



`Abdu'l-Bahá; he returned in 1907, 1908, 1909, 1914, and 1921.

In the fall of 1903 Remey returned to Washington, D.C., which served as his principal residence until the 1950s. He began to write pamphlets on the Faith: Unity: The Revelation of Baha 'Ullah (February 1905); The Revelation of Baha 'Ullah (June 1906); The Message of Unity (October 1908); The Bahai Movement--A Teaching of Peace (May 1911); The Bahai Movement for Universal Religion, Brotherhood, and Peace (March 1912); The Covenant (November 1912); and Some Vital Bahai Principles (1917?). Remey also published two books about his travels, in 1909 and 1914. Remey's introductory pamphlets were among the first and best available to the American Bahá'ís.

Remey also became active as a Bahá'í organizer. When `Abdu'l-Bahá made a passing reference to the possibility of organizing a spiritual assembly in Washington, D. C., in a tablet revealed in June 1906, Remey proposed the idea to the Washington Bahá'ís; the result was the election of a nine-member "Working Committee" on 14 March 1907. Remey served on the body and its successor, the Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Washington, for many years. When the American Bahá'ís met in their first national convention, in March 1909, Remey was the delegate from Washington; subsequently he was elected to the first Executive Committee of the Bahai Temple Unity. He served on that body during the years 1909-10, 1911-12, 1918-20, and 1921-24. In the course of his travels across the United States, during the years 1906-11, Remey was an active promoter of increased Bahá'í organization at the local level. He also was an officer of the Persian-American Educational Association, a Bahá'í organization that assisted the Iranian Bahá'ís in the development of schools and clinics. His loyalty and obedience to `Abdu'l-Bahá caused a group of prominent American Bahá'ís to appoint him and three other Bahá'ís to a "Committee of Investigation" in 1918 to investigate possible Covenant-breaking in Chicago.

Remey was especially well known as a traveling teacher; a complete list of all his trips would be lengthy and difficult to compile. In 1907 he visited much of western Europe. In 1908 he visited England, Germany, Palestine, Turkestan, and Iran, the latter two regions in the company of Sidney Sprague. In Ishqábád Remey visited the first Bahá'í House of Worship; he later published a lengthy description of it. As a result of his visit to Iran, he was able to encourage the American Bahá'ís to send American Bahá'í women to that country to serve as physicians, nurses, and teachers. He also put American and Iranian Bahá'í women in correspondence with each other for the first time.

In November 1909 Charles Mason Remey and Howard Struven began the first Bahá'í teaching trip to circle the globe. Leaving San Francisco, they traveled to Hawaii, four cities in Japan, Shanghai, Singapore, three cities in Burma, at least eight cities in India, and Palestine; they returned to the United States in June 1910. In 1914 Remey and George Latimer crossed military lines to teach the Faith in France, England, and Germany. Lesser known traveling teaching trips occurred in 1919, 1943, and 1944, to the American south; 1945, to the Northeastern United States; 1945-46, to Latin America;

1946, to the Midwest; 1947, to the American south, Europe, and Latin America; 1948, to Germany, Austria, Italy, and England; and 1949, to Europe.

Although `Abdu'l-Bahá encouraged Remey to marry Juliet Thompson, a Bahá'í from New York City, and the couple did become engaged, they never married. On 11 July 1931, when he was 57, Remey married an heiress named Gertrude Heim Klemm; the union ended with his wife's suicide on 5 August 1932.

Because he inherited part of the family fortune, Remey never needed to work for a living. Besides teaching at George Washington University for a year or two after his return from Paris—when he was still living with his parents—Remey never held a regular full-time job. He devoted considerable time to his own writing and publishing and to Bahá'í architecture. He prepared a dozen possible designs for the Bahá'í House of Worship in Wilmette, Illinois, and submitted several to the final competition in 1920; but Louis Bourgeois' design (which was influenced by Remey's ideas) was chosen instead. Remey designed the Houses of Worship built in Kampala and Sydney and the International Archives Building in Haifa. He offered many suggestions for the design of the Shrine of the Báb. He also designed the House of Worship that is to be built on Mount Carmel.

Remey lavished much of his personal fortune on two projects: his mansion in Washington, which he designed himself; and the "Remeum," a huge family mausoleum that he built on five acres of Episcopal church land in Pohick, Virginia, outside Washington. The mausoleum was a large masonry structure with marble vaults and pillars that included walled courtyards, chapels, and ample lawns and gardens. It contained life-size marble statues of deceased family members, marble reliefs depicting important events in American history that involved family members, and plaques commemorating important events in family history. Remey had family members reinterred in the Remeum. Started in 1939, the Remeum cost over a million dollars. After being repeatedly vandalized, the Remeum was razed to the ground in 1973 on the orders of the Episcopal church.

The Remeum reflected a nearly obsessive concern about immortality and his future place in history that Remey increasingly manifested as he grew older. Starting in the 1930s, Remey began to publish limited editions of the memoirs of his father, mother, and grandfather. Turning to his own life, before his death in 1974 Remey published over a hundred volumes of memoirs, correspondence, observations about Bahá'ís and Bahá'í communities, his own daily diaries, and his personal architectural projects. As his fear of global cataclysm grew—in the late 1940s he privately expressed his belief that nuclear war would envelop humanity, while in the 1960s he publicly stated that the axis of the earth would tilt, displacing the world's oceans and producing global floods—he began to deposit copies of his memoirs in university and historical society libraries to ensure the survival of at least one set.

On 24 December 1951 Shoghi Effendi appointed Remey a member of the first

contingent of the Hands of the Cause of God. He also established the International Bahá'í Council and appointed Remey its first President. The appointment necessitated Remey's move to Haifa. He continued to travel for the Faith; in 1953 he spoke at the Second International Teaching Conference in Chicago and the Fourth International Teaching Conference in New Delhi. He also devoted much time to Bahá'í architectural projects.

On 4 November 1957 Shoghi Effendi died in London, after a brief bout with the Asiatic flu. Remey was among the Hands of the Cause who sealed Shoghi Effendi's apartment, then conducted a thorough search for a will, which was not found. From November 1957 to the election of the Universal House of Justice in April 1963 the twenty-seven Hands of the Cause of God appointed by Shoghi Effendi administered the affairs of the Bahá'í Faith; they held a series of six annual conclaves, where all the Hands assembled to meet, and appointed a council of nine Hands that resided in Haifa and met continually to direct the Bahá'í Faith. Remey was a member of the latter body.

Remey's claim to be the second Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith developed gradually in his mind. He himself admits having vague thoughts about it as early as the first conclave of the Hands in November 1957. According to Remey, in November 1958 he spoke at the second conclave of the Hands, warning them that they were violating the Will and Testament of `Abdu'l-Bahá by not allowing the continuation of the Guardianship. At the third conclave, in November 1959, the Hands made the decision to replace the International Bahá'í Council, appointed by the Guardian in 1951, with an elected body, a forerunner of the Universal House of Justice, which they decided would be elected in 1963. Remey refused to sign the joint statement of the Hands and soon left Haifa for Washington. In April 1960 he declared himself the second Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith based largely on the fact that Shoghi Effendi had appointed him President of the International Bahá'í Council—forerunner of the Universal House of Justice—and that the Guardian was the head of the Universal House of Justice. The Hands of the Cause of God promptly declared him a Covenant-breaker.

Remey garnered relatively little support for his claim from the Bahá'í world. Only one National Spiritual Assembly—that of France—partially accepted his claim. Remey's age and declining health made it difficult for him to organize his followers. He directed his followers in the United States and Pakistan to elect National Spiritual Assemblies, which they did in 1963, but he disbanded them in 1966. The American group lost a lawsuit it filed against the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States in which they attempted to claim legal control over all Bahá'í properties in the United States; part of the ruling forbade them to violate Bahá'í trademarks by referring to themselves as Bahá'ís in print. Remey's messages focused on the impending global flood and increasingly turned against Shoghi Effendi's interpretations of the Bahá'í teachings.

In 1961 Remey sent a letter to Joel Marangella, one of his followers, in a sealed envelope that was to be opened when Marangella felt the time was right;

in the enclosed letter he appointed Marangella the third Guardian. In 1964 Remey appointed Marangella the President of the "Second International Bahá'í Council," a highly symbolic act, considering that Remey's own claim to the Guardianship rested on his Presidency of the first council. (Remey later disbanded the council.) Marangella subsequently opened the envelope and learned of his appointment. However, Remey apparently forgot that he had made the appointment, and in 1967 appointed Donald Harvey his successor instead. In 1968 he also appointed the first five of an intended body of twenty-four elders, Harvey being the "first elder." Remey later dissolved the body. In 1969 Marangella made his claim to the Guardianship public, arguing that Remey's actions after 1964 reflected a senile mind. Many of Remey's followers turned to Marangella. Subsequently the "Remeyites" broke up into a half dozen groups. Remey died on 4 February 1974, a few months short of his hundredth birthday, and was buried without religious rites in Florence, Italy.

Bibliography. One biography of Remey, of rather limited use, has been published: Francis C. Spataro, *Charles Mason Remey* (New York: Carlton Press, 1987). Scholars wishing to study Remey's life are confronted by over a hundred volumes of collected letters, memoirs, abridged diaries, reminiscences, descriptions of parts of his life, and accounts of important efforts by him (such as his designs of buildings and his traveling teaching trips). These volumes were composed over five decades; the schemes for numbering the volumes vary; different libraries have different selections of them; and Remey often donated the collections on the condition that they remain sealed (usually until 1995). The Remey papers, presumably, still exist, but are not yet available to researchers. The National Bahá'í Archives in Wilmette, Ill., have hundreds of letters by Remey in the records of the National Spiritual Assembly and various collections of personal papers; newspaper articles; a small collection of Remey papers; and a large collection (with about one hundred volumes) that is closed until 1995. Extensive collections of Remey volumes exist in the New York Public Library (which has at least 56 volumes), the Library of Congress, and at Yale University, Princeton University, and the Iowa Historical Society.

#### METADATA

Views19471 views since posted 2010-05-24; last edit 2014-03-16 14:38 UTC;

previous at [archive.org.../stockman\\_remey](http://archive.org.../stockman_remey)

Language

English

Permission

author

Share

Shortlink: [bahai-library.com/3894](http://bahai-library.com/3894)

Citation: ris/3894

select Collection:

Archives

Articles

Articles-unpublished  
Audio  
Bibliographies  
BIC  
Biographies  
Books  
Chronologies  
Compilations  
Compilations-NSA  
Compilations-personal  
Documents  
East-asia  
Encyclopedia  
Essays  
Etc  
Excerpts  
Fiction  
Glossaries  
Guardian  
Histories  
Introductory  
Letters  
Maps  
Music  
Newspapers  
NSA-documents  
NSA-letters  
Personal  
Pilgrims  
Poetry  
Presentations  
Resources  
Reviews  
Scripts  
Software  
Statistics  
Study  
Talks  
Theses  
Transcripts  
Translations  
UHJ-documents  
UHJ-letters  
Video  
Visual  
Writings

[home](#)

[sitemap](#)

[series](#)

[chronology](#)

[search:](#)

[author](#)

[title](#)

[date](#)

[tags](#)

[adv. search](#)

[languages](#)

[inventory](#)

[bibliography](#)

[abbreviations](#)

[links](#)

[about](#)

[contact](#)

[RSS](#)

[new](#)

— Remy, Charles Mason (Used by permission of the curator)