

# DRAFT

Please send amendments, comments, and suggestions to:  
Walter Meyer zu Erpen, PO Box 8697, Victoria, BC V8W 3S3 CANADA Email: [info@survivalresearch.ca](mailto:info@survivalresearch.ca)

## THE QUEST FOR IMMORTALITY: PSYCHICAL RESEARCH IN WINNIPEG AND THE ROLE OF MEDICAL DOCTORS, LAWYERS, CLERGYMEN, AND OTHER COMMUNITY LEADERS BETWEEN 1918 AND 1935

### Lecture and Slide Presentation by Walter Meyer zu Erpen, BA, MAS

**Summary:** Is there life after death? Spiritualists claim that the human personality survives death. Scientists want proof for such claims. Winnipeg medical doctor Thomas Glendenning Hamilton (1873-1935), FACS, researched these questions.

Between 1918 and 1935 Dr. Hamilton conducted scientific experiments related to trance, mediumship, and psychical phenomena. He focussed primarily on the question of whether or not some part of the human mind, consciousness, or personality survives bodily death. A number of medical doctors, lawyers, clergymen, and other community leaders in Winnipeg witnessed the table levitations and ectoplasms that were produced and photographed during the experiments.

The original photographs and records of the experiments are preserved in the University of Manitoba archives. Walter has been studying the Hamilton experiments since 1991. He will give an overview of the research illustrated with slides made from photographs of table levitations and ectoplasms. There will be opportunity for questions and discussion of these interesting phenomena.

After discussion of the experiments and phenomena, Walter will address the following issues: the authenticity of the Hamilton archival collection; the personal and professional integrity of the individuals associated with the Hamilton research; the value of psychical phenomena as evidence of life after death; and the relationship of psychical phenomena to the researchers' and witnesses' belief in personal immortality.

#### **This lecture and slide presentation has been presented as follows:**

Manitoba History Conference, Winnipeg, 8 May 1992  
Springdale Church, Toronto, 19 September 1992 (twice)  
Open Door Spiritualist Church, Victoria, 2 November 1993  
Vancouver Psychic Society, Vancouver, 18 May 1994  
Springdale Church, Toronto, 29 September 1999  
Calgary First Spiritualist Church, 18 April 2000  
Open Door Spiritualist Church, 25 October 2000  
Open Door Spiritualist Church, 24 October 2001  
Royal Oak Christian Spiritualist Church, 14 April 2002\*

(\*Since July 2002, the T.G. Hamilton research has been presented as "The Problem of Human Survival: Study of Physical Mediumship and Intentional Actions by Trance Personalities as Evidence of Survival of Personality after Bodily Death".)

**Acknowledgement:** Without the financial assistance received from the Thomas Glendenning Hamilton Research Grant Program, the research project upon which this presentation is based would not have been possible.

# DRAFT

Please send amendments, comments, and suggestions to:  
Walter Meyer zu Erpen, PO Box 8697, Victoria, BC V8W 3S3 CANADA Email: [info@survivalresearch.ca](mailto:info@survivalresearch.ca)

## INTRODUCTION:

Between 1918 and 1935 a Winnipeg medical doctor named Thomas Glendenning (Glen) Hamilton (1873-1935), MD, FACS,<sup>1</sup> conducted scientific experiments related to trance, mediumship, and psychical phenomena. He focussed primarily on the question of whether or not some part of the human mind, consciousness, or personality survives bodily death. A number of medical doctors, lawyers, clergymen and other community leaders in Winnipeg witnessed the table levitations and teleplasms that were produced and photographed during Dr. Hamilton's experiments.

Born in Agincourt, near Scarborough, Ontario, T. Glen Hamilton moved with his family to Saskatoon in 1883 and to Winnipeg in 1891. He graduated from Manitoba Medical College in 1903 as a doctor of medicine and was in 1904 registered to practice medicine within Manitoba. In 1906, Dr. Hamilton married Lillian May Forrester (1880-1956) who had graduated from the Winnipeg General Hospital School of Nursing the previous year and "had received the top award for 'Highest General Proficiency.'"<sup>2</sup>

During the period that the research was conducted, Glen and Lillian Hamilton were raising their three surviving children: Margaret Lillian (Hamilton) Bach (1909-1986); Glen Forrester Hamilton (1911-1988); and James Drummond Hamilton (1915-1980). Arthur Lamont Hamilton (1915-1919), a twin brother of James Drummond, had died during the Spanish influenza epidemic of 1918-1919. Lillian Hamilton was Dr. Hamilton's closest colleague throughout the experiments.

The Hamiltons were intensely involved in community, political, social and church affairs in Elmwood, a suburb of Winnipeg, where Glen Hamilton had a large medical practice. Dr. Hamilton was a member of the Winnipeg school board from 1905 to 1915, including school board chairman in 1912 and 1913. He was the Member of Provincial Parliament for Elmwood from 1915 until 1920 in the Liberal Government of T.C. Norris, and an elder of King Memorial Church from 1907 until 1935.

## OVERVIEW OF THE HAMILTON RESEARCH:

One wonders how Dr. Hamilton had the time to tend to his medical practice given his extensive community involvement. In addition, from August 1921, he was increasingly involved in psychical research, although his interest dates from 1918. Reverend Dr. William Talbot Allison (1875-1941), then a professor of English at Wesley College (and from 1919-1920 the minister of King Memorial Church), was instrumental in stimulating the Hamiltons' interest in psychical research through his stories of his personal investigation of the Patience Worth phenomena.<sup>3</sup> As a result, Dr. Hamilton, Reverend Dr. Allison, and Reverend Dr. Daniel Norman (Dan) McLachlan (1875-1943), conducted, in 1918, some simple experiments into thought-transference that convinced the three men "that telepathy was possible and did work."<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>Fellow of the American College of Surgeons.

<sup>2</sup>PUB0095, p. 3.

<sup>3</sup>"Patience Worth" was the name of a trance control who dictated literary works through the medium Mrs. John H. (Pearl Lenore Pollard) Curran (1883-1937) of St. Louis. Several of those works were subsequently published.

<sup>4</sup>PUB0072, p. xvii.

# DRAFT

Please send amendments, comments, and suggestions to:  
Walter Meyer zu Erpen, PO Box 8697, Victoria, BC V8W 3S3 CANADA Email: [info@survivalresearch.ca](mailto:info@survivalresearch.ca)

From 1921 until 1927, Dr. and Mrs. Hamilton turned their attention to study of telekinesis (psychokinesis) and table levitations after Mrs. Hamilton discovered that one of their neighbours, Mrs. Elizabeth Poole, had telekinetic abilities. After the introduction of a new medium to the Hamilton group in 1928, the focus shifted to study of the ectoplasm<sup>5</sup>, or "teleplasm" as it was referred to in the Hamilton research, that Mrs. Mary Ann Marshall was apparently able to manifest.<sup>6</sup> Between January 1928 and March 1934, 72 separate teleplasms were photographed in 50 photographic experiments involving 60 flashlight exposures.<sup>7</sup> Some 300 photographic images exist, taken from different angles. (See pages 5, 6 and 7 for information about the mediums.)

From 1926, Dr. Hamilton published and lectured widely about his experiments and gained an international reputation for his research. As a result, his large medical practice began to suffer, which is not surprising given the number of times that his public lectures took him away from Winnipeg between 1926 and 1934.<sup>8</sup> Dr. Hamilton never charged for his time when lecturing, although as time passed he had to be more stringent about recovering his travel and out-of-pocket expenses. For instance, a lantern slide projector would have to be rented and an operator in attendance. When Dr. Hamilton died, Lillian Hamilton was left in difficult financial circumstances.

Although the Hamiltons were not Spiritualists,<sup>9</sup> they had contact with many individuals active within Spiritualism, including Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, Lady Jean Conan Doyle, Sir Oliver Lodge, Hewat and Barbara McKenzie,<sup>10</sup> and British Admiral E.A.S. Hayward and Cecilia F. Hayward.<sup>11</sup>

First published in 1942, T. Glen Hamilton's *Intention and Survival: Psychological Research Studies and the Bearing of Intentional Actions by Trance Personalities on the Problem of Human Survival*<sup>12</sup> recorded posthumously the results of the investigations of Dr. Hamilton's group. In 1969, Margaret Hamilton Bach published, under her maiden name, a sequel to her father's book

---

<sup>5</sup>From *Intention and Survival*, 2nd ed., p. 214: "A subtle living matter present in the body of a medium, and which is capable of assuming various semi-solid or solid states for a brief time, which can be, and have been felt, and photographed."

<sup>6</sup>The words "apparently", "allegedly," and similar qualifiers which denote uncertainty about the possibility of genuine physical phenomena or spirit communication, or the identity of a specific communicator, are hereafter omitted from this paper.

<sup>7</sup>MSS 14, box 17, folder 3, Summary.

<sup>8</sup>From Spring 1926 to Fall 1934, Dr. Hamilton delivered "a total of 86 public addresses to widely varied groups of people" (MSS 14, box 1, folder 10). On at least 12 different trips, often occasioned through medical business, Dr. Hamilton lectured in locations away from Winnipeg. In addition to local trips, he lectured in Montreal and New York in 1929, in New York, New Hampshire, New Jersey, and Indiana in 1930, in Toronto in 1931, in New York, Washington, DC, and Toronto in 1932, and in England in 1932. In addition to these lectures and his professional and executive duties, Dr. Hamilton also conducted two and sometimes three sittings per week, dictated many letters, and composed many papers for publication in various magazines, both scientific and more popular.

<sup>9</sup>PUB0072, p. xxix.

<sup>10</sup>James Hewat McKenzie (1869-1929) was founder of the British College of Psychic Science, established in 1920. His wife, Mrs. Barbara McKenzie, was closely associated in all of his investigations and was honorary secretary of the college. She was honorary principal during the year following his death.

<sup>11</sup>Admiral and Mrs. Hayward were British Spiritualists who participated in the Hamilton séances in Winnipeg.

<sup>12</sup>PUB0072.

# DRAFT

Please send amendments, comments, and suggestions to:  
Walter Meyer zu Erpen, PO Box 8697, Victoria, BC V8W 3S3 CANADA Email: [info@survivalresearch.ca](mailto:info@survivalresearch.ca)

entitled *Is Survival A Fact?: Studies of Deep-Trance Automatic Scripts and the Bearing of Intentional Actions by Trance Personalities on the Question of Human Survival*.<sup>13</sup> It documented the continuation of the group's research after Dr. Hamilton's death, including the information received through mediumship and accepted as conclusive evidence that T. Glen Hamilton had survived death. The subtitles of the Hamilton books reflect the family's conviction that the evidence of intentional actions by trance personalities had an important bearing on the question of survival of the human personality after bodily death.

According to *Encyclopedia Canadiana*,<sup>14</sup> Dr. Hamilton was "a member of the Manitoba legislature, a prominent physician, medical lecturer and United Church layman." Dr. Hamilton's investigating group was "probably the most important of its kind in Canada." Regarding *Intention and Survival*, the encyclopedia states that: "This book was quite significant for its scientific exactness, for its reasoned arguments in support of a spiritistic hypothesis and for the highly respected status of its author."

The University of Manitoba in Winnipeg holds the records of the Hamilton research group. The Hamilton collection includes correspondence, notes, photographs, newspaper clippings and affidavits documenting Dr. Hamilton's experiments.<sup>15</sup>

## THE MEDIUMS:

The table levitations and teleplasms produced within the Hamilton group were by far the most spectacular aspect of the research. Though this presentation does not include any of the more subjective mental phenomena,<sup>16</sup> they were as important as the physical phenomena in convincing the Hamiltons of the validity of the survival hypothesis in explaining the phenomena.

Three non-professional mediums were primarily responsible for the production of the physical phenomena observed. None received any financial remuneration for her services.<sup>17</sup>

---

<sup>13</sup>PUB0073.

<sup>14</sup>1972 ed., s.v. "Spiritualism."

<sup>15</sup>University of Manitoba Library, MSS 14, Thomas Glendenning Hamilton Collection, nineteen boxes of records and sixteen boxes of photographs. See PUB0095.

<sup>16</sup>Psychic phenomena are of two basic types. They are either cognitive (mental) or physical.

Cognitive phenomena include telepathy, clairvoyance, and precognition. They are often equated with the term extra-sensory perception (ESP) that parapsychologists Joseph B. Rhine (1895-1980) and Louise E. Rhine (1891-1983) popularized through their famous laboratory studies at Duke University during the 1930s. With rare exceptions (e.g., collective clairvoyance), cognitive phenomena are perceived by the single percipient alone (i.e., they are subjective).

Physical phenomena include psychokinesis (PK), another term popularized through the Rhine experiments, and the more controversial phenomena known as materialization, ectoplasm, transfiguration, direct voice, and apports. Those phenomena have been most often associated with studies of mediumship focussed on investigation of communication from discarnate personalities claiming to have survived bodily death. Often referred to as "mind over matter," PK is defined as the exercise of direct mental influence over a physical object without any muscular or other bodily movement. Telekinesis, an earlier term with similar meaning, referred to the movement of physical objects at a distance, by some type of invisible energy, possibly emanating from the body of a medium. Physical phenomena are objective, can be registered by one or more of the physical senses, and can be documented through photography, sound recording, or other means.

<sup>17</sup>In June 1991, Mrs. Phyllis Hamilton (1911-1997) indicated that T. Glen Hamilton never allowed money to pass hands relating to his psychical research; no one was ever paid.

# DRAFT

Please send amendments, comments, and suggestions to:  
Walter Meyer zu Erpen, PO Box 8697, Victoria, BC V8W 3S3 CANADA Email: [info@survivalresearch.ca](mailto:info@survivalresearch.ca)

The Hamiltons' first medium was their neighbour Mrs. Elizabeth MacDonald (Wilson) Poole (1870-1935).<sup>18</sup> Mrs. Poole was largely responsible for the table levitations that were repeatedly produced and photographed. In July 1923, Mrs. Poole's ability to levitate the séance table was witnessed and attested to by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. In March 1926, psychical researcher James Malcolm Bird (1886-1964)<sup>19</sup> visited Winnipeg to scrutinize the Poole telekinetic phenomena in his capacity as Research Officer for the American Society for Psychical Research. Good photographs were obtained of the table suspended in the air,<sup>20</sup> and Mr. Bird later "voiced his approval of the control conditions and the validity of the experiments."<sup>21</sup>

Winnipeg medical doctors Rosslyn Brough (Ross) Mitchell (1880-1972),<sup>22</sup> John Ralston (Ralston) Davidson (1870-1948),<sup>23</sup> and Stanley Gordon (Gordon) Chown (1888-1949)<sup>24</sup> were also photographed observing the levitations. In some photographs, the table is suspended, motionless, in the cabinet, with the surprised observers watching. In several, there is no bodily contact with or near the suspended table.

The other two mediums were Mrs. Mary Ann Marshall (1880-1963)<sup>25</sup> and to lesser extent her sister-in-law Mrs. Susan (McLements) Marshall (1888-1942).<sup>26</sup> The Marshall mediums were essential to the production of the 72 separate teleplasms that were photographed. For a

---

<sup>18</sup>Full maiden name appears as an annotation below a photograph of Mrs. Poole in MSS 14. Her husband was John Allan Poole (ca. 1872-1928).

<sup>19</sup>Arthur S. Berger and Joyce Berger, editors, *The Encyclopedia of Parapsychology and Psychical Research* (Paragon House, 1991), p. 36, indicates that the last known reference to James Malcolm Bird is a letter dated 8 December 1932 which Walter Franklin Prince wrote to a correspondent after having spent a day with him. Malcolm Bird may have died in October 1964 in Brooklyn, New York, but this has yet to be confirmed.

<sup>20</sup>See, for example, MSS 14, PC 12, box 1, slide 20.

<sup>21</sup>PUB0072, p. xx.

<sup>22</sup>Dr. Ross Mitchell, MD, CM, FACS, Hon. LLD, specialized in obstetrics and gynecology. He was also well known as a Manitoba historian and following his retirement in 1964 became archivist of the Winnipeg Clinic. "Dr. Ross Mitchell," *Winnipeg Tribune*, 12 December 1972, p. 26:

Dr. Mitchell was an Associate Professor of Obstetrics and Gynecology of the University of Manitoba in 1956. He was recognized as an authority on Manitoba History, particularly in the field of Medicine and was the author of many articles [including "Dr. T. Glen Hamilton, The Founder of the Manitoba Medical Review," *Manitoba Medical Review*, vol. 40, no. 3 (March 1960), pp. 219, 221] and a book on this subject. He was a contributor to the Beaver Magazine and correspondent to the Canadian Medical Journal. His great interest in Manitoba History and rare medical books lead to the dedication of the "Ross Mitchell Room" at the library of the Medical Faculty. He was a past president and Honorary Life Member of the Manitoba Historical Society and in 1968, the Red River Historical Society conferred the "Hall of Fame" award on him.

MSS 14, PC 12, box 1, slide 24, shows Dr. Ross Mitchell as an observer on 30 May 1926, controlling the hand of the medium, Mrs. Poole. The other guest is Dr. J. Ralston Davidson (1870-1948) who was Dr. Mitchell's brother-in-law. Slide 25 is a second exposure showing the table that had suddenly bounded sideways between Mrs. Poole and Dr. Hamilton.

<sup>23</sup>Dr. Ralston Davidson, MD, CM, LMCC, became interested in cancer research and the possibility of dietary cures. See Gurney Bishop, *Davidson of Manitoba: Cancer Pioneer* (London: L. & N. Bishop, [c. 1974]).

<sup>24</sup>Dr. Gordon Chown practiced pediatrics in Winnipeg and was at one time Chief of Pediatrics in the University of Manitoba Faculty of Medicine. MSS 14, PC 12, box 1, slide 26, shows Dr. Gordon Chown as an observer on 6 October 1927.

<sup>25</sup>Her husband was William (Bill) Marshall (1880-1947).

<sup>26</sup>Her husband was Alexander Campbell (Sandy) Marshall (1888-1953).

# DRAFT

Please send amendments, comments, and suggestions to:  
Walter Meyer zu Erpen, PO Box 8697, Victoria, BC V8W 3S3 CANADA Email: [info@survivalresearch.ca](mailto:info@survivalresearch.ca)

number of years, medical doctors T. Glen Hamilton, James Archibald (Jim) Hamilton, Bruce Chown, William Creighton, and lawyers Henry Archibald Vaughan (Harry) Green, KC,<sup>27</sup> and Isaac Pitblado, KC, studied the teleplasms photographed when the Marshall mediums were present. The association of those professionals' names with the research, in some cases decades after it ended, attests to the fact that they were unable to discover how the teleplasms might have been fraudulently produced.

## REGULAR PARTICIPANTS (NON-MEDICAL):

Two members of Dr. Hamilton's immediate family played a significant role in the research. Lillian May (Forrester) Hamilton (1880-1956) was instrumental in getting her husband to investigate the psychic phenomena she had witnessed with Mrs. Poole. Prior to her marriage, Margaret Lillian (Hamilton) Bach (1909-1986),<sup>28</sup> Dr. Hamilton's eldest child, attended the sittings and sometimes acted as note-taker.

Other regular, non-medical participants in the pre-1935 group included Canadian Pacific Railway lawyer Henry Archibald Vaughan (Harry) Green (1888-1979),<sup>29</sup> businessman William Bernard (Barney) Cooper (1891-1968),<sup>30</sup> school teacher Miss Ada Esther Turner (1892-1956),<sup>31</sup> electrical engineer Hugh Arthur Reed (1879-1942),<sup>32</sup> civil engineer Wilfrid Ernest (Bill) Hobbs (1887-1982),<sup>33</sup> and, as young men,<sup>34</sup> businessman John David (Jack) MacDonald (1906-1984)<sup>35</sup> and school teacher and drama professor David Harold (Harold) Turner (1912-1987).<sup>36</sup> Over time, many of the participants developed and demonstrated, to greater or lesser extent, mediumistic abilities.

---

<sup>27</sup>Harry Green assembled a photograph album of prints of the Hamilton phenomena and carefully labelled each image with the names of the sitters present and other conditions. That album remained in his possession until his death. It was later donated to the Vancouver Psychic Society, then acquired by the Survival Research Institute of Canada in 1999.

<sup>28</sup>Margaret Hamilton Bach, BA (Manitoba, 1930), ARCT (piano and voice), continued to publicize and promote her parents' psychical research until her death.

<sup>29</sup>Harry Green, KC (1936), was a member of the Council of the Winnipeg Society for Psychical Research when it was formed in June 1931 (PUB0072, p. xxvi). Later, in October 1935, he was the Society's President (MSS 14, box 2, folder 6).

<sup>30</sup>Barney Cooper was Vice-President of the Winnipeg Society for Psychical Research when it was formed in June 1931. PUB0072, p. xxvi. Barney Cooper withdrew from the Hamilton group in 1933 when he and his wife Eva Irene Cooper moved to Toronto.

<sup>31</sup>Ada Turner, BA (Wesley College), MA (University of Manitoba), taught at St. John's Technical High School and Daniel McIntyre High School.

<sup>32</sup>Hugh Reed was the traffic superintendent of the Manitoba Telephone System. He was a member of the Council of the Winnipeg Society for Psychical Research when it was formed in June 1931. PUB0072, p. xxvi.

<sup>33</sup>Bill Hobbs was a Manitoba Land Surveyor and during his long career worked for, among other bodies, the provincial and municipal governments and the Hudson's Bay Company. He frequently acted as the note-taker during the Hamilton sésances.

<sup>34</sup>The last two individuals were peers of the Hamiltons' daughter Margaret.

<sup>35</sup>Jack MacDonald eventually became President and General Manager of Pioneer Grain.

<sup>36</sup>Harold Turner, BA, BEd, MEd, was the adopted son of Ada Turner. Born David Harold Watts, he lived with Miss Turner from the time he was aged 15 or 16 and was formally adopted by her in 1933 when he was 21 years of age. Harold Turner taught for many years at the Provincial Normal School and was later a Professor of Speech and Drama in the Faculty of Education at the University of Manitoba. He was also the director of the drama program at the Stony Mountain Penitentiary and was involved with the Manitoba Historical Society.

# DRAFT

Please send amendments, comments, and suggestions to:  
Walter Meyer zu Erpen, PO Box 8697, Victoria, BC V8W 3S3 CANADA Email: [info@survivalresearch.ca](mailto:info@survivalresearch.ca)

Although only infrequent participants before 1935, William Andrew (Bill) Wither (1887-1975)<sup>37</sup> and his wife Jean Taylor (Fardell) Wither (1894-1970) played an important role in the experiments after Dr. Hamilton's death.

## LAWYER ISAAC PITBLADO AS SPECIAL SCRUTINEER:

On several occasions, Dr. Hamilton requested that Winnipeg lawyer Isaac Pitblado (1867-1964),<sup>38</sup> who was not a regular sitter, attend special experiments and act as the official scrutineer. In 1926, Isaac and his wife May Edith Pitblado had witnessed the mediumship of "Margery" Crandon, both in their own home and in the Hamiltons' home. Perhaps the best documented experiment observed by Pitblado is that during which the "Lucy" teleplasm was photographed on 10 March 1930. Two days later, Pitblado wrote and signed an eleven-page handwritten statement about the precautionary procedures that had been in place that evening to preclude the possibility of fraud, including the search of the séance room, mediums, and male sitters and the examination and development of the photographic films and plates. Regarding the "Lucy" teleplasm, Pitblado concluded:

5. I am convinced that the phenomenon of the figure seated on the chair to the left of the medium was genuinely produced without the aid of any known physical or material means, process or apparatus, and that there was no possibility of any 'fake' or trickery.<sup>39</sup>

Fifteen months later, Isaac Pitblado became a member of the Council of the Winnipeg Society for Psychical Research when it was formed in June 1931.<sup>40</sup>

## DR. HAMILTON'S MEDICAL COLLEAGUES:

On the whole, the Winnipeg medical community was supportive of Dr. Hamilton's research, and this support from colleagues encouraged Dr. Hamilton to "go public" with the results of his experiments. Dr. Hamilton's older brother and partner in medical practice, Dr. James Archibald (Jim) Hamilton (1870-1934),<sup>41</sup> was "a member throughout the entire inquiry. He was medical observer and chief controller of Mary M.'s right hand during the teleplasmic experiments."<sup>42</sup> In addition to the medical doctors already mentioned, Dr. Charles (Charlie) Hunter (1873-1955),<sup>43</sup> Dr. Alexander Gibson (1883-1956),<sup>44</sup> Dr. Alexander Robert Winram (1876-1952),<sup>45</sup> and later Dr.

---

<sup>37</sup>Bill Wither was the Secretary-Treasurer of the Winnipeg Society for Psychical Research when it was formed in June 1931 (PUB0072, p. xxvi).

<sup>38</sup>At the age of 80, Isaac Pitblado, KC, successfully represented the railways in their \$80,000,000 freight-rates increase case before the Board of Transport Commissioners. In 1960, he celebrated the 70th anniversary of his being called to the Manitoba bar and continued to practice law almost until his death at the age of 97.

<sup>39</sup>MSS 14, box 16, folder 2. Pitblado's statement is published in PUB0072, pp. 124-6.

<sup>40</sup>PUB0072, p. xxvi.

<sup>41</sup>Dr. J.A. Hamilton, MD, CM.

<sup>42</sup>PUB0072, p. 15.

<sup>43</sup>Charles Hunter, MA (Aberdeen University, 1894), MB, ChB (Aberdeen University, 1899), FRCP(C) (1930), became professor emeritus of medicine at the University of Manitoba.

<sup>44</sup>Alexander Gibson, MB, ChB, FRCS(Eng), FACS, was a professor in the Faculty of Medicine at the University of Manitoba.

<sup>45</sup>Alexander Winram, BA, MD, CM, practiced as a general physician in Winnipeg until his retirement in

# DRAFT

Please send amendments, comments, and suggestions to:  
Walter Meyer zu Erpen, PO Box 8697, Victoria, BC V8W 3S3 CANADA Email: [info@survivalresearch.ca](mailto:info@survivalresearch.ca)

Alexander Murray (Alec) Campbell (1876-1965)<sup>46</sup> attended one or more sittings. Finally, Dr. Henry Bruce (Bruce) Chown (1893-1986)<sup>47</sup> and his wife Gladys Evelyn Chown (1897-1948) joined the research group in 1931,<sup>48</sup> adding their names to the list of witnesses. From 1931 until 1935, Dr. Chown was Dr. Hamilton's primary co-experimenter.<sup>49</sup>

Dr. Hamilton gave his first public lecture on 21 May 1926 when he addressed 125 members of the Winnipeg Medical Society on the subject of "telekinesis." Dr. Bruce Chown heard Dr. Hamilton's lecture and later described the effect he had had on his audience:

. . . The first address I heard him give on his psychic experiments was some eight years or so ago before the Winnipeg Medical Society, at a time when he had already been investigating these phenomena for several years. The crowd before the meeting were derisive. "Come on Glen! Bring on your ghosts!" He smiled at them and, unruffled, spoke. He mentioned no ghost, nor spirit, nor personality, but he talked about a table, a table that moved at request, that rushed across the room, that leapt in the air, that defied the efforts of strong men to hold it. And as he talked he showed photographs of these actions. And because we knew Glen we knew these things were true. He offered neither explanation nor theory, simply facts; we might interpret them as we would. That night he had many converts.<sup>50</sup>

Margaret Hamilton Bach has written that in 1930 her father received encouragement from an unexpected quarter.<sup>51</sup> On May 23, at Manitoba Medical College, Dr. Robert Rennie (Rennie) Swan (1876-1952),<sup>52</sup> President of the Winnipeg Medical Society, delivered his presidential address entitled *Immortality: An Adventure in Faith*.<sup>53</sup> While dealing primarily with the historical, scientific, and ethical aspects of immortality and the role of faith, Dr. Swan mentioned the evidence for survival after death provided through psychical research:

Of recent years we in Winnipeg have heard much regarding psychic research and the evidence for survival after death. I wish to pay tribute to our friend and fellow-member, Dr. T. Glen Hamilton, for the efforts he has made and is making

---

1945.

<sup>46</sup>A.M. Campbell, BA (Manitoba, 1897), MD, CM (Manitoba, 1904), FRCS(C) (1930), FACS, was appointed first Medical Superintendent of Winnipeg General Hospital which position he held until 1907 when he entered private practice as a physician and surgeon. Dr. Campbell was for many years Assistant Professor of Anatomy and Assistant Professor of Surgery in the Faculty of Medicine at the University of Manitoba. He was a charter member of the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada (RCPS(C)), a Fellow of the American College of Surgeons (FACS), a charter and honorary member of the Winnipeg Medical Society, and a senior member of the Canadian Medical Association.

<sup>47</sup>Bruce Chown, BA, MD, Hon. DSc, Hon. LLD, MC, OC, was a paediatrician. From about 1940 until at least 1945, he was the Superintendent of the Winnipeg Children's Hospital and, from 1949 until 1954, he was Chairman of the Department of Paediatrics in the University of Manitoba's Faculty of Medicine.

<sup>48</sup>It is possible that Dr. Chown's curiosity was piqued in August 1930 through Dr. Hamilton's lecture during the British Medical Association convention. The attendance register (MSS 14, box 8, folder 3) reveals that Bruce Chown first attended a Hamilton séance on 2 October 1930. He became a regular sitter in February 1931; Gladys Chown joined the group in May 1931.

<sup>49</sup>Details of the Chowns' association with the Hamilton research are given below.

<sup>50</sup>Bruce Chown, "Obituaries," *Canadian Medical Association Journal*, 32 (June 1935): 710-1.

<sup>51</sup>PUB0072, p. xxiii.

<sup>52</sup>Dr. Swan, MB, ChB.

<sup>53</sup>PUB0107.



# DRAFT

Please send amendments, comments, and suggestions to:  
Walter Meyer zu Erpen, PO Box 8697, Victoria, BC V8W 3S3 CANADA Email: [info@survivalresearch.ca](mailto:info@survivalresearch.ca)

along this line of thought and discovery. Whatever criticism may be made of his work, no one can even attempt to deny the truth of the wonderful phenomena which have come under his observation. We know our man, and we know that he is in this work as a student and investigator, and we can have nothing but admiration and praise for him, and, let me also say, thanks, for the work he is doing.<sup>54</sup>

As a member of the executive of the Canadian Medical Association, Dr. Hamilton played a key role in bringing the convention of the prestigious British Medical Association to Winnipeg in 1930.<sup>55</sup> The members of the Convention Programme Committee, including some well-known and influential physicians and surgeons,<sup>56</sup> subsequently convinced Dr. Hamilton to set up a display of his photographs and to address a luncheon meeting of the delegates on the topic of his psychical research.<sup>57</sup> Dr. Hamilton gave his lecture on 27 August 1930 in the concert hall of the Fort Garry Hotel to a crowd of more than 500 educated men and women.<sup>58</sup>

The independent observations of two medical colleagues, Dr. Alec Campbell and Dr. Rennie Swan, bear witness to the fact that authentic telekinetic activity was observed at Winnipeg séances during the 1930s.<sup>59</sup>

Dr. Campbell attended at least eight séances in the Hamilton home during 1932 and 1933.<sup>60</sup> About the same time, he held sittings in the big room above the double garage of his home and medical practice located at 95 Sherbrook Street. Two of Dr. Campbell's children confirmed that their father was convinced of the authenticity of the table levitations and trumpet movements that he witnessed in his home.<sup>61</sup>

From 1920 until 1947, Dr. Campbell and Dr. Swan were partners in a medical practice operated from the Sherbrook Street premises. Dr. and Mrs. Swan attended a couple of the séances at the Campbell home and were convinced of the phenomena they witnessed; they did not later change their minds.<sup>62</sup> According to one of Dr. Swan's sons, Dr. Campbell was a very upright individual; there were no wires or trickery. Reverend John Sutherland Bonnell (1893-1992), BA, BD, Hon. DD, Minister of Westminster United Church (1929-1935),<sup>63</sup> attended at least one

---

<sup>54</sup>PUB0107, p. 8.

<sup>55</sup>PUB0072, p. xxiv.

<sup>56</sup>The Convention Programme Committee included among its members medical doctors Rosslyn Brough Mitchell, Charles Hunter, Robert Rennie Swan, and Alexander Gibson of Winnipeg, Harvey Agnew and T. Clarence Routley of Toronto, and Charles Ferdinand Martin of Montreal.

<sup>57</sup>PUB0072, p. xxiv, and "Hobbies Exhibit," *Manitoba Medical Bulletin*, no. 104 (April 1930): 59.

<sup>58</sup>PUB0072, p. xxv, and PUB0073, p. 41. Dr. R. Rennie Swan was chairman of the event.

<sup>59</sup>Parenthetically, Spiritualists known to WJMzE claim that authentic physical phenomena were still produced in Victoria in the 1950s and early 1960s. It would be interesting to do a comparative study of the prevalence and attitude towards such phenomena, across Canadian cities.

<sup>60</sup>MSS 14, box 8, folder 3.

<sup>61</sup>Telephone conversations on 30 May 1991 with Mrs. Philip Alexander (Joan Isabel Campbell) Mackie (born 1910) and on 5 June 1991 with Dr. Alexander Arthur (Sandy) Campbell (born 1926), provincial Medical Health Officer.

<sup>62</sup>To date, no record has been found of Dr. Swan having attended any of the Hamilton séances.

<sup>63</sup>In 1935, Mr. Bonnell was invited to New York City to serve as senior pastor of Manhattan's Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church which is sometimes referred to as the "cathedral of Presbyterianism." From the pulpit of Fifth Avenue, his inspirational and sometimes fiery sermons and his keen theological intellect gained him a reputation as "one of the best-known preachers in the United States" ("Bonnell Invested as

# DRAFT

Please send amendments, comments, and suggestions to:  
Walter Meyer zu Erpen, PO Box 8697, Victoria, BC V8W 3S3 CANADA Email: [info@survivalresearch.ca](mailto:info@survivalresearch.ca)

séance above the Campbell garage<sup>64</sup> and tried with Dr. Swan to pull down from the ceiling the table that had levitated with its legs pointing downward.<sup>65</sup>

## PRIME MINISTER MACKENZIE KING:

Though Prime Minister William Lyon Mackenzie King (1874-1950) did not observe the phenomena of the Hamilton séance room, he did meet the Hamiltons. Dr. David Alexander Stewart (1874-1937), BA, MD, LLD, Medical Superintendent of the Manitoba Sanatorium at Ninette (1909-1937) and for many years a friend of Dr. Hamilton, was responsible for putting Mackenzie King in touch with the Hamiltons. On the afternoon of 20 August 1933, while leader of the official opposition,<sup>66</sup> Mackenzie King visited the Hamilton home. Later, he recorded in his diary that the Hamilton experiments are "amazing beyond all words":

The afternoon was quite the most remarkable one . . . I have had in my life . . . I believe absolutely in all that Hamilton and his wife and daughter have told me . . . their children will go on, beginning with this knowledge, and in this way, what is in doubt now will become accepted belief soon. The scriptures will take on new and literal and clearer meaning; the world itself will evolve to a higher plane. One can see a new significance in the second coming and its nearness . . .<sup>67</sup>

Shortly after Mackenzie King's death, *Psychic News* published a letter from a Scotsman named J.J. MacIndoe<sup>68</sup> telling of the late Prime Minister's interest in Spiritualism. In December 1951, *Maclean's Magazine* revealed to the Canadian public that Mackenzie King had, in order to receive communications from family and friends in the spirit world, frequently consulted well-known mediums, including the Irish-born automatist Miss Geraldine Dorothy Cummins (1890-1969)<sup>69</sup>, the automatist Mrs. Hester (Dowden) Travers-Smith (1868-1949) in Britain, the clairaudient Mrs. Helen Hughes in Scotland,<sup>70</sup> and the direct-voice medium Mrs. Henrietta (Etta)

---

Seminary Head," *New York Times*, 17 October 1966). He became famous "for his use of the media in promoting Christianity and for his efforts to increase ties between Protestants and Roman Catholics" ("Well known clergyman dies in Oregon at age 99," *The Guardian* (Prince Edward Island), 25 February 1992).

<sup>64</sup>In a telephone conversation on 30 May 1991, Mrs. P.A. (Joan Isabel) Mackie said that she did not remember J.S. Bonnell having been at the one séance that she attended. At that séance (about 1931-1932), "the table only rose a few inches." There were no visible supports, and "the men did exert pressure to force it to the floor." Dr. Swan may have been a guest at that séance.

<sup>65</sup>Telephone conversation with David Rennie Swan, 29 May 1991.

<sup>66</sup>Mackenzie King was Prime Minister from 1921-1925, 1926-1930, and 1935-1948.

<sup>67</sup>MSS 14, box 5, folder 15 (COR9728), typescript of Mackenzie King's 27 August 1933 diary entry regarding 20 August 1933, prepared and sent to Margaret Hamilton Bach in March 1979 by Stephen Riley, researcher, CBC "24 hours."

<sup>68</sup>Is this rather John B. McIndoe who was a Spiritualist active in Scotland and England, including one-time president of the Spiritualists' National Union, and who reported on the controversial mediumship of Helen Duncan? See introductory pages to Leslie Shepard's 1966 reprint of Dr. Nandor Fodor's *Encyclopaedia of Psychic Science* (London: 1934), p. xxiii.

<sup>69</sup>Cork County Archives holds Geraldine Cummins' papers and believes that 1969 is the correct year of death for Cummins.

<sup>70</sup>One Spiritualist website indicates that Mrs. Helen Hughes and Mrs. Estelle Roberts were noteworthy for their fine clairaudient work, being excellent mediums for propaganda purposes in large meetings. In 1972, Helen Hughes returned through the medium David Young (*Psychic News*, 26 August 1972).

# DRAFT

Please send amendments, comments, and suggestions to:  
Walter Meyer zu Erpen, PO Box 8697, Victoria, BC V8W 3S3 CANADA Email: [info@survivalresearch.ca](mailto:info@survivalresearch.ca)

Wriedt (1859-1942) in the United States and Canada.<sup>71</sup> Following the disclosure by *Maclean's Magazine*, Lillian Hamilton turned over to the *Winnipeg Tribune* the letters the Hamiltons had received from Mackenzie King and told of his visit to the Hamilton home.<sup>72</sup> Mrs. Hamilton took care to state that Mackenzie King "was not a spiritualist in the popular sense," rather "a scientific investigator and through his experience had come to believe in survival after death. He took the same attitude as my husband insisting that facts as they presented themselves through research be kept on the strictest scientific basis."<sup>73</sup> According to Mrs. Sylvia Barber (1892-1979), writing to Mrs. Hamilton who was living in London, Ontario, publication of the letters in the *Winnipeg Tribune* "caused quite a sensation."<sup>74</sup> Mrs. Barber wasted no time in sending the newspaper clippings, by airmail, to the *Psychic News* in London.

## PRECAUTIONS TO PRECLUDE FRAUD:

From the start of their investigations, the Hamiltons took measures to preclude the possibility of fraud. In addition, at séances at which it was predicted by the trance controls that a teleplasm was to be photographed, additional precautions were taken. The séance room was locked and sealed at the end of the previous sitting and the keys to the locks given to several different sitters who did not reside in the Hamilton home. The medium was examined prior to the sitting, and all sitters and the medium held hands so that allegedly no person had free use of his or her hands to fraudulently produce the effects that were photographed. The sitting was held in total darkness. One or more note-takers recorded the verbal proceedings by shorthand and/or longhand, and photographs were taken. A special scrutineer was invited to observe the proceedings, and guards were stationed outside the entrance to the séance room. On four occasions, an affidavit was typed for each participant and signed in the presence of a notary public.<sup>75</sup>

---

<sup>71</sup>Blair Fraser, "The Secret Life of Mackenzie King, Spiritualist," *Maclean's Magazine*, 15 December 1951, pp. 7-9, 60-61. This article does not mention Mackenzie King's connection with the T.G. Hamilton family.

<sup>72</sup>Val Werier, "Mackenzie King's Secret: Newly Disclosed Letters Reveal 'Spiritual' Link," *Winnipeg Tribune*, 14 December 1951, pp. 1, 3, and 8. This article mentions the Fraser article in the 15 December 1951 issue of *Maclean's Magazine*.

Mackenzie King's meeting with Dr. Hamilton is mentioned in C.P. Stacey, *A Very Double Life: the Private World of Mackenzie King* (Toronto: The Macmillan Company of Canada, 1976).

<sup>73</sup>*Winnipeg Tribune*, 14 December 1951, p. 8.

<sup>74</sup>MSS 14, box 5, folder 8 (COR9588), letter from Mrs. Sylvia Barber to Mrs. Lillian Hamilton, 18 December 1951.

<sup>75</sup>MSS 14, box 9, folders 4 to 7. All affidavits relate to phenomena witnessed and photographed in 1928.

# DRAFT

Please send amendments, comments, and suggestions to:  
Walter Meyer zu Erpen, PO Box 8697, Victoria, BC V8W 3S3 CANADA Email: [info@survivalresearch.ca](mailto:info@survivalresearch.ca)

Although the affidavits were never used in a court of law, they reveal the desire of the Hamilton researchers<sup>76</sup> "to put as much material as possible, on a sound legal basis."<sup>77</sup> The documents are of historical value in that they provide contemporary testimony of what the deponents "believed to be true." Each deponent made his or her declaration with the knowledge that it was "of the same force and effect as if made under oath and by virtue of 'The Canada Evidence Act.'"

## AUTHENTICITY OF THE HAMILTON COLLECTION:

Margaret Hamilton Bach helped organize and in 1980 deposited the Hamilton collection with the Department of Archives and Special Collections of the University of Manitoba Libraries. Included are her parents' séance and research notes, attendance registers, photographs, original lantern slides/glass negatives, and affidavits. A team from the National Archival Appraisal Board appraised the collection and the Canadian Cultural Property Export Review Board certified it "as having outstanding cultural and historical value to Canada."<sup>78</sup> Margaret Hamilton Bach was also instrumental in establishing, with financial assistance from family and friends, the T.G. Hamilton Research Grant Program, to assist scholars to study the Hamilton research and to provide funds for the ongoing preservation of the collection.<sup>79</sup>

The collection's organization and complexity, the many cross-references, even the signs of the Hamiltons' heavy use of the records to compile and publish two books and many articles, demonstrate its authenticity. The secretary who prepared most of the séance minutes and related correspondence between 1929 and 1935, and whose initials appear at the bottom of the items typed, was Miss Eileen McTavish (1907-2002). After graduating from business school in 1929, Miss McTavish (later Mrs. Stanley Sykes) went to work as the office secretary for Doctors Glen and Jim Hamilton. Miss McTavish worked as their receptionist, made appointments, and prepared invoices. In the mornings, she was not busy so typed all of Mrs. Hamilton's notes and records, back to the beginning. Mrs. Hamilton had typed them, but was not an expert typist, so brought them into the doctors' office for Miss McTavish to type.

---

<sup>76</sup>Each of the following signed one or more of the affidavits, depending upon his/her attendance at the séance in question: Christianna Amelia Alder (1874-1958), William Bernard (Barney) Cooper (1891-1968), Henry Archibald Vaughan Green (1888-1979), Dr. James Archibald Hamilton (1870-1934), Lillian May Hamilton (1880-1956), Margaret Lillian Hamilton (1909-1986), Dr. Thomas Glendenning Hamilton (1873-1935), Daniel Brown MacDonald (1882(?)-1974), John David MacDonald (1906-1984), Elizabeth MacDonald Poole (1870-1935), Elizabeth Crawford (Bessie) Shand (1895-1963), Ada Esther Turner (1892-1956), Hugh Arthur Reed (1879-1942), Katherine Margaret Alder (1899-1936), and Dr. Frank Aubrey Benner (1884-1963).

<sup>77</sup>MSS 14, box 3, folder 9: Richard E. Bennett-Margaret Hamilton Bach interview, p. 23.

<sup>78</sup>PUB0095, p. 15.

<sup>79</sup>**The author wishes to acknowledge the financial assistance received from the T.G. Hamilton Grant Program, without which the research upon which this presentation is based would not have been possible.**

# DRAFT

Please send amendments, comments, and suggestions to:  
Walter Meyer zu Erpen, PO Box 8697, Victoria, BC V8W 3S3 CANADA Email: [info@survivalresearch.ca](mailto:info@survivalresearch.ca)

## NO PHOTOGRAPHIC FRAUD OR TRICKERY:

Careful examination has not revealed any photographic fraud with respect to the Hamilton research. Photographs of teleplasms were often taken, almost simultaneously, from more than one angle,<sup>80</sup> using the battery of cameras installed at one end of the séance room.<sup>81</sup> Some photographs show that the teleplasms cast a shadow within the room. Other photographs in timed, sequential series show the teleplasm being retracted into the body of the medium. Except in the earliest years of the research, the photographs were, in the case of séances at which special phenomena were to be photographed, developed in the dark room in the Hamilton home immediately after the séance. Dr. Hamilton always took one or more of the scrutineers or other researchers (usually a medical colleague) into the darkroom with him to demonstrate that the photographic plates were NOT switched or otherwise altered. Finally, guests who attended the séances were encouraged to bring their own photographic equipment, and several of these independent photographs survive.<sup>82</sup> There can be no doubt that the table levitations did physically occur and that the teleplasms did temporarily exist within the three-dimensional reality of the séance room, to be photographed in relation to the sitters and séance room background. Through computer digitization of a teleplasm photographed from several different angles, one could prove that it had a three-dimensional existence within the room.

## INTEGRITY OF THE HAMILTON FAMILY:

The personal and professional integrity of the Hamilton family is beyond reproach. Having spoken with many individuals who knew Glen Hamilton personally or knew of him through their parents,<sup>83</sup> the impression with which I was left is that he was a saint in the Winnipeg community in which he lived, practiced medicine, and carried out his psychic investigations. He was considered a true Christian, one with a big heart, unable at times to send out the invoices for the operations he had performed.<sup>84</sup> Many individuals whom Dr. Hamilton brought into this world have attested to the good medical care their families received from their physician and the house calls he made to stitch up a cut lip, to mend a broken arm, or to attend a dying father.<sup>85</sup> Without exception, everyone has attested to his honesty and integrity.

---

<sup>80</sup>For example, the sitting held on 27 June 1932 resulted in photographs of the second "Arthur Conan Doyle" teleplasm shown in these two slides, in which you can see the same teleplasm photographed from two different angles. Alternately, the "Lucy" teleplasm photographed on 10 March 1930 may provide a better illustration.

<sup>81</sup>One photograph shows the equipment used during séances including eleven cameras, three flash light devices, the push button apparatus used to explode the flashes, and a shelf on which sat a phonograph which was operated by a motor-driven mechanism controlled by a switch attached to Dr. Hamilton's chair.

<sup>82</sup>On 18 August 1929, Mrs. William Cannon, wife of Judge Cannon, of New York used a movie camera to photograph a teleplasm as it emerged from Mary Marshall's mouth. See MSS 14, PC 12, box 1, slide 20g. A photograph taken with Hugh Arthur Reed's camera of the 1 May 1929 Charles Haddon Spurgeon teleplasm on the face of the medium Mary Marshall is among the loose images in the H.A.V. Green collection; it presents a view from the left **which may not exist** in the Hamilton collection.

<sup>83</sup>WJMzE's informants were relatives of the Hamilton-Forrester families or the children of neighbours, of Dr. Hamilton's medical colleagues, or of other individuals associated with the research.

<sup>84</sup>Taped interview with Mrs. Stanley (Eileen McTavish) Sykes (31 May 1991), Dr. Hamilton's secretary from 1929 to 1935.

<sup>85</sup>For example, telephone conversations on 31 January 1991 with Mr. Hugh Ranken Horne (1915-1994), CA, and on 10 June 1991 with Mr. A.C. (Cam) Marshall.

# DRAFT

Please send amendments, comments, and suggestions to:  
Walter Meyer zu Erpen, PO Box 8697, Victoria, BC V8W 3S3 CANADA Email: [info@survivalresearch.ca](mailto:info@survivalresearch.ca)

In 1991, Dr. Gordon S. Fahrni (1887-1995) was almost certainly the oldest person still living who had known Glen Hamilton.<sup>86</sup> Gordon Fahrni "knew Dr. Hamilton quite well," also Dr. Jim Hamilton. "Dr. Hamilton was quite a man" and "got his reputation chiefly from Spiritualism." He "was a sincere man" and spent a "good deal of his time" pursuing his interest in spirit survival. Glen Hamilton was "a well-known general physician of high standing and reputation." He meant well; he was "not a charlatan." His psychical research detracted from his medical practice. Glen Hamilton would sometimes speak to Gordon Fahrni about his research, though not in any depth as Fahrni was not really interested.

No one has suggested that the Hamiltons were a party to any fraud that might have occurred in their experimental room. After Dr. Hamilton's death in April 1935, Dr. Bruce Chown "voiced what is perhaps the most impressive appraisal of the man and the researcher when he wrote this appreciation"<sup>87</sup> in the *Canadian Medical Association Journal*:

What shall I say of this man, this elder, this excellent physician, this soul honest and unaffected, and friendly, enduring and courageous? His was no easy fight. He had faced derision and ridicule and calumny . . . This is not the place to discuss these investigations in themselves, though it will be for these that he will be known to history. From table rappings (sic) he passed to observations on the apparent animation of dead things, to trance speech and writing, to the photography of masses extruded from the bodies of mediums, masses at first amorphous, later moulded into the likeness of known dead. These phenomena were all genuine. The yellow fog of doubt that hangs about all mediumistic doings was dispelled by the character of the man. Day after day, week after week, year after year, when the ordinary day's work was done, he observed, recorded, analyzed. I often wondered how he had the patient stubbornness to persist. There lived [in him] a quality of mind rare in any age, even in the man who is a professing scientist; an endurance and an eagerness to carry this, his heart's work, on top of a great load of professional and social duties, showing forth a man of powerful character. Now he is gone from this world of solid flesh. To but a few that strong and steady personality shall again become phenomenal; for the rest of us his spirit alone remains.<sup>88</sup>

## INTEGRITY OF THE OTHER RESEARCHERS:

Also beyond reproach is the personal and professional integrity of the other researchers and of Dr. Hamilton's medical colleagues who attended the sittings. To give but one example, paediatrician Dr. Bruce Chown, who was Glen Hamilton's primary co-experimenter from 1931 until 1935, was shortly after his association with the experiments embarked on a career in

---

<sup>86</sup>Telephone conversation (13 July 1991) with Dr. Gordon S. Fahrni, MD (1911), ChM (1923), OC (1987). Dr. Fahrni was born in Gladstone, Manitoba, graduated from Manitoba Medical College, and taught at the college (after 1919, the University of Manitoba Faculty of Medicine) for 38 years (1912-1950).

<sup>87</sup>PUB0072, p. xxxii.

<sup>88</sup>Bruce Chown, "Obituaries," *Canadian Medical Association Journal*, 32 (June 1935): 710-1.

# DRAFT

Please send amendments, comments, and suggestions to:  
Walter Meyer zu Erpen, PO Box 8697, Victoria, BC V8W 3S3 CANADA Email: [info@survivalresearch.ca](mailto:info@survivalresearch.ca)

medical research that brought him international recognition. Between 2 October 1930 and 13 February 1935,<sup>89</sup> Bruce and/or Gladys Chown participated in at least 114 séances,<sup>90</sup> including one sitting<sup>91</sup> that Dr. Chown oversaw while Dr. Hamilton was away from Winnipeg on business. "A competent note-taker was always present,"<sup>92</sup> and Bruce Chown acted as the recorder at 62 of the pre-1935 séances he attended. For example, Bruce Chown's minutes of the 29 November 1931 séance, typed by secretary Eileen McTavish as dictated by him from his shorthand notes, record the times of key events, verbatim statements of the mediums, and progress notes.<sup>93</sup>

For his scientific research into the nature of blood group incompatibilities, especially his role in the fight to control the Rh condition, Dr. Chown received many honorary degrees and awards, among which appointment as an Officer of the Order of Canada in 1967. His research culminated in "clinical trials that resulted in the licensing of Rh immune globulin, which blocks an often deadly cell interaction between some pregnant women and the infants they carry."<sup>94</sup> The interaction often occurs when an Rh negative mother and an Rh positive father conceive an Rh positive embryo after the mother has given birth to one or more Rh positive children. In a posthumous tribute, Jon Gerrard wrote that Bruce Chown was a "superb diagnostician" who "became known locally as the professor of 'rareology' because of his ability to identify unusual conditions."<sup>95</sup> There can be no doubt that in his study of psychical research the teleplasms presented "unusual conditions"!

One of his close medical colleagues the late Dr. John Bowman said that Bruce was a remarkable person and "had the most brilliant, scientific, analytical mind" he ever met. He ranked Chown with Canadian physicians such as the professor of medicine Sir William Osler (1849-1919) and the discoverer of insulin Sir Frederick Grant Banting (1891-1941). Dr. Bowman found it hard to believe that Bruce Chown could have been fooled during his participation in the psychical research experiments.<sup>96</sup>

---

<sup>89</sup>After Dr. Hamilton's death in April 1935, Dr. Chown took over as head of the group. Bruce and/or Gladys Chown participated in 41 séances in two series of sittings held during the months of April through June 1935 and October 1935 through June 1936. During this period, Gladys Chown acted as the note-taker at all 39 séances which she attended.

<sup>90</sup>See attendance registers in MSS 14, box 8, folders 3 and 4.

<sup>91</sup>Sitting held on 6 March 1932.

<sup>92</sup>PUB0072, p. 24.

<sup>93</sup>MSS 14, box 16, folder 7.

<sup>94</sup>"Rh Disease Research Pioneer Dies at 92," *Winnipeg Free Press*, 9 July 1986, p. 8.

<sup>95</sup>NEW0205, p. 345.

<sup>96</sup>Telephone conversation with Dr. John Bowman, Rh Institute, University of Manitoba, 3 June 1991.

# DRAFT

Please send amendments, comments, and suggestions to:  
Walter Meyer zu Erpen, PO Box 8697, Victoria, BC V8W 3S3 CANADA Email: [info@survivalresearch.ca](mailto:info@survivalresearch.ca)

## THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT:

The Spanish influenza epidemic of 1918-1919, and specifically the death of Arthur Lamont Hamilton (1915-1919) of influenzal pneumonia, is often cited as the factor that caused Dr. and Mrs. Hamilton to undertake study of the survival hypothesis, mediumship, and Spiritualistic phenomena.<sup>97</sup> While young Arthur's death no doubt heightened his parents' interest in that ultimate question about the nature of human existence,<sup>98</sup> the Hamiltons' inquiry must also be seen in the broader historical context. During World War One and the following decade,<sup>99</sup> the large number of war deaths resulted in an increase in interest in life after death and a significant growth in Spiritualism.<sup>100</sup>

---

<sup>97</sup>However, Lillian Hamilton may have read, as early as 1915, *Human Personality and Its Survival of Bodily Death*, edited by Frederic William Henry Myers (1843-1901) and published posthumously in 1903. In an interview with Dr. Richard Bennett, University of Manitoba archivist, Margaret Hamilton Bach stated that Myers' book reached the Hamilton home in 1915 (MSS 14, box 3, folder 9, p. 18). She remembered "finding a note written by my mother about Arthur's passing. In it she said that she had read Myers' great book *Human Personality and Its Survival of Bodily Death*. She found Myers' statement of his own personal belief so profound and so deep and so assured, that her own grief was assuaged by this knowledge, when Arthur was taken from us. Of my two parents she was the stronger, and she was the one to whom father turned for strength in his deep sorrow" (MSS 14, box 3, folder 9, pp. 6-7).

<sup>98</sup>Today, research into the question of survival of the human personality after bodily death encompasses study of near-death experiences, deathbed visions, spontaneous apparitions, and spirit communications through mediumship. There is great interest in these phenomena, as well as in the subjects of euthanasia and death and dying. The existence of the Survival Research Foundation in the United States (founded 1971) and the Survival Research Institute of Canada (founded 1991) demonstrates the ongoing interest in survival research.

<sup>99</sup>The years 1916 through 1921 saw the publication of four books by psychical researcher William Jackson Crawford (1880-1920), DSc, who studied the psychic structures responsible for the raps, table levitations and other phenomena which he witnessed and photographed in the Goligher circle in Belfast, Ireland. In the preface to his first book, Crawford wrote regarding the invisible operators responsible for the manifestations: "I am personally satisfied they are the spirits of human beings who have passed into the Beyond." Crawford's four books are: *The Reality of Psychic Phenomena* (London: John M. Watkins, 1916); *Hints and Observations for those Investigating the Phenomena of Spiritualism* (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1918); *Experiments in Psychical Research* (London: John M. Watkins, 1919); and *The Psychic Structures at the Goligher Circle* (London: John M. Watkins, 1921).

In November 1916, Sir Oliver Joseph Lodge made public, through publication of *Raymond or Life and Death, with Examples of the Evidence for Survival of Memory and Affection after Death* (London: Methuen & Co., Ltd., 1916), his conviction that his son Raymond (1889-1915), killed at the front in September 1915, had survived death.

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle proclaimed his belief in 1918 with the publication of *The New Revelation* which was followed in 1919 by *The Vital Message*.

<sup>100</sup>The 1911, 1921, and 1931 Canadian censuses showed a steady increase in Spiritualist numbers from 674 to 1,558 and 2,263 respectively, followed in 1941 by a sharp decrease to 1,214.

Data from: *Fifth Census of Canada, 1911*, vol. 2 (Ottawa: King's Printer, 1913), table 1, pp. 2-3; *Sixth Census of Canada, 1921*, vol. 1 (Ottawa: King's Printer, 1924), table 34, pp. 572-3; Dominion Bureau of Statistics, *Seventh Census of Canada, 1931*, vol. 2 (Ottawa: King's Printer, 1933), table 38, pp. 508-9; and Dominion Bureau of Statistics, *Eighth Census of Canada, 1941*, vol. 2 (Ottawa: King's Printer, 1944), table 36, pp. 519-21.



# DRAFT

Please send amendments, comments, and suggestions to:  
Walter Meyer zu Erpen, PO Box 8697, Victoria, BC V8W 3S3 CANADA Email: [info@survivalresearch.ca](mailto:info@survivalresearch.ca)

Surviving relatives and friends frequently turned to mediums in an effort to communicate with their deceased loved ones. Also contributing to the growth in Spiritualism and interest in survival were the Canadian lecture tours of Sir Oliver Lodge and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, two eminent British Spiritualists, who in 1920 and 1923 respectively each spoke to large audiences about his personal conviction of the truth of life after death and the possibility of spirit communication.<sup>101</sup>

Finally, the controversial mediumship of Mrs. "Margery" (Mina Marguerite Stinson) Crandon (1889-1941)<sup>102</sup> that began in June 1923<sup>103</sup> focussed considerable attention on the field of psychical research and survival. The main trance control in the Crandon research was Margery's brother Walter Stuart Stinson (1884-1911), who was killed in a railway accident. Walter communicated with and through "Margery" until her death in 1941. The same control manifested in the Hamilton experiments after Mary Marshall joined the group in 1928 and was the main control until Mrs. Hamilton brought the experiments to a close in 1944. Nonetheless, Walter continued to communicate through Mary Marshall who in 1947 joined the home circle of Mrs. Sylvia Barber. Mary remained a member of that group until 1958.

## **BELIEF VERSUS DISBELIEF:**

To believers in the possibility of genuine psychic phenomena, the levitations and teleplasms that Dr. Hamilton and his associates witnessed were without question authentic. Given the education and integrity of the individuals involved, there was no possibility of fraud.

To the skeptic, Dr. Hamilton and his co-experimenters, although they had no doubt the best of intentions, were duped by the mediums. Obviously, they had "the wool pulled over their eyes."

Conversations and correspondence with family members of the three main mediums, Mrs. Elizabeth Poole, Mrs. Mary Ann Marshall, and Mrs. Susan Marshall, attest to the genuineness of the phenomena produced by their grandmother, mother-in-law, or mother. Though unable to explain the phenomena, they have no evidence or suspicion of fraud.

---

<sup>101</sup>Although it is doubtful that Dr. Hamilton met Lodge in 1920, he may have attended his lecture. In 1923, Dr. Hamilton had a private meeting with Conan Doyle and likely attended his lecture.

Sir Oliver Joseph Lodge (1851-1940), FRS, DCL, DSc, a professor of physics and applied mathematics at University College in Liverpool and London who became prominent in psychic research after 1910, lectured in Winnipeg, Vancouver, Victoria and presumably Eastern Canada in 1920.

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle (1859-1930), MD, LL.D., a medical doctor interested in psychic research, is best known as the novelist who wrote the Sherlock Holmes detective stories. In June and July 1923, Conan Doyle lectured to audiences in Vancouver, Victoria, Edmonton, Calgary, Jasper, Winnipeg, Port Arthur, and Montreal.

<sup>102</sup>Her husband was Boston physician Dr. Le Roi Goddard Crandon (1873-1939), AB (1894), MD (1898), AM (1909, Harvard), FACS, who was a Professor of Surgery at Harvard Medical School and the author of a textbook on surgical after-treatment.

<sup>103</sup>Arthur S. Berger, *Lives and Letters in American Parapsychology: A Biographical History, 1850-1987* (Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland & Company, Inc., 1988), p. 67.

# DRAFT

Please send amendments, comments, and suggestions to:  
Walter Meyer zu Erpen, PO Box 8697, Victoria, BC V8W 3S3 CANADA Email: [info@survivalresearch.ca](mailto:info@survivalresearch.ca)

## THE WILL TO BELIEVE?:

A number of Winnipeg medical doctors witnessed the phenomena that occurred in the Hamilton séance room. Most, if not all, were convinced of their authenticity. This is demonstrated by the fact that members of the Winnipeg medical community convinced Dr. Hamilton to address the 1930 convention of the British Medical Association on the subject of his psychical research. Apparently, none of these witnesses was ever sufficiently convinced of fraud to put pen to paper or even to make it known to family and friends.<sup>104</sup> It is more than 65 years since Dr. Hamilton's death and there is no evidence that fraud occurred.

After his first lecture in 1926, a large number of Winnipeg residents were convinced of the genuineness of what was happening in the Hamilton home through Dr. Hamilton's frequent lectures, illustrated with lantern slides. They were convinced of the truth of what they were told on the basis of the integrity of the lecturer and other individuals whom they knew to be involved. Today, some individuals, while skeptical about psychic phenomena, are convinced that the Hamilton phenomena must have been genuine, based upon the intelligence and integrity of the witnesses involved, especially Isaac Pitblado and Bruce Chown.

## ALLEGATIONS OF FRAUD:

In response to a question from Professor James B. (Jim) Nickels during his study of the Hamilton research, Dr. Glen Hamilton, Junior, MD, stated that he had never heard of any allegation of tampering or fraud from any of the Winnipeg residents who attended his father's séances.<sup>105</sup> His statement is corroborated by the surviving archival record and through numerous conversations with relatives of the Hamilton group's researchers, mediums, and witnesses. No factual allegation of fraud regarding the Hamilton psychical phenomena was ever made. Indeed, the only known allegations were by Dr. J.B. Rhine and by Marshall J. Gauvin, neither of whom attended any of the experiments.

---

<sup>104</sup>According to Dr. Chown's research assistant Professor Marion Lewis, Dr. Chown later pondered whether or not he and the other investigators had somehow been duped by the mediums. To Allison Chown, his second wife, Dr. Chown described the Hamilton's medium as a woman of only rudimentary education and literacy and concluded that she had been genuine. Although these two impressions of Dr. Chown's thoughts on the subject differ, both corroborate that he had found no factual basis that he had been duped.

<sup>105</sup>From a videotape based upon interviews with Dr. Glen Forrester Hamilton, MD, by Professor James B. Nickels, Department of Psychology, University of Manitoba. Title: *The Psychic Research in a Winnipeg Family: The Recollections and Views of Dr. Glen F. Hamilton* (compiled 1987).

# DRAFT

Please send amendments, comments, and suggestions to:  
Walter Meyer zu Erpen, PO Box 8697, Victoria, BC V8W 3S3 CANADA Email: [info@survivalresearch.ca](mailto:info@survivalresearch.ca)

Dr. Joseph Banks Rhine (1895-1980), PhD, is best known for his research at the Parapsychology Laboratory at Duke University, North Carolina. Dr. Rhine, after his early investigation of the "Margery" Crandon mediumship, turned to carefully controlled laboratory studies, and stated, some time prior to 1943,<sup>106</sup> that the work of the Canadian Hamiltons looked fraudulent. According to the younger Glen Hamilton, Rhine knew nothing about the Hamiltons, had never visited Winnipeg, and had no factual basis for his statement.<sup>107</sup> Only second-hand references to Rhine's allegation have been located. Dr. Hamilton's connection with and defence of "Margery", whom Rhine considered to be a fraud, and the appearance of Margery's control "Walter" in the Winnipeg experiments, may have made the research seem to him to be fraudulent by association.

Marshall J. Gauvin (1881-1978) was a rationalist, freethinker, and popular free-thought lecturer who lived in Winnipeg from 1926 until his death.<sup>108</sup> Gauvin was Winnipeg's arch-rival of religion,

---

<sup>106</sup>In a letter dated 3 September 1943 to James Drummond Hamilton, Clarkson Dye, Executive Secretary, The Psychic Fellowship, wrote that "It would appear that your father's work had been misrepresented to Dr. Rhine and underestimated by his informants, and this led partly, at least, to his erroneous conclusions" (MSS 14, box 6, folder 5 (COR9905)).

In a letter dated 30 March 1960 to Henri Boitel, Paris, France, Margaret Hamilton Bach wrote: "It was very kind of you to forward to me Mr. Dawson's letter of Feb. 16, 1960, making clear how, in a public lecture in London in late 1959, Dr. J.B. Rhine had made a statement to his audience that he considered Dr. Hamilton's researches to be fraudulent" (MSS 14, box 6, folder 2 (COR9833)). Mr. Dawson was the organizer of the 1960 Congress of the International Spiritualist Federation at which Henri Boitel presented a paper (MSS 14, box 5, folder 14, letter from Henri Boitel to Margaret Hamilton Bach, 14 February 1960 (COR9681)). Unfortunately, Mr. Dawson's letter does not appear to be in the Hamilton collection. In a letter dated 7 February 1960 to Henri Boitel, Margaret Hamilton Bach wrote: "Concerning the completely unfounded and vicious attack upon my dear father's researches by J.B. Rhine, I have already written a very sharp rebuke, and only need the name of the newspaper reporting Rhine's address, and the date, and place, to mail it on to you for immediate publication" (MSS 14, box 6, folder 2 (COR9831)).

<sup>107</sup>From *The Psychic Research in a Winnipeg Family: The Recollections and Views of Dr. Glen F. Hamilton*.

<sup>108</sup>Gauvin was a follower of the humanist, rationalist, free-thought worldview of Colonel Robert Green Ingersoll (1833-21 July 1899), American lawyer, political leader, orator and lecturer. Ingersoll was a prominent agnostic and one of his most noted lectures bore the title "Why I am an Agnostic." Ironically, within days of Ingersoll's death, there were claims of post-mortem communication from him. (Regarding his death, see for example "Whence and Whither," *Nanaimo Free Press*, 24 July 1899, p. 3, which was followed by "Ingersoll in Spirit Land," *Nanaimo Free Press*, 8 August 1899, p. 3. The latter referred to an address which the spirit of Robert Ingersoll had delivered through the mediumship of Mrs. Cora L.V. Richmond to an audience of 5,000 gathered at the Zook Park Spiritualist Camp meeting in Springfield, Illinois.)

Gauvin once estimated that between 1926 and 1940 he delivered 560 lectures to Winnipeg audiences. Gauvin's lectures were "intended to free his audiences from the superstitions of religion and to free them for a life based upon fact, truth and reason. This, to Gauvin, was the meaning and purpose of free thought. He saw religion itself as a delusion and as a means by which people were kept from an attainable freedom. Consequently, throughout his lectures and articles there is an ubiquitous anti-religious element, and a large number of them are direct attacks upon religion and religious belief" (PUB0105, p. 10).

# DRAFT

Please send amendments, comments, and suggestions to:  
Walter Meyer zu Erpen, PO Box 8697, Victoria, BC V8W 3S3 CANADA Email: [info@survivalresearch.ca](mailto:info@survivalresearch.ca)

personal immortality, and related "superstition." Spiritualism, life after death, and belief in ghosts were lecture topics that he addressed on a number of occasions.<sup>109</sup> Even Gauvin would only suggest that Dr. Hamilton and his colleagues had been duped by the mediums or that, "admitting that some strange things are quite sincerely done in séances, it is altogether more probable that they belong to the phenomena of abnormal psychology, than that they are the work of ghosts."<sup>110</sup>

Shortly after Glen Hamilton's 24 April 1933 lecture entitled "The Scientific Evidence for Survival after Death" to more than 900 individuals in Westminster United Church, his largest audience ever,<sup>111</sup> Gauvin replied that:

Dr. Glen Hamilton has given years of study to this research. His work in this field has brought him international fame. It may be assumed without question that he has come face to face with facts of an unusual character. And none, I think, will question--certainly I do not question--his absolute sincerity in carrying on his investigations, and in interpreting (sic) his findings.<sup>112</sup>

While stating that "the presence of fraud in séance rooms where the results obtained are attributed to spirits is a challenge to every thoughtful person to be doubly cautious in accepting any of the work as genuine,"<sup>113</sup> Gauvin still saw fit to state:

---

<sup>109</sup>In addition, Gauvin was the author of a booklet entitled *Is There a Life after Death?* (New York: Peter Eckler Publishing Co., 1919, 1921) which saw at least two impressions. See MSS 47, box 38, folder 16, for a copy of this publication.

<sup>110</sup>MSS 47, box 16, folder 14. Marshall J. Gauvin, "Does Dr. Glen Hamilton Possess 'Scientific Evidence for Survival After Death?'," unpublished typescript, n.d. [1933], p. 15.

<sup>111</sup>A printed card of admission (MSS 14, box 1, folder 10) indicates that the lecture was followed by an "Interrogation of the Lecturer" by Reverend John Sutherland Bonnell, BA, BD, the church's pastor. The lecture was presented under the auspices of the Westminster Young Men's Club; admission was fifty cents. In his reply dated 28 April 1933 to a letter from Reverend W.R. Wood enquiring about the lecture (MSS 14, box 5, folder 1 (COR9211)), Dr. Hamilton wrote that the attendance "was a good showing under present financial conditions." He forwarded to Mr. Wood a copy of Mr. Bonnell's questions, writing that "Mr. Bonnell is very friendly to the subject. His questions, you will notice, are disposed to bring in the religious bearings and these, as you know, are the last things that I wish to deal with. One has to very emphatically establish many facts before applying the religious implications. There are so many who look upon the foundations of religion as having been laid in centuries long past and who think it practically sacrilege that anything in modern life might be considered as contributory (sic) or interpreting such truths. However, the world will move slowly forward in due time. At least we shall see a small measure of progress." A newspaper report referred to the series of questions by Mr. Bonnell as a "novel feature". To one question, Dr. Hamilton is reported as having replied that "the great minds engaged in spiritualistic investigation had definitely arrived at the conclusion that survival after death was an established fact. From cover to cover, the bible held to the theory of survival." ("Novel Feature at Hamilton Lecture on Spiritualism," *Winnipeg Free Press*, 25 April 1933, p. 3.)

<sup>112</sup>MSS 47, box 16, folder 14, p. 2.

<sup>113</sup>MSS 47, box 16, folder 14, p. 3.

# DRAFT

Please send amendments, comments, and suggestions to:  
Walter Meyer zu Erpen, PO Box 8697, Victoria, BC V8W 3S3 CANADA Email: [info@survivalresearch.ca](mailto:info@survivalresearch.ca)

But we may freely admit that many of the phenomena met with in psychical research are genuine. The question they raise is, How are they to be interpreted? Must we call in ghosts to account for them, as Dr. Hamilton does? or should they be regarded as products of quite natural though unusual human powers?<sup>114</sup>

Citing instances of well-known mediums who had been caught in the act of fraudulently producing teleplasm, Gauvin questioned how Dr. Hamilton could be certain that his medium had not produced the "so-called teleplasm" by swallowing and subsequently regurgitating cheesecloth, rubber gloves, paper photographs, and other materials. Alternately, Gauvin suggested that, because the male sitters were not stripped and examined prior to the séance, one of them might be a confederate of the medium who concealed "teleplasm" on his person and later draped it on the woman in the dark.<sup>115</sup>

The typescript of Marshall Gauvin's lecture does not reveal that he had any factual evidence of fraud. Indeed, Gauvin wrote:

I do not pretend to know how Dr. Hamilton's teleplasmic pictures are produced. But it is clear that similar pictures can be produced without the aid of spirits. And it is equally clear that Dr. Hamilton is not in a position to say that he is certain that spirits have had anything to do with his pictures.<sup>116</sup>

The closest Gauvin comes in his suggestion that the Hamilton mediumship is fraudulent is his story about the Winnipeg man who had for a year and a half been duped by two women he "had trusted implicitly," but who had faked the phenomena that he had photographed. Gauvin had spoken with both the photographer and one of the women, and both parties had acknowledged that the teleplasms and spirit pictures had been faked. Gauvin did not, however, suggest that the "mediums" were connected with the Hamilton research.<sup>117</sup>

Neither J.B. Rhine, nor Marshall Gauvin, attended any of the experiments held in Dr. Hamilton's home, and no record has been found to show that either had evidence, based upon the first-hand testimony of some witness, to support his allegation. Until such record is found, the allegations of fraud made by these men must be treated as statements of their belief that physical phenomena cannot be produced through genuinely paranormal means.

## PSYCHICAL PHENOMENA AS EVIDENCE OF LIFE AFTER DEATH:

---

<sup>114</sup>MSS 47, box 16, folder 14, p. 4.

<sup>115</sup>MSS 47, box 16, folder 14, p. 13.

<sup>116</sup>MSS 47, box 16, folder 14, p. 14.

<sup>117</sup>MSS 47, box 16, folder 14, pp. 13-14. MSS 14, box 8, folder 5, pp. 3, 5, and 9: The Hamilton group was aware that Herbert James Metcalfe (1870-1943), a professional photographer in Winnipeg, had had the unfortunate experience of being duped by two fraudulent mediums. With the exception of a series of experiments which Metcalfe might have attended in 1921, H.J. Metcalfe was not a regular participant in the Hamilton group. So as not to expose itself to allegations of fraud based upon association with Mr. Metcalfe, the Hamilton group excluded him from the séance room when he attended sessions after 1933. Regarding a sitting held shortly after Dr. Hamilton's death, Lillian May Hamilton reported that "Metcalfe will come & focus the cameras. Stay downstairs during the sitting and stay to develop any plates" (p. 5). Metcalfe's "offer of his services was greatly appreciated--T.G. having done all the developing of plates in the past" (p. 9).

# DRAFT

Please send amendments, comments, and suggestions to:  
Walter Meyer zu Erpen, PO Box 8697, Victoria, BC V8W 3S3 CANADA Email: [info@survivalresearch.ca](mailto:info@survivalresearch.ca)

While most of the individuals associated with Dr. Hamilton's psychical research were convinced that it provided conclusive evidence of a continued existence in an afterlife state, others maintained that the human mind and body possessed capabilities that, though not yet understood, were able to produce these strange physical phenomena. Indeed, Dr. Hamilton was slow to reach and make public his conclusion that the survival hypothesis was the only theory capable of explaining all of the phenomena witnessed. The lead sentence in an article published in *Psychic News* in October 1932 attributes to Dr. Hamilton the conclusion that: "The only theory that fits the whole of the facts is survival after death."<sup>118</sup> Margaret Hamilton Bach gave a later date for her father's public statement of his conclusion:

His final public lecture, late in 1934 [first week of November],<sup>119</sup> at the Dominion Theatre, was given to a packed house. That night he finally stated that on the basis of the phenomena witnessed and recorded, plus the "group" membership [sic; should read mediumship], and the intentional activities set in motion by the post-mortem group - the only hypothesis that could account for all these interlocked manifestations was the spiritistic hypothesis.<sup>120</sup>

Dr. Hamilton was finally convinced, not by the physical phenomena (table levitations and teleplasms) themselves,<sup>121</sup> rather by the ongoing intentional activities of the discarnate trance personalities that had manifested in a consistent and corroborating manner over a period of almost fifteen years. Dr. Bruce Chown who, though convinced at the time of Dr. Hamilton's death that all of the phenomena were genuine, did not adopt the survival hypothesis as the explanation of the phenomena he had witnessed. Nevertheless, he respected the conclusion that the Hamiltons had reached and remained a family friend for the rest of his life.

Regardless of whether an individual witness believed that the Hamilton group was observing some form of abnormal psychology or was in communication with personalities who had survived death, no one who attended one of the Hamilton séances or who knew the Hamiltons or the other individuals involved has dared to impugn their personal integrity by suggesting that they were a party to fraud.

## RELIGIOUS BACKGROUND OF THE RESEARCHERS:

---

<sup>118</sup>"Séance Room with 14 Cameras: 1,000 Tests by One Researcher," *Psychic News* (October 1932). The article refers to the Hamiltons' return to Winnipeg after six weeks in London, England, where Dr. Hamilton gave several lectures.

<sup>119</sup>"Aims and Methods of Psychic Research: Dr. T. Glen Hamilton Makes Plea for Sympathetic Treatment of Psychic Study in Illustrated Address," *The Elmwood Herald*, 8 November 1934, p. 1. Also, a letter to the editor, dated 7 November 1934, was published under the title "Aims and Methods in Psychical Research," *Winnipeg Free Press*, 10 November 1934, p. 31. Neither item mentions the survival hypothesis, though psychic research was at the time understood to relate to inquiry into survival of the human personality beyond death.

<sup>120</sup>Addendum note added by Margaret Hamilton Bach shortly before her death, in A.E. Rodin, Audrey Kerr, and J.D. Key, "Thomas Glen Hamilton MD FACS Winnipeg Physician Politician and Spiritualist," *Manitoba Medicine*, volume 60, no. 3 (Fall 1990): 124.

<sup>121</sup>Individuals conducting research regarding survival of the human soul, mind or personality after death recognize that physical phenomena do not, in themselves, provide convincing evidence of survival or spirit communication. See *Evidence of Life after Death: A Casebook for the Tough-Minded* (Springfield, Illinois: Charles C. Thomas, Publisher, 1988) by Arthur S. Berger, JD, who is President of the Survival Research Foundation.

# DRAFT

Please send amendments, comments, and suggestions to:  
Walter Meyer zu Erpen, PO Box 8697, Victoria, BC V8W 3S3 CANADA Email: [info@survivalresearch.ca](mailto:info@survivalresearch.ca)

The majority of the individuals connected with the Hamilton research were either born in Scotland or were the children of Scottish parents. Given the predominantly Scottish population of the original Red River Settlement, augmented by the large Scottish populations that settled in the Kildonan and Elmwood areas, this is not surprising.

With the exception of Dr. Bruce Chown who is known to have been agnostic in his later life,<sup>122</sup> the Hamiltons,<sup>123</sup> their co-experimenters, their mediums, and the other witnesses were devout adherents of the Protestant religion. The majority were members of the Presbyterian Church that in 1925 joined the United Church of Canada. Several came into the United Church union from the Methodist Church, a few remained Presbyterian, and several were Anglican. Many held positions as ministers, elders, or deacons within their denominations. Others were active participants in the various auxiliary committees that kept those churches running. Several of the women were members of the Women's Missionary Society of Canada.

These individuals were dedicated to the life of the parishes in which they communed, and we can assume that the majority believed in, as part of their religious faith, the existence of a beneficent Creator and the reality of an eternal afterlife.

From Dr. Hamilton's correspondence, we know that he had before 1933 rejected the idea of an anthropomorphic God. In replying to a letter from one of his patients, in which she enclosed a small book setting out the biblical teachings arguing against Spiritualism and communication with the dead, Dr. Hamilton wrote:

While your book is one with which I am not unacquainted it is a book based largely on certain Biblical extracts together with a large number of fanciful teachings, many of which are very misleading and also unscientific.<sup>124</sup> You will notice that it is published in Tennessee. It is the sort of thing that one finds very prevalent in the Southern States where the anthropomorphic idea of God is so prevalent. I would urge you in the interests of that higher type of Christianity which it is our privilege to enjoy you (sic) must not allow teachings of this kind to get a strong grip on you.<sup>125</sup>

---

<sup>122</sup>His first wife, Gladys Evelyn Chown, may have been a member of the United Church (see burial record, Elmwood Cemetery, section 6A, lot 3, grave 2). Her funeral service was held in Augustine United Church.

<sup>123</sup>Dr. Hamilton was an elder of King Memorial Church from 1907 until 1935 and was one of the individuals who donated the property on which the church was built.

<sup>124</sup>Dr. Hamilton's choice of the word "unscientific" confirms his insistence upon a scientific approach in theological matters.

<sup>125</sup>MSS 14, box 5, folder 1 (COR9210), Dr. T. Glen Hamilton to Mrs. J.A. Fisher, 7 April 1933. Mrs. Fisher's letter to Dr. Hamilton dated 3 April 1933 is in MSS 14, box 4, folder 4 (COR9095).

# DRAFT

Please send amendments, comments, and suggestions to:  
Walter Meyer zu Erpen, PO Box 8697, Victoria, BC V8W 3S3 CANADA Email: [info@survivalresearch.ca](mailto:info@survivalresearch.ca)

## **MEDIUMSHIP AND THE UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA:**

The relationship between the United Church of Canada, mediumship, and psychical research during the 1920s and 1930s would make an interesting topic for a separate article. The family of medium Mary Ann Marshall was very involved in the life of the former St. Paul's United Church. Mrs. Marshall's husband Bill was the church's caretaker from about 1924 until 1944. Their son Reverend George Mervyn Foster Marshall (1909-1959) was received as a candidate by the Winnipeg Presbytery of the United Church in 1932. He graduated with a bachelor of arts degree from United Colleges, Winnipeg, in 1934, was a student minister affiliated with St. Paul's, and was ordained in June 1937 by the Winnipeg Presbytery.

As a boy, United Church minister, the late Reverend Tom Saunders (1909-2005), BD, DD, attended St. Paul's. He was a friend of and ministerial candidate with George Marshall. Mr. Saunders signed a statement attesting to the accuracy of notes relating to our telephone conversation, during which he had stated that Mary Marshall "was not a phoney" and that she "had no idea of what happened while she was in trance."

Mr. Saunders remembered having heard Glen Hamilton lecture and indicated that he always qualified his statements: this voice "purports to be" or this face "is supposed to be." Dr. Hamilton was very precise in his speech and his reports. Although Mr. Saunders was skeptical about psychical research, he had a great deal of respect for Dr. Hamilton and the manner in which he conducted his research.

Mr. Saunders said that Mary Marshall was in some ways a very ordinary woman, but "said and did things that were unbelievable." He said that, "for what it is worth," he would attest to the "complete authenticity of the Mary Ann Marshall mediumship and the Thomas Glendenning Hamilton research." He was convinced of the personal "integrity of Glen Hamilton and Mary Marshall."<sup>126</sup>

Another school friend of George Marshall and member of St. Paul's United Church lived in Victoria, British Columbia, when I contacted him in 1992. At first, he was hesitant to recall and discuss the physical phenomena that he had witnessed Mrs. Marshall produce. As he would not want his identity revealed, I shall refer to this individual as the late David Jones (1908-ca. 1995).

Mr. Jones stated that as far as Mary Marshall was concerned her mediumship was "absolutely authentic." In reply to a question about whether he had ever seen anything suspicious, such as cheesecloth or cotton batting, Mr. Jones said that there were no strings attached. Mr. Jones never again met an individual with such extrasensory powers.

Mr. Jones stated that he and George Marshall attended one experiment in Dr. Hamilton's office in the Somerset Building in downtown Winnipeg. They were observers. At first, Mr. Jones did "not want to go into it" [that is, recall the experience]. Mrs. Marshall was there, as well as a woman (name not remembered) who was very skeptical. The séance took place in full light. David Jones stated that Mary Marshall did not work in the dark. The purpose was to prove to the skeptical woman that Mrs. Marshall could make Dr. Hamilton's electric bell box ring. Well,

---

<sup>126</sup>Walter Meyer zu Erpen's notes of his telephone conversation with Reverend Tom Saunders, Winnipeg, Manitoba, on 8 June 1991. Notes signed by Mr. Saunders on 14 August 1991.



# DRAFT

Please send amendments, comments, and suggestions to:  
Walter Meyer zu Erpen, PO Box 8697, Victoria, BC V8W 3S3 CANADA Email: [info@survivalresearch.ca](mailto:info@survivalresearch.ca)

after Mrs. Marshall went into trance, the "bell rang like crazy." Mr. Jones was a witness to this event, in full light.

Mr. Jones' story continued: For many years, Bill and Mary Marshall had a summer cottage at Gimli Beach<sup>127</sup> on Lake Winnipeg. Mr. Jones remembered that he had helped Mr. Marshall and the Marshall boys (Bill and George) to build the cottage; they had it fixed up very nicely. "Things went on at that summer home. Mrs. Marshall had some kind of power." Mr. Jones did not believe in it. George Marshall and David Jones were outside discussing her psychic abilities or power. George and David had a little bet (not for money, more in jest). They drew rings on the veranda floor around the legs of the table to indicate where it was sitting. There was no person nearby or on the veranda. Mrs. Marshall knew about their bet. The "table moved across the veranda by itself--moved 10 feet away at least." This scared David. He wanted to leave the summer cottage and not return.

Several witnesses have corroborated that Reverend George Marshall did not approve of his mother's use of her psychic abilities,<sup>128</sup> while another suggested that she may have helped finance George's university education through her teacup and card readings.<sup>129</sup>

---

<sup>127</sup>Gimli is a fishing town (population approximately 1600) on Lake Winnipeg.

<sup>128</sup>"David Jones" confirmed that George Marshall did not approve of his mother's abilities. Reverend Marshall was a "real down-to-earth minister" and only "tolerated it [psychic abilities] because it was his mother." There was friction between George and his mother when he entered the ministry.

Reverend Tom Saunders said that Mary Marshall stopped being a medium when her son George convinced her that it was not in his best interest and that it could become an embarrassment to him as a minister. Reverend George Marshall's widow also believed that Mrs. Marshall had stopped using her psychic gifts.

From photographic and other evidence contained in the Hamilton collection, *Patience Hope's Life's Purpose?* (Winnipeg, Manitoba: 1951), and an article published in 1963 in *Psychic News*, it is clear that Mary Marshall continued to participate in Winnipeg psychic research groups until 1958. In an article entitled "World Famous Home Circle's Physical Medium Passes: Her Test Séances Astounded Medical Sitters: Among Famous People to Prove their Survival Were: Conan Doyle, W.T. Stead, Oliver Lodge's son and Robert Louis Stevenson," published in *Psychic News* (Number 1628, 17 August 1963, p. 5) following Mrs. Marshall's death, Margaret Hamilton Bach wrote that Mary Marshall "practised her gifts as a private individual. Apart from sitting occasionally in the privacy of the home with friends, her gifts as a non-professional psychic were made available exclusively for the purpose of scientific research to my father, from 1928 to 1934; to my mother, from 1935 to 1944; and to Mrs. Sylvia Barber and her home circle from 1947 to 1958."

<sup>129</sup>Telephone conversation (6 June 1991) with Mrs. Mary Boomer, neighbour of Mrs. Mary Marshall and member of St. Paul's United Church. Mrs. Mary Boomer said that Mrs. Marshall "did a lot of teacup reading." However, judging by her standard of living and the way that she lived, Mrs. Boomer did not think that Mary Marshall made money from her psychic abilities. She lived in a "little cottage sitting on the ground." Mrs. Boomer added that Mary Marshall may have made some money to put her son George through university. People from St. Paul's United Church would go to Mary Marshall to have their cards read.

# DRAFT

Please send amendments, comments, and suggestions to:  
Walter Meyer zu Erpen, PO Box 8697, Victoria, BC V8W 3S3 CANADA Email: [info@survivalresearch.ca](mailto:info@survivalresearch.ca)

Other United Church ministers, including Reverend William Robertson Wood (1874-1947),<sup>130</sup> Reverend Dr. Daniel Norman (Dan) McLachlan (1875-1943),<sup>131</sup> and Reverend Dr. William Talbot Allison (1875-1941),<sup>132</sup> were personal friends of the Hamiltons and supportive of their research.

Margaret Hamilton Bach has written that Professor Allison was Dr. Hamilton's closest friend and gave a moving prayer at her father's funeral on 9 April 1935 in King Memorial Church.<sup>133</sup> When interviewed by Dr. Richard Bennett, former University of Manitoba archivist, Margaret stated that, on the night of her father's funeral, a séance was held in Professor Allison's study at which she was convinced of her father's survival by a pat on the cheek.<sup>134</sup>

Another family friend, Reverend Dr. Edwin Gardner Dunn Freeman (1890-1973), who was the pastor of King Memorial Church from 1920 until 1929, attended some of the Hamilton séances. Later, while Professor of Systematic and Pastoral Theology at United College (1938-1958),<sup>135</sup> he "felt enough confidence to always include an account of the experiments in his practical theology lectures."<sup>136</sup> His daughter, former moderator of the United Church of Canada Reverend Lois M. Wilson, was one of his students and wrote that her father "presented it affirmatively in such a way as to raise questions for us about the findings of psychic research & stimulate our interest in continuing the research."<sup>137</sup>

Finally, Lillian Hamilton's sister Jessie Jean Forrester (1896-1961) married a Presbyterian minister, Reverend Thomas Benjamin McMillan (1888-1965). From 1921 until 1946, the McMillans lived and worked in India as United Church missionaries. Before they left Winnipeg and when they returned to visit, they attended the Hamilton sittings. Their daughter-in-law Mrs. Patricia McMillan stated that the McMillans definitely believed in the authenticity of the research and were extremely interested and very supportive. However, given their church work, they kept a low profile. They saw absolutely no conflict between Christian beliefs and the Hamilton

---

<sup>130</sup>Reverend W.R. Wood, BA, a minister of the United Church of Canada (formerly Presbyterian), was from 1915 until 1920 a member of the Manitoba legislature and from 1943 until 1946 the chaplain of the Stony Mountain Penitentiary. His wife Margaret Matilda Wood (1881-1966) was, according to Winnipeg Spiritualist Susanne Muir (1891-1997), in whose circle Mr. and Mrs. Wood sat during World War Two, "a very good, very private medium (because of the congregation)."

<sup>131</sup>Reverend D.N. McLachlan, BA, BD, Hon. DD, was a minister of the United Church of Canada (formerly Presbyterian). In 1906, he performed the marriage ceremony for Glen Hamilton and Lillian Forrester and, about 1918, was a participant in "some simple experiments in thought-transference" that Dr. Hamilton devised and carried out with Professor W.T. Allison and himself (PUB0072, p. xvii). The results of those experiments convinced the three men "that telepathy was possible and did work" (PUB0072, p. xvii). Later, in March 1931, Reverend Mr. McLachlan arranged for Dr. Hamilton to address the Toronto Ministerial Association on the subject of his psychical research (PUB0072, p. xxvi).

<sup>132</sup>Reverend W.T. Allison, a minister of the United Church of Canada (formerly Presbyterian), held degrees in the arts and divinity, and a PhD in English. During his thirty years in Manitoba, he only held a pastoral charge for one year, during 1919-1920, and that was at King Memorial Church in Elmwood, the church attended by Dr. Hamilton and his family. From 1910 until 1920, Professor Allison taught English at Wesley College, Winnipeg, and from 1920 until 1939, in the English Department at the University of Manitoba.

<sup>133</sup>PUB0072, pp. xxxiii-xxxiv.

<sup>134</sup>MSS 14, box 3, folder 9, p. 25.

<sup>135</sup>From 1946 until 1958, E.G.D. Freeman was also Dean of Theology at United College.

<sup>136</sup>Letter from Reverend Lois M. Wilson, 8 July 1992.

<sup>137</sup>Letter from Reverend Lois M. Wilson, 8 July 1992.

# DRAFT

Please send amendments, comments, and suggestions to:  
Walter Meyer zu Erpen, PO Box 8697, Victoria, BC V8W 3S3 CANADA Email: [info@survivalresearch.ca](mailto:info@survivalresearch.ca)

research.<sup>138</sup>

## PSYCHIC RESEARCH AND BELIEF IN PERSONAL IMMORTALITY:

Lawyer H.A.V. (Harry) Green may have been the first member of the Hamilton group to publicly declare his belief in the truth of the survival hypothesis. On 28 November 1928, in a letter to the editor of "The Passing World" column of the *Manitoba Free Press*,<sup>139</sup> Green wrote that:

the energy which produces and animates the ectoplasm of the physicist, is directed by the continuing personalities of those whom the materialist is accustomed to think of as dead. The only connection of ectoplasm with the soul is in the belief of spiritists that souls, i.e., immortal personalities, no longer clothed in earthly bodies, can manipulate a form of matter, i.e., ectoplasm, so as to give proof of the continuity of the existence of those souls after bodily death.<sup>140</sup>

After Harry Green died in 1979, Margaret Hamilton Bach wrote that he "was a fearless champion of the truths discovered by psychical research. He submitted papers dealing with various phenomena to *Light*, to the *British Psychic Science Quarterly*."<sup>141</sup>

As the son of a Presbyterian minister, Isaac Pitblado was raised to believe in personal immortality and, based upon his later involvement with the Hamilton research, almost certainly considered the psychical phenomena he witnessed to be evidence of life after death.<sup>142</sup> After the death of his wife May Edith Pitblado (1869-1950), Isaac was able to state, in his card to Lillian Hamilton acknowledging her expression of sympathy, that:

. . . I have very happy memories of the occasions when I was privileged to attend the séances at your home and of the great kindnesses of your dear husband & yourself to

---

<sup>138</sup>Telephone conversation with Mrs. Patricia McMillan, 4 August 1994.

<sup>139</sup>Green wrote in response to that morning's article by TBR entitled "This Mystery," *Manitoba Free Press*, 28 November 1928, p. 13.

<sup>140</sup>HAVG, Letter to the Editor of "The Passing World," *Manitoba Free Press*, 5 December 1928, p. 15. The first teleplasm in the Hamilton group had been photographed on 5 August 1928.

<sup>141</sup>MSS 14, box 6, folder 15 (COR9935), letter from Margaret Hamilton Bach to Maurice Barbanell, 12 June 1979.

<sup>142</sup>His conviction was no doubt strengthened by a spirit photograph of which he was almost certainly given a copy. When Katharine Mary Frances Green (1889-1955) visited England in 1933, she had her photograph taken in November at the Stead Bureau in London, presumably on the recommendation of Dr. and Mrs. Hamilton, who during their 1932 visit to England had had their photographs taken by several well-known spirit photographers. (Although Dr. Hamilton was critical of spirit photographer John Myers, he apparently believed that others were genuine.) The resulting spirit photograph shows two sitters, "Mrs. Hayward" and "K.M.F.G." Mrs. Hayward was Cecilia F. Hayward, wife of Admiral Ernest A.S. Hayward, whom Katharine's husband H.A.V. Green (1888-1979) had met when the Haywards visited Winnipeg to participate in the Hamilton séances. The spirit extra was later recognized as being Reverend Dr. Charles Bruce Pitblado (1836-1913). The photograph is located in H.A.V. Green's photograph album that is now in the custody of the Survival Research Institute of Canada.

# DRAFT

Please send amendments, comments, and suggestions to:  
Walter Meyer zu Erpen, PO Box 8697, Victoria, BC V8W 3S3 CANADA Email: [info@survivalresearch.ca](mailto:info@survivalresearch.ca)

us all. I note that you have been re-reading one of Lodge's books. I must try & get it. It is a great comfort to believe in personal immortality as you & I do. With sincere and affectionate regards, I am, Sincerely yours, I. Pitblado.<sup>143</sup>

Dr. John Stobo Hamilton (1866-1932), BA, BD, MD, was both a Presbyterian minister and a medical doctor. He attributes to the influence of his mother Isabella Hamilton (1834-1912) the Christian upbringing and attitude towards death that he shared with his four brothers.

. . . I must say that what little good has resulted from the life and work of J.S. Hamilton and the other members of James Hamilton's family has been largely due to the influence of a noble Christian mother. She lived for her family. Left a widow with a family of boys<sup>144</sup>--five in number--she kept the highest ideals before them and held them together until they found places of usefulness and some influence. Then in 1912, after a life of unpretentious, kind, motherly helpfulness to all whom she knew, she found her last resting place as she had often requested by the side of her only daughter who had preceded her to the Heavenly Home by upwards of twenty years.<sup>145</sup>

The daughter Margaret (1862-1886) had died of typhoid fever and had been buried in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. In 1914, William Oliver Hamilton (1875-1924), BA, a Winnipeg lawyer, travelled to Saskatoon to accompany back to Winnipeg the exhumed remains of his sister. Her remains were buried in the fifteen-grave family plot in Elmwood Cemetery in which her mother Isabella had been buried in 1912. This done, their mother's wish was fulfilled. Margaret's remains were moved to Winnipeg four years before her family's first recorded interest in psychical research.

Eight years later, W.O. Hamilton had printed on his 1922 Christmas and New Year's greeting the following verse by Olive Linnell:

There is no death,  
Though body must decay,  
The spirit lives and moves  
In God's own way.

I have no fear;  
For God's eternal love  
Encompasseth the whole,  
Beneath, above.

And love is all!  
The creed which God has given  
Just love to Him and man  
In earth and heaven.<sup>146</sup>

---

<sup>143</sup>MSS 14, box 5, folder 8 (COR9314), Isaac Pitblado to Mrs. Lillian M. Hamilton, postmarked 25 November 1950.

<sup>144</sup>Her only daughter Margaret died in 1886, less than ten months after she was widowed.

<sup>145</sup>John Stobo Hamilton, Autobiographical Sketch, 6 May [1924 assumed].

<sup>146</sup>MSS 14, box 1, folder 1, p. 40. Lillian May Hamilton's handwritten annotation indicates "W.O.'s last Xmas Greeting." Either he did not send one in 1923 or it was subsequently misplaced.

# DRAFT

Please send amendments, comments, and suggestions to:  
Walter Meyer zu Erpen, PO Box 8697, Victoria, BC V8W 3S3 CANADA Email: [info@survivalresearch.ca](mailto:info@survivalresearch.ca)

From posthumous tributes to medical doctors Jim and Glen Hamilton, we learn more about the brothers' belief in personal immortality.<sup>147</sup> Professor W.T. Allison, who brought to his writing his training both as a minister and as an academic, wrote, under the pen name, "Ivanhoe," the following paragraph as part of his tribute to Jim Hamilton:

Dr. Jim was intensely interested in psychic research. For years he had studied this subject and his belief in the immortality of the soul had long been with him something more than a pious hope. He believed, with St. Paul, that we are actually surrounded by a cloud of witnesses who once associated with us in the flesh and who eagerly await our union with them in that other world "which lies about us as a breath."<sup>148</sup>

Less than four months later, after the funeral of Glen Hamilton, Professor Allison published the following as part of his tribute:

The presence of 1,200 people, drawn not by morbid curiosity but by respect and affection, at the funeral of Dr. T. Glen Hamilton should impress all of us once more with the fact that goodness, integrity, kindness, and force of character make a powerful appeal to the majority of men.

....

It was nine years after he and his loyal little group of friends began their regular sittings that Dr. Hamilton secured his first picture of ectoplasm. Then there followed those ectoplasmic portraits which are regarded by some students of this subject as the best scientific evidence we have for the survival of the soul after death. No one has yet been able to explain these pictures away and Dr. Hamilton certainly gave all the critics a courteous and most attentive hearing.

These psychic pictures have been received everywhere with the wonder and awe which they deserve. And the very fact that they have been accepted as genuine is in itself the finest testimonial to Dr. Hamilton's reputation for absolute integrity. He showed great courage in giving to the public the results of his private research, for there had been much popular prejudice owing to the charlatany in this field, but to his surprise the criticism he received was infinitesimal and the gratitude prodigious.

Dr. Hamilton was not a spiritualist; he did not even like to be called a spiritualist. He was a loyal member of the Christian church and aimed to build one more buttress for the faith in God and immortality "once for all delivered to the saints."

Ivanhoe<sup>149</sup>

Regarding Dr. J.S. Hamilton's attitude towards the psychical research experiments of his

---

<sup>147</sup>Nothing is known about the religious beliefs of the eldest brother Robert Alexander Hamilton (1860-1923), who was an inspector of electric and gas equipment for the Dominion government.

<sup>148</sup>William Talbot Allison, "The Passing of Dr. Jim," *Winnipeg Evening Tribune*, 2 January 1935 (home edition), p. 9.

<sup>149</sup>William Talbot Allison, "Dr. Glen Hamilton, Psychic Researcher," *Winnipeg Evening Tribune*, 16 April 1935, p. 13.

# DRAFT

Please send amendments, comments, and suggestions to:  
Walter Meyer zu Erpen, PO Box 8697, Victoria, BC V8W 3S3 CANADA Email: [info@survivalresearch.ca](mailto:info@survivalresearch.ca)

brothers Glen and Jim, his granddaughter Mrs. Alison Wright has written that her grandfather's tolerance for the views of other people:

was coupled with a lively and continued intellectual curiosity. He read his New Testament in French to facilitate his memory and usage of that language. He had, of course, also studied Latin, Greek, and Hebrew. His interest in the cutting edge of theology was demonstrated by his excitement over the theory of evolution and the challenging opportunity it presented to theologians. He would probably have found fascinating the current exploration of the implications of physics for theology. For these reasons, I assume his attitude to the psychic experiments was one of intellectual and scientific curiosity but that his views of an afterlife were strongly tempered by his theological studies. In any case, the distance and his busy medical practise would certainly be factors limiting his attendance at the sessions.<sup>150</sup>

Interestingly, the record of J.S. Hamilton's burial in the family plot in Elmwood Cemetery indicates that his religion was "Initiate" or "Initial" church.<sup>151</sup> While no other reference to an "Initial" religion or church has been found, *American Religious Creeds* includes, under the heading of Spiritualism, a statement of the teachings of the "Old Christian Initiate" as taught by the Church of Revelation. The editor notes that the statement combines Spiritualist, Christian, and esoteric traditions.<sup>152</sup> This suggests that John Stobo Hamilton may have been, at his death in 1932, an adherent of the "Old Christian Initiate" philosophy as taught by the Church of Revelation. An obituary written by the Bathgate correspondent to a newspaper in Pembina County, North Dakota, mentions that Dr. Hamilton was a member of Pembina Presbytery, rather than of a specific congregation, suggesting that he was still in good standing as an ordained minister of the Presbyterian Church.

We know that the Hamiltons interpreted the events documented through their research as evidence of the spiritual resurrection of man in an eternal afterlife state. If they interpreted the biblical story of Jesus of Nazareth's resurrection in like manner, they would have believed that it was the spiritual, rather than physical body of Jesus that was resurrected and witnessed by his followers.

---

<sup>150</sup>Letter from Mrs. Alison Wright, 15 June 1992, pp. 1-2. Mrs. Wright indicated that her knowledge of her grandfather, who died before her parents were married, was based primarily on comments made by her grandmother Alison Blanche Hamilton, her mother Alison Isabel Mossler, and her mother's first cousins Olive Hamilton and Margaret Hamilton Bach.

J.S. Hamilton is known to have attended only one séance held in the T.G. Hamilton home. No ectoplasm was photographed on that occasion (13 October 1929). MSS 14, box 8, folder 2.

<sup>151</sup>Gerri Mason, Secretary, Elmwood Cemetery Company, indicated (5 December 1994) that while the name of the religion is difficult to read, "it could very well be 'Initiate'."

<sup>152</sup>J. Gordon Melton, ed., *American Religious Creeds: An Essential Compendium of more than 450 Statements of Belief and Doctrine* (New York: Triumph Books Edition, 1991), pp. 87-9.

# DRAFT

Please send amendments, comments, and suggestions to:  
Walter Meyer zu Erpen, PO Box 8697, Victoria, BC V8W 3S3 CANADA Email: [info@survivalresearch.ca](mailto:info@survivalresearch.ca)

## SO WHAT ARE MY CONCLUSIONS?:

So, after more than twenty-five years of studying the Hamilton research, what are my conclusions?

To begin, there is strong evidence that the table movements witnessed and the full levitations photographed between 1921 and 1927 are genuine examples of physical psychic phenomena. Today those phenomena are most often referred to as psychokinesis. That psychokinesis is possible is supported by the conclusion of Renée Haynes, editor from 1970 to 1981 of the *Journal and Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research*, who wrote in her centenary history of that organization: "For myself--I can speak for no others--the occurrence of psychokinesis has been established, both by the careful observation and recording of spontaneous cases when they erupt, and by experimental work."<sup>153</sup>

Dr. Hamilton died in 1935. At this date, it is impossible to know for sure whether the teleplasms that manifested in his séance room between 1928 and 1934 were produced through genuine or fraudulent means. Though it would be most expedient, and certainly most popular among the scientific establishment, to dismiss these strange phenomena as having been fraudulently produced, I cannot do so. Notwithstanding the significant criticism that the experiments were conducted under the cloak of darkness, making careful control and observation difficult, I find it difficult to believe that the ectoplasm could have been faked and the researchers duped in more than 50 experiments.

As detailed at considerable length throughout this paper, the Hamiltons and their co-experimenters were well-educated and highly respected professionals. There is no indication of malice on the part of any of them, nor do I believe that there was any intent to purposely mislead. And contrary to popular perception about those who study Spiritualism or psychical research, the Hamiltons and their associates were not a bunch of sentimental old fools. Nor were they mothers and widows so overwhelmed by grief and longing for contact with their dearly departed that they would accept any and all evidence. In fact, some of the early ectoplasmic evidence is so coarse, even grotesque, as to give every reason for the participants to walk away from study of it.

The researchers consistently maintained that their experiments were conducted in such a manner as to preclude the possibility of fraud. The records reveal the measures and precautions taken in this regard. Long after Dr. Hamilton's death, his family, and Dr. Chown and others, maintained that all of the psychic phenomena produced were genuine. Indeed, there is no factual evidence to suggest that the teleplasms were fraudulently produced.

---

<sup>153</sup>Renée Haynes, *The Society for Psychical Research, 1882-1982, A History* (London: Macdonald & Co. (Publishers) Ltd., 1982), p. 168.

# DRAFT

Please send amendments, comments, and suggestions to:  
Walter Meyer zu Erpen, PO Box 8697, Victoria, BC V8W 3S3 CANADA Email: [info@survivalresearch.ca](mailto:info@survivalresearch.ca)

The main problem in accepting the phenomena as genuine is that the predominant attitude among parapsychologists does not support the possibility that a medium's body is capable of producing ectoplasm except through fraudulent means. Whereas there is general consensus about the possibility of mental telepathy and psychokinesis,<sup>154</sup> the attitude towards ectoplasm is that it is not worthy of study: too many well-known mediums, once thought to have been genuine, have been exposed while producing ectoplasm through fraudulent means, such as regurgitation or concealing the required materials about their body.<sup>155</sup>

To conclude that the Hamilton teleplasms must be fraudulent on the *a priori* ground that the human body is incapable of producing such extrusions would be foolish. Such a conclusion would go against the testimony of the well-educated and highly respected men and women, including medical doctors, scientists, engineers, lawyers, and clergymen, who witnessed the phenomena and in their time attested to their authenticity.

And if indeed the phenomena were faked, obviously we need not expect an easy answer as to how the trickery was achieved, given that Glen Hamilton, Bruce and Gladys Chown, Isaac Pitblado, and the other witnesses were not able to detect and report it.

Clearly, the fakery need not, and indeed could not, have been achieved through a single means with respect to all 72 ectoplasms. Careful study of the photographic evidence proves that regurgitation alone could not have accounted for the ectoplasms photographed at a distance from the medium's body, nor for those that bore images resembling the faces of the known dead. The experiments in which the medium's body was bathed and reclothed before commencing prove that it was not simply a matter of the medium concealing the required materials in her clothing or on her person.

To sustain the level of fraud required to produce 72 ectoplasms, including several fairly large ones, over six years would have involved collusion between one of the mediums and at least one of the regular sitters or researchers. So which of the participants would have risked their reputation and that of the whole group to perpetrate such a fraud? Though further study of this question is required, I have not detected a pattern in the attendance registers to allow for this conclusion.

In order to expedite the whole affair, some skeptics have even suggested that the research was an elaborate hoax that included all of the participants and indeed a large number of well-known and prominent witnesses. This theory argues in effect that the photographs were all staged. Apart from the fact that there is no evidence of this, the idea of such a plot that would have put at risk the careers of those involved is completely absurd. All of the researchers went to their graves convinced, it would seem, of the genuineness of the phenomena. Many believed that the phenomena provided conclusive evidence that an afterlife existence awaited them. The interrelationships between the records in the Hamilton collection and the long period of years

---

<sup>154</sup>Arthur S. Berger and Joyce Berger, editors, *The Encyclopedia of Parapsychology and Psychological Research* (Paragon House, 1991), p. 341, indicates that positive results in "well-conducted experiments suggest that psychokinesis and the ability of the mind to produce physical effects may be a real, if somewhat startling, phenomenon." Quoting Jule Eisenbud, the Bergers write that there is "no reason in principle to bar effects of any magnitude."

<sup>155</sup>Critics claim that some or all of the ectoplasmic phenomena produced by mediums Helen Victoria Duncan (1898-1956) and Mina (Margery) Crandon (1889-1941), who was the focal point of the very controversial *Scientific American* investigation, were fraudulently produced.



# DRAFT

Please send amendments, comments, and suggestions to:  
Walter Meyer zu Erpen, PO Box 8697, Victoria, BC V8W 3S3 CANADA Email: [info@survivalresearch.ca](mailto:info@survivalresearch.ca)

over which they were created and used demonstrates the sincerity and interest of the researchers and their belief in the importance of the research.

So, what is my conclusion with respect to the ectoplasm photographed in Dr. Hamilton's séance room?

To quote American psychologist, philosopher, and psychical researcher William James (1842-1910), "If you wish to upset the law that all crows are black, you must not seek to show that no crows are, it is enough if you prove the single crow to be white."<sup>156</sup> James believed that he had found his white crow in the mediumship of Mrs. Leonora E. Piper (1857-1950).

As a researcher, the question I must ask is whether it is possible that the Marshall mediumship and the teleplasms produced were genuine.

Though I cannot prove it, I have with great difficulty come to the conclusion that the Marshall teleplasms may well have been genuine, the real McCoy. In fact, I will go so far as to state that if the ectoplasmic phenomena photographed under the scrutiny of Glen Hamilton and his associates were not genuine, then I do not believe that there exists such a thing as ectoplasm.

---

<sup>156</sup>William James, as quoted in Renée Haynes, *The Society for Psychical Research, 1882-1982, A History* (London: Macdonald & Co. (Publishers) Ltd., 1982), p. 83.

# DRAFT

Please send amendments, comments, and suggestions to:  
Walter Meyer zu Erpen, PO Box 8697, Victoria, BC V8W 3S3 CANADA Email: [info@survivalresearch.ca](mailto:info@survivalresearch.ca)

## SOME PUBLISHED SOURCES:

- PUB0072. Thomas Glendenning Hamilton. *Intention and Survival: Psychological Research Studies and the Bearing of Intentional Actions by Trance Personalities on the Problem of Human Survival*. 1st edition edited by James D. Hamilton (Toronto: The Macmillan Company of Canada Limited, 1942). 2nd edition edited by Margaret Lillian (Hamilton) Bach (London: Regency Press Ltd., 1977).
- PUB0073. Margaret Lillian (Hamilton) Bach. *Is Survival A Fact?: Studies of Deep-Trance Automatic Scripts and the Bearing of Intentional Actions by Trance Personalities on the Question of Human Survival*. London: Psychic Press Ltd., 1969.
- PUB0095. *Register of the Thomas Glendenning Hamilton Collection: MSS 14*. Compiled by Kathryn F. Dean, Manuscripts Curator. Winnipeg, Manitoba: University of Manitoba, Department of Archives and Special Collections, 1980.
- PUB0096. *Register of the Bruce Chown Collection: MSS 17*. Compiled by Kathryn F. Dean, Manuscripts Curator. Winnipeg, Manitoba: University of Manitoba, Department of Archives and Special Collections, 1981.
- PUB0105. *Register of the Marshall J. Gauvin Papers: MSS 47*. Compiled by A.E. Millward. Winnipeg, Manitoba: University of Manitoba, Department of Archives and Special Collections, 1987.
- PUB0106. *Register of the Pitblado Papers: MSS 48*. Compiled by A.E. Millward. Winnipeg, Manitoba: University of Manitoba, Department of Archives and Special Collections, 1987.
- PUB0107. Robert Rennie Swan, *Immortality: An Adventure in Faith, Being the Presidential Address delivered by Dr. R. Rennie Swan at Manitoba Medical College, May 23rd, 1930* ([Winnipeg]: Winnipeg Medical Society, [1930]). See MSS 14, box 13, folder 3, for a copy of this pamphlet.
- PUB0108. Patience Hope, *Life's Purpose?* Winnipeg, Manitoba: [1952].
- PUB0109. Patience Hope, *Life Continuous! Albert Tells His Story*. Winnipeg, Manitoba: [1957].
- Patience Hope, *Appeal to Reason: Messages from the Spirit World*. Winnipeg, Manitoba: [1958].

## MAIN ARCHIVAL SOURCES:

Archival collections in the University of Manitoba Libraries Department of Archives and Special Collections: MSS 14 (T.G. Hamilton), MSS 17 (Chown), MSS 47 (Gauvin), MSS 48 (Pitblado).