



National Bahá'í Archives, Wilmette, Illinois.

### BAHÁ'ÍS OF KENOSHA, 1897

These are the first eighteen Bahá'ís of Kenosha, Wisconsin. Mr. and Mrs. Byron Lane are seated in the center.

## A HISTORY OF THE KENOSHA BAHÁ'Í COMMUNITY, 1897-1980

*by Roger M. Dahl*

The Bahá'í Community of Kenosha, Wisconsin, was one of the earliest in North America, having been established in the 1890s. It is of special interest to students of American Bahá'í history because it was probably the only working-class Bahá'í community in America at that time. For several decades, the Kenosha Bahá'í community was one of the largest in the country, and it is still in existence today. The course of its history reflects the changes that have shaped the national Bahá'í community since its birth and also provides us with a glimpse of the diversity that characterized that larger community at the local level.

The city of Kenosha lies on the shores of Lake Michigan in Wisconsin, forty miles north of Chicago. In 1890, it had a population of only 6,532 and little industry. But Kenosha was a growing industrial town. By 1920, it was an important city of 40,000. Its proximity to Chicago and Milwaukee allowed it to become a manufacturing center tied to both neighboring cities.

In the 1890s, immigrants from northern Europe made up the majority of Kenosha's new citizens. By 1900, more than

## 2 Roger M. Dahl

one quarter of the population of Kenosha County was foreign born, particularly from Germany and Scandinavia. After the turn of the century, however, a second wave of immigration from southern and eastern Europe provided for most of the city's growth.<sup>1</sup>

*Beginnings:* The Bahá'í Faith was introduced in America by Ibrahim George Kheiralla (*Khayru'lláh*), a Syrian Bahá'í of Christian background. In 1894, he settled in Chicago and established a successful spiritual healing practice. Corollary to this practice were his efforts to convert his patients, and others, to the Bahá'í religion.<sup>2</sup> He may have visited Kenosha to spread the Bahá'í teachings as early as 1895,<sup>3</sup> but the first success there was achieved in 1897, when a Kenoshan, Byron Lane, became a Bahá'í through his Chicago friend, Paul K. Dealy. In the fall of 1897, Kheiralla began making weekly trips to Kenosha to deliver his lessons on the Bahá'í Faith, in Lane's home, to those who were interested.

These classes, known as lessons for "Truth Seekers," followed a fixed course of study. There were twelve or thirteen lessons, personally delivered in order by Kheiralla himself. The students were expected to keep all of the teachings strictly "private":

. . . these teachings are private and you are not to mention them to anyone; they are not secret but private, and we trust to your honor. We do not ask you to take any obligation or oath. These teachings are private for many reasons. You will remember that Jesus talked to the masses in parables. . . . When [the apostles] attempted to expound the teachings He rebuked them and told them that they must not cast their pearls before swine. This was to show them that the truth was only for truth seekers. . . . So you are not to mention the teachings until you are given permission.<sup>4</sup>

The classes began with lessons on the mind and soul and went on to discuss various religious subjects current at the time. The last three classes dealt with the Bahá'í religion, presenting it as the fulfillment of biblical prophecy. Students were taught that Bahá'u'lláh was the incarnation of God the Father. 'Abdu'l-Bahá, the head of the Faith living in 'Akká, Palestine, was presented as the son of God, the return of Christ. At the end of the classes, students were asked to sign a confession of faith addressed to 'Abdu'l-Bahá. If they did, they were eventually given the Greatest Name,<sup>5</sup> the culmination of Kheiralla's instruction. Those who completed the classes were known as Truth-knowers.

Thus, the Bahá'í Faith was introduced in Kenosha not as an independent religion, but as a secret society or lodge. Those who became Bahá'ís continued to regard themselves as Christians; they were not expected to withdraw from church membership; and their faith was centered on the Bible, which they continued to study in relation to their new beliefs. They had joined an "Order" with secret teachings, much as one might join a Masonic lodge or some other fraternal organization. As Kheiralla himself explained in his early book, *Bab-ed-Din*:

The instruction is private and the [true] name of the Order is known only to those who have taken the full course and received acceptance from the Great Head [i.e., 'Abdu'l-Bahá] of the headquarters of the Order; hence it is that our members are not publicly known and recognized.<sup>6</sup>

Fraternal orders were extremely popular in American cities in the late 1890s. These orders—especially Masonic lodges—frequently taught metaphysical lessons and provided an alternative social network to Protestant churches, although many individuals belonged to both. In Kenosha, in 1899, there were more than twice as many fraternal organizations as

there were churches.<sup>7</sup> It is likely that most of the adults in Kenosha belonged to at least one of these societies. The rapid success of the Bahá'í Faith in Kenosha should be viewed in this context.

As the number of those interested in the Bahá'í teachings grew in Chicago, and in other cities around the United States, Kheiralla could no longer keep up with the demand for his services. He began to appoint other Bahá'í teachers to take on some of his classes. Paul K. Dealy was assigned to teach the Kenosha classes.<sup>8</sup> Beginning in early April 1898, Dealy commuted by train to Kenosha every Friday to deliver his classes in the evening. On April 18, he reported to Kheiralla that there were eighteen new Bahá'ís as a result of his work and that he was about to start a new class immediately, with seven students.<sup>9</sup>

Dealy reported that the older Bahá'ís in Kenosha were repeating the classes. Therefore, it seems that the meetings were not only a means of recruiting new members, but also a point of gathering for those who were already Bahá'ís.<sup>10</sup> With so many people repeating the classes after having taken them before, it is likely that Dealy eventually felt the need for innovation and flexibility with regard to the content of his lectures, which became in effect the first Bahá'í community meetings.

The Bahá'í community of Kenosha grew rapidly, with a total of one hundred and eighty-five members enrolled by the end of 1899. (See Table 1.) This was a predominantly working-class community. While there were a few small businessmen and professionals among the new believers, there were no Bahá'ís among the town's elite. A possible exception was the Timme family: Ernst G. Timme and his wife, Caroline, with their two daughters, Elizabeth and Lena, were Bahá'ís. Timme acted as the Kenosha assessor, justice of the peace, and county clerk. He was the Wisconsin state senator for the

area, and he was an auditor in several federal departments in Washington, D.C.<sup>11</sup>

Most of the Bahá'í men in Kenosha were factory workers. The women were generally full-time homemakers, an indication of the relative prosperity of Kenosha laborers. In 1900, 60% of those who had become Bahá'ís were born in the United States, while 40% were foreign born.<sup>12</sup> Fully 87% of the foreign-born came from Sweden, Germany, England, or Denmark.<sup>13</sup> (See Tables 2 and 3.) But they were not all newcomers: John C. Bishop was from a long-time Kenosha family, his grandfather having settled in the county in 1838.<sup>14</sup> By the middle of 1900, there were more Bahá'ís per capita in Kenosha than in any other American city, about 2% of the population of 11,000.<sup>15</sup>

On May 26, 1899, the Kenosha Bahá'í community established its first organizational structure by electing community officers. Byron Lane was elected as the community's president. The other elected officers were: vice-president, second vice-president, secretary, correspondence secretary, treasurer, and collector.<sup>16</sup> There was no administrative body elected, and important decisions seem to have been made by the community as a whole at general meetings.

Even before this, in 1898, the community had collected funds in a treasury to pay for Dealy's weekly train fare. His travel expenses remained a major expense through 1899. No one contributed regularly to this fund, but the community could count on sufficient donations when there were bills to be paid.<sup>17</sup>

*Church Opposition, 1899:* Opposition to the Bahá'í teachings from at least one Christian church had developed in Kenosha by the time that Dealy assumed responsibility for teaching in Kenosha in 1898. The parents of one of the new Bahá'ís, William Hesper, were Baptists from Racine, a town nearby.

Learning of their son's new faith, they pronounced it the work of the devil. Armed with their Bibles, they visited their son in Kenosha in an effort to convince him to cut himself off from the Bahá'ís. When this did not work, they sent the deacon of their church. When he too was unsuccessful, they sent the minister himself to confront Paul Dealy. There was much quoting from the Bible back and forth. But Dealy claimed that he won the debate and that the encounter had helped to confirm the faith of the Kenosha Bahá'ís and the new inquirers.<sup>18</sup>

By late 1899, the Bahá'í successes caused the mainstream churches in Kenosha (Baptist, Methodist, and Congregational) to take direct, public action to denounce the new religion. The churches hired a Harvard-educated Bulgarian minister, Stoyan Vatralsky, to come to Kenosha from Chicago and refute the Bahá'í teachings. Vatralsky attended some of the Bahá'í classes in Kenosha and shortly thereafter denounced the Faith in the local newspapers as "an esoteric Moham-medan sect," "the most dangerous cult that has yet made its appearance on this continent."<sup>19</sup> For several weeks, the Kenosha newspapers carried articles and letters from Vatralsky and from various Bahá'ís who sought to defend their Faith from attack. Meetings were held in local churches where Bahá'ís were challenged to prove that their religion was not anti-Christian. Some of these debates became quite loud and rancorous. They received a good deal of newspaper coverage.

Up to this point, the Bahá'í teachings had not been made public. They were available only to those who attended the "private" classes given by Bahá'í teachers. However, faced with this public denunciation, the Bahá'ís were forced to defend themselves by making at least some of their beliefs known, though they seem to have given out as little as possible. Their principle line of defense was to reject the charge

that the Bahá'í Faith was a Muhammadan religion; to express their contempt for Islam, "the most corrupt of all religions"; and to insist that they were teaching God's truth from the Bible.<sup>20</sup> Kheiralla himself came to Kenosha, where at the Rhodes Opera House, he delivered a public talk explaining some of his teachings and faced Vatralsky in a public debate.

In December 1899, Vatralsky moved on to Milwaukee. However, the secrecy and anonymity which had surrounded the Bahá'í community in Kenosha had been ripped away. Despite the Bahá'í protestations of Christian credentials, the churches had made it clear to all that they found the Bahá'í Faith and its teachings unacceptable. No doubt, Bahá'ís felt under pressure to either give up their Bahá'í activities or leave their churches.<sup>21</sup> Bahá'ís were now known and publicly labeled. As a result, they became a more close-knit group and, as time passed, their community meetings came to replace church activities for most members.<sup>22</sup> Denounced by the mainline churches, the Bahá'í meetings took on the character of an alternative church, with many Bahá'í activities being similar to functions in a Protestant congregation.

During the year between May 1899 and May 1900, the Bahá'í community met at least thirty-nine times. The Christian orientation of the group is made clear by the subjects of their study. Most of these centered on the Bible: Revelation, chapters 1-22 (more than once); Ezekiel, chapters 35 and 47; Chronicles, chapter 30; and Isaiah, chapters 47 and 62. Bahá'í materials read and studied were: Bahá'u'lláh's Hidden Words, his "Tablet of El Hak," and his Tablets (letters) to Napoleon III and to the Pope; a Tablet from 'Abdu'l-Bahá to the American Bahá'ís, one of Edward G. Browne's books on the Faith, and letters from Bahá'í teachers Marion Kheiralla, Anton Haddad, and Lua Getsinger.<sup>23</sup>

Many people in nearby Racine, Wisconsin, were also attracted to the Bahá'í teachings. Byron Lane introduced the



Faith to that city in 1899, and he taught the first seven believers there. In March 1900, he was able to deliver a public lecture in Racine to an audience of over one hundred people. The community elected its first officers on November 8, 1899. By 1901, an additional forty people had been brought into the Faith by Fred Peterson, a Racine Bahá'í.<sup>24</sup>

*Crisis, 1900:* At the end of 1898 and during the first several weeks of 1899, Kheiralla and a number of American Bahá'ís were able to travel to 'Akká, Palestine, to visit 'Abdu'l-Bahá. This was the first pilgrimage of Western believers to be made. During this visit, tensions developed between Kheiralla and the Bahá'ís traveling with him, and between Kheiralla and 'Abdu'l-Bahá. These tensions were soon to have a profound effect on the Kenosha Bahá'í community.<sup>25</sup>

Almost immediately upon Kheiralla's return to America in May 1899, disagreements broke out among Bahá'ís in several communities—especially New York and Chicago. Deep divisions developed between those Bahá'ís who felt that Kheiralla, their first teacher, should be regarded as the head of the Bahá'í Faith in America, and those who felt that he had no right to such a position.

Kenosha was pulled into the growing controversy for the first time on March 8, 1900, when Kheiralla visited the city and told the Bahá'ís of Kenosha and Racine that he was not sure of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's position as the head of the Bahá'í Faith. A second meeting was held on March 9, at which Kheiralla explained his doubts. At the end of this meeting, Byron Lane remained unconvinced. He rejected Kheiralla's arguments and "announced that he himself will continue to teach that Abbas Effendi ['Abdu'l-Bahá] is the Master and he has found nothing to convince him otherwise."<sup>26</sup> Lane and his wife worked to keep the community loyal to 'Abdu'l-Bahá. On March 14, Mr. and Mrs. Lane presented a paper before the Racine

Bahá'ís giving reasons why 'Abdu'l-Bahá was still the "Master" and head of the Bahá'í Faith.<sup>27</sup>

However, it appears to have taken the Bahá'ís in Kenosha and Racine several months to make up their minds about the controversy. There were a few Bahá'ís who agreed with Kheiralla, and some who definitely rejected him. But most fell somewhere in the middle. They maintained relations with both groups and were reluctant to cut ties with either side.<sup>28</sup>

In April 1900, the Bahá'ís of Kenosha were studying Kheiralla's new book *Behá 'Ulláh* in their meetings. The Bahá'ís of Racine began studying the book the next month. It was not until September of that year that the Bahá'ís of Racine decided to replace Kheiralla's photograph with one of 'Abdu'l-Bahá.<sup>29</sup>

Kheiralla retained more support in Kenosha than he did anywhere else in the country outside of Chicago, where he lived. Several factors account for this. The Lanes moved out of Kenosha at about this time, leaving the Bahá'ís there without strong leadership.<sup>30</sup> Kheiralla soon began making regular trips to Kenosha to organize support for himself there.<sup>31</sup>

Kheiralla and his followers have indicated that about one hundred and fifty Bahá'ís in Kenosha sided with him, but this number is certainly highly inflated. Some thirty or forty members of the community remained staunchly loyal to 'Abdu'l-Bahá. Another thirty or forty repudiated him in favor of Kheiralla.<sup>32</sup> Of the remainder, many may have drifted away from the Faith or moved away from the area. Although community records provide no documentation, it appears from a search of the Kenosha city directories that a number of Bahá'ís moved from the city during the next few years.

*Transition, 1900-1904:* There is a gap in the minutes of the Kenosha community between 1900 (after the Lanes' move) and 1904. It seems likely, however, that Bahá'í meetings

continued to be held during this period, even though we have no record of them. There are 115 blank pages in the minute book, and most of these have a date written on them in pencil. This suggests that meetings were held, but that minutes were not taken—or if taken, were never transferred into the minute book, which was not purchased until 1904.<sup>33</sup>

It is known that Kenosha formed an all-male Board of Counsel early in this period, most likely during 1900. This was a consultative body that eventually developed into the local Spiritual Assembly of Kenosha. 'Abdu'l-Bahá addressed a Tablet to the Board of Counsel some time in 1901.<sup>34</sup> Racine had also formed a Board of Counsel by July 1900.<sup>35</sup> The Kenosha Board adopted the practice of rotating the chairmanship of its meetings, as did Racine. Frank H. Hoffmann of Chicago had advised the Racine Bahá'ís in 1900, to elect their secretary and treasurer for a term of office, but to choose a different chairman for each meeting, "thereby giving all members a chance to act and avoiding distinction or criticism give every body a chance. Chicago has had a severe experience in this very thing and has suffered for it."<sup>36</sup>

In 1900 and 1901, 'Abdu'l-Bahá sent messages of encouragement and praise to the Bahá'ís of Kenosha. He sent Tablets to the Kenosha Board of Counsel, the Bahá'í women of Kenosha (twice),<sup>37</sup> and to the community as a whole. In one of these Tablets, 'Abdu'l-Bahá addressed them in words that echoed their study of biblical prophecies:

O ye firm, steadfast and faithful Believers! . . . the Tabernacle hath been elevated upon the Hill of Might, the powers of heaven have been shaken, the corners of the earth have quaked, the sun has been darkened, the moon ceased to give light, the stars have fallen, the nations of the earth have lamented, and the Son of Man hath come upon the clouds of heaven with power and great glory, and He hath sent His angels with the sound of the great trumpet, and no one knows the meaning of these emblems save the wise and informed.

Ye are the angels, if your feet be firm, your spirits rejoiced, your secret thoughts pure, your eyes consoled, your ears opened, your breasts dilated with joy, and your souls gladdened, and if you arise to assist the Covenant, to resist dissension and to be attracted to the Effulgence! Verily, I say unto you that the Word of God has assuredly been explained and has become an evident sign and a strong and solid proof, and its traces shall be spread in the East and West, and to these all heads shall bow and all souls shall submit and kneel down with their faces to the ground."<sup>38</sup>

In July 1901, Mírzá Asadu'lláh, one of the Persian Bahá'í teachers that 'Abdu'l-Bahá had sent to America to support the new community in the wake of Kheiralla's defection, visited Kenosha with Anton Haddad, a Lebanese believer resident in the United States, as his interpreter. Upon returning to Chicago, Asadu'lláh advised the House of Spirituality (the administrative body there) that Kenosha was in need of a Bahá'í teacher every Sunday who could "impart to them the true teaching of Baha Ullah and otherwise look after the flocks."<sup>39</sup> Apparently, this was not done since, in October 1901, twenty-four Kenosha Bahá'ís signed a petition addressed to Chicago saying that they were in need of a teacher. They asked that Byron Lane be sent.<sup>40</sup>

Byron Lane was able to visit Kenosha every other week during 1902,<sup>41</sup> but it is certain that the community felt the lack of a strong resident teacher. This may account for the decline in membership and the inconsistency of the community's records during these years. Though it is not clear exactly when, the Boards of Counsel in both Kenosha and Racine stopped holding meetings and became defunct. This did not leave the Bahá'ís without organization, however, since community officers were reelected.

The financial records of the Kenosha Bahá'í community between 1900 and 1904 demonstrate on-going activities but suggest that the community had grown weaker. The number



**BERNARD AND THERESA JACOBSON**  
with their son.

of contributors decreased in 1900, with only 50 Bahá'ís giving money to the funds that year.<sup>42</sup> In 1900, train fare continued to be the largest expense of the community, dependent as it was on outside teachers. In 1902, hall rent was a major item in the budget, but the rents varied considerably since the community was probably only using halls for special occasions. By 1904, most of the money was being spent on halls, and only a little for train fare.<sup>43</sup>

In the early 1900s, the Chicago House of Spirituality acted as a regional center for all Bahá'í communities in the Midwest. Chicago undertook to instruct Bahá'ís in the region on various aspects of Bahá'í life. In 1902, the Chicago Bahá'ís wrote to Kenosha urging that they celebrate the "Feast of the Master" on November 26, and Kenosha agreed to commemorate the occasion.<sup>44</sup> In 1903, Chicago reminded other communities about the Bahá'í nineteen-day fast. Kenosha replied that those who could would observe the fast.<sup>45</sup> The Chicago community also helped the Kenosha community relocate Miss Maud Frazine, an invalid Kenosha Bahá'í, to the home of Isaac H. Doxsey, a Chicago believer. "She would by this act be saved the humiliation of being placed in the public poor house."<sup>46</sup>

In 1904, Bernard Jacobsen moved to Kenosha from Chicago and quickly became the center of a reorganized community. He provided new leadership by delivering weekly lectures on the Bahá'í teachings which were summarized as being on: "the way we should live, words we should speak, the attitude we should take towards others, in order to bring about the most Great Peace, and urging us to be ready at all times to deliver the message of God's Kingdom on earth."<sup>47</sup>

After Jacobsen's arrival, the Kenosha Board of Counsel was reestablished. In 1904, there was a meeting of the male believers who wanted to form a board. They wrote to the Chicago House of Spirituality and to the New York Board for

advice, and to 'Abdu'l-Bahá for his approval. The whole community was polled to see if it wanted a permanent Board. A temporary all-male Board was reestablished, with Bernard Jacobsen as its president and Louis Voelz as secretary. This Board replaced the community officers who had served since the collapse of the original Board of Counsel. It also had the effect of excluding Bahá'í women (such as Mrs. Saint Germain—then the community treasurer) from the administration of the community.<sup>48</sup>

*Consolidation, 1904-1910:* During the next several years, the Kenosha Bahá'ís were able to establish a regular and distinctive community life, resembling that of a small Protestant church. Jacobsen had success in activating some of the inactive Bahá'ís who had entered the Faith during the 1890s. He was also able to win over some of Kheiralla's followers in Kenosha.<sup>49</sup> But there were few enrollments. (See Tables 1 and 4.) It does not appear that there was any significant effort made to spread the Faith among the new immigrant population from Southern and Eastern Europe. As the Bahá'í teachings were being spread primarily by word of mouth, the lack of any believers from Italian, Polish, Russian, or Hungarian backgrounds meant that the Bahá'ís would have difficulty reaching the new immigrants. The absence of believers who had been Roman Catholics also proved to be a formidable barrier.

Isabella Brittingham established the regular observance of the Nineteen-Day Feast<sup>50</sup> in Kenosha, as she did in many other places. The Feast was a worship service and a social gathering, rather than a business meeting. There was no consultation. The meeting was customarily opened by one of the children, who would recite a verse from the writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá and anoint all those present with attar of rose. The first Nineteen-Day Supper, as it was called, was held on

March 21 (the first day of the Bahá'í calendar), in 1906, with fifty-three Bahá'ís present.<sup>51</sup> The refreshments served at subsequent Feasts ranged from ice cream and cakes, to sandwiches, fruit, and oyster stew. In 1908-1909, the average attendance at the Feast was twenty-four.<sup>52</sup>

A continual stream of visitors and Bahá'í teachers passed through Kenosha during these years. This was partially due to the proximity of the community to Chicago, which was the center for many national Bahá'í events. But it also indicates the dependence of this working-class community on wealthier, better educated, and more prominent believers from outside. During seven months of 1909 alone, Kenosha had at least sixteen Bahá'í visitors, including Howard and Mary MacNutt, Roy Wilhelm, Charles Mason Remey, Edward Struven, Mrs. A. M. Bryant, Thornton Chase, and Sidney Sprague.<sup>53</sup> Kenosha also had an early tradition of summer picnics which drew Bahá'ís from nearby communities, such as Racine and Chicago, and later Milwaukee. The first recorded picnic was in 1905. The Racine Bahá'ís were invited, and everyone was to bring his own basket of food.<sup>54</sup>

In 1907, the Kenosha Board—now calling itself the Board of Consultation<sup>55</sup>—began a tradition of corresponding with other Bahá'í communities which continued into the 1920s. Ameen Ullah Fareed suggested that Kenosha send out a circular letter with a report of their June 30, 1907 reception for several Chicago believers recently returned from pilgrimage to 'Akká. Later, it was decided to have the report translated into Persian and sent to Eastern Bahá'í communities. It took over a year to accomplish, but by August 1908, the report had been mailed to over one hundred communities around the world. A number of responses were received, including one from Rangoon, Burma.<sup>56</sup>

From very early on, Kenosha participated in fund-raising activities for the Bahá'í Temple to be built in Chicago. In



1907, the Board created a Temple Fund, with Walter Bohanan as treasurer.<sup>57</sup> In 1908, at the request of the Chicago House of Spirituality, a Temple Committee was appointed, consisting of three men and two women.<sup>58</sup> By August 1908, they had raised about two-hundred dollars and had another two hundred in pledges.<sup>59</sup> When Chicago issued the call for the first Bahai Temple Unity convention, to be held March 20-23, 1909, Kenosha elected Bernard Jacobsen as its delegate. During the convention, Jacobsen was elected to the Executive Board of the Temple Unity, a national body. He was also elected its secretary. He served on the national Executive Board until 1914.<sup>60</sup>

During the early years of the community, the Kenosha Bahá'ís met in each other's homes or rented halls for special occasions. However, in May 1907, the community began renting a hall on a full-time basis. It seems to have been a second-story room above a store. Most of the money of the community was now used to pay for rent, utilities, and furnishings for the new meeting place. Several local drives were undertaken to pay for wallpaper, paint, chairs, and other furniture.<sup>61</sup>

Kenosha was unusual among Bahá'í communities in the United States because of the large number of children who were included as part of the community. This may, again, reflect the working-class background of most of the believers. In 1906, children were included on the Bahá'í membership list. The community established a Bahá'í Sunday school in the fall of 1907.<sup>62</sup> In the summer of 1908, the Board of Consultation announced that "a School of Industry has been organized that the children may learn some useful work, in accordance with instructions contained in the *Kitab-el-Akdas*.<sup>63</sup> And a school for all the children to learn the communes and prayers and simpler teachings of the Religion of GOD is under way."<sup>64</sup> The industrial school for children was a unique



National Bahá'í Archives, Wilmette, Ill.

THE BAHÁ'Í CHILDREN OF KENOSHA, WISCONSIN, c. 1909.

innovation in the American Bahá'í community. The year it was established, the school held a picnic which drew 50 children.<sup>65</sup> By 1910, the industrial school for girls had grown to 125 students.<sup>66</sup> Efforts were made to include children in the programs of Bahá'í meetings, especially Holy Day observances. In 1909, the children conducted the program for Naw-Rúz (Bahá'í New Year), March 21, and presented a musical program and recitations for the Day of the Covenant, November 26.<sup>67</sup>

The Society of Behaists, the organization established by the followers of Kheiralla, was also active in Kenosha during this period. They held regular Sunday meetings in 1909, which were advertised in the church column of the *Kenosha Evening News*.<sup>68</sup> This was the only organized group of Kheiralla's followers outside of Chicago, where Behaist meetings were held in Kheiralla's home. However, the existence of this rival group was sometimes discouraging to the Bahá'ís. In January 1904, before the community was reorganized by Jacobsen, the community drafted a letter to 'Abdu'l-Bahá which read in part:

We are a little band of believers in Kenosha, who are trying to hold together through [sic] all difficulties caused by the Nakazeen<sup>69</sup> of this town. This is their stronghold in America. We humble [sic] beg that Thou wilt [sic] intercede for us that we may be strengthened through the confirmations of the Spirit, to keep our numbers together, to hold to the Center of the Covenant [i.e., 'Abdu'l-Bahá], and be enabled to draw these deniers nearer to Thee.<sup>70</sup>

The Behaist group continued holding their meetings in Kenosha, their only stronghold, until the early 1950s.<sup>71</sup>

*Gender Tensions, 1910-1911:* The establishment of all-male Bahá'í councils in Chicago and Kenosha in 1900, was a matter which caused some tension at the time. Only days after the election of the Chicago House of Justice, on May 15,



National Bahá'í Archives, Wilmette, Ill.

### THE BAHÁ'Í SCHOOL OF INDUSTRY

Unique to Kenosha, Wisconsin, the Bahá'í industrial schools were organized in 1908. There was also a school for boys.

1901, a Ladies Auxiliary Board (later known as the Women's Assembly of Teaching) was organized in Chicago at the suggestion of Ella Nash and Corinne True. The Ladies Auxiliary managed to hold on to the treasury of the Chicago community, despite the election of the new all-male board.<sup>72</sup>

The exclusion of women from some local Bahá'í institutions was a development to which some Bahá'í women were never reconciled. In 1909, Corinne True received a Tablet from 'Abdu'l-Bahá, in response to her questions on this matter, which she construed to mean that women could now be elected to the Chicago House of Spirituality, the successor of the House of Justice.<sup>73</sup> However, the House of Spirituality did not interpret the Tablet to mean any such thing. The House wrote immediately to 'Abdu'l-Bahá for a clarification, but they do not seem to have received a reply. True's interpretation soon opened up a nationwide controversy over the rights of women to serve on Bahá'í institutions.<sup>74</sup>

In Kenosha, the women raised the issue in the summer of 1910. On July 4, the Kenosha Board of Consultation wrote to the Chicago House of Spirituality asking if they had any Tablets from 'Abdu'l-Bahá that instructed that women should be elected to local Bahá'í institutions. They explained that two ladies in their community were insisting that such Tablets exist.<sup>75</sup> The reply of the Chicago House of Spirituality quoted three recent Tablets from 'Abdu'l-Bahá. The first Tablet, to Corinne True, stated that men and women are equal, except for the universal (or general) House of Justice.<sup>76</sup> The second Tablet, to Louise Waite, stated that institutions organized for the sake of teaching could be all men, all women, or made up of both: ". . . whether assemblies for men, assemblies for women, or mixed assemblies, are all accepted and are conducive to the spreading of the Fragrances of God."<sup>77</sup> In the third Tablet, to the Bahá'ís of Cincinnati, 'Abdu'l-Bahá stated that since it was impossible to organize the House

of Justice at the present time, a Spiritual Assembly should be organized in that city, and that it would be preferable if an Assembly of both men and women should be elected.<sup>78</sup>

The Chicago House concluded from these Tablets that, although local boards had originally been intended as all-male institutions, 'Abdu'l-Bahá now approved of the establishment of institutions made up of both men and women. Albert Windust, writing for the House of Spirituality, suggested:

As your Assembly has had a Board of Consultation established for some years, it seems to me it would be wise to ask for a vote from them as to whether the majority desire to have a mixed Board of men and women before making a change. It is evident from the foregoing extract from a recent Tablet that in organizing Spiritual Assemblies of Consultation *now* it is deemed advisable by Abdul-Baha to have them composed of both men and women. The wisdom of this will become evident in due time, no doubt.<sup>79</sup>

Rather than do this, however, the Kenosha Board of Consultation submitted the question to 'Abdu'l-Bahá. All the men of the Board signed a "supplication" asking if the Board should be dissolved, and reelected with women as members. They pledged that they would dissolve the Board if 'Abdu'l-Bahá wished, but that their intentions had been pure at the founding of the institution, since it had been established in accordance with a Tablet revealed for the Chicago House of Spirituality some years before.<sup>80</sup>

'Abdu'l-Bahá, however, would not sanction the idea of dissolving the all-male Board. His reply, received March 4, 1911, explains:

Now Spiritual Assemblies must be organized and that is for Teaching the Cause of God. In that city you have a spiritual Assembly of men and you can establish a spiritual Assembly for women. Both Assemblies must be engaged in diffusing the fragrances of

God and be occupied with the service of the Kingdom.  
The above is the best solution for this problem.<sup>81</sup>

It is not known if the Kenosha community elected a special women's Board at this time. Neither do the records of the community indicate when women first started serving as members of the Board of Consultation. In Chicago, the change came in 1912. 'Abdu'l-Bahá, while in New York, during his journey through America, directed that the Chicago House of Spirituality should be reorganized and a new institution, called a "Spiritual Meeting," composed of both men and women, be elected. This was accomplished on August 11, 1912.<sup>82</sup> Certainly by 1917, women were serving alongside men on the Kenosha Board. In that year, a new "Committee of 9" was elected, with Augusta Nelson as the assistant secretary.<sup>83</sup>

*'Abdu'l-Bahá's Visit to Kenosha, September 15-16, 1912:* In May of 1912, 'Abdu'l-Bahá traveled to Chicago to attend the Bahai Temple Unity convention. His visit to the United States had received a large amount of newspaper publicity. Kheiralla's followers in Kenosha, the Behaists, sought to use this publicity to gain some attention for their own cause.

Mirza Shua Ullah (Mírzá Shu'á'u'lláh), the son of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's half brother, Mírzá Muḥammad-'Alí, was also in the United States at this time. Muḥammad-'Alí and his family had rejected 'Abdu'l-Bahá's leadership of the Bahá'í community. Kheiralla and his followers, after their break with 'Abdu'l-Bahá, had associated themselves with Muḥammad-'Alí and his faction. On May 4, 1912, Shua Ullah wrote to the *Kenosha Evening News* from Pasadena, California. His letter was published on the front page of that newspaper on May 11. It was an open letter to 'Abdu'l-Bahá which denounced him for allegedly trying to substitute his own teachings for those of Bahá'u'lláh. Shua Ullah claimed that only Muḥammad-

'Alí was truly following Bahá'u'lláh's teachings. However, Shua Ullah proposed a peace conference between himself and 'Abdu'l-Bahá to settle their differences. Kheiralla would also attend this conference.<sup>84</sup> 'Abdu'l-Bahá chose to ignore this letter.

On July 8, Kheiralla himself wrote to the *Kenosha Evening News* defending Shua Ullah's May letter and making new accusations. His letter made it clear that he supported Mírzá Muḥammad-'Alí and his claims.<sup>85</sup> The Kenosha Bahá'ís were disturbed by these letters, but they made no public rebuttal. 'Abdu'l-Bahá, who had returned to New York, assured the believers in Kenosha in a Tablet written to them in July 1912, that such attacks would come to nothing:

The bats fly away from the rays of the sun and hiding themselves in dark and narrow niches they blame the sun saying "Why do not the rays of the sun reach our dark corners and cranics? And why does it not associate and affiliate with us?" What relation is there between the all glorious sun and the weak-eyed bats! What friendship exists between the nightingale of the rose garden of significances and the gloomy crows! The sun travels in its own sphere and is entirely above the fluttering blindness of the bats.<sup>86</sup>

On the evening of September 12, 'Abdu'l-Bahá returned to Chicago for a brief visit. The Bahá'ís of Kenosha invited him to come to their city, Mr. and Mrs. Henry L. Goodale sent the letter inviting him to stay at their house. Before leaving Chicago on September 15, 'Abdu'l-Bahá spoke to Dr. W. Frederick Nutt, who was associated with the Behaists, about Kheiralla. With great emotion, he said that he knew that Kheiralla wanted him to arrange a special meeting between the two of them. But, during his journey to America many people, great and small, had come on their own accord to see 'Abdu'l-Bahá, and he had received them all. If Kheiralla's intentions were pure, he would come with sincer-



ity, like everyone else. Dr. Nutt accompanied 'Abdu'l-Bahá to Kenosha.<sup>87</sup> The visit there seems to have been primarily intended by 'Abdu'l-Bahá as a means of lifting the spirits of the Bahá'ís in Kenosha and raising the public prestige of that community in the face of opposition by the followers of Kheiralla.

The *Kenosha Evening News* highlighted 'Abdu'l-Bahá's approaching visit with a front-page article. The headlines read:

ABDUL BAHÁ COMING

Leader of Bahaists to Visit Kenosha Sunday and Deliver Address  
Expect Great Gathering

The newspaper announced that 'Abdu'l-Bahá would speak at the Congregational Church:

While the visit of the spiritual leader of the Bahaist to this city is intended primarily to strengthen and encourage his followers in this city, the Kenosha public is cordially invited to attend the lecture and hear the exposition of the new religion and the stand it is expected to take in this country.<sup>88</sup>

'Abdu'l-Bahá arrived in Kenosha on Sunday afternoon, September 15, 1912. He was taken to the Bahá'í Hall, where he had a meeting with the Kenosha Bahá'ís. He spoke on Bahá'u'lláh's imprisonment and blessed the children. He was seated in the ceremonial chair which, at Bahá'í meetings, had always been left empty in his honor.

After speaking to a large audience at the Congregational Church, 'Abdu'l-Bahá remained overnight in Kenosha at the home of the Goodales. There he received many of the Kenosha believers in private conversations. On the afternoon of September 16, he returned to Chicago.<sup>89</sup> That day the *Kenosha Evening News* carried another front-page article describing the talk at the Congregational Church in enthusiastic terms.<sup>90</sup>

*Decline, 1912-1920:* The activities of the Kenosha Bahá'í community in the period between 1912 and 1920 are not well documented. Therefore it is difficult to discuss this history in any great detail. There are no minutes or treasurer's ledgers for the years 1911 to 1917. But it is clear that the community was slowly declining in size. There were few enrollments. Several families moved away, while some older Bahá'ís died—including the Goodales. The community maintained a local institution, called either a Board of Consultation or a "Committee of Bahá'ís." Walter Bohanan acted as its secretary until 1923.

Around 1916, a period of disunity began. It appears that this was caused by personality conflicts centered around Bernard Jacobsen, though the individual responsible is not named in the records. Louis Voelz, a member of the community later recalled that a certain Bahá'í man had "caused dissension by domineering the community and persecuting some."<sup>91</sup> A contemporary document, however, suggests that this division may also have been linked to disunity in the Chicago Bahá'í community.

Some Bahá'ís in Chicago had opened a reading room which offered lessons that mixed the Bahá'í teachings with those of Theosophy. Other Bahá'ís objected, claiming that this was a form of Covenant-breaking. In an investigation of the matter conducted in 1917, Walter Bohanan and Bernard Jacobsen claimed that a number of Bahá'ís in Kenosha had been influenced by Luella Kirchner (who had organized the reading room) and were sympathetic to Covenant-breakers.<sup>92</sup> These Bahá'ís, it was reported, likened themselves to "Lutherans," and referred to other Bahá'ís as "Catholics."<sup>93</sup> While these Bahá'ís are not known to have endorsed the positions of any Covenant-breakers, it does seem that they felt uncomfortable with the authoritarianism that was implied by the concept of the Covenant, at least as it was understood at the time.

These feelings may have had their roots in a reaction to the authoritarian style of leadership in the local community referred to by Voelz.

About half the Bahá'ís stopped attending meetings. In 1920, the Kenosha House of Spirituality, as the Board was then calling itself, made an attempt to persuade some of them to rejoin the community. They asked a committee to meet with the inactive Bahá'ís and encourage them to forget the past. But this attempt was not successful.<sup>94</sup>

The remnant of the community maintained the regular activities that had become customary in the Kenosha community, such as Feasts, Sunday school classes, Sunday meetings, and summer picnics. Prominent Bahá'í teachers continued to visit the city. The industrial school for girls continued, and the Bahá'í Hall was maintained.

The summer picnics were elaborate affairs. In August 1919, the picnic was held at the country home of the secretary, Walter Bohanan. At noon there was a meal, followed by an afternoon spiritual meeting. There were talks by Adolf P. Chapman, N. Peterson, and others. Zia and Zenat Bagdadi, of Chicago, chanted prayers and sang songs in Persian. The children recited from Bahá'í scriptures. Mr. Bagdadi spoke. And a public meeting was held in the evening.<sup>95</sup>

*Changes in Bahá'í Administration, 1920-1929:* After the passing of 'Abdu'l-Bahá in 1921, Shoghi Effendi, the new Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith, spent much of the next decade supervising the development of a uniform system of Bahá'í administration—in terms of organization, terminology, and procedure—in the United States and elsewhere. The local Bahá'í institutions in Kenosha gradually came to conform to this new system.

In 1920, Kenosha had a House of Spirituality made up of six men and three women.<sup>96</sup> When Jenabe Fazel (Mírzá

Asadu'lláh Mazandarání, known as Jináb-i Faḍil), a Persian Bahá'í teacher, visited Kenosha on June 19, 1920, he offered his advice on the duties of the House. This advice was the most current understanding of the matter. He listed thirteen duties of the House of Spirituality:

1. members must be firm in the Covenant;
2. members must be sincere;
3. members must be polite and humble;
4. members must have harmony and love;
5. members should not discuss politics;
6. the House should spend one half of its time instructing and teaching;
7. the children must be educated in spiritual matters;
8. the House must study the Teachings;
9. the House should look after the sick and poor;
10. there should be at least nine members on the House;
11. the House should meet at least once a week, depending on the work to be done;
12. the House should arrange one or two meetings a week where the Bahai Writings are read and talks given;
13. members should not repeat the secrets of the House outside its meetings.<sup>97</sup>

The House took its duty to look after the sick and poor seriously. In 1920, the Kenosha community sent a two-hundred-pound box of food and clothing to needy German Bahá'ís impoverished by World War I. The Bahá'í women also prepared Christmas baskets for the needy in Kenosha.<sup>98</sup> The House regularly sent flowers to those Bahá'ís who were ill and to the families of those who passed away. Also in 1920, August Rudd, a Kenosha Bahá'í moved back to Sweden to become the first Bahá'í to reside in that country.<sup>99</sup>

In January of 1923, Shoghi Effendi wrote a letter in English directly to the Kenosha community urging them to renew their efforts on behalf of the Faith. The style and

approach of his writing—direct, literate, and unembellished—was markedly different from that of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá:

I am sure that every one of you, in view of the perilous state of the world, realizes more than ever before the urgent need for the full recognition by the peoples and governments of the world of the new Message of Salvation that the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh brings in this day to distracted humanity. . . . It is our task and privilege to capture gradually and persistently the attention of the world by the sincerity of our motives, by the breadth of our outlook and the devotion and tenacity with which we pursue our work of service to mankind. If only we discharge fully and conscientiously our sacred duties, surely the Hand of Divine Power shall in time come to our aid and shall so shape the affairs and circumstances of the world as to enable us to win for the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh the admiration and the allegiance of all mankind.<sup>100</sup>

Responding to another letter from Shoghi Effendi,<sup>101</sup> the Kenosha Bahá'ís held their election for their local institution on April 21, 1923. The body was termed a Spiritual Assembly for the first time. At the election, a new means of voting was used by which all would write nine names on a piece of paper, and the nine who received the highest votes would constitute the Spiritual Assembly for one year.<sup>102</sup> There were also changes in the internal workings of the Assembly. For the first time, a permanent chairman was elected. Previously, a new chairman had been chosen for each meeting.<sup>103</sup> Philip Savilles replaced Walter Bohanan as the Assembly's secretary.<sup>104</sup>

On October 20, 1923, a special meeting of the community was held at the request of the National Spiritual Assembly. At the meeting, after reading the Will and Testament of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and the Guardian's letter of March 12, 1923, the adult Bahá'ís of Kenosha formally added their names to the recently established national membership list. Eighteen adults were enrolled,<sup>105</sup> only a small fraction of Kenosha's earlier membership.

At the elections in 1924, the community elected ten, rather than nine, members to the Spiritual Assembly. In 1925, on a motion by Adrian DeBruin, the community unanimously returned the incumbent ten members of the Assembly to office, by acclamation.<sup>106</sup>

In 1920, the Kenosha House of Spirituality had appointed a teaching committee. Efforts to teach the Faith, using various techniques were carried on throughout the 1920s, but they did not result in any significant growth in the size of the community. The Kenosha Bahá'ís relied heavily on public lectures delivered by prominent outside speakers to spearhead their teaching efforts. The orientation of teaching efforts seems to have been to reach out to established organizations in the area and deliver the Bahá'í message to those groups in their own venues. The efforts were interracial. When Annie Parmerton visited in July 1920, there were blacks as well as whites among the inquirers in the crowd. Chris Jensen actively taught the Faith to the black population, attending services at black churches.<sup>107</sup> In 1921, Louis Gregory, a prominent black Bahá'í lecturer, visited Kenosha and spoke at the Racine African Methodist-Episcopal Church. Two black people in Racine became Bahá'ís as a result of this visit.

During 1922, there was a busy round of Bahá'í meetings in Kenosha. Four weekly meetings were being held: the Sunday children's meeting, the Sunday adult meeting, the Monday evening teaching meeting, and the Thursday evening study meeting. The women met together every other week on Thursday afternoon. There were, in addition to the weekly meetings, the Nineteen-Day Feasts, Holy Day observances, Assembly meetings, monthly Temple meetings, entertainments and socials, and fund-raising events.<sup>108</sup> The annual summer picnic was also an important event which drew many Bahá'ís from Chicago, Milwaukee, and Racine, as well as local non-Bahá'í friends.

In September of 1922, at the request of their national body, the Bahá'ís of Kenosha sent a letter to the Persian ambassador in Washington, D.C., signed by all of the believers, asking his assistance in stopping attacks on Bahá'ís in Iran. Kenosha also organized prayers on behalf of the Persian Bahá'ís, saying one prayer nineteen times at 6:00 a.m., for nineteen days.<sup>109</sup>

Also in 1922, Kenosha established a nineteen-day circular letter which it sent out to Bahá'í communities around the world. As a result, the community received replies and, for a number of years, carried on an international correspondence. In March 1923, the Spiritual Assembly reported that it had received letters from seventy-one other Bahá'í communities. In one Bahá'í month later that year, it received letters from eight communities in the United States and from Bahá'ís in Japan, Egypt, Burma, Iran, Palestine, Germany, and England.<sup>110</sup>

In May 1923, the Bahá'ís arranged for Faḍil-i Mazandarání to speak at the College of Commerce, at a luncheon of more than one-hundred Jewish ladies, and at the Socialist Hall.<sup>111</sup> Between 1924 and 1927, the community organized three series of public lectures. The lectures were delivered every other week, by Bahá'í speakers from Chicago and other communities, for three periods of several months.<sup>112</sup>

However, the pace of other Bahá'í activities slowed down. By the end of 1925, it seems that the only regular meetings being carried on were the Sunday meetings, the Feasts, and the Spiritual Assembly meetings.<sup>113</sup> By 1925, circular letters were no longer being sent out every nineteen days; and by 1928, most of this correspondence had died out. However, between 1927 and 1929, the community did manage to send out seven circulars to other communities in an effort to raise funds for the construction of the Bahá'í Temple in Wilmette, Illinois.

Some effort must have gone into contacting believers who



National Bahá'í Archives, Wilmette, Ill.

JINÁB-I FADL MAZANDARÁNÍ  
(seated center) with some of the Bahá'ís in Kenosha, Wisconsin.



had been active in the community in earlier years, but had not yet formally enrolled as Bahá'ís under the new administrative system. Between April 1925 and April 1926, four former members of the community were added to the membership list: Eva Russell, Carrie Gates, Rose Harmon, and Rose Russell.<sup>114</sup>

Fund raising for the Temple was an important activity in Kenosha during the 1920s, even though it was not a well-to-do community. In 1927, the Kenosha Assembly explained to the National Spiritual Assembly that they could not send large contributions for the Temple because most of the believers were not well off and were heavily in debt. The community had to give up their full-time hall during this year, since they could now only afford to rent it for Sunday meetings, still the most important feature of community life.<sup>115</sup> In 1929, in response to appeals to raise enough to begin work on the Temple's superstructure, the Kenosha Bahá'ís sold the community's piano for fifty dollars and gave it all to the Temple Fund.<sup>116</sup>

By 1928, the Assembly had three standing committees—the Sick Committee, the Program Committee, and the Feast Committee. The Program Committee had primary responsibility for bringing the Bahá'í teachings to the public. They were to “seek openings for public talks at various religious, social and club centers.”<sup>117</sup> The Sick Committee continued to assist Bahá'ís who were ill or injured.

Also in 1928, a letter from the National Spiritual Assembly prompted some changes in the way Kenosha conducted its Feasts. The Spiritual Assembly decided to permit consultation by the believers after the devotional readings, giving the Feast three parts. The National Assembly suggested that contributions to the Bahá'í Fund be accepted at the Feasts, and the Assembly agreed to receive contributions to the national Plan of Unified Action immediately after the consultation.<sup>118</sup>

That same year, a youth group—Bahá'í Juniors—was formed. This was one of the few youth groups in the country. It was formed to accommodate the maturing Bahá'í children of Kenosha. No one could be formally enrolled as a Bahá'í until age twenty-one. But the Assembly agreed to have the youth arrange monthly social meetings for the entire community. The first entertainment was a bunco party, for Bahá'ís and their friends, with prizes and refreshments. Several more bunco parties and card parties were organized over the next year.<sup>119</sup>

*Community Development, 1930-1939:* During the 1930s, the decade of the Great Depression, the Kenosha Bahá'í community developed considerably. The city was hit hard by the failure of the economy and many Bahá'ís were unemployed.<sup>120</sup> Nonetheless, Bahá'ís came to rely a bit less on teachers from outside, and the community developed more distinct boundaries. The activities of the community continued to retain a Protestant flavor in their style, reflecting the background of most of the believers.

Two questions concerning Bahá'í membership came up during the 1930s which reflect a shift in the nature of the community which was taking place nationwide. In 1932, the Spiritual Assembly of Kenosha inquired of the National Spiritual Assembly whether it was permissible for Bahá'ís to belong to other churches. This suggests that some Bahá'ís were still members of churches at this time, and that others were beginning to feel uncomfortable with this practice. The National Assembly assured the Kenosha community, however, that Bahá'ís could belong to other churches and still maintain their Bahá'í membership.<sup>121</sup> It was not until 1935, that the Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith definitely ruled that Bahá'ís should separate themselves from church membership.<sup>122</sup>

On June 16, 1932, Kenosha wrote to ask the National Spiritual Assembly about involvement in politics. In a gen-

eral letter to the Bahá'ís of the United States and Canada, the Guardian had recently stated that all Bahá'ís should withdraw from all involvement in political activities and association with political parties: "Let them refrain from associating themselves, whether by word or by deed, with the political pursuits of their respective nations, with the policies of governments and the schemes and programs of parties and factions. In such controversies they should assign no blame, take no side, further no design, and identify themselves with no system . . ."

One of the Bahá'ís in Kenosha, Eva Russell, was the county clerk and stood for office on the Republican ballot. The Kenosha Assembly wondered if this was no longer to be allowed. The National Assembly responded that the Guardian's instructions concerning politics "represented a spiritual ideal which all faithful believers will ponder in their hearts and not a formal ruling which the National Assembly can apply in cases such as the one brought to our attention in your letter." They indicated that the Kenosha Assembly should "not exert any undue pressure upon this particular believer."<sup>123</sup> However, the National Assembly later that same year came out with a stronger statement on non-involvement in politics, including holding political office, which was published in the December issue of *Bahá'í News*. The Kenosha Assembly stressed these new instructions in a letter sent to the entire community.<sup>124</sup>

The lecture series had always been Kenosha's primary means of bringing the Bahá'í teachings to the attention of the public. In 1931, this method was used again. The community organized 48 lectures and 25 afternoon forums. These large public meetings were supplemented by smaller study classes held on Monday and Friday nights. Kenosha had Bahá'ís within the community who were able to lead the small group meetings, but they relied on outside Bahá'ís to



National Bahá'í Archives, Wilmette, Ill.

### STOREFRONT

set up for the Bahá'í lecture series in Kenosha, Wisconsin,  
in 1931.

give talks before public audiences.<sup>125</sup> In 1931, Ruth Moffett was the principal speaker. During her stay in Kenosha she delivered 32 of the lectures and spoke at most of the forums, in addition to a number to talks given in local churches and clubs.

The response to Moffett was tremendous. An average of 65 people attended the lectures, and an average of 18 participated in the forums. This resulted in six new Bahá'ís and the enrollment of nine old Bahá'ís who had not been active in the community since 1918.<sup>126</sup> The going-away party held for Moffett on November 23, 1931, attracted 50 guests.<sup>127</sup> Of course, these were modest gains compared to the initial growth of the Bahá'í community at the turn of the century (1898-1900), but they represented the largest enrollment of new believers since that early period.

Throughout the 1930s, Kenosha continued its tradition of weekly Sunday meetings, supplemented by special lecture series whenever prominent Bahá'í speakers became available. By 1932, some Kenosha Bahá'ís began delivering the lectures themselves. Up until then, the Kenosha community had relied entirely on outside speakers to give public talks. Earl Parker and Louis Voelz were the first to take part in the Sunday lectures as speakers. However, most public speakers continued to come from outside, including Albert Windust (1933), Fanny Knobloch (1934), Madame Orlova (twice in 1935), and Lenore Morris (1936).

During this decade, the organization of the local Assembly became more complex and the Bahá'ís became more concerned with issues of organization and administrative procedure. For example, the Assembly voted in 1930 to arrange the Feast so that the readings would always come first and the refreshments last, eliminating the previous, less-structured practice. In 1931, the question was raised with the National Assembly whether the Feast of 'Alá' (Loftiness)

should be held on February 26 or March 2. The National Assembly decided to refer the matter to the Guardian, as "this is a subject that ought to be uniformly [sic] known by all the friends."<sup>128</sup> In 1933, the Assembly added to the Feast a short period for an Assembly report and consultation with the community.<sup>129</sup> In 1935, acting on instructions of the National Spiritual Assembly, the local Assembly informed the believers that only the writings of the Báb, Bahá'u'lláh, and 'Abdu'l-Bahá could be used during the devotional portion of the Feast. The average attendance at Feasts was high, with 29 out of 48 adult, voting members attending during 1936.<sup>130</sup>

By the mid-1930s, the Kenosha Bahá'í community appears to have been about evenly divided between working-class and middle-class members. This was a major shift from its original composition.<sup>131</sup> This was partially due to the fact that some of the original working-class Bahá'ís and their children had achieved some upward mobility, finding better jobs. But it was at least equally due to an influx of middle-class individuals into the Bahá'í community.<sup>132</sup> Another factor may have been the decline of Kenosha as an industrial center, which would have forced working-class believers to move elsewhere to find employment.

It appears that the working-class culture of the old Kenosha community was, during this period, coming into conflict with more middle-class values, which included greater concern with public image. Open displays of religious emotion were frowned on, non-conformist ritual practices were eliminated, and a more reserved and genteel manner was encouraged, at least at public meetings. In 1934, the Kenosha Assembly voted to "inform the believers not to use vebaly [sic], the Greatest Name, in our public meetings, as applause, when visitors are present." Later, they asked the community not to turn around to see who was coming in during public meetings or to use the Greatest Name aloud unnecessarily

when the public is present.<sup>133</sup> The community was also asked not to hold the Bahá'í speakers in conversation when there were visitors waiting to meet them and ask questions.<sup>134</sup>

In 1934, the Assembly appointed five committees: Visiting, Publicity, Arrangements, Social, and Teaching. It is significant that two of these committees were still primarily concerned with the pastoral functions of visiting the sick and arranging social occasions for the community. The Visiting Committee now also had the task of calling on believers who were lax in attending meetings.<sup>135</sup> In 1935, two more committees were added, the Program Committee and the Feast Committee. However, much of the work of the community was accomplished through individual initiative, usually through the contributions of goods and personal services. The children's Sunday School, which had lapsed, was reestablished, with Eva Russell and Grace Anderson as teachers. On April 15, 1937, Kenosha became the first local Spiritual Assembly in Wisconsin to legally incorporate.<sup>136</sup>

In 1937, it appears that some members of the community wanted to eliminate the practice of anointing each believer with attar of rose at the Nineteen-Day Feast. This had been regular practice since the Feast had been instituted in Kenosha in 1906. The local Assembly asked the National Assembly about the custom and also inquired about the practice of having each believer read a passage from Bahá'u'lláh's Hidden Words at the Feast. The National Assembly replied that they knew of nothing in the Bahá'í teachings which required either of these practices.<sup>137</sup>

In 1938, the Kenosha Assembly asked the National Spiritual Assembly whether those Bahá'ís in the city who never attended any meetings could be dropped from the voting list, but kept on the membership list. Here again, the Assembly was seeking firmer boundaries. The National Assembly replied that this question had been discussed for many years,

but that a Bahá'í must himself declare that he was no longer a Bahá'í for his status to change. The local Assembly might periodically ascertain the attitude of a believer, but "the obligation to attend the Nineteen Day Feast is a spiritual one and not an administrative duty which we can enforce."<sup>138</sup>

The singing of hymns had always been a regular part of Bahá'í meetings. As late as 1938, the local Assembly had encouraged enthusiastic singing at the Sunday meetings and had arranged for singing practice at the Feasts.<sup>139</sup> However, in 1939, the Assembly received a report from William Schend that he had learned at the National Convention that the Guardian did not approve of regular singing at meetings. After that, music was used only occasionally.<sup>140</sup>

*In the Mainstream, 1940-1949:* In the 1940s, the Kenosha Bahá'í community changed in terms of its occupational makeup. There were now more professionals and small businessmen. To a large extent, this was because the women and the youth were able to find better jobs than their parents' generation could. Also, some of the men had improved their positions over the years. Still, the community was fairly poor, and several new believers came from the working class. Tensions continued between the middle-class values and the working-class cultural assumptions found in the community.

In 1940, the National Spiritual Assembly informed the Kenosha Bahá'ís of the Guardian's ruling that local Assemblies should limit their jurisdictions to the civil city limits of their localities. This meant that Bahá'ís living outside the city limits would have to form separate Bahá'í communities. Five long-time Kenosha Bahá'ís found themselves suddenly in a new community.<sup>141</sup>

Despite this loss of membership, the Kenosha Assembly continued to elaborate its own administrative structure. That same year it appointed eleven committees: Teaching, Public-



ity, Art and Decorating, Welfare, Feasts, Anniversaries, Social, Garden of Light (children's classes), Hall Custodian, Music, and Transportation. The practice was for the Assembly to appoint a chairman for each committee, and for the chairman to then submit suggestions for members of that committee. The Assembly would then appoint the committee members from the chairman's list. Some committees were large, like the Teaching Committee, with twenty members. Others were small: the Art and Decorating Committee, the Publicity Committee, and the Welfare Committee each had only two members besides the chairman.<sup>142</sup>

The community's devotional life remained somewhat unconventional by wider American standards, but still Protestant in inspiration. In 1940, the Spiritual Assembly set up a new prayer campaign. Four groups of believers were organized that would each offer a prayer for nineteen days. Every nineteen days the prayer would be changed. The community prayed for teaching, healing, material needs, and for universal peace. The Welfare Committee was instructed to inform the community that they would be prayed for at the prayer meetings.<sup>143</sup>

The lecture series continued to be the Bahá'ís' principal means of approach to the public. Regular Sunday meetings were a fixture of Bahá'í community life. The believers made persistent efforts to reach the black population. Louis Gregory visited the city again in 1941. There were occasional lectures and programs on the question of racial harmony. In support of its lecture programs, the Kenosha Assembly would place ads or articles in local newspapers, and Bahá'í radio programs on the local station, WLIP.<sup>144</sup>

Music still played a role in community life, though the Bahá'ís seemed to be less comfortable with it. In 1944, Kenosha wrote to the National Assembly to ask that a recording of the Bahá'í hymn "Benediction" be produced, using

a good singer, and be made available to local communities. Some Bahá'ís enjoyed singing the "Benediction" at the close of Sunday meetings, but others were afraid that a lack of good singers among the Bahá'ís might give a poor impression to visitors. Here again was the tension between the working-class need for congregational singing, on one hand, and the middle-class desire for good performance, on the other. The National Assembly replied that it was not in a position to produce such a record, as it had no music policy or procedure.<sup>145</sup>

The Kenosha community maintained a local Bahá'í Center at 5912 22nd Avenue. A great deal of time and labor was invested in maintaining the building. Two of the eleven committees appointed in 1940 were exclusively concerned with the Center. Beyond this, volunteers helped with such tasks as cleaning, painting, making new curtains, and eliminating the squeaks in the chairs. Christmas displays were arranged in the window of the Center in December.

In 1940, the Bahá'í children's classes, the Garden of Light, included 23 children. The Bahá'í youth remained active. That year they held an International Youth Meeting, inviting non-Bahá'í speakers of different nationalities, and one Bahá'í speaker.<sup>146</sup> However, by 1945, the attendance at the children's classes was down to 5 (the Voelz children, Marilyn and Ronald; the Johnson children, Jacqueline and Thomas; and Georgia Ann Halberstadt). Nonetheless, the children presented the Naw-Rúz (Bahá'í New Year) program.<sup>147</sup> That same year, the youth organized two programs, a youth symposium and a banquet.<sup>148</sup>

On December 17, 1947, the Kenosha community celebrated its fiftieth anniversary at the local Bahá'í Center. Louis Voelz spoke on the history of the Kenosha Bahá'ís, Jessie Halberstadt talked about the present. Horace Holley, secretary of the National Spiritual Assembly, spoke about the future. Floral tributes were given to those Bahá'ís who had been members of the original community. Among the refresh-

ments was a huge golden cake, decorated to honor the occasion. The National Spiritual Assembly sent a cable of congratulations and also informed the Guardian of the celebration. On December 29, Kenosha received the following cable from the Bahá'í World Center:

OCCASION FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY ESTABLISHMENT  
 FAITH KENOSHA MOVED EXPRESS DEARLY BELOVED  
 STEADFAST DEVOTED MEMBERS COMMUNITY HEART-  
 FELT CONGRATULATIONS WARM ADMIRATION SPIRIT  
 ANIMATING THEIR SERVICE FAITH ARDENT HOPE EXTEN-  
 SION RANGE MERITORIOUS LABOURS. SHOGHI.<sup>149</sup>

*Continuation, 1950 to the present:* The Kenosha Bahá'í community, after its early years, reached a peak in membership in 1938 (with fifty believers). After that, there was a steady decline in membership to the 18-25 range, where membership has remained to the present day. (See Table 4.) Between 1946 and 1960, there was a net loss of 20 Bahá'ís, more than half the community's membership. By the 1980s, Kenosha had the resources and the level of activity of a small Bahá'í community, even though its numbers on paper remained considerable, by Bahá'í standards.

Throughout this period the community was aging. Members were lost due to death, pioneering, and moves to other cities. The first generation of Bahá'ís passed away during these years, and the next generation moved away. Several believers left as pioneers for the Faith in Canada and Europe. The city of Kenosha was itself in economic decline, and the Bahá'í community did not recruit new and active members to offset its losses. Only one new believer was enrolled in the six years between 1964 and 1970, for example. The Bahá'í community has maintained itself since 1950, but it seems to have gone through cycles—with periods of teaching and activity alternating with periods of inaction.

From the 1950s to the 1970s, the local Spiritual Assem-

bly maintained a full committee structure. The usual committees were Teaching and Holy Days, Welfare, Social, Feast, Library, Garden of Light, and House.<sup>150</sup> The Assembly maintained a modest local fund, and generally met its budget goal—which in 1969 was \$35 per month. Contributions were sent to the National Fund when money was available.<sup>151</sup> The tradition of summer picnics was maintained. The community kept its local Bahá'í Center until October 1979, when it had to be given up.<sup>152</sup>

By 1956, decline in Kenosha was already obvious and the National Spiritual Assembly wrote to the community to express its concern. The local Assembly's annual report indicated that very little was happening. The National Assembly's chief concern was that there were no firesides<sup>153</sup> being held in the city. The community had always relied on the public lecture to introduce new people to their religion. The National Assembly suggested that fireside meetings be organized and that the Bahá'ís in Kenosha study two booklets on teaching which had recently been published.<sup>154</sup> However, there was little response to this appeal since Kenosha still had no firesides or deepening classes the next year.

In 1960, the Area Teaching Committee for the Central United States described the Kenosha community as a place where "the people are old and need fresh planning and assistance in setting up an active and progressive program." A traveling teacher, Thelma Jackson, was sent to the city in 1961, to deepen the community and provide teaching advice. By March, the community had started firesides and a Thursday-evening study class, which resulted in the enrollment of two new believers.

But the situation in Kenosha changed very little. In 1970, the local Assembly summed up its feelings thus:

We need one or two "alive" Bahá'í couples to move into Kenosha. We are now down to 15, but 5 members never come. One mem-

ber is in his 80's and two have a heart condition. We need more young workers.<sup>165</sup>

During the 1980s, the community recovered a bit, but the numbers of Bahá'ís remained small, and the activities of the community were limited. Kenosha had become a typical small Bahá'í community.

*Summary and Conclusion:* There are some conclusions about the expansion of the Bahá'í Faith and the consolidation of its communities which can be drawn from Kenosha's Bahá'í history. The first is the important role played by proven, experienced, and talented Bahá'í teachers. From Paul K. Dealy to Bernard Jacobsen, from Ruth Moffett to Lenore Morris, the Bahá'í lecturer played a central role in sparking each new phase of expansion in Kenosha. They were also major figures in the efforts to deepen the community's knowledge of the Bahá'í teachings and maintain its unity.

The second conclusion is that one of Kenosha's major strengths as an early community was the large number of families which converted as units. Families added a richness and stability to community life that Bahá'ís in most other areas lacked. The large number of children, and later youth, strengthened the community and eventually contributed greatly to its growth in numbers. Families also insured a variety of Bahá'í activities could be organized—for children, women, youth, and so forth. There are at least ten early Kenosha families, scattered around the country and around the world, whose descendants are still Bahá'ís: the families of Louis Voelz, George Anderson, Christ Howard, Peter Nelson, Henry Benning, Alfred Anderson, John Wilcott, August Anderson, Adrian DeBruin, and Charles Carson.

Third, the Bahá'í community in Kenosha was strengthened by opposition—first from the Protestant churches, and later from the followers of Kheiralla. Although both of these

episodes resulted in the loss of membership, they also defined the boundaries of the community, strengthened the Bahá'í identities of the remaining believers, and accelerated their acceptance of the Bahá'í teachings as a total and exclusive religious system. One reason that the first generation of Bahá'ís in Kenosha developed such a close and cohesive community, in sharp contrast to most other Bahá'í communities around the country (which usually functioned as voluntary societies or clubs, rather than as close religious communities), was that they had vocal opponents.

Fourth, we might note the relatively small role played by the individual teaching of rank-and-file Bahá'ís. It appears that the enrollments during the two decades of greatest growth, the 1890s and the 1930s, was caused by important teachers. The efforts of the ordinary believer were more limited and less effective. If there had been more effective teaching by each individual believer, the growth of the Kenosha community may have been more consistent.

Fifth, the Kenosha Bahá'í community was unable to move beyond the borders of its ethnic composition to reach new immigrants from Southern and Eastern Europe, especially during the early 1900s. Even the enrollments during the 1930s were of people from Northern European or American backgrounds.<sup>156</sup> This inability of the Bahá'ís to keep pace with the changing ethnic makeup of the city was probably a major factor in its limited growth. Kenosha did not focus its teaching activities on any specific ethnic group, except for blacks. Their proclamation and teaching activities were just aimed at the general public.

For a time, Kenosha was the second or third largest Bahá'í community in the Western world. The crisis caused by Kheiralla's defection caused a sharp decline in numbers, but the community remained sizeable by Bahá'í standards, and it maintained an active life. Reaching a low point in the

1920s, there was a brief moment of growth in the 1930s. But, this momentum could not be sustained, and Kenosha again became a small Bahá'í community. Having contributed richly to Bahá'í history, the Bahá'ís of Kenosha have now taken their place alongside of hundreds of other Bahá'í communities in the United States, among which Kenosha is now virtually indistinguishable.

## NOTES

1. John D. Buenker, "Immigration and Ethnic Groups" in *Kenosha County in the Twentieth Century: A Topical History*, John A. Neuenschwander, ed. (Kenosha, WI: Kenosha County Bicentennial Commission, 1976) pp. 2-5, and Richard H. Keehn, "Industry and Business" in *ibid.* pp. 175-81.

2. For detailed accounts of the introduction of the Bahá'í Faith in the United States, see Richard Hollinger, "Ibrahim George Kheiralla and the Bahá'í Faith in America" in *Studies in Bábí and Bahá'í History*, Vol. 2: *From Iran East and West*, Juan R. Cole and Moojan Momen, eds. (Los Angeles: Kalimát Press, 1984); Peter Smith, "The American Bahá'í Community, 1894-1917: A Preliminary Survey" in *Studies in Bábí and Bahá'í History*, Vol. 1, Moojan Momen, ed. (Los Angeles: Kalimát Press, 1982); and Robert H. Stockman, *The Bahá'í Faith in America: Origins, 1892-1900* (Wilmette, Ill., Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1985). The summary of Kheiralla's teachings and early activities which follows is taken from these sources.

3. Shoghi Effendi indicates that Kheiralla secured "an opening" for teaching the Faith in Kenosha in 1895 (Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By* [Wilmette, Ill.: Bahá'í Publishing Committee, 1944]).

4. From a Truth-knower Lessons manuscript, lesson on "The Soul," p. 1. Kenosha, WI, Bahá'í Community Records, National Bahá'í Archives, Wilmette, Illinois. (Hereafter, Kenosha Community Records.)

5. *Alláh-u Abhá*, God the Most Glorious. An invocation used by Bahá'ís.

6. Ibrahim Kheiralla, *Bab-ed-Din: The Door of True Religion* (Chicago: Charles H. Kerr and Co., 1897) p. 9.

7. *Wright's Kenosha City Directory, 1899-1900*, pp. 11-19.

8. Hollinger, "Ibrahim George Kheiralla," pp. 109-110; Stockman, *The Bahá'í Faith in America*, pp. 110; Ibrahim George Kheiralla, *O Christians! Why do Ye Believe Not on Christ?* (Chicago: Goodspeed Press, 1917) p.168.

9. Paul K. Dealy to Ibrahim Kheiralla, April 18, 1898. Paul K. Dealy Papers. National Bahá'í Archives, Wilmette, Illinois.

10. *Ibid.*

11. Frank H. Lyman, *The City of Kenosha and Kenosha County, Wisconsin* (Chicago: The S. J. Clarke Publishing Co., 1916) vol. 2, pp. 13-14.

12. Based on the 114 (of 219 total) Bahá'ís for whom countries of birth could be identified.

13. Later, 16 of 27 (of 60 total) adults on the 1906 membership list for whom countries of origin could be identified were foreign born. United States Census, 1900: Kenosha County, Wisc.; Bahá'í Historical Record Cards, National Bahá'í Archives.

14. *Portrait and Biographical Album of Racine and Kenosha Counties, Wisconsin* (Chicago: Lake City Publishing Co., 1892) pp. 393-94 and *Commemorative Biographical Record of Prominent and Representative Men of Racine and Kenosha Counties, Wisconsin* (Chicago: J. H. Beers & Co., 1906) pp. 323-25.

15. Stockman, *Bahá'í Faith in America*, p. 114.

16. Minutes, May 26, 1899. Kenosha Community Records.

17. Treasurer's Cash Book, 1898-1911. Kenosha Community Records.

18. Paul K. Dealy to Ibrahim Kheiralla, April 18, 1898. Paul K. Dealy Papers. National Bahá'í Archives. A draft letter from Ibrahim Kheiralla to 'Abdu'l-Bahá (dated c. 1898) also mentions opposition from the clergy in Kenosha. Ibrahim Kheiralla papers. In private hands.

19. *Kenosha Kicker*, October 19, 1899.

20. *Ibid.*, October 26, 1899.

21. Even decades later this was still a significant issue within churches in Kenosha. Meg Naysmith, a Bahá'í from Wisconsin, first heard of the Bahá'í Faith from an anti-Bahá'í sermon delivered by a minister in a Congregational Church in Kenosha. (Interview with M. Naysmith, conducted by Richard Hollinger, September 1987.)

22. For a fuller account of the Vatralsky episode, see William P.



Collins, "Kenosha, 1893-1912: History of an Early American Bahá'í Community in the United States" in Momen, ed., *Studies*, Vol. 1.

23. Minutes, May 26, 1899 to May 11, 1900. Kenosha Community Records. It is not clear from the records which of Browne's books were used in Kenosha. Kheiralla had access to four such books. See Stockman, *Bahá'í Faith in America*, pp. 43-46.

24. Minutes, November 8, 1899; November 15, 1899 to November 28, 1900; List of enrollments, 1899-1900 in the minute book. Racine, WI, Bahá'í Community Records. (Hereafter, Racine Community Records.) National Bahá'í Archives.

25. For detailed accounts of how these events affected Kenosha, see: Collins, "Kenosha, 1893-1912," pp. 239-42; Hollinger, "Ibrahim George Kheiralla," pp. 112-19; and Stockman, *The Bahá'í Faith in America*, pp. 136-93.

26. Voelz, "History of the Kenosha Bahá'í Community from 1897 to November 1933," p. 2. Kenosha Community Records. National Bahá'í Archives.

27. Minutes, March 14, 1900. Racine Community Records. Minutes, March 2, 1900 and March 9, 1900. Kenosha Community Records. Collins, "Kenosha, 1893-1912," p. 239.

28. See Richard Hollinger, "The Origins, Development, and Decline of the Behaist Sect, 1894-1955." Unpublished paper.

29. Minutes, April 6, 1900. Kenosha Community Records. Minutes, May 9, 1900 and September 17, 1900. Racine Community Records.

30. *Kenosha Evening News*, p. 1, "They Repudiate Him." Minutes, May 25, 1900. Kenosha Community Records. National Bahá'í Archives.

31. *Kenosha Courier*, November 15, 1900, "Local Notes." I am grateful to Richard Hollinger for this citation.

32. For a fuller discussion of this point, and an account of the numbers of those loyal to 'Abdu'l-Bahá and to Kheiralla, see Hollinger, "Behaist Sect."

33. Minutes, July 15, 1904. Kenosha Community Records.

34. The Tablet was translated by Ali Kuli Khan, c. December 30, 1901. The Board members addressed in the Tablet were Robert Walters, Magnus Norlander, Henry Benning, Edward Thomsen, John Anderson, Louie Schleimer, Edward Lindstrom, Arthur Lindstrom, and Charles Redeem. (*Tablets of Abdul Baha*, pp. 141-42. The Board members and translator are listed on the translation in the Commit-

tee for Editing the Tablets of 'Abdu'l-Bahá Records, National Bahá'í Archives.)

35. Racine's Board originally had seven members, but when it was reelected in November 1900, two additional members were added. Soon after that, the Racine Board (at least) adopted the rules and regulations which had been given to the Chicago Board by 'Abdu'l-Karím Tihrání. (Minutes, July 12, 1900; November 28, 1900; December 3, 1900. Racine Community Records. National Bahá'í Archives.)

36. Behais Supply and Publishing Board to Racine Assembly, September 12, 1900. Racine Community Records. National Bahá'í Archives.

37. The women named in the first Tablet were Ida Walters, Caroline Borkenhagen, Minnie Saint Germain, Elvira Benning, Mrs. L. Schleimer, Emma Lindstrom, Emma Voelz, Chersti Redeen, Wilhelmina Norlander, and Jane Parks. This may suggest that there was a women's Board of Counsel parallel to the men's Board, as in Chicago. (*Tablets of Abdul Baha*, pp. 143-45. Translations by Ali Kuli Khan, about December 30, 1901. Committee for Editing the Tablets of 'Abdu'l-Bahá Records. National Bahá'í Archives.)

38. *Tablets of Abdul Baha*, pp. 145-46.

39. Minutes, June 25, 1901. Chicago House of Spirituality Records. National Bahá'í Archives.

40. Kenosha Council Board to Chicago House of Spirituality, October 13, 1901; Minutes, October 15, 1901. Chicago House of Spirituality Records. National Bahá'í Archives.

41. Minutes, March 28, 1903. Chicago House of Spirituality Records. National Bahá'í Archives.

42. Between 1901 and 1910, the number of contributors varied between 12 and 26 per year, with an average of 16. (1903 is not included in the figures for contributors as the Treasurer's records are incomplete for that year.) Treasurer's Cash Book, 1898-1911. Kenosha Community Records. National Bahá'í Archives.

43. *Ibid.*

44. Now known as the Day of the Covenant, this has become a Bahá'í Holy Day which is universally observed. Chicago first celebrated the day in 1901. In 1902, they wrote to twelve other communities suggesting that they institute celebrations on November 26. (Minutes, November 15, 1902. Chicago House of Spirituality Records. National Bahá'í Archives.)

45. Minutes, February 14, 1903; Kenosha to Chicago House of Spirituality, February 26, 1903; Minutes, February 28, 1903. Chicago House of Spirituality Records. National Bahá'í Archives.

Bahá'í law requires that all believers between the ages of 15 and 70 abstain from food and drink during daylight hours. Exceptions include those who are ill, traveling, pregnant, and nursing.

46. Minutes, April 4, 1903. Chicago House of Spirituality Records. National Bahá'í Archives.

47. Circular letter from Kenosha Assembly to the Different Assemblies of America, February 21, 1906; Minutes, March 3, 1906. Chicago House of Spirituality Records. National Bahá'í Archives.

48. Minutes, May 25, 1904; June 8, 1904; June 17, 1904; July 22, 1904; August 2, 1904. Kenosha Community Records. National Bahá'í Archives. Minutes, January 21, 1903. Racine Community Records. National Bahá'í Archives.

49. See "Kenosha, Wisconsin," *Baha'i Bulletin*, vol. 1, no. 1 (September 1908).

50. The Nineteen-Day Feast is a Bahá'í community meeting which is usually held on the first day of each (nineteen-day) Bahá'í month. It appears to have started here as primarily a devotional and social event. At the instructions of Shoghi Effendi, the Feast eventually developed (in the United States, at least) as the primary community gathering, divided into three parts: devotional, administrative, and social. Despite its name, the Feast was never regarded as an occasion for regular feasting, though refreshments are always served.

51. Nineteen Day Feast Minutes, March 21, 1906. Kenosha Community Records. National Bahá'í Archives.

52. Nineteen Day Feast Minutes, May 17, 1908 through December 31, 1909. Kenosha Community Records. National Bahá'í Archives.

53. Minutes, February 2, 1909 to September 14, 1909. Kenosha Community Records. National Bahá'í Archives.

54. Louis Voelz to Andrew Nelson, August 29, 1905. Racine Community Records. National Bahá'í Archives.

55. Minutes, May 29, 1907. Kenosha Community Records. National Bahá'í Archives.

56. Minutes, July 3, 1907; September 11, 1907; January 8, 1908; June 23, 1908; June 30, 1908; August 4, 1908; August 11, 1908; November 10, 1908. Kenosha Community Records. National Bahá'í Archives.

57. Minutes September 18, 1907; September 25, 1907; October 9, 1907. Kenosha Community Records. National Bahá'í Archives.

58. They were Bernard Jacobsen, Walter Bohanan, John Wilcott, Tillie Schend, and Emma Goodale. (Minutes, November 3, 1908; November 17, 1908. Kenosha Community Records. National Bahá'í Archives.)

59. Bernard M. Jacobsen to Chicago House of Spirituality, August 28, 1908. Chicago House of Spirituality Records. National Bahá'í Archives.

60. Bruce Whitmore, *The Dawning Place* (Wilmette, Ill.: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1984) pp. 49-52.

61. Minutes, June 12, 1907; March 3, 1908; September 15, 1908; October 13, 1908, and Treasurer's Cash Book, 1898-1911. Kenosha Community Records. National Bahá'í Center.

62. Minutes, September 11, 1907; September 25, 1907; October 23, 1907. Kenosha Community Records. National Bahá'í Archives.

63. *Kitáb-i aqdas*, (Bahá'u'lláh's) Most Holy Book. This book contains the basic laws of the religion.

64. Circular letter from the Kenosha Board of Consultation, July 25, 1908. Minutes, August 4, 1908. Chicago House of Spirituality Records. National Bahá'í Archives.

65. Minutes, July 21, 1908. Kenosha Community Records. National Bahá'í Archives.

66. *Bahá'í News*, vol. 1 (March 21, 1910) no. 1, p. 16.

67. Minutes, November 30, 1909. Kenosha Community Records. Nineteen Day Feast Minutes, March 21, 1909. Kenosha Community Records. National Bahá'í Archives.

68. *Kenosha Evening News*, June 26, 1909; July 3, 1909; July 10, 1909, August 14, 1909.

69. *Náqidín*, Covenant-breakers. Here the term refers to the followers of Kheiralla.

70. [Kenosha Bahá'ís] to 'Abdu'l-Bahá (draft), January 23, 1904. Kenosha Community Records. National Bahá'í Archives.

71. See Hasan M. Balyuzi, *'Abdu'l-Bahá: The Centre of the Covenant of Bahá'u'lláh* (London: George Ronald, 1971) p. 527; Collins, "Kenosha: 1893-1912," pp. 239-43; Hollinger, "Behaist Sect."

72. Minutes of the House of Justice (Chicago), June 28, 1901 and January 26, 1902. Chicago House of Spirituality Records. National Bahá'í Archives.

73. 'Abdu'l-Bahá to Corinne True, July 24, 1909. Microfilm. National Bahá'í Archives.

74. Minutes, August 31, 1909 and September 7, 1909. Chicago

House of Spirituality Records. National Bahá'í Archives. Chase to Remey, January 19, 1910. Chase to Scheffler, May 10, 1910. Thornton Chase Papers. National Bahá'í Archives.

75. Bahai Assembly of Kenosha to House of Spirituality, July 4, 1910. Chicago House of Spirituality Records. National Bahá'í Archives.

76. *Baytu'l-'adl-i 'umúmi*. Tablet dated July 24, 1909. See note 73.

77. House of Spirituality to Board of Consultation, Kenosha, Wisc., July 23, 1910. Chicago House of Spirituality Records. National Bahá'í Archives.

78. Ibid.

79. Ibid.

80. Kenosha Assembly to House of Spirituality (Albert Windust), May 16, 1911. Chicago House of Spirituality Records. National Bahá'í Archives.

81. 'Abdu'l-Bahá to the members of the Spiritual Assembly and Mr. Bernard M. Jacobsen, Kenosha, Wisc., May 4, 1911. Chicago House of Spirituality Records. National Bahá'í Archives.

82. *Star of the West*, vol. 3, no. 4 (August 20, 1912) p. 16. See also, 'Abdu'l-Bahá's instructions to Howard MacNutt (who accomplished the reorganization), August 6, 1912. Microfilm collection. National Bahá'í Archives.

83. Bernard Jacobsen to Harlan Ober (postcard), February 28, 1917. Alfred Lunt Papers. National Bahá'í Archives. Minutes, October 24, 1917. Kenosha Community Records.

84. *Kenosha Evening News*, May 11, 1912, p. 1.

85. *Kenosha Evening News*, July 8, 1912, p. 4.

86. Tablet translated by Ahmad Sohrab, July 1912, at New York City. Microfilm of Translations of Tablets of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, National Bahá'í Archives.

87. Mahmúd Zarqání, *Kitáb-i Badáyi'u'l-Áthár*, vol. 2 (Bombay: Elegant Photo-Litho Press, 1921) pp. 103-104. See also Balyuzi, *'Abdu'l-Bahá*, pp. 271-72.

For a more complete account of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's visit to Kenosha, see Collins, "Kenosha, 1893-1912," pp. 243-48.

88. *Kenosha Evening News*, September 14, 1912, p. 1.

89. Louis Voelz, "History of the Kenosha (Wisconsin) Baha'i Community, 1897-1947," p. 3. National Bahá'í Archives. See also, note 85.

90. *Kenosha Evening News*, September 16, 1912, p. 1.

91. Voelz, "History, 1897-1933," p. 4 and Voelz, "History, 1897-1947," p. 4. National Bahá'í Archives.

92. Bahá'ís expelled from the community by 'Abdu'l-Bahá for various reasons.

93. Notes of the Committee of Investigation (TS), p. 6. Ella Cooper Papers. San Francisco Bahá'í Archives. San Francisco, California.

94. Minutes, June 23, 1920. Kenosha Community Records. National Bahá'í Archives.

95. *Star of the West*, vol. 10, no. 13 (November 4, 1919) p. 251.

96. Walter Bohanan to Alfred Lunt, December 5, 1920. Alfred Lunt Papers. National Bahá'í Archives.

97. Minutes, June 19, 1920. Kenosha Community Records. National Bahá'í Archives. See Smith, "The American Bahá'í Community," p. 134, for Mazandarání's full name.

98. Minutes, October 20, 1920; November 10, 1920; November 17, 1920; December 15, 1920. Kenosha Community Records. National Bahá'í Archives.

99. He settled in Boviken, where he taught the Faith to Miss Anna Gustavssen, the first person to become a Bahá'í in Sweden. *Star of the West*, vol. 11 (1920) no. 16, pp. 270 and 276; *The Bahá'í World*, vol. 18, pp. 980-82 (Haifa: Bahá'í World Center, 1986; *The Magazine of the Children of the Kingdom*, vol. 1 (1920) no. 4, p. 22.

100. Shoghi Effendi to the Kenosha Bahá'ís, January 4, 1923. Microfilm of Original Letters and Cables from Shoghi Effendi Collection. National Bahá'í Archives.

101. Dated March 12, 1923.

102. Minutes, April 21, 1923. Kenosha Assembly Records. National Bahá'í Archives.

103. Minutes, May 7, 1928. Kenosha Assembly Records. National Bahá'í Archives.

104. Minutes, April 25, 1923. Kenosha Assembly Records. National Bahá'í Archives.

105. Minutes, October 20, 1923. Kenosha Assembly Records. National Bahá'í Archives.

106. Minutes, April 21, 1924 and April 21, 1925. Kenosha Assembly Records. National Bahá'í Archives.

107. Teaching Committee of Nineteen Bulletin, August 19, 1920. National Bahá'í Reference Library. Wilmette, Illinois. Johnathan W. Zohpy, "Invisible People: Blacks and Mexican-Americans" in *Kenosha County in the Twentieth Century*, pp. 54-55.

108. Kenosha Assembly circular letter, March 21, 1922. Kenosha Community Records. National Bahá'í Archives.

109. In 1925, and again in 1927, the Kenosha Assembly placed articles in the local newspaper concerning the persecution of Bahá'ís in Persia. (Minutes, September 24, 1922; May 20, 1925; January 4, 1928. Kenosha Assembly Records. Kenosha Bahá'í community to Persian Ambassador to the United States, September 15, 1922. Kenosha Community Records. National Bahá'í Archives.)

110. Kenosha Assembly Circular letters, March 2, 1923 and November 4, 1923. Kenosha Community Records. National Bahá'í Archives.

111. Kenosha Assembly circular letter, May 17, 1923. Kenosha Assembly Records. National Bahá'í Archives.

112. Kenosha Assembly circular letters, March 21, 1924 and September 27, 1925. Kenosha Assembly Records. Minutes, January 24, 1924; January 12, 1927; February 23, 1927. Kenosha Assembly Records. Kenosha Spiritual Assembly to Shoghi Effendi, March 12, 1924. Alfred Lund Papers. National Bahá'í Archives.

113. Minutes, December 10, 1924; December 17, 1924; and October 28, 1925. Kenosha Assembly Records. National Bahá'í Archives.

114. Minutes, 1925-1926 Membership Lists. Kenosha Assembly Records. Kenosha Assembly to National Spiritual Assembly, September 27, 1925. Office of the Secretary Records. National Bahá'í Archives.

115. Kenosha Assembly to Carl Sheffler, January 19, 1927. Office of the Treasurer Records. National Bahá'í Archives.

116. Minutes, November 6, 1929; January 29, 1930. Kenosha Assembly Records. National Bahá'í Archives.

117. Minutes, June 18, 1928. Kenosha Assembly Records. National Bahá'í Archives.

118. Minutes, May 28, 1928. Kenosha Assembly Records. National Bahá'í Archives.

119. Minutes, May 7, 1928; June 18, 1928; January 9, 1929; May 9, 1929. Kenosha Assembly Records. National Bahá'í Archives.

120. Kenosha Assembly to National Assembly Treasurer, January 10, 1932. Office of the Treasurer Records. National Bahá'í Archives. Richard H. Keehn, "Industry and Business" in *Kenosha County in the Twentieth Century*, p. 187.

121. Minutes July 1, 1932 and July 12, 1932. Kenosha Assembly Records. National Bahá'í Archives.

122. Shoghi Effendi, *Messages to America* (Wilmette, Ill.: Bahá'í Publishing Committee, 1947) pp. 4-5.

123. Kenosha Assembly to National Assembly, June 16, 1932; National Assembly to Kenosha Assembly, September 22, 1932. Office of the Secretary Records. National Bahá'í Archives.

124. Kenosha Assembly to Kenosha Bahá'ís, January 12, 1933. Kenosha Assembly Records. National Bahá'í Archives.

125. Kenosha Assembly to National Teaching Committee, February 25, 1931. Kenosha Assembly Records. National Bahá'í Archives.

126. The new Bahá'ís were: Gertrude Collins, Anna Petersen, Elinor Beemer, Carl Walline, Daniel Roszelle, and John Wosjecnic. The nine old Bahá'ís were: Charles Carlson, Matilda Carlson, Florence Borge, Molly Anderson, Elsa Meyer, Magnus Norlander, Wilhelmina Norlander, Clara Nelson, and Joseph Borkenhagen. Previously, Bernard and Theresa Jacobsen had been added to the membership list. (Minutes, March 30, 1932; April 27, 1932; 1931 Membership List. Kenosha Assembly Records. National Bahá'í Archives.)

Racine, in the early 1930s, was also having success in its teaching efforts and recorded new enrollments.

127. Minutes, November 9, 1932; November 19, 1932. Kenosha Assembly Records. National Bahá'í Archives.

128. National Assembly to Kenosha Assembly, April 7, 1931. Office of the Secretary Records. National Bahá'í Archives.

129. Minutes, September 25, 1933. Kenosha Assembly Records. National Bahá'í Archives.

130. Minutes, January 4, 1937. Kenosha Assembly Records. National Bahá'í Archives.

131. I am grateful to Richard Hollinger for this information. Using the "Feast Attendance Record," (1936) in the Kenosha Assembly Records and the 1936 Kenosha city directory, Hollinger has identified the occupations of nineteen Bahá'ís. Blue-collar workers were as follows: plasterer, carpenter, sign painter, auto worker, mason, machinist, driver, brass worker, factory employee, and laborer. The white-collar occupations were: assistant superintendent (at an insurance company), librarian, president, secretary-treasurer, investigator, draftsman, stenographer, beauty operator, and clerk. The occupation for Walter Bohanan (plasterer) was obtained from his obituary in a clipping file at the Kenosha Public Library.

This data also seems to indicate that there was a trend from unskilled to skilled blue-collar positions during the period 1900-1936, but this may be partly accounted for by the probability that un-



skilled workers were less frequently listed in the city directories as the population of the town grew.

132. Of the white-collar workers, two became Bahá'ís prior to 1900. (They are on the list kept by Byron Lane. Kenosha Community Records. National Bahá'í Archives.) Two were second generation Bahá'ís whose parents had become Bahá'ís prior to 1900. (Historical Record Cards for Eldon Voelz and Lauretta Voelz. National Bahá'í Archives.) The remaining white-collar Bahá'ís were neither listed on Lane's list nor on the membership list composed by 1906 (Kenosha Community Records. National Bahá'í Archives.) Therefore, they must have become Bahá'ís between 1906 and 1936.

133. Minutes, February 19, 1934; June 11, 1935. Kenosha Assembly Records. National Bahá'í Archives.

134. Minutes, January 8, 1934. Kenosha Assembly Records. National Bahá'í Archives.

135. Minutes, May 2, 1934. Kenosha Assembly Records. National Bahá'í Archives.

136. Minutes, April 20, 1937. Kenosha Assembly Records. National Bahá'í Archives. *Bahá'í World*, vol. 7, pp. 365, 373, 398.

137. Kenosha Assembly to National Assembly, June 24, 1937; National Assembly to Kenosha Assembly, July 9, 1937. Office of the Secretary Records. National Bahá'í Archives.

138. Kenosha Assembly to National Assembly, February 19, 1938; National Assembly to Kenosha Assembly, February 23, 1938. Office of the Secretary Records. National Bahá'í Archives.

139. Minutes, July 11, 1938. Kenosha Assembly Records. National Bahá'í Archives.

140. Minutes, May 2, 1939; June 10, 1940. Kenosha Assembly Records. National Bahá'í Archives.

141. Minutes, September 9, 1940; 1940 membership list (at the back of the minute book). Kenosha Assembly Records. National Bahá'í Archives.

142. Minutes, May 6, 1940; May 20, 1940; May 5, 1941. Kenosha Assembly Records. National Bahá'í Archives.

143. Minutes, January 22, 1940; May 20, 1940. Kenosha Assembly Records. National Bahá'í Archives.

144. Kenosha also provided two international pioneers during the Seven Year Plan: Flora Hottes, who moved to Bolivia in 1942, and Lauretta Voelz, who went to Regina, Canada, in 1943.

*History of the Kenosha Bahá'í Community* 57

145. Kenosha Assembly to National Assembly, January 17, 1944; National Assembly to Kenosha Assembly, March 30, 1944. Office of the Secretary Records. National Bahá'í Archives.

146. Minutes, March 27, 1945. Kenosha Assembly Records. National Bahá'í Archives.

147. Minutes, April 15, 1940; March 27, 1945. Kenosha Assembly Records. National Bahá'í Archives.

148. Minutes, July 17, 1945; Kenosha Assembly to Flora Hottes, September 20, 1945. Kenosha Assembly Records. National Bahá'í Archives.

149. *Bahá'í News*, No. 205 (March 1948) p. 4.

150. However, not all of these committees were appointed every year.

151. Kenosha Assembly Progress Report, November 1, 1968-July 1, 1969; November 1, 1969. Kenosha, Wisconsin, File. National Teaching Committee Records. National Bahá'í Archives.

152. Kenosha Assembly Annual Report, 1979-1980. Assembly Records. Kenosha Archives.

153. Informal meetings held in the homes of Bahá'ís to introduce new people to the Bahá'í teachings.

154. National Assembly to Kenosha Assembly, December 28, 1956. Office of the Secretary Records. National Bahá'í Archives.

155. Kenosha Assembly Progress Report. December 1970. Kenosha, Wisconsin, File. National Teaching Committee Records. National Bahá'í Archives.

156. Bahá'í Historical Record Cards. National Bahá'í Archives.

**TABLE 1**  
**KENOSHA ENROLLMENT BY YEAR\***  
 1897-1987

Year	Men	Women	Youth	Total
1897	9	9	NA	18
1898	24	31	NA	55
1899	53	59	NA	112
1900	18	16	NA	34
1904	1	1	NA	2
1906	1	1	NA	2
1908	1	0	NA	1
1917	1	0	NA	1
1918	0	1	NA	1
1920	3	1	NA	4
1921	1	0	NA	1
1925	0	0	NA	0
1926	0	0	NA	0
1927	0	1	NA	1
1928	1	0	NA	1
1929	2	0	NA	2
1930	0	0	NA	0
1931	2	2	NA	4
1932	7	9	NA	16
1933	0	0	NA	0
1934	1	1	NA	2
1935	0	0	NA	0
1936	1	2	0	3
1937	1	0	0	1
1938	0	0	1	1
1939	1	1	0	2
1940	1	0	0	1
1941	0	2	1	3
1942	0	1	0	1
1943	0	0	0	0
1944	0	1	0	1
1945	0	0	0	0
1946	0	2	0	2

\* Sources: Membership List, 1894-1900, Kenosha Community Records; Kenosha Membership Material, 1899-1900, 1925-1945, Kenosha Community Records; Kenosha Assembly Annual Reports, Kenosha Assembly Records. National Bahá'í Archives. Wilmette, Ill.

TABLE 1 (continued)

Year	Men	Women	Youth	Total
1947	0	0	0	0
1948	0	0	0	0
1949	0	1	3	4
1950	0	0	0	0
1951	0	0	0	0
1952	0	0	0	0
1953	1	2	1	4
1954	0	0	1	1
1955	0	0	1	1
1956	0	0	0	0
1957	0	0	0	0
1958	0	0	0	0
1959	0	0	0	0
1960	NA	NA	NA	3
1961	0	0	0	0
1962	NA	NA	NA	4
1963	NA	NA	NA	1
1964	0	0	0	0
1965	0	0	0	0
1966	0	0	0	0
1967	0	0	0	0
1968	0	0	0	0
1969	0	0	0	0
1970	0	0	1	1
1971	[1 adult]		3	4
1972	0	0	0	0
1973	NA	NA	NA	5
1974	0	0	0	0
1975	0	0	0	0
1976	0	0	0	0
1977	NA	NA	NA	2
1978	0	0	1	1
1979	0	0	0	0
1980	0	0	0	0
1981	NA	NA	NA	2
1982	0	0	0	0
1983	0	0	0	0
1984	0	0	0	0
1985	0	0	0	0
1986	0	0	0	0
1987	0	0	0	0

**TABLE 2**  
**OCCUPATIONS OF KENOSHA BAHÁ'Í MEN\***  
 1897-1941

Enrollment Year	Machinest	Factory Workers†	Professionals§	Craftsmen**	Other††	Not Known
1897	2	3	0	0	1	2
1898	5	9	1	1	2	9
1899	8	23	4	1	6	12
1900	2	6	0	0	2	9
1903	--	--	--	1	0	0
1904	1	3	0	0	0	0
1906	0	0	0	0	1	0
1908	0	0	0	0	1	0
1912	1	0	0	0	0	0
1913	0	0	1	0	0	0
1917	1	0	0	0	0	0
1920	0	0	1	0	0	0
1928	0	0	0	1	0	0
1929	0	0	1	0	0	1
1931	0	0	0	0	0	1
1932	0	1	0	0	0	3
1933	0	1	0	0	0	0
1936	0	0	0	0	0	1
1937	0	0	0	0	1	0
1939	0	0	0	0	0	1
1941	0	1	0	0	1	0

\* The occupations are those of the man at the time of enrollment as a Bahá'í or the closest year. Some of the men changed occupations. These changes were often an improvement in economic standing.

† Tinner, factory fireman, presser, enameler, tool maker, stationary engineer, stockkeeper, wagon maker, tinsmith, tanner, polisher.

§ Bookkeeper, clerk, druggist, contractor, photographer, office manager, insurance agent.

\*\* Carpenter, printer, sign painter.

†† Ship captain, barber, farmer, servant, teamster, butcher, gardner, foremen, janitor.

**TABLE 3**  
**OCCUPATIONS OF KENOSHA BAHÁ'Í WOMEN\***  
**1897-1941**

Enrollment Year	Housewife†	Professional§	Other	Not Known‡
1897	5	0	0	3
1898	14	1	2	12
1899	28	3	11	22
1900	4	1	3	9
1904	0	0	0	1
1906	0	0	1	1
1918	0	1	0	0
1920	0	0	0	1
1926	1	0	0	0
1931	0	1	0	0
1932	0	2	0	2
1936	0	2	0	0
1939	0	0	0	1
1941	0	1	0	1
1942	0	1	0	0
1944	0	0	0	1

\* The occupations are those of the woman when she enrolled as a Bahá'í or the closest year. Some of the men changed occupations. These changes were often an improvement in economic standing.

† As woman is assumed to be a housewife if no occupation is given for her in the census or city directory.

§ Teacher, bookkeeper, clerk, nurse, librarian.

‡ Farmer, factory worker, domestic, dressmaker, housekeeper, boarding house, waitress.

**TABLE 4**  
**SIZE OF KENOSHA BAHÁ'Í COMMUNITY BY YEAR\***  
 1906-1987

Year	Adults	Youth	Year	Adults	Youth
1906	60	2	1953	28	0
1916	35	NA	1954	25	1
1920	32	NA	1956	23	1
1922	26	NA	1957	21	1
1923	18	NA	1958	21	1
1925	17	7	1959	17	0
1926	20	NA	1960	16	NA
1927	18	NA	1961	15	NA
1928	18	NA	1962	18	0
1929	23	NA	1963	18	NA
1930	23	NA	1964	19	0
1931	27	NA	1965	21	0
1932	41	NA	1966	23	0
1933	40	NA	1967	24	0
1934	42	NA	1968	22	0
1935	44	NA	1969	18	3
1936	47	NA	1970	15	9
1937	48	NA	1971	13	NA
1938	50	NA	1972	20	2
1939	49	NA	1973	19	NA
1940	47	NA	1974	21	5
1941	42	NA	1975	21	4
1942	41	NA	1976	21	3
1943	38	NA	1977	18	2
1944	39	NA	1978	20	1
1945	36	NA	1979	23	1
1946	36	NA	1980	20	1
1947	29	NA	1981	21	1
1948	26	NA	1982	24	NA
1949	25	NA	1983	19	NA
1950	25	2	1985	19	NA
1951	25	3	1987	19	0
1952	26	3			

\* Sources: Kenosha Assembly Minutes, 1906 Kenosha Membership List, Kenosha Records. Local Spiritual Assembly Election Forms, Letter from Kenosha Assembly to National Spiritual Assembly, Septemeber 27, 1925, National Spiritual Assembly Records. Membership Lists, 1920, 1922, Alfred E. Lunt Papers. Kenosha Assembly Annual Reports, Kenosha Assembly Records. National Bahá'í Archives. Wilmette, Illinois.

**TABLE 5**  
**CHANGES IN SIZE OF KENOSHA BAHÁ'Í COMMUNITY\*, †**  
**1920-1987**

Year	Enrollments	Transfers In / Out		Deaths	Left Faith
1920	4	0	0	0	1
1921	1	0	0	0	0
1925	0	1	0	0	0
1926	0	3	0	0	0
1927	1	0	3	0	0
1928	1	0	2	1	0
1929	2	2	0	0	0
1930	0	0	0	1	0
1931	4	1	0	1	0
1932	16	0	0	0	0
1933	0	2	0	1	1
1934	2	0	0	0	0
1935	0	0	0	0	0
1936	3	0	0	1	0
1937	1	0	0	0	0
1938	1	1	1	2	0
1939	2	0	1	0	0
1940	1	0	7	2	0
1941	3	0	3	1	0
1942	1	1	1	0	0
1943	0	0	2	1	0
1944	1	1	1	0	0
1945	0	0	2	2	0
1946	2	1	1	1	0
1947	0	0	4	2	0
1948	0	0	2	0	0
1949	4	0	2	1	0
1950	0	0	0	0	0
1951	0	1	0	1	0
1952	0	0	0	0	0
1953	4	0	2	0	0
1954	1	0	4	1	0
1955	1	0	2	0	0

\* Sources: Kenosha Assembly Minutes, Kenosha Assembly Annual Reports, Kenosha Assembly Progress Reports.

† These statistics are probably not complete as the records for some years were missing or incomplete. There are discrepancies between Tables 4 and 5 for a few years.



**TABLE 5 (continued)**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Enrollments</b>	<b>Transfers In / Out</b>		<b>Deaths</b>	<b>Left Faith</b>
1956	0	0	2	1	0
1957	0	0	0	0	0
1958	0	0	0	1	0
1959-60	0	0	2	0	0
1960-61	3	0	1	4	0
1961-62	0	0	0	1	0
1962-63	4	0	0	1	0
1963-64	1	0	0	1	0
1964-65	0	0	0	0	0
1965-66	0	2	0	0	0
1966-67	0	0	0	0	0
1967-68	0	0	0	1	1
1968-69	0	0	0	1	0
1969-70	0	0	0	0	0
1970-71	1	0	4	2	0
1971-72	4	1	1	0	0
1973-74	5	0	0	0	0
1974-75	0	0	3	0	1
1975-76	0	0	0	0	0
1976-77	0	0	4	1	2
1977-78	2	0	0	1	1
1978-79	1	4	5	0	0
1979-80	0	1	2	0	0
1980-81	0	1	0	1	1
1981-82	2	0	1	0	0
1982-83	0	2	0	1	0
1986	0	2	0	0	0
1987	0	2	0	0	0