



Juliet Thompson's Inside View

By Caitlin Shayda Jones

Published: May 8, 2012

Permalink: <http://239days.com/2012/05/07/juliet-thompsons-washington/>

THE JAPANESE CHERRY TREES BEHIND THE WHITE HOUSE bloomed in coral pink. Washington in spring was a treat to the eyes of a painter. Juliet Thompson was born here, and although has since lived in both Paris and New York, has returned — not to paint it, but to follow ‘Abdu’l-Bahá.

She met ‘Abdu’l-Bahá for the first time in ‘Akká in 1909, then was drawn to Thonon-les-Bains, France, when he was there in 1911, and now back to Washington. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá holds Juliet in high regard, not for her skill as a painter, (when she was 24, the New York Times called her “one of the most promising young artists of the day”), but for her sincerity. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá observed of her: “Everybody is your friend.”

In Washington, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá met daily with crowds in Agnes Parsons’s ballroom. Juliet described its features in her diary: its “unusually high mantel,” “delicately carved with garlands,” and its windows, hung with “thin silk curtains the colour of jonquil leaves.” Juliet has many connections in Washington. In future years she will even paint a portrait of Mrs. Coolidge, one of the most popular First Ladies.

On the morning of Saturday, April 27th, Lee McClung had breakfast with ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. This was the day before ‘Abdu’l-Bahá was to meet President Taft at the White House. McClung had been one of Juliet’s idols when she was a young girl. He was a football star in his college days, the epitome of popularity. Now he charmed another field, as the twenty-second Treasurer of the United States of America.

Only a year earlier McClung had poked fun at her for her “conversion to Baháism.” He said it made him “laugh out of one eye and cry out of the other.” He was not as old as Juliet remembered him: he was still just thirty-eight. Cutlery clinked against plates, and Juliet waited for a chance to ask her old friend what he thought of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. Finally, once breakfast was away, she pulled McClung aside. Rather than play catch-up, she got to the heart of the matter and asked him, “How did you feel when you saw the Master?” A shy look came over McClung’s face — a rarity for a man unabashed to be the object of a crowd’s cheers. He took a moment to sort out his thoughts: “Well, I felt as

though I were in the presence of one of the great old Prophets: Elijah, Isaiah, Moses. No, it was more than that! Christ . . . no, now I have it. He seemed to me my Divine Father.”

Just yesterday, May 7, 1912, Juliet started to write her account of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s first trip to Washington. Her diary will become one of the most important historical sources about ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s journey across America.

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:

Caitlin Shayda Jones, “Juliet Thompson’s Inside View,” *239 Days in America*, ed. Jonathan Menon and Robert Sockett, May 8, 2012, <http://239days.com/2012/05/07/juliet-thompsons-washington/>.

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

Jones, Caitlin Shayda. “Juliet Thompson’s Inside View.” *239 Days in America*. Edited by Jonathan Menon and Robert Sockett. May 8, 2012. <http://239days.com/2012/05/07/juliet-thompsons-washington/>.

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. 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.