



Salem Witch Trials REVISITED

Of the 34 readings Edgar Cayce gave for eight members of the author's extended family and ten of their friends, those for two of his second cousins gave them past lives during the Salem Witch Trials in the 17th century. One cousin was a perpetrator and another a bystander. Both were significantly influenced in their present lives by their Salem experiences, they told the author, but requested anonymity as to details. These findings prompted his research for this article on what the Cayce readings said transpired during that historic witch hunt.

By Stanley Jaffin

Between February 1692 and May 1693, over 150 men and women in and around Salem, Massachusetts were accused of witchcraft. Twenty-nine were hanged, as many as eight on one day; one man was pressed to death for refusing to plead to the charges; and 17 others may have died in prison. This frenzy started after two young girls suddenly began screaming, throwing things around the room, crawling under

furniture, and complaining about being stuck with pins. Their physician could not diagnose their maladies. In that day and time these girls' afflictions could only be the work of the Devil.

Satan was believed to act through witches, and three nearby women fit the Puritan description of the usual suspects. One rarely attended church, another was a penniless beggar, and the third was from Barbados. They were arrested on charges

of witchcraft, convicted, and imprisoned. The first woman died in prison and the beggar was later hanged.

Soon more of these unexplained maladies were reported, which led to further accusations of witchcraft. Many of the accused were respected church members who were supposedly immune from the Devil's offerings. Mounting hysteria led first to suspecting and then to accepting that even the most faithful were doing Satan's bidding. Those in league with the Devil were allegedly able to project a visual image of themselves to another person or cause disturbing noises or other events at distant locations. These unprovable accusations were sometimes based on personal retribution and revenge.

Witch hunting and the resulting trials, imprisonments, and hangings ceased within 18 months of the first accusations. Over the ensuing centuries many political, socioeconomic, religious, and biological causes for this tragic hysteria were proposed and debated. The Edgar Cayce readings provide different explanations for the Salem phenomena, and trace their impacts across lifetimes for both perpetrators and victims. Cayce described Salem's pious zealots as "...those who were so orthodox as to forget God, and being only orthodox as to rules and regulations." (reading 5089-2)

The Cayce Readings

There are over 50 Salem witchcraft-related readings. In addition to Salem and other towns on today's map, trial and execution records refer to Salem Town, Salem Village, and other communities consolidated into Salem. The readings are consistent with these 17th century historical records in their use of the former names of other present-day cities and towns. (261-21, 987-2) The witch hunts afflicted a larger area than present-day Salem and also crossed current state boundaries.

Cayce depicted the witch hunts as tragically erroneous responses to psychic phenomena. Witch hunting involved "...the persecutions of those who visioned through their inner selves experiences for

themselves and others...” (1919-1) Some suffered because of their “...visions, experiences, relationships of activities from without...” (691-1) Others suffered for what was “...their communications with outside influences, or of the souls of those that have the more often sought that there be the comprehending of the continuity of life.” (497-1) Others experienced “...convincing evidence of the survival of personality, those activities which would bring messages, communications, activities from the inter-between of departed souls.” (3630-2) Some who experienced these phenomena accused others of afflicting them, and some brought punishment on themselves by describing their own experiences.

These events challenged Puritan dogmas. The readings described the immediate effects as “...those that even made a question brought certain activities of a stern Puritanic influence in those peoples of that experience.” (1367-1) There were also long-term effects in future lifetimes.

None of the readings recipients were sentenced to death or hanged. Many were ducked or dipped as punishment. Some who survived the actual dippings later died from their side effects. Several were injured or died after being punished for aiding the victims. Others were witch hunt perpetrators or bystanders. For almost all Salem readings recipients, Salem was either given as the most recent past life or was the first past life provided, implying an important influence on their present lives. Interestingly, both perpetrators and victims gained and lost, and their readings built on this to offer present-life guidance.

Perpetrators and Persecutors

Many witch hunters held positions of religious or secular authority. For some, their Salem life was a low point reached after prior lives of high spiritual attainment or worldly achievements.

One of Cayce’s best known readings was for an 11-year-old boy, who had been a minister in Salem and was responsible for ducking many children, and now

was experiencing his own duckings as a chronic bed wetter “because of the entity’s condemning [and] ...‘ducking’ others.” (2779-1) His reading further stated that his nightly duckings and personal consequences would get worse unless he “...set aright that incoordination between the mental mind, or the physical mind and the spiritual mind of the individual entity, as related to condemnation of

he made choices that led to serious marital and professional problems.

Another 11-year-old boy was told that as a Salem-era persecutor he used witch hunting to satisfy his basest needs. He had “...made for the suppression of the expressions of individuals in meeting those experiences that came as the expressions of spiritual manifestations in the experiences of others. The entity was



One ‘foolproof’ way to establish whether a suspect was a witch was ducking. With right thumb bound to left toe, the accused was plunged into a pond. If she floated, it proved an association with the black arts, the body rejecting baptismal water. If the victim drowned, she was innocent. A ducking stool or diving chair was also used. From A Popular History of the United States by William Cullen Bryant. 1896.

things in others.” The following year David Kahn reported that the boy “met the condition” and his bed wetting stopped. (2779-1, Reports 2)

While his physical problem was cured by Cayce’s recommended pre-sleep suggestion, the full depth of his Salem karma went unrecognized. This soul had fallen from some lofty incarnations. In a previous life he had been Ra-Ta’s designated successor, and during the Exodus his sister was betrothed to Joshua. Despite this, his second and third readings indicated that at the soul level he was not making the necessary tough choices or applying the deeper guidance. (2779-3) In this life

not only among those that made for the belittling of such but induced the material activity in the suppression, in the expression; and not only took advantage of those that were being oppressed but used same in such a manner as to gratify, satisfy, the passions of the body in associations with same.” (693-3) These abuses resulted in his present suffering from partial paralysis, speech impediments, and epileptic convulsions. (693-1, Background 1,2) He was also unable to dress himself or use the toilet unaided. (693-3, R2)

A teen-age boy was told he had hunted witches because they infringed on his position in the community. “The entity



This classic painting, Examination of a Witch, by Thompkins H. Matteson depicts the humiliation of a young woman accused of witchcraft during the fearful frenzy in Salem, Massachusetts that punished many innocents with death or imprisonment. Photograph courtesy of Peabody Essex Museum.

then was a minister, Isaac Cassidy, that abhorred those who would claim powers that should have been the possession of him alone who was *ordained* for such judgments! In that experience the entity brought disturbing factors, and much misunderstanding.” (963-1) Cayce also said the boy was both far advanced and yet backward, and that both had to be met in this lifetime. He was advised to distribute or sell worthy books or tracts, because he had previously brought such ideas to others as Simon Peter’s nephew. Later he would be able to develop his own psychic abilities.

One woman had reveled in persecuting victims. “The entity was among those who were very hard, very questioning, very condemning of those who, in their experience, had convincing evidence to the individual of the survival of personality, those activities which would bring messages, communications, activities from the inter-between of departed souls. The experience of the entity then caused many hardships. When some of those were ducked, the entity was pres-

ent and gave consent. When some were beaten with many strikes, the entity gave evidence and consent to such.” (3630-2) In her present lifetime she suffered from migraine headaches and mental illness. (3630-1, R1)

Interestingly, one man actually managed to gain and not just lose from his past life as a persecutor. “The entity was among those who persecuted what was called witchcraft, near Salem. The entity...both gained and lost in that experience; for the tenets of others were not considered by the entity as necessary elements in the development of an individual toward its own spiritual development, and persecution following same brought to the entity those experiences that gave as that innate in the entity’s experience today – that of the *right* of every individual to live according to the dictates of its own conscience without fear to any man, save as infringing upon the same elements in another individual’s life.” (943-2) Cayce said this man admired those who apply their stated religious tenets in their daily lives, and had

very little patience for those who profess one thing and live another.

For the next 11 years, this man was involved in many treasure hunting and A.R.E.-related business activities. He “borrowed” 9 readings in the Bimini series and 17 readings in the treasure hunting series, and they are still missing. (943-2, R11) He obtained the patent for the animated ash used in some readings’ cancer treatments. (943-12, R8) While he evidenced little patience for hypocrisy in others, three years after his Salem reading he “...left with some woman and authorities got after him on the Mann Act charge. He had to divorce his wife so he could marry this other girl.” (5571-1, R3) Ironically he had persecuted this “other girl” during their Salem lives. (5571-1) By the time of his death in 1938, he was estranged from A.R.E.

Victims and Visionaries

Those accused of witchcraft both gained and lost from these experiences. Some who saw these visions escaped

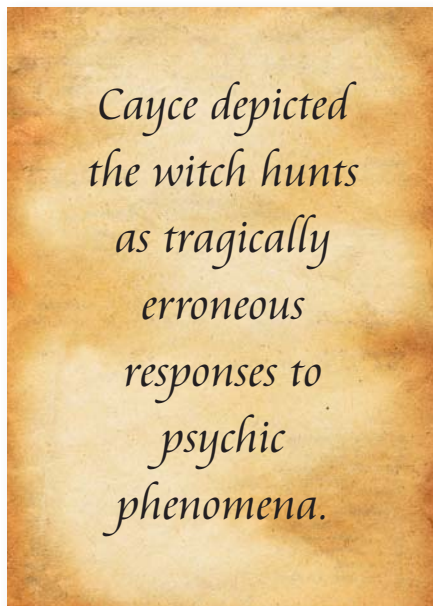
mistreatment, either through acquittal or by remaining quiet. In their present lives victims did not always fare better than their former persecutors.

Only one Salem-era victim, in her present lifetime, married her former persecutor, becoming the second wife for Mr. 943. This 29-year-old woman was told that she had been persecuted for influencing the lives of others. "The entity then among those who were persecuted for their activities, for the giving of those influences in the lives of individuals that altered or changed their mode of life or activity, and *oft* was the entity dipped – and *once* stocked – for that the entity carried on." (5569-1) Cayce also said in her present life she often changed her ideal for convenience rather than for what she believed. Given the circumstances of how this couple behaved, Cayce's statements as to how easily her ideals changed proved accurate. (943-12, R12)

One woman was persecuted upon being "accused of being able to cast spells upon, or to wield an unseeming influence in, the lives and activities of others..." (267-1) Cayce advised her to develop her innate intuitive forces in her present life as she would be able to help others understand the universal forces. Shortly after her reading was given, she and her husband became involved in automatic writing, and she eventually gave psychic readings. This led to their divorcing and

she later developed artistic talents which she then applied for the remaining 38 years of her life. (267-1, R1-12)

Another woman died after being dipped. "In one before this we find in that country about Salem, when the peoples were persecuted for the belief in those vi-



brations called by those people as witchcraft, vision, or ones believing in familiar spirits. The entity then in that of Sally Dale, and the entity lost the life (physical) through the cold caught by dipping." (2842-1) Cayce further noted that this explained why she feared discussing spir-

itual subjects in her present life.

A registered nurse in this lifetime had her physical and mental health ruined by the dipping performed to stop her from allegedly causing the types of noises that were also historically documented. "The entity was among those very close with the first of the activities there in which it was indicated that there were the influences or the forces from without causing noises, causing visions, yea, affecting the mental and physical activity of individuals or peoples. Then...the entity became mentally very disturbed; and took a great deal of persecution, even to the dipping, even to the attempts to eradicate those influences; causing eventually the breaking of the health in such measures and manners as to unfit the body for those activities of that experience, physically and mentally." (2269-1) She asked about her previous associations with a specific man, and was told her mental attitude towards him came from their Salem experiences.

A six-year-old girl's reading related how, as a young church member in Salem, she was persecuted as an example to the others, a circumstance also historically documented. "And the entity, in the name Hester Robynsen, was among those used rather to give a lesson to many others – as was *supposed* in good faith by many in the experience. The entity, though tender in years, was persecuted unmercifully from

Should an A.R.E. Charitable Gift Annuity be part of your retirement?



Supplement your current or future income with an **A.R.E. Charitable Gift Annuity** (age 60 and over) or **Deferred Gift Annuity** (age 50 and over).

You receive:

- Guaranteed income for life
- Recently increased charitable deduction
- Partially tax-free income
- Generous fixed rate of return

Although most people use cash to fund a Charitable Gift Annuity, you can also use appreciated securities such as stocks, bonds, and mutual funds as well as real estate.

To receive your personalized sample of a Charitable Gift Annuity, contact Marianna Theo at 800-333-4499 or marianna.theo@edgar cayce.org

*Salem's pious
zealots were those
who were so
orthodox as to
forget God, and
orthodox only as
to rules and
regulations.*

the material standpoint.” (559-7)

Cayce advised restraint when addressing paranormal activities in the present. He also said she should expect to be questioned about her activities and beliefs, and that others would consider her to be strange. Seven years later her parents, both A.R.E. members with multiple readings, divorced and she lived with her mother. In 1972 she requested copies of her family's readings. In 1974 *The First Church in Salem – Records 1629-1736*, edited by Richard D. Pierce, was published by the Essex Institute in Salem, Massachusetts. Hester, daughter of William Robinson, is listed with a notation that other spellings for “Robinson” were found. (559-7, R-2, 3, 6-8)

A 39-year-old astrologer tormented herself in Salem by denying her own experiences. “...the entity was in the land of the present nativity, in and about that portion known as Newport and Newburgh (Salem); during those experiences when much turmoil arose to those who were beset with experiences that were termed of an infinite nature with the evil forces, or possession activity. These the entity experienced, these the entity fought against, these the entity denied. Hence she had an experience, in the name then Nell Kingsburg, that made for

turmoils.” (1293-1) The reading also said that in her present life she will find that people she trusts will prove to be dependable and unstable. Hence, she will meet the self that did not believe in its own experiences.

In 1960 she sent a note to Gladys Davis Turner in reply to a questionnaire in reference to early America research, stating: “...I have never done anything at all about looking up past records on my incarnations – in fact I had quite forgotten that Mr. Cayce mentioned someone known as ‘Nell Kingsburgh’ [sic] until your letter reminded me. As I recall, ‘Nell Kingsburgh’ was going to be tried for witchcraft during her lifetime? Frankly, I am completely disinterested.”

Given her response and Cayce's statement that in this lifetime she will be meeting the self that denied its own experiences, it appears that her attitude of denial persisted. Her closing statement to Gladys is very ironic: “I must just try to do a little better in *this* incarnation than I evidently did in *that* one!...” (1293-1, R4)

A 10-year-old girl avoided persecution in her Salem-era incarnation. “In the name Marie Smith, the entity heard and saw visions that were the imaginations of a mind far from home, that had heard the groaning of the forests and of a peoples that sought for a sign, for an assurance that the souls of people lived on. Thus the mysteries that surrounded the experiences of the entity. In the present these may bring the curious things, the curiosity, the wanting to know, yea the listening to snatches of conversation, not too nice. For oft ye will hear that which if left unheard would have made thee much happier. Thus do not abuse opportunities.” (3659-1) Cayce advised her to study nursing and the body-mind relationship.

Bystanders and Helpers

The present life experiences of bystanders who witnessed the witch hunts from the sidelines varied widely. Helpers assisted the victims, and were sometimes victimized themselves. A psychiatrist

who was told she had witnessed the Salem witch trials “gained much by following much that was presented in the appearance of those particular phenomena manifested by those felt by many during the period as being possessed. The entity was rather the observer than associating self with the activities during the period...” (444-1)

Cayce also said her mental abilities were above normal as a result of her Salem and other lives. He told her that if she applied herself to creating within herself and others ideals that would make for creative influences in the mental, spiritual, and physical, she would gain sufficiently to not have to reincarnate again on Earth. This made her one of only 18 unique people who were told that they may not need to return. Sixteen years later Gladys Davis noted that 444 is well known for her work in psychiatry, and for using art therapy in studying the emotional problems of both children and adults.

A 14-year-old girl was told she had been named Abigail Hemingway and been dipped for helping the victims. “In the experience the entity gained, for there were the abilities that are in the present innate from the material experiences – to understand and comprehend those influences that cause others to act in the varied directions regarding those things... Thus the entity aided many. Then the entity was an old maid. Hence the present inclination will be to marry early. *Don't do it!* for such would bring those confusions in the experience for the entity...the entity's activities, the directions should be rather in the training for the abilities of the entity in teaching, in ministering, and in bringing to others the material as well as the mental and spiritual help.” (1406-1)

She asked why she had chosen her parents and was told that they would provide the correct balance in her present choices. She also asked what should be her life's work and Cayce said it was as a seer in the capacity of nurse or teacher, and the psychic faculties she should develop were vibrations and color.

At the time of her reading, she was participating in a telepathy project. In a

letter to the member who sponsored her reading, Hugh Lynn Cayce noted: "This young girl is very psychic. I have worked with her in an experimental group here in Norfolk on some of the simple card experiments similar to those being tried in Duke University. She is running an unusually high average." (1406-1, R-1)

An eight-year-old girl had been the daughter of "one Parkway, a minister in the old Salem church. In that experience the entity gained; gained through the associations, the lending of self in those activities that brought an understanding of the relationships of individuals to unseen influences and forces as she became then active with the peoples in the period – not in suppression, but an *understanding*, and making a thorough study and investigation of those things that came into the experiences of others through the ones that saw scenes, saw visions, heard noises, heard activities that brought in the experience of many the destructive influences to the *physical* beings of others. The entity gained throughout the


experience. Though the years were not long in that sojourn, they were filled with many things done *for others...*" (665-1)

Cayce further said she is "sensitive" to influences from without, and her life's work should be aiding or teaching others. Previously, as a Roman child she had been blessed by Jesus at Bethesda and became His follower. She asked why she had reincarnated at this time and was told that the Earth will be better for her having come into it as an emissary and representative of Christ.

Epilogue

By September 1693 the fanatical persecution had subsided, and Governor William Phips commuted many sentences in part due to overcrowded jail conditions. Over the next 10 years, many victims petitioned the Massachusetts government to have their convictions reversed. In 1705 one of the most active accusers publicly recanted her testimony, asked

for forgiveness, and claimed Satan had deluded her into denouncing so many others – saying in effect that the Devil made her do it. By 1718 the last victim and/or survivor claims were settled.

In 1993, the last witch trials' tercentennial, the Massachusetts House of Representatives passed a resolution honoring those who died during Salem's hysteria. In 2001 Governor Jane Swift incorporated the resolution into a proclamation declaring that all of Salem's victims were innocent. Ironically, it was signed and issued on October 31 – Halloween. 

STANLEY JAFFIN, DBA, and his wife Ann, life members from Maryland, presented a report of their Jaffin family research project during the A.R.E. Congress in June. Stan also gave his journal covering 15 years of Atlantis research activities in and around Bimini to the Edgar Cayce Foundation.

"Renew for 2"

and Receive a **FREE GIFT!**

The Complete Edgar Cayce Readings Expanded Version 2.0

14,306 Psychic Readings

Powerful Search Capability • Audio/Video Resources • "How-To" Instruction • More

ANCIENT MYSTERIES

Atlantis Bible Egypt
India South America

HOLISTIC HEALTH

Apple Diet Psoriasis
Acid-Alkaline Balance

PERSONAL SPIRITUALITY

Meditation Karma Akashic Records

Edgar Cayce

FREE when you Renew for 2 Years - a \$200 value!

SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS: Windows 2000 (SP2 recommended), Windows ME, Windows 2003, Windows XP (will *not* work on 95, NT, 98, or on a 64-bit processor). Microsoft Internet Explorer 5.5 or higher. Pentium III PC (500 MHZ or higher recommended). We have found mixed success with Vista. 256 MB of RAM. 1.4 GB hard drive space required. Must be installed on your C: drive.

We appreciate your involvement in and support of Edgar Cayce's A.R.E. Your membership helps us share the work of Edgar Cayce with people all around the world.

Right now, we'd like to offer all our members a bonus gift for renewing their membership for 2 years. When you "Renew for 2" by October 31, 2008, we will send you the latest version of **"The Complete Edgar Cayce Readings on CD-ROM," a \$200 value, absolutely FREE!**

This CD-ROM applies new technology to search all of Edgar Cayce's 14,306 readings on holistic health, reincarnation, ancient mysteries, spirituality, and more. Also included are audio files, nonmedical reports, videos, and over 100 photos. This amazing CD-ROM alone is worth the price of almost 5 annual memberships, yet we're offering it to anyone who renews for 2 years... **FREE!**

To renew your membership for 2 years and receive your free gift, please call our Membership Team toll-free at **800-333-4499** and mention this ad (code VIR2) or visit our special Web page at EdgarCayce.org/RenewForTwo.

Your support is important to us. If there is anything we can do to make your membership more fulfilling, we'd like to hear from you!