These new converts naturally saw little contradiction between the ideals of their new religion and the styles and assumptions of the counterculture they lived in.

As these youth entered the Sacramento Bahá'í community, there were almost no active believers left in the city.

Unguided and unrestrained by older Bahá'ís, they were free to reshape the community in the style and image of 1960s popular culture. Eventually, fifteen or twenty young Bahá'ís established themselves as the core of the Sacramento Bahá'í community. They were in their early twenties, with a few in their late twenties or early thirties, and mostly white. Although many were deeply involved in the counterculture, the majority were not. Some had become Bahá'ís locally, while others moved into Sacramento from the San Francisco Bay area. Their only link to the earlier Bahá'í community was one strong, black man in his forties who remained active during this period. This believer was a strong advocate of Bahá'í administration and acted as a mentor and father-figure for the new believers. He encouraged their activities and showed restraint and tolerance in his role as leader. He seldom showed disapproval. The youth knew they had pleased him when he laughed, or displeased him when he brought out the Bahá'í Writings to admonish them, or simply left a gathering.⁹⁷

During this period, the Bahá'ís rented the first Bahá'í Center (meeting place) in the community's history. One Bahá'í recalled that since there was no home of an active Bahá'í available for meetings, the youth felt the need for a Center.⁹⁸ It became an important focal point for Bahá'í activities. The youth had decided that it should be located downtown, since that was the area of the city visited by 'Abdu'l-Bahá. His visit was a continual source of inspiration to them throughout this period. In December of 1971, a house was rented downtown in the commercial zone. It served as the Sacramento Bahá'í Center until 1974, when the Bahá'ís were released from their contract.

The new center provided a place for the Bahá'í youth to congregate. It operated in typical counterculture style. Eventually, there were Bahá'í meetings of one kind or another



MUSIC AT THE UNITY FAIR
Sponsored by the Bahá'ís in Southside Park,
Sacramento, during the early 1970s.



TEACHING BOOTH
at the Sacramento Unity Fair.

there almost every night—firesides, deepening classes, Assembly meetings, and committee meetings. The center was used by Bahá'í communities outside of Sacramento, as well. Gradually, many of the youth moved downtown to be near the focus of Bahá'í activity. One Bahá'í moved into the center as caretaker. He had once worked as a member of the technical crew for a touring rock-and-roll band. He had hair down to his waist, and he owned a waterbed factory in the city.⁹⁹ A local Bahá'í who visited the center during this period found a number of young people there in various costumes and hairstyles, sitting cross-legged on the floor and praying, with incense burning.¹⁰⁰

The older Bahá'ís in Sacramento found this style unacceptable. They generally remained inactive, and unhappy with the state of the community, during this entire period. Some assumed that the Bahá'í youth must be involved with drugs and sexual immorality, because of their life styles. However, there is no evidence to indicate that this was the case. The new Bahá'ís generally understood the Bahá'í teachings, served on the Assembly, as well as several committees, and kept meticulous records of their Bahá'í activities. The most voluminous, complete, and well-kept archival records of community activity are found for the period of 1971-1973.

The Bahá'ís, during this period, faithfully observed communications from the National Spiritual Assembly. Their approach to most problems was to refer to the Bahá'í scriptures. They were apocalyptic in their vision of the future, feeling that the world was on the brink of dramatic and earthshaking changes. They supported this view with passages from Shoghi Effendi's books *Advent of Divine Justice* and *The Promised Day Is Come*. They were intensely involved in Bahá'í activities and became a close-knit group.

The local Spiritual Assembly at this time sponsored a number of large events. A spring Unity Fair was especially

successful. The fair was a large art and music festival in Southside Park, including rock-and-roll, country, and folk bands. The event was attended by hundreds of people, mostly youth. It was well organized, and Bahá'ís from several communities participated. In 1971, the community organized an elaborate display and garden as a part of the State Fair. They arranged for several people to man the booth at all times during the nineteen days of the fair. The fair booth resulted in some people becoming Bahá'ís. Although Sacramento was the sponsor of several major events that took place within the city, it was often the case that the majority of Bahá'ís who supported these activities came from outlying communities.

The intense Bahá'í activity of this period did not last long. The youth were mobile and not permanently established in Sacramento. They began moving out of the city in 1973, many of them to Bahá'í pioneering (missionary) posts in other countries. They were encouraged to pioneer by the general Bahá'í ethos of the time, by other Bahá'í youth, and by the older Bahá'ís in the area.¹⁰¹ In addition, there were urgent calls for pioneers at the end of the nine-year Bahá'í teaching plan. The middle-aged mentor of the youth eventually left the city for a pioneer post in the Caribbean. The 1960s were finally over, and the mood of the country was changing. Personal difficulties began to come to the attention of the Assembly more frequently—alcoholism, mental illness, and sexual difficulties. Hours of Assembly meetings were filled with the discussion of such problems. The Assembly struggled with the issues but could offer little help. The usual solution was to pray for troubled persons, recommend more prayer and meditation, and encourage them to become more active in the community.

Sacramento had first experienced an influx of population into its suburban areas during World War II. In 1940, the

population was 105,000 in the city, and 65,000 in the rest of the county. This trend continued, and by 1960 three-fifths of the population lived in the county. Downtown Sacramento was falling into decline, and much of it became a slum. Efforts at urban renewal began around the Capitol building in the early 1960s. Some of the slum areas were cleared and replaced with modern offices and other buildings. It was not until the mid-1970s, however, that the restoration of historic Sacramento began drawing people back into the inner city.¹⁰²

By late 1973, many of the active Bahá'í youth left in Sacramento were beginning to feel exhausted, and they could no longer sustain the same level of Bahá'í work. The Bahá'ís were unable to maintain the rent on the downtown center and lost it in 1974. The suburban Bahá'í communities were now larger and developing their own independence. Urban blight had done its work in Sacramento, and the area was no longer considered a desirable place to live. Middle-class people had moved to outlying areas.

As the youth era waned, older Bahá'ís in Sacramento gradually returned to activity. As had happened so many times before, there was little continuity—either of membership or perspective—with the earlier period.

Continuation. Following the exodus of Bahá'í youth, the Sacramento community was less active. In 1976, it was not uncommon for only five or six Bahá'ís to be present at the Nineteen-Day Feast, though there were perhaps ten times that many believers in the city.¹⁰³ Seven members of the Assembly that year were new to the community. Sacramento has continued to be characterized by more transience and less stability than its suburban neighbors. This reflects the changing nature and urban complexity of the city at large.

The size of the Bahá'í community had remained small, numbering about 20 in 1964. It increased dramatically to 55

believers by 1967. Although there was a decrease to 39 in 1969, the membership after that time, in a series of rises and falls, gradually moved up to over 100 Bahá'ís in the early 1990s.¹⁰⁴ Active participation in the Nineteen-Day Feasts remained the same, regardless of the community's size, until the Assembly began renting a hall for the celebration in 1989. The use of a large facility in a constant location, in combination with a change in community leadership, the influx of a number of Bahá'ís from Southeast Asia (Hmong), and the enrollment of new Hispanic believers, has increased the average Feast attendance to twenty-five or thirty adults, plus eight or ten children.¹⁰⁵

During the late 1970s, some interest in mass teaching developed among the Bahá'ís of Sacramento. Tens of thousands of rural black people had become Bahá'ís in the South of the United States using this new teaching technique. Bahá'í teachers would approach people on the street, or knock on doors, to invite people to a meeting, or deliver the Bahá'í message and ask for their declaration of faith on the spot. Such radically new methods were controversial. Some Sacramento Bahá'ís did not think it was right to teach in this manner. The method was tried, but the results were generally discouraging, and such projects were discontinued.

The Sacramento community has seen no large influx of new believers since the early 1970s. However, it has witnessed a gradual increase in the number of believers. Feasts, firesides, and deepening classes have continued through the years. The Assembly has been maintained. Occasionally, large and unusual activities have been sponsored which have caught the attention and inspired the participation of surrounding Bahá'í communities.

The Sacramento Assembly sponsored a large, professional art show for three consecutive years in the early 1980s. The show drew entries from all over the country. Professional

judges were used and prizes awarded. Concurrent Bahá'í teaching activities were held, as well as theatrical and musical performances. The events attracted many people and a great deal of public attention.

In June of 1987, a Bahá'í intercommunity committee organized a large commemoration of the seventy-fifth anniversary of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's visit to Sacramento. In October of the same year, the Sacramento community sponsored an even larger event for the same purpose. A crowd of Bahá'ís gathered on the capitol steps to say prayers and remember the visit. A train ride in Old Town was arranged to commemorate 'Abdu'l-Bahá's train ride into the city. The guest speaker, Joseph Ioas, the father of one of the Sacramento Bahá'ís, could still remember meeting 'Abdu'l-Bahá as a child. It was a moving testimony to the endurance of the community.

The Sacramento Bahá'í community was once the child of the larger Bahá'í communities of the San Francisco Bay area. Later, Sacramento itself became the mother-community to a number of suburban areas in the Sacramento region, sponsoring large Bahá'í activities which sustained and encouraged other Bahá'í communities in the area. Now, Sacramento has become one Bahá'í community among many, though its membership is more culturally and economically diverse than that of its suburban neighbors. However, it continues to represent the early history of the Bahá'í Faith in the region, because it was the first Bahá'í community there and because of its connection to 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

NOTES

1. Tom Beebe, *Who's Who in New Thought: Biographical Dictionary of New Thought* (Lakemont, Calif.: CSA Press, 1977) p. 104. Horatio W. Dresser, *A History of the New Thought Movement* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1919) pp. 231-32.

2. Charles S. Braden, *Spirits in Rebellion: The Rise and Development of New Thought* (Dallas: South Methodist University Press, 1963) p. 315. Dresser, *History*, p. 233. Rev. James Hutchinson Smylie, "New Thought," *The New Encyclopedia Britannica, Macropedia*, vol. 13 (Chicago: Helen Hemingway Benton Publisher, 1974) pp. 14-16.

3. In 1906, in response to an invitation, the Chicago House of Spirituality decided that it was desirable for a Bahá'í to speak at the New Thought Convention. They did not want the speaker to be identified as a Bahá'í, however, to avoid any implication that the Bahá'í Faith was a New Thought group. (Minutes, Chicago House of Spirituality, March 10, 1906. National Bahá'í Archives, Wilmette, Illinois.)

In response to questions from New Thought adherents and others involved in the proliferating metaphysical healing movements of the time, 'Abdu'l-Baha addressed the subjects of healing and the nature of man while in the United States. Whereas many of these people insisted that healing was by spiritual means alone, 'Abdu'l-Bahá stated that both spiritual and physical means may have healing powers. In an interview with Mrs. Pell of the Home of Truth, he explained that man reflects the attributes of God but does not share in the Essence of God. (Ellen V. Beecher, "The Difference Between the Metaphysical Teachings of the Present Day and that of the Baha'i Revelation," *Star of the West*, vol. 2 [1911] no. 5, pp. 14-16; Ramona Allen Brown, *Memories of 'Abdu'l-Bahá: Recollections of the Early Days of the Bahá'í Faith in California* [Wilmette, Ill.: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1980] pp. 69-76; "Mrs. Pell Interviews 'Abdu'l-Bahá," Ella Cooper papers, National Bahá'í Archives.)

4. Braden, *Spirits*, p. 313.

5. *Ibid.*, pp. 313-15. Dresser, *History*, p. 233.

6. Militz founded a periodical called *The Master Mind* which published from 1911 to 1924. At one point, the magazine decided to honor fifty people with a year's free subscription. These fifty were chosen from among those whom they felt were in a position to benefit humanity, such as President Theodore Roosevelt, Woodrow Wilson, and Jane Addams. 'Abdu'l-Bahá was included in this group. When he received his subscription, he sent Militz a gracious reply, commending the magazine for its efforts. The letter was published in *The Master Mind*. ("Fifty Eminent Subscribers," *The Master Mind*, vol. 3 [1913] no. 6, p. 191; 'Abdu'l-Bahá, "Letter to the Editor," *ibid.*, vol. 3 [1913] p. 116.)

7. *Sacramento City Directory*, 1903-1921.
8. *The Master Mind*, vol 2 (1912) no. 5, p. clxxvi; *ibid.*, vol. 4 (1913) no. 3, p. 111; *ibid.*, vol. 1 (1911) no. 1, p. xxxix.
9. United States Census, 1910. Sacramento City, California.
10. *Sacramento Bee*, October 19, 1912, p. 11.
11. Mirzá Maḥmúd-i Zarqání, *Kitáb-i Badáyi'u'l-Áthár*, vol. 1 (Bombay: Elegant Photo-Litho Press, 1914) p. 331.
12. Ramona Brown mentions that some believers from Sacramento came to visit 'Abdu'l-Bahá in the Bay Area. Since there were no Bahá'ís in Sacramento at the time, this may be a reference to New Thought sympathizers. (Brown, *Recollections*, p. 44.)
13. United States Census, 1910. Population General Report and Analysis. *Thirteenth Census of the United States*, 1910, vol. 1 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1913).
14. *Ibid.*
15. Zarqání, *Kitáb*, p. 331. He arrived at the train at either 8:00 or 9:00 a.m. (Cf. Zarqání and Ella Cooper, "California Bahá'í History." Ella Cooper papers.)
16. Brown, *Recollections*, p. 85.
17. Zarqání, *Kitáb*, p. 331. The train schedule for that time shows train No. 24 leaving San Francisco at 7:20 a.m., arriving at the Oakland Pier at 7:47 a.m., and at Sacramento at 11:35 a.m. Train No. 4 left at 9:00 a.m. and arrived at Sacramento at 12:35 p.m. Harriet Cline mentions that 'Abdu'l-Bahá arrived around 11:00 a.m. ("A Narration of the Events Leading up to, and the Meetings with 'Abdu'l-Bahá. Ella Cooper papers, National Bahá'í Archives.)
18. At 1235 I Street.
19. Brown, *Recollections*, pp. 85-86.
20. Zarqání, *Kitáb*, p. 331.
21. There are four distinct accounts of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's visit to the Home of Truth in Sacramento. The accounts differ in some details, but they can be easily reconciled. See Cline, "Narration," pp. 8-9; Zarqání, *Kitáb*, p. 331 ff.; Brown, *Recollections*, pp. 85-86; Bijou Straun's transcripts of the talk given at the Home of Truth (Ella Cooper papers); and Cooper, "California," p. 6.
22. "Interview with 'Abdu'l-Baha by F. R. Hinkle, reporter on the Sacramento Union, Hotel Sacramento, October 25, 5:00 p.m." Ella Cooper papers.
23. Cooper, "California," p. 6; Interview No. 4. Interviews with

Bahá'ís who are or have been members of the Sacramento Bahá'í community were conducted by the author, and they remain in her possession. They will be referred to by number here to protect the privacy of those involved.

24. The first local Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Sacramento, in 1938, had its official photograph taken standing under that same tree. A row of three evergreen trees near that place is still standing on the north side of the Capitol. I made many attempts to locate the exact tree that 'Abdu'l-Bahá may have blessed, interviewing Bahá'ís, viewing old photos, and studying archival records for Capitol Park. Though I could establish an approximate location, I have never found the tree. According to one source (Interview No. 4), this tree may have been removed to make room for the extension of the Capitol building.

Somehow for the Sacramento Bahá'ís the tree came to symbolize 'Abdu'l-Bahá's visit, a tangible link to the person and the spirit of the Master. All other landmarks associated with the visit have been torn down: the train station, the Home of Truth, and Hotel Sacramento. But, the trees in Capitol Park remain as a living legacy of his visit.

25. "Women Grovel to Persian Prophet," *Sacramento Union*, October 27, 1912, p. 1.

26. "Talk by 'Abdu'l-Bahá, Hotel Sacramento, Parlor on Mezzanine Floor, October 25, 7:30 p.m." Ella Cooper papers.

27. 'Abdu'l-Bahá, *The Promulgation of Universal Peace: Talks Delivered by 'Abdu'l-Bahá during His Visit to the United States and Canada in 1912* (Chicago: Bahai Publishing Committee, 1922-25 [Wilmette, Ill.: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1982]) pp. 370-76.

28. "Talk by 'Abdu'l-Bahá, Hotel Sacramento, Parlor on Mezzanine Floor, October 25, 9:15 p.m." Ella Cooper papers.

29. "Interview given by 'Abdu'l-Bahá to Ida McCormick, Maud Sickles, and Myrtle Nerhbass, Maids in Hotel Sacramento, October 26, 8:15 a.m." Ella Cooper papers.

30. "Message from 'Abdu'l-Bahá to Japanese Boys, Portland, Oregon; Hotel Sacramento, October 26, 8:25 a.m." Ella Cooper papers.

31. Cline, "Narration," pp. 9-10.

32. 'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Promulgation*, pp. 376-77. Ramona Brown, who was a teenager at the time of her visit to Sacramento, tells how she felt when she was present at the signing of the United Nations charter in San Francisco in 1945: "Then, in the most thrilling moment of

the conference, a flag was brought onto the stage: the flag of the United Nations. To my great astonishment I saw the fulfillment of prophecy. The wish of 'Abdu'l-Bahá had come true; the flag of international peace was unfurled in California." (Brown, *Recollections*, p. 88.)

33. William Lawson, "Noted Oriental Not a Prophet But a Teacher," *Sacramento Bee*, October 26, 1912, p. 1; "Noted Persian Teacher Here Pleads for World Peace," *Sacramento Bee*, October 26, 1912, p. 1; "Persian Prophet, Leader of Baha Movement, Lectures on Doctrines," *Sacramento Union*, October 26, 1912, p. 5; "Persian Priest Lectures Here," *Sacramento Star*, October 26, 1912, p. 1.

34. "Women Grovel," *Sacramento Union*.

35. Cooper, "California," p. 5.

36. "Notes by B. S. Straun, Cafe, Hotel Sacramento, October 26, noon." Ella Cooper papers.

37. Zarqání, *Kitáb*, p. 331.

38. Possibly the No. 4, at 12:50 p.m., or the No. 2, at 1:40 p.m., by the Overland Limited.

39. Brown, *Recollections*, pp. 106-107.

40. Zarqání, *Kitáb*, p. 333. Translated by the Research Department, Bahá'í World Center.

41. While living there he discovered the O'Neill family, but it is not clear how or when. They may have been living there first as Bahá'ís, or he may have brought them into the Faith. (Personal communication from Marion Yazdi [Ali M. Yazdi's wife])

42. Letter from Marion Yazdi to the author, November 25, 1987.

43. Marion Carpenter Yazdi, *Youth in the Vanguard: Memoirs and Letters Collected by the First Bahá'í Student at Berkeley and at Stanford University* (Wilmette: Ill., Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1982) pp. 49, 115 ff.

44. *Sacramento Bee*, January 30, 1924, p. 14.

45. Enola Leonard remembered that some of the early Bahá'ís in Sacramento were taught by Orcella Rexford, though her name does not appear on a list of traveling teachers who visited the city. The size of the group and the fact that some of them did not consider themselves to be Bahá'ís at that time, also suggests Rexford's teaching methods.

46. The term *Assembly* was commonly used by Bahá'ís at this time to refer to any Bahá'í group or gathering.

47. *Sacramento Bee*, January 30, 1925, p. 14.

48. Horace Holley, Secretary, to Frances Kuphal, September 21, 1925. National Bahá'í Archives.

49. Mrs. Emma Dearborn appears to be listed as a member of the Bahai Assembly of Sacramento in 1925. (The list includes Mr. and Mrs. I. Dearborn.) She states that she did not accept the Faith until 1926, in Sacramento. (Bahá'í Historical Record cards. c.1935.)

50. *Sacramento Bee*, January 30, 1925, p. 14.

51. Letter to Shoghi Effendi, September 27, 1924. Western States Teaching Conference to National Spiritual Assembly, October 9, 1924. (Western States Region Book. San Francisco Bahá'í Archives.)

52. Harriet Cline, "Narration," p. 7. Sacramento Bahá'í Archives. (Also, Ella Cooper papers, National Bahá'í Archives.)

53. Bahai Temple Unity Contribution Journal, 1909-1920. National Bahá'í Archives. Frances Kuphal to George Latimer, March 23, 1921. George Latimer papers, National Bahá'í Archives. Bahá'í Historical Record Cards, National Bahá'í Archives.

54. Yazdi, *Youth*, pp. 71-72. Elmer Dearborn was adopted by his grandmother and used her last name.

55. Frances Kuphal to Bahá'í News Letter, n.d. [1926], National Bahá'í Archives.

56. Horace Holley, Secretary, to Frances Cline Kuphal, August 3, 1926, National Bahá'í Archives.

57. Interview No. 1 (1987).

58. Dwight Allen, "John William Allen," In Memoriam section of *The Bahá'í World*, vol. 18 (Haifa: Bahá'í World Centre, 1986) p. 725.

59. Interview No. 1.

60. Interview No. 2 (June 27, 1987). Interview No. 3 (July 1987). Interview No. 4 (June 1987).

61. National Teaching Committee to Elizabeth L. Duffy, January 5, 1938. National Bahá'í Archives.

62. "Minutes of the Meeting Covering the Formation of the First Spiritual Assembly of the Bahais of Sacramento, California on April 21, 1938," Sacramento Bahá'í Archives. *The Bahá'í World*, vol. 8 (Wilmette, Ill.: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1942) p. 340.

63. Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Sacramento to Shoghi Effendi, June 12, 1939. Sacramento Bahá'í Archives. Regional Bahá'í Teaching Committee for Arizona, California and Nevada, circular letter dated April 13, 1936. Sacramento Bahá'í Archives.

64. Ibid.

65. Later Marzieh Gail.

66. National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States and Canada to Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Sacramento, July 21, 1939. National Bahá'í Archives.

67. Membership list, dated January 11, 1940. Sacramento Bahá'í Archives.

68. Annual Report of the Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Sacramento, California, n.d. [April 21, 1941]. Sacramento Bahá'í Archives.

69. Ibid.

70. Sacramento Assembly to National Spiritual Assembly, January 26, 1944. National Bahá'í Archives.

71. Interview No. 5 (July 1988).

72. Sacramento Assembly to National Spiritual Assembly, August 21, 1940. National Bahá'í Archives.

73. Minutes, August 24, 1944. Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Sacramento. Sacramento Bahá'í Archives.

74. Louis Bourgeois's ashes are buried in the East Lawn Cemetery in Sacramento.

75. Interview No. 2.

76. Minutes, May 20, 1947. Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Sacramento. Sacramento Bahá'í Archives.

77. The date is approximate.

78. The Bahá'í teaching that all religions have come from God, with the teachings appropriate for their time, in a progressive unfoldment of one divine plan.

79. The booth received two awards and won a plaque.

80. Interviews No. 2, 3, and 4.

81. Interview No. 3.

82. *News from the Bahá'í Community of Sacramento*, October 1958.

83. Interview No. 4.

84. Sacramento Assembly to Bahá'í Area Teaching Committee for the Southwest States, September 7, 1959. Sacramento Bahá'í Archives.

85. Dated April 4, 1960, pp. 3-4.

86. Sacramento Assembly to Area Teaching Committee, May 25, 1960. Sacramento Bahá'í Archives.

87. National Spiritual Assembly to Sacramento Assembly, May 12, 1960 and May 15, 1960. Sacramento Bahá'í Archives.

88. National Spiritual Assembly to Sacramento Assembly, March 10, 1961. Sacramento Bahá'í Archives.

89. Sacramento Bahá'í Archive. Personal recollections of the author.

90. Interview No. 7. Interview No. 6.

91. Interview No. 6.

92. A teaching aid published by the National Spiritual Assembly which had a color photo of the Wilmette Temple on one side and a listing of ten Bahá'í social principles on the other.

93. Interview No. 6.

94. Interview No. 10 (July 1988 and September 1991).

95. Ibid.

96. Interview No. 6. Interview No. 8. Minutes, March 5, 1968. Sacramento Assembly. Sacramento Bahá'í Archives.

97. Interview No. 8.

98. Interview No. 10 (September 1991).

99. He eventually cut his hair in response to pressure to conform to the laws outlined in the *Synopsis and Codification of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas* (Haifa: Bahá'í World Centre, 1973), which became available in 1973. (Interview 10.)

100. Interview No. 4.

101. Interview No. 10.

102. Joseph A. McGowan and Terry R. Willis, *Sacramento: Heart of the Golden State* (Woodland Hills, Calif.: Windsor Publications, Inc., 1983) pp. 85-104.

103. Interview No. 13 (July 1988).

104. There were about 110 adults and 60 children in the community in 1991. Interview No. 15 (October 1991).

105. Interview 15.