

## MEMOIRS OF FRANCES BRADFORD (JONES) EDELSTEIN

JUNE, 1985

Even as a Bahá'í, one always has a beginning unless born into a Bahá'í family and they, especially the Iranians, go back into a much older culture. I was not born into a Bahá'í family, but from the time I was a small child I wanted to live in New York City. In 1912, when I was two years old, the Master, 'Abdu'l-Bahá arrived on the North American continent in the very month of my birth, April. Evidently the Spirit always seemed to pull me towards the great city of New York, the City of the Covenant, which 'Abdu'l-Bahá also called the City of Lights.

My forebears were English; founders of the eastern end of the north shore of Long Island, when 20 families crossed Long Island sound in 1640 from New Haven, Connecticut. They had been living since 1624 in New Hampshire. I was born in one of those small Long Island towns, Mattituck.

My greatest desire always was to read. When I was small and only beginning to talk I would thrust one of my children's books at my mother and say "READ!" I gained many a new book because my mother would finally get tired of the same old stories. And upon entering school my first day was utter disaster! With disgust, I came home furious. Mother questioned me and I said, "I can't even read!" This great desire to read has been my salvation as I've read almost everything available of the Bahá'í writings over and over again, pondering them in my heart and soul, seeking their inner meaning.

The time came when I moved to New York to live and within a few months the message of this great Bahá'í Era was given to me.

My introduction to the Faith was a rather unusual one--through a friend, I met a spiritualist medium. I'd always had a great curiosity about such phenomena but much to my dismay, I learned nothing of it from her. My friend went weekly for guidance (on) money and love affairs. The spiritualist continued to ask for me, but I had simply decided it was a waste of time. However, since she constantly requested to see me, I finally went again. She told me there was a message for me which she could not give but would introduce me to someone who could. Hence, a week later, I met Mildred Varnum, a Bahá'í. As soon as we were left alone, Miss. Varnum said to me "Christ has returned." It was such a simple way to tell me and it didn't seem strange. I wanted to know when and where but told her I could not take her word for it: I must investigate it first. She said, "That is exactly what we want you to do." I arranged to go to my first meeting in Steinway Hall, where the Bahá'í's had a center for years.

Later, when I asked Mrs. Weir (the spiritualist) how she knew I was ready, she said, "When you walked in the first time I saw 'Abdu'l-Bahá just above your head." She knew a great deal about the Faith but she also knew as a medium taking money she had no right to talk about it. But she knew Miss Varnum well and knew her to be the right one for me. Mildred Varnum was elderly and went back to Bangor, Maine, (where she came from) soon after she met me. She turned me over to Mathew Kaszab. This was in March 1938. In six months I was signed up. Mathew went to Central America in the first seven-year plan and died a young man. His life is written up in the *Bahá'í World* volumes. One of my best teachers was Annie Roamer. We had a class of 6 weeks or so on "*Some Answered Questions*". It was that book that really brought me into the Faith.

By the time I came into the Faith I had already devoured *The Dawn Breakers*, *Paris Talks*, *Hidden Words*, *Iqan* and many messages from Shoghi Effendi. I had read *Seven Valleys* and *Four Valleys* which was

like being lost in a mystical forest. All borrowed books. My first purchase was *Prayers and Meditations*, a very recent publication --I still have it.

My life in New York thereafter was interesting, as I became acquainted with Juliet Thompson--who lived at 48 W. 10th St--and for a short time I lived there too. Her stories about 'Abdu'l-Bahá were fascinating. She had kept a diary (now published). People gathered there weekly (or maybe every two weeks) to listen. Her ability for verbal portraiture was unequalled--no one could keep you spellbound as she could.

It was during that time that I also met the Kinneys, the Kelseys, Marjory Morten, Mountfort Mills, the (Ali Kuli) Khans (Marzieh Gale's parents), Laura Dreyfus-Barney of "*Some Answered Questions*", Horace Holley and his wife, Doris, and Genevieve Coy, who was administrator of Green Acre for some years. These were all interesting people with vital and amazing information to share.

It was in New York that I first met Marzieh Gail and Mark Tobey who eventually became my close friends.

In the last part of the first Seven Year Plan of the Guardian, my life as a pioneer began. First, to Birmingham, Alabama, where two very interesting things occurred. Race was a big factor in those days and Mr. Louis Gregory came to Birmingham periodically. He visited both Negro colleges in Alabama and the churches and schools of Birmingham. Another itinerant Negro teacher was Joy Earl. They both stayed at the same place in the Negro section of that huge city.

Upon my arrival, Joy was there and the friends asked if I knew her. I did--and she was ill. They thought it would be nice if I went to see her--none of them (white) had been to see her. So I phoned then and went to see her, she was despondent over the fact that the others (Bahá'ís) had ignored her so to speak. Anyway, she said, "Will you stay for dinner if this family says 'yes'?" And I said, "Why not? Of course!" It seems they had never had whites in their home and felt the same towards them as most whites did of Negroes. They were a highly educated family (I have forgotten their names). He was a principal of a high school, she a church soloist with a beautiful voice who sang also at weddings and funerals. They agreed to have me sit down at the dinner table with them and Joy said, "You are making history! This never happened in this area."

She (Joy) also said, "Next week, after I leave, Mr. Gregory will be here. Do you think you could meet him at the train?" A very naive Yankee said, "Sure." To meet Louis Gregory was a prospect I'd never thought would happen to me and I was ecstatic over the thought of it. Another one of the Birmingham ladies with a car had the courage to offer to go also. When I say courage, I had no idea at the moment it took just that. The day of his arrival came and we met the train and Mr. Gregory (at a later period of time I realized that he had hardly ever been met at the train--and two White ladies must have been unbelievable to him). But he was the most serene person outwardly that one could ever imagine--simply unflappable as if it happened all the time. We took him to the house where he was to stay and when I appeared with him, that lady couldn't believe her eyes, but said nothing.

My next move almost got me shot--and not by the Negroes by the White Bahá'ís. As I left Mr. Gregory, I said, "We will see you at the meeting tonight." (The meeting being the regular Open Fireside gathering.) His reply was, "Yes, of course--where is it?" I said, "In the same place as usual." He said, "I don't know where that is. I have never been to one." I told him the address, but having been in

Birmingham less than a month, I couldn't tell him how to get there. The lady quietly said to me, "I'll see that Mr. Gregory finds the way." News travels fast, and by the time I reached my boarding place where I was staying with Martha Fetting and Nina Howard, Gertie (Gwertz) Blum it had arrived and FEAR was written all over their faces and I was kindly give the facts of life in (about?) the Deep South.

In the end, I said, "Well, I don't understand any of this--the Oneness of Mankind is one of the principles--if you want to phone Mr. Gregory and tell him not to come, that's fine, but I surely won't." Nina Howard, a newly arrived pioneer from Los Angeles, spoke up and said, "Frances, I am with you. I don't understand any of this either."

So, with fear and trembling, I with the others went to the meeting. Everything went smoothly. Mr. Gregory spoke to all the Birmingham Bahá'ís for the first time. Mrs. Myra Bryant came--a beautiful Negro woman of renown in the state, who knew Mr. Gregory and had accepted the Faith. (Unfortunately, some time later, she resigned because the Bahá'ís did not live up to the teachings--a sad twist for us. She could have been able to spread it (the Faith) all over the state, because she was so well known.)

The outcome of that Open Fireside was that John Ingles, a new Bahá'í, was so impressed he asked Martha, Nina, Gerti and I if we would have dinner at his home the following Sunday, which we readily agreed to do and Mr. Gregory was asked to join us. Vern Ingles, his wife, was out of town on a vacation trip. We spent the most marvelous and unforgettable day with Louis Gregory--a memory I cherish--he was as 'Abdu'l-Bahá said, "A monument to his race."

Our first assembly consisted of Elsa Steinmetz, Fritzi Shaver, Jean Stapleton (all of Minneapolis, Minnesota), Marie Fingerlin (Urbana, Illinois), Muriel Stilson (Yonkers, New York), Lorol Jackson (Montana), Ed Belcher (Binghamton, New York), Ethel MacAllister (Vallejo, California), Frances B. (Jones) Edelstein (New York City, New York). For some reason, I don't remember, I don't think we even took a picture--some how it didn't occur to us how historic all these new assemblies were. Elsa and Fritzi went to Switzerland in the second Seven-Year Plan. Ed Belcher and Muriel Stilson ended up in South America and Ethel MacAllister also.

My stay in Birmingham was short, as the climate was humid and smoky, giving me asthma. So I was encouraged to leave since they had enough for an assembly (Local Spiritual Assembly). [Asthma dogged me all my life until I was in my late sixties.]

The next post was Sioux Falls, South Dakota. This was one of those vast prairie states where Lutherans were predominant and Sioux Falls was the home of Augustana Lutheran College. It took 14 years to have a native L.S.A. and I was there 7 years--being its first secretary and later chairman. As I became more acclimated, I realized the impossibility of reaching out into that entire vast expanse and pursued the idea of radio. We were one of the first pioneer states to have a radio program.

The radio station was comparatively new and its wavelength reached just the state of South Dakota. We wrote our own scripts, picked music to go with it, and paid for it ourselves. It was a half-hour program on Saturday mornings. One of our pioneers, Jean Stapleton, whom we lovingly called 'Stapie', was the best voice to broadcast. We were all tested. Mine (my voice) was good, too. But since I was committee chairman with many other duties, I didn't want that one, and was more than happy to have Stapie, especially because she was Negro. All of this was at the end of the first Seven Year Plan and the beginning of the second (over 40 years ago).

Each year we had a booth at the county fair--and friends from Minneapolis sometimes came down to help.

Once we took on a very individual race relations project. I was living with an elderly Augustana College professor and his wife. They were living on a meager income and needed their living and dining room walls painted. Clarence Hughes, a wonderful Negro Bahá'í from Minneapolis, loved to house paint. He was a chemist (at a time when there were no Negro chemist to speak of) and headed up labs for International Painting Inks (later merged with Allied Chemical). Doing inside paint jobs was sort of a hobby with him. He agreed to come paint (the professor's house) and stayed with Mr. and Mrs. Knox. The reason for this was (as she had expressed to me) that she wondered how she would feel about Negroes on a personal level. So I took the opportunity (to demonstrate) and it worked like a charm. She and Professor Knox were so impressed with Clarence. Her summing up was that he was such a gentleman that she immediately forgot his color. Clarence had that quality--color always vanished when you were with him. As we know, everything begins with the individual.

During my years in Sioux Falls we had many special visitors--such as Amelia Collins, Mason Remy, Hilda Yen, Peggy True, who later in the Crusade with her husband, George, established the Faith in the Canary Islands as Knights of Bahá'u'lláh. Harlan Ober who later married Elizabeth Kidder and went to South Africa in the Crusade. Ruth Moffett and Monroe Ioas (brother of LeRoy Ioas) were some of the others.

Life in those days of pioneering was a plowing of hard soil--but we spent our time not only spiritually trying to make a dent, but also working to earn a living. I was fortunate enough to become a hotel auditor with many ramifications, but I earned more than most hotel clerks, etc., as I took on, little by little, more of the night work. It was wartime (World War II), and help was scarce. The other friends found work in other ways. One elderly lady as a hotel chambermaid; another a housekeeper for a widower; another frail little person, who had never worked in her life, lived-in as a maid with a man and his wife (the work was very hard for her). And one and all never missed meetings--all observances were kept. We were there for one purpose--to establish the Bahá'í Faith and it's administrative order. Above all, we never missed contributing to the Faith (the NSA Fund). In April 1943, we had a communication from the Guardian to establish State Conventions (*Messages to America, 1932-1946*, pg. 60). The Sioux Falls Assembly arranged the first South Dakota State Convention. We sent our delegate to the 1944 National Convention. If I remember correctly, Elsa Steinmetz who later pioneered in Switzerland was our delegate.

In 1944 we commemorated the Declaration of the Centenary of the Báb in Wilmette at the Temple in Foundation Hall. It was the culmination of the first Seven-Year Plan and I felt lucky to attend as a pioneer from Sioux Falls. In those days the Guardian had set the pattern and plans for all that has ensued.

We finally had about 14 people in Sioux Falls, but only two were locals. However, I decided I could move on if the National Teaching Committee permitted. The next move was to Louisville, Kentucky, where they were having some difficulties among the believers. I was sent there as something of a "troubleshooter". There were no Auxillary Boards in those days. It was an experience which culminated in the troublemakers leaving most quickly and abruptly. The friends who were left, of whom two or three were locals, helped us decide to leave the soil fallow for the ensuing year--but also to burrow in for a siege--later to rebuild.

In Louisville, we were blessed with a visit from Agnes Alexander--not a Hand then--but like Martha Root, her years had been spent teaching and traveling, especially in Hawaii, her home, and in Japan and China. She often accompanied Martha. She was a delightful person. Her visit was the result of Kathryn Frankland being in Louisville to help out for a period of time.

While there, I served on the District Teaching Committee for Kentucky, Indiana and Ohio (I think it was). I also found an excellent job in the Credit Department of Sears, Roebuck & Co. But, like Birmingham, the climate in Louisville was a continuous battle with asthma and the DTC felt I should go to a better climate. Eventually, I went back to Sioux Falls LSA whose numbers had diminished.

In 1950, the Guardian reopened the doors to pilgrims--and we in Sioux Falls (a jumping off place in those days) were the recipients of a visit from Gladys Anderson Weeden and her husband, Ben, upon their return after serving the Guardian at the World Centre for a few years. What a bounty! No one can imagine today what that meant in those times. It was at this time I was encouraged to request a pilgrimage but I procrastinated a bit until one of the other pioneers persuaded me and we (Gladys and I) went together along with her mother who had been urging her to go.

I shall never forget that Sunday in September when the decision was made to cable the Guardian for permission. His reply was as swift as lightning--it came at 7:00 AM the following Wednesday (three days later). The telephone rang and it said "Welcome December". My legs tuned to water and I sat down on the nearest seat, which were the steps going upstairs.

The first Holy Year started in October 1952. It was December 1953 when we arrived in Haifa. From October 1952 to October 1953, the Guardian inaugurated a 10-year Crusade, four intercontinental conferences, and the dedication of the Mother Temple, the Holiest Temple, ever erected. That year I made a pilgrimage, attended the Temple dedication, and also the first Teaching Conference in the Western Hemisphere.

The pilgrimage!! Our first move was to get passports and travel arrangements made. From a place like Sioux Falls, passports were applied for at the Post Office, but no one had applied for one in years--a novelty. The war was over but conditions in Europe still bore the heavy scars of devastation. The very first travel agency in the city had only just opened its doors in July so we were comparatively early customers going to Israel, no less. That took some doing. They could get us to Italy, and finally, through Italian lines they got the necessary route to Haifa, Israel. We were to land in Naples, cross the Boot, and take a Mediterranean Line from Bari to Haifa. Bari had been the point of embarkation for the Crusades many centuries before.

We finally took off by car, drove to Fort Wayne, Indiana; took a bus to New York, and the Saturday after Thanksgiving, we sailed for Italy. In mid-ocean, we lost a propeller, limped into Genoa, were piled into a boat train for Rome and Naples to Bari--a 24 hour trip with no sleep, nothing to eat and the extra luggage (except personal luggage) went on a "Slow boat to China." It never arrived in Bari until we had long since sailed for Haifa. I had been asked by friends to take gifts of supplies to the World Center. When I got back to Naples, I had to wait almost a week for it to be shipped there, so I could take it to Rome. There Mr. Ugo Giachery held it and arranged for future pilgrims to take it on with them, or to arrange to ship it with other materials.

My pilgrimage could fill pages. The trips to and from were a lifetime experience. It was my first trip out of the United States and on my way home I visited Naples, Rome, Basel (Switzerland) to see some old friends pioneering there--then on to Paris and home. Paris didn't impress me but I stayed a few days to sightsee. Upon arrival in Haifa, we were met by Jessie and Ethel Revel at the boat, taken to the Western Pilgrim House, where we met LeRoy and Sylvia Ioas, Lotfullah Hakim, and Mason Remey. Later, Rúhíyyih Khánum came over to welcome us and to take us to the Shrine of the Báb.

That first evening, as we gathered downstairs awaiting the arrival of our Guardian for dinner, I had butterflies in the pit of my stomach, and my heart was trembling--in short, I felt like dying rather than being ecstatic over this great opportunity. The inner turmoil was overwhelming and not once in the thirteen days of my visit did I ever feel any different when I sat down at the table opposite Shoghi Effendi.

One of the evenings after dinner, Jessie Revel said to me, "I notice you don't take notes." I had made my mind up before going on Pilgrimage I wouldn't take any notes. The ones I'd heard were most unsatisfactory and, secondly, I thought it impolite to sit at the table as his guest and write down things on paper--so that is what I told Jessie. She said, "It's very interesting, because just a few days before you arrived, the Guardian said he was going to stop having the pilgrims take notes."

I've a short diary of things remembered that I jotted down-- but I also realize if you had read and studied all he had written in his books and messages, he was going over them (at times). . . . At other times, he talked of the four great Teaching Conferences to be held in 1953. February-- Kampala, Wilmette--June, Stockholm--and October, New Delhi--and everything was geared to the coming Crusade.

It was obvious his main objective was to enlist an army for the Ten Year Plan--his last and greatest, and the pattern and forerunner of all the plans to come. In one of his messages a few years before, he had said the Divine Plan of 'Abdu'l-Bahá would be accomplished by a series of plans--and so it is slowly and progressively taking place.

The most interesting things, aside from the greatest event, dinner with the Guardian, were projects done while there. Housekeeping things, such as readying the room in the Master's house for Millie Collins' occupancy when she returned; and moving her from the Western Pilgrim House in the dead of night. The bed was a brass bedstead in the room we had gotten ready, one used by Sutherland Maxwell, and I made a valance by putting some old ship's curtains sewn on an old sheet under the mattress--this covered everything packed under the bed. Closet and drawer space was meager, so the space under the bed was utilized. The time it took to make that valance was unbelievable. The sewing machine, an old treadle, was over in the Master's House across from the Western Pilgrim House, in the tearoom. I'd dash over, take the top off, get started to stitch and Rúhíyyih Khánum (RK) would rush in with an unexpected conference with the construction engineer on the Shrine or some such thing. I'd whisk the sewing machine out of sight and take myself back across the street until after lunch. There was no office anywhere; in those days, Shoghi Effendi worked in his room. The rest worked at the Western Pilgrim House whenever it was convenient. Thus life was anything but a "red carpet" posh desk affair. I could give a guess, it took at least three days to do a 3-hour job on the sewing machine--I did baste it on first, which I could do at the Western Pilgrim House.

Then Rúhíyyih Khánum moved me from the room I was in into the room Millie had occupied for the duration of my pilgrimage.

In those days, we were taken to Bahjí for a day and a night. I shared a room with Ethel Revel who accompanied us. It has a single bulb hanging from the ceiling and when we put it out it was pitch dark. Ethel had a flashlight, thank goodness. I was up before dawn to go into the Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh. And stayed as long as I wished. Never will I forget that lovely place; all alone in the beautiful garden room at the threshold of the King of the World and be able to rest my head on that threshold, carpeted with a beautiful Persian prayer rug with flowers and petals scattered on it.

I went twice to the Shrine of the Báb--the first time was with Rúhíyyih Khánum. There were the two other pilgrims as well and Rúhíyyih Khánum chanted a prayer. Then, on Christmas Eve, early, Lotfullah Hakim took me again, as he stayed outside. It was a special time as our pilgrimage coincided with Hanukkah and the Mayor of Haifa had requested Shoghi Effendi that the Shrine remained floodlit for their holiday. It was a first, also--it was more beautiful--the Shrine was not quite complete. They were waiting for the gold tile to arrive; otherwise, it was almost finished.

The grounds everywhere were lovely, Shoghi Effendi being his own horticulturist. We saw small palm trees being nurtured in a corner of the gardens on the grounds of the Shrine of the Báb--perfect little specimens, probably not yet a foot tall--to be transplanted when and where he wanted them. There was another project I undertook. Rúhíyyih Khánum showed me her frozen food (deep-freeze) that had been shipped by one of the friends--and in it was a side of beef, 3 lamb carcasses and 3 chickens. The beef and lamb had been purchased from the ship's supply house and were frozen on delivery. The purveyor had simply taken an axe, cut it in half between the foreleg and hind leg, and dumped it in. All of this uncut, unwrapped and dehydrating rapidly. Having been a bookkeeper in a frozen-food locker plant in Sioux Falls, I spontaneously said it should all be cut and wrapped, otherwise it will be let's-come-up-with-something." I knew we needed waxed paper, but Rúhíyyih Khánum said, "This is Israel. We don't have waxed paper." The new state was destitute of most essentials, bread was unwrapped, carried under your arm from the baker. Anyway, I asked about wax of any kind and Rúhíyyih Khánum said, "I've plenty of candle stubs we can melt down." Which we did. Then we took huge brown sheets of wrapping paper that had come in on the various shipments, put them on the ironing board, dipped a paint brush in the wax, spread it on the paper, put another sheet of paper on top, took an iron and made waxed paper.

Then, the process of prying the frozen meat from the deep-freeze began. A few weeks before, someone had sent a complete set of screwdrivers of all lengths and sizes, so I took the largest one and pried the meat out, defrosted the locker, having heated water in every possible cook pot available, and placed three of these hot ones inside, which soon melted all the accumulated ice. I washed it thoroughly, put the electricity on again, and left it while I supervised the cutting and wrapping of the frozen meat. Having taken lots of cutting instructions, I could say more or less where to cut. We had a hacksaw and a butcher knife. To this day, I'll never know how it was accomplished. Lotfullah Hakim and Mason Remey wielding first one then the other (knife or hacksaw); Sylvia Ioas wrapped and marked it; we tied it with string that had been saved for emergencies whenever any came--same as the brown paper. It was all done in an afternoon and put back in the deep freeze without thawing--another miracle!

The chickens I cooked one evening for dinner. I fried them first, but they didn't get cooked well enough so I had to put them in a pressure cooker. LeRoy Ioas was amazed to think I could cook.

In those days of pilgrimage, we could do things and be helpful in general, to a degree, and it made for interesting times. Afternoon tea was usually served at the Master's house across the street where we joined the Persian ladies on pilgrimage. Their husbands, sons or brothers spent the time at the Eastern

Pilgrim House, with the Guardian--then when he returned, he spend about 15 minutes with them (the Persian ladies).

The Guardian spoke nightly of the destruction of the cities and devastation everywhere. When asked what and from whence the calamities would come, he said it could be another Great War or some terrestrial upheaval beyond the power of man. As we look around us we have seen the cities devastated by riots--both Newark and New York have large sections gutted by arsonists--and financial bankruptcy plaguing them, to say nothing of the environmental pollution!! We have earthquakes, tornadoes, vast floods, landslides, volcanic eruptions all going on almost at once somewhere; along with wars--Central America, Africa, India's Sikhs, Bangladesh, Pakistan--the almost complete demolition of Lebanon and on and on. Yet the vast majority of humanity lulls itself deeper and deeper into a coma-like existence. At the time (1953) that he was talking of the destruction of cities, all we could imagine were bombs and war.

Shoghi Effendi was hoping to recruit an army for his Crusade--which was another main topic. He never made you feel compelled to enlist. Enlisting was a matter of being spiritually motivated and oriented--and the Crusade was worldwide, a gargantuan plan to the average Bahá'í at that time. One evening, the Guardian brought over the original map he had made for the Ten-Year Crusade. It had not yet been printed. It is now found in the statistical compilation *The Bahá'í Faith--1844-1952: Including Supplement for the Ten-Year International Bahá'í Teaching and Consolidation Plan 1953-1963*. He spread it on the table for us to see and discussed the printing of it and the statistics that had not yet been decided on. It was finally printed in the USA by the Bahá'í Publishing Committee in Wilmette. He vacillated between Britain, the USA and possibly India because he felt that our community often disagreed and dragged its feet about getting things done. It's possible that all three finally printed the maps--I don't know for sure--but in December 1952 it was all up in the air and the first conference in Kampala was in February.

Anyway, I've always been a map hound, and great on geography, and that MAP intrigued me to the extent that I swallowed my reticence and asked if I could keep it until the next night so as to see it in detail, all by myself. I took it back to my room rolled it out on the floor, got down on my hands and knees and had a glorious time. I returned it the next night, knowing that eventually I would have my own copy when it was published. I still have it.

How could one eliminate the evening the Guardian asked Mason Remy for his drawings. The Guardian had asked Mason to draw plans to enhance the exterior of the Shrine at Bahjí (which to date has never been accomplished). Mason brought them to the table that had been cleared of dishes. Shoghi Effendi swiftly rolled them out and at one glance and with a sweeping gesture of his hands said, "They won't do." The drawings were swiftly rolled up and Mason was completely crestfallen. He asked Shoghi Effendi what he would suggest for a design, and the Guardian quickly told him he (the Guardian) wasn't an architect. He said, "Mason, you are the architect. When you produce what I want, I'll know it." Mason Remy pressed as to ideas and finally the Guardian said, "I want columns (which we now see on the Archives Building, Universal House of Justice Seat and the Báb's Shrine). Later, Rúḥíyyih Khánúm said, "Mason, Daddy, didn't produce anything at first for the Shrine and had to make several attempts before he got what Shoghi Effendi wanted."

After we had been to the Archives, the Guardian looked across the table at me and said, "You have seen pictures of Bahá'u'lláh today in the Archives. Which one did you like best?" As you know, there are two painting and one photograph. I had banked on the latter for years, having heard about them from Juliet Thompson and Marjory Morten. But I didn't like any of them. The paintings were, to me, very



stylized and the photograph a great disappointment. I swallowed, and within my mind I groaned--he had asked me outright, what could I say? He answered for me. "The photograph is a poor one, taken in Adrianople after He had suffered greatly." (my notes)

After the dedication of the Temple, May 1953, I realized why he had asked. He had sent us a reproduction of the painting of Bahá'u'lláh in a red turban, beautifully framed as a gift which we all reverently walked passed in the newly dedicated holiest temple in the Bahá'í world. Rúhíyyih Khánum brought it with her.

A couple of days, for a few hours Rúhíyyih Khánum and I spent picking up and stacking stones out of the ground from a plot next to the Western Pilgrim House that the Guardian had recently acquired and wanted to make into a garden spot to beautify it. It had begun to be used as a dumping place so he purchased it.

One morning I'd slept late and felt a bit ashamed, but Rúhíyyih Khánum came over to breakfast and sat with me to eat. She said, "I decided I just didn't want to eat alone today." We chatted at great length about her parents and her father's relationship with Shoghi Effendi (most of which she included in *The Priceless Pearl*). She also told of the Guardian's times of great unhappiness and how it was difficult to get him out of bed in those periods of despair. Rúhíyyih Khánum's bell-like voice often comes back to me as I hear her in retrospect address him as "Shoghi Effendi"--the tone of her voice caressed that name as no words of endearment ever could. It must have always soothed his burdened soul.

We experienced both the agony and the ecstasy on this journey to the World Centre--the experience which overwhelmed us came on an evening when the Guardian had been going through his mail and was harassed with papers, papers, papers--too many papers. He said it was so with both Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá . On the last days of their lives their papers became too much for them.

In *God Passes By* the Guardian has written of it on page 311--thus we were thrown stricken, and gripped into an inner death-like panic. He then said "--It is not that way with me, yet." Rúhíyyih Khánum had left the table in tears. When she returned, he told her he had not meant to frighten her. For myself, I mechanically sat down with unseeing eyes, ate my food, not conscious of what I was eating. Finally I felt compelled to lift my head and looked up to discover Shoghi Effendi's eyes boring into my inmost being. Then I drew a breath and began to feel alive.

In 1962, during the first Luxembourg Summer School, I asked LeRoy Ioas if the Guardian ever again referred to his passing. He replied, "Never again before pilgrims."

Although Pilgrimage is nine days, ours extended to thirteen. We had come by boat and a return boat was due on the thirteenth day. Usually, the friends moved to a guesthouse or hotel but the Guardian kept us at Pilgrim house the entire time. In later years I understood his generosity. Early pioneers had been hard to recruit. The time had slipped by. We had lived for a time in another world and dimension. The night before we left, it was time to express our appreciation and farewells. As he took my hand, he said, "I will see you tomorrow before you leave." Those present, members of the International Council, as well as myself, were a bit dumbfounded--especially ME. I was actually DUMB. It seemed it had never occurred before. True to his word, he sent for us the next day as we waited to leave.

His parting words I write from my falling-apart diary:

*Please convey to the friends my love and gratitude. The money they send will go into the 'gold dome' crowning the Báb's Tomb. Now you have been in Paradise and you must take it back to the friends for, to have it and not to share it. Well!!*

(He spread his hands, as if to keep it to oneself is to lose it. In the passing years, it has troubled me to find few who are really interested in hearing about a visit to Haifa when the Guardian was alive.)

*Tell them of the map soon to be printed, also the statistics. Impress upon them the vitalness of the Ten-Year Crusade. Tell them of the new gardens at Bahjí. (At that time only a month old).*

There were other topics also--but those are the ones I'll include here.

He was so very charming--a handsome man with such a spiritual aura, a dignity of quality, integrity and purpose. One felt split asunder at parting.

We boarded our ship in mid-afternoon and weighed anchor. It was New Year's Eve 1952 and 1953 about to enter with it our World Crusade. THE PLAN was to become a reality with four great teaching conferences--Kampala, Wilmette, Stockholm, and New Delhi to introduce it.

My pilgrimage started at the onset of the First Holy Year, October 1, 1952 to October 1, 1953 (noted in the *Messages to the Bahá'í World, 1950-1957*, page 34, where he clarifies that the vision in that pestilential pit took place in mid-October 1852).

There is really much I could add to my trip over and back. I came home via Europe and embarked on the Cunard Liner *Mauritania* in Cherbourg and was seated at the purser's table. (In Cabin Class that's like the Captain's table in First Class.)

The Purser was most interested that I had been to Israel and asked how I came to visit there. So, I was able to give the message to all at the table. There was a young Spanish-British aristocrat; a layman and wife of some Protestant denomination (one of those hell-fire and brimstone revivalists coming to tour North America? for some group); a high-ranking Episcopalian churchman, who was coming to a church in Philadelphia in an exchange program. When the layman heard me say the Báb was from Iran (still Persia) he very rudely said, "--from that terrible civilization? NO, never, not acceptable!" I said, "Well, didn't they say of Christ "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" The amused look on the purser's face, as well as the gentleman of Episcopalian ranks, told me I had scored!

Back in the United States, my father was dying of cancer, so I spent 1953 taking care of family matters--trying to decide where best to situate in this country and tentatively planned for Jacksonville, Florida. In the meantime, I worked in New York City, helped to keep the center open in my spare time, as pioneers flowed through. I attended the dedication of the Mother Temple in Wilmette, as well as the Conference.

That year my High School Graduating Class celebrated it's 25th Anniversary which I attended in Mattituck, N.Y. They had heard I had joined a religious group and it seemed they expected some kind of a zealot, which I didn't turn out to be. At least that put a good foot forward for the Faith in a small town on the eastern end of Long Island. There was time spent with Marjory Morten and Juliet Thompson again, as well as Marguerite Pumpelly Smyth ('Daisy' to us). They were all nearing the end of their life span--but still able to enrich us with time of the past.

It was during 1953 and 1954 that I became well acquainted with Mark Tobey. He used to spend weeks in New York at the National Arts Club. That's where Marjory Morten lived. Our friendship lasted until he passed away in 1976.

In 1954 (February) the Guardian made a request at the table in Haifa one evening, which LeRoy Ioas, then Secretary General of the International Council, sent to New York City. It seems that the Guardian expressed the wish for someone from the City of the Covenant (N.Y.) to go to the City of the Arch-Covenant Breaker (Famagusta, Cyprus) and one to go to Fizan in Tripolitania (*God Passes By* pg. 269). Thus it was that I went Famagusta, Cyprus in October 1954.

Before then, in the summer, I was secretary at the Green Acre School. Those were hectic times. Green Acre was an unforgettable experience. Genevieve Coy was head of the Green Acre Committee and the teaching program. [How did I ever have brains enough to do what I did there?] Genevieve was a master mind at being in charge and no one ever felt it. Everything glided along--good classes, mostly good teacher, one of my duties was to assess every class once during each week. I was also in charge of books and book sales.

Mildred Mehl went with me Cyprus. It turned out to be a rather poor choice but then--we learn as we live. We sailed October 4th on the *Queen Mary* for Southampton, Great Britain. The British NSA and British National Teaching Committee wished to confer with us. Cyprus had been allocated to the United Kingdom as a Crusade goal. They had already sent their pioneers to Nicosia (the capital). The goal of Famagusta fell directly under Shoghi Effendi, the International Council, NSA USA (because we were from that Bahá'í community), and indirectly to Germany, as Greece was their goal--hence they were really responsible for the language--but we had nothing in Greek available.

We spent four or five days in London, from there on to Paris where I saw a friend, met Edith Sanderson, attended the Báb's Birthday. Then on to Switzerland to see friends pioneering in Berne and Basel. From there we went to Vienna where we spent 2 weeks resting, seeing Margaret Lenz, a pioneer there, and met the Vargas. On to Venice where we embarked on a Mediterranean boat for Cyprus. One of the Adriatic shipping lines, where we again bounced around like a match box on the rough seas, going through the Corinthian Canal (as we did on route to Haifa), skirting the Cyclades Islands, weaving through Dodcanese and finally arriving in Limassol, Cyprus, our port of disembarkation. There was no wharf. We climbed down a ladder into small harbor boats, in the dead of night some 12-14 hours late.

We spent two or three days in Nicosia with the McKinleys--Hugh and his mother Violet (both Knights of Bahá'u'lláh). They had filled the British goal in the capital city of Cyprus (Nicosia). Two other pioneers there were Abbas Vakil and his wife from Baghdad. I think Abbas was originally from Turkey. His family was Iranian, I believe. Jeanne Kranen (she was Dutch) at that time was governess to a small boy in the outlying countryside. Later she came to Nicosia to live. She brought into the Faith the first Turkish Cypriot, Hassan Shashmaz. Abbas Vakil brought in the first Armenian Cypriot, whose name I've forgotten. I eventually brought in the first Greek Cypriot in Famagusta, Nick Charalambous. He was from Larnaca but worked and lived in Famagusta. He worked for Mantovani shipping agents in the office. They also handled shipping for American Export Lines as well as the Italian boats plying the Mediterranean.

First we stayed at the Palace Hotel for quite a while as we took a prefab cottage on the rooftop. Then we separated. I lived in four places after that--all in town. The reasons for the moves I don't remember.

[A personal episode--one place I lived had a vanity table and bench. It was a bed-sitter really. It also had a tomcat that adopted me; I simply couldn't get rid of him, he was a real beauty, part Persian with tiger markings. One night I saw under the vanity table a round black ball, at first I dismissed it as something "Missy Melli" (the cat, whose name means, "It doesn't matter.") brought in. But on second thought I decided to investigate more thoroughly. It turned out to be a tarantula, which have a body much like a mouse, rolled up like a furry ball. It seemed best not to go to bed with it still alive in my room so with the heel of my British walking shoe and a piece of newspaper spread over it, I pounded it to death. I left it until morning to clean up.]

My best teaching work of my entire life was done in Famagusta. Day to day living in the Middle East was much different than we were accustomed to--but having been on pilgrimage I had seen something of what to expect.

The Guardian asked us to be careful and not to divulge our purpose for being there--seems we had to think about what to tell the authorities. We needed permits to stay longer than just a visit. They had to be renewed from time to time. Our passports were always submitted with the request and we usually waited for weeks to get them back, which made us very nervous.

At a later date when we had to renew, Mildred Mehl didn't have any luck, but was ensnared into telling them she was there for the Bahá'í Faith. They came to investigate about 10:30 PM one evening. When they arrived, they saw our books; among them was one of the *Bahá'í World* volumes. They asked to look at it and we readily agreed. The book seemed automatically open to "Appreciations". They flipped a page or two, found a letter written by Sir Ronald Storrs about the Faith and also one by Sir Herbert Samuels. Storrs had been governor of Cyprus and Samuels had been First High Commissioner of Palestine under the British Mandate. The investigation ended before it started.

I decided after seeing the native craft of needlework and pottery that if I could find an outlet to sell it to, that selling might be useful. Government House employers thought it an excellent idea. It fizzled, but somehow, the Guardian heard about it and found it amusingly impressive that a female should consider going into 'commerce'.

Valentino Charalambos had become a very well known Mid-Eastern potter; potting having been their family craft for centuries. He had squeezed permission from his father to send him to the Arts and Crafts School in London for three years, so he had become an expert modern potter. (His father was a traditional potter.) While studying, Val had spent a summer in St. Ives at the Bernard Leach Kilns. Leach became a Bahá'í through Mark Tobey, so Val had heard of the Bahá'í Faith from them. He was interested, but never became involved. I became fascinated with the potting craft: where the clay came from, etc.; the designs he used. I have two of his plates; my sister has three plates and an ashtray.

My contact with Mr. and Mrs. Panagidi continued for many years after I left Cyprus and they moved to London. Another was Mr. and Mrs. Anthony Anthias who moved to Rhodesia. I still hear from her.

The list of contacts I made and gave the message to, was included in my report sent to the International Center at the time of the end of the Crusade. The new Universal House of Justice sent many of us requests to give a report.

My contacts actually consisted of all the key people in Famagusta. One, Mr. Yiannakis, teacher of English and official translator for the Board of Education on the entire island was among my contacts. He read much that I gave him. He also translated the *Tablet of Ahmad* and the pamphlet, *Christian, Mohammedan and Jew*. The article was really 'Abdu'l-Bahá 's talk given in Temple Emmanuel in San Francisco. Shortly after I came home, he was murdered on the streets of Famagusta by the EOKA, a guerilla gang that terrorized the island from 1954 to 1960 when Cyprus became independent.

The first June (1955) I was sent a formal invitation to attend the Queen's Birthday celebration which takes place everywhere that is under the British flag (Union Jack). A hat and glove affair that takes place in the tropics at 9:00 AM before the hot, noonday sun. A very impressive ceremony.

Another contact was an Armenian man, Treasurer for the entire county of Famagusta. I saw a great deal of him. He took us driving but couldn't understand why we remained in Famagusta--so many more opportunities in Nicosia. I told him that someday I would explain specifically why I must remain in Famagusta. Time went on. Finally, he said again, "Why must you stay in Famagusta?" By this time he had read *The New Era*, we had discussed many facets of the Faith, and he was very open to it. (Always, one must remember that of all places, Famagusta and Cyprus were enemy territory to us). I explained about Mírzá Yahyá--much to my surprise he understood the situation--but he also knew the family. They were paid every month from the Treasury as they had been by the Turkish regime before World War I. Each month, two very elderly ladies of that family came to sign for their meager stipend. As Treasurer, he did the 'paying out' to all who were on the payroll.

The most interesting contact was the Barrister, Turkish Muslim, who represented the Turkish population in that area. Each faction had a representative to the British government. The Greek Cypriots were represented by their bishop, and the Armenians by their churchman.

The Turks were not represented, that way they had a Barrister who had been educated in London. This man was married to an Irish Catholic nurse and she was seeking a religion that might have more common ground. The Bahá'í Faith sounded like what she was looking for. It was arranged that I accompany Miss Hamilton, an English lady living there with whom I had become acquainted, to come to tea. It was a day during the Fast of Ramadan. The husband was at the Mosque when we arrived, but came in later. We talked about the Faith, then when he came in he excused himself for not joining us for tea, as it was the Fast of Ramadan. I said, "Yes, I know." He was so surprised to find an American lady who knew about the Fast of Ramadan. At this point, the wife spoke up and wanted to know about monogamy. Her husband kept telling her he was lawfully allowed four wives, which she as a Catholic could not accept. I don't think he really meant to take three others but kept telling her just the same. I said that we as Bahá'ís believed in monogamy and that although the Moslems were allowed four wives, Mohammed had said that he preferred they have only one. But since they had been polygamists so long, he would allow them to have four. The Barrister was so surprised at my answer and at the same time, his wife asked him if what I said was so. He said, "Yes." Then he asked, "You have read the Koran?" I said, "Yes." Well! That he could hardly take in! Then he said, "I'm a Barrister and you have to prove to me that your Faith is what you say it is. A Barrister must have proof." I replied, "In this case, you must find your own proof. This is something you must do for yourself. No one else can prove these things to you." I left the island a couple weeks later. Whatever happened to them, I don't know. Miss Hamilton eventually became a Bahá'í.

Three other contacts were the Librarian at the Public Library where I placed the *New Era* in English, the Headmaster of the Famagusta Elementary School, who in some way had heard about the Faith and had written to Wilmette. In return, I got a letter from Mr. Holley--the man was interested in Rosicrucians. He did read *Iqan* while I was there. The other was the Head of Antiquities for Cyprus--Mr. Theophilus Mogabgab (a Lebanese). His brother, as it happened, was married to an American lady and they lived in Chamberlain, South Dakota.

The Azalis weren't very active, but most had good jobs with either the government or the radio network. Mírzá Yaḥyá's tomb was pointed out to me--very ill kept. I was approached once in Kyrenia by someone who claimed to be from Lebanon--that is a Covenant-Breakers hotbed also--I felt an uneasiness and went no further.

In Kyrenia, there was a health center of sorts--which I contacted for herbal medicines. The naturopath turned out to be Sumbly (???) an Ahmad Sohrab devotee. An Englishman, I think he was. At that time, the New History Society (as the Sohrab group was known) was trying to merge with the Azalis--strangely enough they refused to be involved with him.

All the while we were living under political terrorism--murders, bombs and constant curfews. We would scurry out for food, postage and other errands such as books to read and then back. At first, curfews were from late afternoon to morning; then they got to be longer.

I learned to smile constantly while in Cyprus. The natives considered me "Englese" and would spit upon the ground when passing by, but I smiled just the same. A smile always helps at any time.

I couldn't speak the language, which was Greek, but I did become very proficient in good English with an English accent. There are still words I pronounce as the English do. In Europe it became as handy as American English isn't understood as well. Living outside of one's homeland is the most educational experience one can have. That, with an in-depth study of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh, gives you the equivalent of a university education as 'Abdu'l-Bahá always said.

The Cypriots had a delicacy they always treated you with. It was fruit: peach, pear, orange peel, and grapefruit peel, put down in heavy sugar syrup. They also prepared green walnuts and almonds the same way except they were put into a shallow well with some kind of preparation to soak for a long period of time before being cooked in the syrup with spices.

There were two other delicacies I never quite took to--eating small birds, tiny, tiny things, head and all-- and eating a lamb's head cooked just as it was butchered from the body. To each his own! In Africa they eat ants, locust, etc. As I think back on my pilgrimage I remember when a bag of dried peaches arrived from Millie Collins, all wormy. We said, "What a pity they must be thrown out!" Rúḥíyyih Khánúm said, "Oh no! We will cook them, the worms will float on top and we'll skim them off. It won't hurt the peaches at all." Thus it was, they were delicious, but then anything was delicious in Haifa in those days of scanty, anything edible.

In one of the Guardian's communications to the friends in Nicosia he referred to Cyprus as the 'wilds of Cyprus'. Shortly, after that I was reading the *Iqan* and on page 43 I found where Bahá'u'lláh referred to the 'wilds or remoteness.' Remoteness from God is "hell" nearness to God is "Paradise." I figured I've been to both places since the Guardian said to us in Haifa "now you have been in Paradise."

There were two educational aspects gathered in my stay in Cyprus. One was the various brands of Christianity afloat in the world and how Christianity was so tainted with the old Greek gods, and had allowed them to hold so many old ways in order to get people to accept Christ. The other, I became acquainted with ancient history that I had studied in school--yet had no realization of where it was. I did not have the understanding of where ancient history took place.

With the Bahá'í Revelation, one finds wherever they go the oneness of it as if they don't combine the old with the new--as Paul and others did. Yes, we sort of hang onto old customs, but when we try to mix them someone must be strong enough to stamp on it immediately.

During the time of my stay in Cyprus, I was aided financially by Ala'i Kalantar and his wife; also Mr. Panagidi, a native Cypriot, had me work a bit in his office at his home--this only for a short time. Then the Kalantars went pioneering, so when I came home I worked to reimburse them. So actually Cyprus was a teaching project I financed myself. The same as I did during my years pioneering in the U.S.A. It was only later in the Crusades, after the passing of the Guardian that the Iranians took over much financing, deputizing those needing it and the West providing much of the manpower.

Cyprus in 1956 became almost impossible: bombings, killings, curfew and little chance to contact people. The Panagidi's left for England (he had become a marked man) but we continued to correspond for many years. Our correspondence unfortunately ended when Turkey invaded Cyprus. . [I would see them whenever I was in England often staying with them. They attended Mr. Sears' public address at the 1963 Jubilee}

A great deal of territory was covered in a short time--shades of Mírzá Yaḥyá had been penetrated. I came home. My report on my work there went to the Guardian--in his reply he hoped I'd go back into 'foreign service.' To return to Cyprus, he said, would be a waste of money. Upon my return in mid-1956 I worked three years and then back to Europe for the rest of the Crusade.

The Western Hemisphere Teaching Committee asked me to serve with them, but I felt Europe, as a pioneer was best. When I think of the work they did during the Crusade from Alaska to the tip of South America and the Caribbean Ocean--some of them traveled 10,000 to 20,000 miles--one would go one place another somewhere else--thus it was for the ten years. It would have been impossible for me.

So 1960 saw me back in Europe under the European Teaching Committee, in Switzerland. Italy and Switzerland were a regional National Assembly. But each was destined in the Crusade to form separate, independent National Assemblies and both did in 1962. There are twenty-four cantons (states) but not even half had assemblies when it formed the first National.

In order for them to do this, independent Assemblies had to be formed. Switzerland needed 12 locals to form the National and 42 pioneers went from the U.S.A., Canada and Iran. I helped form the first in Lucerne (Luzern). One of the most beautiful cities in Switzerland (The Confederation of Helvetia), situated on the Vier Valdstätter Sea (Lac or Lake)--It touched four wooded states--on Canton Lucerne, Canton Uri, and Cantons Elb Walden and Nid Walden part of the Inner Schweiz or original confederation. [A beautiful trip by boat to Fluellen.]

It took living there for me to learn where Helvetica was. I had taken four years of Latin and translated Caesar's Champaign. Gaul I knew was France but Helvetia was an unknown place, I guess I never asked. Switzerland has three national languages--Italian, French, German. (I tried to learn German but the grammar was much too difficult. All I could do was gather a fairly good vocabulary. I always knew what was going on if and when spoken in high German.). One finds a Swiss dialect spoken--each canton and city usually uses its own in everyday affairs. One canton Granhundeu--Chier, the capitol, speaks Romanisch a garbled, old, Latin holdover.

When we formed our Assembly I was elected Secretary. Lucerne was in the German part. I took minutes in English and somebody translated them into German. In those days a secretary was both corresponding and recording secretary. Most everyone spoke some English, some didn't. The first L.S.A. of Lucerne were Elsa Heinmitz, Julie Reeder, Fr. Klara Wenger, Fr. Inwyler, Bud Davis, Myrna Davis, Lorana Kerfoot, Joanna Thomas (Joanna now lives in Holland married to an Iranian dentist) and Lorana Kerfoot finally went to Haifa to work. Every week we held open meetings at one of the small hotels with advertisements in the paper. It cost so little in those days.

I lived with Fraulein Marie Kasper on Gartenheim Street. She came to all the meetings and told many people about the Faith, but never became a Bahá'í--couldn't seem to accept Bahá'u'lláh. She belonged to the Rudolph Steiner movement in Basel. It was through her that I met Louise Singer who did become a Bahá'í and remained staunch and steadfast through the many ups and downs over the years. She spoke only German and I only English but I understood her questions. Through Doris Lohse the answers were translated. Information and discussion took place; language was never a barrier--if the inner self was functioning. [May Maxwell, Rúhíyyih Khánúm's mother, often communicated this way.] Doris Lohse was a long-time Bahá'í, who spoke beautiful German and French. Thus it was that Louise came into the Faith.

I've traveled back and forth a number of times since I left there; mostly to keep in touch with those whom I knew. Louise used to say whenever I arrived, "immer de selbe"--always the same.

Switzerland was a difficult place as all places are. The pioneers were deeply resented by the native believers which was not easy. The Guardian had told us in "*The Challenging Requirements*" *Citadel of Faith*, page 20, that it was the most arduous and most challenging task--the redemption of the Old World (Europe) and Harmony. At one meeting, a conference, or convention they were requesting a special contribution as well as the usual Einheit and Harmonie. A pioneer sitting next to me picked up her handbag and then dropped it saying, "I'll just give them Einheit and Harmonie."

All the while I was in Europe I was beset with my old friend asthma. At the end of the Crusade, Mr. Ioas suggested the climate was too difficult for me and to leave. Asthma had, unfortunately, caused me to miss many activities. The 50th anniversary of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's visit to Geneva--Mona Hanni de Bon sent me a copy of the compilation and the program (in French) which I still have), some of the Summer Schools, but I did go to the Bex les Baines attended that year by Mr. and Mrs. Ugo Giachery. And the first Luxembourg Summer School in 1962 dedicated to the Greatest Holy Leaf. (It was the thirtieth anniversary of her passing--Mr. and Mrs. LeRoy Ioas and Dr. Muschlegel present.)

On one of my trips to Paris I was able to renew my acquaintance with Laura Dreyfus-Barney (of "*Some Answered Questions*")--an impressive experience. Her family home in Washington, D.C. (she and her



sister Natalie) had just given to the Smithsonian Museum. Her mother had been a patroness of Juliet Thompson. Madame Dreyfus was trying to locate a list of the portraits Juliet had painted.

The Crusade ended in 1963 with the Great Jubilee in London. The newly elected Universal House of Justice introduced itself to us in a Body. The Centenary of Bahá'u'lláh's declaration in Baghdad--it was still the Ridván period, almost everyone who pioneered and could walk or even crawl attended this great event. I went limping around with a bandaged toe in an old pair of shoes with the end cut out for comfort. How could one miss it just for a trifle toe surgery? London--a fitting place to hold such a celebration where one could literally lay the laurels won at the feet of "*The Priceless Pearl*," the overworked, overburdened Remnant of Bahá'u'lláh, our Guardian, Shoghi Effendi, who lies in a London cemetery. He passed away there midway in the Crusade.

A few months later I came home depleted. Those first three plans of the Guardian's were a period of trial and error. It was a period of plowing hard stony ground; wherever we went on a wing and a song with little preparation but heavily armed with our prayer books. If you were a first, you were alone, you battled the government regulations by putting your best foot forward in order to get the necessary papers and whatever else was needed to stay on as long as possible. Always hoping the axe wouldn't fall until some real progress had been made. Day-to-day living, a new experience!

Home was then San Jose, California, where my mother and sister lived. The climate was best for asthma. Mother lived only two years after I came home.

In 1969, I went back to Montclair, New Jersey, and married Frank Edelstein. Before, I was Frances B. Jones, the name under which I pioneered. Thirty years before, I met him (he was not a Bahá'í) in the very same month (March 1938) that I first heard about the Bahá'í Faith.

We lived in Montclair for about fifteen years, where I helped to hold the assembly together. It's an early Bahá'í community dating back to before the visit of 'Abdu'l-Bahá to the U.S.A. Three or four experiences there stand out in my mind--such as the year we held the State Convention. Another was the intricacies of getting Iris and Hassan Tarafdar back to the United States from Iran. They were there for about 9 months but because they weren't properly transferred on paper they were held there. It was a problem between two N.S.A.s. Finally, we besought the Universal House of Justice to straighten it out. It was done in a flash. The third was getting the green light from National to go ahead and marry an Iranian couple who had had to have a civil ceremony in London 24 hours before departure so they could get him a visa. She already was okay to enter St. Barnabas' Hospital as an intern. The above incidences are typical of the kinds of hassles most L.S.A.s have periodically--it makes for growth by experience. It was my good fortune during those years to attend the 1971 Icelandic Conference and in 1972 to have a second Pilgrimage. The Universal House of Justice was gracious to extend an invitation to my husband who accompanied me--the mysteries!! Only seven months later he passed away suddenly. He very much appreciated the Faith, going with me everywhere except Feasts and Assemblies meetings. I feel sure he has progressed rapidly in the next world.

After a broken hip--sustained by being knocked down by a car--a year later, 1982, I moved back to California and am living in Palo Alto, another very early Bahá'í community.

Due to the constant prodding of many friends I decided to write a brief reminiscence of my life as a very early day Bahá'í who pioneered in the three plans inaugurated by the Guardian. They were history

making. It was a time of expansion--living and eagerly awaiting every message that came from him. Experiencing the terrible agony of his loss, but continuing under the auspices of the Hands, the bridge that carried us on to the finish of the Crusade and election of the Universal House of Justice.

I never dreamed in 1938 that I'd ever live to see the Universal House of Justice come into existence or to live under its directives. I've lived from the end of the horse and buggy age to the space age. A momentous period. History doesn't happen between the covers of a book.

### July 1998

Fourteen years have since I ended this rambling account of my life and I'm told that I have to fill in the next 14 years because I have lived these 14 years and I should account in some way for them.

When I arrived in California at the very end of 1982, I had to find a place to live. I more or less decided that I would live in Palo Alto as I knew people there, but high rents made it impossible to find suitable places to live. So I temporarily shared an apartment with a lovely lady in Mountain View. While I was there, I visited around looking for places to live and finally made application at Stevenson House on East Charleston Road, Palo Alto. It was a non-profit organization for low-income seniors with very pretty grounds and nice studios. One became available to me in the spring of 1984. I moved in July 15th.

This made me a member of the Palo Alto Bahá'í Community which was one of the older communities in the area. Unlike many of the old communities they were a bit stagnant. Having run out of ideas on how to attract people, to say nothing of the very unfortunate situation of having two people who were quite mentally unstable, and which caused constant problems for us to confront. They had one very strong member, Frank Raymond, whose home was always open to us for most all our activities. The Palo Alto community was a community that was always in flux. It seemed to have a revolving door. They came in and they went out--but no new blood came in, it was merely Bahá'ís moving in or out or passing away.

This is what happened when Frank Raymond passed away in 1991. The Faith went into a deep decline there. We would manage to keep nine on an Assembly each year but hardly ever able to get a quorum, and for 3-4 years we could be considered a dysfunctional community. Then we got 3 new Bahá'ís in, local people. One very active youth whose parents came into the Faith because of her enthusiasm and knowledge. And then a fourth came in. He was about to be married to a Bahá'í in San Francisco which made it possible for her to move here and give us some stability. Along with a Bahá'í who was an educator and had become the Assistant Administrator of Palo Alto High School. This made him a permanent resident also.

During the periods of decline and dysfunction, I was on the Assembly, but since I had failing eyesight, I was not able to do much because I could not do any secretarial work at all. In the late 1970's, I had been diagnosed as having glaucoma, and although the drops staved off sight loss for quite some time. . . . But along with macular degeneration, it finally began to be so that I couldn't read, which really leaves me rather helpless.

Then a couple of years ago (about 1996) the most fortunate thing of all happened. The addition of a couple that moved from Phoenix, Arizona to live here and they have proven to be real live wires.

And in 1997, in February, I discovered that Keith deFolo was living in Say Mateo. I had known him many years before in New York City and it has proven to be a great boon to have such a friendship. 1998 is my 60th year of being a member of the Bahá'í Faith. It certainly has been probably one of the greatest periods of development that one can ever have lived in. In 1938, when I became a Bahá'í, there were still many believers living who had met 'Abdu'l-Bahá, the Master, and we certainly enjoyed listening to their stories about him.

I spent many, many hours with Marjory Morten, who had been close to the Greatest Holy Leaf, the daughter of Bahá'u'lláh. I was especially privileged to have met and spent time with Laura Dreyfus-Barney at her Paris home in the later years. And I had a very special relationship with Mark Tobey, who had come into the Faith through Juliet Thompson and who had received a tablet from 'Abdu'l-Bahá concerning how artists in the future should be given special consideration because of their talent. To my sorrow I neglected to ask if I could have a copy of that tablet which I saw and I have no idea whatever happened to it.

Marjory Morten had been the recipient of great bounty from 'Abdu'l-Bahá when she had been on pilgrimage after the first Great War. When one day he took her by the hand and lead her over to the Greatest Holy Leaf and placed her hand in that of the Greatest Holy Leaf and said, "I give Marjory to you as a gift." And for the rest of the life of the Greatest Holy Leaf, Marjory spent a great deal of time in the Holy Land visiting with Her. During that same visit, the Master made two very interesting comments to Marjory--one was that she heard him say as he bid farewell to a group of departing pilgrims, in a tone of great sadness, 'They come stones. They remain stones. They go away stones.' And another wonderful message that he told was in saying farewell to her, that she should travel the length and breadth of Italy and never open her mouth but that he wanted every tree and stone to know that she had passed by. In one of the visits with the Greatest Holy Leaf, the subject of her mother Navváb, the Most Exalted Leaf, came up. Someone mentioned the fact that Navváb had not gone to Bahjí to live and they mentioned the fact that Bibi, who was Bahá'u'lláh's third wife, was very difficult to get along with and that she probably did not want to live under the same roof with her. The Greatest Holy Leaf stiffened a bit and said, "My mother could have managed that woman if she had wanted to."

It seems, according to the Greatest Holy Leaf, when Bahá'u'lláh moved to Bahjí, Navváb packed his things very carefully, all of them, and sent them to him, and from then on, she remained a recluse in the home of her son 'Abdu'l-Bahá for the rest of her life. When the Greatest Holy Leaf passed away, the Guardian asked Marjory to write something about her and she wrote a beautiful article which Marjory simply called 'A Portrait'. And it is in the *Bahá'í World* volume now--dedicated to the Greatest Holy Leaf after her passing in 1932. Because of devotion to the Greatest Holy Leaf, the Guardian called Marjory a Bahiyyist (a devoted friend who had loved the Greatest Holy Leaf so much.)

### **April 1999**

In April 1999, I moved to Medford Oregon, to the *Orchards Assisted Living Residence*, to be nearer my niece.