



## ‘Abdu’l-Bahá Strolls in Lincoln Park

By Jonathan Menon

Published: November 1, 2012 | Last modified: January 28, 2015

Permalink: <http://239days.com/2012/11/01/abdu-baha-strolls-in-lincoln-park/>

THINGS WERE COMING TO an end as ‘Abdu’l-Bahá contemplated the view from his window at the Plaza Hotel at the corner of North and Clark Streets, during his final few days in Chicago. He was preparing to leave America soon, on an early ship from New York after brief stops in Cincinnati and Washington, DC. Across the nation the presidential candidates were wrapping up the campaign season. Almost fifteen million Americans — almost all of them men, almost all of them white — would go to the polls next Tuesday. Even autumn was fighting for its life: the mercury dipped just below freezing overnight on Friday, November 1, and brisk northerly winds raked the leafless trees of Lincoln Park across the street from the Plaza Hotel.

During his stays in Chicago ‘Abdu’l-Bahá made a habit, every morning and evening, of taking walks across the lawns and woods of Lincoln Park, which extended northward from the hotel for a mile and half along the western shore of Lake Michigan. One morning in early May, with most of the tree branches still bare, he visited the Lincoln Park Zoo. Honoré Jaxon was there to tell the story in his sentimental, somewhat grandiose prose. “The many strange and beautiful forms of bird and animal life herein presented,” Jaxon wrote, “proved very interesting to Abdul-Baha, as he walked among them with a manner which somehow reminds one of the legends of St. Francis of Assisi.”

Honoré Jaxon had been born William Henry Jackson in Toronto, but in his younger life he moved west to Saskatchewan, which was then part of Canada’s Northwest Territory. He became a leader in the North-West Rebellion of 1885, the struggle of Métis people against the Canadian federal government, converted to Catholicism, took a French name, and served as Louis Riel’s secretary. After Riel was hanged for treason, Jaxon was declared innocent by reason of insanity and placed in an asylum. He quickly escaped and fled to Chicago, where he joined the labor movement. Many years later, in 1894, he marched on Washington with Coxey’s Army.

After stopping for a photograph with ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, and the twenty or so other people who accompanied them, Jaxon followed ‘Abdu’l-Bahá to a section of the park “where — springing from the midst of heavy bushes on either shore — a single arched foot-bridge rises high above a wide lagoon. . . . The landscape

disclosed from this viewpoint is indeed one of the fairest in Chicago.”  
“‘Beautiful,’ was the comment made by Abdul-Baha in English,” Jaxon wrote,  
“as he gazed northward from the parapet of the bridge.” The group then  
sauntered back to the animals, where ‘Abdu’l-Bahá stood “engrossed in  
contemplating the movements of a majestic polar bear.”

“And now came the most striking feature of the morning’s experience,” Jaxon  
related as he prepared to bring the story to a fitting end. “From the episode of  
the bear’s den, Abdul-Baha led the friends toward the lake, and taking one of a  
number of seats conveniently disposed under a group of trees, invited the  
friends to likewise be seated. They found themselves arranged in a circle, and,  
after dictating an answer to a letter which had been read to him that morning as  
he had walked along, Abdul-Baha suddenly commenced talking to them in a  
strain of intimate and friendly counsel . . . which warmed the determination of  
each one to be doubly on guard against any future possibility of becoming a  
cause of disunion or discord.”

“Some of you may have observed that I have not called attention to any of your  
individual shortcomings,” ‘Abdu’l-Bahá said, a course of action in stark contrast  
to the kinds of political activity Honoré Jaxon was no doubt used to, and which  
was part and parcel of the campaign of 1912. “I want you to be organized like a  
flock of the doves of Heaven, whose attitude and conduct toward each other is a  
symbol of that which will take place among human beings when human beings  
shall become willing to accept the guidance of the Holy Spirit.”

“With those words,” Jaxon wrote about that morning in May, “the homeward  
course was taken, and so concluded a typical and memorable Bahai meeting in a  
park, which will ever hereafter be associated in memory with the blessed  
influence of the ‘Servant of Baha.’”

## How to Cite this Article

The formatting below is from the *Chicago Manual of Style*, 17th Edition. For other academic citation styles, please adapt accordingly. Since the **239 Days** site and its contents may be updated from time to time, we recommend you include a “last modified” date, which is provided at the top of both the web and PDF versions of this article.

### **FOOTNOTE / ENDNOTE:**

Jonathan Menon, “‘Abdu’l-Bahá Strolls in Lincoln Park,” *239 Days in America*, ed. Jonathan Menon and Robert Sockett, November 1, 2012, <http://239days.com/2012/11/01/abdul-baha-strolls-in-lincoln-park/>.

### **BIBLIOGRAPHY:**

Menon, Jonathan. “‘Abdu’l-Bahá Strolls in Lincoln Park.” *239 Days in America*. Edited by Jonathan Menon and Robert Sockett. November 1, 2012. <http://239days.com/2012/11/01/abdul-baha-strolls-in-lincoln-park/>.

### **HOW TO CITE THE *239 Days in America* WEBSITE IN A BIBLIOGRAPHY:**

Menon, Jonathan, and Robert Sockett, eds. *239 Days in America*. <http://239days.com/>.

## Terms of Use

**239 Days in America**™ and the 239Days.com website is licensed under a Creative Commons 3.0 License as specified at this link: <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/3.0/>. **This PDF file** is shared with you with the following additional terms:

YOU MAY quote from this PDF file with proper attribution. Your citation must include the author's name and the **239 Days in America** project's name. You may download and print this PDF file, and you may share individual PDF files in print or electronic form.

Although we want to make our work easy to share, we also wish to maintain the unity and integrity of **239 Days in America** as a whole. Therefore,

YOU MAY NOT republish or rebroadcast our PDF files in a public forum—such as by uploading them to a blog, app, or other web property, publishing them in print form, or distributing them widely using electronic means—without our prior written consent. We invite you to discuss such opportunities with us by contacting the Editor-In-Chief at [editor@239Days.com](mailto:editor@239Days.com). Otherwise, please share the permalinks displayed at the top of each file.

YOU MAY NOT extract pages from this file, recombine this PDF file with other documents, assemble its contents into any free or paid product, app, ebook, collection, compilation, or archive, nor remove this page of Terms. The **Adobe PDF**™ security features employed in this document have been selected to prevent such use. You may not circumvent these security features in any way.