

KNOBLOCH MEMORIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

Email Date: Thursday, June 29, 2000 1:24 PM
Local Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'i's of Washington, DC

Subject: Knobloch Family Memorial

"You are invited to a unique event that will pay tribute to a distinguished Baha'i family of Washington DC, the Knobloch family.

Pauline Knobloch was the first of the family to become a Baha'i (in 1903), followed by her mother Amalie and her sisters Fanny and Alma. Pauline's husband, the saintly Joseph Hannen, took notes of all Abdu'l-Bahá talks in Washington. It was through this devoted couple that Louis Gregory became a Baha'i, studying with them each week in their modest home.

Fanny was the first Baha'i teacher to go to South Africa, where she stayed for three years developing the first Baha'i settlements. She returned to the US because of ill health but later, at age 68, returned to South Africa. She lived her life out at the home of Carl Hannen in Wilmette.

Alma Knobloch went to Germany in 1907 to implant the Baha'i Faith there. Abdu'l-Bahá instructed her to remain as long as she could and she was there through the horrors of the first world war and beyond.

This family is buried in a family plot at Prospect Hill cemetery just north of Rhode Island Avenue and North Capitol Street in Washington, and about 20 of the descendants are flying in to hold a commemorative ceremony there on July 8th at 11 am. You are all invited to attend, and to come for a light lunch at the Baha'i Center to meet the descendants of this outstanding family.

Please join us on this occasion.

Sincerely,

The Local Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'i's of Washington, DC

Gravesite Location

To find the gravesite, follow the cemetery outer circle road to the right to its southern most point before it turns back into the cemetery. From there you will walk in and look for the Grey stone with 'Hannen' on one side and 'Knobloch' on the other, and the Nine Pointed Star (Baha'i symbol) placed their names. In 2000 Hannen family members planted a bush along side the gravestone that is now about waist high. This will help guide you to the exact location.

Sincerely,

Dr. Ardeshir B. Irani and wife, Mrs. Louise Shuman Irani

Knobloch Family Memorial¹

Prospect Hill Cemetery, 2201 North Capitol Street
Washington, District of Columbia, June 2000ⁱ



Opening

Welcome to Prospect Hill Cemetery where the Master [Abdu'l-Bahá] instructed "the Believers in that City [Washington, DC] in which the Maid-Servant [Amalie Knobloch] is buried, ... go to her Tomb and read this 'Visiting Tablet'."

Visiting Tablet

[This] Visiting Tablet [is] Revealed for the Attracted Maid-Servant of God, Mrs. Amalie Knobloch, who has Ascended to the Kingdom of God!

He is God! O, thou Pure Spirit, Amalie Knobloch! Although thou didst soar away from this terrestrial world, yet thou didst enter into the immeasurable, illumined Universe of the Almighty. While in this life thou didst hear the Divine Call, beheld the light of Truth, became alive by the Breaths of the Holy Spirit, tasted the sweetness of the Love of God, became the Maid-Servant of the Lord of Hosts and the object of the Bounties of His Highness the Desired one.

Thou didst lead the erring ones into the Path of Truth and bestowed a portion of the Heavenly Food to those who are deprived. Thou didst consecrate the days of thy

¹ The original document was slightly edited for clarity and annotated for historical reference to shed light on the early development of Baha'i community life in Washington, DC; and in particular, how Baha'is were able to advance race relations in the Nations Capital. See: *Footnotes and Endnotes*.

existence to the Service of His Highness the Clement and spent thy time in the diffusion of the Fragrances of the Paradise of Abha. There are many souls perfumed and many spirits illumined through thy services!

O, thou divine, beloved Maid-Servant! Although thou didst disappear from the mortal eyes, yet thou didst train and educate thy daughters, each of whom has arisen to serve the Kingdom like unto thee and is engaged in the guidance of the souls. In the Assembly of wisdom they are the lighted candles; they sacrifice their lives in the Path of God; they are gardening in thy orchard and irrigating thy rose-garden. Happy is thy condition, for thou art enjoying Eternal Life in the Kingdom of Everlasting Glory and hast left in this world kind and loving Remembrances.

Happy are those souls who visit thy luminous resting-place and through thy commemoration receive and acquire spiritual Powers!

Legacy

An eloquent testimony was written on the life of Mrs. Amalie Knobloch in the April 1910 issue of *Star of the West*ⁱ, a national Baha'i newsletter. It announced in three paragraphs the location of the 'Institution of Baha'i Sunday Schools' which Amalie's daughter, Pauline, had introduced to North America, and the [racial] integrated Community Feast which she herself had personally labored for together with her family, considered as true pioneers of this work in North America. Finally, a visitation tablet received from 'Abdu'l-Baha which all Baha'is who visit Washington are to read to ensure that her legacy [based on her understanding demonstrated efforts of the 'Oneness of God' and the 'Oneness of Mankind'², and the importance of raising a family to serve the Baha'i Faith] live on forever.

Baha'i Meetings

Regular meetings are held on Friday evenings at 8:15, and Sunday School at 11:15, at the Gareissen Studio, 1219 Connecticut Avenueⁱⁱⁱ, permanent address of the Bahá'í Assembly, or individual members can be reached through Post Office Box 192.

Baha'i Unity Feast

A notable feature of the Unity Feast of April 9, is that our colored believers and friends are to be invited to participate, the plan to hold every fourth Unity Feast in this manner, being put into effect on this date.

Visitors

The Visiting Tablet revealed by Abdul-Baha for Mrs. Amalie Knobloch has been read over her grave by a large number of the Baha'is of Washington on different occasions.

March 13, a party of the young people accompanied Mr. Roy C. Wilhelm^{iv} to the tomb.

March 27, Mr. and Mrs. Kinney, Dr. Fareed, and Mrs. Lua Getsinger^v were visitors, with the Sunday School children completing the party.

The obedience of the friends to this Command to read the Visiting Tablet is notable and a great blessing attends this act.

However, the first reading of the Tablet was made by her Baha'i teacher, Lua Getsinger, on March 27. Lua was affectionately known as "our teacher" to the Hannen's, and no doubt to other DC Baha'is as well, such as Mrs. Parsons^{vi} and Mr. Gregory^{vii}. An example of her teachings are found in her April 1905 Washington DC talk on service:

² Both are core themes in Baha'i writings.

“None of us are sufficiently single-minded! We wish to serve in the Cause of God, but we particularly wish to do it in our own way after our own fashion, and when it suits our convenience, and that is just what God won't have. Once engaging in His Service, we must work in accordance with His Way, after His fashion, and when it shall please Him”.

Letters from the Master to Mrs. Amalie Knobloch:

July 1906:

O thou maid servant of God! Consider not merit and aptitude! Thou shouldst rather consider the favors and benefits of the Blessed perfection.

When we think of self, we find that merit and aptitude are lost. When we regard Truth, we discover that the favors of God are infinite and not conditional upon merit and aptitude.

Observe how the small seed grows and thrives by means of vernal showers, the heat of the heavenly sun and the zephyrs until it grows to a fruitful tree. Now see where the former state of the seed is, and the present state of the stem, leaves, blossoms and the wonderful fruits! Consequently the Divine gifts make a sea out of a drop of water! And make out of one seed a heavenly tree.

December 1906:

This is a great day and this period is the period of the Sovereignty of the Most Glorious Lord. It is the world of illumination and the time of the Manifestation of Mysteries. The Treasury of the Kingdom is visible and the wealth of the realm of Might is attainable. The Everlasting Glory is ready and the Life Eternal is evident and manifest. Now is the time, now is the occasion, when thou mayest guide and educate souls with a shining face, with a heart like unto a Rose-garden; with an exulting mind and nostrils perfumed by the fragrances of the Holy Spirit. This Cause is incommensurable and this gift is resplendent. If thou become assisted therewith the confirmation of the kingdom will uninterruptedly descend upon thee and thou wilt behold clearly and manifestly the Breaths of the Holy Spirit.

After her passing, and after the Visitation Tablet [was revealed,] which was written in February, [the following tribute was penned by Abdu'l-Bahá]

March 1910:

Through the Maid Servants of God, Lua and Mirza Ahmad

To the friends and maidservants of the Merciful who were assembled together on the 14th of October, 1909, at the memorial service of Mrs. Amalie Knobloch, the one who has ascended to the Kingdom of God.

Upon them be Baha El Abha!

He Is God!

O Thou Almighty! O Thou Forgiver!

*These souls have ascended spiritually to Thy kingdom, are begging Thy Bounty and Favor and are in need of forgiveness and providence.
O God!*

*Thy Mercy is unlimited and Thy Favor is all-encircling! Immerse Thou these souls in the Ocean of Thy Generosity and Compassion. Shower upon them the Rain of Thy Mystery!
Thou art the Giver! The Generous, the Pardoner and the Clement!*

O ye friends and maid servants of the Merciful!

Thank ye God that ye become assisted to be present at the Memorial Service of the Bird of the Rose-garden of Immortality, Mrs. Amalie Knobloch, chanted the supplications, prayed and communed at the threshold of God, pleaded forgiveness for many souls and read Tablets and Heavenly Verses. All the inhabitants of the Kingdom of Abha were made happy thereby and became engaged in mentioning you.

You must never forget the beloved maid servant of God, Mrs. Amalie Knobloch; always remember her and supplicate for her inexhaustible bounties.

Upon ye be Baha El Abha!

Amalie Knobloch

Mrs. Amalie Knobloch's chief accomplishments were the raising of three illustrious daughters firmly in the Faith: Fanny, Alma and Pauline. She was German-Lutheran^{viii} in background, before encountering the Faith through her married daughter Pauline Hannen. Amalie became Baha'i sometime in late 1905 and after writing her belief to 'Abdu'l-Bahá she received the reply shown on the facing Bahá'í page addressed to Amalie Knobloch on July 25, 1906 from Abdu'l-Bahá. Not half a year later 'Abdu'l-Bahá continued guiding this family through its matriarch, addressed to Mrs. Amalie Knobloch, from 'Abdu'l-Bahá, December 9, 1906.

With her encouragement, all three of her daughters would pioneer to help introduce the faith to other races of people in North America, Africa and Europe. 'Abdu'l-Bahá in 1910 blessed Mrs. Knobloch with two tablets at her passing from this world. The first tablet if read in her commemoration gives and bestows spiritual Powers to the Faithful much as she did in her lifetime to her daughters, the early D.C. community and indirectly to the world. In the visitation tablet the Master extols "three lighted candles", the daughters of Mrs. Amalie Knobloch who are also buried here, adding further blessings to this sacred spot.

Fanny Knobloch

Fanny Knobloch was born in Bautzen, Saxony, Germany³ on December 22, 1859. Fanny Knobloch was taught the faith by her sister Pauline. Pauline taught Fanny the faith in the following way: She would visit her sister with her two sons every Sunday afternoon to discuss the Baha'i Faith and its interpretation of Bible Scripture⁴. Fanny was sometimes impatient with Pauline and this new religion. One day Pauline came and shared something she had learned from Mirza Abu'l-Fadl⁵ about the miracle of the loaves and fishes. The Baha'i explanation excited Fanny and she attended the meetings from that day on. For two years she studied until she became a Baha'i in 1904. She became a Baha'i and became an eager and ardent teacher of the Faith.

In 1908 the three sisters and Joseph made an inspiring pilgrimage to Akka^{ix} to see 'Abdu'l-Bahá. Fanny described Haifa this way, "In our small hotel we occupied a second floor room, one door of which opened on to a small balcony. That night the glorious rays of a full moon revealed the white crested waves of the sea, rolling upon the sands of the valley of Akka. The minaret of the mosque⁶ gleamed white above the wall of the Prison City⁷. In the distance was Mt. Carmel⁸, illumined, while close at hand great rows of tall palms cast weird shadows upon the road."

She loved the Holy family.⁹ She met Munirih Khanum^x, the wife of 'Abdu'l-Bahá and the young Shoghi Effendi^{xi}. She described meeting Bahiyyih Khanum¹⁰ who is Abdu'l-Bahá sister. "A Strange and unknown feeling possessed me while in the presence of Bahiyyih Khanum, the greatest Holy Leaf. Possibly it can be described as a feeling of awe, a feeling very unfamiliar to me. However, later, I realized that I had been in the presence of the greatest, the most holy woman in the history of the world, the Greatest Holy Leaf! The daughter of the manifestation of God, Baha'u'llah."

They stayed nine days in Akka. When they left they wept. Abdu'l-Bahá said, "You are weeping? Do not weep! Many friends weep because they wish to remain longer."

Fannie said, "No, we have received so many blessings and are eager to go out and share them with all who are ready to listen."

³ Bautzen is a hilltop town in eastern Saxony, Germany and administrative center of the eponymous district, the largest district in Saxony in size of area.

⁴ The practice at that time was to relate the Baha'i teachings to biblical prophecy concerning the second coming of Jesus the Christ.

⁵ Mirzá Muḥammad, or Mirzá Abu'l-Faḍl-i-Gulpáygání, (July 1844, Iran – January 21, 1914, Cairo, Egypt) was the foremost Bahá'í scholar who helped spread the Bahá'í Faith in Egypt, Turkmenistan, and the United States. He is one of the few Apostles of Bahá'u'lláh who never actually met Bahá'u'lláh.

⁶ The el-Jazzar Mosque, also known as the White Mosque, is located on el-Jazzar Street inside the walls of the old city of Acre. It is named after the Ottoman Bosnian governor Ahmad Pasha el-Jazzar who designed it and oversaw its construction. He also is known for defeating Napoleon Bonaparte at the Siege of Acre in 1799.

⁷ The term relates to the time of the British Mandate that came into effect on September 29, 1923. The citadel in the old city of Acre was used as a prison in which many Arabs were imprisoned as criminals for participating in the 1936–1939 Arab revolt in Palestine. Approximately 140 were executed.

⁸ Mount Carmel is considered a sacred place for Bahá'ís around the world, and is the location of the Bahá'í World Centre and the Shrine of the Báb.

⁹ Ásíyih Khánúm (1820 – 1886) was the wife of Bahá'u'lláh, the founder of the Bahá'í Faith. She is viewed by Bahá'ís as the paragon of a devoted mother and wife. She is also known by her titles of Navváb, the Most Exalted Leaf, Búyúk Khánúm or Hadrat-i-Khánúm. Khánúm is a title usually given to a Persian lady and is equivalent to madam. Bahá'u'lláh and Ásíyih Khánúm were known as the 'Father of the Poor' and the 'Mother of Consolation' for their extraordinary generosity and regard for the impoverished. Bahá'u'lláh, along with Ásíyih Khánúm and her children, are regarded as the Bahá'í holy family. -*Wikipedia*

¹⁰ Bahiyyih Khánúm (1846 – July 15, 1932) was the only daughter of Bahá'u'lláh, the founder of the Bahá'í Faith, and Ásíyih Khánúm. She was born with the given name Fatimih Sultan, and was entitled "Varaqiy-i-'Ulyá" or "Greatest Holy Leaf". Bahá'ís believe that Bahiyyih Khánúm is the outstanding heroine of the Bahá'í dispensation.

Abdu'l-Bahá smiled and said, "If you but knew the value of these days, you would not eat, you would not sleep, you would not walk. You would run and give all the Glad Tidings."

On the way home they visited Miraza Abu'l-Fadl in Cairo.^{xiii} He was their dear and beloved teacher in Washington, D.C. He gave Fannie a gift of his prayer beads which he said he receive from 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

At home they continued the work that Abdu'l-Bahá had inspired them to do. They worked hard for racial unity within the Baha'i community.

By 1909, in Washington DC, Lua Getsinger, the Hannen's and Fanny's sisters, Alma and Pauline, all of whom were well aware of the implications of racial unity in the Baha'i teachings, were already participating in integrated meetings, both in public places and in private homes.

On April 9th 1910, the first ever Nineteen-day Feast¹¹, where both races were united was held with Fanny Knobloch acting as hostess and the speaker was Louis Gregory. Joseph Hannen described it in Baha'i News as "wonderfully blessed and successful" and noted that "several leading men and women of the colored race attended (*To Move the World* pg. 33)."

After teaching in DC in the early 1900s, she was soon to be off pioneering in 1920. She was instrumental to the opening of the South African nation to the Faith of Baha'u'llah. The same year the ANC [Africa National Congress] was born in South Africa¹², the first two native South Africans Mr. And Mrs. William Fraetas became Baha'is in New York in 1912 upon hearing 'Abdu'l-Bahá speak. Miss Fanny Knobloch settled in Cape Town during 1920, where England's Agnes Cook had initiated the faith nine years earlier. The fruits of her labor, assisted occasionally by her sister Pauline Hannen from Washington D.C. and the historic assistance of Martha Root, resulted by 1929 in thee small groups of Baha'is in the Western Cape and three more in and around Johannesburg. The very first local Baha'i Assembly was formed in Pretoria in 1925.^{xiii}

Fanny came home once in 1928 because of illness, but returned [to South Africa] at the age of sixty-eight to remain for two more years. Finally, the difficulties of old age forced her to return to the United States where she lived with her nephew, Carl Hannen, and then in a nursing home. She was often in great pain. She died on Dec 9th 1949. She was the first born of Mrs. Amalie Knobloch, and the last to die.

Tribute

Shoghi Effendi paid tribute to Fanny Knobloch at her passing some 25 years later on December 16, 1950.¹³

"Grieve at passing of beloved, distinguished, exemplary pioneer of Faith, Fanny Knobloch. Memory of her notable services imperishable, her reward in Abhá Kingdom bountiful, assured, everlasting."

Burial

Fanny Knobloch is buried in Prospect Hills Cemetery in Washington D.C. She passed away in 1949. In 1930 she and her sister Alma lived at 624 23rd Street N.W. The building has since been torn down, likely around the time of the family's reunion at her gravesite in July 2000.

¹¹ The Baha'i Nineteen Day Feast is a regular community gathering that occur on the first day of each month of the Bahá'i calendar (generally nineteen days apart from each other). It consists of a Devotional, Administrative, and Social part. The devotional part of the Nineteen Day Feast is of a non-congregational nature since the Faith has no clergy.

¹² January 8, 1912

¹³ Correction: 14 Dec 1949. Ref. 'Citadel of Faith, IN MEMORIAM', page 166.

Pauline Knobloch Hannen

Pauline was born on August 29, 1874 in Washington DC and raised in the South, in Wilmington, North Carolina^{xiv}, she “*had known of the frightful retribution visited by whites on Negroes for offenses of which I assumed they must be guilty.*” She was destined to go on and by a pioneer in removing America’s racial problems by spreading Baha'u'llah's teachings amongst both races. She married Joseph Hannen on November 8, 1893 and she gave birth to two sons Carl in 1895 and Paul in 1900. She also gave birth to a Baha’i Family through Carl which is now six generations Baha’i in America, likely the oldest successively Baha’i Family in the nation.

Pauline (Knobloch) Hannen was the First Believer of an illustrious line of Baha’i Servants, and a ground-breaking prime mover behind the teaching of the African-Descent Americans in Washington D.C. She also participated in important travel-teaching to South Africa while that community was still in its infancy.

Pauline Hannen, was married to Joseph Hannen, and was tiny and young, and looked even younger. Mirza Abu’l Fadl and Ali Kuli Khan had moved in 1902 to a house between Scott Circle and Thirteenth Street on Massachusetts Avenue, where Mirza had rooms on the second floor. This little Mrs. Hannen would come upstairs in 1902 to be taught the Baha’i Faith, leaving her baby in its carriage downstairs, outside the front door! (Innocent days, those!) She visited a number of times, and sat quietly while Mirza explained the Bible prophecies about the coming of the Lord. She just sat and listened, accepted a cup of tea from Mirza's hands, waited until they were done speaking, and then said goodbye, went back downstairs and pushed the baby home, she came back day after day continuing this same routine.

One day Khan said to Mirza, “Does this little girl understand what we are talking about? Is she really interested?” They both decided that since she kept coming back, she must be interested, although she said nothing. Impatient, Khan made up his mind to find out for himself whether she was receiving the Message or not. On her next visit he simply asked her, was she satisfied with the explanations or did she need more answers to become convinced? She suddenly beamed at them. “How could there be anything more wonderful than this great Faith?” she said. “After you have received this, what else in the world would you wish to possess?”

As was the custom, Pauline wrote to 'Abdu'l-Bahá declaring her Faith, and 'Abdu'l-Bahá reply was translated by Ali Kuli Khan in May 1903 as read on the Baha page.

This remarkable woman, with courage and conviction took the Faith to her devoted Lutheran family and husband. She and her husband and family served the Cause all through their lives. The continuing progress of her teaching won her 'Abdu'l-Bahá favor, He wrote her again in 1908 shortly before she went on Pilgrimage. They went on pilgrimage to the Holy Land in 1909. Not only did she bring the Knoblochs (her 2 sisters and mother) and Joseph (her husband) into the faith but her relatives the Barnitz family of Washington D.C. as well. Two of her most outstanding accomplishments were the introduction of the Faith to Louis Gregory and Mrs. Pocahontas Pope both among the first of their respective races to become Baha’i in America.

Pauline Hannen’s most important contribution to the Washington community was made in her special pioneering effort to teach African-Descent Americans. Amidst the completely segregated Washington DC (in 1912 there was but one restaurant which would serve both races together and the owners were foreigners), she and her husband Joseph, opened their home to African-Descent Americans in a hope to pass them the message of Unity and Oneness of the Baha’i Faith. With limited writings from the Faith, they well understood the spirit of this principle and motive force of the Faith of God in this age.

One Book of guidance they did have was the Hidden Words of Baha’u’llah, in which it is written: “*O children of men! Know ye not why We created you all from the same dust?*”

That no one should exalt himself over the other...Since We have created you all from one same substance it is incumbent on you to be even as one soul, to walk with he 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 maybe made manifest."

Pauline's story of awakening to the teaching of African-Descent Americans is as remarkable as her learning the Baha'i Faith. Pauline bent down and tied an African-Descent American woman's untied shoelace. Pauline said the woman was astonished and all the people who saw thought she must be crazy. This small but important event was a turning point for Pauline and it was then that she decided to turn her teaching efforts towards the African-Descent Americans. She began teaching by telling her black washer woman, Miss Carrie York, who accepted the Faith very quickly. Pauline also told her sister's seamstress, Pocahontas Pope, who was also Black skinned, and Pope too accepted the New Cause. First these two women held meetings at their homes to introduce the Faith to their black friends in hopes that they too would accept the Faith as they had. Then this was the time the Hannen's did the daring act of letting the blacks into their own home. Their bravery was rewarded for by July 1908 fifteen African-Descent Americans had become Baha'is in Washington D.C.

It was through their tireless efforts, such as teaching [later designated] Hand of the Cause of God, Louis Gregory continuously for 18 months which nurtured him into the faith, and caused him to speak very highly of Pauline. Louis's writing expresses both Pauline's love, leadership and wisdom in Teaching the African-Descent American population:

Describing his first Baha'i meeting he states: "The only occupant of the room when I entered was Mrs. Pauline Hannen. She gave me an unusually cordial welcome... told me that I would hear something very wonderful, though difficult. It would afford me an opportunity similar to that which would have been mine had I lived on earth as a contemporary of Jesus Christ. She urged me to get a full understanding of the message of today, that through it a work would be possible that would bless humanity. She kindly gave me three pieces of Baha'i literature, the Hidden Words, Dealy Book and a small tract written by Charles Mason Remey. Mrs. Hannen invited me to another meeting. It was held at the home of the two colored friends [Miss Millie York and Miss Nellie Gray], among poor people. Mrs. Hannen was the teacher and her loving service was impressive. She then invited me to come to her home where I would meet either herself or her husband for further teaching. Mr. Joseph H. Hannen thus became my teacher, a service in which he was aided by his wife. Over a period of more than eighteen months I went to their home on Sunday evenings. During this period Mr. And Mrs. Hannen went on their pilgrimage to the Holy Land. As they were my sole connection with the Faith, my interest waned during their absence. A long time afterwards I learned that they had kindly mentioned me to the Master who had instructed them to continue teaching me, assuring them that I would become a believer and an advocate of the teachings. Upon their return they remade the connection. Through the very unusual kindness of these dear friends my mental veils were cleared away and the light of assurance mercifully appeared within when they had taught me the Greatest Name and how to pray. I became a confirmed believer about June, 1909 and thereafter cooperated with the Hannen's in arranging meetings and trying to give everyone the message. Misses Alma and Fanny Knobloch with Mr. And Mrs. Hannen were pioneers in the early days in spreading the message among the colored people of Washington. Among those they were the means of bringing to the attitude of acceptance were Misses York and Gray, Mrs. Pocahontas Pope and Mrs. Rhoda Turner. During my early days of investigation I rarely attended a meeting but went to the home of the Hannen's where my friends and I were always welcome."

With Louis in the Faith, Pauline was able to work with him as a member of the Race Amity Committee. The committee would organize meetings and activities primarily for the purpose of having different races in the same place at the same time.

Louis Gregory wrote of them in Baha'i World, Volume 8,

"These two rare souls were united in service, teaching every rank, color, class and creed, amid rural scenes and in many cities, in Washington, where they resided, from the lowly

prisoners in jail to the social leaders. How healing to the sick; how consoling to the distressed; how enlightening to children and to those of mature years; how harmonizing an influence; how self-sacrificing; how ceaselessly active! Their southern origin, freedom from prejudice, warmth of heart and knowledge of the Word of God, admirably fitted them for the stupendous and glorious task of harmonizing the races, assigned them by the Master. They visited Abdu'l-Bahá and the Holy Shrines in 1909."

Pauline's contribution to the Washington DC community did not stop with Race Unity. Pauline also had a love for children and youth. It was for this reason she began Baha'i Sunday school classes. After a short time she was able to have the two interests mix, to begin having racially integrated children, youth, and adult classes. Pauline had received items for teaching children during their pilgrimage to Akka in 1909. Pauline also became chairwomen of a committee for the collection, organization and distribution of all material pertaining to the education of children within the USA Baha'i community.

"Mr. And Mrs. Hannen will be considered the parents of the Baha'i Sunday school idea in America." 'Abdu'l-Bahá wrote to Pauline concerning the Sunday school classes. He told her to put great importance on the classes so "day by day it's circle may be enlarged." What he meant was that he wanted the classes to become more well known, assuring her that it would have great results. With confidence in what 'Abdu'l-Bahá told her she continued with fervor and determination. Because of Pauline's work the Washington DC Sunday school classes were the best organized in America between 1900-1912. 'Abdu'l-Bahá wrote, "Indeed the sweet melody of the pupils of Mrs. Hannen gladdened the hearts of the people of the Supreme Concourse."

Pauline Hannen is buried in Prospect Hills Cemetery in Washington D.C. after she passed away in 1939.

The year before Joseph passed on to the next Kingdom, 'Abdu'l-Bahá sang the praises of Pauline and Joseph:

"O ye two heralds of the Divine Kingdom! Verily ye have consecrated your time and your lives to the service of the Kingdom. Day and night, your highest wish is confined to the guidance of people and praise be to God, ye are confirmed and assisted in the promulgation of Divine Teachings. This supreme favor is pregnant with momentous results and this seed which ye have sown in the garden of Reality shall yield an exuberant result. Every seed shall yield a teeming harvest and every bough shall turn into a thriving, fruitful tree."

Alma Knobloch

On July 31 1912 at Mrs. Parson's summer house in Dublin Maine, the Master told a story of Alma: "Anyone whom I send to a place is confirmed; anyone. One of them is Miss Alma Knobloch. God has confirmed her. In the beginning she was teaching in Stuttgart. Now she is in Leipzig." This story would be repeated by the Master in a Tablet He revealed for all the Believers in the United States and Canada, on April 11 1916:

"Likewise Miss Knobloch traveled alone to Germany. To what a great extent she became confirmed!" This was followed with one of the Master's most quoted statements "Therefore, know ye of a certainty that whosoever arises in this day to diffuse the divine fragrances, the cohorts of the Kingdom of God shall confirm him and the bestowals and the favors of the Blessed Perfection shall encircle him. O that I could travel, even though on foot and in the utmost poverty, to these regions, and, raising the call of "Yá Bahá'u'l-Abhá" in cities, villages, mountains, deserts and oceans, promote the divine teachings! This, alas, I cannot do. How intensely I deplore it! Please God, ye may achieve it."

The Master's Grandson Shoghi Effendi immortalized Alma in his history of the Baha'i Faith God Passes By: "Alma Knobloch . . . hoisted the standard of the Faith in Germany, and carried its light to Austria." At the request of Abdu'l-Bahá, she pioneered to Germany in 1907. One of the great early teachers of the Faith in Europe, she helped to bring the Hand of the Cause Hermann Grossman into the Faith, as explained in "Hermann Grossman, Hand of the Cause of God, A Life for the Faith."

Alma Knobloch became a Baha'i in 1903 with her sisters, Pauline and Fanny and her mother, Amalie Knobloch. The family became a lighted torch in the Washington DC area and then they carried the torch throughout the world. Alma Knobloch was the Faith's first female pioneer from Washington D.C and to teach the cause beyond the United States. Because of Fanny's generosity her sister, Alma was able to pioneer in Germany from 1907 until 1920. 'Abdu'l-Bahá had sent two letters before she left encouraging her pioneering decision.

Alma left for Germany in July 1907. Alma was welcomed in Stuttgart and invited to homes where afternoon and evening events were exciting gatherings for Baha'is and non-Baha'is as well. In the Baha'i World Volume 9, it says that, "Alma worked incessantly, always effacing her own strong personality and accenting the Spirit of Baha'u'llah."

Many young people became Baha'is, formed study groups, and began to correspond with the Holy Family in the Holy Land. Local Spiritual Assemblies were formed in Stuttgart, Esslingen, Zuffenhausen, Leipzig and Gera. 'Abdu'l-Bahá encouraged the translation of the Writings into German and the Baha'is waited eagerly for each new publication. Concerts and assemblies were held where the highlight of the evening was a speaker who introduced the Faith which grew steadily.

Just as she co-pioneered racial unity in North America, she did so too in Europe, when she greeted her sister's D.C. friend Louis Gregory shortly after his pilgrimage to the Holy Land in 1911. At 'Abdu'l-Bahá request Mr. Gregory visited Germany in April 1911 after his pilgrimage. The German Baha'i community had been established only a few years earlier. It had grown largely through the efforts of Miss Alma Knobloch, who had settled in Stuttgart in 1907. Miss Knobloch assured his welcome in a land where non-European minorities were few and where, scarcely more than twenty years later, racialism, which Shoghi Effendi has termed one of the "chief idols in the desecrated temple of mankind," was to be enshrined by the Nazis in their country's political philosophy. The German Baha'is lovingly welcomed him and held a reception in his honor where he, in their words "told the assembled friends much that was interesting."

When war was declared in 1914 Alma stayed and suffered with her German brothers and sisters. Before Alma returned to the United States, she visited Austria, Switzerland,

London and Paris. She taught wherever she went and wrote letters to all her spiritual children.

Shoghi Effendi provides a beautiful testimonial to Alma's work in 'God Passes By':

“Simultaneously, travelers and teachers, emerging triumphantly from the storms of tests and trials which had threatened to engulf their beloved Cause, arose, of their own accord, to reinforce and multiply the strongholds of the Faith already established. Centers were opened in the cities of Washington... and in other places. Audacious pioneers, whether as visitors or settlers, eager to spread the new born Evangel beyond the confines of their native country, undertook journeys, and embarked on enterprises which carried its light to the heart of Europe, to the Far East, and as far as the islands of the Pacific. [Washington D.C. resident]... Alma Knobloch, following on the heels of Dr. K. E. Fisher, hoisted the standard of the Faith in Germany, and carried its light to Austria.”

Alma Knobloch is buried in Prospect Hills Cemetery in Washington D.C. She passed away on December 22, 1943.

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Other Baha'i Burial Sites Prospect Hill Cemetery*

Next to the Knobloch/Hannen Gravesite is another founding Washington DC Baha'i Family's gravesite. Ms. Louise Shuman served on the first Washington DC Baha'i Local Spiritual Assembly in 1907. The son of the famous founder of Indian Cinema, Ardeshir Irani, came to Washington to study to become a Doctor and ended up marrying Louise Shuman. Mr. Irani received six tablets from 'Abdu'l-Bahá who affectionately referred to him as the "Tiger."

Their daughter, Tahmineh Irani, served the Baha'i Faith until her passing in 2010 in the Washington DC area. She arranged to have her husband's headstone, Lieut. George Ragsdale Parsons, inscribed with the 'Greatest Name', and is the only gravesite in Arlington Cemetery, "America's Shrine" to its fallen soldiers, to display other than the standard US government grave marker. The gravesite is located in Section 7, Site 8287-2, where she too is now buried.

Building's 1912 Continuity: [Prospect Hill Cemetery]

The gravestone was removed sometime between the 1920s and the 1990s, but happily the descendants of Mrs. Amalie Knobloch replaced the stone on July 8 2000, and upon the same spot. This place of veneration prepared by the Master continues to provide spiritual power to all who visit it.

Directions Prospect Hill Cemetery

Metro Stop: New York Avenue Metro Station on the Red Line, head north 0.2 miles until you reach Florida Avenue, turn northwest, and walk 0.3 miles to North Capitol Street. Then walk 0.5 miles to the gate of Prospect Hill Cemetery. Follow the cemetery outer circle road to the right to its southern most point before it turns back into the cemetery. From there you will walk in and look for the grey headstone with 'Hannen' engraved on one side and 'Knobloch' on the other, and with the 9 pointed Baha'i Star placed above them both. The Hannen family descendants planted a bush aside the gravestone in 2000 that is about waist high. This will help guide you to the spot.

**Other Baha'i burial sites at Prospect Hill Cemetery will be presented in separate posts. This will also hold true for other Baha'i burial sites located in the greater Metropolitan Washington, DC.*

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ⁱ Prospect Hill Cemetery, also known as the German Cemetery, is a historic German-American cemetery founded in 1858. On January 27, 1822, German immigrants to Washington, D.C. organized the German Evangelical Lutheran Church (GELC). The small Lutheran and Reformed congregation first worshipped at City Hall along with Catholics and Jews.

In 1853, the Reformed and Lutheran elements of the congregation erected a church building at 20th and G Streets NW, and had a small burying ground adjacent to it. In 1858, the German Evangelical Church Society decided to purchase a cemetery for the GELC, now renamed Concordia Church. After some difficulties, the seventeen acres of Moore's Farm, located in the Glenwood neighborhood (now Edgewood), were purchased on September 23, 1858 for \$7000.00. The whites-only cemetery was dedicated on September 26, 1858. Most of the early burials at Prospect Hill were interments of remains from the Concordia Church cemetery.

Presently, the cemetery retains its character as a garden cemetery. The cemetery remains the historic burying ground of the city's once-large German American community. About 75 percent of the 14,000 burials in 2006 are German Americans. Most of the remaining graves represent European families. Approximately 200 Civil War veterans, most of them German Americans who served in the 8th Battalion, are buried at Prospect Hill Cemetery.

ⁱⁱ Star of the West was a US Bahá'í newsletter published between 1910 and 1935. It was first published under the title 'Baha'í News'. At that time it was one of the only ways for Baha'ís in the west to receive Tablets and news about the Bahá'í Faith. It contains many translations of Tablets and communications received which have to date not been published elsewhere. Its remains a primary source for research.

ⁱⁱⁱ The following excerpts were taken from Baha'í News dated March 21, 1910. They directly relates to efforts put forth by Baha'ís in the Nations Capital to foster positive race relations in that City.

“The Bahá'í Assembly of Washington, D. C. holds its meetings on Friday evenings at 8 o'clock, at the Gareissen Studio, 1219 Connecticut avenue, N. W. This Studio, which has been our headquarters since December 1, 1909, is well located and commodious, having a seating capacity of about 200. The weekly meetings are well attended, and interest is growing constantly. In addition to the Friday meetings, there is a Sunday school, with classes for children and an adult department, which meets at 11:15 Sunday mornings, for the study of bible prophecies and of the Ishrakat, Tarazat, Tajalliyet and Tablet of Paradise.”

“The Unity Feasts are observed on the appointed dates, generally at the Studio, the rental of which covers all of these meetings. These latter gatherings have proven to be most helpful in the spread of the Teachings, through the spirit of love and unity which is noticeable there and attracts the seekers as seemingly nothing else can.”

“We are fortunate in having splendid music at many of our meetings, through the courtesy of Mr. Arthur D. Mayo, who is musical director in one of our largest churches, and who frequently brings his soloists and other singers of reputation, all of whom are attracted to the Cause and gladly give their services, in the majority of instances asking for the privilege of coming again and again.”

“On the evening of March 6th, an important gathering assembled at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Hannen, representing the joining in one meeting of the white and the colored Bahais and friends of this city. Considerable work is being done among the latter, and a regular weekly meeting is held at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Dyer, 1937 13th street, N. W. on Wednesdays.”

Note the following section of the article leave no doubt that the Baha'ís were carrying out the instructions of Abdu'l-Baha:

“February of last year, Abdu’l-Baha commanded that to prove the validity of our Teachings and as a means of removing existing prejudices between the races, a Spiritual Assembly or meeting be held, preferably at the home of one of the white Bahais, in which both races should join. This is the first meeting of that character, and is to be repeated monthly. There were present about 35 persons, one-third of whom were colored, and nearly all believers. It is also planned that every fourth Unity Feast, beginning April 9, should be held in such manner that both races can join. This is a radical step in this section of the country, and is in reality making history.” *Ref.: Baha’i News, Vol. 1 Chicago, (March 21, 1910) Baha No. 1; pg. 1-1-18 to 1-1-19.*

^{iv} Roy C. Wilhelm was a prominent early American Bahá’í. He was a millionaire businessman in New York City, and head of the family coffee company. His mother, Laurie, became a Bahá’í in 1898, but Roy was not attracted to the Faith until he accompanied his mother on her pilgrimage to ‘Akká in 1907. This experience transformed his life.

He was elected to serve on the Executive Board of the Baha’i Temple Unity in 1909 and, except for one year of illness, remained a member on it, and its successor, the national spiritual assembly, until 1946, often acting as its treasurer. He also helped administer the Bahá’í community in New York, produced Bahá’í literature, and supported the teaching work of Martha Root and Louis Gregory. He acted as a channel of communication between ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and the American Bahá’ís, and was one of those whom Shoghi Effendi consulted about the future development of the Faith in 1922.

He died on 24 November 1951, and was posthumously named a Hand of the Cause by Shoghi Effendi. An annual unity feast is held at the former Wilhelm property at West Englewood, New Jersey, to commemorate a feast held there by ‘Abdu’l-Baha during his visit to America. –*Bahaikipedia*

^v Louise Aurora Getsinger (née Moore) (November 1, 1871 - May 2, 1916) was an early Western Bahá’í and Disciple of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and Herald of the Covenant in the West. She converted to the Faith on May 21, 1897, just two years after Thornton Chase. Shoghi Effendi describes her as "the mother teacher of the West". –*Bahaikipedia*

^{vi} Agnes Parsons (1861-1934) was a Washington D.C. socialite and devoted Bahá’í whose diary records the events of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá while in the nation’s capitol. She went so far as to have a house built exclusively for ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s visit. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá was in Washington D.C. from 20-27 April. She arranged the first “Amity Convention”, termed by the Master "the mother convention", for unity of the colored and white races in America.

^{vii} Louis George Gregory (born June 6, 1874 in Charleston, South Carolina; died July 30, 1951 in Eliot, Maine) was a prominent member of the Bahá’í Faith posthumously appointed a Hand of the Cause of God, the highest appointed position in the Bahá’í Faith, by Shoghi Effendi, Guardian of the Bahá’í Faith.

^{viii} The 16th Century German thinker was Martin Luther and he was desperate to stay part of that great European project known as the Roman Catholic Church, but equally desperate not to support those who were ripping off German believers to pay to build St Peter's in Rome. The unfairness of the abuses fed popular resentment until German patience finally snapped. Luther broke away from his beloved Catholic Church, "protesting" in that great rebellion we now know as the creation of Protestant-ism, the Reformation, and the religious order that followed; hence, being of German-Lutheran background.

^{ix} ‘Akkā is a holy city of the Bahá’í Faith located at the northern extremity of Haifa Bay in Israel.

^x Holy Mother Munírih Khánum (1848 - April 28, 1938) was the wife of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, eldest son of Bahá’u’lláh and Ásíyih Khánum. She is the grandmother of Shoghi Effendi. She was born in Isfahán of the renowned Bábí-Bahá’í Nahrí Family. At age 23 she was chosen to be the wife of the Master, 'Abdu'l-Bahá, for whom she bore nine children. During her fifty or so years of marriage to 'Abdu'l-Bahá she became His beloved confidante. The ascension of 'Abdu'l-Bahá devastated her. Known by the friends as Holy Mother, Munírih Khánum served as the matriarch type figure after the passing of the Greatest Holy Leaf. Her grandson, Shoghi Effendi, had a monument built in her honour at the site where she is currently buried. - *Wikipedia*

^{xi} Shoghi Effendí Rabbání (March 1, 1897 – November 4, 1957), better known as Shoghi Effendi, would become the Guardian and appointed head of the Bahá’í Faith from 1921 until his death in 1957. After the death of `Abdu'l-Bahá in 1921, the leadership of the Bahá’í community changed from that of a single individual to an administrative order with executive and legislative branches, the head of each being the Guardianship and the Universal House of Justice, respectively. Shoghi Effendi was referred to as the Guardian, and had the authority to interpret the writings of the three central figures of the religion and define the sphere of legislative authority. His writings are effectively limited to commentaries on the works of the central figures, and broad directives for the future. - *Wikipedia*

^{xii} The Bahá’í Faith in Egypt has existed for over 100 years. The first Bahá’ís arrived in 1863. Bahá’u’lláh, founder of the religion, was himself briefly in Egypt in 1868 when on his way to imprisonment in `Akká. The first Egyptians were converts by 1896. Despite forming an early Bahá’í Local Spiritual Assembly and forming a National Assembly, in 1960, by Decree 263, following a regime change, the Bahá’ís lost all rights as an organized religious community.

One of the early Baha'i pioneers to come to Egypt in 1867 was Mirza Heyder Ali during the reign of Isma'il Pasha circa 1860–70. Soon after his entrance he was arrested and banished to Sudan for 12 years. Other early Bahá’ís in Egypt were Haji Báqir-i-Káshání and Siyyid Husayin-i-Káshání who took up residence in Egypt during the period Bahá’u’lláh was in Adrianople. Another early Bahá’í was Hag Hassan Khurásání who held weekly meetings in his home.

Bahá’u’lláh and his family left Adrianople on 12 August 1868 and after a journey by land and sea through Gallipoli and Egypt arrived in `Akká on 31 August, and confined in the barracks in the citadel in the city. From then on many well known Bahá’ís spent time in Egypt or joined the religion there. Nabil-i-A`zam made several journeys on behalf of Bahá’u’lláh and was imprisoned in Egypt in 1868. Robert Felkin was in Egypt circa 1880s and published a number of books. He later converted to the religion. In 1892 two converts in Egypt embarked to the West intending to spread the religion and were the first Bahá’ís to enter the United States where the first converts soon followed in 1894. Ibrahim George Kheiralla converted to the Bahá’í Faith while living in Egypt in 1889 when he met Hájí `Abdu'l-Karím-i-Tihrání. Kheiralla went through Europe and eventually came to the United States in late 1892 where he joined Anton Haddad, the first Bahá’í to come to America.

^{xiii} May 1911 marked the first recorded Bahá’í activity in the history of South Africa, when a small group of people started to hold regular gatherings in Sea Point, Cape Town. The 1920’s saw the Bahá’í Faith spread further in the Western Cape and around Johannesburg through the efforts of Fanny Knobloch from the United States of America assisted for a time by her sister, Pauline. The first local Bahá’í administrative body in South Africa was formed in Pretoria in 1925. Later in 1953 the Bahá’í community received a fresh impetus when thirteen Bahá’ís came from the United States and settled in Cape Town, Pretoria, Johannesburg and Durban. Given the conditions in the country at the time, the Bahá’ís focused on sharing the Bahá’í teachings of unity with the indigenous peoples of the land. Klaas Mtsweni, from a Zulu background, was the first local to become a Bahá’í in 1954. - *Baha’i Faith in South Africa*

^{xiv} The area of Wilmington had long been inhabited by various cultures of indigenous peoples. At the time of European encounter, historic Native Americans consisted of tribes belonging to the Algonquian family of languages. The ethnic European and African history of Wilmington spans more than two and a half centuries. The first permanent European settlement in the area came in the 1720s. Incorporation took place in 1739 or 1740, when the town was given a new name, Wilmington. Thereafter, most new settlers arrived from the northern colonies, the West Indies, and the British Isles. Many were indentured servants and, as such, had gained their freedom, making them too expensive to employ. To lower the expense of labor, the colonists then imported an increasing number of African slaves as laborers. By 1767 slaves accounted for more than 62% of the population, many working as laborers and some in ship-related trades.

This background is noteworthy as it provides deeper understanding of the ethnic makeup of early peoples in North Carolina, those who likely shaped the heritage and ethnic identity of their descendants, some who would play an important role in the growth and expansion of the Baha'i Faith.