

## Biography of Carl A. and Anna M. Wickland

A member of the Chicago Medical Society, the American Association for the Advancement of Science, and director of the National Psychological Institute of Los Angeles, Dr. Carl Wickland (February 14, 1861 to November 13, 1945) was a psychiatrist who specialized in cases of schizophrenia, paranoia, depression, addiction, manic-depression, criminal behavior and phobias of all kind. In his 1924 book, *Thirty Years Among the Dead*, Wickland stated that much of such mental illness was caused by intruding, or obsessing, spirits. "Spirit obsession is a fact – a perversion of a natural law – and is amply demonstrable," Wickland wrote. "This has been proven hundreds of times by causing the supposed insanity or aberration to be temporarily transferred from the victim to a psychic sensitive who is trained for the purpose, and by this method ascertain the cause of the psychosis to be an ignorant or mischievous spirit, whose identity may frequently be verified."<sup>1</sup>

Born in Sweden, Wickland came to the United States in 1881, married Anna W. Anderson in 1896 and graduated from Durham Medical College in 1900. He became chief psychiatrist at the National Psychopathic Institute of Chicago in 1909 and left that position in 1918 where he founded the National Psychological Institute of Los Angeles.

Wickland's wife, Anna, was a trance medium. Their method of combating the vagabond spirits attached to Wickland's patients was to administer an electrical charge to the patient and drive the obsessing spirits from the patient to Mrs. Wickland. These obsessing spirits would then talk to Dr. Wickland using Anna Wickland's body. Nearly all of them didn't know they were

"dead" and so Wickland explained their plight to them.

Mrs. Wickland was said to be protected from the vagabond spirits remaining with her by a group of strong intelligences known as "The Mercy Band." As a representative of this Mercy band explained to Wickland, these earthbound entities become attracted to certain humans and attach themselves to the human aura, unwittingly conveying their thoughts to these individuals. It was further explained that the earthbound spirits could not be helped by spirits on their side until they recognized they were "dead."



With one patient, Wickland related, he conversed with 21 different spirits through his wife. In all, they spoke six different languages even though Anna Wickland spoke only Swedish and English.

In *Thirty Years*, Wickland sets forth numerous cases of spirit release dislodgement, including the dialogue that went on between him and the vagabond spirits attached to his patients. As an example, with a patient identified only as "Miss R.F." a spirit calling himself Edward Sterling be-

gan speaking through Mrs. Wickland's vocal cords. At first, he didn't remember his last name and couldn't remember what town he was from although he knew he was born in Iowa. When asked what year it was, Edward said it was 1901 (the year he had died). Wickland informed him that it was now 1920. Edward struggled to understand why his hair was now long and he had on women's clothes. Wickland explained to him that he was now "dead" and occupying his wife's body. "If I was dead I would go to the grave and stay there until the last day," Edward responded. "You stay there until Gabriel blows the horn."<sup>2</sup>

At the end of a long conversation, Wickland seems to have convinced Sterling that his physical body had died, but that his spirit body was very much alive and that he should detach himself from Miss R.F. and let her get on with her own life. Wickland noted people take their beliefs with them when they die and that the false teachings of religion often keep them earthbound.

With a patient referred to as "Mrs. R.," a spirit named Ralph Stevenson took over Mrs. Wickland's body and began speaking to Dr. Wickland. Stevenson said he was "straggling along" when he saw a "light," so he came in. However, he couldn't figure out who he was or where he was. He thought it was 1902, when, in fact, it was 1919. When Wickland asked him how long he had been dead, Stevenson replied: "Dead, you say? Why I'm not dead; I wish I were." Wickland asked him why he preferred to be dead and Stevenson said things had been very unpleasant for him. "If I am dead, then it is very hard to be dead," he said. "I have tried and tried to die, but it seems every single time I come to life again. Why is it that I cannot die?"<sup>3</sup>

Stevenson went on to say that he often thinks he is dead, but then he is alive again. "Sometimes I get in places (auras) but I am always pushed out in the dark again, and I go from place to place. I cannot find my home and I cannot die."<sup>4</sup> Wickland noted that Mrs. R., his patient, had often talked about killing herself. Fur-

ther conversation with Stevenson revealed that he and a young woman named Alice were engaged to be married. However, when her parents objected to the marriage, he decided to kill Alice and himself. After killing Alice, he said he could not kill himself. In fact, he did succeed in killing himself after shooting Alice, but he assumed that he had failed and had been on the run ever since.

After Wickland convinced him that he, in fact, had succeeded in killing himself, Stevenson recognized his mother (in spirit). The mother then took over Mrs. Wickland's body and explained that she had been trying to get through to her son for a long time, but he had built up a barrier that she could not penetrate until now. "He ran away from me whenever he saw me, and neither Alice nor I could come near him," the mother communicated. "He thought he was alive and that he had not killed himself. Some time ago he came in contact with a sensitive person, a woman (Mrs. R), and has been obsessing her, but he thought he was in prison."<sup>5</sup>

Another of Wickland's patients was a pharmacist with a drug addiction problem, especially addicted to morphine. After the patient was administered an electrical shock, the obsessing spirit jumped into Mrs. Wickland's entranced body. Mrs. Wickland's body then began violently coughing. Dr. Wickland asked what the problem was and the spirit replied that she was dying and needed some morphine. Wickland explained to her that she was already dead, but the spirit ignored his comments and continued to beg for morphine.

Wickland managed to calm her down enough to further explain the situation to her and ask her for a name. At first she couldn't remember, but after several moments of searching gave her name as Elizabeth Noble. She said that she was 42 years old and was living in El Paso, Texas. After again begging for morphine, she noticed her husband, Frankie, standing there (in spirit). Frank Noble then took over Mrs. Wickland's body and explained to Wickland that he had died be-

fore his wife and had been trying to get her to realize she had “passed out,” but had been unsuccessful. He thanked Wickland for explaining the situation to her and said that she would now understand and be better.

Wickland’s second book, *The Gateway of Understanding*, was published in 1934. It offers additional cases of spirit possession and considerable philosophy. “The unscientific attitude and aloofness of the medical fraternity toward any research that suggests discarnated spirits, due to fear of ostracism, of jeopardizing professional standing,

or owing to the fallacious notion that it is unethical and beneath the dignity of science to follow such research, is today a serious obstacle to advancement of knowledge pertaining to contributing causes underlying mental aberrations and insanity,” he wrote in his second book, “and is a hindrance to neurological and psychiatric research.”<sup>6</sup>



Copyright 2011 Michael E. Tymn

---

<sup>1</sup> Wickland, Carl A. *Thirty Years Among the Dead*, Newcastle Publishing Co., Inc. 1974 (originally published in 1924), pgs. 24-25.

<sup>2</sup> \_\_\_\_\_, pp. 106-107.

<sup>3</sup> \_\_\_\_\_, p. 149.

<sup>4</sup> \_\_\_\_\_, p. 149.

<sup>5</sup> \_\_\_\_\_, p. 152.

<sup>6</sup> Wickland, Carl A., *The Gateway of Understanding*, National Psychological Institute, 1934, p. 115.