

Sarah Smith's Final Years

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Introduction

When Sarah Smith chose to return to America after 51 years of missionary life in Japan, she said, "I have prayed over this and I am as sure of guidance now as when I decided first to come to Japan" (Monk, November 16, 1931, p. 2). Her comment reveals the awareness of God's presence in and direction of her life which had characterized her 80-year journey to this point.

The following is a look into the ways she elected to invest her time, energies, talents, and resources in the remaining years of her life from 1931 to 1947. It demonstrates much of what this sense of being guided by the hand of God meant to her.

Life in Pasadena, California

The *Asama Maru* sailed from Yokohama on October 8, 1931, with Sarah Smith on board. According to Board of Foreign Missions records, she arrived in the United States on October 23 in San Francisco.⁽¹⁾ Her passage had been paid for by the Board. Among the possessions she must have either carried or shipped were the fox neckpiece and lap robe which she received shortly before departing Sapporo at a farewell tea party given in her honor by the Educational Society of Hokkaido and the Educational Society of Sapporo.

Key words: Presbyterian missions, Pasadena Japanese Union Church, internment camps,
Hokusei Gakuen, Sarah C. Smith

Smith selected Pasadena, California, as her retirement home, and she lived there until her death in 1947. Her particular reasons for choosing this location from among all the other possibilities are unknown. However, the warm, dry climate of Southern California must have been among the factors she considered, as a person who had suffered from rheumatism since her thirties. Combined with her lack of family or close relatives in her home state of New York, the relative freedom which Southern California afforded from the snow, cold, and perhaps accompanying rheumatic pain may have formed a compelling reason.

The presence of relatively large numbers of Japanese people along America's West Coast was likely an attractive point to her, as well. The cosmopolitan and international environment of the Los Angeles area in general and Pasadena specifically may have been a plus. The Pasadena City Directory for the years Smith lived there states that the native born population comprised only 10% of the whole.

Smith no doubt knew of a retirement home for Presbyterian ministers located in Pasadena, called Monte Vista Grove Homes. The number of residents there fluctuated during Smith's years in Pasadena from approximately 20 to 45, some of whom were retired missionaries. This retirement community's existence meant that she would have opportunities to meet people whose lives and careers had much in common with her own. She knew former Presbyterian missionaries to Japan Dr. and Mrs. John C. Worley, who were already Pasadena residents, and Miss Gertrude S. Bigelow, who moved there either shortly before or after Smith did. Miss Mary H. Ransom and then Miss Isabelle M. Ward would arrive from Japan several years later. The opportunities for friendships with these and other kindred spirits may have helped shape Smith's choice of a location for her retirement.

As a career educator, she may have also found Pasadena's educational environment attractive. In her first three winters in the city (1931-1933), Albert Einstein was also living there, lecturing at the California Institute of Technology. The museums and many other cultural attractions likely helped provide an atmosphere which a retired teacher, principal, and missionary such as Smith could find stimulating.

In an advertisement entitled "Pasadena: A City of Character," the Pasadena City Directory for most of the years Smith lived there included the following introduction to the city.

Pasadena, summer and winter, enjoys a climate that is superb. It is an ideal home city with clean, moral atmosphere, delightful surroundings and possessing a citizenship above the average.

It is essentially a city of homes, 835 feet above the sea level, with the Sierra Madre Mountains protecting it from heavy winds. It is surrounded by great natural playgrounds of entrancing beauty.

Pasadena is the home of the California Institute of Technology and of the administration and laboratory departments of the Carnegie Institution Mount Wilson observatory—two of the most famous scientific institutions in the world.

(1932, p. 16)

Pasadena's population in 1931 was an estimated 80,000, and it grew roughly 50% during Smith's years there to exceed 125,000. It was situated nine miles from Los Angeles, which could be reached in 15 minutes by way of a six-lane highway.

In her approximately 15 years in this city, Sarah Smith lived at four separate locations. They were all in the same general residential area, close to shopping, and all within a roughly four-block radius of each other. Each was a car ride of about five minutes away from the Pasadena Japanese Union Church, which she joined. They all fell squarely within the Caucasian area in the racially segregated city that Pasadena was in those days.

According to the City Directory, for her first approximately six years there (through mid-1937), she resided at 382 East Del Mar Boulevard. As far as these records reveal, this was a private residence in which Smith lived alone. It appears likely that she simply elected to live here rather than with the other Presbyterian ministers in the Monte Vista Grove Homes noted above. Various explanations for her not living in this retirement community are possible, of course, such as room availability or cost. However, the other retired single Presbyterian women missionaries to Japan mentioned above who came to Pasadena at roughly the same time as Smith, did choose to reside at Monte Vista Grove Homes.

One of these was Miss Gertrude S. Bigelow, who lived there from 1935 through her death in 1941. Like Smith, she had recently completed a long career (40 years), serving in Tokyo, Yamaguchi, and Shimonoseki as Smith had in Tokyo, Hakodate, and Sapporo. She and Smith had worked in the same mission organization since the 1880s and in the same subsection of it (the East Japan Mission) for approximately six years. Miss Mary H. Ransom, who likewise served in Osaka and Wakayama while Smith was in Sapporo, came to live in Pasadena in 1937 and 1938, part of that time at Monte Vista Grove Homes. Miss Isabelle M. Ward, apparently the woman who had served with Smith in Sapporo for five years from 1904 to 1908, would later live in this retirement community during the 1940s. Thus, Smith had much in common with these ladies and no doubt others there.

Yet she apparently preferred to stay more to herself. One may speculate that this choice reflects the personality she both took to Japan originally and developed through long years of work in a pioneer environment. Particularly by this point in her life's journey, she may have come to feel more comfortable alone and wished to live a somewhat solitary life as long as her health allowed.

For the five years from late 1937 through 1942, Smith apparently resided at 256 South Marengo Avenue.⁽²⁾ Though until 1937 this location had been Sunland Villa, apparently it was re-opened in 1938 as Lutheran Homes, or Good Samaritan Home, with Mrs. May Merrick (widow of W. M. Merrick) as manager, or "hostess," as the position was termed at times. Mrs. Darlene Studley also served as superintendent of this facility in 1938. Management changed frequently, with Mrs. M. Edna Gould in charge in 1939, Mrs. Rena Bouchard in 1940, and Helen D. Leech in 1941 and 1942. Each of these women apparently played a significant role in providing care for Sarah Smith's daily needs. Records skip at this point, but when they resume in 1947, this address is no longer listed in the Pasadena City Directory as Lutheran Homes. It is possible, therefore, that Smith moved from this location because of its closing.

At some time (likely following 1942), Sarah Smith's home was at 212 South Euclid Avenue. Beginning about 1937, Peabody Missionary Home had been in operation at this address, under the management of Mrs. Elizabeth C. MacPhie, the widow of a local minister, John MacPhie. By 1942, Mrs. Cora S. Hicks (widow of W. W. Hicks) was living at this home and by 1943 had become manager. It is likely that she both knew and played a central role in caring for Smith, who would have been past age 90 by this time.

At the time of her death in 1947, Sarah Smith was living at 466 South Oakland Avenue. Little information is available about her living situation at this point; however, a note in her Board of Foreign Missions personnel file indicates that in 1946 she was living in a rest home. Neither this South Oakland address nor any of the other three at which she lived appear in the City Directory as apartments or boarding houses do, with residents listed by name. This may indicate that each of Smith's residences, including Lutheran Homes and Peabody Missionary Home was more of a small-scale operation than one providing housing for greater numbers of individuals.

Smith and Pasadena Japanese Union Church

The greatest amount of extant materials related to Sarah Smith's final years involve her life in Pasadena Japanese Union Church. A Board of Foreign Missions review of Smith's life states that she had "spent many happy hours" at this church (1947, p. 2). The pastor, Rev. Kengo Tajima, described "Miss Smith" as someone who "attends Sunday morning worship every time without fail" (March 23, 1933, author's translation). Though she played no leadership role in this group, as a Board of Foreign Missions "Memorial Minute" phrases it, "her benign influence . . . richly blessed all about her" (1947, p. 2).

In order to examine in more detail how she represented this type of influence in the life of this congregation, it may be helpful to first look briefly at the background of Pasadena

Japanese Union Church. People of Japanese descent in Pasadena had numbered only 17 in the 1900 census; however, by the mid-1920s the population had increased to around 700. It expanded further during Smith's ⁽³⁾ years in the city and reached a pre-war high of approximately 200 families and 1,000 people.

With the goal of ministering to the Japanese community, a variety of local churches began programs which addressed both spiritual and social needs. In addition to teaching the Christian faith, they provided housing and language instruction for the Japanese, predominantly young men, who were adjusting to life in a new country. Two churches, the Congregational and Friends congregations, combined their work and in 1913 organized a church. The word *Union* in its name reflects this ecumenical nature of its formation, development, and identity. Throughout the next several decades, these local groups of believers and a variety of others including Episcopalians, Methodists, and Baptists provided volunteer workers and funding for the organization. They gave oversight through representatives who comprised a governing body called the Board of Federated Missions.

Pasadena Japanese Union Church's emergence was part of a larger movement of Japanese who came to accept Christian faith. The first known Japanese American believer was Kanichi Miyama, who became a Christian on February 22, 1877, in the Methodist Chinese Mission in San Francisco. From the 1890s through the turn of the century, several Japanese churches were successfully planted along the West Coast. From these would grow over 180 congregations in the 100 years following Mr. Miyama's conversion.

When Sarah Smith arrived at the Pasadena Japanese Union Church, probably in late 1931, its membership had increased to 86. It was comprised totally or nearly totally of first generation Japanese. At this point, its Sunday School was providing Christian education for 200 children. This church not only held meaning for the Christians in Pasadena but had strong links to the Japanese community as a whole. Though the Pasadena Japanese Cultural Institute played a role as well, Japanese Union Church was the primary civic group serving the Japanese people in Pasadena. It was virtually the only religious organization which included a significant portion of the community. Even the Pasadena Buddhist Church which would form later was not organized until the 1950s.

The Japanese Union Church was what its pastor called in his "Pastor's Report to the Annual Meeting of the Board" an "inter-racial [sic] and inter-creedal work in this corner of the Lord's Kingdom" (Tajima, K., 1935). With its leader a Congregational minister and a variety of denominational influences continuing to form the group of believers, it was actually not a Presbyterian church which Smith joined, though she had been a Presbyterian nearly all her life. However, the theological teachings to which the church held in its statements of faith were quite similar to those which Smith and other Presbyterians embraced.

In fact, only a few years after her death, the church actually joined the Presbyterian denomination when it called as its pastor a Presbyterian minister.

The church had called Kengo Tajima as pastor in 1928, and he was its leader during the majority of Smith's years in Pasadena, until 1942. Though born in Japan, his education included study at the Pacific School of Religion in Berkeley, California, and at Yale University. He had taught at Tohoku Gakuin University, where a room bearing his name still exists, containing the books he donated to the institution. His ministry included pastoring churches in Utah, California, and Ohio. Pastor Tajima was widely regarded as a gifted person of deep conviction and a strong personality who led the church effectively in very trying times. By the time of the Pearl Harbor attacks and subsequent forced evacuation of Japanese from the West Coast of America, the church he served had grown to a membership of roughly 194 and a total of approximately 334 involved in the life of the church. This was a remarkably large portion of the entire Japanese community in Pasadena.⁽³⁾ The group had successfully upgraded its facilities, as well as maintaining a Christian witness and serving the community.

Sarah Smith became part of this group of Japanese Christians and actively supported its work during her retirement years. Apparently part of her sense of being guided by her Heavenly Father was joining herself to the life of this community of believers.

Relationships with People in Church Life. From all indications, Smith enjoyed warm relationships with a wide variety of people through her membership in Pasadena Japanese Union Church. Soon after she moved to the city, the church *Weekly Calendar* included a brief introduction of her life and work in Japan, including her personal motto: "Forget the past, labor for the present, looking towards the future" (Tajima, K., March 24, 1932). Perhaps these words capture something of the pioneer spirit which seems to have propelled her through life up to this point. They may also reveal a will set on facing the future positively, as she both advanced through her last years in this world and prepared for eternity.

The church welcomed their new member by hosting a party to help her celebrate her 81st birthday. They held a similar reception in her honor the following year, as well. Another sign that Smith was enjoying her hard-earned years of retirement is a note in the church *Weekly Calendar* that she, along with five other ladies, had taken a 20-day trip by automobile to Victoria in Canada, a journey covering over 3,000 kilometers. Her traveling companions were Gertrude Bigelow, mentioned above (who had apparently been a guest speaker at this church, though not a member), along with four other unnamed ladies. The writer notes what a remarkable summer vacation Smith had taken for a person over age 80 (Tajima, K., September 9, 1934).

Some church members living today still recall being in church with Sarah Smith when they were growing up. Ted Tajima, a son of the pastor at that time, remembers going to her home to take her by car to church. Toshiko Nakamura, a teenager during the early 1930s and recently deceased, likewise had memories of her father, Masaichi Matsumoto, taking Smith to church on Sundays. The impression of Miss Smith left in her mind was of a “nice, kind” elderly woman who was “very active in the Fujinkai,” also known as the Christian Women's Group and the Women's Christian Association (October 1, 2006). Others such as Mary Nakagawa, Jessie Sugano, and Setsuko Yamada were young people in the church when Smith was a member but had little if any occasion to speak with her directly, so have no particular remembrances.

Occasional visitors from Japan also provided Sarah Smith opportunities to renew acquaintance with people she had known there. Michi Kawai, one of the original seven students in the school which was to become Hokusei Gakuen, came to the United States in 1934 on a speaking tour. By this time in her life, she had become head of Keisen Jogakuen and a well-known figure in international Christian education. Her visit to Pasadena and her former teacher provided the church an opportunity to hear her lectures and get to know her at a reception held for her and Sarah Smith. Similarly, a visiting evangelist and pastor by the name of Muraoka apparently came to Southern California in early 1936 with his wife and stopped in Pasadena to visit Smith, who had developed ties with the couple in Japan.

Church records indicate that Smith did not hold positions of leadership within the church. Rather, her role at this stage of life was more to perform a “ministry of presence,” it appears. The church constitution allowed only ordained ministers to preach, and Smith had almost certainly never received ordination. The congregation did have a variety of programs and groups functioning within it. Besides the Sunday worship in which Smith participated regularly, these included the Junior Service of Worship, Sunday School, the Young People's Society, the Service of Prayer and Testimony, the Kingdom of God Prayer Meeting, Japanese language lessons taught by the pastor, and the Christian Women's Group. Japanese Union Church also regularly took part in a wide variety of activities together with churches of other Christian denominations, such as a Joint Summer Bible School, sponsored by the Southern California Japanese Church Federation. However, the only group within the church to which Smith clearly belonged was the Christian Women's Group, and her name does not regularly appear on its membership lists. Though numerous other Caucasian women and men from local churches supporting the Japanese Union Church took active roles as Sunday School teachers, for instance, Smith apparently did not do any of the kind of leading that she had done in Sunday schools for so many years in Japan.

Supporting the Church Financially in Difficult Times. One role she did regularly play was making financial contributions to the church. Though her pension income was fixed

at \$1,000 per year by her denomination's Board of Foreign Missions, she made it a part of her life of faith in Christ to regularly give tithes or offerings. The standard amount of her contribution was \$5, and this rarely varied, as far as records reveal. In her earlier years in the church, she often designated the purpose of her gifts, and in later years they more often were made as "monthly offerings" or "special offerings" with no particular designation.

Some of Sarah Smith's designated contributions included more general purposes such as "Christmas," "Easter," or to celebrate the church's 20th anniversary. Others were more specific, such as her gift shortly after arriving in Pasadena for cushions for the pews on which people sat during worship. Her contribution to the Christian Women's Group was directed toward advertising this group's activities to students. This designation may reflect the concern for young people which she had demonstrated over the course of her life in Japan. Due in part to her support, the Young People's Society grew from its beginning in 1929 to the point of drawing 100 people to its meetings in 1936.

Smith and others in the church gave offerings in order to help Japanese people who were suffering in the Mexicali area on the Mexico-United States border in 1932. Though the precise nature of the need they were addressing is not known, it is clear that Smith took part in this humanitarian relief effort in the name of Christ.

Two years later, the church faced a loan repayment deadline for the land they had purchased four years before. Smith contributed \$20 to help the church keep this financial commitment.

As the tension increased between Japan and the United States in the months preceding World War II, the church took part in a campaign to gather funds for America's War Chest. Contributions, encouraged by the federal government, went to the military when made. Sarah Smith joined numerous others in the church in donating an unspecified amount to this cause. In light of the many patriotic sentiments recorded by church members during these days, it is likely that these donations were an expression of the strong desire they had for others in their nation to recognize that they were not the enemy but loyal fellow citizens.

None of these various offerings from Sarah Smith were terribly large in amount, as far as records show. For the years in which she is known to have given offerings, her typical \$5 contribution would translate into \$62-\$72 in terms of purchasing power in the year 2004 (National Aeronautics and Space Administration [NASA], 2005). As the yearly budget of the church only totaled approximately \$2,500 per year, Smith's offerings constituted a portion of the total somewhere in the neighborhood of 2%.

Here again, her presence appears to have been far more constant and dependable than flamboyant and outspoken. Yet particularly because her first 10 years in Pasadena all came during the Great Depression, the financial contributions she was able to make brought considerable benefit to a small church struggling to develop.

Helping the Church Endure Racism. Another role which Sarah Smith was able to play in this church's life, even as her physical strength dissipated, was standing with her Japanese and Japanese-American brothers and sisters in Christ while they endured racial injustice. Even before the Pearl Harbor attacks and subsequent forced evacuation of people of Japanese descent from America's West Coast, those with whom Smith worshiped and served in Pasadena were routinely subjected to racist treatment in everyday life. Not only were neighborhoods strictly divided along racial lines, but also land sales operated under the *restrictive covenant*, or agreement not to sell land to non-Caucasians. The use of the religious term *covenant* to describe this blatantly discriminatory practice carried a particular irony for Christians such as those in the Japanese Union Church. Citizenship privileges were legally denied Japanese on the basis of race. Because bank loans were usually not available to them, members of the Japanese Union Church found it necessary to form a savings and credit association, through which members could obtain small loans for household and personal needs. In large part due to the reality that few if any employers would hire them, the vast majority of those from Japan were self-employed, working for instance as small shopkeepers. Others served as domestic helpers in the homes of the wealthy. The socioeconomic inequities of the times made it particularly difficult for the church to provide full funding for itself and all the more remarkable that it was able to expand its physical plant through the years of the Depression.

Well before the outbreak of World War II, the church was demonstrating its loyalty to the country where its people had chosen to live, for instance by its pastor's encouraging the congregation to write to local soldiers who were stationed far from home and suffering from loneliness. Church members also actually helped finance the American military effort, as the preceding has made clear. In the weeks following the Pearl Harbor attacks, there were numerous newspaper editorials written by those from the Japanese Union Church and elsewhere openly and passionately declaring their loyalty to the United States.

Despite their going to these lengths, however, the American government made the decision to forcibly relocate people of Japanese origin, most of them American citizens, in internment camps inland. Over 120,000 Japanese were forced from their homes on the West Coast into relocation centers in the nation's interior. Many from the Japanese Union Church were incarcerated at Gila River in Arizona. The church had no choice but to close, holding its final worship service on May 10, 1942, and did not reopen until the end of the war had come.

There were some non-Japanese in the city who felt that the internment program was a violation of Japanese Pasadenans' civil rights. Most of the over 112 local churches stood silently by in the face of this treatment of their neighbors. However, a few citizens such as Robert Millikan (the renowned scientist and Chairman of the Executive Council at California Institute of Technology), Hugh Anderson (a businessman), and William C. Carr (a realtor) worked on behalf of the Japanese. Local Christians directed the use of two Japanese Union Church buildings as American Friends hostels. Carr and Anderson led a group called Friends of the American Way, which was formed to work on behalf of the displaced Japanese. They used the church's buildings, which had been placed under the control of the Federated Missions Board, to work for the restoration of Japanese civil rights. They wrote monthly letters to all Pasadenans in the internment camps to let them know that they were not being forgotten. One consciousness-raising step they took was putting up a bulletin board with a service flag and the names of 117 Japanese-Americans from Pasadena (including the Japanese Union Church) who were currently serving in the United States military.

During these years of the church members' exile, the organization's facilities were also used for storing the private possessions of its members. The Federated Missions Board ensured that this personal property was kept under close watch, with the result that it survived the war years largely intact. By contrast, the possessions put in storage at the local Japanese Cultural Center during the war were not monitored as carefully, and many were lost to vandalism. After Japanese Union Church members began returning from the internment, its buildings functioned as dormitories and a job placement center.

In these turbulent years, Sarah Smith apparently played no prominent role in the efforts just described on behalf of the Japanese. The diminishing of her physical strength likely prevented this. It is not possible to know what if any social price she had to pay for standing on the side of the Japanese in her church. Nevertheless, her continued presence as a member of this family of faith during troubled times was clearly not without significance. Hers was the only Caucasian name on the membership list of the church. Though numerous others from other local groups of believers played various leadership and supporting roles, she was the only one to join this particular organization as a sister in Christ. Her financial and spiritual support of the church, along with her friendship, through the years it was enduring social injustice appear to be the key contributions she made.

Her presence helped set the tone for those who would make Pasadena a place which appeared warm and welcoming enough to attract many of the people of Japanese descent who were released at the end of the war and had to again choose a place to live. The positive, supportive influence she gave to those around her also helped set the stage for the church's recovery and the post-war growth it enjoyed, which exceeded anything it had experienced

previously. Before she left Japan in 1931, a Japanese pastor had said of Smith, "She is more a Japanese, after these fifty years than am I" (Monk, November 16, 1931, p. 2). Perhaps the fact that in one sense she identified herself with the oppressed members of this congregation was to her a form of self-expression.

Declining Health and Death

Sarah C. Smith displayed robust health, at least at times, well past age 80, apparently able to live alone and even travel great distances, as noted above. However, she may also have struggled with health issues including her chronic rheumatism during these relatively strong years. Pastor Tajima notes in a *Weekly Calendar* that Smith seems to have endured difficulty over the course of her life but preferred not to talk too freely about it (March 24, 1932). Perhaps there is a connection between this impression of Smith and her quoting the Bible words of Romans 15:3 in a farewell worship service soon before she departed Japan ("For even Christ did not please himself but, as it is written: 'The insults of those who insult you have fallen on me'" [New International Version]). It is possible that the suffering to which she referred included her own struggles with illness.

Existing records in Smith's Board of Foreign Missions personnel file indicate that, according to a Miss Ransom (no doubt Mary H. Ransom, noted above), Sarah Smith was in the hospital to undergo cataract surgery in 1936, likely soon before her 85th birthday ("Missionary personal," n.d.). Another letter written 10 years later to the Board from Janet F. Smith reported, "Monday I called on Miss Smith in the Rest Home where she is living. She is in bed most of the time now" ("Untitled data sheet," n.d.). Her Certificate of Death indicates that she suffered from senility. No other information is available on the specifics of her gradual decline in health.

Sarah Smith's life ended on February 18, 1947, only weeks before her 96th birthday. A letter from Alice Monk states that a friend who was with Smith at the time of her death recorded the following:

She went in a beautiful, peaceful way. She was sitting in her chair with the morning sun on her face. God had claimed her, but the Christian influence of her life goes on in the lives of hundreds of her beloved students in Japan (May 12, 1947, p. 2).

The cause of death was acute myocarditis, which lasted for a duration of approximately a day, her Certificate of Death states. Myocarditis is the weakening of the heart muscle, an uncommon disease usually caused by a virus (U. S. National Library of Medicine and National Institutes of Health, 2006). In Smith's case medical information was recorded not by a physician but the coroner, George H. Hazeltine. This suggests that, in agreement

with the letter from Smith's friend, she likely died of this heart ailment not in a hospital but at home after being seen by a doctor.

The personal data on Sarah Smith in her Certificate of Death were supplied by a woman named Ada C. Elston, who is also listed as a friend in Smith's Board of Foreign Missions data file ("Untitled data sheet," n.d.). She was a bookkeeper at a local business (Orth Van and Storage) which had an office just next to the church to which Sarah Smith belonged. Elston also lived in the same neighborhood Smith did throughout Smith's years in Pasadena and apparently, as the retired missionary had been, was a single working woman. She was in her late forties through mid-sixties (roughly 30 years younger than Smith) while the two were neighbors and friends. Very little more is known about Ms. Elston, including how she obtained the information she did about Smith.

This information includes Sarah Smith's middle name, which is recorded on the Certificate of Death as *Clecia*, not *Clara* as she has been known at Hokusei Gakuen. The local newspaper, the Pasadena Star-News, states in its obituary that Sarah Smith was survived by her niece, Mrs. Charles Hedden of Watkins Glen, New York ("Obituaries, Smith," 1947). No family member or relative closer than this niece is noted as living at the time. Furthermore, it is far from clear that Mrs. Hedden (a daughter of one of Smith's sisters, presumably) knew Sarah Smith's official middle name. The possibility or likelihood exists that no one in her family but Smith herself knew the name and, thus, there simply was no one in a position of authority independent of her who could declare what it actually was. Perhaps she told her friend the name at some point and was indeed lucid enough at that time to be speaking correctly herself, then this Ms. Elston recorded the Certificate of Death information after Miss Smith had expired. If this is the way events transpired, it appears impossible at this point to determine with complete accuracy which middle name is in fact correct or from where the "incorrect" one originated. Further research still appears necessary.

Sarah Smith's funeral seems to have taken place on February 20, 1947, two days after her death, and been conducted at Lamb Funeral Home in Pasadena by Rev. John Cobb Worley. As noted above, he had served with his wife, Florence, in Japan (Matsuyama) for 16 years. Smith would certainly have known him. After resigning and returning to America 16 years before Smith, Worley had lived in Pasadena and served First Presbyterian Church while also conducting tours of the Middle East ("J. C. Worley dies," 1951).

Sarah C. Smith was buried in Mountain View Cemetery in the city of Altadena, adjacent to Pasadena. She is still remembered and honored by many in Japan and the United States, including the members of First Presbyterian Church, Altadena, the current name of the church to which she belonged in her final years.

Conclusion

Alice Monk reports in reviewing Sarah Smith's life that shortly before she departed from Japan for the final time, a pastor said of her that she

did not doubt or fear . . . to follow her Lord's guiding, whether to Japan itself . . . nor a little later to the wilds of Hokkaido, remote even to Japanese. . . . She came not because she chose, but because God called. And now she was returning to what must seem the strange land of her birth, again at what she felt sure was God's bidding (November 16, 1931, p. 2).

In the last segment of her life in Pasadena, California, she likewise chose to invest her remaining energies in her new church family of faith, in old friends from mission life in Japan, and in other ways seeking to be faithful to obey the call and follow the guidance she believed she continued to receive from God.

The way Smith chose to spend her years after retirement reflects not only her unchanging commitment to her God but also, as a result, her commitment to the Japanese people. She lived out her years of retirement in the United States, like those she had in Tokyo and Hokkaido, in close relationship with people from Japan. Through her often unseen yet constant "ministry of presence," she appears to have succeeded in being a nourishing and sustaining influence on the Japanese people and others around her, even long after leaving Japan.

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Notes

- (1) A "Missionary Personal" card in Smith's Board of Foreign Missions personnel file provides this date. A letter from Alice M. Monk (Smith's successor as head of Hokusei Gakuen) dated November 16, 1931, is less precise, putting the arrival date at "October 23 or 24." Another untitled Board of Foreign Missions personnel file card records her as arriving in the United States on October 31 of that year.
- (2) There are no records of her specific address for 1939.
- (3) Pasadena's Japanese population (Japanese-Americans and Japanese living in America) is variously estimated to have been from 600 to 1,100.

[Abstract]

Sarah Smith's Final Years

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Research on Sarah C. Smith, Hokusei Gakuen's founder, has dealt almost exclusively with her youth and later life and work in Japan. However, the time she spent in America after returning there in 1931 spans over 15 years. She spent these remaining years in a life which, though different in context from the one she had known in Japan, still reflected the values, spirit, and types of service which characterized her 51 years in this country. An understanding of her final years helps provide a more complete picture of her life as a whole, including her earlier days. This paper traces the course of Sarah Smith's life from her return to the United States through her death in 1947.

Key words: Presbyterian missions, Pasadena Japanese Union Church, internment camps,
Hokusei Gakuen, Sarah C. Smith