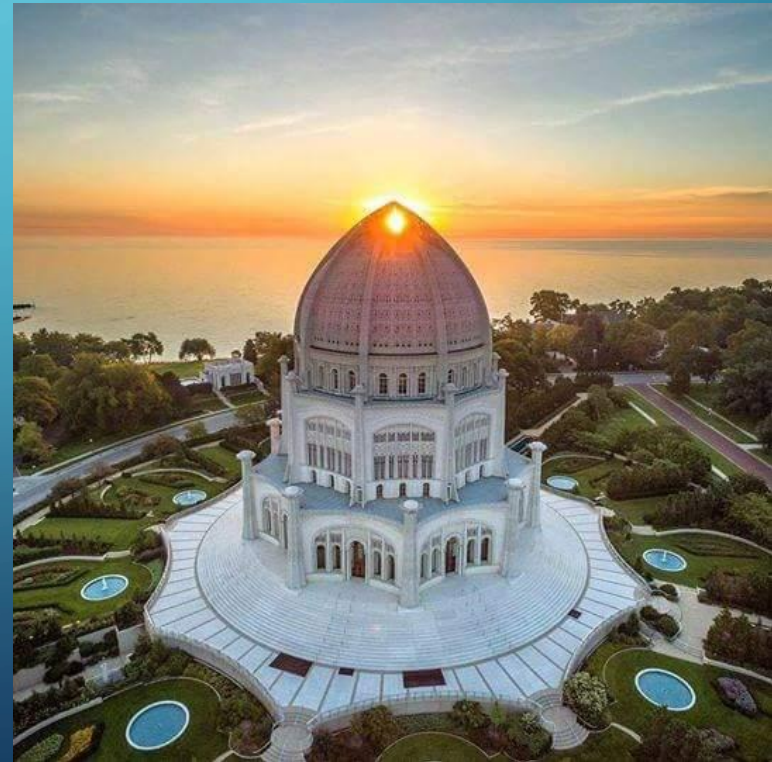


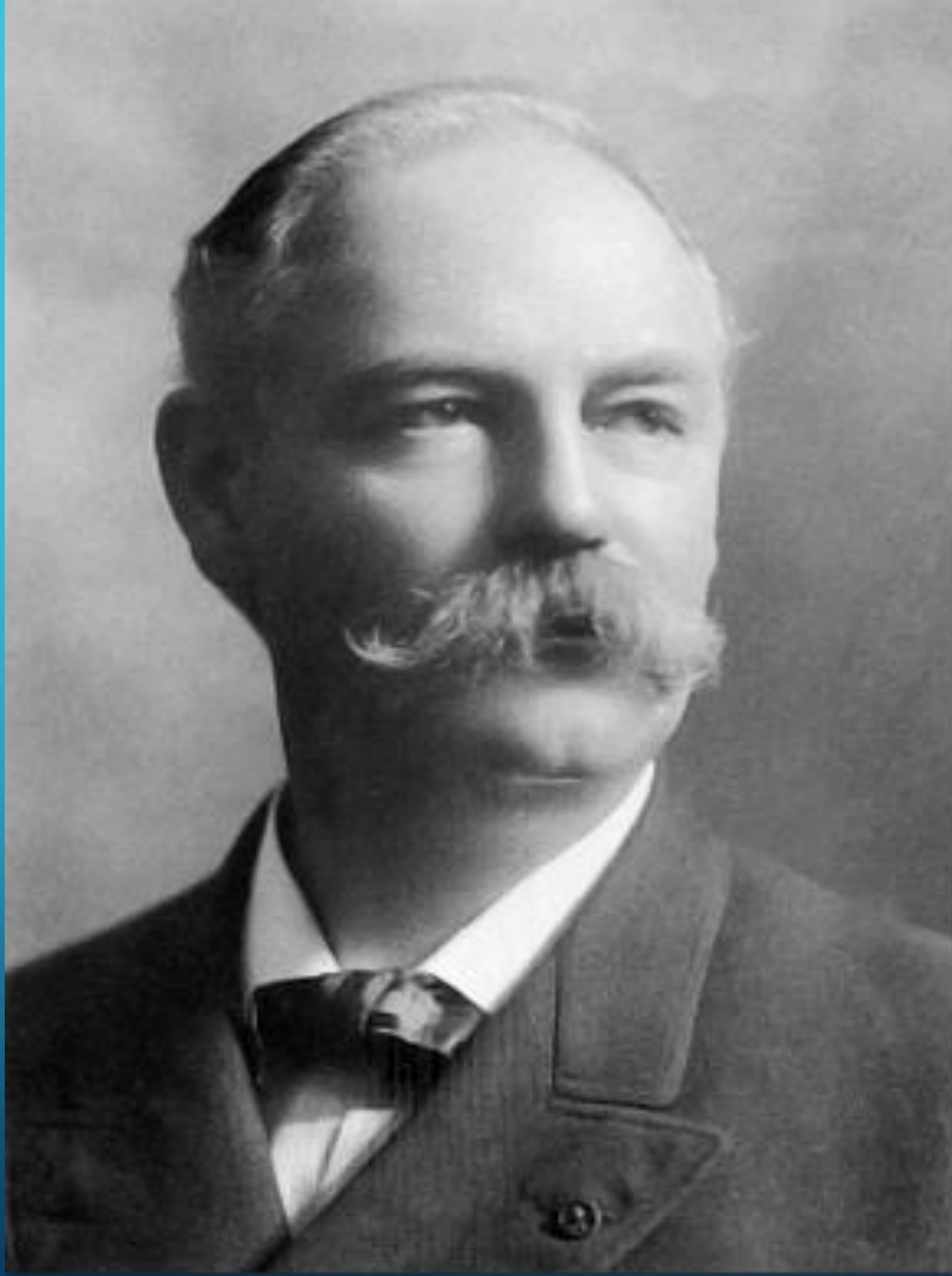
AFLAME WITH DEVOTION:
THE HANNEN AND KNOBLOCH FAMILIES
AND THE EARLY DAYS OF THE BAHA'I FAITH
IN AMERICA.

By Judy Hannen Moe





The first time Baha'u'llah was mentioned in America was at the World Parliament of Religions in 1893 in Chicago.



Thornton Chase in his early forties. (Mr. Chase Nelson)

The first to embrace the Baha'i Faith in America was Thornton Chase, who had had a strong feeling that this was the Day of God and he was actively seeking for answers. He heard about Baha'u'llah while living in Chicago.

In 1894, 5 people had become believers.



This book is about the Hannens and Knoblochs, who became Baha'is around 1902 and lived lives of service for the remainder of their lives.



TO MOVE THE WORLD

*Louis G. Gregory
and the Advancement
of Racial Unity
in America*

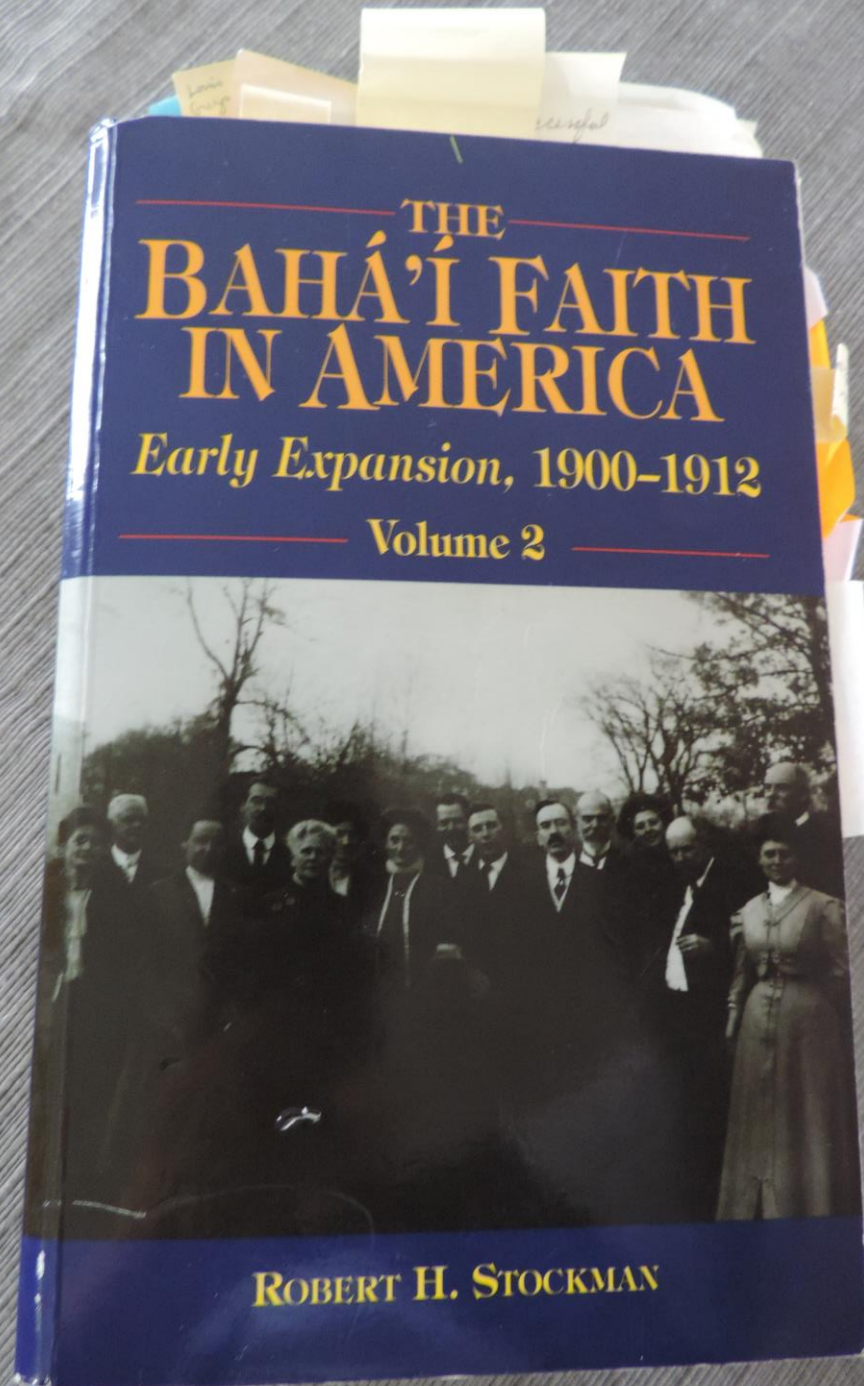
by
GAYLE MORRISON

*To Sokayl and Fran Hansen —
with loving appreciation for your
assistance — may the light of
unity always illumine your
path of service, as it did Joseph
and Pauline's —
Gayle Morrison*



BAHÁ'Í PUBLISHING TRUST

It wasn't until 1982, when this book about Louis Gregory came out, that I realized what an important role my great grandparents played in advancing the cause of race unity in the early days of the Faith in America.



By 1995, Robert Stockman came out with his second important volume of history of The Baha'i Faith in America. This volume covers the time when the Hannens and Knoblochs were learning of the Faith and their early efforts to organize and expand were taking place.



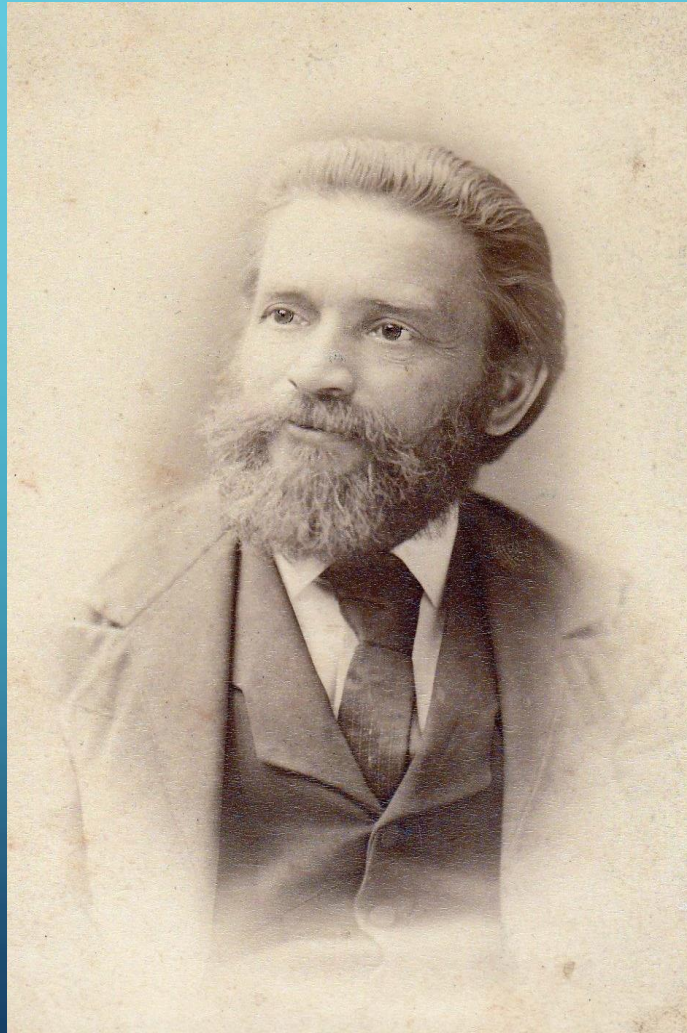
This is me with Jennifer Weibers who is writing a book about Alma Knobloch and her role in the early days of the Baha'i Faith in Germany.

Much of the research was done in the National Archives in the Wilmette House of Worship, where there are over 30 large folders of letters and manuscripts written to and from the many characters in the book.

The other main source was the Baha'i Archives of Washington D.C., where there are about 10 file boxes of Hannen Knobloch papers and letters.



Pauline's parents, Amalie & Karl August Knobloch immigrated from Germany with four children around 1866 after the Civil War. Karl was an architect.



Amalie Knobloch's parents from Germany, Count A. Von Roessler and wife, Elizabeth (Dresler).





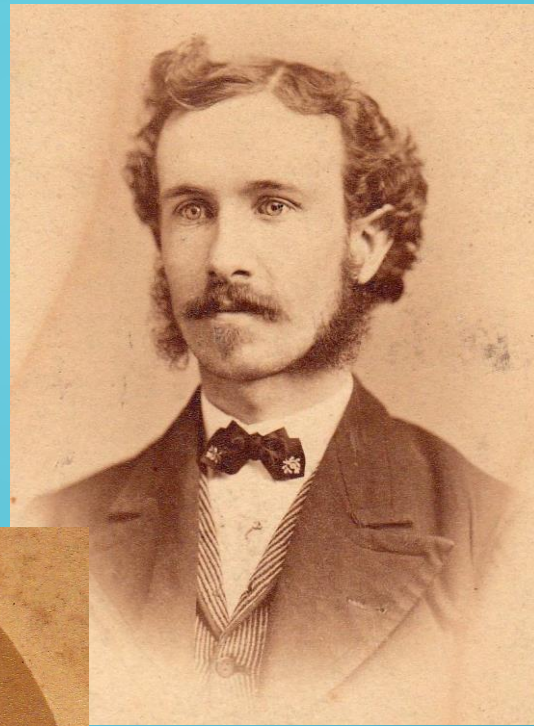
This picture of Fanny (1860) as a child was probably taken in Germany around age 6. She seems to be holding baby Alma (1864).

This is Pauline (1874) with brother William, (1869) both born in America.



This is Paul, Alma and young Pauline, the youngest.





Joseph's parents were Mary Virginia Anthony and Frank Hannen. They married in 1868 and gave birth to Joseph in 1872, in Richmond, VA. Around 1873 Frank left the marriage and Mary V brought up Joseph on her own in Washington DC.

The Knobloch family moved to Wilmington , NC when Pauline was a young child. Pauline returned to Washington when she was 14, sometime after her father died in 1887.



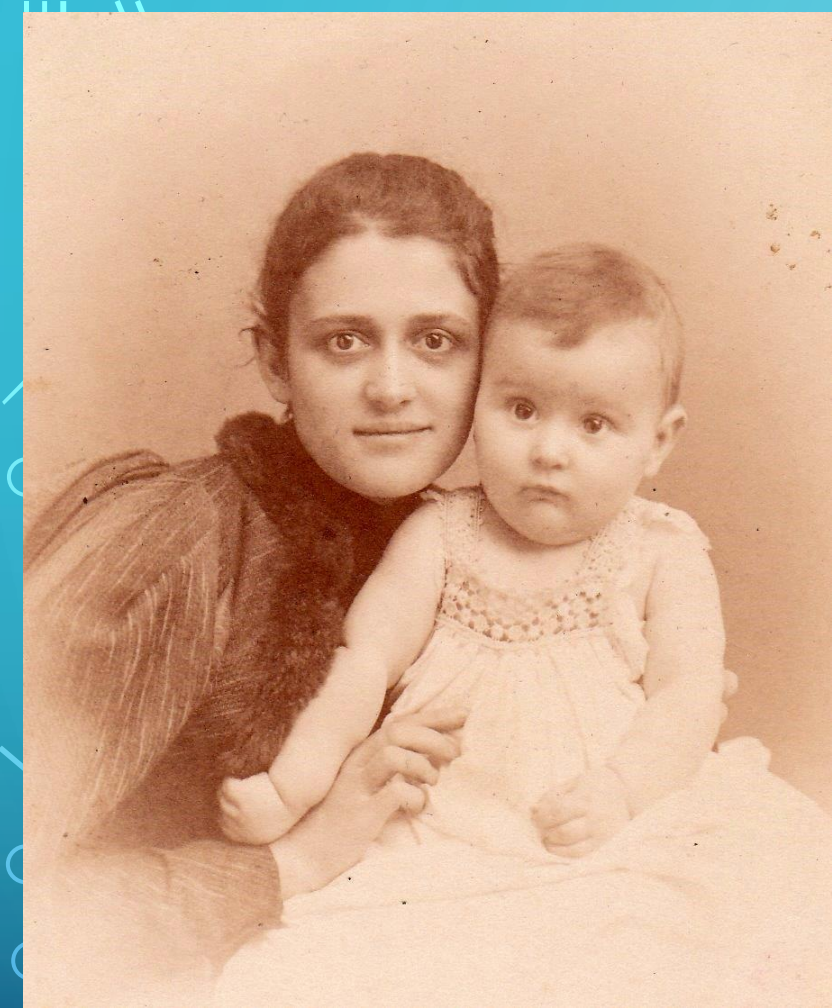
Pauline met Joseph Hannen during their high school years.





Joseph and Pauline
were married in 1893
and created a life
together in
Washington.

Their first child, Carl Anthony Hannen was born in 1895. Their second child Gladys died as a baby. Paul was born in 1900.





In 1901, Joseph and Pauline's older sister Fanny started working for a company called Viavi, which sold health products.

In 1902 a new employee at Viavi, Mrs. Sargent had a conversation with Joseph about spiritual matters when she told him about a lady, Mrs. Jones, who had very powerful prayer meetings at her home. Fanny, Pauline and Joseph attended one stormy night. Pauline told them on the way home, that that meeting , like the changing weather, had had a very big affect on her and she felt a change was coming.



In 1901, Abdu'l-Baha, the son of Baha'u'llah, sent two very knowledgeable Baha'is, Mirza Abu'l-Fadl, a Bible scholar and Ali Kuli Khan a translator to America to teach the new Baha'is. They settled in Washington D.C. and started holding weekly classes. It was to these classes Pauline was invited in 1902.





Baltimore June 19th 1906

As soon as Pauline accepted Baha'u'llah as the newest manifestation of God, and the return of the spirit of Christ in the world, she began to share the good news with family and friends. It took a few years to convince this family of strong Lutheran Christians that their Lord had returned. But eventually they all became Baha'is.



This is the quote Pauline refers to in her story.

O children of men! Know ye not why we have created you all from the same dust? That no one should exalt himself over the other. . . . Since we have created you all from the same substance it is incumbent on you to be even as one soul, to walk with the same feet, eat with the same mouth and dwell in the same land, that from your inmost being, by your deeds and actions, the signs of oneness and the essence of detachment may be made manifest.



The first place Pauline looked to teach the message of the Bahá'í Faith to people of African descent was in her own home, to those that she knew best.



“The meetings at Carrie York’s proved to be the candle-stick from which the Light was spread.”



While Pauline was visiting her sister Alma, trying to teach her about her new Faith, she also was teaching Alma's assistant seamstress, Pocahontas Pope who became the first African American believer in that area.



Because of his Persian connections, Joseph helped with the formation of The Persian American Education Society to help Persia with its educational and economic developments.

First Annual Meeting of Persian American Educational Society, 1910.

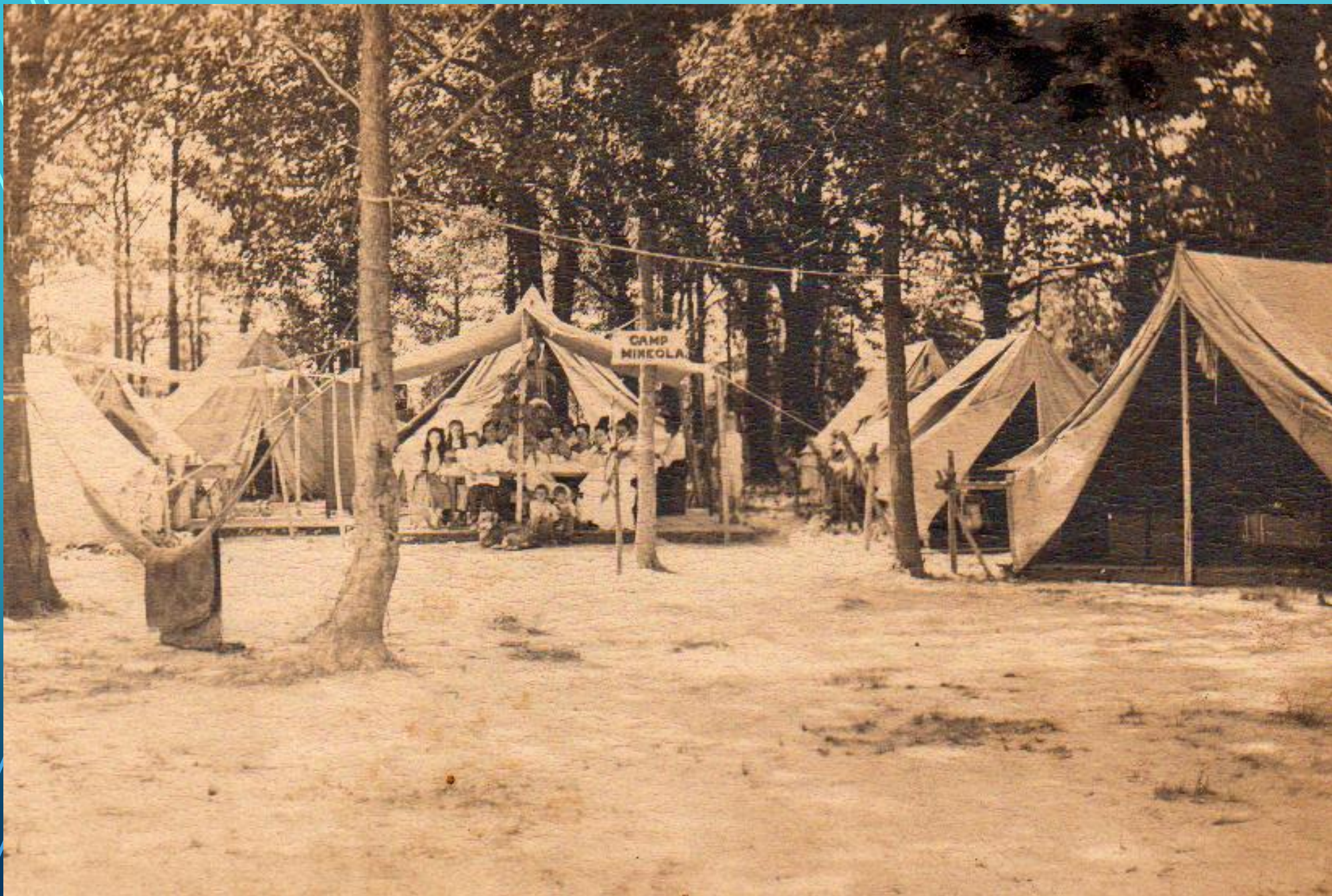


Another person who attended those classes in 1902 was Leona West Barnitz, who, since she was a little girl, had been following her father's advise , and had been searching for the return of Christ in the world.



These are the Barnitz grandchildren.





This is
Camp
Mineola,
the first
Baha'i
Summer
school
organized
by Mrs.
Leona
Barnitz, at
Colonial
Beach, VA.



Their oldest daughter Leone St. Claire Barnitz served for many years as a personal secretary to Agnes Parsons.

She helped organize a lot of the papers donated to the archives.

The middle daughter Beulah, with husband Ralph Brown and daughter Marjory, moved to Milwaukee, WI.



The youngest daughter,
Mineola Barnitz became a
Hannen when she married
the Hannen's oldest son
Carl.

She spent many years near
the House of Worship
serving in many capacities.





A holy day celebration held at the Hannen home in DC in 1906.

The Hannen's lived at 1252 8th St NW for their entire married life. On left is what it looked like before it was taken down in 1999 to make room for the DC Convention Center. It is across the street from the Catholic Church of the Immaculate Conception. It is said the family did not serve dinner until the church bells rang at 6:00PM.



A similar looking row house now.





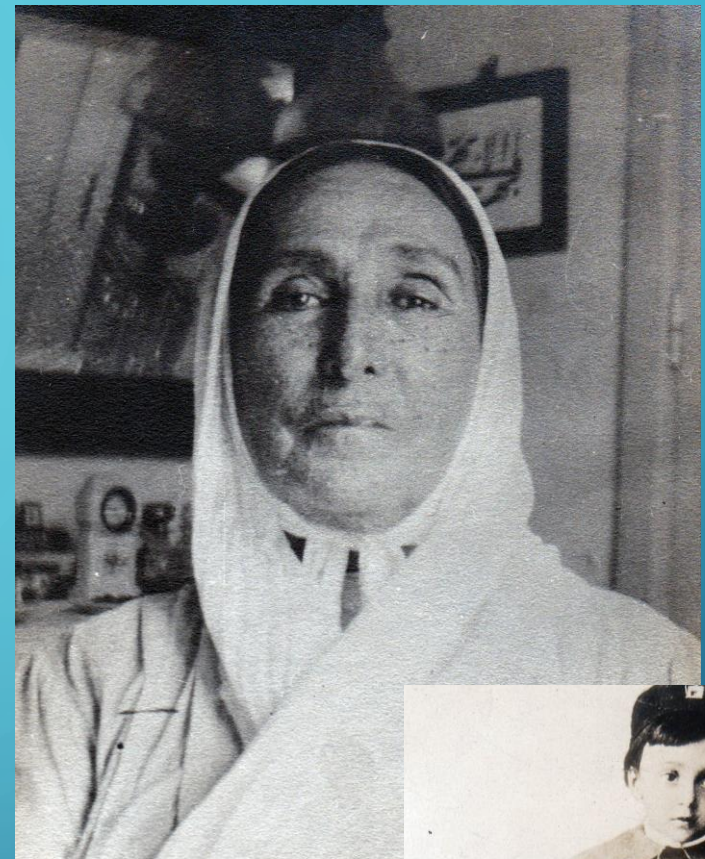
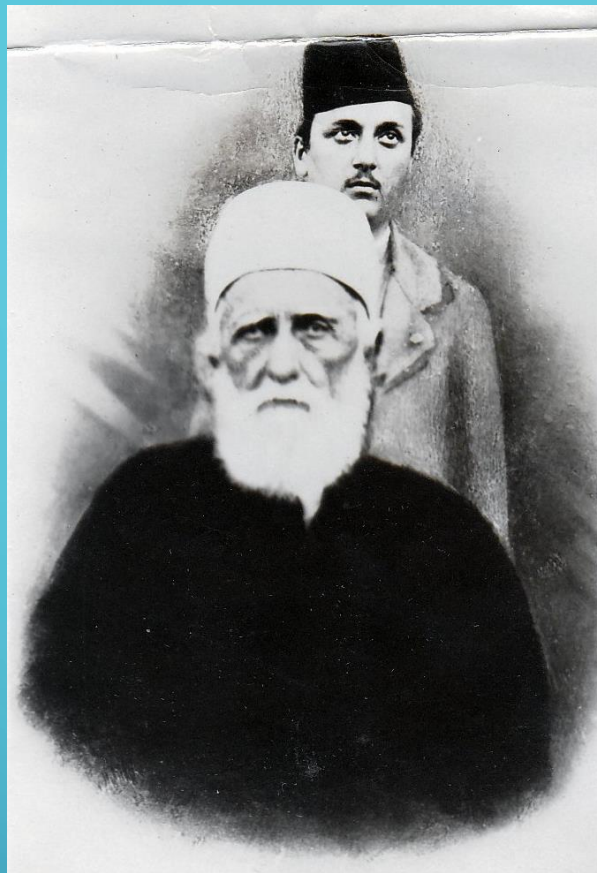
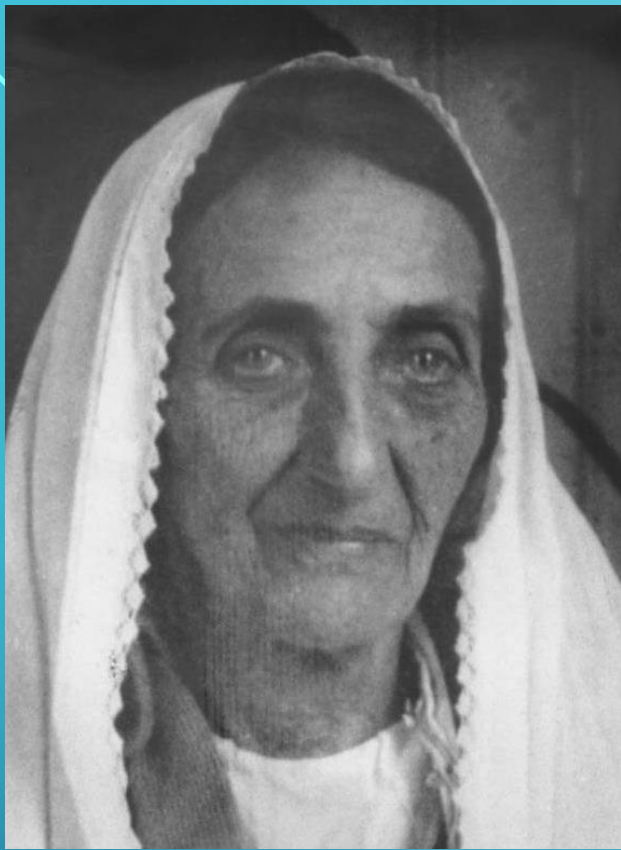
In 1906, when Abdu'l-Baha was looking for a German speaking Baha'i to go to help spread the Word in Germany, Alma was up to the challenge and arranged to go very soon after hearing of the request. She stayed for 15 years.



Several times while Alma was in Germany Fanny came to visit. They traveled to Paris to meet Abdu'l-Baha together and went on pilgrimage together.

In 1908, just a few years after becoming a believer, Amalie Knobloch passed on in Glory to the Abha Kingdom. Everyone who knew Amalie spoke of her as saintly. Her death scene is one of the most amazing I have ever heard.





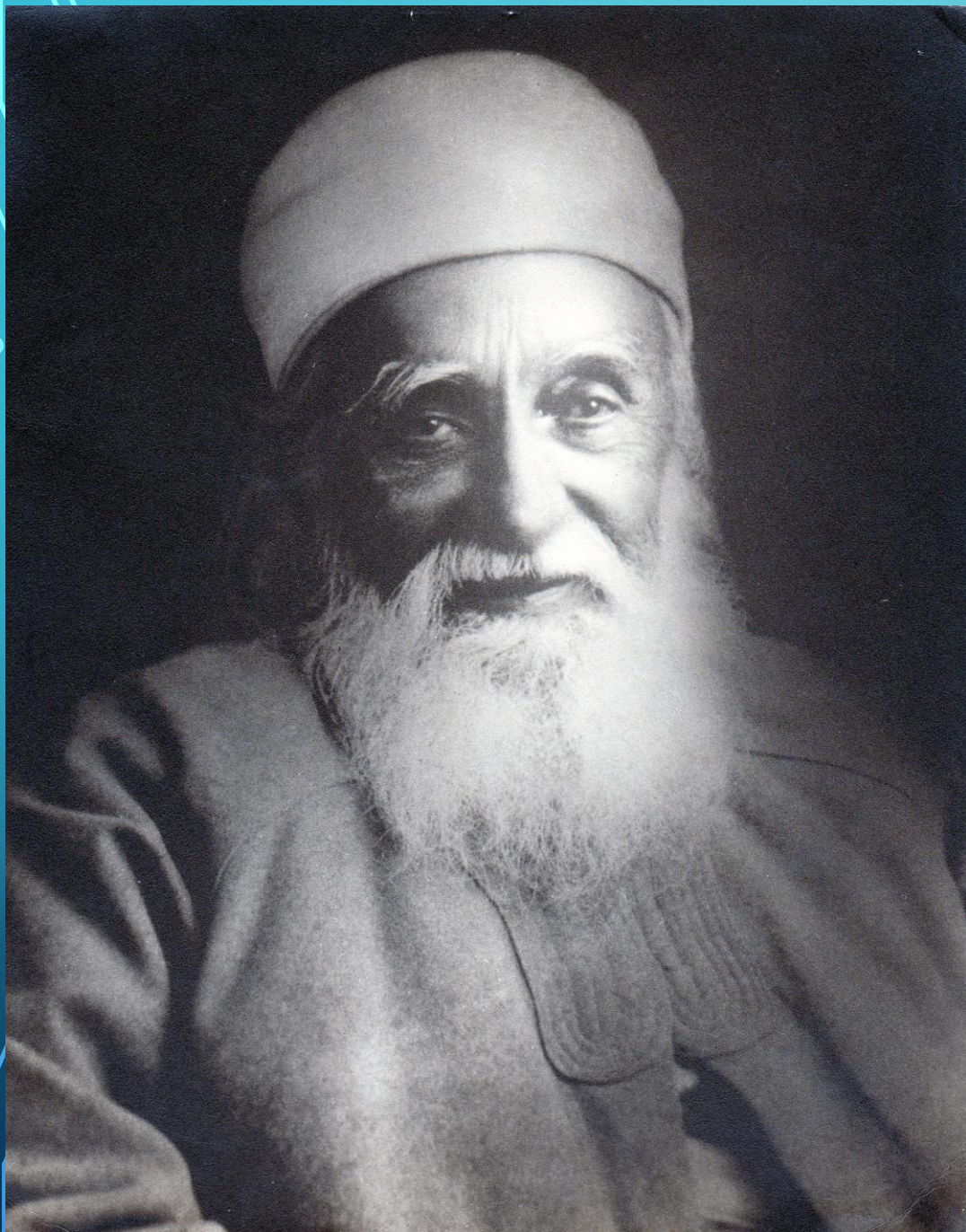
Fanny and Alma went on pilgrimage to meet Abdu'l-Baha in 1908 and Pauline and Joseph went in 1909. Here are a few photos of who they met while there. They had many conversations and encounters with Abdu'l-Baha, Bahiyyih Khanum and Munira Khanum, and Shoghi Effendi as a child.



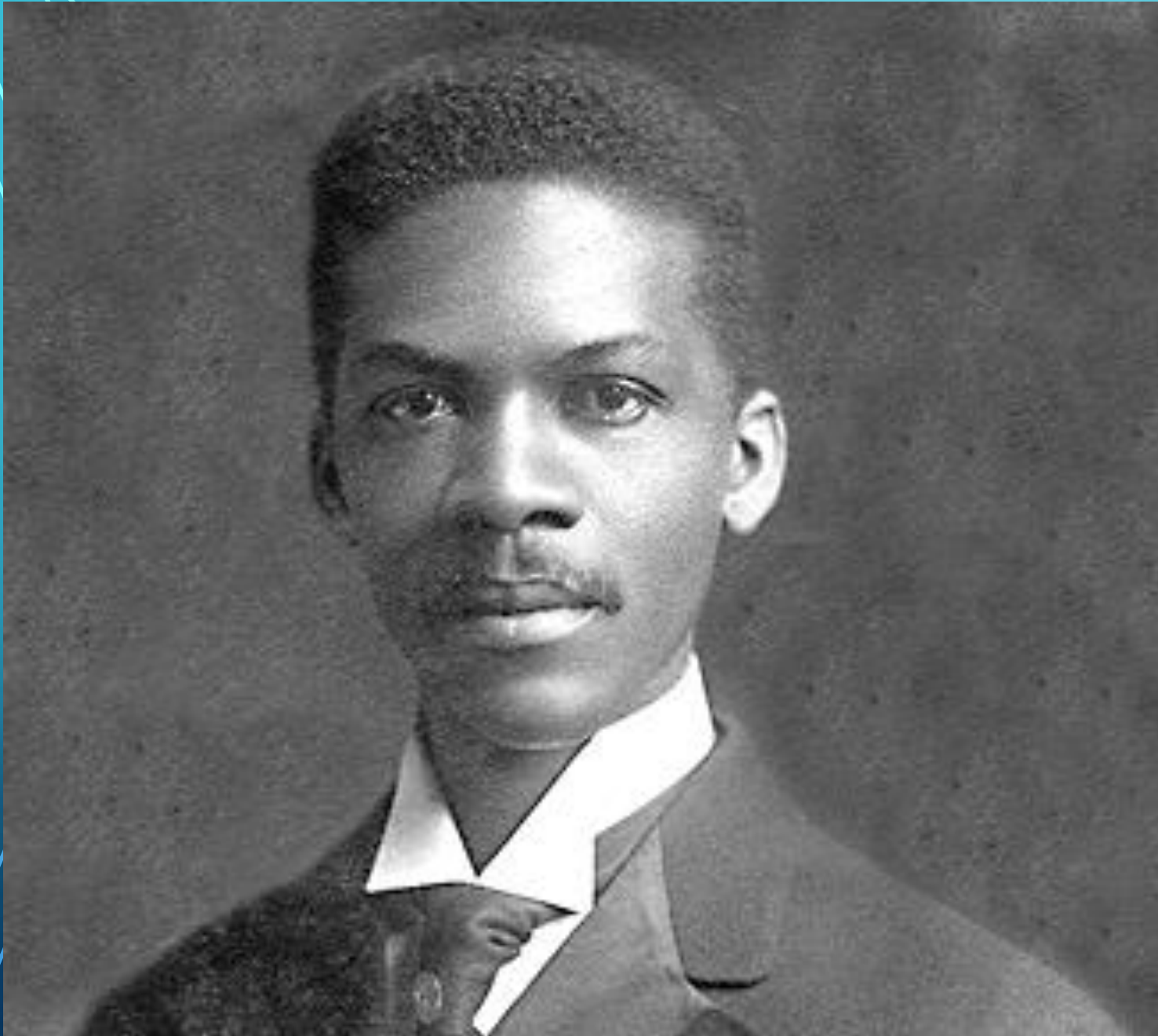
They
spent a
lot of
time with
the
women
of the
Holy
Family.



One of the people Pauline and Joseph introduced the Faith to was Louis Gregory, who was a highly educated Lawyer working for the Treasury Department. He attended weekly meetings at Carry York's house and then at the Hannens'. This began in about 1907.



When the Hannens went on a Pilgrimage to meet Abdu'l-Baha in 1909, they mentioned Louis to the Master who instructed them to continue teaching him, assuring them that he would become a believer and an advocate of the Teachings. He became a confirmed believer about June 1909.



The decision to become a Bahá'í was not an easy one for Louis. He was ridiculed by his friends who thought he was “mentally unbalanced,” and joining a group of predominantly white people had a tangible effect on his standing in the Black community.

Louis then introduced the Faith to some of his white friends, Mr. and Mrs. Dyer, who became vital participants in teaching those of African descent. They too began to hold regular weekly meetings in their home. Another place where mixed race meetings could be held was the Music Conservatory run by a Mrs. Marshall another “colored” Baha’i.



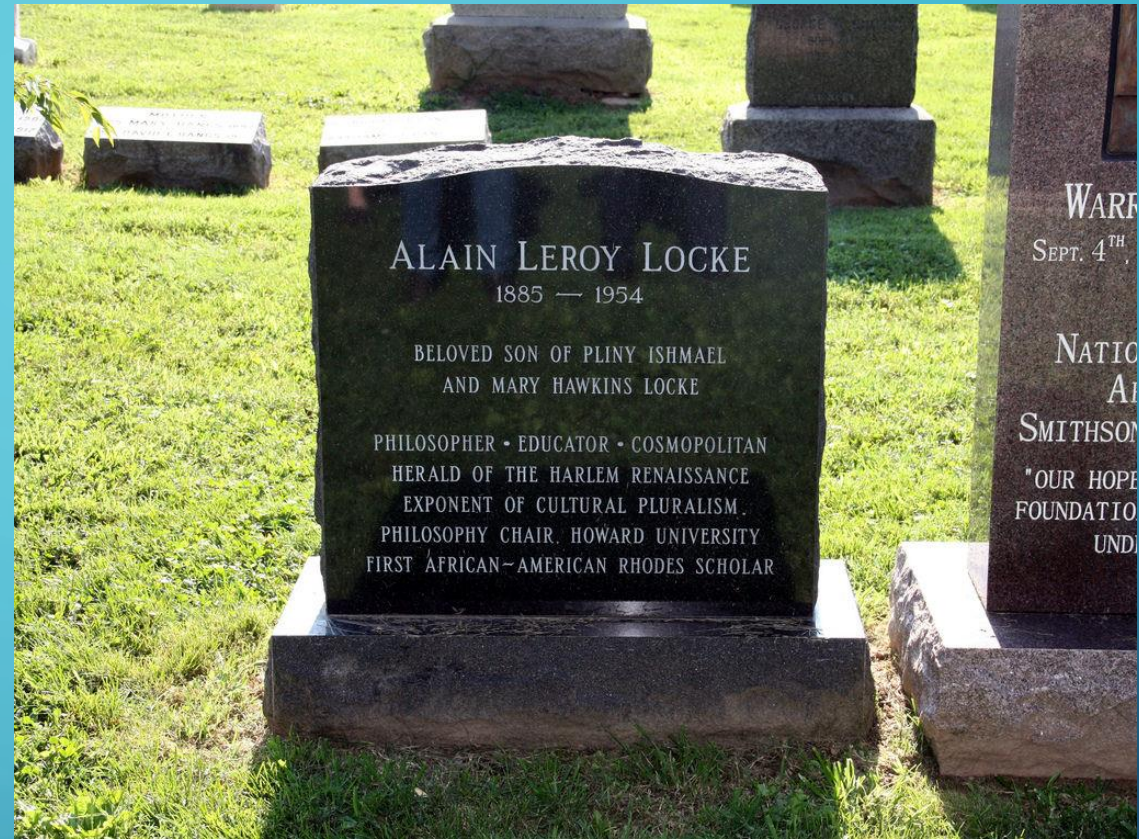


She was Chair of Oratory and he held the positions of Professor of Commercial and International Law and Dean of the School of Commerce and Finance.

Coralie Cook, and her husband George, were both professors at Howard University with very impressive credentials. She became a Bahá'í in 1913 as a result of the Hannen's efforts and he gave much support to the Baha'is. One of her great contributions was a letter she wrote to Abdu'l-Baha about race in America. Another was to arrange for Abdu'l-Baha's talk at Howard University. She is mentioned several times in this book.

Alain Locke, best known as the Dean of the Harlem Renaissance, who was a professor at Howard University, was taught the Baha'i message by the Hannens.





Many years after Alain's death in 1954, his ash remains were found in the archives at Howard University. To honor this special man, who was also known for being the first Black Rhode Scholar, several groups with whom he had been associated planned a fitting dedication to inter his remains in the Capital Hills Congressional Cemetery.

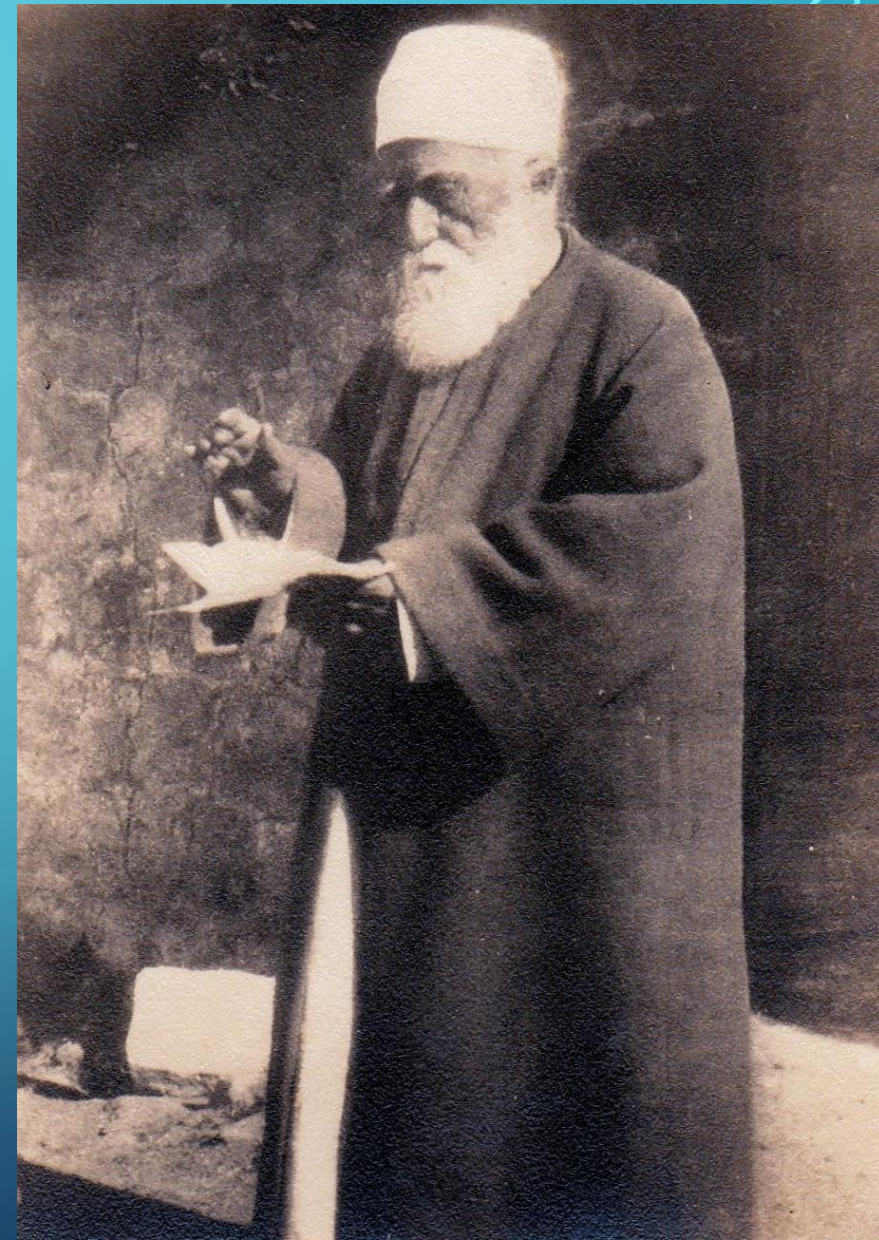


Although mixed race marriages were not accepted by most North Americans in the early 20th century, Abdu'l-Baha actually encouraged it. Pauline and Joseph and the Knoblochs were among the strong supporters of the newly wed Gregorys.

O ye dear ones of Abdu'l-Baha!

In the world of existence the Meeting is blessed when the white and the colored race meet together with infinite spiritual love and heavenly harmony. When such meetings are established and the participants associate with each other with perfect unity, love and kindness the angels of the Kingdom of Abha praise them and the beauty of Baha'u'llah addresses them; Blessed are you and again blessed are you!

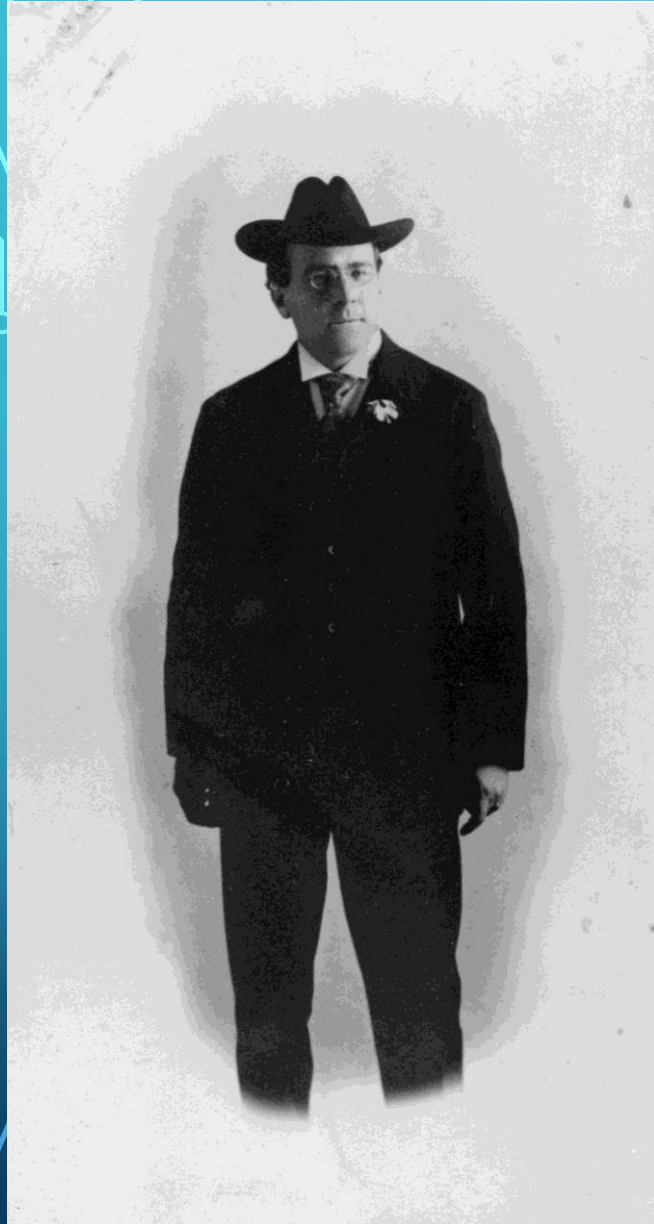
(Signed) 'Abdu'l-Bahá Abbas





In 1909 Pauline and Joseph were able to make a pilgrimage to meet Abdu'l-Baha in Acca. There they had many lessons and blessings and were able to establish an intimate relationship with their Beloved.

Pauline longed to share with Abdu'l-Baha her concerns about teaching among the African American community.



Pauline wrote, “Placing His hand on my husband’s shoulder and looking into his eyes with great power, He [Abdu’l-Baha] said, “May you be the means of uniting the colored and the white races.” Then He walked out and left us...My husband did all in his power to obey the command of Abdul-Baha, and eventually became much beloved by the colored people.”





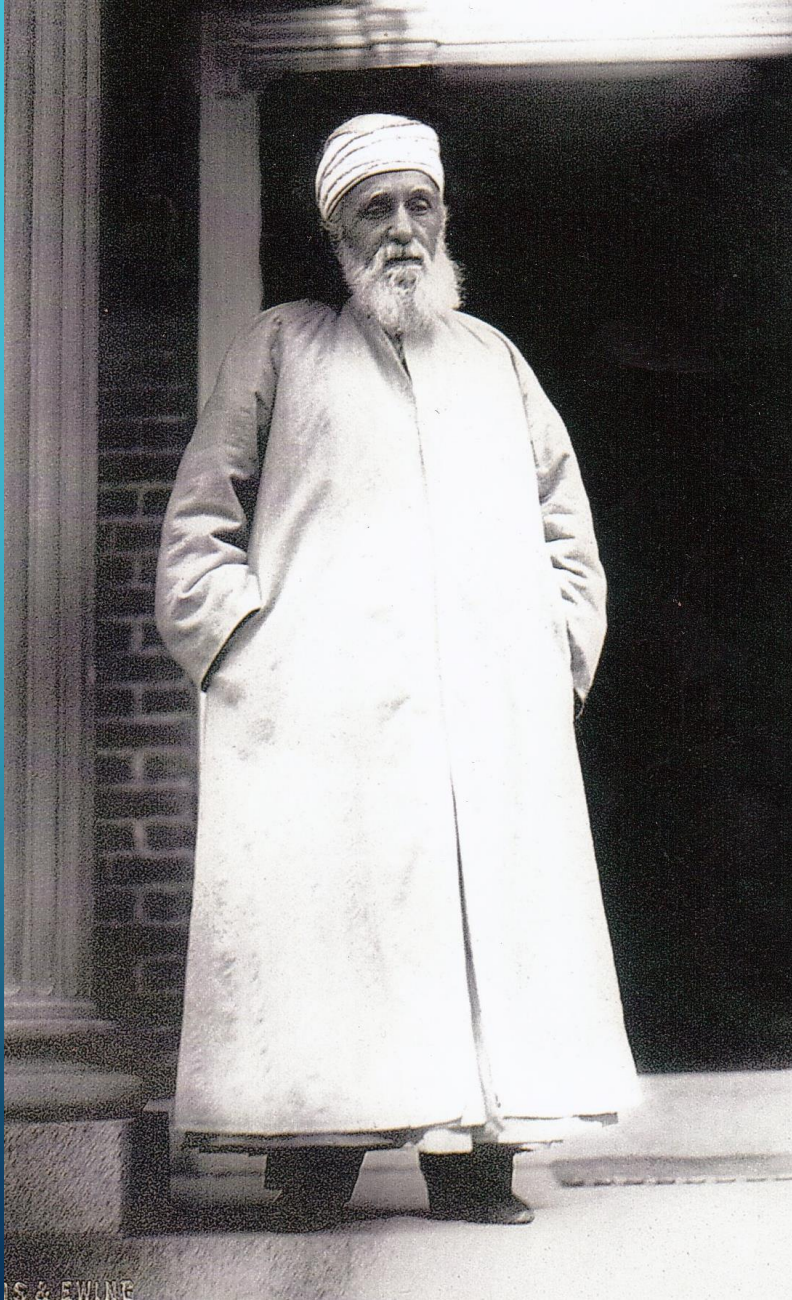
Pauline helped to establish a Baha'i Sunday School in DC. She became known as the Mother of Baha'i Sunday Schools in America.





Soon Pauline invited Black children to attend the classes. She enjoyed seeing the children play together without prejudice.

Abdu'l-Baha's trip to America 1912



For years the Baha'is had been asking Abdu'l-Baha to come to America but he told them he would not until they became more unified. He was always happiest when he was among a mixed racial group. And most of those places were the result of the Hannen's efforts.

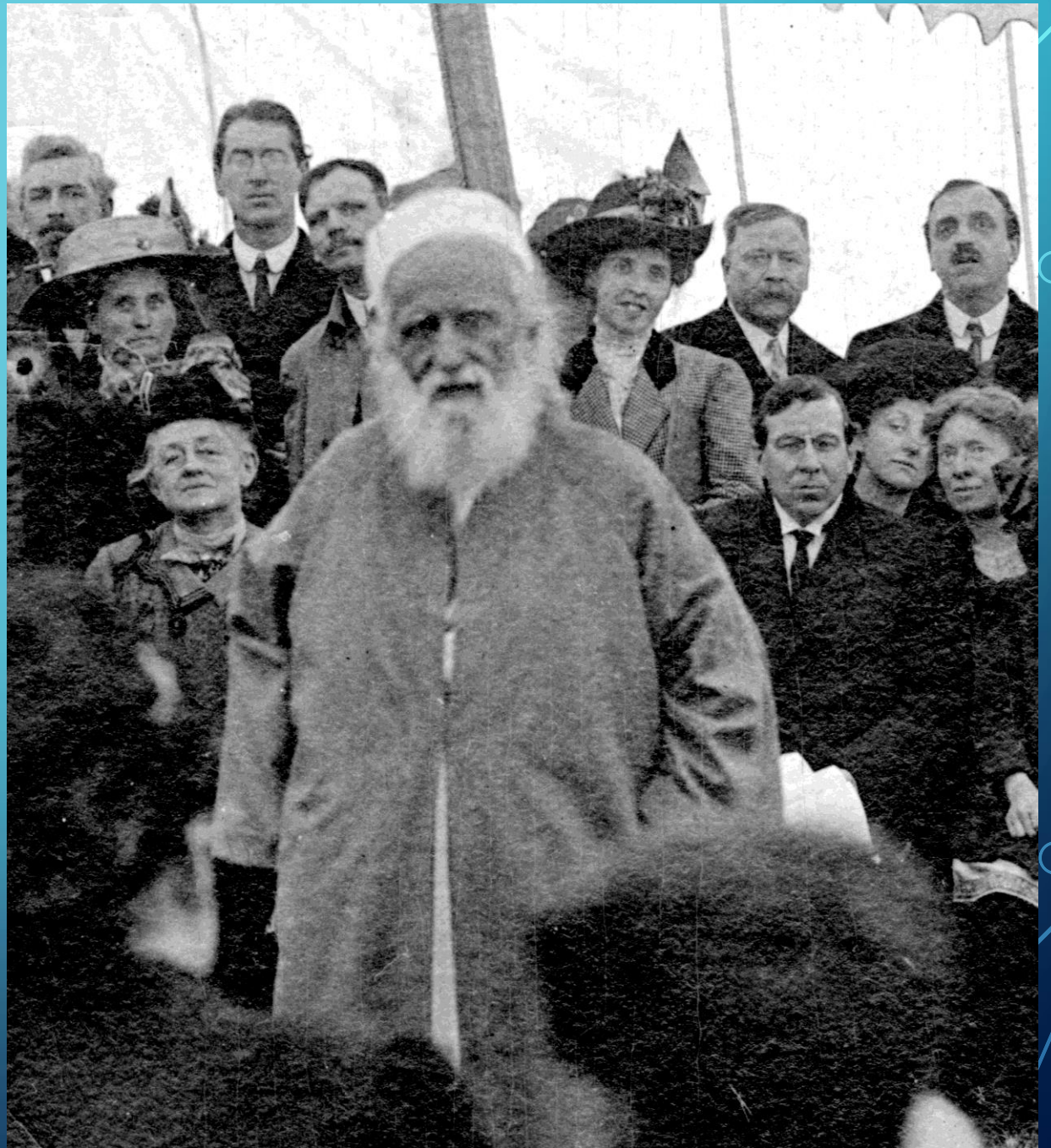
When Abdu'l-Baha's visited Washington DC he spoke at Howard University, the place where much of the teaching among the Black community had taken place.





It was the Cooks who arranged for Abdu'l-Baha's famous talk at Howard university which is commemorated in Washington DC every spring. There are interesting stories in the book about that event.

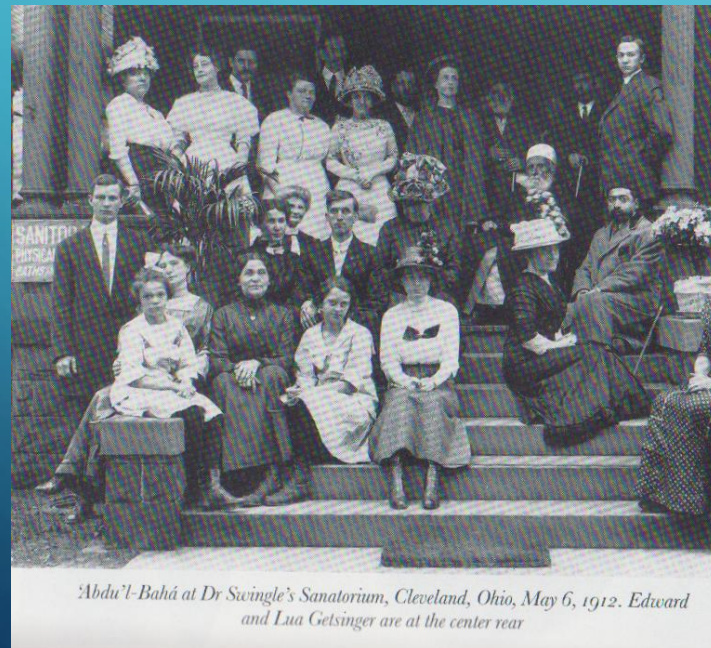
After spending time in Washington DC, Abdu'l-Baha went to Chicago to lay the cornerstone at the future site of the first Baha'i House of Worship.





Pauline loved to write about the personal stories like when Abdu'l-Baha spoke at their home and when He ate dinner in their home.

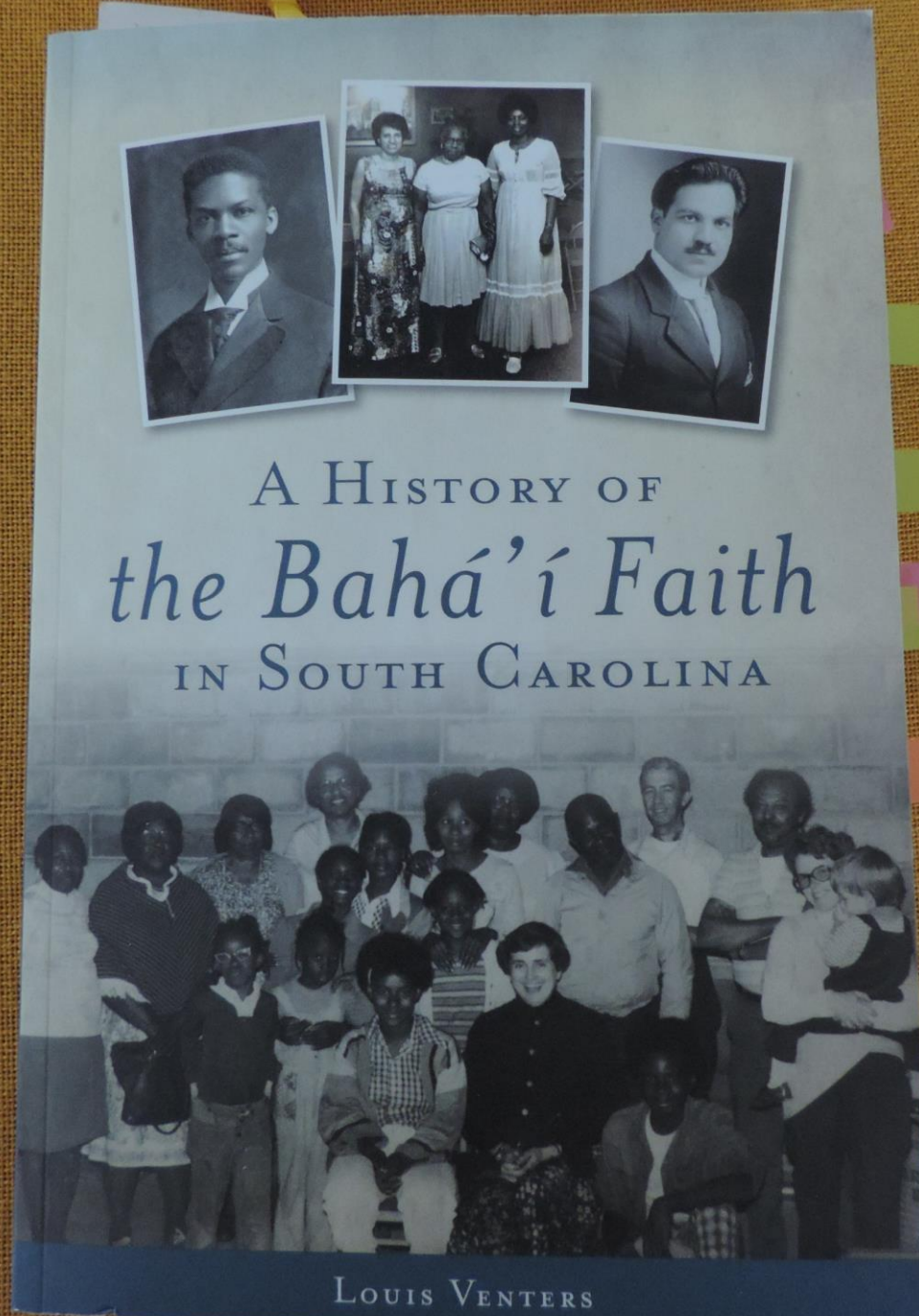
A few photos of Abdu'l-Baha in America.



Pauline and Fanny traveled to New York to say Good Bye to Abdu'l-Baha as he prepared to sail back to Europe in November.



Of all his many services to the Faith, Brother Joseph was best known for his secretarial skills. His great contributions in this field of service are a gift to all Baha'i historians everywhere. The Hannen Knobloch files in both Washington and Wilmette archives are the largest collection anywhere.



In this book published in 2019, Louis Venters tells about Joseph's cooperation with Louis Gregory while Louis was teaching in the South. He writes about Joseph coming there in 1914 to speak at a series of events in Augusta, Georgia, on invitation of Louis.



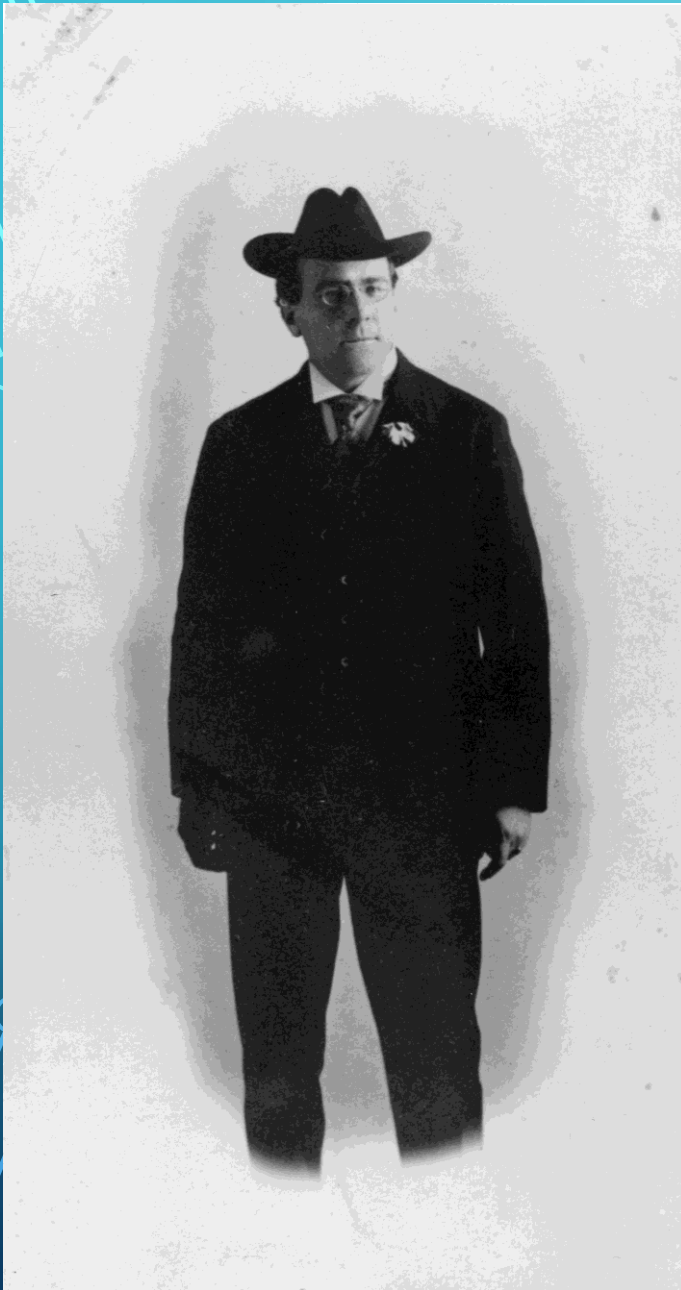
Carl Hannen and Mineola Barnitz grew up together in the Washington DC Baha'i Community. In 1916 they became engaged while Carl was serving in the Navy during WWI. They were married in 1918 and their union was blessed by Abdu'l-Baha with a Tablet.



Their first son Sohayl, named by Abdu'l-Baha was born in 1919.
Joseph was born in 1921 after his name sake had died in 1920.



Barbara was born in 1925 while grandma Pauline was in South Africa with Aunt Fanny "Dona".



In January of 1920, the American Baha'i Community sustained a very tragic loss when Joseph Hannen died from injuries obtained in a tragic automobile accident. Many authors concur that the loss of his great skills and services was a huge blow to the teaching work in the USA.

Shoghi Effendi later named Joseph a Disciple

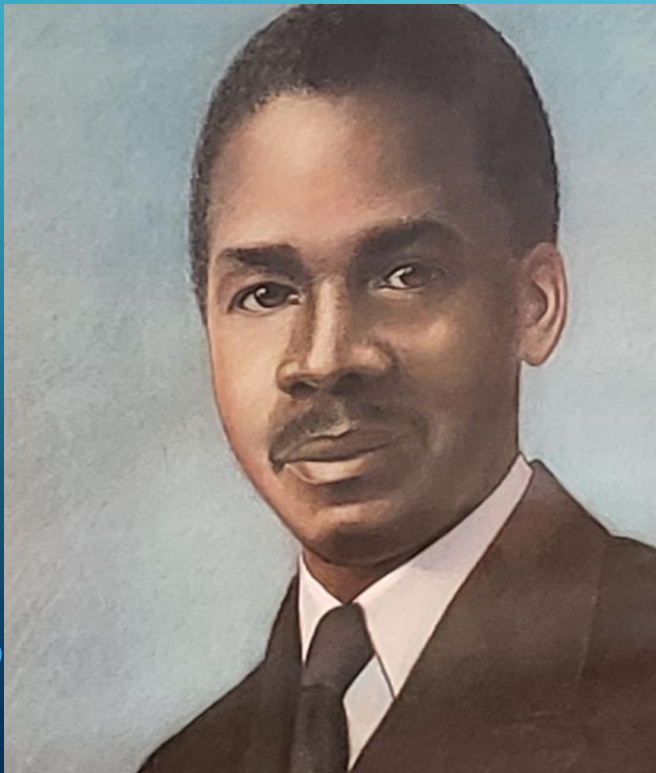


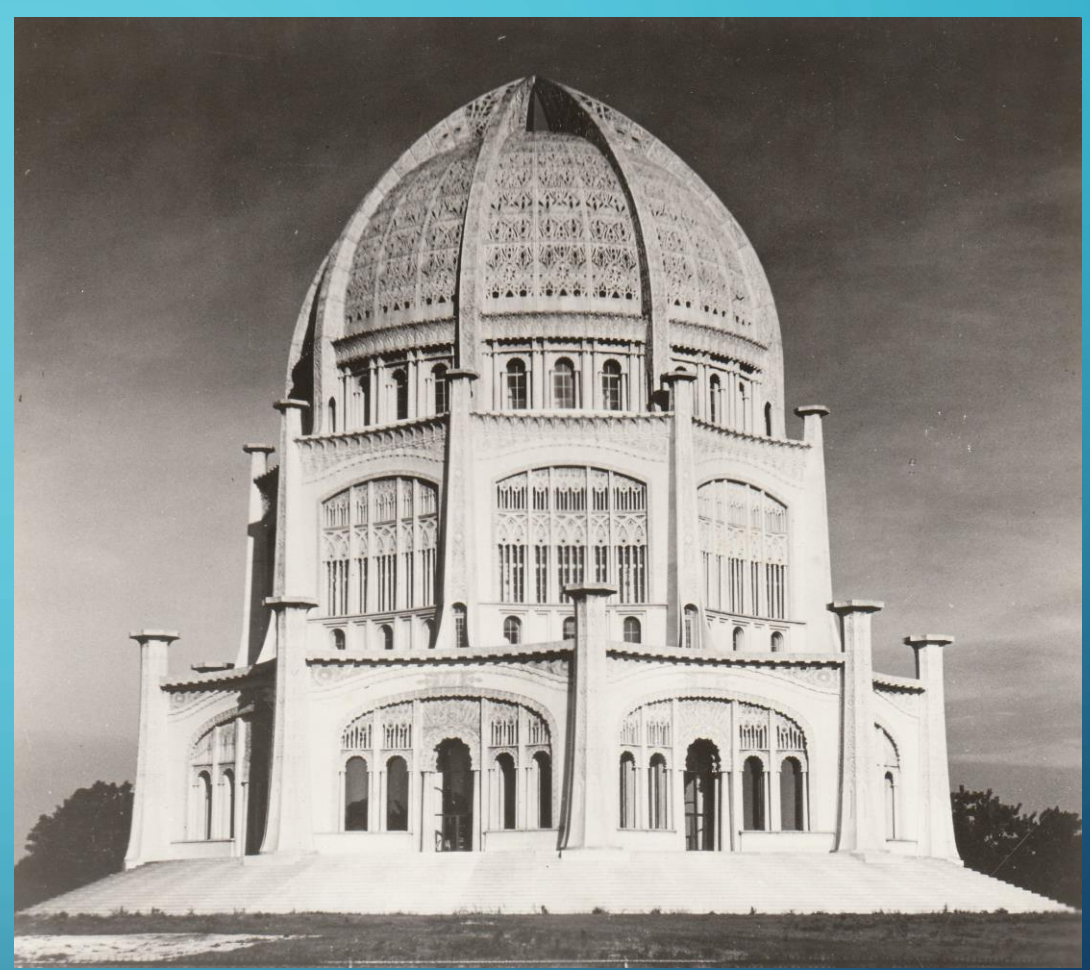


*The second Bahá'í race amity convention in America,
held in the auditorium of Central High School, Springfield, Massachusetts, 5-6 December 1921*

In 1921, Abdu'l-Baha called on the Baha'is in DC to organize a Race Amity Convention. Pauline worked with Louis Gregory and others to accomplish this.

Many of the souls the Hannens had led to the Faith were on the organizing committees of several Race Amity Conventions.

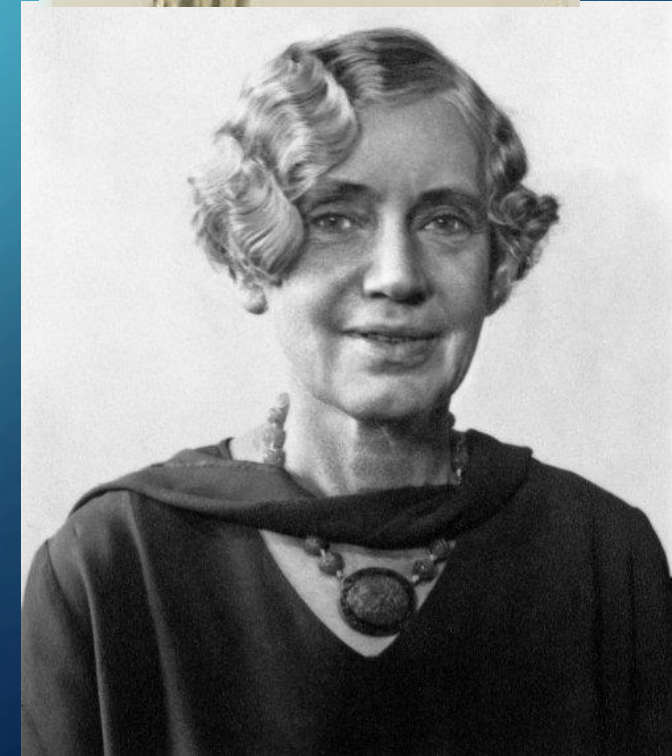




After Joseph's death, Alma was finally able to return to the States and reclaim her US Citizenship. For the next 25 years both she and Fanny traveled south to help build Baha'i Communities.



During the 1920's , after Joseph died, Fanny Knobloch fulfilled her dream to pioneer to South Africa. She took three separate but extended trips over a ten year period. First Martha Root and later Pauline joined her in 1925.





During the depression, Carl was offered a job at the House of Worship as a custodian. He and Ed Struven were the crew.



536 Sheridan



112 Linden Ave.



Left – Sohayl with youth in Wilmette area mid 1940s.



Bottom – youth conference with 3 Hannen youth 1940.



CENTRAL STATES BAHAI' YOUTH CONFERENCE
WILMETTE, ILLINOIS
JAN. 6-7 1940.



Sohayl married his sister Barb's best friend, Frances Ogle after WWII. She soon became a Baha'i. They had 5 children, 16 grandchildren and it keeps growing.





In 2001, three generations of Pauline and Joseph's descendants came together in Washington DC to dedicate a new tombstone for the Hannens and Knoblochs, who are buried in Prospect Hills Cemetery.





AFLAME WITH DEVOTION

*The Hannen and Knobloch Families
and the Early Days of the Bahá'í Faith in America*

JUDY HANNEN MOE



After 10 years of research, reviews, new additions and rewrites, the book is finally here. I hope all the key characters in it are happy with the end product.

Published in April of 2019.



The three Knobloch sisters will ever be connected in people's hearts as three very dedicated servants of Baha'u'llah and Abdu'l-Baha. He called them "three lighted candles." Pauline said of her family that she was honored to be born in "this family of spiritual dynamos".

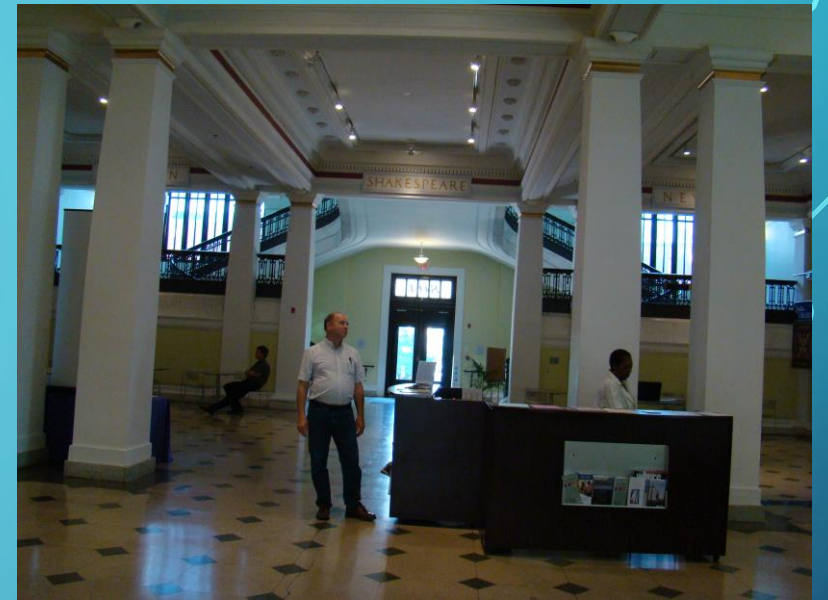
This picture hangs in the House where Baha'u'llah's remains are interred, forever near their Lord.



These family pictures from tin plate photos were taken between 1892 and 1896. Alma's fiancé and Paul Knobloch were still alive.



Lex's Tour in DC.





Hannen and Barnitz union.

Louis Gregory wrote of George Cook, “On many occasions he expressed with earnestness and enthusiasm his appreciation of the great principles enunciated by Bahá’u’lláh for the perfecting of the human race, and unhesitatingly offered his home for Bahá’í meetings.” p71



This building at Howard is named for George Cook.