

Chronological Events During Swamiji's S. California Trip of 1899 and 1900

(Compiled by Asirn Chaudhuri on August 22, 1999 from various sources)

1899

- December 3 Leaves his American mother Ellen Isabelle Hale (Mrs. George W. Hale) in Chicago on November 30, after the Thanksgiving dinner, and arrives at the Los Angeles Santa Fe Depot on Santa Fe Avenue, between East 1st and East 2nd Streets. Josephine MacLeod meets him at the station. [The eye-catching, moorish style wooden depot was probably on the east side of Santa Fe Avenue, now occupied by Metro Rail sheds.] Stays initially with a Miss Spencer for a few days. (Probably meets other people during his stay at Miss Spencer's, notably Judge William A. Cheney and Mr. Bernhard R. Baumgardt). [Miss Spencer's identity was never mentioned anywhere. According to the L.A. directory of 1899 there were four Miss Spencers in L.A.: Bessie B. at 436 W. 33rd, Mamie M. at 252 E. 28th (a stenographer) and 327 S. Main (a student), and Mattie B. at 326 E. 4th. There was also a Mrs. Mary E. Spencer at 2421 S. Figueroa (close to the Blodgett house) in 1899, who was listed as Miss Mary E. Spencer in preceding years in the directory. She could most likely be the "mysterious" Miss Spencer. 1899 directory could have put Mrs. before her name by mistake. MLB mentions a Judge Cheney, a judge from 1885 to 1891. L.A. directory of 1899 has only William A. Cheney as an attorney, living at 1046 S. Hill, most likely to be the Judge Cheney. In all probability Swamiji must have been to his house, and also to Mr. Baumgardt house at 1029 W 22nd Street. MLB mentions that Swamiji must have visited others while staying with Miss Spencer.]
- December 8 Lectures in Los Angeles for the first time at Blanchard Hall, 233 S. Broadway, at 8 p.m., arranged by Mr. Baumgardt. Subject: "Vedanta Philosophy or Hinduism as a Religion." The Mead sisters (Mrs. Carrie Mead Wyckoff, Mrs. Alice Mead Hansbrough, and Miss Helen Mead) of Pasadena were in the audience, but they didn't get to meet him personally until later. [The Meads knew Mr. Baumgardt, who introduced them to Josephine MacLeod that night, who, in turn, arranged their meeting with Swamiji on December 13. 1899 directory has Miss Helen Mead, a clerk with the Board of Fire Underwriters, living at 135 S. Olive. But her name wasn't in the L.A. directory in 1900/1901. She was probably the only Mead sister who held a regular job.] Probably moves to Mrs. "Roxie" S. Blodgett's house at 921 W. 21st Street around this time. [Roxie Blodgett was the widow of S.K. Blodgett, according to L.A. directory. The site now has a gated apartment complex].
- December 12 Lectures before Southern California Academy of Sciences at the Church of Unity, corner of W. 3rd and S. Hill Streets, at 8 p.m., also arranged

- by Mr. Baumgardt. Subject: "The Cosmos" or ^{The} Veda Conception of the Universe."
- December 13 Meets the Mead sisters at Mrs. Blodgett's house, a meeting arranged by Josephine MacLeod.
- December 19 Lectures at Blanchard Hall at 7.30 p.m. Subject: "Applied Psychology." Probably stays with a Mr. Willard H. Stimson (introduced to him by Mrs. Blodgett) at 2426 S. Figueroa for a couple of days or so around this time. At the Stimson mansion meets Mr. J. Ransome Bransby, the director of Los Angeles Home of Truth, a religious society of "New Thought" persuasion, and Christian Healing and Teaching. [MLB mentions a letter by Mr. Bransby saying that he had met Swamiji at the Stimson mansion on Figueroa Street to arrange for his lectures at the Home of Truth. 1899 L.A. directory lists Willard H. as the only Stimson living on Figueroa.]
- December 21 Lectures at the Home of Truth, 1327 Georgia Street. Subject: "Applied Psychology."
- December 22 Lectures at the Home of Truth; Subject: "Applied Psychology."
- December 23 Attends reception in the morning at Mrs. Caroline M. Severance's (President Emeritus of Friday Morning Club) house at 806 W. Adams Street. [John Tracy Clinic is at this location now. The north-south street on the north of the site is Severance Street, probably named after the "Mother of Clubs" Caroline Severance.]
Sees the play "My Friend from India" in the Los Angeles Theater at 227 S. Spring with Miss MacLeod, Mr. Baumgardt, Mrs. Hansbrough and others.
Visits the home of the magnetic healer Mrs. Melton almost regularly around this time. Her house was within walking distance of the Blodgett house).[1899 L.A. Directory does not list any Mrs. Melton. Three Meltons are listed (Mr. Albert, Mr. John, and Mr. Robert), but none of the addresses was close to the Blodgett house. The census record could be another source].
- December 24 Attends Christmas Eve dinner at the Meads' house in Lincoln Park, South Pasadena (at 309 Monterey Road) with Josephine MacLeod.[1900 Pasadena directory lists Jesse Mead and Helen Mead separately, living on the south side of Monterey Road, the second house east of Pasadena Avenue. The numbering probably came later.]
- December 25 Lectures at the Home of Truth at 10 a.m. (for the next five days as well). Subject: "Christ's Message to the World."
- December 26 Lectures at the Home of Truth. Subject: Unknown.
- December 27 Lectures at the Home of Truth. Subject: "The Theory of Concentration."
- December 28 Lectures at the Home of Truth. Subject: "The Practice of Concentration."
- December 29 Lectures at the Home of Truth. Subject: "Spiritual Breathing."
- December 30 Lectures at the Home of Truth. Subject: "Reincarnation."

1900

- January 2 Lectures at Payne's Hall, 330 1/2 S. Broadway, at 10 a.m.; Subject: Unknown.
Lectures at Blanchard Hall in the evening; Subject: The People of India."
- January 3 Lectures at Payne's Hall at 10 a.m. Subject: Unknown.
- January 4 Lectures at Payne's Hall at 10 a.m. Subject: "What Brings Success."
- January 5 Lectures at Payne's Hall at 10 a.m. Subject: "We Ourselves."
Mrs. Francis H. Leggett arrives in Los Angeles.
- January 6 Lectures at Payne's Hall at 10 a.m. Subject: Unknown.
Lectures at Blanchard Hall in the evening. Subject: "The History of India."
- January 7 Lectures at Payne's Hall at 2.30 p.m. Subject: "Christ's Message to the World."
- January 8 Lectures at Payne's Hall at 8 p.m., the last known lecture in Los Angeles.
Subject: "The Powers of the Mind."
- January 11 Goes to a *vaudeville* show (probably in Orpheum at 112 S. Main Street) with Mrs. Francis Leggett and others. [There were probably other vaudeville houses in L.A. that time. But Orpheum was the posh one advertising in L.A. Times. With Mrs. Francis Leggett, Swamiji most likely would have gone there.]
- January 12 Holds a class at Mrs. Blodgett's house.
- January 13 Visits Mount Lowe in the San Gabriel Range northeast of Pasadena with Mr. and Mrs. Baumgardt and Josephine MacLeod; takes train excursions; rides on funicular; stays at the Echo Mountain House overnight (the hotel burnt down on February 5, 1900).
- January 14 Lectures at the Echo Mountain House in the morning. Subject: Unknown.
Probably moves to Mrs. Jacob C. Newton's house (at west side of Fair Oaks Avenue, the first house south of Bank Street, in South Pasadena) for a few days. [1900 Pasadena directory gave the address of Mrs. Newton as above. The present house at the southwest corner of Fair Oaks and Bank does not look like hundred years old. But the house south of it, at 1407 Fair Oaks Avenue, looks like an old house. If there was no house at the corner at that time, then this could have been the first house south of Bank Street. South Pasadena city records could reveal the ownership of 1407, Fair Oaks house in 1900. The house could also have been rented by Mrs. Newton, because her name does not appear in the directory in 1901. Whoever was the owner in 1900, if the present No. 1407 was the first house south of Bank Street at that time, then Swamiji had apparently lived in this house.]
- January 15 Lectures in the morning at the Hotel Green, 99 S. Raymond Avenue, the first lecture in Pasadena. Subject: "*Bhakti Yoga*." (The main building still exists, but the East Wing where Swamiji lectured does not.)

- January 16 Visits Redlands; lunches at the Casa Loma Hotel; signs the register for Mrs. Leggett and Miss MacLeod; visits the Canyon Crest Park.
! According to Marie Louise Burke the Casa Loma Hotel register was signed by Mrs. Leggett, but the handwriting resembles that of Swamiji'si Lectures at the Shakespeare Club (at the northwest corner of Fair Oaks Avenue and Lincoln Street at that time; due to I-110 construction, Lincoln does not intersect Fair Oaks anymore) in Pasadena at 8 p.m. Subject: "Religious Legends."
- January 17 Lectures at the Hotel Green at 10 a.m. Subject: Unknown.
- January 18 Lectures at the Shakespeare Club at 8 p.m. Subject: "Women of India."
- January 19 Lectures at the Hotel Green at 10 a.m. Subject: Unknown.
Probably moves to the president of Shakespeare Club Mrs. Emeline F. Bowler's house (at 63 S. Los Robles Avenue) for a few days. EMLB never mentions when Swamiji moved to this house, but since he was heavily booked with lectures in Shakespeare Club next week, it is conceivable that he moved in around this time. That would have given him a few days at this house until he fled from it and wound up in the Meads' house saying "I have come to stay with you. That's too much of a lady!" see MLB, 5, p.244. The time of his stay at Mrs. J. C. Newton's house earlier has already been established by the newspaper. This was only time period Swamiji could have stayed with somebody other than the Meads.]
- January 20 Attends reception at the Shakespeare Club from 3 to 5 p.m.
Lectures at the Club. Subject: "Persian Art."
- January 22 Lectures at the Shakespeare Club at 10 a.m. Subject: "The Ideal of a Universal Religion."
- January 24 Lecture at the Shakespeare Club at 10 a.m. Subject: Unknown.
- January 25 Probably moves to the Meads' House at 309 Monterey Road, South Pasadena around this time.
Lectures at the Shakespeare Club at 10 a.m. Subject: "The Science of Yoga."
- January 26 Lecture at the Shakespeare Club at 10 a.m. Subject: Unknown.
- January 27 Lectures at the Shakespeare Club at 10 a.m. Subject: "My Life and Mission."
- January 28 Lectures at the Universalist Church at Pasadena (at the southeast corner of Fair Oaks Avenue and Chestnut Street) in the evening; pastor: Rev. Ralph Connery. Subject: "The Ideal of a Universal Religion."
- January 30 Lectures at the Shakespeare Club. Subject: "The Aryan Race."
- January 31 Lectures at the Shakespeare Club. Subject: The "*Ramayana*."
- February 1 Lectures at the Shakespeare Club. Subject: The "*Mahabharata*."
- February 2 Lectures at the Shakespeare Club. Subject: "Buddhistic India."
Josephine MacLeod leaves southern California.
- February 3 Lectures at the Shakespeare Club, the last lecture in Pasadena. Subject: "The Great Teachers of the World."
- February 6 Visited Throop Polytechnic Institute and Manual Training School (at the southeast corner of Fair Oaks Avenue and Green Street) in Pasadena.*

[Throop Polytechnic became the California Institute of Technology later. There is a plaque on the outer wall of the present building at that corner identifying the site as the old Throop institute Swamiji had visited.]

There is nothing I could find regarding Swamiji's whereabouts in southern California between February 6 and February 22. Although Riverside had a Unitarian Church established in 1892, a likely place for Swamiji to give a lecture, the local newspapers did not reveal anything. On February 15 Swamiji had written to Sister Nivedita giving "c/o Miss Mead, 447 Douglas Building, Los Angeles" as the return address. In that letter Swamiji wrote—"Yours of the--reached me today at Pasadena: This must be Helen Mead, and the address could be her place of work. 1899 L.A. Directory listed her as a clerk at the Board of Fire Underwriters, living at 135 S. Olive in L.A. She was not listed in 1900/1901 directory. Swamiji's February 20 letter to Mary Hale mentions Pasadena. Swamiji probably continued his stay in Pasadena until he left for San Francisco. That would make the extent of his stay in Pasadena about 5 weeks (January 14 through February 21), and 4 weeks (January 25 through February 21) in Meads' house. Mrs. Newton and Mrs. Bowler's homes combine for 1 week. Since Swamiji's principal traveling companion Josephine MacLeod had left. L.A. on February 2, he probably didn't get around too much after that. Also gone with Miss MacLeod was the one main source of information about Swamiji's activities, her letters.

February 22

Leaves southern California and arrives in San Francisco.