

Biography of T. Glen Hamilton (1873-1935)

Thomas Glendenning Hamilton, better known as "T.G." or Glen to his friends, was a successful physician and surgeon in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada, when he became interested in psychical research. He studied both mental and physical mediumship.

After completing his medical studies at Manitoba Medical College, Hamilton spent a year as a house surgeon at Winnipeg General Hospital. In 1904, he established a medical practice in Elmwood, a suburb of Winnipeg. In 1915, he was elected to the Manitoba Legislative Assembly. He also taught medical jurisprudence and clinical surgery at Manitoba Medical College.

Hamilton had read articles on psychic phenomena by William T. Stead of England, but it was not until 1918 that he began to give more serious thought to it. This was a result of his friend, Dr. W. T. Allison, a professor at the University of Manitoba, telling him of his part in the investigation of the "Patience Worth" phenomena in St. Louis, Missouri, USA. Hamilton and Allison carried out some experiments in thought-transference, or telepathy, and became convinced that there was something to it. Hamilton then began studying the reports of esteemed members of the Society for Psychical Research, including Sir William Crookes, Sir Oliver Lodge, Professor William James, Professor Charles Richet, and Alfred Russel Wallace. "To suggest that these trained observers were all deceived by fraudulent operations, those stupid and very tiresome performances which mislead no one but the uninformed and gullible, is to offer an explanation which offends our reason and shows willful indifference to truth," Hamilton wrote.¹

Hamilton first experimented with Elizabeth Poole, a family friend who lived near him. With

her, he observed a 10-pound table move by itself and heard communicating raps come from the table. An early message supposedly came from Frederic W. H. Myers, one of the pioneers of psychical research and read: "Read Plato Book X. Allegory very true. Read Lodge. Trust his religious sense. Myers."²



But, after 40 sésances with Poole, Hamilton, concerned about the negative reaction to his research and his reputation, temporarily gave up his research of mediums. Early in 1923, however, he had an impromptu sitting at which a message purportedly coming from William T. Stead said, "Go on with your work. More ahead. Stead."³ Hamilton then resumed a weekly study of the Poole phenomena. Over a five-year period (1923-27), he observed Mrs. Poole in 388 sésances and observed 591 trance states containing 977 trance products of a purely mental nature. In addition to Stead, author Robert Louis Stevenson and missionary-explorer David Livingston were among the frequent communicators.

Poole would go into a trance state and her hand would then begin writing. "It seemed to be directed to one purpose only, that of setting down

the script," Hamilton recorded, referring to the writing as coming through in an extraordinarily blind sort of fashion. "But it was a blind and trusting automatism which assumed the cooperation of the observer. It displayed no awareness of the end of the paper, or of a broken pencil, or of the removal of the paper. In all such cases the hand wrote steadily on, regardless of any circumstances which made the automatism valueless. In order to facilitate such matters, the medium was supported in her chair and her arm was lifted at the end of each line and returned to the starting point on a fresh sheet of paper."⁴

Poole was semi-illiterate and lacking in spelling and basic grammar skills when writing consciously. Hamilton was reasonably certain that she had never read any of the works of Stead, Stevenson, or Livingstone. Yet many details of their lives and published stories came through Poole's trance writing. While Hamilton, his wife Lillian, and others on the research team, had read some of their works, much of the information that was dictated was unknown to them and had to be verified by acquiring their books from various libraries. Moreover, Hamilton noted that there were differences between the handwriting of the various trance intelligences. In her normal state, Poole wrote slowly and with care, but in the trance state, under the influence of Stevenson, her hand wrote in a dashing, headlong, nervous style. The Livingstone messages were written more slowly and with "manifest imperturbability." The Livingstone script was small and neat, Stead's larger, while Stevenson's was largest and roundest of all, "betraying more than the others (and particularly more than the medium's own) that appearance which we call 'cultivated'."⁵

The stream of memories and ideas from each communicator was well-defined and unmixed, Hamilton added. "Yet between the change from one dominating trance entity to the next, the medium made little stirrings and uneasy movements which were interpreted as her efforts to re-integrate herself," he explained. "Though less

marked, a similar effect was observed when there was a change of memory-topic by one of the communicators."⁶

Livingstone's messages lacked the poetry and creativeness of Stevenson's, and were more factual in content. The messages included many tribal names and places encountered by Livingstone during his travels, most of which were unknown to the medium and sitters but later verified as part the Scottish explorer's adventures.

Indications were that Stead, who had been very much interested in mediumship before he died in the *Titanic* disaster of 1912, was the director of the group of discarnates, who were cooperating with Hamilton and his group in their researches and that Stead had urged Stevenson and Livingstone to present their memories in such a way as to indicate continuity of human personality and creative skill. Moreover, Stead predicted the coming of a second medium whose powers would unite with those of Poole to produce materializations."

The second medium was Mary Marshall, referred to in the scripts as "Dawn." She had displayed some psychic gifts as early as 1923, but did not begin to develop as a trance medium until 1928. Mary's sister-in-law, Susan Marshall, referred to as "Mercedes" in the records, also developed as a medium and was studied by the Hamilton group, which by this time consisted of Hamilton, his wife Lillian, his brother Dr. James Hamilton, and Dr. Bruce Chown, a professor of pediatrics who is remembered for his research of the Rh negative blood factor. A fourth medium, a professional man who preferred not to be identified and was referred to as "Ewan" also contributed to the research.

Walter Stinson ("Walter"), the deceased brother of Boston medium Mina Crandon ("Margery"), claimed to be the primary control for Dawn, Mercedes, and Ewan, but "Katie King," who manifested in the mediumship of Florence Cook nearly 60 years earlier, also controlled Mercedes, while "John King," who had controlled Eu-

sapia Paladino 30-40 years earlier, also controlled Ewan.

Dawn became known for her “teleplasms,” which were primarily strange two-dimensional manifestations similar to those obtained by Drs. Gustave Geley and Albert von-Schrenck-Notizing with the medium known as “Eva C.” in France. Ectoplasm, or teleplasm, as it was also called, flowed from an orifice of Dawn, after which faces would appear in the ectoplasm. Some of the faces, including Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and Charles Haddon Spurgeon, were familiar to the researchers. As Geley had come to understand them, these were incomplete or fragmentary materializations as the medium was not powerful enough for the “spirits” to fully materialize. Hamilton was able to photograph many of these teleplasms. According to Hamilton, Walter would signal when to take the picture.

“Five years, from 1928 to 1933, we gave to this study,” Hamilton wrote. “Through all these stages unseen intelligences led us, directed us, cooperated with us, and did their best to maintain rigorous conditions of séance-technique — intelligences claiming to be the dead. As are most investigators in the beginning, reluctant at first to face these most astounding agencies and their equally astounding claims, we were forced — if worthwhile phenomena were to be secured and made available for examination — to capitulate and to walk humbly before their greater knowledge in these matters. I make no apology for this state of affairs.”⁷

On March 29, 1931, members of the research team witnessed an unusual phenomenon with Dawn. “For some ten minutes the pencil was heard moving across the sheets of paper,” Margaret Lillian Hamilton, Glen Hamilton’s daughter, recorded. “While her hand wrote for some unknown communicator, ‘Walter’ spoke through her in his usual rather offhand and joking fashion. The three medical men present, my father, his brother, Dr. J. A. Hamilton, and Dr. Bruce Chown, all expressed amazement at witnessing two

streams of diverse thought emerging simultaneously through the single organism of the entranced automatist.”⁸

In spite of the complete darkness, the writing was neat and within the margins and on the lines of the foolscap paper. The unsigned message read, in part: “The spirit world is not far removed from the natural world. In appearance the spirit world closely resembles the physical world; the similarity is too startling for you to believe. The incarnate mind views spirit in the sense of intangibility as something like misty nothingness, when the truth is, spirit, to spiritual beings, is tangible and real. The spirit world, as we term it, is the abode of undeveloped spirits, those who have not long left the body, and those who, by the law of spirit life, have not yet risen to higher spheres by progression...”⁹

After Hamilton’s death in 1935, his wife and daughter led the research circle, primarily with Dawn. During 1943, Dr. Hamilton communicated a number of times. “I see you, Lillian, as a spot of vivid light,” he told his wife during an August 1943 sitting, “but to me you seem tenuous. It is the old question of adjusting to one’s environment. At first I could not do it; at first I had trouble in learning to adjust the amount of energy necessary to each action; so little energy is required here.”¹⁰

In a later sitting, Hamilton said that he had met John King, Robert Louis Stevenson, William T. Stead, Oliver Lodge and Mary Lodge and had seen Frederic W. H. Myers, Camille Flammarion, Arthur Conan Doyle, William Barrett, Rudyard Kipling, William Crookes, “and many others who have forgotten their names.”¹¹

In still a later communication, Hamilton said that he saw a group of people looking in the graves which contained the remains of their bodies. “With some it is an obsession which they cannot get free from while a bit of flesh remains on the bones,” he said, “and that is why Walter and Spurgeon and R.L.S. (Stevenson) and the others wish it to be known that *we do not die* — only

in the flesh. The soul lives on and takes a new form.”¹²



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¹ Hamilton, T. Glen, *Intention and Survival*, The Mac-Millan Company of Canada, 1942 (second edition), 1977, p. 5.

² _____ p. xviii.

³ _____ p. xviii.

⁴ _____ p. 167.

⁵ _____ p, 167.

⁶ _____ p. 169.

⁷ _____ p. 200.

⁸ Hamilton, Margaret Lillian, *Is Survival a Fact?* Psychic Press Ltd., 1969, p. 52.

⁹ _____ pp. 52-53.

¹⁰ _____ p. 129

¹¹ _____ p. 130

¹² _____ p. 132