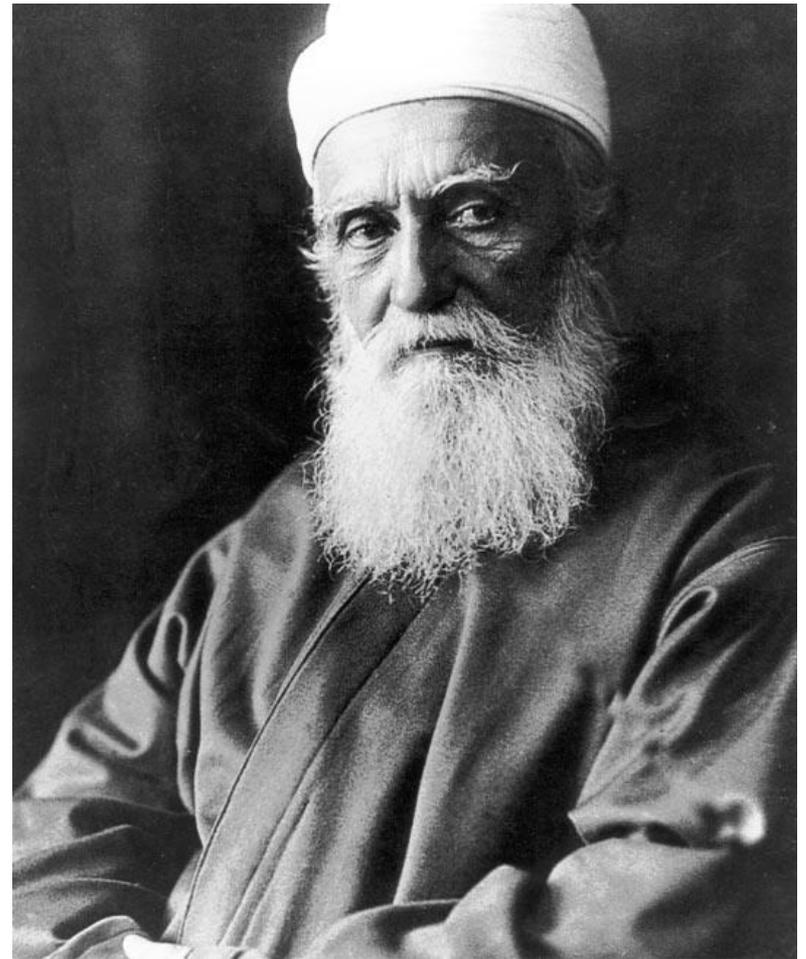


# The Legacy of `Abdu'l-Bahá's Visit to America, 1912

Robert H. Stockman



# Purpose of the Course

- To review `Abdu'l-Bahá's trip to the US and Canada, April-December, 1912
- To consider its impact on the American Bahá'ís and on America
- To look at `Abdu'l-Bahá's social action and public discourse, His accompanying individuals
- To look at the trip comparatively by examining the visits of Protap Chunder Mozoomdar and Swami Vivekananda (Hindu) and Anagarika Dharmapala (Buddhist). What did `Abdu'l-Bahá say that was different, and how? How did He act differently?

# Shoghi Effendi's Evaluation

- It was reserved, however, for the North American continent to witness the most astonishing manifestation of the boundless vitality 'Abdu'l-Bahá exhibited in the course of these journeys. The remarkable progress achieved by the organized community of His followers in the United States and Canada, the marked receptivity of the American public to His Message, as well as His consciousness of the high destiny awaiting the people of that continent, fully warranted the expenditure of time and energy which he devoted to this most important phase of His travels. (Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By*, p. 287-88)

# More from Shoghi Effendi

- A visit which entailed a journey of over five thousand miles, which lasted from April to December, which carried Him from the Atlantic to the Pacific coast and back, which elicited discourses of such number as to fill no less than three volumes, was to mark the climax of those journeys, and was fully justified by the far-reaching results which He well knew such labors on His part would produce.

- The character of the acts He performed fully demonstrated the importance He attached to that visit. The laying, with His own hands, of the dedication stone of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkar, by the shore of Lake Michigan, in the vicinity of Chicago, on the recently purchased property, and in the presence of a representative gathering of Bahá'ís from East and West; the dynamic affirmation by Him of the implications of the Covenant instituted by Bahá'u'lláh, following the reading of the newly translated Tablet of the Branch, in a general assembly of His followers in New York, designated henceforth as the "City of the Covenant";

the moving ceremony in Inglewood, California, marking His special pilgrimage to the grave of Thornton Chase, the "first American believer," and indeed the first to embrace the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh in the Western world; the symbolic Feast He Himself offered to a large gathering of His disciples assembled in the open air, and in the green setting of a June day at West Englewood, in New Jersey; the blessing He bestowed on the Open Forum at Green Acre, in Maine, on the banks of the Piscataqua River, where many of His followers had gathered, and which was to evolve into one of the first Bahá'í summer schools of the Western Hemisphere and be recognized as one of the earliest endowments established in the American continent;

His address to an audience of several hundred attending the last session of the newly-founded Bahá'í Temple Unity held in Chicago; and, last but not least, the exemplary act He performed by uniting in wedlock two of His followers of different nationalities, one of the white, the other of the Negro race -- these must rank among the outstanding functions associated with His visit to the community of the American believers, functions designed to pave the way for the erection of their central House of Worship, to fortify them against the tests they were soon to endure, to cement their unity, and to bless the beginnings of that Administrative Order which they were soon to initiate and champion.

"When 'Abdu'l-Bahá visited this country for the first time in 1912," a commentator on His American travels has written, "He found a large and sympathetic audience waiting to greet Him personally and to receive from His own lips His loving and spiritual message. ...Beyond the words spoken there was something indescribable in His personality that impressed profoundly all who came into His presence. The dome-like head, the patriarchal beard, the eyes that seemed to have looked beyond the reach of time and sense, the soft yet clearly penetrating voice, the translucent humility, the never failing love, -- but above all, the sense of power mingled with gentleness that invested His whole being with a rare majesty of spiritual exaltation that both set Him apart, and yet that brought Him near to the lowliest soul, -- it was all this, and much more that can never be defined, that have left with His many ... friends, memories that are ineffaceable and unspeakably precious. (Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By*, p. 289)

# `Abdu'l-Bahá's Trips West

- Americans asked Him to come to the US starting in about 1902
- Some thought it'd be a bad idea, though
- 1911: Washington Bahá'ís organized a supplication of 850 signatures inviting Him to U.S.
- `Abdu'l-Bahá wrote the American Bahá'ís and said unity was necessary if He was to come
- He sent Ahmad Sohrab ahead to do advance planning
- `Abdu'l-Bahá wrote the Lake Mohonk organizers Himself

# First Trip West: Europe

- Stayed at the Hotel du Parc, Thonon-les-Bains, Aug. 21-Sept. 4, 1911
- London, Sept. 4-Oct. 3
- First public talk, 2,000 people, Sept. 10
- Paris Oct. 3-Dec. 2
- Spoke about principles of the Faith



# Itinerary of `Abdu'l-Bahá (1844-1921)

- Visited France and Britain, Sept-Dec. 1911
- Arrived in New York April 11, 1912; departed for Britain December 5, 1912
- Arrived with three major speaking invitations in Washington, Chicago, New York state.
- Apr. 11 -20: New York City. Spoke at Columbia University, several churches, visited the Bowery Mission for destitute men.
- Washington, April 20-28, Chicago April 28-May 6

# Itinerary, Continued

- New York City, then Lake Mohonk Peace Conference, May 15-17.
- May 17-August 23: New York City, with excursions to Boston (May 22-25), Philadelphia (June 8-10), and Montclair (June 21-29)
- Boston (July 23-25), Dublin, NH (July 25-Aug. 16), Green Acre School (Aug. 16-23), Malden (Aug. 23-30)
- Montreal (Aug. 30-Sept. 9), Buffalo (Sept. 10-12), Chicago (Sept. 13-17), Minnesota (Sept. 17-21), Nebraska (Sept. 22-23), Denver (Sept. 23-26), Glenwood Springs (Sept. 27-28), Salt Lake City (Sept. 29-Oct. 1)

# Itinerary, Final

- San Francisco area, Oct. 2-18, Oct. 21-25
- Los Angeles, Oct. 18-21.
- Sacramento (Oct. 25-26), Denver (Oct. 29), Chicago (Oct. 31 - Nov. 4), Cincinnati (Nov. 5), Washington (Nov. 6-11), Baltimore and Philadelphia (Nov. 11)
- New York City, Nov. 12-Dec. 5.
- Public talks: at least 376 (1.5 per day on average) to an audience of some 93,000.
- 31 liberal Protestant churches, 14 Theosophical and New Thought meetings

# `Abdu'l-Bahá's Activities

- Talks in homes
- Visits with individuals and small groups
- Meetings with prominent persons
- Visits to settlement houses/social service agencies (7?), summer camps (2)
- Visits to the sick
- Over 350 newspaper articles
- Public talks: at least 401 (1.67 per day on average) to an audience of some 93,000.
- 31 liberal Protestant churches, 14 Theosophical and New Thought meetings
- California alone: 48 formal address, 41 small group meetings, 53 interviews

# Talks

- 5 Universities
- 3 synagogues
- Hull House and 4 other settlement houses/missions
- 4<sup>th</sup> annual NAACP convention
- 1 African American literary society (at an AME church)

Audiences: rich and poor, high and low, black, European-Americans, Syrians, and Japanese, Christians, Jews, and Muslims, powerful and powerless

Focused on African Americans

# Goal of Talks, in General

- Purpose of talks: to move the uninformed public into the ranks of the interested, the interested into the ranks of the inquiring, the inquiring into the ranks of the committed, and the committed into the ranks of the consecrated. In short, He sought to generate a centripetal force, attracting people to Bahá'u'lláh and His teachings to the extent they would respond.

# Some of `Abdu'l-Bahá's Private Priorities

- `Abdu'l-Bahá had already directed American Bahá'ís on international traveling teaching trips and needed to prepare them for the Tablets of the Divine Plan.
- American Bahá'ís needed to understand the Covenant, the Center of the Covenant, and Covenant Breaking
- `Abdu'l-Bahá had already composed a Will and Testament establishing the Guardianship and Administrative Order, so He needed to strengthen Bahá'í institutions

# Arrival in New York City, April 11, 1912



- The Cedric left Alexandria for Naples, March 25, then left Naples for New York City.
- Shoghi Effendi (then 14) was turned back at Naples
- Louisa Mathew joined party in Naples

# The Cedric

- Abdu'l-Baha and His party signed the passenger manifest of the Cedric

Department of Commerce and Labor  
IMMIGRATION SERVICE

LIST OR MANIFEST OF ALIEN PASSENGERS FOR THE UNITED STATES  
Required by the regulations of the Secretary of Commerce and Labor of the United States, under Act of Congress approved February 20, 1907, to be delivered  
s.s. Cedric sailing from Naples March 30<sup>th</sup> 1912

No. on List	NAME IN FULL	Age	Sex	Color of Hair	Color of Eyes	Place of Birth	Nativity	Profession, Occupation, or Trade	Country	City or Town	Final Destination
1	Almgren Cecilia	45	W	brn	brn	Sweden	Swedish	Teacher	Sweden	Stockholm	NY New York
2	Chapman Dorothy	30	F	brn	brn	England	English	Teacher	England	New York	NY New York
3	Donati Emma	44	F	brn	brn	Italy	Italian	Teacher	Italy	Rome	NY New York
4	Fiore Prof. Pasquale	70	M	brn	brn	Italy	Italian	Teacher	Italy	Naples	NY New York
5	Händler Charlotte	19	F	brn	brn	Germany	German	Teacher	Germany	Berlin	NY New York
6	Mathew Louis Alice Maria	41	F	brn	brn	France	French	Teacher	France	Paris	NY New York
7	Peterson Florence Mary	30	F	brn	brn	Denmark	Danish	Teacher	Denmark	Copenhagen	NY New York
8	Abdul Baha	40	M	brn	brn	Persia	Persian	Teacher	Persia	Bahá	Touring
9	Abdullah Said	50	M	brn	brn	Persia	Persian	Teacher	Persia	Bahá	Touring
10	Farced Aman	25	M	brn	brn	Persia	Persian	Teacher	Persia	Bahá	Touring
11	Grant R. Anderson	44	M	brn	brn	Canada	English	Teacher	Canada	Halifax	NY New York
12	Mrs. Grant	41	F	brn	brn	Canada	English	Teacher	Canada	Halifax	NY New York
13	Mahmud Miza	34	M	brn	brn	Persia	Persian	Teacher	Persia	Bahá	Touring
14	Millar William	23	M	brn	brn	England	English	Teacher	England	London	NY New York
15	Nordaz Ruth	36	F	brn	brn	France	French	Teacher	France	Paris	NY New York
16	Marcello	48	M	brn	brn	Italy	Italian	Teacher	Italy	Naples	NY New York
17	Jelen Hart Raymond Nelson	51	M	brn	brn	Canada	English	Teacher	Canada	Halifax	NY New York
18	William	25	M	brn	brn	Canada	English	Teacher	Canada	Halifax	NY New York
19	Walker Harry W.	33	M	brn	brn	Canada	English	Teacher	Canada	Halifax	NY New York
20	Swart William D.	55	M	brn	brn	Canada	English	Teacher	Canada	Halifax	NY New York
21	Warren	13	M	brn	brn	Canada	English	Teacher	Canada	Halifax	NY New York
22	Watrous S.	72	M	brn	brn	Canada	English	Teacher	Canada	Halifax	NY New York
23	Wilson L.	58	M	brn	brn	Canada	English	Teacher	Canada	Halifax	NY New York
24	Mrs. Wilson	42	F	brn	brn	Canada	English	Teacher	Canada	Halifax	NY New York
25	Yates Arthur Mrs	40	F	brn	brn	Canada	English	Teacher	Canada	Halifax	NY New York
26	Roche James A.	32	M	brn	brn	Canada	English	Teacher	Canada	Halifax	NY New York
27	Damon Cora	35	F	brn	brn	Canada	English	Teacher	Canada	Halifax	NY New York

278/14

R.D. Wetzel  
Mehner

# Description of `Abdu'l-Bahá

- He was a “strongly and solidly built” man of medium height, though He “seemed to be much taller,” weighing about 165 pounds (75 kilograms) and pacing the deck, “alert and active in every moment, his head thrown back and splendidly poised upon his broad, square shoulders”:
- A profusion of iron grey hair bursting out at the sides of the turban and hanging long upon the neck; a large, massive head, full-domed and remarkable wide across the forehead rising like a great palisade above the eyes, which were very wide apart, their orbits large and deep, looking out from under massive overhanging brows; strong Roman nose, generous ears, decisive yet kindly mouth and chin; a creamy white complexion, beard same color as his hair, worn full over the face and carefully trimmed at almost full length—this completes an insufficient word picture of this “Wise Man Out of the East.”

# Meeting with Reporters

- An enquirer, about to set off to Jerusalem, was one day discussing with Abdul-Baha the subject of pilgrimage:
- “The proper spirit,” said `Abdul-Baha, “in which to visit places hallowed by remembrances of Christ, is one of constant communion with God. Love for God will be the telegraph wire, one end of which is in the Kingdom of the Spirit, and the other in your heart.”
- “I am afraid my telegraph wire is broken,” the enquirer replied.
- “Then you will have to use wireless telegraphy. . .” said Abdul-Baha, laughing heartily.

# `Abdu'l-Bahá's Arrival

- Everyone obeyed [the request to leave] at once except Marjorie, Rhoda, and myself! Marjorie, who loves the Teachings but has never wholly accepted them, said “I can’t leave till I’ve seen Him. I *can’t*. I WON’T!” So, though we followed the crowd to the street, we slipped away there and looked around for some place to hide. Quite a distance below the big entrance to the pier we saw a fairly deep embrasure into which a window was set, with the stone wall jutting out from it. Here we flattened ourselves against the window, Rhoda (who is conspicuously tall) clasping a long white box of lilies which she had brought for the Master. Just in front of the entrance stood Mr. Mills’ car, his chauffeur in it. Suddenly it rolled forward and, to our utter dismay, parked directly in front of us. Now we were caught: certain to be discovered. But there was no help for it, for Marjorie still refused to budge till she had seen the Master.

- Then, He *came*—through the entrance with Mr. MacNutt and Mr. Mills, and turned and walked swiftly toward the car. In a panic we waited.
- A few nights ago Marjorie and I had a double dream. In her dream, I was out in space with her. In mine, we were in a room together and the Master had just entered it. He walked straight up to Marjorie, put His two hands on her shoulders and pressed and pressed till she sank to her knees. And while she was sinking, she lifted her face to His and everything in her seemed to be dying except her soul, which looked out through her raised eyes in a sort of agony of recognition.
- Today, after one glance at the Master, this was just the way she looked.
- “Now,” she said, I *know*.”
- As the Master was stepping into the car, He turned and—*smiled* at us.

# Residence at Hotel Ansonia, April 11-20

- “I am very much pleased with the City of New York. Its entrance, its wharves, the buildings and the broad avenues are all magnificent and beautiful. Truly I say it is a wonderful city. As New York has made wonderful progress in material civilization, I hope that spiritually it may also advance in the realm of God.”



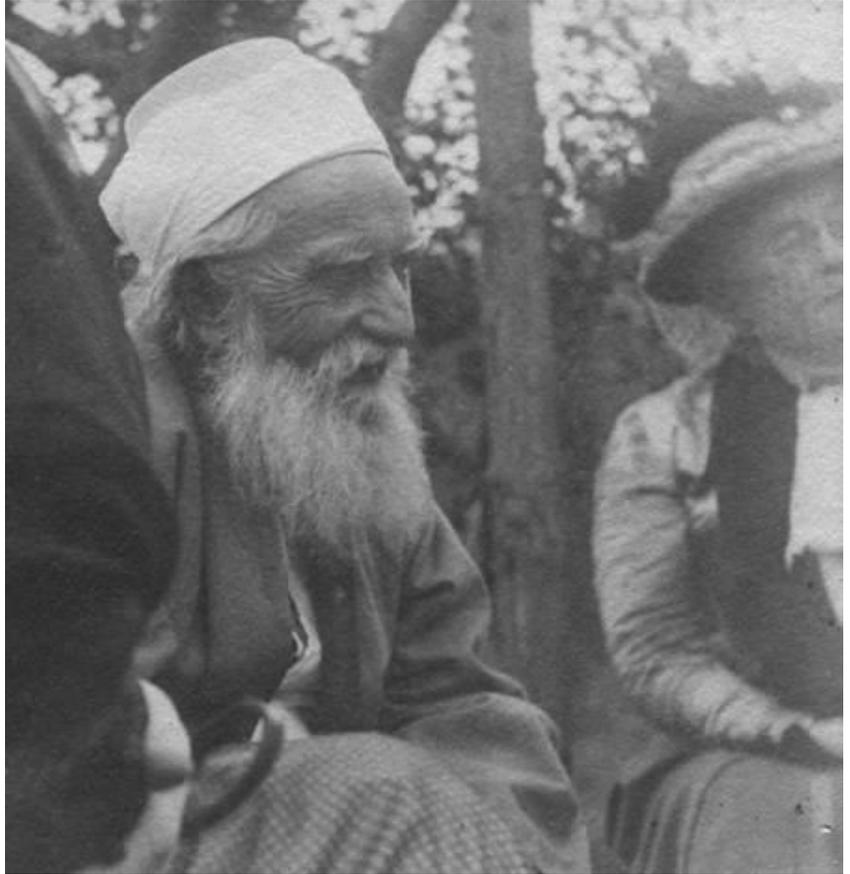
# The Kinney Household

- 300 people awaited Him in the medium sized house
- People were so packed together, it was hard to drink tea
- He gave a very short talk; the house got warm
- He returned to speak often



# A brief talk at the Kinneys

- I was in Egypt and was not feeling well, but I wished to come to you in America. My friends said, "This is a long journey; the sea is wide; you should remain here." But the more they advised and insisted, the greater became my longing to take this trip, and now I have come to America to meet the friends of God. **This long voyage will prove how great is my love for you.** There were many troubles and vicissitudes, but, in the thought of meeting you, all these things vanished and were forgotten.



# Howard Colby Ives

- Unitarian minister attracted to the Master
- Secretly wanted a private meeting without translator, and got it.

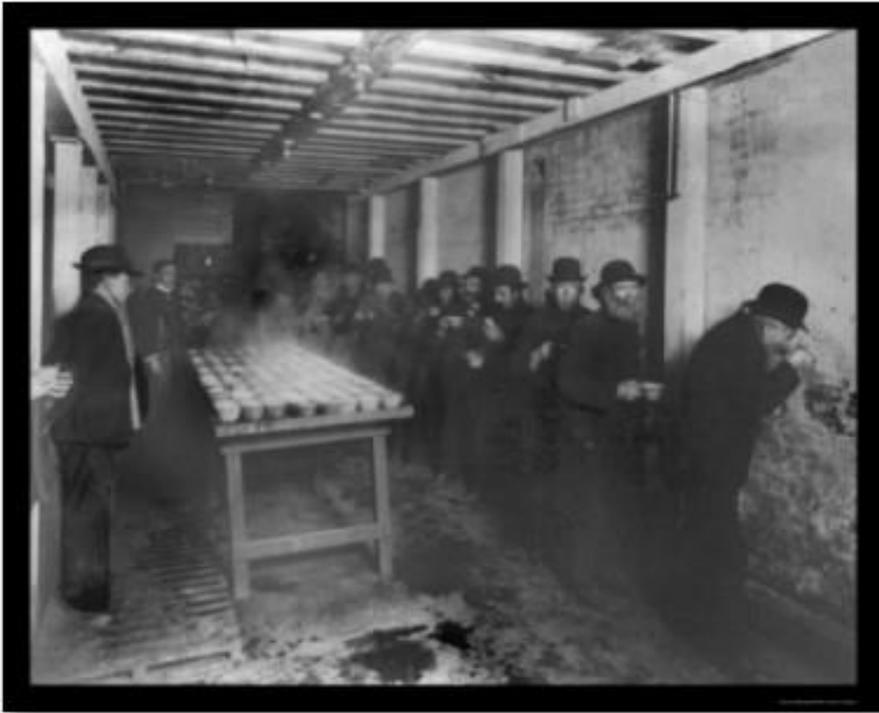


# Juliet Thompson

- From a very prominent Washington family
- Became a Bahá'í about 1906
- Went on pilgrimage, then to Thonon
- Her diary is one of the most emotionally deep records of His visit



# A Bowery food line



- Free coffee at the Bowery, 1908
- First US talk in Church of the Ascension
- Also spoke at Columbia University
- Attended a play, The Terrible Meek

# Visit to the Bowery

- Juliet Thompson started a personal ministry there and arranged for `Abdu'l-Bahá to visit
- He spoke to 400 men and gave each man one or more quarters
- A very moving incident



# Washington, D.C., April 20-28

- Left for Washington on April 20
- Stayed at Mrs. Agnes Parsons' house
- Spoke there daily to about 150 people
- Spoke to several churches, the PAES meeting, and at Howard University



# More about Washington

- 8 public talks, 12 talks in homes; spoke of 3 principles of the Faith
- Total audience, about 10,000 people
- Spoke at Unitarian Church and Universalist Church
- Spoke to Bethel Literary Society
- Made a major impression on black audiences



# Race Unity

- `Abdu'l-Bahá asked Louis Gregory extensively about racial prejudice in 1910
- Louis arranged for many of `Abdu'l-Bahá's talks to black audiences
- Sat Louis Gregory at a banquet at Persian Legation
- Spoke at an interracial gathering in a Bahá'í home
- Possibly half `Abdu'l-Bahá's D.C. audience was African-American

# Incidents

- Spoke at Alexander Graham Bell's Wednesday gathering
- Met many ambassadors, Congressmen, cabinet members, Supreme Court Justice, members of Taft family
- Khan and Parsons had excellent contacts
- Spoke at a huge gathering that included Samuel Gompers
- Was invited to the White House, but it didn't happen
- Invited to dinner at Turkish embassy
- Probably met Theodore Roosevelt

# Chicago, April 29-May 6

- Train problems delayed His arrival until evening
- First full day (April 30) spoke 3 times (Hull House, NAACP, Bahai Temple Unity), spoke to reporters about 7 principles of the Faith, and comforted Corinne True



# Hull House and NAACP

- Spoke to several hundred blacks and whites about race unity
- Gave away quarters to poor people
- Spoke to 750 at NAACP gathering
- W. E. B. DuBois was impressed



# The Marriage of Louis and Louise



- `Abdu'l-Bahá encouraged Louisa to marry Louis
- She asked Him to talk to Louis, which He did
- Louis was shocked
- They married on September 27, 1912 in New York City
- The paradigmatic event of `Abdu'l-Bahá's visit

# Nettie Tobin and the Stone



- Nettie Tobin obtained a broken building stone from a Chicago construction site in 1908
- Took it to the temple site on trolleys, the EI, and in a baby carriage
- `Abdu'l-Bahá selected it spontaneously
- Many people dug the hole together, representing all the races and nations present that day
- `Abdu'l-Bahá put the stone in the hole and declared the temple built

# Preparing to Lay the Cornerstone



# A Busy Chicago Itinerary

- Spoke in two churches and to the Theosophists at Northwestern Univ.
- Walked in the park with Bahá'ís
- Met with the children
- Encouraged Louise Waite in her music



# Talks in Chicago Churches



# Cleveland, May 6-7, 1912



- Arrived, 4:20 P.M.
- `Abdu'l-Bahá spoke at Swingle's Sanitorium to 40 Bahá'ís
- American will lead all nations spiritually
- Addressed 500 at Hotel Euclid
- 8 newspaper articles
- Left the next morning

# Pittsburg, May 7-8



- `Abdu'l-Baha stayed at the Hotel Schenley
- Martha Root arranged His talk
- Spoke to 400 at Hotel Schenley about 7 principles, stayed there overnight
- Many private meetings, 5 newspaper articles
- Left for D.C., 8 a.m.

# Washington and New York

- Visited Washington, D.C., May 8-11
- Rented 1340 Harvard St. stayed there
- Spoke at Parsons house daily
- Visited a settlement house for children
- New York City, May 11-14
- Spoke at Unity Church, Montclair to 800 people, then at Edsall house
- International Peace Forum, 2,000 people
- NY Peace Society, 1800 people

# Lake Mohonk Peace Conference, May 14-16

- An exclusive annual conference for 200+ prominent men
- The leading annual peace gathering in USA at the time
- Smiley family: Quakers
- Beautiful resort hotel in Shawangunk Mts.
- Spoke twice, 8 principles

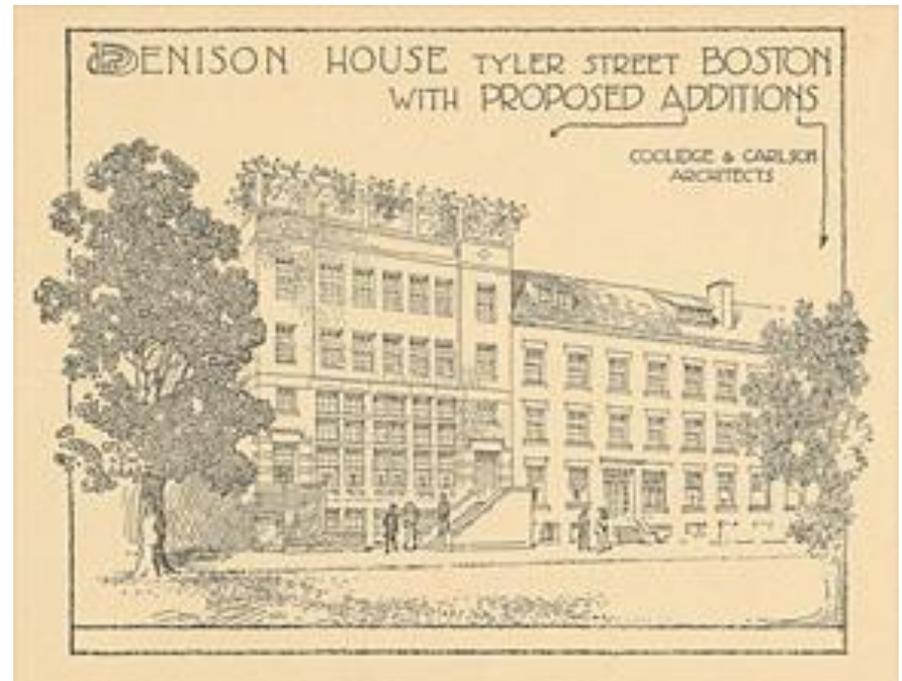


# Back to New York City, May 17-22

- Rested a bit and made plans; He would not go to California
- Met with ministers and rabbis
- Spoke at 2 churches, including Ives's in Jersey City, to 500-600
- Ives was immensely impressed
- Spoke to clergy about Islam at Kinney house
- Spoke to women's gathering about equality of sexes
- Met the Bahá'í children

# Boston, May 22-26

- Spoke to Unitarian Association and Free Religious Association to 4000+ people
- Spoke at 1 settlement house to Greek-Syrian Relief Society, Golden Circle Society
- Spoke to Clark University, Worcester



# Back to New York, May 26-June 8

- 18 talks in 14 days
- Theosophists, 2 churches
- Went to Gifford Pinchot's estate in Milford, PA to meet VIPs
- 2 talks to clubs, 9 in Bahá'ís' houses
- In the future "all will turn" to the House of Justice; first reference to a provision of the Will and Testament
- No reference ever to Guardianship
- Ameen Fareed caused trouble

# Philadelphia, June 8-10

- Forty-five hours in Phily; 5 talks to 3,000+ people
- Sunday: Talk to Bahá'ís at the Hotel Rittenhouse, at Unitarian Church, and Baptist Temple (10 principles)
- Russell Conwell was famous founder of Temple University

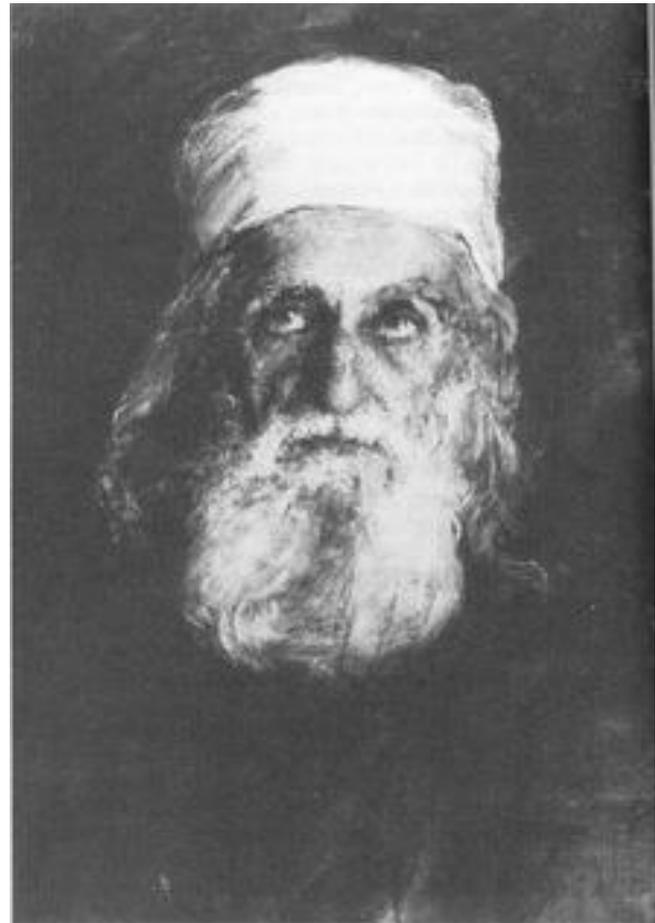


# New York City, June 10-20

- Spoke to Central Congregational Church, Brooklyn, about the Manifestations and accepting them all.
- Spoke about Jewish proofs of Messiah
- Spoke about proofs of Muhammad's mission
- Spoke to a small group of Bahá'ís about the Covenant, Center of the Covenant, the Universal House of Justice
- Bahá'ís must obey `Abdu'l-Bahá
- Met NY LSA

# Portrait of the Master

- Agreed to let Juliet Thompson paint Him
- In one sitting, He awoke and proclaimed Lua the Herald of the Covenant
- She goes downstairs to proclaim `Abdu'l-Bahá Center of the Covenant
- `Abdu'l-Bahá calls for a big Unity Feast to be held



# New Jersey, June 21-29

- Goes to Montclair for some rest
- No public talks; talks at Edsall house or his rented house every day
- Walks around Montclair, shops, cooks meals
- Meets “Auntie Victoria” Bedekian



# Souvenir Picnic, West Englewood, N.J.



- 250 in attendance
- Persian food, `Abdu'l-Bahá annointed everyone
- `Abdu'l-Bahá spoke three times
- Private meetings in Wilhelm residence
- `Abdu'l-Bahá spent the night

# The Souvenir Picnic

- `Abdu'l-Bahá said it should be an annual event
- Very diverse attendance, including a few clergymen



# `Abdu'l-Baha and Haozoun Hohannes Topakyan



- Topakyan was an Armenian who served as Persian consul for New York
- He invited `Abdu'l-Bahá to his home in Morristown twice and introduced `Abdu'l-Bahá in a public gathering
- Attended Souvenir picnic

# New York City, June 30-July 23

- Huge crowds at `Abdu'l-Bahá's house every night
- 31 talks, but only one in a public location: All Souls Unitarian Church
- Advocated an interreligious body to solve differences
- Cured Lua of poison ivy and sent her to California
- Spent a lot of time with Juliet Thompson
- Deepened Howard MacNutt for a mission to Chicago

# The Service of Grace Robarts

- Canadian Bahá'í, aunt of future Hand of the Cause John Robarts
- She asked to serve in His household, so He tested her
- She served well; He mentored her
- Later, secretary of NTC



# Marriage of Harlan and Grace

- Harlan was a Harvard grad and an active Boston area Bahá'í
- `Abdu'l-Bahá suggested he and Grace marry
- He and Ives married them the next day
- Chair of NSA, Aux. Board member, pioneer to South Africa



# Visit to Boston, July 23-25



- Stayed at the Hotel Victoria, Boston
- Seven talks in 3 days; economics, Golden Circle Club, Theosophists
- On to Dublin, NH

# `Abdu'l-Bahá in Dublin, N.H., July 25-Aug. 16



# Busy 23 Days

- `Abdu'l-Bahá stayed at “Dayspring” a farmhouse owned by Agnes Parsons
- Rotated visitors through on a schedule; H. Harmon, George Latimer, Howard C. Ives
- 1 public talk at Congregational Ch.
- Daily talks at Parsons
- Time to rest



# `Abdu'l-Bahá Visiting Boy's Camp

- Instructed MacNutt about reelected Chicago Assembly
- `Abdu'l-Bahá met the black servants
- Met many prominent people
- Visited a boy's camp



# Green Acre, Aug. 16-23



# Fred Mortensen

- Was a juvenile delinquent who became a Bahá'í
- Fred rode the rods to Green Acre and had to explain it to `Abdu'l-Bahá
- `Abdu'l-Bahá took him to Malden with him for a week



# Malden and Boston, Aug. 23-30

- Asked to stay at a house on a hill, so Maria Wilson vacated her house in Malden for Him and His party
- Cured Ruth Randall of tuberculosis
- Spoke to the Theosophists and attended a wedding



# Talks in Boston

- Spoke at Franklin Square House to 500 working women about equality of the sexes
- Left for Montreal at 9 a.m. August 30.



# Montreal, Aug. 30-Sept. 9



- He stayed at the Maxwell House at 1548 ave. des Pins for several days
- Largest Bahá'í group in Canada
- Spoke at two churches, clubs; Maxwell house daily.

# Montreal Meetings

- Moved to the Windsor Hotel, Canada's first "grand hotel"
- Enunciated 11 principles at St. James Methodist Ch.
- Warned of impending war in Europe
- 25 newspaper articles in English, 9 in French

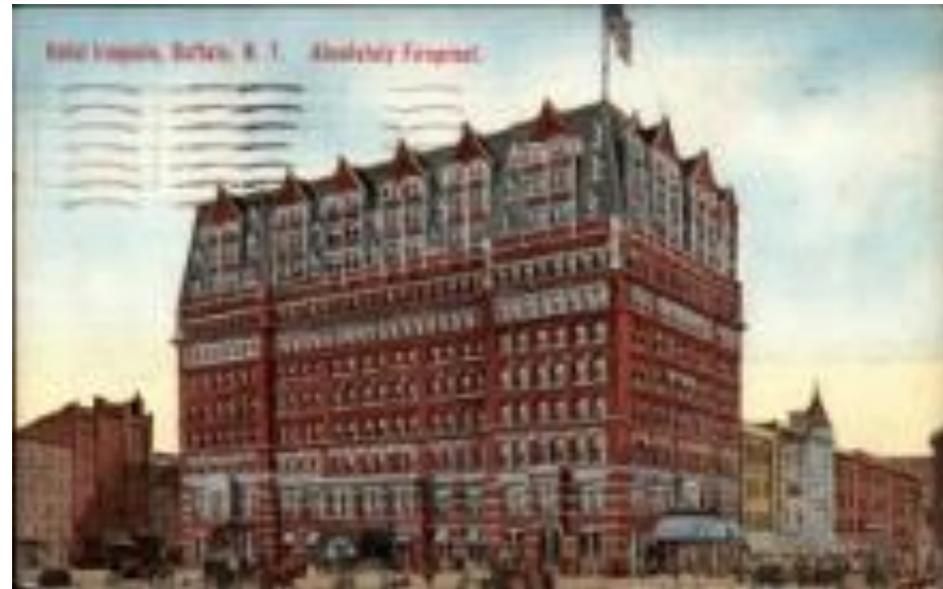


# Ontario

- Passed through Ontario on His way to Buffalo
- Got off the train in Toronto and paced in the railway platform
- Waved to a 3 year old Mohawk boy, James Loft, sitting on a fence as the train went by. Thirty-six years later, Loft became the first native Canadian Bahá'í.

# Buffalo, Sept. 10-12

- Stayed at the Hotel Iroquois, Buffalo
- Spoke at hotel and to Universalist Church
- Warned again of war in Europe
- Visited Niagara Falls



# Chicago, Sept. 13-17

- Met Saichiro Fujita at the train station
- Only one public meeting: with the Theosophists
- Concentrated on the Bahá'ís
- Met with Frederick Nutt and warned him about Covenant breaking
- Spoke often about the Covenant and Covenant breaking
- Met with the African American Bahá'ís
- Invited Nutt to Kenosha with Him
- Instructed Bahá'ís to turn away violators from their meetings

# Kenosha, Sept. 16

- Missed the first train to Kenosha; it crashed
- Spoke at the Bahá'í Center twice and the Congregational Church
- Stayed overnight, returned to Chicago



# Minneapolis/St. Paul, Sept. 18-21

- Spoke at the Commercial Club and Shaari Tov Temple (Jewish)
- 3 talks at His hotel, 3 in Bahá'í homes
- Visited Walker Art Gallery
- Walked in Loring Park daily



# Nebraska, Sept. 22-23

- Stopped in Lincoln, Neb. to see William Jennings Bryan
- Had to spend a night in Omaha because He missed a train
- Several newspaper articles, 1 hotel talk, and a fireside in the train station resulted
- Bryan wasn't home!



# Denver, Sept. 23-26

- Stayed at Shirley Hotel
- Spoke at Divine Science Church, the hotel, and Bahá'í homes
- 1,000 people heard Him; eight newspaper articles



# Glenwood Springs, Sept. 27-28



- He stopped at the Hotel Colorado in Glenwood Springs because of exhaustion
- Arrived at midnight, left at midnight
- Enjoyed the spa, went shopping, rested

# Salt Lake City, Sept. 29-Oct. 1

- Stayed at the Kenyon Hotel
- State Fair, Irrigation Congress, Mormon Conference all at once
- Toured the Fair and bought seeds to plant in Haifa
- Invited to sit on stage at Mormon Tabernacle



# San Francisco, Oct. 2-18, 21-25

- Arrived a day late
- Rented a house at 1815 California St., San Francisco
- 48 public talks, 41 smaller talks, 53 interviews
- 37 newspaper articles
- Maybe 100 Bahá'ís in Bay area



# Helen Goodall and Ella Cooper: the two leading Bahá'ís



# Talks

- Some of His most important and weighty talks
- `Abdu'l-Bahá spoke at the First Unitarian Church, San Francisco, on Oct. 6, 1912
- Gave many talks at Cooper home in Oakland



# 'Abdu'l-Bahá at Stanford, Oct. 8



ABDUL BAHÁ AT LELAND STANFORD JR. UNIVERSITY, PALO ALTO  
OCTOBER 8, 1912



# Open Forum, Oct. 10

- Reliability of sense perception
- Example of human evolution; maybe we once had tails or swam in sea
- Missing Link will never be found
- Materialistic philosophers are like cows



# Temple Emanu-el, Oct. 12



# `Abdu'l-Bahá and the Bahá'ís



- Met with the children
- Met with the youth and talked about teaching the Faith
- Met with small groups of Bahá'ís, including three physicians, with whom He discussed healing

# Visit with Phoebe Hearst, Oct. 14-16

- Spent part of three days with her and her family, including Randolph
- Tried to heal the rift that had occurred
- Taught the Faith to her relatives
- Fareed attempted to extort money from her



# Los Angeles, Oct. 18-21

- Stayed at the Hotel Lankershim, 7<sup>th</sup> and Broadway
- Every Bahá'í in S. Cal invited; 25 or 30 in all
- Spoke about the Covenant and Center of Covenant, 4 p.m.
- Public talk, evening
- So exhausted He couldn't eat supper



# Grave of Thornton Chase



# Finishing the Work, San Fran.

- Focused on consolidation, Oct. 21-25
- No public talks
- Oct. 22, eve., Goodall-Cooper residence: declared Himself the Center of the Covenant
- Met the youth again to talk about teaching
- Met with Kaneshi Kanno, encouraged Bahá'ís to befriend him
- Farewell meetings

# Sacramento, Oct. 25-26

- Went to lunch at the “Home of Truth,” a metaphysical group
- Spoke at the Hotel Sacramento twice that night and once next morning
- Said Europe was an arsenal ready for ignition
- Said “may” 1<sup>st</sup> flag of international peace be raised in Cal.



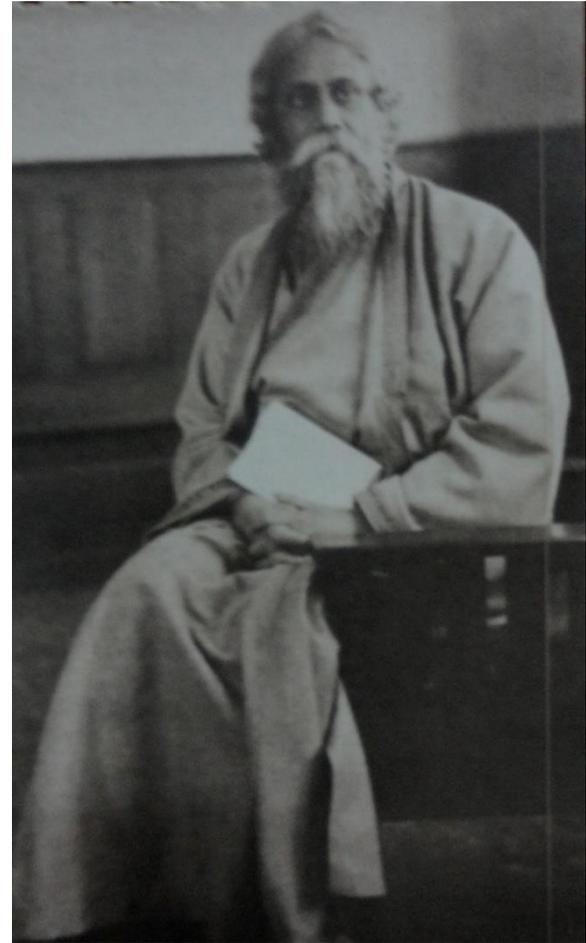
# Denver, Oct. 29

- Taught the Faith in the train to Denver
- Stayed one night at the Oxford Hotel, city's oldest major hotel
- Spoke house of a Bahá'í and at Universalist Church
- Arrived and left at midnight



# Chicago, Oct. 31-Nov. 4

- Spoke at Frederick Douglas Center and 2 churches
- Met Rabindranath Tagore in the Hotel Plaza; Tagore heard about `Abdu'l-Bahá and went to meet Him there.
- Spoke frankly about the Covenant and Covenant breaking
- Met House of Spirituality; said they should write the Covenant Breakers and tell them to stop coming to meetings
- Spoke about Universal House of Justice at Feast



# Cincinnati, Nov. 4-5

- Stayed at the Grand Hotel and spoke to 500 on first night, followed by banquet for 50 Bahá'ís
- Next morning: spoke of Covenant and Universal House of Justice
- Spoke about a universal tribunal



# Washington, Nov. 6-11

- Agreed to speak at Parsons's house every night and at Universalist Church
- Thirteen talks altogether; none about the Covenant (it was not an issue in D.C.)
- Visited with Ottoman ambassador, Yusuf Zia Pasha
- "Feast of the Covenant" celebration held, attended by Yusuf Zia Pasha
- Attended an interracial meeting

# Washington Hebrew Congregation



- Talk very similar to Emanu-el
- When He mentioned Jesus, rabbi tried to stop the talk; some people were upset
- `Abdu'l-Bahá had to speak to the rabbi the next day

# Baltimore and Philadelphia, Nov. 11



- Rested briefly at Hotel Rennert
- Spoke at Unitarian Chapel at noon
- Lunch with Bahá'ís at Struven residence
- Telegraphed Phily Bahá'ís to get on the train while He came through; He didn't get off

# New York City, Nov. 12-Dec. 5

- Didn't know how long He would stay; long enough to wrap up business
- 40 talks in Bahá'í homes in 3 in public places
- At least two talks about the Covenant



# The Covenant and MacNutt

- `Abdu'l-Bahá sent MacNutt to Chicago to tell Nutt and the C-breakers to stay away from meetings
- MacNutt thought they were nice people and failed in his mission
- `Abdu'l-Bahá was unhappy about the report
- Bahá'ís were upset about MacNutt and were beginning to cut off contact with him
- He told MacNutt to go downstairs and confess his error to the Bahá'ís gathered there
- He expelled MacNutt from the Faith for 4 months in 1913

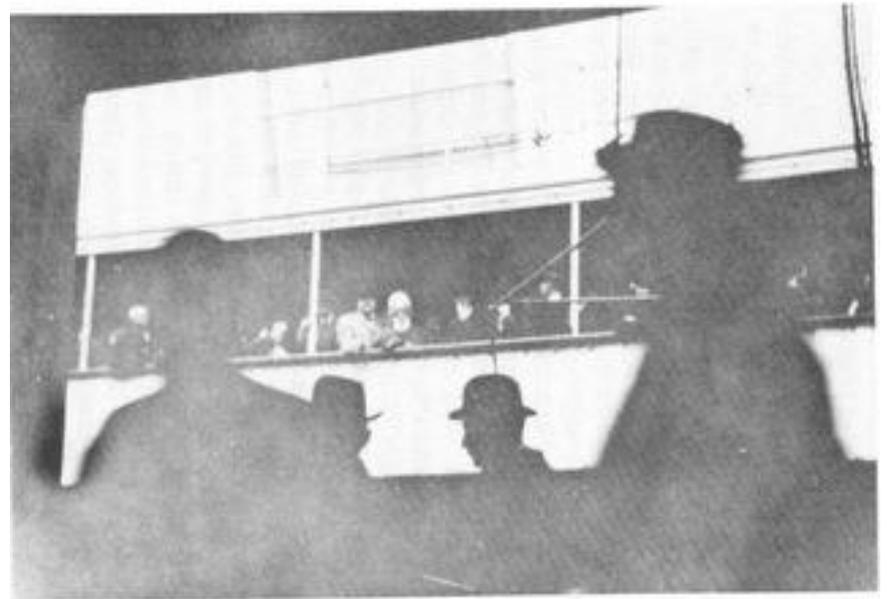
# A Grand Affair

- A Banquet for the Day of the Covenant was given at the Great Northern Hotel
- 300 guests attended
- The hotel turned away the blacks, so they had a separate banquet at the Kinneys the next night, served by whites



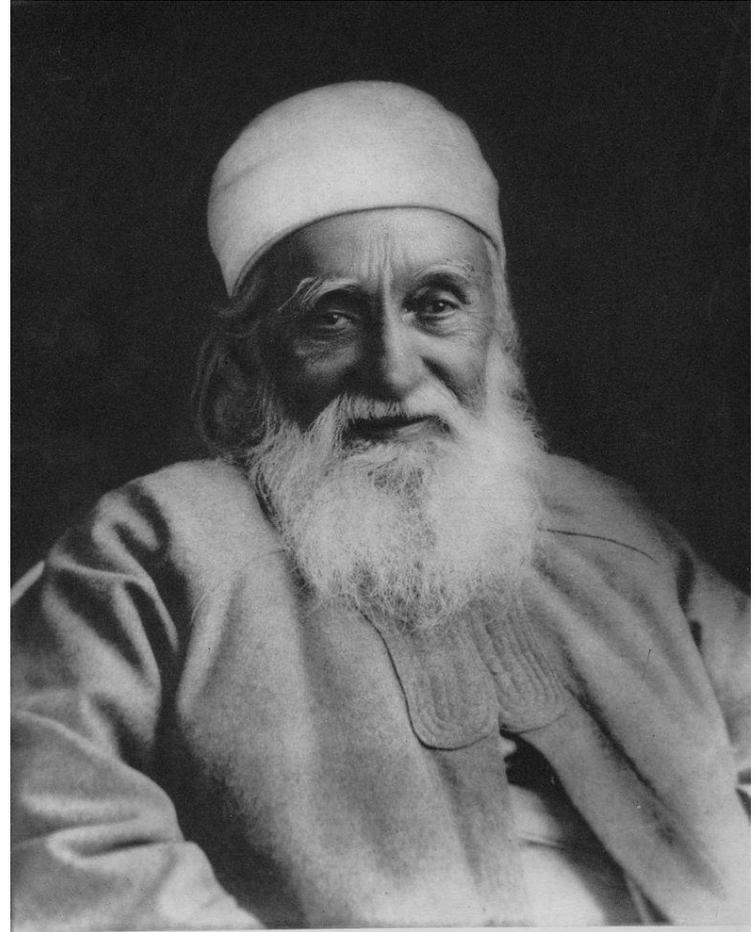
# `Abdu'l-Baha on the Celtic

- Twice in New York, Bahá'ís tried to give `Abdu'l-Bahá money. He refused
- Dec. 2: Beautiful talk about the Faith at Kinney residence
- Spoke to Minerva Club and Theosophists



# Results of the Visit

- `Abdu'l-Bahá had "observed all the doors open ... and the ideal power of the Kingdom of God removing every obstacle and obstruction."



# Types of Talks

- Many emphasized “Bahá’í Principles”; up to 11 in one talk.
- Some are discussed by Bahá’u’lláh, some mentioned, some only implied. Most can be found in `Abdu’l-Bahá’s prior writings
- The principles: investigation of reality, the oneness of humanity, the oneness of religion and science,
- the abandonment of prejudices, the adjustment of economic standards, equality of men and women, universal education, religion must be a cause of love and unity, establishment of an equal standard of human rights, a universal language, and the power of the holy spirit.

# Proofs of the Manifestations Talks

- He would expound several proofs that someone was a messenger of God
- First, apply them to Moses and Abraham.
- Then would apply them to Jesus and Muhammad
- Sometimes He applied them to Bahá'u'lláh, sometimes not
- This was very controversial in the 3 synagogues
- His purpose seems to have been to make acceptance of messengers as a basis of interfaith dialogue

# “Interfaith” Discourse, 1912

- The “conflation of race, religion, and progress”: white Protestants argued that northern European Protestantism and the white people there were in a superior position and had created the superior civilization, which was a proof of the superiority of them and their religion.
- `Abdu'l-Bahá's response: oneness of humanity and progressive revelation through Bahá'u'lláh will bring spiritual civilization, and otherwise a great war in Europe was imminent

# Spiritual and Cultural Transformation

- `Abdu'l-Bahá emphasized the need for true and abiding love between all humans, striving to free oneself from prejudices (particularly national and racial), and a deep understanding of the implications of the oneness of humanity.
- His audience often missed thought He was talking about the “Brotherhood of Man” but it allowed “separate by equal”
- Marriage of Louis Gregory and Louisa Mathews: illegal in 25 of 48 states.
- Their marriage was the paradigmatic demonstration of His teachings in America.

# Equality of Men and Women

- `Abdu'l-Bahá emphasized that women were not equal because of lack of education and because of lesser physical strength (which was no longer an issue with the use of machines)
- He advocated votes for women; a controversial position that garnered headlines
- In 1912, several western states had given women the vote (Wyoming was first, 1869). California gave them the vote in 1911.
- Tammany Hall in New York was opposed; they'd vote for reform
- The vote came in the USA in 1920

# War and Peace

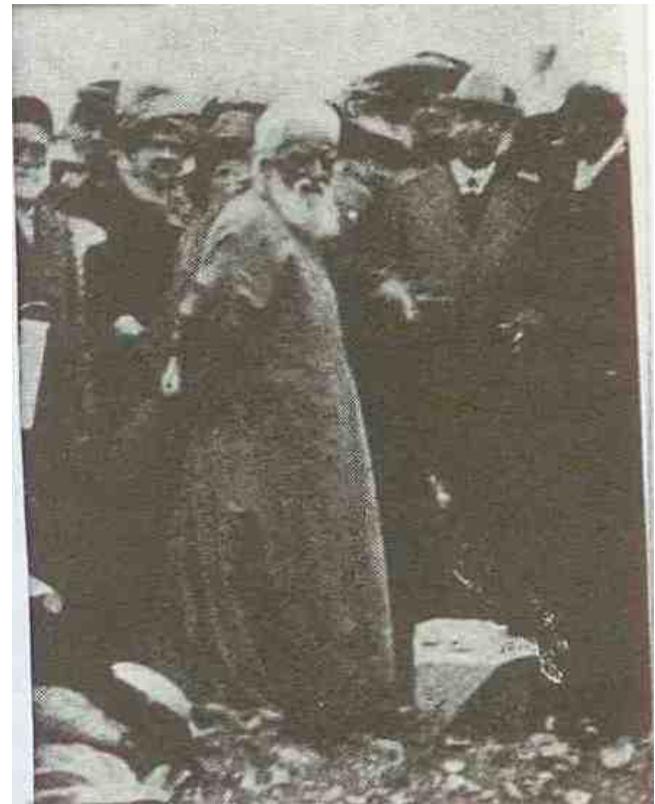
- At least six times—in New York City, Milford, PA, Montreal, Buffalo, Omaha, and Sacramento—He warned that Europe was a powder keg and a much greater and more destructive war there was coming soon.
- The thinkers of the day thought “Christian civilization” was enlightened and would never have a major internal war
- World War I was an utter shock and destroyed their optimism and belief in human perfectibility
- Subsequent Christian theology emphasized original sin.

# Talks to Bahá'í Audiences

- Talks to Bahá'í audiences emphasized four things:
  - 1. Steadfast example of the Persian believers
  - 2. Teaching the Faith to others
  - 3. Faithfulness to the Bahá'í Covenant and future role of Universal House of Justice
  - 4. Obedience to `Abdu'l-Bahá as the Center of the Covenant
- These often came up in His last talks in a place

# Building Community

- He had the Chicago House of Spirituality reelected because of disunity there
  - He met with the Chicago and New York Bahá'í governing bodies
  - He stressed obedience to Him as the Center of the Covenant and of the future Universal House of Justice
  - Comments anticipate provisions of His Will and Testament
- He laid the cornerstone of the Bahá'í temple



# Bahá'í Practices

- He did not stress obligatory prayer or fasting, even though many Bahá'ís had begun those practices.
- He did not usually celebrate the Bahá'í Holy Days in the US
- He did not say anything about not drinking alcohol, though some Bahá'ís had stopped consuming it.
- Shoghi Effendi stressed these practices later

# Teaching the Faith

- He stressed love and service to others, which would attract people
- He encouraged Bahá'ís to travel to take the Bahá'í teachings to other places
- His advice anticipates the 14 Tablets of the Divine Plan, which He sent to the American Bahá'ís in 1916-17, which gave them a mandate to take the Faith to the entire world

# Race Unity

- A notable emphasis of His trip
- None of the Buddhist or Hindu teachers made efforts to meet with African Americans
- He often met with the servants of the rich people He visited
- He added Fujita to His party for the trip to California
- He charged white Bahá'ís to get involved in interracial efforts
- He sat Louis Gregory in the seat to His right at a dinner arranged according to diplomatic protocol
- He encouraged Louis Gregory and Louisa Mathews to marry

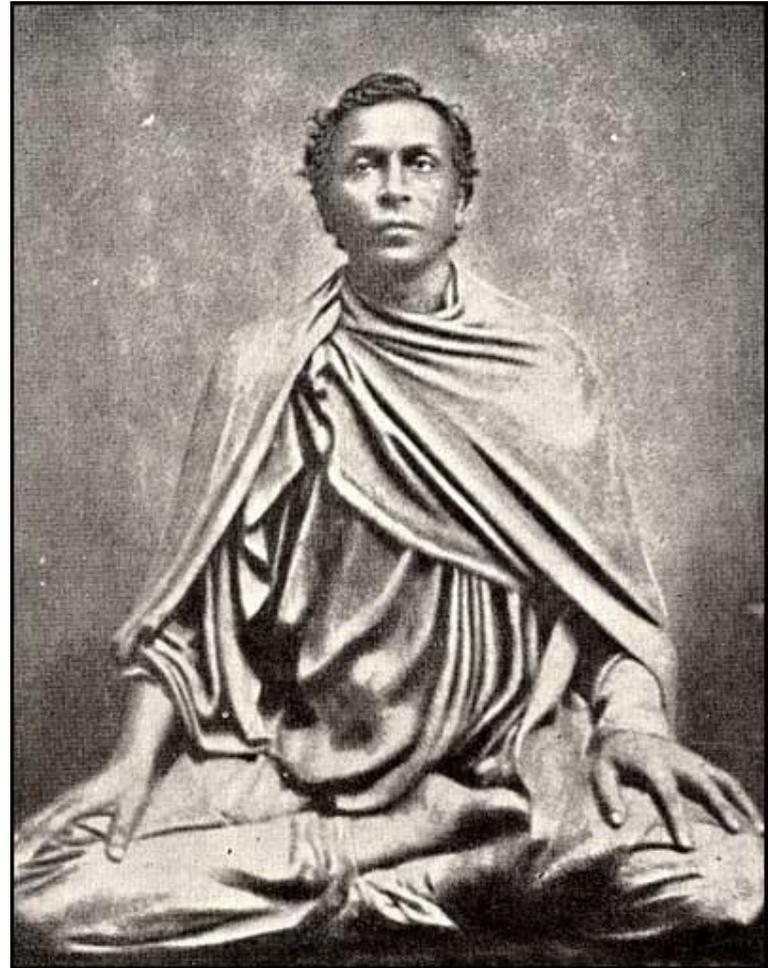
# Protap Chunder Mozoomdar (1840-1905)

- A leader of the Brahmo Somaj
- Came to US in 1883, 1893, 1900
- Emphasized Hindu monotheism and his great love for Christ
- Spoke at the Parliament
- Gave 200 talks in 3 months
- Made no attempt to convert Americans



# Anagarika Dharmapala (1863-1933)

- The most prominent Sri Lankan Buddhist leader
- Spoke at Parliament in 1893 and returned in 1896-97 and 1901
- Broke with the Theosophists and emphasized the truths of Buddhism
- Converted 2 Americans to Buddhism
- Spoke at Green Acre



# Swami Vivekananda (1863-1902)

- Leader of the Rama Krishna Mission, a major Hindu religious/ service organization
- Spoke at Parliament and for months afterward in the US (and at Green Acre)
- Strongly criticized Christianity and missionaries
- Started the Vedanta Society (190 members, 1912)



# Comparisons

- Vivekananda started a Hindu community of about 100 converts in the US; Dharmapala converted 2 or 3 Americans to Buddhism
- All three South Asians did a lot of fund raising for projects at home
- `Abdu'l-Bahá refused all donations from Americans on His visit (He had enough funding from the Persian community) and even donated money to the poor

# Impact of the South Asians

- All three represented large, ancient religious communities
- All three participated in a pivotal religious event in American history: the World's Parliament of Religions
- All three punctured stereotypes of "heathen" religions and helped change perceptions about Christianity.
- `Abdu'l-Bahá's visit came at a different time and had a lesser cultural impact

# Influences

- Ernest Hocking, later a prominent Harvard philosopher, heard Vivekananda at the Parliament in 1892 and it changed his life.
- Romain Rolland, a French Nobel in literature, was influenced in his thought
- `Abdu'l-Bahá influenced Thomas Kelly Cheyne, a prominent biblical scholar, to write *The Reconciliation of Races and Religions*
- Albert Leon Guerard, a Stanford professor, became a strong supporter of world government and language

# Religious Context, 1912

- Darwinism, Higher Biblical Criticism, and Comparative Religion had been a crisis of faith for many in the 1890s
- By 1912 the Social Gospel, Progressivism, and Liberal Protestantism represented solutions for many.
- These solutions “worked” in 1912
- They collapsed intellectually after World War I, 6 or 8 years after `Abdu’l-Bahá’s visit
- WW I destroyed the notion of a progressive Christian civilization; WW II destroyed the notion of racial superiority

# Impact on the American Bahá'ís

- The American Bahá'í community had 1,000 to 3,000 members, depending on how you count them
- The US had 86K Unitarians, 59K Universalists, 29K Spiritualists, 5.4K Theosophists
- American Bahá'ís were diverse in race and class, with many middle and lower middle class members and maybe 20-30 blacks
- Local communities could organize events for Him

# Impact on Bahá'í Membership

- Perhaps fifty new Bahá'ís immediately resulted
- Many veteran Bahá'ís had to change their thinking
- Many young Bahá'ís became much more committed
- Many Bahá'í children acquired a Bahá'í identity
- `Abdu'l-Bahá's visit sharpened divisions between those who saw the new faith as a religion and those who saw it as a reforming movement within other faiths
- The visit precipitated 2 incidents of Covenant breaking

# Impact worldwide

- `Abdu'l-Bahá's visit was widely publicized among the Iranian Bahá'ís and was very encouraging for them
- The South Asian teachers had their reputations made by their western travels
- Their impact on American culture was partly accidental
- `Abdu'l-Bahá's visit is still largely unknown in Iran (outside the Bahá'í community) but its cultural importance may grow.
- His visit may have had an impact on African Americans and suffragettes
- The visit was the “culmination” of `Abdu'l-Bahá's ministry