

Notes on Robert Crosbie's Life and Work in the Early Years of the Theosophical Society

"It is true that the road to the gods is dark and difficult... the Spectator sees it all and beckons to us, and whispers, "Be of good courage, for I have prepared a place for you where you will be with me forever." He is the Great Self; He is ourselves."

from the [Letters of W. O. Judge](#), p 17, Robert Crosbie's teacher, mentor and friend

Biography from 1886 to 1894 of Robert Crosbie

- 1886-87 First made contact with Theosophy, on arrival from Montreal, Canada to Boston, USA.
After writing to HPB and being introduced to Judge he attended a TS meeting by him in 1887. Lived in Boston, Massachusetts, USA, affiliated to Boston TS Lodge.
- 1888 Signed application for membership in the TS on 26th February 1888. Membership Diploma is dated 5th June 1888.
- 1891 Member of the Audit Committee (Supervision of Accounting, as from Annual Reports of the Conventions of the American Section of the TS)
- 1892 Secretary of the Boston Lodge of the TS, 1892-1893.
RC helped organize the 5th Convention of the American Section of the TS held in Boston 24/25th April 1892. Living at 186 South Street, Boston, Mass.
- 1894 President of the Boston Lodge of the TS (1894 to approx. 1901).

In the new biography of Robert Crosbie that is being serialised in the ULT Newsletters since his 100th anniversary this time last year in 2019 – it is said many of the experiences he had in his early days in the TS formed how the ULT could operate: it was a new and bold vision to create self-organising groups of volunteers with little formal hierarchy – without elections or presidents – who would work in frequent consultation with one another, helping each other co-operatively, developing their own insights and relying on them to guide their activities.

We heard that when Crosbie first discovered Theosophy around 1886-87, he first wrote to H. P. Blavatsky in Europe and that she put him in touch with William Judge, her co-worker in New York. Perhaps it was inevitable, and that there was a magnetic attraction of an old vow that drew him inexorably into that circle of workers. Correspondingly, today we can hold the light out for those newly returning souls who are searching for old traces they know are there.

We have it from HPB that the Work is always present, where ever thought has struggled to be free, and that it is supported by those mighty Few who remain behind the scenes always working and careful to help where there are willing and open hearts.

Crosbie's vision of the ULT was that it would have no need of any external authority or supervision but rely on the light of their own hearts (*the Tathagata light*) and tribunals of consciences made compassionate by kind acts of service and sacrifice, ideal fraternities in which others can come and see and also learn the Way of the Good Law.

Robert Crosbie lived that life, and although passing on more than 100 years ago in times that appear so different now, we are told by the Mahatmas who instigated the Movement in 14th century that there always exists a constant effort by a widely spread band of brothers and sisters who work down the centuries for the Great Cause of Humanity to help guide its progress by providing the needed knowledge and principles by which man and nature may prosper and thrive together.

Such noble ideals were a revival from older times, ones that were said to have been tried and tested by millennia of experiences from the Third Root Race, the Lemurians, the Fourth, the Atlanteans, up to our Fifth, the Indian-Aryans.

This old Wisdom-Knowledge will become the basis of "the Wisdom of the Future": the idea given in the Secret Doctrine is that the Sixth Root Race will one day look back on us today and see how these times were "ripe for the reception of Occult truths" which would go on to become be "fully and unconditionally" accepted among them.

The aim of the ULT is to help and promulgate this "old Way" which is so much needed today in a world too competitive and dominated by material desires.

~ ~ ~

Some of Crosbie's principles he had learned and gave to the new ULT:

Ambition also comes in; the desire for the approbation of our fellows may cloud our vision in our effort to maintain it. There are many temptations, some of which may come disguised as angels of light. Our best safe-guard is an unselfish desire to

benefit others, with no anxiety about our own progress, while striving all the time to make ourselves the better able to help and teach others.

... the doctrine of the Heart is spiritual, where knowledge springs up spontaneously within. It is this latter which you crave, and which I can assure you Theosophy will lead you to. There is no need to grope, nor stagger, nor stray, for the chart that has led many to the goal is in your hands in the philosophy of Theosophy.... (but) do not be too anxious; abide the time when your own inner demands shall open the doors, for those Great Ones who I know exist see every pure-hearted earnest disciple, and are ready to give a turn to the key of knowledge when the time in the disciple's progress is ripe.

No one who strives to tread the path is left unhelped; the Great Ones see his "light," and he is given what is needed for his better development. That light is not mere poetical imagery, but is actual, and its character denotes one's spiritual condition; there are no veils on that plane of seeing.

The help must be of that nature which leaves perfect freedom of thought and action; otherwise, the lessons would not be learned. Mistakes will occur, perhaps many of them, but, as is said, "twenty failures are not irremediable if followed by as many undaunted struggles upward." The help will come for the most part in ordinary ways and from one or another of the companions with whom you were possibly connected in other lives, and whom your soul will recognize.

The Great White Lodge exists for the service of humanity; They need and welcome workers in the world. Is it strange, then, that the light of souls attracted toward the path of unselfishness should receive Their cognition, and when deserved—when needed—such succor as Karma permits? They, Themselves, have written, "Ingratitude is not one of our vices"; and while we may not claim gratitude from Them, yet we may be sure that compassion absolute is there, and with it the understanding of the nature and needs of each aspirant.

...

May I add one word to you, as a friend and brother: make clean and clear, first, the mental conceptions and perceptions; the rest will follow naturally; there will be no destruction—the Undesirable will die a natural death.

"Grow as the flowers grow," from within outwards.

As ever, R.C.

from *The Friendly Philosopher*, The Spirit In The Body, Letter Two, p 6-7

Crosbie's Roles and Locations from his new biography & other sources

date	Crosbie's work and roles	Private address	Theosophical affiliations
10 th Jan 1849	Birth to Scottish parents (from Chapter Three and biography by Dallas TenBroeck)	Montreal, Canada.	
1885?	Shoe making business (from biography by Dallas TenBroeck)	Montreal. (ibid)	
1886	Second shoe & leather business (ibid)	Leather District, Boston, Massachusetts, USA. (ibid)	
1886-87	First contact with Theosophy. After writing to HPB and being introduced to Judge he attended a TS meeting by him in 1887. (from Chapter 4)	Boston, Massachusetts, USA. (ibid)	Boston TS Lodge [unknown address]
February - April - June 1888	Signed application for membership in the TS on 26 th February 1888. Membership Diploma is dated 5 th June 1888. (from Chapter 4)	Boston, Massachusetts, USA. (ibid)	Boston TS Lodge [unknown address]
1891	Member of the Audit Committee (Supervision of Accounting) (from <i>Annual Reports</i> of the Conventions of the American Section of the TS)	?	" " " "

1892	Secretary of the Boston Lodge of the TS, 1892-1893. (ibid)	?	" " " "
Nov 1892	While Secretary of the Boston Lodge RC helped organize the 5 th Convention of the American Section of the TS held in Boston 24/25 th April 1892.	186 South Street, Boston, Massachusetts. (Ch 4, rear of "The Theosophical Ray" Vol. 1, No. 4)	Boston TS Lodge 136 Boylston Street, Boston, Mass. (ibid)
1894	President of the Boston Lodge of the TS, 1894-1901	unknown address	" " " "
April 1895	Crosbie was instrumental in organising the 8 th Convention of the American Section of the TS, held again in Boston 28/29 th April 1895.	unknown address At this Convention he assisted Judge to get resolutions passed that transformed the TS it into the <i>Theosophical Society in America</i> , giving it full legal autonomy and freedom.	Boston TS Lodge
Feb 1897	" " " "	24 Mount Vernon Street, Boston, Mass. [living at the TS Lodge] (from Chapter 6)	Boston TS Lodge 24 Mount Vernon Street, Boston, Mass. (Chapter Six)
Apr 1899	" " " "	23 Sargent Street, Dorchester, Mass. (from an edition of <i>The Voice of the Silence</i> signed by him)	" " " "
1901 (Chapter Three gives this as 1898; Ch 4 gives 1901)	Joins Mrs Tingley at 'Lomaland' community.	'Lomaland,' Point Loma, California	Theosophical Society in America, (later "Universal Brotherhood")

1904	Leaves 'Lomaland'	Los Angeles, California, USA.	Joins Hargrove's "Theosophical Society" in New York, USA.
17 th Nov 1908	Writes to "all open-minded Theosophists" announcing intention to form the ULT	Los Angeles.	United Lodge of Theosophists
18 th Feb 1909	Starts ULT; holds unofficial title as co-founder with six others.	" " " "	" " " "
1912	Starts "Theosophy" magazine and continues to make the ULT a force for the study and publishing of the original writings of H. P. Blavatsky and William Q Judge.	" " " "	" " " "
25 th June 1919	Death aged 70.	In Los Angeles.	