National Bahá'í Archives, Wilmette, Illinois.

BAHÁ'ÍS OF BALTIMORE
holding a framed copy of the Greatest Name in front, July 1909.

THE BAHÁ'ÍS OF BALTIMORE, 1898-1990

by Deb Clark

In 1899, Hazel Clarke was six months old and deathly ill. Her mother, Kate Kidwell Clarke, had been to the doctors at Johns Hopkins Hospital, but they were unable to do anything for the baby. She would not eat. One day, as Kate was returning home from the doctor's on the streetcar, a woman sitting next to her saw her sobbing and said, "You seem to be upset."

"Yes," answered Kate. "My baby is dying and nothing can be done."

"Have you tried praying?" asked the woman.

Kate Clarke was a devout Christian. "Yes, I have," she replied. "Nothing helps."

The woman said, "I know a remarkable woman who may be able to help you. You must go see her at 895 Park Avenue." The woman wrote down the address and handed Kate the piece of paper.

Kate got off the streetcar near Park Avenue and found 895, where a sign in the window read "Battee Institute of Self Knowledge." She went up the front steps and knocked on the door. When she was let inside, she explained the problem. Pearle Doty held the baby and prayed for her. When she was finished and had handed the child back to her mother, Kate thought she saw a slightly healthier glow in the child. By the time Kate got home, Hazel wanted to eat.

The next day she was fully recovered.[1]

The Beginnings of the Baltimore Community: The early Bahá'ís of Baltimore remembered Pearle Doty as the first Bahá'í in the city and the unofficial leader of the community during its first years. Born Pearle Battee in Alexandria, Ohio, in 1868, she moved to Mulberry Street in the Mount Vernon area of Baltimore, the city where her father, Elisha Battee had been born in 1835.[2] She found work as a professor in 1892, but her calling was as a faith healer.

Pearle Battee began her practice as a phrenologist, treating people's infirmities by reading the markings and bumps on their heads. At the time, this was a fairly common alternative form of healing, based on the belief that the mind and body are a whole entity. This practice opened in about 1893, at 111 Franklin, where Battee resided during her first year in Baltimore. It was a neighborhood of artists. The Charcoal Club on the corner of Howard and Franklin was frequented by artists, musicians, and writers, who would also meet in each other's homes to discuss the events of the day.[3]

Henry (Harry) Archer Doty, born September 18, 1874, to Aristippus Doty and Josephine Charlotte Carpenter in Charleston, South Carolina, was the fifth of eleven children, and the first son to survive. His father was a military man and a school principal, a descendant of Edward Doty who arrived on the Mayflower in 1620.[4] At the age of twenty, Harry Doty moved to Baltimore to work in a laboratory. He lived on Greenmount Avenue in the Old Town area, which would have been central to both Mount Vernon and Johns Hopkins Hospital, where he may have been employed.[5]

While he may have been planning a career as a physician, he did not pursue this. After about a year in Baltimore, he moved to 111 Franklin, the same house—probably a boarding house—where Pearle Battee lived, and he was employed as a bookkeeper. Doty must have been fascinated by Battee, an older woman with an exotic healing practice; and, appar-

ently, she by him. In April of 1896, only a year and a half after Doty came to town, Pearle Battee gave birth to their son, Henry Battee Doty.[6] Harry Doty let his family know, at that point, that he and Pearle were married and that he was publishing a magazine called *Self Knowledge*.[7] By 1897, Harry was working as a phrenologist along with his wife, and the two of them had incorporated their business as Doty and Doty.[8]

Elisha Battee moved in with Pearle and Henry Doty sometime during 1897, and the Battee Institute of Self Knowledge became official. It was located at 895 Park Avenue, a very fashionable street of brownstone houses with finely worked dark wood interiors and marble steps.[9] Clearly, the Doty family was doing well. The neighborhood was inhabited by professionals: doctors, judges, and lawyers. There were several bookstores nearby, including one owned by a poet, and a corner drugstore where young couples could go to drink a soda.[10]

Harry Doty managed the Institute, Pearle Doty was the principal, and Elisha Battee was healer and teacher. The Institute touted its monthly magazine, *Self Knowledge*, as a publication "devoted to the unfolding of the Divinity in humanity."[11] A half-page advertisement for it read: "The aim of this Institute is to unfold the highest possibilities on all planes of consciousness. All diseases of mind or body successfully treated by right understanding of the laws of being and proper application to individual needs. Phrenology and mental science healing taught and practiced."[12]

A year after Pearle Doty had healed her baby, Kate Clarke tried to return to the Institute of Self Knowledge, but it was no longer there.[13] She did not realize that the Dotys had moved a block away to 808 North Howard Street.[14] Sometime during 1900, both Harry Doty and Elisha Battee either died or moved out, and the child, Henry Battee Doty, who was then only five years old, was living with his father's parents.

Pearle Doty continued as a metaphysician until she died in about 1903.[15]

Pearle Doty may have attended Bahá'í classes in New York delivered by Ibrahim Kheiralla, an important Bahá'í teacher, as early as 1897. Her name appears on a list put together that year of people who were to be invited (or had previously attended) these classes.[16] Her name and the name of her father, Elisha Battee, also appear on a list of those who completed Bahá'í lessons in Baltimore in 1898. But the fact that Doty's name is on a similar list for New York suggests that she originally took the classes there.[17]

By 1901, fifty persons had been attracted to the Faith in Baltimore. The majority of these Bahá'ís were women, and most were from a working-class or professional middle-class background.[18] Those who became Bahá'ís during this period formed the nucleus of the early Baltimore Bahá'í Community. However, most of them do not appear to have remained active in the community for long after Pearle Doty's death.[19] Bahá'ís moved to Baltimore from other localities, which helped to sustain the community in its early years.

Some Early Bahá'ís of Baltimore: Charlotte Brittingham Dixon of Princess Anne, Maryland, began a spiritual quest which took her to Chicago in 1896. She had a feeling that there was something in that city that she should know about. So when it was time to return to Maryland in 1897, and she still had found nothing, she resisted. She later wrote: "I besought God most earnestly, often lying on my face on the floor, that I should not be allowed to leave Chicago, without finding someone who knew of this Revelation."[20] One day, while she was praying, a woman rang the doorbell asking for something, and Dixon let her in. As they talked, the woman suggested that she seek out a Mrs. Reed, who was teaching the gospel

in the slums. That afternoon, Dixon tried to find Mrs. Reed, but was told that she was out of town. She returned the next day, and the day after, only to be turned away again. On the third day, a neighbor heard her asking for Mrs. Reed and said, "Woman, God sent you here; you are not seeking Mrs. Reed. We have the greatest message since Christ."[21]

The neighbor told Charlotte Dixon that she had recently accepted the Bahá'í Revelation and directed her to Ibrahim Kheiralla, who was giving lessons on the new religion. She attended his classes in Chicago, accepted the Faith, and returned to Maryland, believing herself to be the first Bahá'í there. She wrote to her brother and sister-in-law in New Jersey about the Bahá'í teachings and convinced them to travel to New York to take Kheiralla's classes. She also taught the Faith to at least six other relatives in Maryland, as well as her daughter and sister in Philadelphia.[22]

Dixon's sister, Evalina Brittingham, lived in Baltimore, and it may have been through her that the Faith was introduced into that city. Her name appears among the fifteen Baltimore Bahá'ís listed in the Supplication Book for the year 1898, while Charlotte Dixon's name appears in 1897. The Supplication Book records the names of those who completed Kheiralla's classes and who wrote letters of "supplication" to 'Abdu'l-Bahá confessing their faith. A checkmark placed after Dixon's name indicates that she received the Greatest Name from Kheiralla, his final initiation into Bahá'í membership. However, there are no check marks after the names of the Baltimoreans whose names appear in 1898.[23] Brittingham was an active Bahá'í in Baltimore during 1900.[24]

Edward Struven is also listed on the 1898 list. His parents were from Bremen, Germany, a city with close ties to Baltimore throughout the nineteenth century. Baltimore was the largest tobacco export harbor in America, and Bremen was the largest tobacco import harbor in Europe.[25] Edward

lived with his parents, Rosa and Dietrich Struven, on Thames Street in Fells Point, until he left to study at Cornell University in Ithaca, New York. His younger brother, Howard Struven, learned to make things with his hands and built a greenhouse when he was only eleven years old.[26] Later, he worked as a shipbuilder and lost a finger in an accident.[27]

Edward Struven learned of the Bahá'í Faith in Ithaca from Lua Getsinger, an important Bahá'í teacher. He considered himself to be a Bahá'í immediately, and his brother accepted the Faith in 1899. The Struven brothers remained active Bahá'ís for many years.

Baltimore has always been a city of divided neighborhoods, separated by class, race, or ethnicity. In 1890, with a population of about 430,000, Baltimore was more than two-thirds white and about one-sixth black. About 12,000 foreign immigrants arrived between 1879 and 1900. Sixty percent of the new arrivals were German, between twenty and twenty-five percent were Irish; and Britons, Russians, Poles, and Austrians made up five percent each.[28]

The chief industries were canning and the production of men's clothing. Trade, transportation, and service industries were also important.[29] Industrialization brought more jobs, but many of them were in sweatshops full of low-paid workers, mostly recent immigrants and their children—Jews, Lithuanians, and Bohemians.[30] The sweatshops, particularly the coat tailors, were usually found in houses in East Baltimore.[31]

The Bahá'í community was comprised of people from a variety of backgrounds who lived in different parts of town. Several Bahá'ís lived in South Baltimore, which was inhabited mostly by working-class blacks and whites. William B. Stoffel, a railroad inspector, and Charles Lampe, a machinist, lived there. Catherine A. Anderson, also lived in South Baltimore near the Camden Station.[32]

Fells Point, in East Baltimore, was a docking area, as well as a home for the sweatshops, and many new immigrants were to be found there. Bahá'ís in Fells Point included Winnifred Watson, and Elizabeth Emmell, who worked in a lunchroom and was married to a musician. Nellie C. Babbit, who lived in Mount Clare in southwest Baltimore, was married to a painter. On the other side of town, in an area known as Goose Hill in west Baltimore, were Ann E. Stansbury and Mary E. Powell, the wife of a conductor. Later on, Howard Struven had a home in this area where he entertained 'Abdu'l-Bahá during his trip to Baltimore.[33]

Although the Bahá'ís of Baltimore were not in favor of any formal organization at this time, they held meetings and were in contact with 'Abdu'l-Bahá.[34] They were addressed by 'Abdu'l-Bahá in several Tablets (letters) written to America and mentioned in others. In one Tablet translated around 1900, 'Abdu'l-Bahá praised Mrs. Emmell and Mrs. Powell for having meetings in their homes.[35]

Although Baltimore was a large Bahá'í community during the first few years of the century, nearby Washington, D.C., appears to have been the center of more Bahá'í activity. Several prominent Bahá'í teachers lived there, including Lua Getsinger, Laura Barney, and Charles Mason Remey. 'Abdu'l-Bahá wrote often to the Bahá'ís of Washington and urged them to assist the Baltimore community. In one Tablet, addressed to Remey, he said that "every week, two or three of the Washington friends should go to Baltimore and endeavor to help and encourage the friends there."[36]

Whether or not such regular contact was established is unclear, but there is evidence that Baltimore Bahá'ís received some support from the Washington believers. When Sarah Jane Farmer was staying with Washington Bahá'ís and holding Bahá'í meetings there in 1901, for example, she also met with the Bahá'ís of Baltimore.[37]

At least one Baltimore Bahá'í, Frederick Woodward, moved to Washington, D.C., in 1902. 'Abdu'l-Bahá instructed him to "receive proofs from Mirza Abul Fazl [Mírzá Abú'l-Faḍl]," the famous Bahá'í scholar he had sent to America to instruct the believers in the teachings.[38]

Abú'l-Faḍl's visit to Baltimore received a great deal of press coverage. One article, in the *Baltimore Sun* of February 1, 1902, announced the visit and styled him the "High Priest of Behaism." The *Sun* reporter had visited Abú'l-Faḍl in Washington, where he was living at the time. In Baltimore, Abú'l-Faḍl spoke to over one hundred people at a public meeting held at 1041 North Eutaw Street, "the headquarters of the cult." Colonel Nathan Ward Fitzgerald, of Washington, D.C., conducted the evening lesson and quoted scripture to support the "Beha'i claim that Christ had returned." The article reported that Mírzá Asadu'lláh, another Persian teacher, and his interpreter, Niaz Effendi Kermani, had held a conference in Baltimore two weeks before. When the reporter saw them in Washington, they were speaking to two inquirers from Virginia.[39]

The article went on: "Washington has recently become a seat or center of the new religion in this country, and several prominent believers and teachers are now there. Among these is Mrs. Lua M. Getsinger, a well known resident of the capital." It recounted a short history of the Bahá'í Faith, starting with the Báb, and explained that the Bahá'ís use a "remarkable" method of "propaganda." First they agree with you that your religion had divine origins, but then they add that "every perfect man comes to the point where he is no longer in complete harmony with the surroundings which his forefathers prepared." The article reported that there were about seventy professed believers in Baltimore. However, the census reported only twenty-eight Bahá'ís in 1906, and that figure may be high.[40]

Transition and Organization: Pearle Doty, remembered by the Bahá'ís as the "leader" of the community in Baltimore in the early days, died sometime in 1903. 'Abdu'l-Bahá wrote a consoling Tablet to the Bahá'ís of Baltimore saying that they should not sigh in grief over her death: "I hope her noble son may seek the Path wherein his mother walked and may become better and more illustrious; nay, rather, the lights of his love may also take effect in his grandparents." He went on: "As to ye who are friends of that bird of the meadow of guidance, ye must, after her, have such unison, love, association and unity that it may make things better and more favorable than they were during her days."[41]

Another Tablet from 'Abdu'l-Bahá, addressed to Mason Remey, says: "Thou hast written concerning Baltimore. Convey respectful greetings on my behalf to Miss . . . and say, 'Exert thyself as much as thou canst in order that thou mayest illumine Baltimore, lay there an eternal foundation and ignite a lamp whose rays may shine through cycles and ages.'"[42]

In 1904, much of the city of Baltimore burned down in a great fire that lasted two days and spread over one hundred and forty acres. Something caught fire in a dry goods firm that stood between Hopkins Place and Liberty Street. Most of the reconstruction of the city was finished by 1906.[43] However, the disruption may have contributed to a decline in Bahá'í activity.

It was Edward Struven who lived in Catonsville in Baltimore County, outside the city limits, who held the Bahá'í community together after Doty's passing. The believers continued to meet in each other's homes, as before. They received correspondence from other Bahá'í communities, but avoided any organization and kept no records. They did, however, send Struven to Chicago as a representative for the first Bahai Temple Unity convention held March 22-23, 1909. That same year Struven reported to the *Bahai Bulletin* (pub-

lished in New York) that: "Due to this lack of numbers and the many duties and family cares and ties of our brothers and sisters, our regular Tuesday meetings average between 6 and 9 in attendance. Then because of our proximity to Washington and principally for the reason that none of us have arisen to the actual work of teaching, our progress has been very slow."[44] In 1906, the Washington Bahá'í community paid the train fare for Baltimore Bahá'ís to travel to a lecture given by Lua Getsinger in Washington.[45]

When Struven returned from the Chicago convention, he brought a new spirit with him. It was then that the Baltimore community decided to "form an organization to help the Cause along, believing that as a body more work could be done, and correspondence attended to properly, besides keeping a record of meetings."[46] Acting as temporary chairman of the newly formed Baltimore "Assembly," as it was known, Edward Struven appointed a committee of four: Joseph Hope, Gertrude Stanwood, Howard Struven, and Maud Thompson, and Edwin B. Eardley as secretary, to frame a new constitution and by-laws for the community. The by-laws were approved on May 4, 1909. It was then decided to write to 'Abdu'l-Bahá telling him that Baltimore had organized in this way, and that it was intended as a temporary organization until the laws of the *Kitáb-i Aqdas* (Bahá'u'lláh's "Most Holy Book") were adopted. The letter expressed the community's appreciation that unity in Baltimore was achieved through the efforts of the Washington friends, whom 'Abdu'l-Bahá had instructed to support the Bahá'ís of Baltimore. They asked 'Abdu'l-Bahá to be Honored Head of their assembly and to select other honorary members if he so desired. The letter was signed by twenty-five believers.[47]

The by-laws called for spiritual meetings of the community to be opened by the members repeating the Greatest Name, followed by a prayer read by the chairman of the

meeting. Unity feasts were to be held every nineteen days, and other meetings held on Tuesday evenings and Sunday afternoons. At the end of each meeting, those present would decide who would lead the next meeting. Parliamentary procedure was to be followed when business was conducted. Community officers were to be elected every six months, in March and September. All the meetings were to close either with the recitation of a passage from the Hidden Words of Bahá'u'lláh or a prayer, or both, and then all should repeat the Greatest Name. It seems that the community tried hard to prevent any one person from assuming leadership and that they adhered to the procedures they had adopted.[48]

A few weeks after organizing their group, the Baltimore community wrote to other Bahá'í assemblies to inform them of the names and addresses of their own officers. Believers from Washington continued to support activities in Baltimore. For example, Fanny Knobloch was a regular visitor who read lessons by 'Abdu'l-Bahá at her meetings. Pauline Hannen, another Washingtonian, frequently attended Holy Day celebrations and spoke at other Bahá'í gatherings. The community used booklets on the Bahá'í teachings written by Hooper Harris, Isabella Brittingham, and Paul Dealy.[49]

In 1909, Baltimore Bahá'ís included: Edward Struven, who now worked for the Maryland Viavi Company and lived in Catonsville; Margaret (Maud) E. Thompson, the wife of a clerk, who also lived in Catonsville; Estelle Lowndes was the associate manager of the Maryland Viavi Company. One of her neighbors, Anna McKhust, was also a Bahá'í. Gertrude Stanwood, an artist, and Sadie C. Ambrose, a dressmaker, lived only a few blocks from Pearle Doty's old home, and may have become Bahá'ís as a result of her efforts.

Other Bahá'ís were: Edwin H. Eardley, and his wife Louisa, and his sister, Beatrice (Eardley), all of whom lived together. The women ran a hat shop (L & B Eardley Com-

pany) from their home on O'Donnell Street in Highlandtown. Edwin Eardley worked as a draftsman and served as the secretary for the community, recording the minutes in a beautiful script. Charles W. Mann was a clerk living near Patterson Park, and Joseph W. Grant ran a grocery store in the same area. Charles L. Lampe was a pipefitter living in South Baltimore. Winnifred E. Watson was still in the community, employed as a buyer and living in fashionable Bolton Hill. Mary E. Lane lived there also. Joseph Hope, a stenographer, lived just east of the Jones Falls, near the Old Town Mall, formerly Jones Town, the oldest settled area of Baltimore.[50]

The Bahá'í community established three funds: The Kappes Fund, to send to Miss Lillian Kappes, a Bahá'í from northern New Jersey, living in Iran at the request of 'Abdu'l-Bahá to assist the Bahá'ís there; the Temple Fund; and a fund for traveling expenses (railway fare for visiting delegates) the disbursement of which was left to the treasurer's discretion.[51]

The Bahai Temple Unity was, at that time, the national executive committee elected by delegates from local Bahá'í communities. The raising of funds for the construction of the Temple was the subject of much local discussion. Various means were devised to raise money, such as the donation of a quilt made by a Baltimore Bahá'í. A room was donated by Miss Dorr in Washington where visiting Baltimore friends could pay a contribution, in lieu of rent, to be turned over to the Temple Fund. Also, Cincinnati sent twenty-five "blessing boxes" in which money could be put for various blessings "as they come to mind," like wishing wells. This money was also sent to the Temple Fund.[52]

Howard Struven was twenty-seven years old in 1909 when 'Abdu'l-Bahá asked him to travel around the world with Mason Remey to visit Bahá'í communities and teach the Faith. The Assembly in Baltimore gave him a letter, signed by twenty-three believers, to deliver to 'Abdu'l-Bahá when he

arrived in 'Akká. He left on July 20, and the community invited Washington believers to a farewell gathering for him. About this trip, Shoghi Effendi later wrote: "Mason Remey voyaged to Russia and Persia, and later, with Howard Struven, circled, for the first time in Bahá'í history, the globe, visiting on his way the Hawaiian Islands, Japan, China, India and Burma."[53]

In early September, Howard Struven wrote from Denver to tell of teaching successes, and from San Francisco to say he would be sailing on November 17. Both he and Mason Remey sent letters with news of their trip which were published in *Star of the West* and *Bahai News*, and which Remey later compiled into a book. By February 1910, the two had visited Japan, China, and Singapore, and were teaching in Burma.[54] Struven later told some Baltimore Bahá'ís that he had prayed while Remey lectured, and that when they arrived in the Holy Land, 'Abdu'l-Bahá had embraced him and praised him for his efforts.[55]

'Abdu'l-Bahá gave Struven a letter to carry back with him to Baltimore. It read: "O Ye Merciful Assembly . . . He became the cause of the glory of the believers of Baltimore and imparted happiness and joy to the friends and maidservants of the Merciful. He sacrificed everything in the Path of the Kingdom and imparted life to many souls."[56]

Before leaving on his global trip, Struven had spoken enthusiastically about the Washington Sunday School, and urged the Bahá'ís to start a similar one in Baltimore. Other believers took up the task. Grace Mann offered her home at 1920 Orleans Street, and Maud Thompson offered her services in gathering children. Pauline Hannen also helped. One thousand invitation cards were printed up to advertise the Sunday School, which had its first meeting September 19, 1909. Five children attended, aged five to twelve, as well as one sixteen-year-old youth.

The community also planned a public meeting for which

a newspaper advertisement was prepared. The ad read: "Can the religions of the world be united? If so, on what basis? Free lecture by Howard MacNutt of Brooklyn, New York, Sunday afternoon, Oct. 24, 1909, 3 P.M., Florist Exchange Hall, Franklin and St. Paul Streets." Two hundred invitations were printed for Bahá'ís to give to friends who "would be likely to attend."

Also in 1909, the Assembly noted that Mrs. Carline, originally from Baltimore but now living in Washington, had reported on her "successful meeting of colored people held during the week."[57]

Howard Struven returned to Baltimore in September of 1910, and he and Edwin Eardley were elected as delegates to the Bahai Temple Unity convention held in Chicago. The Assembly supplied them with letters of credential, and Edwin left with a number 9 chalked on his suitcase.[58]

In 1910, the Bahá'í funds were again divided into categories: general use, the Temple Fund, a translator, and for the convention in Chicago. During the summer, a series of outdoor meetings were planned at the home of Rose Struven, Howard and Edward's mother, on Sundays. The speakers were to be Pauline Hannen, Mirza Ahmad Sohrab, Hooper Harris, Mons. H. Dreyfus, Joseph Hannen, Lua Getsinger, Ameen Ullah Fareed, Howard MacNutt, and Mason Remey.[59] All except Fareed were members of the Washington or New York communities.

One day in 1911, Eusibia Day Dorrida and her neighbor went shopping at a public food market in the city. For Dorrida, this day was to be a turning point in her life. When she returned home to unload her purchases, she discovered among her vegetables a little printed pamphlet, one inch square, announcing that the Lord of Ages had come and inviting her to a meeting. She went to the meeting and that same day accepted the truth of the Bahá'í Faith.[60]

In 1911, Edwin Eardley was the delegate to the Bahai Temple Unity convention.[61] Howard Struven was the alternate. While in the Chicago area, Eardley visited the Bahá'ís in Kenosha, Wisconsin.[62] The convention sent greetings to the Peace Congress which was held in Baltimore on May 6, 1911. In August, Howard Struven was sent as a delegate to the first annual conference of the Persian-American Educational Society in Washington, and was on the Hall Committee. His brother Edward attended also. Perhaps beginning to demonstrate its independence from Washington, the Assembly told Joseph and Pauline Hannen, who had been asked to come to Baltimore to conduct Bible studies, that they need not come any longer.

Both Struven brothers married in 1912. Edward married Estelle Lowndes, his former coworker, and they moved to her house on North Avenue. He was now employed as a mechanical engineer. Howard married Ruby (Hebe) Moore, Lua Getsinger's sister.

'Abdu'l-Bahá in Baltimore: Although 'Abdu'l-Bahá visited Baltimore only briefly, his stay there was extremely important to the Bahá'ís there, and anecdotes about his visit became an important element of the community's heritage. When the Bahá'ís heard of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's planned trip to America, they began to prepare for his arrival. Five days before his ship was to arrive in New York, the Baltimore Bahá'ís were expecting his imminent visit to their city. The *Baltimore Sun* announced: ABDUL BAHA COMING. The article stated that he would speak on Sunday, April 21, at the First Independent Christ's Church (Unitarian).[63] They must have been disappointed.

'Abdu'l-Bahá apparently made his plans day by day. When the believers realized that he would not be coming immediately to Baltimore, some of them traveled to New York to see

him. According to an oral tradition in the community, Edward Struven rode the rails to get there. When he arrived, he was dishevelled from his trip. 'Abdu'l-Bahá had him sit down and offered him a bowl of Persian rice. When he finished eating it, 'Abdu'l-Bahá gave him another one.[64]

The biggest day in the life of the Baltimore Bahá'í community began at Camden Station on November 11, 1912, when, accompanied by a party of seven—including two translators and a secretary, 'Abdu'l-Bahá arrived at 11:00 a.m. from Washington, D.C. He went to the fashionable Hotel Rennert at Saratoga and Liberty Streets, where he met the press and took a short rest.

When he got to the Unitarian Chapel on Hamilton Street at noon, "the hall had been filled for a while before the hour set for his address, with followers, Johns Hopkins professors, and many business and professional men." 'Abdu'l-Bahá stood on the platform, "enveloped by a long black robe, with an oriental cap upon his head." The interpreter was Dr. Fareed, a Persian Bahá'í.[65]

The *News American* account of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's talk included a three paragraph summary which focused on the parts of the talk concerned with the unity of religion and the difference between its essentials and accidental aspects. However, his remarks in their entirety, as recorded by Jack Solomon, a stenographer, also specifically referred to the lecture he had delivered the day before to a largely Jewish audience in a Washington synogogue.[66]

The report in the *Sun* included illustrations depicting 'Abdu'l-Bahá in five different aspects, under the headline: PERSIAN PHILOSOPHER IN STRIKING POSES. The accompanying article was entitled: WOMEN KISS HIS HAND. Although the headlines seem rather sardonic, the contents of the article appear to be accurate. 'Abdu'l-Bahá was escorted from the train station to a waiting automobile by six people, sur-

rounded by a crowd of well-dressed women. He greeted each of his followers as they were presented to him by his interpreter, Dr. Fareed. The article continues:

> At the lecture he wore a robe of black with triangular insert of light tan in front reaching from hem to neck.
>
> A striking-looking man of about 70 years, he's of average height, with a strong rugged face covered with a short white beard. His cheekbones are high, his eyes bright and flashing.

The article explained that 'Abdu'l-Bahá was distinguishable from his companions in that he wore a white turban, while they wore black ones.

> The lecture was delivered in Persian in an impressive manner. His voice was low-pitched, but at times increased in volume. He spoke a few minutes before pausing to let the interpreter translate.
>
> He used frequent gestures, the favorite one being an inclusive swing of both arms to show the universality of the doctrine he propounded. He also frequently leaned over the reading desk and looked at his hearers.
>
> "God is one, we are his children, submerged in the sea of his kindness," was his theme. He said all divine religions had two parts, the essentials, which dealt with morality and ethical standards, and the non-essentials which change with time and place. In proof of this, he compared the teaching of Moses and Christ, both of whom he styled "His Holiness." He declared that the penal code announced by Moses was necessary for the Israelites travelling through the wilderness, but was repealed by Christ. Theological dogmas which, he said, had crept into religions were useless and should be forsaken. Those differences, he declared, were the cause of the world's bitterness and strife, and their elimination would bring about universal peace and love. . . .
>
> After the lecture he declared that the nations of the world looked to America as the leader in the world-wide movement and declared the situation of this country not being a rival of any other power and not considering colonization schemes or conquests, made it an ideal country to lead in the movement.

The article reported that there were six thousand Bahá'ís in the United States (almost certainly an exaggeration) and that there were a dozen or so believers in the doctrine in Baltimore.[67]

There is a story told by the Bahá'ís of Baltimore that relates how two Catholic priests had sneaked into the chapel during 'Abdu'l-Bahá's talk. They are supposed to have hidden themselves in a doorway behind the stage where he was speaking. As he lectured, so the story goes, 'Abdu'l-Bahá walked over and shut the door on the priests.

After the talk, 'Abdu'l-Bahá went to Howard and Hebe Struven's home, at 1800 Bentaloo Street in West Baltimore, a row house facing a courtyard. 'Abdu'l-Bahá stood in the courtyard with his arms outstretched and said, "Many friends have I in Baltimore."[68]

Maud Thompson missed 'Abdu'l-Bahá's talk because she had spent the morning walking out to a farm east of Baltimore to get a fresh, live chicken to make for lunch. When all the visitors were at the Struven house, Maud was in the kitchen busily preparing the meal. 'Abdu'l-Bahá called to her from the living room. She went into the living room and saw that everyone was seated, and no chairs were empty. She thought she saw a twinkle in 'Abdu'l-Bahá's eye when he pointed to the floor near his feet and motioned her to sit down there. Not only was Maud Thompson a stout woman, but she was tightly laced in a corset, and sitting on the floor was no small task.[69]

Ursula Shuman Moore was living with the Struvens in 1912, also serving as community treasurer.[70] In a letter to her sister, Louise Shuman Irani, composed the day after 'Abdu'l-Bahá's visit, she wrote:

> Yesterday, the 11th he came over to our house in Baltimore and had dinner with us at our table! Did you ever dream that this

would come to pass. He came to Baltimore about twelve o'clock and spoke at the Unitarian Church, and then they came out to our house and we had dinner for him. Many of the Washington believers came over too and many of the Baltimore believers came up. We had about 55 or 54 to feed. Had a grand chicken dinner, with rice and celery, peas, ice cream and cake, and vegetable soup. He said we had given him a *good* dinner, a *fine* dinner, and that he ate much. When I brought in the big platter of chicken and set it before him at the table he said, "Oh, chicken!" and seemed to be much pleased with it. He said everything was cooked well. We had him and the Persians in his party sit down first, 12 at the table, and served them, and then we had four relays and every body had something. They all seemed so glad to be there and enjoyed themselves so much. I was so glad for Mother could be near him and see him. I introduced Mother to him, and he took her hand and said, "Oh, your Mother!" and looked at her very kindly. I told him she had been and was sick, and that we asked that she might be well. He said "In Shalah." [God willing.] So I hope she will get well soon now. They did not stay very long, as they left on the (3 o'clock) train. It surely was a great privilege to have him in our house, and something that we will always remember.[71]

Consolidation, 1912-1934: Laura L. Drum was Baltimore's delegate to the sixth annual Bahai Temple Unity convention in 1914, although she was a member of the Washington Bahá'í community. She reported at the convention on Baltimore's response to the newly inaugurated system of monthly contributions to the Temple Fund.[72]

In 1919, when the American Bahá'ís received the Tablets of the Divine Plan from 'Abdu'l-Bahá, they learned that he had grouped the various states into regions. These Tablets charged the American Bahá'ís with spreading the Bahá'í Faith all over the country, and all over the world. Maryland, being a southern state, was part of the southern region, whose headquarters were established in Washington, D.C.[73]

After the passing of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, the Baltimore community wrote to the new Guardian, Shoghi Effendi, on March 31, 1922, expressing love, gratitude, and their willingness to serve the Faith.[74]

In 1926, there were thirteen adults and seven "junior" Bahá'ís in Baltimore.[75] They met steadily in one or two of the believers' homes until they decided to rent Maccabees Hall at 522 Park Avenue, for ten dollars a month. Their meetings were open to "strangers" and believers. Among their visitors was at least one black man, John Chase.[76]

Louis Gregory, a prominent black Bahá'í teacher, spent a week in Baltimore in 1927, from January 11 to 17. He finished up his visit at Morgan College, a black institution, where he spoke to a group of black ministers.[77] It was around this time that Aleen Lock, in Washington, D.C., made it known that she thought black Bahá'ís would be happier if they organized their own separate Nineteen-Day Feasts. There were some blacks who either withdrew from the Faith or hesitated to join it because of this. The repercussions were felt years later in Baltimore. In the 1950s, the president of Morgan College, which had been established as a school for blacks, told a friend who was investigating the Bahá'í teachings that his wife had been interested during the 1920s, but had changed her mind when she heard about these remarks in the Washington community.[78]

Several public meetings were held in 1930. On January 26, Albert Vail, a Bahá'í teacher who was also a Unitarian minister, spoke to some two hundred people at the First Unitarian Church on the topic "What is the Kingdom of God?" On March 19, Ali Kuli Khan, a well-known Persian Bahá'í teacher, visited the Assembly and spoke on the relation of the Bahá'í Faith to other religions. Meetings and study classes usually featured readings from recent translations of the Bahá'í scriptures, letters from the Guardian, reports of Bahá'ís

who had attended conferences, and notes of travelers who had been to the Holy Land. Sometimes the Bahá'ís studied biblical proofs, or held classes on public speaking techniques.[79]

The community followed set procedures for all of its meetings, following agendas that were similar to the order of church services. A "Program for a Public Meeting" and a "Program for the Spiritual Board Meeting" were kept in the back of the Baltimore Minute Book, and seem to have been established in 1929. The public meeting was to open with a hymn, the Invocation found on page 3 of the blue Bahá'í prayer book, then another hymn. There followed a short history of the Cause, a prayer for Guidance (page 37 of the blue prayer book), a lecture, and then questions. After that came announcements of future public meetings and a healing prayer (from page 28 of the prayer book). The meetings closed with the Benediction, a widely used Bahá'í song.[80]

The Spiritual Board meetings were supposed to open with the prayer on page 99 of the blue *Bahá'í World* volume. Then the minutes were to be read, followed by committee reports and the evening prayer on page 23 of the Bahá'í prayer book. This was followed by new business, a prayer for protection (page 45) and a healing prayer (page 28). During the 1930s, many of the meetings were held in East Baltimore, perhaps at the home of the Mann family or of Beatrice Eardley.

In February of 1931, during the Great Depression, the Baltimore Assembly took an audacious step: They took out a bank loan in order to pay for Howard Colby Ives to come on a teaching trip to their community. He conducted "deepening" classes for the Bahá'ís and probably was invited to their homes for private gatherings with friends and relatives.[81] Bahá'í classes continued to be held twice a week in 1932, on various Bahá'í books, including *Some Answered Questions*, *Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era*, *The Dawn-Breakers*, and the *Kitáb-i-Íqán*. These efforts appear to have been intended to prepare the

National Bahá'í Archives, Wilmette, Illinois.

SIXTH ANNUAL BAHÁ'Í WORLD YOUTH SYMPOSIUM

c. 1930. Standing (l. to r.): Unknown, Hilda Seidman, Bill Dorrida, Birdie Eardley, Lois Revell, Maude Thompson Amendt, Raymond Rouse, Anne Hatter, Mrs. Rouse, unknown, Harrison Langrell, Mildred Elmer. Seated (l. to r.): Jessie Mann Stallings, Mildred Hipsley Long.

community for reorganization in accordance with new guidelines from the National Spiritual Assembly. This reorganization was taking place in a number of Bahá'í communities at about this time.

The new Assembly elected in April of 1932 consisted of seven women and two men. Local committees, comprised of one or two Bahá'ís each, were formed to oversee study classes, Feasts and publicity, and attendance. On April 28, Ives prepared a report for the National Convention on the progress the Baltimore community had made since his stay there.[82] On May 3, 1932, there were then fifteen Bahá'ís in the city.

The Assembly began to require that new believers study the Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá and *Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era* and acknowledge their understanding and complete acceptance of the tenets of the Bahá'í Faith. This was in compliance with new procedures suggested by the National Spiritual Assembly. For the first time, on February 1, 1933, the local Spiritual Assembly of Baltimore voted on and recorded the enrollment of a new member: It was Hazel Clarke Langrall, whose mother had taken her to Pearle Doty for healing when she was a baby, back in 1898.[83]

Langrall had serious health problems and had been told by her doctors that she only had a brief time left to live. This was the second major health crisis in her life, and it spurred her on a religious quest that would lead her to the Bahá'ís again. She learned of the Faith through Eusibia Dorrida, her neighbor on the 2800 block of Allendale Street, where Marguerite Dorrida Hipsley also lived.[84] At the time she entered the Faith, she did not know that her mother had taken her to a Bahá'í for healing when she was an infant. When she learned about the incident, she liked to say that she had been a Bahá'í all her life.[85]

Marguerite Dorrida Hipsley, whose mother had been a Bahá'í since 1911, had always been a strong-minded person.

She was a women's suffrage activist and an advocate of women's rights. She was a member of the Methodist Church before becoming a Bahá'í, but she was dissatisfied with it. Besides her mother, her sister and brother were all Bahá'ís, and they posed questions to her that she would carry to her minister. Once she asked him about the return of Christ. The minister replied, "Oh, he isn't going to come in our day."

"But he has to come in *somebody's* day! Why not our day?" Hipsley exclaimed. When the minister could not provide a satisfactory answer, she left his church and was soon actively involved in the Bahá'í community.[86]

The diversity of the Bahá'í community increased during the 1930s. Ann Hatter, a descendant of Menno Simon, founder of the Mennonites, and Paul Sadowitz, a Jewish man who had been interested in the Faith since the 1920s, became Bahá'ís. The community also developed good relations with the Theosophists and the World Federalists.[87]

Grace Mann was appointed by the Baltimore Assembly as a committee of one in March of 1933, to order sixty copies of *The Goal of a New World Order*, the Guardian's recent letter to the Bahá'ís of America. The letter was to be made known to every believer. The number of copies purchased suggests that there were many persons in Baltimore who considered themselves Bahá'ís, or who had at one time been affiliated with the Faith, but who were not included on the membership list under the new and stricter standards that had been adopted in 1932.

The year 1933 was the first for which minutes were recorded in Baltimore during the summer months. Previously, the Assembly had only met from September through spring. A youth committee was formed during this year. Further, the Assembly had a stamp made which read: "This is authentic Bahá'í literature" which they stamped in all Bahá'í books, including those they donated to libraries. An attempt

was made to have the public library in Baltimore file Bahá'í materials under the heading "Bahá'í Faith," rather than under "Bahaism."[88]

Much of the effort of the community was directed towards the recruitment of new believers. In March 1934, the Bahá'ís rented a regular hall to be used for lectures and as a reading room. It was located on North Avenue, near St. Paul Street. The community furnished it with a new leather living-room suite and lamps. They placed a painted sign in the window which read: "Bahá'í Centre and Reading Room, open from 11 to 4 P.M. excepting Saturday and Sunday" and held public meetings about every other month in an effort to reach the public. Visitors were reported at the meetings, some of whom seemed interested. The official community membership list was sixteen strong.[89]

Martha Root, the internationally known Bahá'í teacher, visited Baltimore in 1936, and she stayed at the YMCA. The title of her lecture at the University Club at 800 Charles Street was "My World Travels in the Interest of Universal Peace."[86]

Mildred Elmer took a trip to Chicago to visit her relatives there and attend the World's Fair in 1936. While there, she saw the Bahá'í Temple under construction in Wilmette. Returning to Baltimore, she found that her brother was acquainted with the Bahá'ís. He took her to a fireside (an informal introductory meeting) at the home of Hazel Langrall on a Friday evening. She continued to attend firesides every Friday for a few years. At last, she wrote a letter to the Assembly in Baltimore saying that she would like to become a Bahá'í. On the evening that the Assembly met to consider her enrollment, Mildred nervously waited outside the room, wondering what the outcome would be. She was accepted into the community, and two years later she was elected to the Assembly.[91]

National Bahá'í Archives, Wilmette, Illinois.

BALTIMORE BAHÁ'Í CENTER
is seen behind Mildred Elmer (l.) and Marguerite Dorrida Hipsley.

Hazel Langrall's son, Clarke, declared his acceptance of the Bahá'í Faith in 1940, at the age of sixteen. He had spent much time at Green Acre Bahá'í School, where he had worked at Stanwood Cobb's camp. He was one of only about six Bahá'í youth on the entire East Coast.[92]

Also in 1940, the Baltimore Assembly decided to find a larger Bahá'í Center in a more central location. Mildred Elmer and Clarence Percival located a site at 527 North Charles Street, on the first floor of a fashionable brownstone building. Volunteers renovated the flat that became the new Center.[93]

A Jewish woman, Faith Amberg, became a Bahá'í in 1942. She had been a Bahá'í for only a year or two when she died, leaving her estate—two buildings on Gwynn Oak Avenue and a large sum of money—to the Bahá'í community. Gwynn Oak was a broad, tree-lined street, and the two houses were only a few blocks from the county line, across which was the exclusively white Woodlawn area.[94] In the 1940s, the area where Amberg lived was predominantly Jewish.

In order to inherit the estate, the local Spiritual Assembly of Baltimore had to incorporate, and it did so in 1945. As stipulated in Amberg's will, a sum of money was sent to the Guardian of the Faith to be used for the completion of the Shrine of the Báb in Israel. The Guardian wrote to the community in his own hand, thanking them. He said: "Your responsibilities are great as you now are more independent than most Bahá'í communities from a financial point of view."[95] The Assembly also gave two thousand dollars to the Green Acre Maintenance Committee, probably from the Amberg estate.[96]

Growth and Diversity, 1934 to the present: Since slavery times, Baltimore had been a segregated city. Jim Crow laws adopted after the Civil War excluded blacks from public facilities that whites used and segregated the schools, jobs, stores, restau-

rants and neighborhoods. Albert James became a Bahá'í in 1934, in Tennessee and moved to Baltimore in 1937, where he remained the only black Bahá'í until after World War II. Roland Mann, a Bahá'í who lived in all-white Highlandtown, helped James find a job.[97]

Still it was very difficult for the Baltimore Bahá'ís to make contact with the black community. In February of 1936, they had made an effort to do so by sponsoring an illustrated lecture on the Bahá'í Temple, entitled "The Temple of Light," at Morgan College, and also at the Enoch Pratt Free Library.[98] Fred Amendt and Maud (Thompson) Amendt made aggressive efforts to teach the Faith to African-American people. They also lived in Highlandtown, on Kenwood Avenue.[99]

It was not until after the war, however, that the strict barriers of race and class began to weaken. More diverse types of people entered the Bahá'í community, which until then had been fairly homogeneous. The early believers were a closely knit group, like a family, still "enamoured with 'Abdu'l-Bahá—thrilled with having met him. . . . The Administration was important, but not as important as later on."[100]

During the 1950s, a few Persian Bahá'ís came to study in Baltimore, especially at Johns Hopkins University. There were also some black women, nurses, who came into the Faith. A women with an orthodox Jewish background, Betty Feldman, moved into Baltimore County, and she was the only Bahá'í there during this period.[101]

In the summer of 1958, Eugene Byrd, a dentist who practiced in Baltimore, started out for Chicago with his wife. They stopped in Pittsburgh on the way to pick up their sons who had gone to the YMCA camp there that summer, because the one in Baltimore was for whites only. When the family arrived in Chicago, they found that their motel reservations would not be honored because they were black. Even-

tually, they found accommodations at the Sheridan Hotel in Evanston. Their Chicago friend, Herbie Nipson, the executive editor of *Ebony* magazine, suggested that they drive up to visit the newly completed Bahá'í House of Worship in Wilmette, not far from where they were staying.[102]

Back in Baltimore the Byrd family continued to investigate the Faith. They regularly attended Friday night firesides at the home of Alma Heise, who lived in an all-white neighborhood in Baltimore where blacks might be arrested if found on the streets after dark. After a year and a half, they entered the Faith.[103]

The Friday fireside conducted by Alma Heise and Bill Burgess resulted in seven enrollments in 1956, four in the city of Baltimore and three outside. Heise and Burgess were the only Bahá'ís present, and conducted the fireside as a team inviting two or three friends to their gathering every Friday night. Sometimes seekers heard of the meetings on their own and asked to be invited. The firesides were very informal occasions. The Bahá'ís would prepare in advance the point that they wanted to cover, but their delivery was conversational, seemingly spontaneous, and not overly serious.

In 1960, the first functioning Bahá'í group was formed in Baltimore County. Two years later, an Assembly was elected in the county, with Howard Struven as one of its members. The county Assembly was active and helped organize Bahá'í events in the city.

In 1963, the Supreme Court overturned state laws that sanctioned racial discrimination. The *Baltimore Sun* ran a series of articles interviewing prominent Americans on their views on race and prejudice. Taking advantage of the opportunity, the Baltimore Bahá'ís organized a proclamation week, with four public meetings and publicity on radio, on television, and in the newspapers. This resulted in much interest in the Faith.[104]

The Byrds attended the National Bahá'í Convention in Wilmette, as delegates in 1963. They were planning to participate in Martin Luther King's march on Selma, Alabama, in protest of racial segregation. They found a group of Bahá'ís at the convention who also intended to join the march, but they were waiting for the approval of the National Spiritual Assembly before going ahead. At the last minute, the National Assembly gave its blessing, and the Byrds participated in the march.[105]

The Bahá'ís of the county and city of Baltimore jointly secured the first official proclamation of World Peace Day as the third Sunday in September, designated by the mayor. Under the direction of the National Spiritual Assembly, the communities planned a meeting to commemorate World Peace Day on September 15, 1963. Nine hundred people attended the event that evening at the Lyric Opera House in Baltimore, despite a heavy rainstorm. The audience was both black and white, with slightly more blacks than whites in attendance.[106]

On that same day, in the afternoon, four black children had been killed in a racially motivated church bombing incident in Birmingham, Alabama. Robert Quigley, then vice-chairman of the National Spiritual Assembly, set the tone of the meeting when he asked the audience to silently remember the slain children. McHenry Boatwright, an eminent African-American baritone, sang the Bahá'í prayer "Blessed Is the Spot," "prolonging the closing phrases, repeating one several times, as he felt the hearts of his listeners drawn to the prayer."[107] Lerone Bennett, Jr., senior editor of *Ebony* magazine spoke at the meeting. Although he was not a Bahá'í, he quoted from Shoghi Effendi's *Advent of Divine Justice* and the Bahá'í book *Race and Man.* In an eloquent speech, he acknowledged that the Bahá'í Faith proclaimed the brotherhood of all races. William Sears, the Bahá'í Hand of the Cause,

told the history of the Faith and the Bahá'í teachings of racial unity. Boatwright returned to the stage and accompanied himself at the piano for the Negro spiritual "He's Got the Whole World in His Hands." The audience was moved to tears.[108] During the week after the program, which attracted wide media attention, some fifteen hundred phone calls were received at the Baltimore Bahá'í Center.[109]

The ethnic composition of the Gwynn Oak Avenue area, where the Bahá'í Center was located, changed from predominantly Jewish to black during the 1960s. Of the two buildings left by the Amberg estate, one had to be sold to raise money to renovate the other which began to serve as the Bahá'í Center. A Bahá'í couple, Bill and Martha Dorrida, lived there as caretakers and acted as the social epicenter of the community. Martha Dorrida died in 1966, and Bill (later known to many Bahá'ís as Uncle Billy) moved in with the Radpour family in Baltimore County. Some of the other early Baltimore Bahá'ís passed away during the 1960s.

Two days after the assassination of Martin Luther King, on April 6, 1968, riots began in Baltimore that lasted for three days and resulted in 6 deaths, at least 300 injuries, 420 fires, and 350 looted stores.[110] Much of the destruction took place around Pennsylvania Avenue and Gay Street, and the riots discouraged suburban shoppers from coming into the city.

The focus of Bahá'í activity in the Baltimore area also moved outside the city. Fred Lee, a Bahá'í in the county, was much involved with youth activities. In the early 1960s, he had urged the Baltimore City Assembly to sponsor a Boy Scout Troop, and in 1964, he hosted a youth conference on his farm, with 123 youth camping out for the weekend. During the late 1960s, youth began entering the Bahá'í Faith in the Baltimore area in significant numbers.

The Baltimore County Bahá'ís organized a booth at the

SOME BALTIMORE BAHÁ'ÍS

who attended the St. Louis Bahá'í Conference, 1975. Top row, l. to r.: Kiser Barnes, Pamela Prosser, Michael King, Gordon Jacky, Debbie King (with baby). Third row, l. to r.: Parvis Ighani, Anne Z. Ighani, Barbara Maschal, Marlene Jacky, Betty S. Feldman. Second row: W. DuBois Johnson, Mabel L. Byrd, Eugene D. Byrd, Kathyrn A. Cleveland. Front row: Danny Prosser, Jacky child (in back), Angela Prosser (in front), Matthew Maschal, Mildred Elmer, Marguerite D. Hipsley.

Maryland State Fair in Timonium in September 1968, and again in 1969. Called "It Works," the booth was built of acrylic, with panels and counters. It attracted youth from upper-middle-class Dulaney High School, who began attending firesides.[111] The firesides were so successful that declarations of faith became a regular feature every Friday evening. Young people began to enroll in the Faith so regularly that the Bahá'ís would consider the fireside a failure if there were no enrollments one week.[112]

The county community organized Sunday morning study classes to teach the new youth more about the Bahá'í Faith and actively worked to get them involved in Bahá'í activities. There were overnight conferences in Bahá'í homes, and a great deal of energy was expended to make sure that all youth could attend. Many of the youth became pioneers (missionaries) for the Faith in Mexico, Finland, the Caribbean Islands, and other places., and some were among the first mass teachers in the Carolinas.[113] A strong Bahá'í Club developed at Towson State University.

The Baltimore County Assembly incorporated in 1970, and three years later the National Spiritual Assembly authorized the division of the county into east and west communties. Baltimore County West incorporated in 1974. Later, the Baltimore County East community split again, forming the Cockeysville Bahá'í community, which considered itself the successor of the original Baltimore County Assembly. The Baltimore County Central Assembly did not incorporate until 1986. The east County split left many believers isolated, and the two new communities did not agree on their boundary for some time. Both communities experienced a decline in activities.

The Bahá'í community in the city of Baltimore remained weaker than the communities in the county, and more transient. Bahá'í college students, sometimes four or five at a

time, would live in Baltimore while going to school. They were actively involved in the Bahá'í community while they were in the city, but then would move on after their studies were over.

In 1974, soon after installing cast iron bars on the windows of the Bahá'í Center for security, the local Assembly was held up at gunpoint while conducting a late-night meeting.

After the Islamic Revolution in Iran in 1979, there was an influx of Persian Bahá'ís. The first to arrive were high school and college students. Later, their parents and other relatives joined them as refugees from the brutal persecution of Bahá'ís in Iran. The older generation, unable to pursue their careers, knew little English and had little money. They needed the help of the Bahá'í community to get settled.

By the end of the 1980s, there were four local Spiritual Assemblies in the Baltimore metropolitan area. Each of these Bahá'í communities contained a widely diverse ethnic mix. The local Assembly in Baltimore was made up of four Persians, three blacks, and two whites. There were about seventy believers on the rolls in the city, but most were inactive. The Bahá'ís were largely middle class. The Baltimore County Central Bahá'í community had achieved a good level of unity and participation. Most of the Bahá'ís were Persian, with Persians outnumbering Americans on the Assembly. The west County community had about thirty believers—including seven Persians and seven African-Americans—and held consistent proclamation activities. The Cockeysville Assembly was revived in 1987, with a majority of Persians in the community, many of whom were refugees.

The Bahá'í community of the Baltimore area has a long history which reaches back to 'Abdu'l-Bahá's visit to America, and before. Originally closely tied to the Washington, D.C. Bahá'í community, it developed its independence and gave birth to new Bahá'í communities in outly-

ing areas. It stands today as an example of racial and cultural unity that is unusal in Baltimore.

NOTES

1. Interview with Clarke Langrall, December 1987, conducted by the author.

2. *Baltimore City Directory,* 1893 (Baltimore: R. L. Polk and Co., 1893). United States Census, Baltimore. Index to the 1860 Federal Population Census of Ohio, vol. 1, p. 64.

3. Meredith Janvier, *Baltimore in the Eighties and Nineties* (Baltimore: H. G. Roebuck and Son, 1933) pp. 169-71.

4. Ethan Allen Doty, *The Doty-Doten Family in America* (Brooklyn, NY: n.p., 1897) p. 819.

5. *Baltimore City Directory,* 1894 and 1895.

6. United States Census, 1900.

7. Doty, *The Doty-Doten Family*, p. 837.

8. *Baltimore City Directory*, 1898.

9. *Baltimore City Directory*, 1898.

10. Janvier, *Baltimore*, pp. 169-171.

11. *Baltimore City Directory*, 1898, p. 2015.

12. Ibid., p. 2014.

13. Interview with Clarke Langrall.

14. *Baltimore City Directory*, 1899.

15. Ibid., 1900, 1901, 1902, and 1903.

16. "List of Persons to be Notified Concerning the Classes," Ibrahim Kheiralla papers, in private hands.

17. "Supplication Book—Baltimore," and "Additional Names for the New York List." Albert Windust papers. National Bahá'í Archives, Wilmette, Illinois.

18. I am grateful to Richard Hollinger for providing this information. Mr. Hollinger has conducted research on the class origins of the Bahá'ís: A list of persons who signed a petition sent to 'Abdu'l-Bahá in 1901 (Thornton Chase Papers, National Bahá'í Archives) includes the names of 53 from Baltimore. After collating this list, with the names of Baltimore Bahá'ís on the "Supplication Lists—Baltimore," it was possible to identify the occupations of eighteen persons using

the *Baltimore City Directory* for 1900. The "List of Persons to be Notified Concerning the Classes" was used to identify the addresses of some of those on the other lists. In some cases there were no listings for Bahá'í women, but their husbands were listed. In these cases, the husband's occupations were used, because these would have determined the social status of the women. In several instances, there was more than one person of the same name listed in the directory, and no address could be located to identify the specific person who was the Bahá'í. In these cases, the occupations could not be used.

The occupations were as follows: bookkeeper, carpenter, clerk, conductor, confectioner, draftsman, inspector, laborer, machinist, painter, sailmaker, seamstress, student, teacher (3), teamster, and waitress. The fact that the names of most of the Bahá'ís could not be found in the city directory, however, suggests that a significant percentage may have been unskilled laborers, who would not have been likely to have a listing.

19. In 1909, a letter sent to 'Abdu'l-Bahá from Baltimore was signed by twenty-five believers. This is less than half the number who signed the petition to him in 1901. (Minutes, April 1909, pp. 2-9. Baltimore Bahá'í Archives.)

20. Robert Stockman, *The Bahá'í Faith in America: Origins, 1892-1900* (Wilmette, Ill.: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1985) p. 119 quoting Charlotte E. Brittingham Dixon, "How I Became a Believer and Was Given the Bahai Revelation by and through Visions," National Bahá'í Archives.

21. Ibid.

22. Ibid. p. 129.

23. "Supplication Book—Baltimore."

24. "Minutes of the Bahá'ís of Baltimore City," March 29, 1910, p. 23. National Bahá'í Archives. (Hereafter, Minutes, Baltimore)

25. Dieter Cunz, *The Maryland Germans* (Princeton University Press, 1948) p. 236.

26. *Baltimore News American*, April 23, 1974.

27. Interview with Nancy Lee, conducted by the author in September 1987.

28. Carl Bode, *Maryland* (New York: W. W. Morton and Co., 1978) p. 152-53.

29. Ibid., p. 153.

30. Ibid., p. 154.

31. *Third Annual Report of the Bureau of Industrial Statistics of Maryland, 1894* (Baltimore: Sun Book and Job Printing Office, 1895) p. 80.

32. *Baltimore City Directory*, 1898, 1899, and 1900.

33. *Baltimore City Directory*, 1898 and 1900.

34. Page one of the Minute Book (April 27, 1909) reads: "Previous to the organization of the Bahá'ís of Baltimore, it was the custom to hold meetings at any of the believers' homes, but since the convention held in Chicago, March 22-23, 1909, it was thought best to form an organization, believing that as a body, more work could be done . . .

"In view of the fact that for years, the believers were not in favor of any order whatever, this decision [i.e. to organize] was reached in perfect harmony."

35. *Tablets of Abdul Baha Abbas* (Chicago: Bahai Publishing Society, 1915) vol. 2, pp. 444-45. Names from Windust notes.

36. *Tablets,* vol. 2, p. 459.

37. Sarah Jane Farmer diary, entries for February-March 1901. Sarah Jane Farmer Papers. National Bahá'í Archives. I am grateful to Richard Hollinger for this information.

38. *Tablets,* vol. 2, p. 250.

39. *Baltimore Sun*, February 1, 1902, p. 7

40. Ibid.

41. *Tablets*, p. 444 (translated July 9, 1905).

42. Ibid., p. 469.

43. *Baltimore Magazine*, October 1987, p. 53.

44. *Bahai Bulletin*, 1909.

45. Financial Statement for December 1906. Records of the Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Washington, D.C. Washington, D.C., Bahá'í Archives. I am grateful to Richard Hollinger for this information.

46. Minutes, Baltimore, April 1909, p. 1.

47. Ibid., May 1909, pp. 2-9.

48. Ibid, pp. 3-5.

49. Ibid.

50. *Baltimore City Directory*, 1909.

51. Minutes, Baltimore, May 1909, p. 7.

52. Ibid., June 8, 1909, p. 12; July 6, 1909, p. 14.

53. Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By* (Wilmette, Ill.: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1944) p. 261.

54. *Star of the West*, vol. 1 (1910) no. 2, p. 2.

55. Interview with Fred Lee, conducted by the author in September 1987.

56. *Star of the West*, vol. 1 (1910) no. 9, p. 1 (translated June 17, 1910).

57. Minutes, Baltimore, October 1909.

58. Minutes, Baltimore, 1911, p. 44.

59. *Star of the West*, vol. 1 (1910) no. 6, p. 12.

60. Interview with Mildred Elmer, conducted by the author in September 1987. Minutes, Baltimore, 1911, p. 44.

61. *Star of the West*, vol. 2 (1911) no. 4, p. 3.

62. Ibid., p. 15.

63. *Baltimore Sun*, April 6, 1912.

64. Interview with Mildred Elmer, conducted by the author on January 29, 1988.

65. *Baltimore News American*, November 12, 1912, p. 13.

66. "Talk of 'Abdu'l-Bahá" (ms.), Dorrida Library, Baltimore County.

67. *Baltimore Sun*, November 12, 1912, p. 9.

68. Interview with Mildred Elmer, conducted by the author in September 1987.

69. Interview with Albert James, conducted by the author in February 1988.

70. *Star of the West*, vol. 4 (1913) no. 3, p. 52.

71. Quoted in Allison Vaccaro and Edward E. Bartlett, "'Abdu'l-Bahá in Baltimore," *Bahá'í News* (February 1982) pp. 3-4.

72. *Star of the West*, vol. 4 (1913) no. 13, p. 52.

73. Ibid., vol. 7 (1916) no. 12, p. 113.

74. Minutes, Baltimore, Baltimore Collection. National Bahá'í Archives.

75. Minute Book, pp. 150-51.

76. Ibid., 1926, p. 56; ibid., 1931.

77. Ibid., January 12, 1930, p. 71.

78. Interview with Eugene Byrd, conducted by the author in January 1987.

79. This information was gleaned from the Baltimore Minute Book for the years 1930-32.

80. Baltimore Minute Book, p. 143.

81. Minutes, Baltimore, 1931, pp. 101-102.

82. Ibid., April 28, 1932, p. 114.

83. Ibid., February 1, 1933, pp. 122-23.

84. Interview with Clarke Langrall, conducted by the author in December 1987. *Baltimore City Directory*, 1930-1935.

85. Interview with Mildred Elmer, conducted by the author in September 1987.

86. Interview with Penny Trusty, conducted by the author in January 1987.

87. Interview with Albert James, conducted by the author in January 1988.

88. Minutes, Baltimore, February 1933, pp. 121-22.

89. Ibid., March 1934.

90. *Baltimore Sun* article, n.d. Interview with Penny Trusty, conducted by the author in January 1987. *The Bahá'í World*, vol. 7, p. 89.

91. Interview with Mildred Elmer, conducted by the author in September 1987.

92. Interview with Clarke Langrall.

93. Interview with Mildred Elmer.

94. Gwynn Oak Park in Woodlawn was rocked by race riots in 1963.

95. Shoghi Effendi to Baltimore Bahá'í community, February 28, 1946, Baltimore Bahá'í Archives.

96. *Bahá'í News* (1947) no. 196, p. 1.

97. Interview with Albert James, conducted by the author in January 1988.

98. *Bahá'í News*, vol. 9 (1936) p. 4. Morgan State College (now University) was established as part of a system of higher education in Maryland for African-Americans.

99. Interview with Albert James, conducted by the author in November 1987.

100. Interview with Mildred Elmer, September 1987.

101. Interview with Betty Feldman, conducted by the author in September 1987.

102. Interview with Eugene Byrd, conducted by the author in January 1988.

103. Ibid.

104. *Bahá'í News* (1963) no. 386, p. 12.

105. Interview with Eugene Byrd.

106. *Bahá'í News* (1963) no. 386, p. 12.

107. Ibid.
108. Ibid.
109. Ibid.
110. Duane Hickman, "One Hot Fourth of July," *Baltimore Magazine* (October 1987) p. 106.
111. Interview with Lynn Fremd, conducted by the author in December 1987.
112. Interview with Fred Lee, conducted by the author in September 1987.
113. Interview with Lynn Fremd.