

**True Tales from  
the Edgar Cayce Archives**





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the Edgar Cayce Archives**



*Lives Touched and Lessons Learned  
from the Sleeping Prophet*

Sidney Kirkpatrick and  
Nancy Kirkpatrick



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### **Source Notes**

Unless otherwise indicated in the text, this book is based entirely on interviews conducted by Sidney and Nancy Kirkpatrick, primary source material collected by them, and Edgar Cayce's personal papers and correspondence, which can be found in the archives of the Edgar Cayce Foundation (ECF) and the library of the Association for Research and Enlightenment (A.R.E.) in Virginia Beach, Va. Extracts from the Cayce readings come directly from typed transcriptions housed in the A.R.E. library or found on the Official Edgar Cayce Readings DVD-ROM. Additional access to the entire readings database is available to A.R.E. members at [EdgarCayce.org/members](http://EdgarCayce.org/members).

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*To Gillian Young*





*Hear now my words: If there be a prophet among you,  
I the Lord will make myself known unto him in a vision,  
and will speak unto him in a dream.*

Numbers 12:6



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Edgar Cayce (March 18, 1877-January 3, 1945).

## INTRODUCTION



### WHY EDGAR CAYCE?

**L**ike many journalists, I once arrogantly believed that psychic phenomena was a subject unworthy of serious study and that anyone who put his faith in a trance medium was either fooling himself or the unwitting victim of fraud. Then along came Nancy Webster, who would become my writing partner and wife. “Edgar Cayce is going to be the subject of your next book,” Nancy prophetically declared. Not wishing to be rude or condescending, I politely declined further discussion. But Nancy, a dedicated student of Cayce’s work since she had been in high school, was unrelenting. Books and articles about the so-called “sleeping prophet” of Virginia Beach appeared in my mail box with such regularity that to finally put the matter to rest, I read one.



To say that the Cayce story challenged my imagination is an understatement. A backwoods Kentucky farm boy with an eighth grade education, he allegedly had the ability to enter into a deep hypnotic trance from which he could diagnose illness, witness events in the distant past, preview the future, and converse with angels. No subject was off limits, regardless of how simple or complex the question—whether it

was help finding a lost pocket watch, how to perform a surgical procedure, or what to expect in the hereafter. Cayce would lie down on a couch, fold his hands over his stomach, seemingly drift off to sleep, and miraculously answer any question put to him. Rarely, if ever, was he proven wrong.

In the course of his forty-one year career, Cayce reportedly saved hundreds of people from intractable diseases and crippling injuries. A hospital dedicated to his healing arts was built in Virginia Beach where patients received his trance readings, and specialty technology, years ahead of its time, was used to treat them. He guided the business interests of Detroit auto-parts manufacturers and helped New York stockbrokers along with Texas oilmen become millionaires. He identified the location of buried treasure, solved a murder, and dictated trance-induced Hollywood screenplays. Yet Cayce and his family led lives of constant struggle and hardship, moving from home to home often under threat of being persecuted for fortunetelling or practicing medicine without a license. He didn't profit from giving trance counsel nor did he promote himself. For much of his life he earned his livelihood as a portrait photographer and was a much-admired husband, father, and church deacon.

Cayce's story was altogether too incredible to be true. This was why, I suspected, fifty years had elapsed since a comprehensive biography of Cayce had been written. No serious writer or journalist would devote time to making a rigorous examination of the facts because they wouldn't stand up to scrutiny. Dig deeper and Cayce's story was sure to unravel. Or so I supposed.

Always a step ahead of me, Nancy would send me transcripts of Cayce's trance readings. Accompanying them were physician's reports and convincing first-person testimony of how his recommended health treatments—frequently dismissed in his lifetime as the fanciful products of his imagination—had later become fully accepted by the mainstream medical community. Trance discourses he gave on such subjects as foods for health and healing, hydrotherapy, massage, and the intimate connection between psychological and physical health would earn Cayce distinction as the undisputed father of today's holistic health movement. Information he gave on world history, physics, electrical engineering, and earth sciences also proved uncannily accu-



rate. And though he died decades before widespread popular interest in paranormal phenomenon, Cayce's trance readings on subjects such as remote viewing, life after death, reincarnation, the secret of the Sphinx, and the lost continent of Atlantis would set the standard by which nearly all metaphysical information has subsequently been judged. He was to the world of psychics and mediums what Babe Ruth was to the world of baseball.

Most compelling, Cayce didn't speak in vague, ambiguous terms that were open for interpretation but used precise medical and scientific terminology well beyond his education and training. Further, he didn't perform these superhuman feats a few hundred times in the course of his career. He gave well over sixteen thousand trance readings, each one different, and some lasting thirty minutes to an hour. On many occasions professors from Ivy League universities, notable church leaders, bank presidents, historians, physicians, inventors, and scientists attended his trance session. Master magician Harry Houdini, having dedicated himself to exposing the fraudulent practices of hundreds of occult mediums and spiritualists, failed to debunk or explain the Cayce phenomenon, as did Hugo Münsterberg of the Harvard Medical School.

Even this, however, was not what made the Cayce material most relevant. As his trance readings make clear, their ultimate purpose was not simply to provide diagnostic insights to aid physicians, bring about miraculous cures, locate lost treasure, or to excite the intellect. They were provided to help individuals to understand and accept the truth of the multidimensional world in which we live. Cayce had provided incontrovertible evidence for the existence of a consciousness beyond our five senses. His work was an open door into another dimension through which we can more fully understand ourselves and our place in the universe.

The question that I was soon asking myself was not whether Cayce did what he was alleged to have done—the evidence was overwhelming—but how he did it. Thus began our study of Edgar Cayce, and along with it, a partnership was formed between myself, a nonbeliever, and Nancy, whose faith in Cayce never faltered. Together we would research Cayce's life and work as it had never been conducted before, producing his definitive biography, *Edgar Cayce, An American*

*Prophet*; authoring numerous articles; contributing to movie and television projects; and most important, endeavoring to apply his trance guidance into our everyday lives and those of our four children.

A trip to Virginia Beach, Virginia, was our starting point. Here, at the Association for Research and Enlightenment (A.R.E.) are housed the Edgar Cayce archives, which consist of an estimated half-million pages of trance readings, correspondence, family papers, and photographs. As Cayce primarily gave readings for particular individuals who requested his help and follow-up biographical research had been conducted to determine the effectiveness of his advice, we had a massive collection of additional reference material which we would use to track down the people who received the readings and judge the truth for ourselves. The vast majority of names of these individuals meant little or nothing to us at the onset of our research, for they had led otherwise undistinguished lives as farmers, housewives, building contractors, musicians, students, and nurses—even an Alabama tombstone cutter. Children and adults from nearly any profession one can name came to Cayce for advice.

However, among these individuals were names that we instantly recognized. Composer George Gershwin and Hollywood film pioneer Jesse Lasky had readings, as had inventors Thomas Edison and Nikola Tesla, electrical engineers at RCA and NBC, and the president and founder of Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company. Readings were conducted for the mother of Ernest Hemingway, on behalf of the husband of aviator Amelia Earhart, and though shrouded in secrecy, for President Woodrow Wilson. This aspect of Cayce's work had not heretofore been called attention to because Cayce had never promoted himself. He didn't trade on the names of the rich and famous who consulted with him for the same reason he didn't charge a fee for giving readings. He believed that his gift was from God and not to be used for selfish or self-serving purposes, but for the brotherhood of man; what the readings say is our collective purpose or soul's destiny.

In Hopkinsville, Kentucky, where Cayce lived and worked for the first half of his career, Nancy and I camped at the edge of a farmer's field, walked the woods where Cayce played as a youth, and visited the tobacco barn where he had first begun communicating with the spirit world. In Selma, Alabama, we visited the First Christian Church,

in whose archive we read the minutes once kept by its church secretary, Edgar Cayce. In Cleburne, Texas, we met the son of a newspaper reporter who had worked with Cayce to develop the Desdemona oil fields, one of the largest petroleum and natural gas deposits ever found. In Dayton, Ohio, we interviewed a man whose employer's dream was to build the hospital dedicated to Cayce's healing arts. Many others who knew Cayce personally or had received readings came forward with stories that had previously gone unrecorded. As we would discover, their enthusiasm for Cayce went beyond the trance counsel he provided. They enjoyed his company—whether he was teaching Bible study, working alongside them in the photo studio, or joining him at his favorite fishing hole. A humble, kind, and affectionate man, he preferred the company of children, friends, and co-workers over and above his many rich and famous acquaintances. He touched their lives, and they touched his.

Herein lies the theme of this book. Edgar Cayce could not do what he did alone. Deep in a hypnotic trance, he had no conscious memory of anything that was said. He needed someone—more often than not his wife, Gertrude—to guide him into trance and put questions to him. He also needed someone to record and transcribe what he said, a task which would ultimately fall to his devoted secretary, Gladys Davis. He needed plenty of others—physicians, nurses, physical therapists, scientists, engineers, and biblical scholars, even an Alabama tombstone cutter—to help recipients of the readings make the most of the advice that was provided. Most important, he needed someone who genuinely wanted his help. The more deeply felt and true the desire for that help, the longer, more detailed and often more profound was the information that came through. He needed a team, just as the trance readings tell us that all of us need a team or partners with whom, and by design, we are to share life's experience.

Now, more than two decades after first entering the Cayce vault in Virginia Beach, it is not just Edgar that keeps us coming back for further research and study, but the many people whose lives gave shape and meaning to his trance readings. Understanding their challenges, triumphs, failures, and desires is to understand the higher purpose of our own life's journey. This is what is meant by "Cayce's work." It's not just *his* work, but *our* work, too.

