

## Reviews/Critiques/Reseñas

### THE GREAT ADVENTURE

**Author:** Florence Mayberry

**Publisher:** Nine Pines Publishing, Manotick, Ontario, Canada, 1994, 217 pages

Florence Mayberry has had many years of distinguished Bahá'í service. She has served as a member of the Continental Board of Counsellors in North America (1968–1973), Counsellor member of the International Teaching Centre (1973–1983), on the National Spiritual Assemblies of the Bahá'ís of the United States (1959–1961) and Mexico (1961–1963), and as an Auxiliary Board member (1954–1968). She has also made many extensive Bahá'í travel teaching trips. In *The Great Adventure*, Florence Mayberry writes her memoirs and recounts many stories from these years of service.

The book has two main parts. First, she describes her family background, especially regarding her mother, Myrtle, and her maternal grandparents, Jesse and Becky Foose, who had the greatest impact on her childhood years. She traces her early years in Missouri, California, and Indiana, including a possible near encounter with 'Abdu'l-Bahá in San Francisco. She had heard about the Bahá'í Faith various times from Elizabeth Carpenter and Marzieh Gail but did not seriously investigate the Bahá'í Faith until after her marriage to David Mayberry. She became a Bahá'í in May, 1941, along with her husband, mother, brother, and sister-in-law.

In the second part of the book, Florence Mayberry relates stories of her Bahá'í activities, primarily the many travel-teaching trips she took in North and Central America and her pioneering experiences in Mexico. She relates how she developed into an experienced and effective Bahá'í public speaker. There is also a moving account of her pilgrimage in 1957 when she had the bounty of meeting Shoghi Effendi.

Florence Mayberry is an excellent writer, and her stories are vivid and inspiring. She brings to life the many people she has met and the places she has visited. This is not an analytical work but is written from the heart. It is disappointing that she did not include more material from her years at the International Teaching Centre, as well as the other Bahá'í institutions on which she served. The book focuses on her travel teaching and goes into little detail about her administrative work. It is beneficial, however, that we have another set of memoirs upon which future historians can draw. The book will be inspiring for any Bahá'í who wants to emulate Florence Mayberry's long, devoted service, and that of her husband, David, whose patient support made her extensive trips possible.

ROGER M. DAHL