

A Human Wireless Receiving Station

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Shortly after the end of World War I, Dr. Hamlin Garland, a Pulitzer Prize-winning author of more than 50 books as well as a psychical researcher, was in New York City and was invited to lunch at the Bankers' Club on Wall Street by his old friend, Edwin Winter.



Dr. Hamlin Garland

Knowing of Garland's interest in psychic matters, Winter brought along another guest whom he introduced as Thomas Traynor, telling Garland that Traynor had the gift of second sight. Traynor informed Garland that ever since he could remember he could see "invisibles" and report their words to his friends and relatives. He didn't know how it worked other than that he was some kind of "wireless receiving station." Winter, a retired railroad company president, told Garland that he had heard from many of his deceased railroad cronies through Tray-

nor's clairvoyance and clairaudience. He suggested they meet at his apartment so that Garland might experience Traynor's gift.

Several days later, Garland, his wife, Augustus Thomas (Garland's friend), Traynor, and Winter met for dinner at Winter's Park Ave. apartment. "Nothing was said of his mediumship during dinner," Garland recorded, "but an hour later as we were all sitting before the fire, with our coffee and cigars, Winter turned to Traynor and said, 'Well, Tom, do you see any spooks in the room?'" Traynor replied that he saw a young woman standing beside Mrs. Garland. This startled her, Garland noted, as she disbelieved in spirits and ghosts and disliked all discussion of them. However, Traynor continued: "She says her name is Scales – Carrie L. Scales. She is about thirty-five. She is tall with brown hair combed up in a roll above her brow. She says to you, Mrs. Garland, that you were not with her when she passed out – neither was her husband."

Mrs. Garland immediately recognized the name and the facts but remained silent. "As he went on, he began to impersonate the dead woman," Garland continued the story. He spoke as if she were using his organs of speech. Addressing my wife directly, 'Carrie' entered into most intimate details. 'For a time I resented my husband's second marriage, but I am resigned to it now,' she said."

The communicating spirit described events of which Mrs. Garland had no knowledge and which Traynor could not have read. Mrs. Garland was deeply moved, commenting that every relationship and every description was accurate, at least those she knew of.

Traynor then turned to Winter and told him that there was a man there who claimed to have known him since he was a boy. "I used to see you on the platform of the station at Beloit, Wisconsin," Traynor quoted the spirit. "You used to come down to the train with pails of berries to sell to the passengers."

Winter agreed that he sold pails of berries to passengers at that train station when he was a boy, but didn't know what man was being referred to. Traynor then impersonated the man. "I was conductor on the local which ran from Chicago to Madison. I wore a fancy vest – you'll remember that vest – and it was my habit to wait till the last car came along before swinging on. You liked to see me do it. You admired me."

Garland noted that the tone of the voice then changed. "After you became a big man in the railway business you made me a division superintendent. That was a mistake. I wasn't big enough for the job."

Winter then recalled the man and remembered promoting him after he became general manager of the Northern Railway. He remembered the fancy vest and watching him swing on to the rear car platform. He further recalled that the man failed as a superintendent and returned to being a conductor.

Traynor then turned to Thomas and began talking about an old friend of his, which Thomas immediately recognized. Several other old friends were then mentioned. Garland noted that Traynor could turn his power off and on like twisting a key. Thomas suggested that it was a case of mind-reading and that even though the people mentioned to the sitters were not on their minds and in the case of the train conductor had not been thought of in years, that Traynor was somehow able to dig into their subconscious memories.

Winter brought out some papers in which he recorded the details of a previous sitting with Traynor. Traynor told him that there was "a queer, seedy, old chap, who says that he is a kind

of uncle of yours." Winter didn't know whom he was talking about. The man then told him that he was married to his Aunt Sarah when he (Winter) was a child and gave his name as Milton K. Smalley.

Winter faintly recalled that his Aunt Sarah was married to someone when he was a boy but had never met him and had forgotten him completely. Winter asked what the man wanted. "He doesn't seem to want anything – just wishes to say that he didn't appreciate your aunt," Traynor said. "He would like to identify himself and clear his record. He says: 'I left your aunt and went down to Lowell just before the Civil War broke out. I enlisted in one of the first Massachusetts regiments to go South and I was killed in the Baltimore riot along with four other men.'"

In an attempt to confirm the information, Winter wrote to the Adjutant General at the State House in Boston. The reply came that there was no such man as Milton K. Smalley in their records. The next time he saw Traynor, Winter told him of the search and negative results. Traynor then became silent and a fixed look came into his eyes. He then began impersonating Smalley: "Of course you didn't find me under that name. I enlisted under another name altogether. You see I'd been living with another woman since leaving your aunt, and I enlisted as Jackson Turner."

Winter checked with the Adjutant General again and confirmed that Jackson Turner was in the regiment indicated and that he had been killed in the streets of Baltimore along with three other men. Moreover, Winter contacted his sister and confirmed his Aunt Sarah's marriage to Smalley.

If Traynor had been mind-reading, both Garland and Winter wondered how he could come upon such facts that were definitely not in Winter's subconscious mind. While Winter vaguely recalled the marriage and may have heard the name Smalley, he clearly did not know the name Jackson Turner and the fact that Turner was killed in Baltimore.

Not long after, Garland arranged to have Traynor visit with him and his friend Brown, who was grieving the recent death of his wife. Sometime after they finished eating, Traynor began to impersonate Mrs. Brown. "From his lips came words which indicated that the dying woman had twice left the body and that she had visited friends during her first flight," Garland wrote.

"I heard your voice," the dead woman told her husband, "and returned to my body. I heard you, but I could not answer."

Traynor then turned to Garland and spoke in the dead woman's character. "I wanted to see you before you went home, but I was not able to do so. I was too weak." Garland confirmed that he was staying with Brown at the time, but had to leave to fill some lecture dates. Also, the apparent death of Mrs. Brown and her revival a few hours later was true, as was her reported appearance at the bedside of a friend during her "first flight."

In spite of many years of psychical research and having observed much similar phenomena, Garland could not bring himself to accept the spirit hypothesis. He preferred to see it as some kind of "perceptive sensing" which could not be understood. Nevertheless, he concluded that the case of Tom Traynor strengthened the case for personal survival after death.

