



motor

scene there. In May of 1902, Martha returned to Pittsburgh and continued writing

automobile articles for the Index and latter for the Pittsburgh Gazette, acquiring the experiences that prepared her for the monumental task ahead.

Martha met Roy C. Wilhelm from whom she received Bahá'í literature and later met with several early believers, among them Thorton Chase and Arthur Agnew at a restaurant in Chicago, a place to become known as the "place

of Saints and Sinners". After some months of concentrated research and contemplation,

Martha became a Bahá'í in Pittsburgh in 1909. This was a course change for Martha,

opening new pathways into her mind.

In September, 1909, Martha wrote an extensive article for the Pittsburgh Post siting the history and teachings of the Bahá'í Faith.

In 1911, she participated in the first annual Bahá'í convention, held in Chicago.

But the single event that made the greatest impact on Martha's early Bahá'í life

was the visit to the United States of 'Abdu'l-Bahá in 1911-12, where she attended

as many meeting as possible.

Martha arranged for 'Abdu'l-Bahá to present a talk in Pittsburgh and was able to have two private interviews with him. The Master presented her with a white rose and infused her spirit with His love, for he must have sensed her gargantuan capacity for teaching the Bahá'í Faith.

One of Martha's most memorable Bahá'í gatherings was the Unity Feast given by Roy Wilhelm in West Englewood, New Jersey on June 29, 1912.

She would often write to the Wilhelm's in her gratitude to them for having included

her in the picnic with 'Abdu'l-Bahá. Another event that made a deep impression on Martha was a meeting with 'Abdu'l-Bahá on one of His last nights in New York.

Also present was Vali'u'llah Varqa, the son of 'Ali-Muhammad Varqa and brother of little Ruh'u'llah Varqa, father and son, martyred together in Iran.

'Abdu'l-Bahá's visit had greatly affected Martha and an outline for a world teaching trip was submitted and on January 30, 1915 she sailed

out of New York on her first around the world teaching trip. After traveling through many countries, she tried to see "Abdu'l-Bahá in Palestine and visit the holy places in Haifa and Akká. The authorities would not permit it.

Palestine

was in a state of war and being occupied by German and Turkish troops and 'Abdu'l-Bahá insisted that all Bahá'ís leave the area.

Martha traveled to Egypt and stayed around six months, working as a newspaperwoman, writing about the four to six thousand Jews, expelled from Palestine by the Ottoman Empire of Turkey and subsequently rescued by the U.S.S.

Tennessee and brought to Alexandria. Her interviews of the Jewish refugees gave reports of intolerable conditions imposed upon them preceding their flight and their political tormentors. Martha also witnessed the military preparations that

World War I created, such as the movements of thousands of troops and pieces of military hardware in Egypt on the way to embark for the Dardanelles; and to her astonishment, not one mention of this activity was made by the press.

In 1915, Martha made a visit to Bombay and latter Rangoon.

In June of that same year, she traveled on to Japan at the invitation of Agnes Alexander, an American Bahá'í teacher there. After a brief stop in Hawaii, Martha arrived in San Francisco on August 29, 1915 to conclude the first of many international teaching endeavors under the banners of Bahá'u'lláh.

In the year 1920, Martha encountered a confirming test of her faith by a misunderstanding between Agnes Parsons and herself in regard to planning the first "race unity" conference to have ever been held within the United

States. The concept of doing each one's bidding for the sake of unity had backfired,

resulting in upset and confusion. Martha continued teaching by traveling to Saint

John, Montreal, London, and Saint Thomas, Canada, to arrange programs. She was also, at that time, appointed by the U.S. Bahá'í National Center, then known as

the Bahá'í Temple Unity, to the Ideas Committee, assisted by Horace Holley, D.

J. Hanko, Barbara Fitting, Edwar D. Kinney, and an addition of eleven other members.

Martha had to inspire them to come up with ways to raise money for the construction

of the Bahá'í House of Worship in Wilmette. She had the powers of experience and left no source of help untapped, including asking 'Abdu'l-Bahá for His Blessing and Confirmations.

The work continued onward and onward. In 1921, Martha decided to write a book on the Faith. She was in physical pain. She was also having to care for her ill father. Nine years earlier, she had developed breast

cancer,  
and a unique prescription from 'Abdu'l-Bahá probably aided it into remission.  
This time however, it had focused in other areas. But, despite her pain, she  
continued the work at a reduced rate.

Martha's next teaching trip was Mexico where there was one  
Bahá'í, Mr. C. P. Forest, and then on to Guatemala in the middle of a  
political  
revolution. She had arranged for an interview with the president of that  
country  
but before the set date, he was known as ex- President Herrera.

On the night of November 3, 1922, at the age of eighty-five,  
Martha's father, T. T. Root passed on. With an inheritance of some money, she  
had nothing to hold her back and divested herself of all that anchors one to  
the  
earth. At the age of fifty, Martha Root left her home town of Cambridge  
Springs,  
Pennsylvania, and took up residency in the rest of the world.

The journeys begun and Martha traveled continuously, almost  
everywhere, throughout the United States, and Canada, then back to Japan. She  
visited China. Martha had eight thousand copies of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's statement on  
teaching the Chinese sent to friends all over the world. Agnes Alexander  
succumbed  
to Martha's glowing word of Peking and its people and the two pioneers worked  
together.

The next stop was Australia, New Zealand, and Tasmania preceded  
by a short excursion to Hong Kong. In Australia, she stayed with Clara and Hyde  
Dunn, pioneers from California. The Dunns assisted her in regaining some of her  
health, not to mention assistance in the teaching work.

South Africa was the next place on Martha's roster, where  
she received the red carpet treatment almost everywhere she visited. Here she  
made several radio broadcast and held constant meetings. Martha also took some  
time to study Esperanto and "rested my brains."

On November 28, 1921, the Master passed on. In 1925, Martha's  
attention was drawn to the beleaguered Guardian. In the Will and Testament  
of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, Shoghi Effendi's station was designated as "the blessed  
and sacred bough that hath branched out from the Twin Holy Trees," whose shade  
"shadoweth all mankind." At this time, the Greatest Holy Leaf administered  
the affairs of the Faith. The Guardian was preparing to assume his position.  
Known as Bahiyiyih Khánum, she had been tempered by forty years of  
imprisonment,  
deprivation, and cruelty; the conditions were intended to destroy the exiled  
members  
of the Faith. However, history stands testament to the contrary. It was  
Martha's

plan to meet Her and the Holy Family. To the Guardian, Martha appeared as a resplendent touch, lighting a world of shadows.

Martha Root arrived at Mount Carmel on March 13, 1925 along with Effie Baker and Corinne True. She had become very close to the Master and communed often, even after his passing. Thus, she did the same with Shoghi Effendi, her beloved Guardian. They prayed together at the shrines and conferred on her teaching work. The beauty and dignity of Bahiyyih Khánum touched Martha deeply.

The travels continued, on to the north, to Switzerland and in 1923, a visit with Queen Marie in Rumania, one of Europe's most noble members of royalty. She visited the British Isles and gave lectures at the Edinburgh Esperanto congress in 1926. Germany and the north countries were next, then Greece, Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia. Despite cautious words from Shoghi Effendi, Martha visited the Cradle of the Faith, Iran with an unsuccessful effort to meet the shah, Riza Khan Pahlavi. On the 25 November, 1929, Martha Root arrived for her second visit to Haifa and the Bahá'í holy shrines. In 1930, she tried to visit His Imperial Majesty, Hirohito of Japan. However, the U. S. officials would not grant permission at first. With perseverance, she was finally able to present gifts and Bahá'í writings.

It was 1936, the world was an ugly place, and World War II was devouring the spiritual essence of man. Martha continued her relentless effort to infuse Europe with the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh. Although the work went forward, the body was failing, and she knew that time was on the wing, the skylark returned home to the United States.

In 1937, Martha traveled once more to the Hawaiian Islands, to China and India; finally traveling to Austral-Asia to finish earlier work there.

In 1939, Martha returned to Hawaii and after a lengthy illness, on 28 September, slipped into unconsciousness and moved from this world. She had begun another journey.

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