

*In the Footsteps of
Paramahansa Yogananda*



*A guidebook to the places in and around
Boston associated with Paramahansaji*



Self-Realization Fellowship

Founded in 1920 by Paramahansa Yogananda

October 8, 2007

Devotees of the Boston Meditation Group
of Self-Realization Fellowship

Dear Ones,

Thank you for the beautiful flowers and gifts, and for sending me a copy of the lovely guidebook you have prepared of places in Boston that Master visited. It was thoughtful of you to do this to assist devotees who travel to the area where he first began his work in America, and I know it was a labor of love.

As you think of the earliest years of Guruji's work, may your hearts be filled with the same enthusiasm and positive spirit that made it possible for him to accomplish so much in one lifetime and to serve so many souls yearning for a deeper relationship with God. In the beginning Master knew no one, and had no resources to draw upon except his unshakable faith in Him and the will to put forth every effort in service to Him. May your own lives be an offering to God of the best that you can give, and may they be rooted in that sweet inner relationship with the Divine which sustained Master throughout the years.

You have entitled your booklet *In the Footsteps of Paramahansa Yogananda*, and I encourage you and all who read it, not only to walk in his footsteps physically but inwardly by following his example of devotion to God, of love for His children, and of living each day in attunement with the Divine. Although it has been many years since he walked the streets of Boston, Guruji is ever in your hearts – a living, loving presence that will become more and more real to you as you meditate deeply and put into practice his blessed teachings. In that effort I pray he may ever guide and watch over you. I am so pleased that you continue to faithfully come together to meditate and are sincerely dedicated to Guruji's ideals. My soul's love and blessings to each one of you.

God love you,

Sri Daya Mata

SRI DAYA MATA, PRESIDENT

INTERNATIONAL HEADQUARTERS: 3880 SAN RAFAEL AVENUE, LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90065-3298

TEL: (323) 225-2471 • FAX: (323) 225-5088 • www.yogananda-srf.org

IN INDIA: YOGODA SATSANGA SOCIETY OF INDIA

Preface

The purpose of this guidebook is to assist in locating and visiting some of the places associated with Paramahansa Yogananda during his early years in America when he lectured, taught and resided in the Boston area. It is the hope of those who researched and developed this guidebook that the moments spent reflecting on God in the places where Paramahansaji spent time will draw devotees into a deeper relationship with the Great Master.

The first eleven locations appear in the order in which they can be most easily reached on foot. These locations can be viewed as a walking tour; the distance is approximately two miles. The remaining locations are best visited by public or private transportation, as explained in the text.

The suburban homes in which Paramahansaji once lived or visited are private residences. The occupants should not be disturbed by any devotee trespassing on the property, or by questions about Paramahansaji.

Unfortunately, some of the places where he lectured or conducted classes are no longer in existence, such as Chickering Hall and Faelton Hall on Huntington Avenue. The Athens Olympia Restaurant, where Paramahansaji occasionally dined, has also become the victim of urban renewal. Although the building once occupied by Unity House is no longer standing, its former location has been included here because of the important role it played during his Boston years.

Several places associated with Paramahansaji have been identified that do not function as they did when he was in Boston. The former Temple Israel on Commonwealth Avenue, for example, is now an auditorium, and the Bancroft Hotel in Worcester has been converted into an apartment building.

An online version of this guide is available on our website, www.bostoncentersrf.org, and printed copies are available at the Boston Center.

We gratefully acknowledge the contribution of the members of the Boston Center who donated their time to compile this guidebook.

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Boston Center Historical Committee

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Massachusetts State House

Beacon Hill, Boston

Upon his return to Boston in 1928, Paramahansaji was welcomed at the State House on September 19 by Governor Alvan T. Fuller. He was presented to the Governor by Chester I. Campbell, Councilor from Quincy. Paramahansaji and the Governor discussed various educational affairs of India and America.

Directions

Take any Green Line train to Park Street Station. The exit is on Boston Common at Park and Tremont Streets. Walk up Park Street or through the Common to Beacon Street at the top of the hill. The State House is located on Beacon Street at the head of Park Street.

Unitarian Universalist Association

25 Beacon Street, Boston

Paramahansaji arrived in America on September 19, 1920 as a delegate to the International Congress of Religious Liberals. The Congress was held in Boston in October under the auspices of the American Unitarian Association, now the Unitarian Universalist Association. Paramahansaji frequently visited the Association's headquarters while he was living at Unity House. At that time, the headquarters' address, 25 Beacon Street, was located at the corner of Beacon and Bowdoin Streets, across from the East Wing of the State House. The building is no longer standing and has been replaced by an addition to the Bellevue Building. The number '25' was transferred in 1927 to the headquarters' present location.

Directions

Follow the directions for the Massachusetts State House. 25 Beacon Street is the first building after the State House as you walk west on Beacon. The former location of the association's headquarters, now at 21 Beacon, is situated opposite the east wing of the State House at the corner of Bowdoin Street. Please note: the original building no longer stands.

*“Wrap yourself
in the thought of
God. His holy
Name is the
Power of all
powers. Like a
shield it deflects
all negative
vibrations.”*

Paramahansa Yogananda

Park Street Church

Corner of Tremont & Park Street, Boston

On Monday, March 5, 1923, Paramahansaji addressed a regional conference on world peace at Park Street Church.

Directions

Take any Green Line train to Park Street Station. The exit is on Boston Common at Park and Tremont Streets. Park Street Church is directly opposite the subway exit.

Steinert Hall

162 Boylston Street, Boston

On May 12, 1922, Paramahansaji lectured in Steinert Hall during the Gandhi World Peace Meeting. The following year on May 7, he gave a lecture in Steinert Hall on the subject of concentration.

Directions

Take any Green Line train to Boylston Street Station. Walk to the intersection of Boylston and Tremont Streets and cross Boylston to the southwest corner. Turn right and walk west to 162 Boylston, opposite Boston Common. The premises are occupied by Steinert and Sons Piano Company. The hall is in the basement, but is not open to the public. The hall has been closed since a fire code change in the 40's. (See also the directions for Unity House. 162 Boylston is only two doors from Charles Street and Park Square, near the former site of Unity House.)

Unity House

7 Park Square, Boston

Paramahansaji moved to Unity House after his stay at the Y.M.C.A. following his arrival in Boston on September 19, 1920. On October 6, Paramahansaji delivered his maiden speech in America, 'The Science of Religion,' in Unity House before the International Congress of Religious Liberals. It was in Unity House that Paramahansaji first met Dr. Minott W. Lewis on Christmas Eve, 1920. When Paramahansaji returned to Boston in 1928, during the months of October and November, he gave three series of Yogoda classes, the last two in Unity House.

Directions

The building occupied by Unity House at 7 Park Square was later converted into a hotel. **Please note that this building no longer stands. It has since been razed to make room for the Massachusetts Transportation Building at 10 Park Plaza.** To reach Park Square, take any Green Line train to Arlington Street Station. Walk east one block on Boylston Street to the intersection of Boylston and Charles Streets. Park Square is the area behind the Four Seasons Hotel. Unity House was formerly situated at the east side of the square, where the transportation building is now located. (See also the directions for Steinert Hall.)

*“As a mortal
being you are
limited, but
as a child of
God you are
unlimited...
Focus your
attention on
God, and you
shall have all
the power you
want, to use in
any direction.”*

Paramahansa Yogananda

Copley Plaza Hotel

Copley Square, Boston

Paramahansaji first spoke at the Copley Plaza Hotel on October 3, 1928 before the Boston Lions Club in the hotel's Swiss Room. His subject was 'How Oriental Methods Can Help Occidental Business.' He also lived in the hotel for a period in 1928 during the time he was lecturing in Symphony Hall. On October 15, 1928, he was a guest at a reception in the Copley Plaza Hotel given by Mrs. Alvan T. Fuller, wife of Governor Fuller, in honor of Mrs. Herbert Hoover, wife of the Republican nominee for President of the United States.

Directions

Take any Green Line train to Copley Station. The Copley Plaza Hotel is located opposite the south side of Copley Square. Please note that the names of the halls in the hotel have changed and it is now unknown in which hall Paramahansaji spoke.

Boston Public Library

Copley Square, Boston

Paramahansaji visited the Boston Public Library several times while living in the Boston area. It was in the Boston Public Library that Paramahansaji identified and spoke to the man who had sent him the anonymous letter questioning his interpretation of a biblical passage about the life of Christ.

Directions

Take any Green Line train to Copley Station. The library is located in Copley Square.

Convention Hall

56 St. Botolph Street, Boston

Paramahansaji held a 'Grand Satsanga Festival' at Convention Hall on December 18, 1923. During September, October, and November 1928, Paramahansaji gave three series of lectures in the Hall.

Directions

Take any Green Line train to Copley Station. Walk south on Dartmouth Street past the Public Library, and turn right on Huntington Avenue. Follow Huntington past the Marriott Hotel at Copley Place and turn left onto Harcourt Street, which bounds the west side of the hotel. Walk one block south to the intersection with St. Botolph Street. Turn right onto St. Botolph and walk half a block. According to the Boston Landmarks Commission, the building has been converted into apartments but the exterior has been preserved.

Symphony Hall

Corner of Massachusetts & Huntington Avenues,
Boston

Paramahansaji gave a series of free lectures at Symphony Hall from September 23 to October 7, 1928. A capacity audience of 2,500 heard his opening lecture, 'Is Everlasting Youth Possible?'

Directions

Take the "E" train on the Green Line to Symphony Station. Symphony Hall is next to the subway exit on the northwest corner of the intersection of Massachusetts & Huntington Avenues. You can contact Symphony Hall for information about tours that they offer.

Jordan Hall

30 Gainsborough Street, Boston

On March 4, 1921, Paramahansaji gave his first public lecture in America at Jordan Hall. On January 5, 1929, he collaborated in the presentation of the 1400 year old tragic comedy, 'The Little Clay Cart.' The performance was a huge success, and the proceeds from the box office were given to the Hindu Students' Loan Fund.

Directions

Take the "E" train on the Green Line to Symphony Station. Walk one block west on Huntington Avenue to Gainsborough Street. Cross the avenue to the southwest corner of the intersection where the New England Conservatory of Music is located. Jordan Hall is a part of the Conservatory. The entry is at 30 Gainsborough Street, a few steps from the corner. Please contact Jordan Hall for information about visiting the auditorium, as there may be events taking place that would prohibit visitors from entering.

Announcement for Jordan Hall
lecture on March 4, 1921

SWAMI YOGANANDA GIVES LECTURE SERIES IN BOSTON

Boston was the first city in America to receive and welcome the Yogoda Sat-Sanga message, in 1920, when Swami Yogananda arrived in that city as the delegate from India to the International Congress of Religious Liberals. The first Yogoda Sat-Sanga Center in America was established in Boston, under the local leadership of Dr. M. W. Lewis of West Somerville, who still continues in charge. For these reasons, Boston occupies a special place in the heart of Swami Yogananda. It was with great joy that he returned there in September of this year to give another series of Boston lectures.

The series was given at Symphony Hall from September 23rd to October 7th, 1928. A capacity audience of over twenty-five hundred people, an exceptional gathering for conservative Boston, was present on the opening night to greet the Swami.

East-West Magazine, November - December 1928 Vol. 3 - 6

Om Tat Sat.

पुत्रीधामस्थ जगद्गुरु शंकराचार्यः
साधुसंग्रहलाघिपतिः
उद्धरतात्मनात्मानं
महि कल्पानकृतं कविवरं
दुर्गातिं वात् गच्छति।
नात्मानं भवसादयेत्

9 Lester Terrace,
West Somerville.

The _____ Dpr. _____

192 _____

February 25, 1921.

SADHU SAVA

—:—

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Swami Yogananda Giri, B. A., Delegate
to the recent International Congress of
Religious Liberals, Vice-President Sadhu
Sava, Secretary Sat-Sanga Home, Founder and
Managing Director of the Brahmacharya Resi-
dential School, Ranchi, India, will lecture
at Jordan Hall, Boston, Friday Evening,
March 4, 1921, at eight o'clock, (admission
free)

The Swami will speak on "The
Analysis of Man's Inner Life, and its Ideal."
— as taught in India. —
You and your friends are cordially
invited.

*“Remain in
the castle of
His presence.
Carry within
you a portable
heaven.”*

Paramahansa Yogananda

The Greater Boston Y.M.C.A.

316 Huntington Avenue, Boston

Paramahansaji lived first at the Boston Y.M.C.A. upon his arrival in Boston on September 19, 1920. He was introduced by various local delegates attending the Congress of Religious Liberals. Later in 1920, Paramahansaji took up residence in Unity House, Park Square, Boston. On January 12, 1929, Paramahansaji gave a talk at the Y.M.C.A. on 'My Mother India' and won enthusiastic support from all present.

Directions

See the directions for Jordan Hall. The Y.M.C.A. is next door to the New England Conservatory of Music on Huntington Avenue.

Temple Israel

Commonwealth Avenue & Blandford Street, Boston

On January 15, 1929, Paramahansaji addressed the Sisterhood of Temple Israel at the request of Rabbi Harry Levi. His address was received enthusiastically. The topic of his talk is not on record.

Directions

Take the "B" train on the Green Line to the first stop after Kenmore Square. The train stops at Blandford Street on Commonwealth Avenue. The auditorium, now named the Alfred L. Morse Auditorium, is on the southwest corner of the intersection. The auditorium also may be reached by taking either the "C" or "D" train of the Green Line to Kenmore Square, and then walking one block west on Commonwealth Avenue.

Harvard University

Harvard Square, Cambridge

Paramahansaji spoke for the first time at Harvard University on February 23, 1923, on 'India and Internationalism' at a luncheon held by the Harvard Liberal Club. The exact place where he spoke is not on record. On November 11, 1928, Paramahansaji addressed the students on the subject 'India' at the Harvard Union. His talk was received with 'deafening applause and sustained cheering,' and aroused a great deal of interest.

Directions

Take the Red Line to Harvard Station, located in Harvard Square. Several entrances to Harvard Yard are located near the square. To reach the Harvard Union, now called "The Freshman Union," walk east through the yard to Quincy Street, which borders the east side of the yard. Turn right on Quincy Street. The Union is on the northeast corner of Quincy and Harvard Streets.

Pier 3, East Boston

Marginal Street, Boston (Now Piers Park)

On September 19, 1920, the City of Sparta, carrying Paramahansa Yogananda, docked at Pier 3, East Boston. The dock has recently been newly landscaped and renovated and is now part of Piers Park, a thriving public recreation spot with beautiful views of downtown Boston across the inner harbor.

*“Place your
heart with God.*

The more you

seek peace in

Him, the more

that peace will

devour your

worries and

sufferings.”

Paramahansa Yogananda

Directions

Piers Park is less than ½ mile from the Maverick Station stop on the MBTA's Blue Line. Exit the station and take a left on Sumner Street. Walk two blocks and take a right on Orleans Street. Marginal Street is the third left. Piers Park is two blocks up on the right.

THE BOSTON GLOBE—MONDAY

LEYLAND LINER CITY OF SPARTA ARRIVES HERE FROM FAR EAST

Diverted to Boston at Port Said, She Had Uneventful Trip of 50 Days—Hindu Liberal, American Child Who Can't Speak English And Returning Missionaries Among Passengers



A picturesque figure in the group was Swami Yoganadageri, a Hindu of Ranchi, India. He wore a brilliant costume and almost K O'd the newspapermen when he bid them good morning in perfectly good English. He has come to this country to attend a religious conference in Boston and later plans to make a lecturing tour through the country.

Swami Yoganadageri gave a talk on "The battle of Life." He said that he is a liberal. He represents a society favoring the establishment of residential schools in India for the training of the children of his race.

GROUP OF PASSENGERS WHO WERE AMONG THE ARRIVALS ON THE CITY OF SPARTA.

Upper Left—Miss Helen Nighewander, formerly of Toronto. Upper Right—The Misses Gueevjian, Armenian refugees. Center—Constance Maxlow. Lower Right—Swami Yoganadageri.

The Leyland Liner City of Sparta, Calcutta and Port Said and reached port yesterday forenoon after she had been at various points. A picturesque figure in the group was

Article in The Boston Globe, Monday, September 20, 1920

Emerson House

28 Cambridge Turnpike, Concord, Massachusetts

In 1921, Paramahanji visited Emerson House in Concord, the home from 1835 to 1882 of Ralph Waldo Emerson, whose writings he admired.

Directions

Take Route 2 West through Concord. Where Route 2 turns left to become 2/2A/Concord Turnpike, continue straight onto Cambridge Turnpike. Emerson House is located at 28 Cambridge Turnpike across from Concord Museum. The house is open to the public from mid-April to mid-October, Thursday through Sunday.



9 *Lester Terrace*

West Somerville, Massachusetts

Private residence

This is the former home of Sister Yogamata (Mrs. Alice Hasey). Paramahansaji was a dinner guest here shortly after his arrival in America. It was in this house that Sri Yukteswarji's strawberry prophecy was realized (see the first page of chapter 21 of *Autobiography of a Yogi* .) Paramahansaji conducted many classes here from January through October 1921, probably in the room with the bay window.

Directions

*Take the Red Line to Davis Square Station. After exiting the station, go left on Holland St. Take the first left onto Dover St., and the first right onto Meacham Road. Lester Terrace is the second right. **Note: this is a private residence. Please do not enter the property grounds or disturb the residents unless a prior arrangement has been made for a visit.***

*“The kingdom
of God is just
behind the
darkness of
closed eyes, and
the first gate
that opens to it
is your peace.”*

Paramahansa Yogananda

Plum Island

“In April 1921 Dr. and Mrs. Lewis drove Paramahansaji and a small party of students to a little island resort off the coast of Massachusetts. The plan was to stay there for a week. On the first day the weather was very cold, and sleet was falling. The temperature remained cool, although the weather did improve, and on some days there was sunshine. On one such day Swamiji asked Doctor to go for a walk on the beach to a breakwater that ran out some distance into the bay. When they reached their destination, the tide was far out; the high rocks were dry.

“‘Let us meditate here,’ Swamiji said. They seated themselves cross-legged on the rocks, and Dr. Lewis thought it would be wonderful to meditate there in the sunshine.

“Swamiji was soon deep within, but Doctor was battling the forces without. The rocks were hard, the sun bright, the air brisk. He saw the great calmness of Swamiji, and thought ‘If Master can do it, I can do it.’ Time sped on and, after tremendous effort (“probably on Guru’s part as well as mine,” Doctor said), the disciple felt great tranquility. More time passed, and occasionally Doctor would look carefully about to see how close the tidewater was coming. Watching its inevitable approach, Doctor frequently affirmed: ‘If he can stay, I can stay.’

“Five hours passed. Master opened his eyes just as a great wave was about to splash over them. “Doctor, Doctor!” Swamiji exclaimed. ‘Let’s get out of here!’ Guru and disciple departed with speed. Later Doctor said, ‘That test of sitting with Master for five hours on the rocks while the tide was rising removed from me forever all feelings of restlessness during long periods of meditation.’” – *Dr. M. W. Lewis - The Life Story of One of the Earliest American Disciples of Paramahansa Yogananda, Self-Realization Fellowship*

The probable dates of the trip were Sunday April 17 – Saturday April 23, 1921. Weather records show that Boston and points north were very cold with rain, sleet and snow on April 17 and 18. Weather at other times in the month does not match the trip description. Also, April 19 was Patriots Day, a Massachusetts holiday often included in spring vacations.



The South Jetty at Plum Island where Param

In 1920, Plum Island had about 300 summer cottages and homes with spacious lots and broad views. In July of that year, Alice Hasey (who became Sister Yogamata) and her husband Ward purchased Lot 24 Block A, now 27 Harbor Street, Newburyport, at the northern end of Plum Island. The current home does not date to Master's visit; Sister sold the property in October 1937 and a new house was built in 1945.

The breakwater on which Paramahansaji and Doctor meditated was South Jetty, located at the northern end of Plum Island where the Merrimack River meets the sea. This is a 10-15 minute walk from the Haseys' home. South Jetty is now as it was in 1921 when Paramahansaji visited: a jumble of boulders extending into the ocean, about 15 feet wide at the top and only four feet above sea level at high tide. Tidal currents are very strong; sea levels can change up to 12 feet between high and low tide.

Correlation of historic records and the trip description show that the meditation probably occurred between 5:30 a.m. and 10:30 a.m. on Thursday, April 21. Records show that the sun rose between 4:50 and 5:00 am from April 17 to 21, 1921. Assuming that Paramahansaji and Doctor arose about dawn on the 21st and walked to the jetty, they could have been seated by 5:30 am, which was an hour after low tide. The high rocks would have been dry, as mentioned in the story. High tide, and the quick end to the meditation, would have occurred at 10:30 am. For the meditation to have occurred on the 19th or 20th, one must make the unlikely assumption that Master and Doctor walked out on the hazardous jetty in complete darkness at 3:40 a.m. to 4:40 a.m. in order to meditate for five hours before high tide. The temperature was in the mid-forties.

Directions

Plum Island is in the northeast corner of Massachusetts about an hour's drive from Boston. From Boston, take Interstate Rte 95N to Exit 57, Rte. 113 at Newburyport. Follow Rte 113 East about 3 miles, turn left on Green Street, go to the end and turn right on Merrimack Street which becomes Water Street. Follow this about 3 miles to Plum Island, take the second left on Northern Boulevard and follow a little over one mile to the parking lot (\$10 daily fee) at the end. A wooden walkway leads from the parking lot part-way to the jetty and the rest of the 10 minute walk is across sand.



Paramahansa Yogananda meditated with Dr. Lewis

Worcester Sites

Girls' Trade School/Fanning Trade High School

24 Chatham Street, Worcester, Massachusetts

On November 5, 1923, Paramahansaji, traveling to Worcester with Dr. and Mrs. Lewis, lectured to the Applied Psychology Club. The subject of his lecture was 'Concentration and the Cure of Nervousness.' He also demonstrated 'the usefulness of exercise by will.'

Directions

Worcester is located 40 miles west of Boston . From the Mass Pike West, take exit 11 for MA-122 toward Millbury/Worcester. After ½ mile, turn left at Grafton Road (MA-122). After 3¼ miles, you will see a traffic circle. Take the 2nd exit onto Grafton St. After ½ mile, turn right to stay on Grafton St. At Washington Square, take the 3rd exit, then after ¼ mile, turn right at Foster St. In another ¼ mile, turn left at Main St. Go ¼ mile and turn right at Chatham St. Take the first right onto Aldrich St. The entrance is on the left.

Bancroft Hotel

50 Franklin Street, Worcester, Massachusetts

While in Worcester, Paramahansaji stayed at the Bancroft Hotel, now an apartment building, at 50 Franklin Street. He conducted a series of classes there following his lecture to the Applied Psychology Club.

Directions

The old Bancroft Hotel Building is approximately 2 blocks from Hildreth Hall. From Hildreth Hall, continue on Aldrich St toward Chestnut St. Make a slight right at Chestnut St, then turn right at Pleasant St. Take the first right onto Main St., and then take the second left onto Franklin St.

*“Saturate
everything
with the
thought of God.
Realize that
all that exists
is centered in
God.”*

Paramahansa Yogananda

Plymouth Rock

Plymouth, Massachusetts

On October 5, 1920, several hundred delegates from the United States, Canada, England, Holland, India, France, and Switzerland visited Plymouth. Paramahansaji represented India as a delegate to the International Congress of Religious Liberals. Paramahansaji's photograph was taken while he sat on Plymouth Rock.

Directions

Plymouth is located 35 miles south of Boston. By automobile, take Route 3 South, or take the Greyhound Bus from its terminal at South Station in Boston. Signs in Plymouth will direct you to Plymouth Rock and other places of interest, including Plymouth Plantation and the Mayflower II.

*With the deepening of inner
and outer silence,
Thy peace comes to me.
I will try always to hear the echo
of Thy footsteps.*

~ Paramahansa Yogananda, *Metaphysical Meditations*

Boston Center of Self-Realization Fellowship

66 Fellsway West • Somerville, MA 02145

(617) 528-9692

Email: boston.srf@gmail.com

Web: www.bostoncentersrf.org