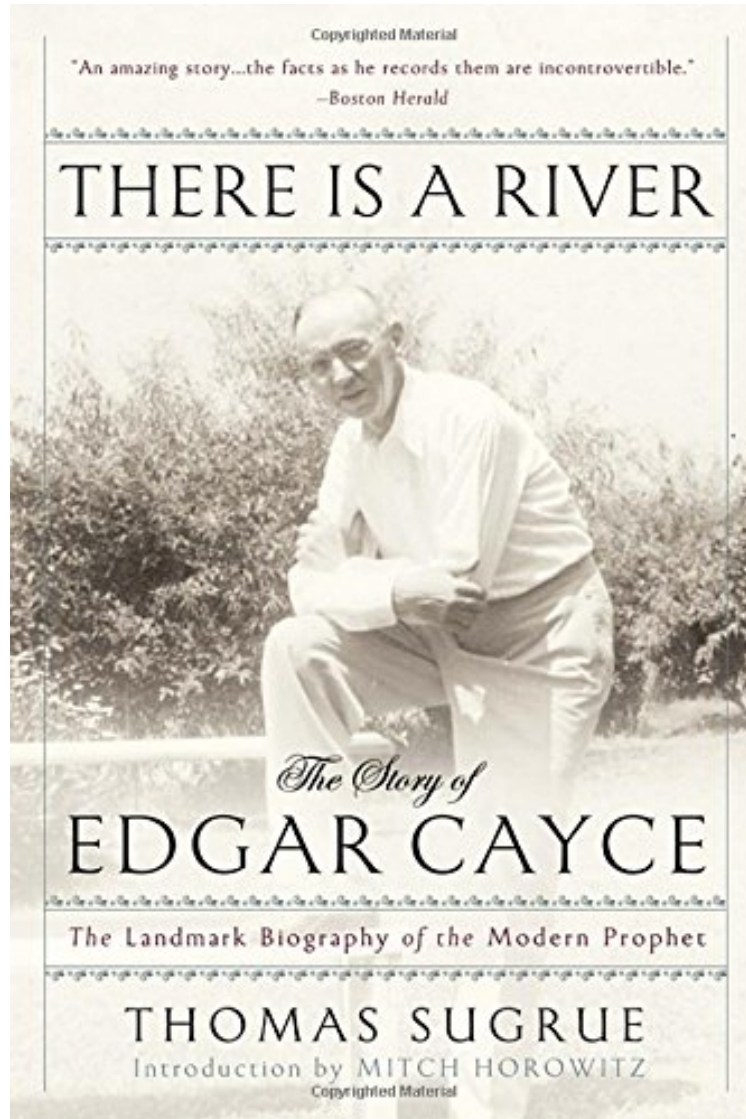


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There Is a River: The Story of Edgar Cayce

Thomas Sugrue

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Thomas Sugrue : There Is a River: The Story of Edgar Cayce before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised There Is a River: The Story of Edgar Cayce:

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back in 1968 it has changed my life. How I think about things and how I function toward others and what I consider to be truly important. Be careful; it COULD change your life for the better. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Wonderful! By Nancy Chapman Wonderful book - wonderful man!! This one is for my one granddaughter to read!

A new edition of the landmark, worldwide bestseller on the life of the famed medical clairvoyant and founding father of the New Age: Edgar Cayce. Edgar Cayce (1877-1945) is known to millions today as the grandfather of the New Age. A medical clairvoyant, psychic, and Christian mystic, Cayce provided medical, psychological, and spiritual advice to thousands of people who swore by the effectiveness of his trance-based readings. But Cayce was not always a household name. When a young, skeptical journalist named Thomas Sugrue first met Cayce in 1927 the world had not yet heard of the "sleeping prophet." During years of unique access, Sugrue completed his landmark biography, which on its publication in 1942 brought national attention to Cayce and stands as the sole record written during the seer's lifetime. This edition includes a new introduction by historian Mitch Horowitz that highlights the enduring significance of Cayce's message and the role this book played in its dissemination.

A classic and a must for all those who desire to expand and honor their heart. Gerald Jampolsky, M.D., author of *Love Is Letting Go of Fear* An amazing story the facts as he records them are incontrovertible. Boston Herald No fiction could be stranger To read *There Is a River* cannot help being an adventure. Mary Ross, New York Herald Tribune An irreplaceable record of Cayce's development as a spiritual messenger a formative document of New Age spirituality. from the introduction by Mitch Horowitz About the Author Thomas Sugrue (1907-1953) was a widely respected and world-travelled journalist who wrote for many of the nation's leading newspapers and magazines. Sugrue sought medical help through Edgar Cayce's channeled readings, and went on to become both Cayce's biographer and a lifelong supporter. Excerpt. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved. INTRODUCTION The year 1910 marked a turning point in Western spirituality. It saw the deaths of some of the most luminous religious thinkers of the nineteenth century, including psychologist-seeker William James; popular medium Andrew Jackson Davis; and Christian Science founder Mary Baker Eddy. These three figures deeply impacted the movements in positive thinking, prayer healing, and psychical research. Their death that year was accompanied by the rise to prominence of a new religious innovator a figure who built upon the spiritual experiments of the nineteenth century to shape the New Age culture of the dawning era.* In autumn of 1910, The New York Times brought the first major national attention to the name of Edgar Cayce, a young man who later became known as the father of holistic medicine and the founding voice of alternative spirituality. The Sunday Times of October 9, 1910, profiled the Christian mystic and medical clairvoyant in an extensive article and photo spread: *Illiterate Man Becomes a Doctor When Hypnotized*. At the time, Cayce (pronounced Casey), then thirty-three, was struggling to make his way as a commercial photographer in his hometown of Hopkinsville, Kentucky, while delivering daily trance-based medical readings in which he would diagnose and prescribe natural cures for the illnesses of people he had never met. Cayce's method was to recline on a sofa or daybed; loosen his tie, belt, cuffs, and shoelaces; and enter a sleep-like trance; then, given only the name and location of a subject, the sleeping prophet was said to gain insight into the person's body and psychology. By the time of his death in January 1945, Cayce had amassed a record of more than 14,300 clairvoyant readings for people across the nation, with many of the sessions captured by stenographer Gladys Davis. In the 1920s, Cayce's trance readings expanded beyond medicine (which nonetheless remained at the core of his work) to include life readings, in which he explored a person's inner conflicts and needs. In these sessions, Cayce employed references to astrology, karma, reincarnation, and number symbolism. Other times, he expounded on global prophecies, climate or geological changes, and the lost history of mythical cultures, such as Atlantis and Lemuria. Cayce had no recollection of any of this when he awoke, though as a devout Christian the esotericism of such material made him wince when he read the transcripts. Contrary to news coverage, Cayce was not illiterate, but neither was he well educated. Although he taught Sunday school at his Disciples of Christ church and read through the King James Bible at least once every year he had never made it past the eighth grade of a rural schoolhouse. While his knowledge of Scripture was encyclopedic, Cayce's reading tastes were otherwise limited. Aside from spending a few on-and-off years in Texas, unsuccessfully trying to use his psychical abilities to strike oil he had hoped to raise money to open a hospital based on his clairvoyant cures Cayce rarely ventured beyond the Bible Belt environs of his childhood. Since the tale of Jonah fleeing from the word of God, prophets have been characterized as reluctant, ordinary folk plucked from reasonably satisfying lives to embark on missions that they never originally sought. In this sense, if the impending New Age the vast culture of Eastern, esoteric, and therapeutic spirituality that exploded on the national scene in the 1960s and 1970s was seeking a founding prophet, Cayce could hardly be viewed as an unusual choice, but, historically, as a perfect one. A SEER IN SEASON It was this Edgar Caycean everyday man, dedicated Christian, and uneasy mystic whom New England college student and future biographer Thomas Sugrue encountered in 1927. When Sugrue met Cayce, the twenty-year-old journalism student was not someone who frequented psychics or seance parlors. Sugrue was a dedicated Catholic who had considered joining the priesthood. Deeply versed in world affairs and possessed of an iron determination to break into news reporting,

Sugrue left his native Connecticut in 1926 for Washington and Lee University in Lexington, Virginia, which was then one of the only schools in the nation to offer a journalism degree to undergraduates. (Sugrue later switched his major to English literature, in which he earned both bachelors and masters degrees in four years.) As a student, Sugrue rolled his eyes at paranormal claims or talk of ESP. Yet Sugrue met a new friend at Washington and Lee who challenged his preconceptions: the psychics eldest son, Hugh Lynn Cayce. Hugh Lynn had planned to attend Columbia but his fathers clairvoyant readings directed him instead to the old-line Virginia school. (The institution counted George Washington as an early benefactor.) Sugrue grew intrigued by his new friends stories about his father in particular the elder Cayces theory that one persons subconscious mind could communicate with anothers. The two freshmen enjoyed sparring intellectually and soon became roommates. While still cautious, Sugrue wanted to meet the agrarian seer. Edgar and his wife, Gertrude, meanwhile, were laying new roots about 250 miles east of Lexington in Virginia Beach, a location the readings had also selected. The psychic spent the remainder of his life in the Atlantic coastal town, delivering twice-daily readings and developing the Association for Research and Enlightenment (A.R.E.), a spiritual learning center that remains active there today. Accompanying Hugh Lynn home in June 1927, Sugrue received a life reading from Cayce. In these psychological readings, Cayce was said to peer into a subjects past life incarnations and influences, analyze his character through astrology and other esoteric methods, and view his personal struggles and aptitudes. Cayce correctly identified the young writers interest in the Middle East, a region from which Sugrue later issued news reports on the founding of the modern state of Israel. But it wasnt until Christmas of that year that Sugrue, upon receiving an intimate and uncannily accurate medical reading, became an all-out convert to Cayces psychical abilities. Sugrue went on to fulfill his aim of becoming a journalist, writing from different parts of the world for publications including the New York Herald Tribune and The American Magazine. But his life remained interwoven with Cayces. Stricken by debilitating arthritis in the late 1930s, Sugrue sought help through Cayces medical readings. From 1939 to 1941, the ailing Sugrue lived with the Cayce family in Virginia Beach, writing and convalescing. During these years of close access to Cayce while struggling with painful joints and limited mobility Sugrue completed *There Is a River*, the sole biography written of Cayce during his lifetime. When the book appeared in 1942 it brought Cayce national attention that surpassed even the earlier Times coverage. DOCUMENTING THE PROPHET Sugrue was not Cayces only enthusiast within the world of American letters. *There Is a River* broke through the skeptical wall of New York publishing thanks to a reputable editor, William Sloane, of Holt, Rinehart Winston, who experienced his own brush with the Cayce readings. In 1940, Sloane agreed to consider the manuscript for *There Is a River*. He knew the biography was highly sympathetic, a fact that did not endear it to him. Sloanes wariness faded after Cayces clairvoyant diagnosis helped one of the editors children. Novelist and screenwriter Nora Ephron recounted the episode in a 1968 New York Times article. I read it, Sloane told Ephron. Now there isnt any way to test a manuscript like this. So I did the only thing I could do. He went on: A member of my family, one of my children, had been in great and continuing pain. Wed been to all the doctors and dentists in the area and all the tests were negative and the pain was still there. I wrote Cayce, told him my child was in pain and would be at a certain place at such-and-such a time, and enclosed a check for \$25. He wrote back that there was an infection in the jaw behind a particular tooth. So I took the child to the dentist and told him to pull the tooth. The dentist refused he said his professional ethics prevented him from pulling sound teeth. Finally, I told him he would have to pull it. One tooth more or less didnt matter, I said I couldnt live with the child in such pain. So he pulled the tooth and the infection was there and the pain went away. I was a little shook. Im the kind of man who believes in X-rays. About this time, a member of my staff who thought I was nuts to get involved with this took even more precautions in writing to Cayce than I did, and he sent her back facts about her own body only she could have known. So I published Sugrues book. Many literary journalists and historians since Sugrue have traced Cayces life. Journalist and documentarian Sidney D. Kirkpatrick wrote the landmark record of Cayce in his 2000 biography *Edgar Cayce*. Historian K. Paul Johnson crafted a deeply balanced and meticulous scholarly analysis of Cayce with the 1998 *Edgar Cayce in Context*. And the intrepid scholar of religion Harmon Bro who spent nine months in Cayces company toward the end of the psychics life produced insightful studies of Cayce as a Christian mystic in his 1955 University of Chicago doctoral thesis (a groundbreaking work of modern scholarship on an occult subject) and later in the 1989 biography *Seer Out of Season*. While Harmon Bro died in 1997, his family has a long and still active literary involvement with Cayce. Bros mother, Margueritte, was a pioneering female journalist in the first half of the twentieth century, who brought Cayce national attention in her 1943 profile in *Coronet* magazine: *Miracle Man of Virginia Beach*. Bros wife, June, and daughter, Pamela, actively teach and interpret the Cayce ideas today. There exist many other works on Cayce it would take several paragraphs to appreciate the best of them. But it was Sugrue, an accomplished print journalist who worked and convalesced with Cayce for several years, who fully and this word is chosen carefully captured Cayces goodness. Sugrues historical *Edgar Cayce* is the man who grew from being an awkward, soft-voiced adolescent to a national figure who never quite knew how to manage his fame and less so how to manage money, often forgoing or deferring his usual \$20 fee for readings, leaving himself and his family in a perpetual state of financial precariousness. In a typical letter from 1940, Cayce replied to a blind laborer who asked about paying in installments: You may take care of the [fee] any way convenient to your self please know one is not prohibited from having a reading... because they havent money. If this information is of a divine source it cant be sold,

if it isn't then it isn't worth any thing. Sugrue also captured Cayce as a figure of deep Christian faith struggling to come to terms with the occult concepts that ran through his readings beginning in the early 1920s. This material extended to numerology, astrology, crystal gazing, modern prophecies, reincarnation, karma, and the story of mythical civilizations, such as Atlantis and prehistoric Egypt. People who sought readings were intrigued and emotionally impacted by this material as much as by Cayce's medical diagnoses. What's more, in readings that dealt with spiritual and esoteric topics along with the more familiar readings that focused on holistic remedies, massage, meditation, and natural foods there began to emerge the range of subjects that formed the parameters of therapeutic New Age spirituality in the later twentieth century.

ESOTERIC PHILOSOPHER

Cayce did more than assemble a catalogue of the dawning New Age. The spiritual ideas running through his readings, combined with his own intrepid study of Scripture, supplied the basis for a universal approach to religion, which, in various ways, also spread across American culture. Sugrue captures this especially well in chapter fifteen, which recounts Cayce's metaphysical explorations with an Ohio printer and Theosophist named Arthur Lammers. Cayce's collaboration with Lammers, which began in the autumn of 1923 in Selma, Alabama, marked a turn in Cayce's career from medical clairvoyant to esoteric philosopher. Licking his wounds after his failed oil ventures, Cayce had resettled his family in Selma where he planned to resume his career as a commercial photographer. He and Gertrude, who had long suffered her husband's absences and unsteady finances, enrolled their son Hugh Lynn, then sixteen, in Selma High School. The family, now including five-year-old Edgar Evans, settled into a new home and appeared headed for some measure of domestic normalcy. All this got upturned in September, however, when the wealthy printer Lammers arrived from Dayton. Lammers had learned of Cayce during the psychics oil-prospecting days. He showed up at Cayce's photo studio with an intriguing proposition. Lammers was both a hard-driving businessman and an avid seeker in Theosophy, ancient religions, and the occult. He impressed upon Cayce that the seer could use his psychical powers for more than medical diagnoses. Lammers wanted Cayce to probe the secrets of the ages: What happens after death? Is there a soul? Why are we alive? Lammers yearned to understand the meaning of the pyramids, astrology, alchemy, the Etheric World, reincarnation, and the mystery religions of ancient Egypt, Greece, and Rome. He felt certain that Cayce's readings could part the veil shrouding the ageless wisdom. After years of stalled progress in his personal life, Cayce was enticed by this new sense of mission. Lammers urged Cayce to return with him to Dayton, where he promised to place the Cayce family in a new home and financially care for them. Cayce agreed, and uprooted Gertrude and their younger son, Edgar Evans. Hugh Lynn remained behind with friends in Selma to finish out the school term. Lammers's financial promises later proved illusive and Cayce's Dayton years, which preceded his move to Virginia Beach, turned into a period of financial despair. Nonetheless, for Cayce, if not his loved ones, Dayton also marked a stage of unprecedented discovery. Cayce and Lammers began their explorations at a downtown hotel on October 11, 1923. In the presence of several onlookers, Lammers arranged for Cayce to enter a trance and to give the printer an astrological reading. Whatever hesitations the waking Cayce evinced over arcane subjects vanished while he was in his trance state. Cayce expounded on the validity of astrology even as the Source what Cayce called the ethereal intelligence behind his readings alluded to misconceptions in the Western model. Toward the end of the reading, Cayce almost casually tossed off that it was Lammers's third appearance on this [earthly] plane. He was once a monk. It was an unmistakable reference to reincarnation just the type of insight Lammers had been seeking. In the weeks ahead, the men continued their readings, probing into Hermetic and esoteric spirituality. From a trance state on October 18, Cayce laid out for Lammers a whole philosophy of life, dealing with karmic rebirth, man's role in the cosmic order, and the hidden meaning of existence: In this we see the plan of development of those individuals set upon this plane, meaning the ability (as would be manifested from the physical) to enter again into the presence of the Creator and become a full part of that creation. Insofar as this entity is concerned, this is the third appearance on this plane, and before this one, as the monk. We see glimpses in the life of the entity now as were shown in the monk, in his mode of living. The body is only the vehicle ever of that spirit and soul that waft through all times and ever remain the same. These phrases were, for Lammers, the golden key to the mysteries: a theory of eternal recurrence, or reincarnation, which identified man's destiny as inner refinement through karmic cycles of rebirth, then reintegration with the source of Creation. This, the printer believed, was the hidden truth behind the Scriptural injunction to be born again so as to enter the kingdom of Heaven. It opens up the door, Lammers told Cayce. It's like finding the secret chamber of the Great Pyramid. He insisted that the doctrine that came through the readings synchronized the great wisdom traditions: Its Hermetic, its Pythagorean, its Jewish, its Christian! Cayce himself wasn't sure what to believe. The important thing, Lammers reassured him, is that the basic system which runs through all the mystery traditions, whether they come from Tibet or the pyramids of Egypt, is backed up by you. It's actually the right system.... It not only agrees with the best ethics of religion and society, it is the source of them. Lammers's enthusiasms aside, the religious ideas that emerged from Cayce's readings did articulate a compelling theology. Cayce's teachings sought to marry a Christian moral outlook with the cycles of karma and reincarnation central to Hindu and Buddhist ways of thought, as well as the Hermetic concept of man as an extension of the Divine. Cayce's references elsewhere to the causative powers of the mind the spiritual is the LIFE; the mental is the BUILDER; the physical is the RESULT melded his cosmic philosophy with tenets of New Thought, Christian Science, and mental healing. If there was an inner philosophy unifying the worlds

religions, Cayce came as close as any modern person in defining it. CAYCES SOURCE Religious traditionalists could rightly object: Just where are Cayces insights coming from? Are they the product of a Higher Power or merely the overactive imagination of a religious outlier? Or, worse, are his phrases the type of muddle-fuddle produced by haunts at Ouija board sessions? Cayce himself wrestled with these questions. His response was that all of his ideas, whatever their source, had to square with Gospel ethics in order to be judged vital and right. Cayce addressed this in a talk that he delivered in his normal waking state in Norfolk, Virginia, in February 1933, just before he turned fifty-six: Many people ask me how I prevent undesirable influences entering into the work I do. In order to answer that question let me relate an experience I had as a child. When I was between eleven and twelve years of age I had read the Bible through three times. I have now read it fifty-six times. No doubt many people have read it more times than that, but I have tried to read it through once for each year of my life. Well, as a child I prayed that I might be able to do something for the other fellow, to aid others in understanding themselves, and especially to aid children in their ills. I had a vision one day which convinced me that my prayer had been heard and answered. Cayces vision has been described differently by different biographers. Sugrue recounts the episode occurring when Cayce was about twelve in the woods outside his home in western Kentucky. Cayce himself places it in his bedroom at age thirteen or fourteen. One night, this adolescent boy who had spoken of childhood conversations with hidden friends, and who hungrily read through Scripture, knelt by his bed and prayed for the ability to help others. Just before drifting to sleep, Cayce recalled, a glorious light filled the room and a feminine apparition appeared at the foot of his bed, telling him: Thy prayers are heard. You will have your wish. Remain faithful. Be true to yourself. Help the sick, the afflicted. Cayce did not realize until years later what form his answered prayers would take and even in his twenties it took him years to adjust to being a medical clairvoyant. As his new powers took shape, he labored to use Scripture as his moral vetting mechanism. Yet he consistently attributed his information to the Source another subject on which he expanded at Norfolk: As a matter of fact, there would seem to be not only one, but several sources of information that I tap when in this sleep condition. One source is, apparently, the recording that an individual or entity makes in all its experiences through what we call time. The sum-total of the experiences of that soul is written, so to speak, in the subconscious of that individual as well as in what is known as the Akashic records. Anyone may read these records if he can attune himself properly. Cayces concept of the Akashic records is derived from ancient Vedic writings, in which akasha is a kind of universal ether. This idea of universal records was popularized to Westerners in the late nineteenth century through the work of occult philosopher, world traveler, and Theosophy founder Madame H. P. Blavatsky. A generation before Cayce, Blavatsky told of a hidden philosophy at the core of the historic faiths and of a cosmic record bank that catalogs all human events. In Blavatskys 1877 study of occult philosophy, *Isis Unveiled*, the Theosophist described an all-pervasive magnetic ether that keeps an unmutated record of all that was, that is, or ever will be. These astral records, wrote Blavatsky, preserve a vivid picture for the eye of the seer and prophet to follow. Blavatsky equated this archival ether with the Book of Life from Revelation. Returning to the topic in her massive 1888 study of occult history, *The Secret Doctrine*, Blavatsky depicted these etheric records in more explicitly Vedic terms (having spent several preceding years in India). In the first of her two-volume study, Blavatsky referred to Aksic or astral-photographs inching closer to the term Akashic records as used by Cayce. Cayce was not the first channeler to credit the Akashic records as his source of data. In 1908, a retired Civil War chaplain and Church of Christ pastor named Levi H. Dowling said that he clairvoyantly channeled an alternative history of Christ in *The Aquarian Gospel of Jesus the Christ*. In Dowlings influential account, the Son of Man travels and studies throughout the religious cultures of the East before dispensing a message of universal faith that encompasses all the worlds traditions. Dowling, too, attributed his insights to the Akashic records, accessed while in a trance state in his Los Angeles living room. Cayce, like Blavatsky, equated akasha with the Scriptural Book of Life. This was an example of how Cayce harmonized the exotic and unfamiliar themes of his readings with his Christian worldview. In a similar vein, he reinterpreted the ninth chapter of the Gospel of John, in which Christ heals a man who had been blind from birth, to validate ideas of karma and reincarnation. When the disciples ask Christ whether it was the mans sins or those of his parents that caused his affliction, the Master replies enigmatically: Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him (John 9:3). In Cayces reasoning, since the blind man was born with his disorder, and Christ exonerates both the man and his parents, his disability must be karmic baggage from a previous incarnation. Cayce made comparable interpretations of passages from Matthew and Revelation. In another effort to unite the poles of different traditions, Cayce elsewhere associated his esoteric search with Madame Blavatskys. On four occasions, he reported being visited by a mysterious, turbaned spiritual master from the East one of the mahatmas, or great souls, whom Blavatsky said had guided her. THE LEGACY Neither Cayce nor Sugrue lived long enough to witness the full reach of Cayces ideas. The psychic died at age sixty-seven in Virginia Beach on January 3, 1945, less than three years after *There Is a River* first appeared. Sugrue updated the book that year. After struggling with years of illness, the biographer died at age forty-five on January 6, 1953, at the Hospital for Joint Diseases in New York. The first popularizations of Cayces work began to appear in 1950 with the publication of *Many Mansions*, an enduring work on reincarnation by Gina Cerminara, a longtime Cayce devotee. But it wasnt until 1956 that Cayces name took full flight across the culture with the appearance of the sensationally popular book *The Search for Bridey Murphy* by Morey

Bernstein. Sugrues editor Sloane, having since warmed to parapsychology, published both Cerminara and Bernstein. Bernstein was an iconic figure. A Coloradan of Jewish descent and an Ivy League educated dealer in heavy machinery and scrap metal, he grew inspired by Cayces career partly through the influence of Sugrues book and became an amateur hypnotist. In the early 1950s, Bernstein conducted a series of experiments with a Pueblo, Colorado, housewife who, while in a hypnotic trance, appeared to regress into a past-life persona: an early-nineteenth-century Irish country girl named Bridey Murphy. The entranced homemaker spoke in an Irish brogue and recounted to Bernstein comprehensive details of her life more than a century earlier. Suddenly, reincarnation an ancient Vedic concept about which Americans had heard little before World War II was the latest craze, ignited by Bernstein, an avowed admirer of Cayce, to whom the hypnotist devoted two chapters in his book. In the following decade, California journalist Jess Stearn further ramped up interest in Cayce with his 1967 bestseller, *Edgar Cayce The Sleeping Prophet*. With the mystic sixties in full swing and the youth culture embracing all forms of alternative or Eastern spirituality from Zen to yoga to psychedelics Cayce, while not explicitly tied to any of this, rode the new vogue in alternative spirituality. During this time, Hugh Lynn Cayce emerged as a formidable custodian of his fathers legacy, presiding over the expansion of the Virginia Beach based Association for Research and Enlightenment, and shepherding to market a new wave of instructional guides based on the Cayce teachings, from dream interpretation to drug-free methods of relaxation to the spiritual uses of colors, crystals, and numbers. Cayces name became a permanent fixture on the cultural landscape. The 1960s and 1970s also saw a new generation of channeled literature Cayce himself originated the term channel from higher intelligences, such as Seth, Ramtha, and even the figure of Christ in *A Course in Miracles*. The last was a profound and enduring lesson series, which was channeled beginning in 1965 by Columbia University research psychiatrist Helen Schucman. A concordance of tone and values existed between Cayces readings and *A Course in Miracles*. Cayces devotees and the Courses wide array of readers discovered that they had a lot in common; members of both cultures blended seamlessly, attending many of the same seminars, growth centers, and metaphysical churches. Likewise, a congruence emerged between Cayces world and followers of the twelve steps of Alcoholics Anonymous. Starting in the 1970s, twelve-steppers of various stripes became a familiar presence at Cayce conferences and events in Virginia Beach. Cayces universalistic religious message dovetailed with the purposefully flexible references to a Higher Power in the Big Book, Alcoholics Anonymous, written in 1939. AA cofounder Bill Wilson, his wife Lois, his confidant Bob Smith, and several other early AAs were deeply versed in mystical and mediumistic teachings. Whether they viewed Cayce as an influence is unclear. But all three works the Cayce readings, *A Course in Miracles*, and Alcoholics Anonymous demonstrated a shared sense of religious liberalism, an encouragement that all individuals seek their own conception of a Higher Power, and a permeability intended to accommodate the broadest expression of religious outlooks and backgrounds. The free-flowing tone of the therapeutic spiritual movements of the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries had a shared antecedent, if not a direct ancestry, in the Cayce readings. Sugrues *There Is a River* remains an irreplaceable record of Cayces development as a spiritual messenger and pioneer. The biography captured the seer as the person who Cayce himself said he was: an ordinary man who struggled with his apparent psychical abilities and the universal religious ideas that traveled through him. But Sugrues biography accomplished more than just that. *There Is a River*, in its own right, became a formative document of New Age spirituality. In exploring Cayces career, Sugrue highlighted and popularized core themes from the Cayce readings including past-life experiences, alternative medical treatments, the imperative of the individual spiritual search, and the idea of religion as a practical source of healing. Sugrue demonstrated how Caycea committed Christian, a Sunday school teacher, and, by his own reckoning, an everyday man developed into the founding prophet of Aquarian Age spirituality. In capturing the drama and events of Cayces journey, Sugrue elevated the clarity and endurance of the seers message. September 2014 New York City PREFACE The story of Cayce properly belongs in the history of hypnosis, as a chapter in evidence for the theories of Armand Marc Jacques de Chastenet, Marquis de Puységur. It was de Puységur, not Mesmer, who in 1784 discovered hypnotism. De Puységurs famous subject Victor went into a sleep instead of a convulsion while being magnetized, and in that state showed remarkable intelligence and apparent powers of clairvoyance. Further experiments brought the same results. Other patients, when put to sleep, showed like powers. Walter Bromberg, in *The Mind of Man*,* says: Dull peasants became mentally alert, and could even foretell events or understand things ordinarily obscure to them. Somnambulists made medical diagnoses in other patients brought before them, and foretold the future. The magnetizer of the 1820s merely brought his patient before a competent somnambulist, and waited for the diagnosis... If only modern science had such aids! The clairvoyance of somnambulists became a fascinating game. But the fascinating game was not encouraged, either by the French Academy or by the medical profession, and it suffered the fate of other fads. A generation later Andrew Jackson Davis, the Poughkeepsie Seer, was practicing medical diagnosis by clairvoyance in America, but he remained obscure and is not even mentioned in textbooks and histories of hypnotism. Hypnotism, in fact, will have nothing to do with clairvoyance; it has renounced its own mother. Edgar Cayce practiced medical diagnosis by clairvoyance for forty-three years. He left stenographic reports of 9,000 of these diagnoses to the Association for Research and Enlightenment, Inc., along with hundreds of complete case reports, containing affidavits by the patients and reports by physicians. There are hundreds of people throughout the United States who will testify,

at the drop of a hat, to the accuracy of his diagnoses and the efficacy of his suggestions for treatment. He did not use his ability except to prescribe for the sick and to give spiritual advice and vocational guidance when these were specifically requested. He never made any public demonstrations of his powers; he was never on the stage; he never sought any publicity; he did not prophesy; he did not seek wealth. Often his economic status was quite precarious; at best it never rose above modest security. During the period of the Cayce Hospital he was paid only seventy-five dollars a week for his services. His unquestioned personal integrity, plus the excellent and voluminous records of his work and the long period that they covered, made him an ideal subject for scientific study. But scientists shunned him. He and his friends regretted this; it might have been more evidential if they, not I, had made this report. I first met Edgar Cayce in 1927. At that time I made most of the preliminary notes and sketches for this book. Since then I have continually added to the material, enjoying the complete cooperation of the members of the Cayce family, and being accorded access to the files at all times. From June, 1939, to October, 1941, I was a guest in the house on Arctic Crescent, seeing and interviewing Mr. Cayce every day, and examining material from the files. I spent many summers at Virginia Beach, particularly those of 1929, 1930, and 1931. In addition to the members of the Cayce family I have had the good fortune to know intimately most of the other characters in the story. One of the first and most important contributors to my dossier was Mr. Cayces father, the late Leslie B. Cayce. Another was Carrie Salter House, who with her husband, the late Dr. House, and her son, Tommy, were invaluable aids and staunch friends through the years. I was not privileged to know Mr. Cayces mother she died in 1926 but her children and her grandchildren have described her to me so often and so well that I feel her portrait, as I have drawn it, is an accurate one. I knew Mrs. Cayces mother, Mrs. Evans; and Gray Salter, like the Cayce boys and Tommy House, has long been a friend. I have known two of Mr. Cayces sisters, Annie and Sara, for many years. Other members of the Cayce and Salter families I have met and talked with from time to time. All have aided me, and by comparing and paralleling the reports they gave me of incidents and conversations with those of other participants, in many cases I have been able to arrive at that rounded, objective viewpoint of events which is the biographers goal. On the other hand, I have gradually acquired a knowledge of and a fondness for all these people which is comparable to a novelists feeling for the characters he has created. That is why the biography, in many parts, reads like a family chronicle. The Norfolk and Virginia Beach Study Groups of the Association for Research and Enlightenment have been of great help to me, as have been the staff members of the Association, particularly Miss Gladys Davis, Mr. Cayces secretary for twenty-two years. In the end, however, it was Hugh Lynn Cayce who not only led the horse to water, but made him drink; and it was my wife who acted as typist, proofreader, editor, and nurse to my crotchets and doldrums. To them I am deeply grateful. If I have done a good job it is because of them and despite myself. I last saw Edgar Cayce in August, 1944, when he visited me in Florida. He was weary then, tired to the depths of his being. He talked eagerly of the future of the Association; he spoke wistfully of the time when he might retire. He liked the warmth and brightness of Florida; he loved the Australian pines that grow near the water. Pick out a place for me here, he said, and I will come back and stay. He went home the next day. His last letter to me, written in longhand, on the stationery of the Hotel Patrick Henry in Roanoke, was dated September 11, 1944. It said, in part, My hands wont let me use the machine. I doubt whether you can read this but I hope you can make some of it out. I am not doing too well; sort of a stroke I guess. They have come in a kind of series. I hope to get back to work for a while yet, and I want to hold out until the boys get home. I cant much more than put on and take off my clothes. I cant tie my shoe laces or knot my tie. But I am hoping to be better soon. There is so much to be done and so many who need help... Thomas Sugrue May 11, 1945 Clearwater Beach, Fla. ONE Uncle Billy Evans huddled in the rear seat of his cab and watched the afternoon train pull into the Louisville and Nashville Railroad station in Hopkinsville, Kentucky. It was a cold, still afternoon in January, 1912. A stranger stepped off the Pullman. Uncle Billy left his warm seat and went to meet him. He was a large, tall man, wrapped in a heavy overcoat, with its collar turned up to protect his ears. He let Uncle Billy take his two suitcases and followed him to the cab. I am looking for a man named Edgar Cayce, he said while the old black man stowed the bags away. Can you take me to him? He spoke quickly, with a thick, Germanic accent. Uncle Billy straightened himself and shivered a little. Mr. Edgars gone home for the day, he said. And its a mile and a half out there to the Hill. Miss Gertrudes mighty sick these days, and Mr. Edgars there with her most o the time. The stranger settled himself in the cab and Uncle Billy tucked a blanket around his legs. They dont have many visitors, on account of Miss Gertrude, he went on. Lord, I hope nothin happens to that child! She is his daughter? the stranger asked. Uncle Billy finished with the blanket. No, sir. Miss Gertrude is Mr. Edgars wife, he explained. Now, I can take you to the hotel and first thing tomorrow morning... We will go now to the house, the stranger said. And tell me, why is it so cold down here in the South? Lord God, sir! Uncle Billy said. This aint the South! The Souths way down yonder! He pointed. This heres Kentucky, and the Lord aint got a bit o use for it! He paused before closing the door. You think youll be warm enough ridin way out there and back again? he asked. I will be comfortable, the stranger said. Let us go quickly. Uncle Billy closed the door and climbed to his box, muttering. The two horses, eager for exercise, started briskly down East Ninth Street, turned left along the park, and headed out East Seventh Street. The town fell behind and the street became Russellville Road. Houses gave way to brown, rolling hills, and bare fields looted of their crops. A single bright spot loomed through the dusk. On a hill higher than the rest and covered with trees, a gray, rambling house stood with its face to the north, the four white

columns of its porch glistening in the sidewise glance of the winter sun. Beyond it the road swerved to the right. Just before the cab reached the carriage entrance leading to the house on the hill, it stopped. A little off the road, almost hidden by a giant oak and some maple trees, was a small cottage, brightly painted in green and white. Uncle Billy got down from his box and opened the cab door. In here, sir, he said. The stranger got out, stretched, and looked around him. He doesnt live in the big house? he said, as if disappointed. Uncle Billy pointed to the glistening columns. Thats the Hill, he said. Its the old Salter Place, where Miss Gertrudes folks live. This here he pointed to the cottage is Miss Lizzies little place. Miss Lizzie is Miss Gertrudes mother. She lives up at the Hill with Miss Kate. The stranger smiled a little. Do your southern ladies never marry? he said. Oh, theys all married, Uncle Billy said, but they aint got no husbands, except Miss Gertrude. Theys dead. The stranger changed the subject. What does this land produce? he asked, waving his arm toward Hopkinsville. Dark tobacco, Uncle Billy said. Dark? The stranger looked thoughtful. He stared at Uncle Billy. Dark tobacco, Uncle Billy repeated. Hopkinsville is famous fo being the dark tobacco market of the whole world. It is also famous for another thing that is dark, the stranger said. Then he added, as if to himself, Funny place to find it. He started for the cottage. Uncle Billy crawled into the cab to wait. The young man who opened the cottage door was slim and almost as tall as the stranger. Without saying anything the stranger stepped into the hallway. You are Edgar Cayce? he asked. I am, the young man answered. I am Dr. Hugo Mnsterberg, of Harvard, the stranger said. I have come here to expose you. There has been entirely too much written about you in the newspapers lately. He looked quickly around the hallway and peered into the living room, which opened from the hallway to the right. What is your modus operandi? he said. Where is your cabinet? The young man had not moved. He looked dazed. I dont know what you mean, he said. Dr. Mnsterberg struck the air impatiently with an arm. The cabinet, the cabinet, he said brusquely. The young man recovered himself suddenly. He smiled and led the way into the living room. Come in and sit down, he said. I will take your coat. There is a fire in the fireplace. But I have no cabinet. I dont use any apparatus at all, if thats what you mean. I could lie down on the floor here and go to sleep, if I wanted to. Dr. Mnsterberg came into the room but did not sit down or remove his coat. From its inner pocket he took a sheaf of newspaper clippings. Theres been too much publicity for this thing not to be a fake, he said, putting the clippings on a tea table. Idly the young man leafed through the clippings. Apparently he had seen them before. One was a full-page display from the Sunday magazine section of the New York Times for October 9, 1910. The headline said, **ILLITERATE MAN BECOMES A DOCTOR WHEN HYPNOTIZED STRANGE POWER SHOWN BY EDGAR CAYCE PUZZLES PHYSICIANS.** The first paragraph read: The medical fraternity of the country is taking a lively interest in the strange power said to be possessed by Edgar Cayce of Hopkinsville, Ky., to diagnose difficult diseases while in a semi-conscious state, though he has not the slightest knowledge of medicine when not in this condition. There was a photograph of the young man, another of his father, a mustached gentleman named Leslie B. Cayce, who was described as the conductor of the hypnotic sleeps; and a third picture showing a young physician named Dr. Wesley H. Ketchum, who had reported the phenomena to the American Society of Clinical Research, of Boston. There was a drawing which showed the young man lying on a table, asleep, while a weird demon of the other world hovered over him. All this was done without my knowledge or permission, the young man explained to Dr. Mnsterberg. I was in Alabama at the time. I didnt know anything about it. Dr. Mnsterberg stood with his back to the fireplace, warming himself. You say you do not have a cabinet, he said. Do you allow yourself to be seen? Are the lights on? Oh, its always very light, the young man said. I give the readings in the morning and afternoon, two each day. If there isnt enough light we have to turn on the lamps, so the stenographer can see to take down what I say. And the patient? Where is the patient? Most of them are at home, wherever that is. They just read me the address, and I seem to find the place all right. You do not examine the patients beforehand? Oh, no. I dont know anything about medicine when Im awake. I prefer not to know even the name of the person before I go to sleep. The names wouldnt mean much to me, anyhow. Most of the people are from out of the state somewhere. They tell their symptoms in letters to this... Dr. Ketchum? Oh, no. We only want to be sure that they really need help. Thats all. Dr. Mnsterberg watched the young mans face while he talked. It was a frank, open countenance. The cheeks were round, the nose straight, the chin receding but not weak, the eyes gray-blue and friendly. His hair was straight and brown. He spoke with a soft drawl. He looked about twenty-five. You are how old? the doctor asked. Thirty-four. Ill be thirty-five in March. You look younger. What is your name? You are Irish? No, it was originally Cuaci. Norman-French, I reckon. Our records dont go back to the country from which we came originally. Our direct ancestor is Shadrach Cayce. He lived in Powhatan County, Virginia, and his sons fought in the Revolution. They received land grants in Tennessee and Kentucky from the government, and thats why were here. He went to a square-topped walnut table in the corner of the room. His stride was quick and sure, his step soft, like a man used to hunting and life in the open. This table came from Virginia more than a hundred years ago, he said. You were born on a farm? Dr. Mnsterberg asked. The young man came back to the tea table and sat down. Yes, sir. I was born here in Christian County. The Cayces used to own nearly all the land between Hopkinsville and the Tennessee line. Thats about fifteen miles. But my great-grandfather had four sons and my grandfather had seven sons, so by the time all the land was split up there wasnt a great deal left for my generation. So Im a photographer. But you do not work at that now, of course. Oh, yes. Thats in the contract I have with my partners. They have to furnish me with a studio and equipment. Thats where I make my living. I can only give two

readings a day, you see, and some of them are for people who have no money. Dr. Mnsterberg laughed a little and shook his head. Either you are a very simple fellow, he said, or you are very clever. I cannot penetrate your ruse. The young man shook his head mournfully. Im the dumbest man in Christian County, he said, when Im awake. But when you are asleep you know everything. Is that it? Thats what they tell me. I dont know. The people say I tell them how they feel better than they know how to tell it themselves. They take the medicines and the treatment I prescribe, and they get better. The stenographer takes it down and gives the patient a copy. Dr. Ketchum adds whatever comment is needed. Thats all I know. You have no explanation for this? There is no tradition of psychic power in your family? They say my grandfather was a water witch. He would walk around with a forked hazel twig in his hand and tell the farmers where to dig their wells. They always found water there, so they said. He was supposed to be able to do other things, too, such as make a broom dance, but that was probably just talk. Theres nothing funny about my father except that snakes love him, and he hates them. Snakes are fond of your father? They used to follow him home from the fields. They would wrap themselves around his hat brim if he laid his hat down in the field. It got on his nerves so much that he gave up farming. The family has lived in town for about fifteen years now. And you have been doing this business how long? The readings? Oh, just regularly since all the publicity started a year ago. I didnt pay much attention to it until then. I just did it for friends, and people round about who asked me now and then. What have been your studies? Not medicine, you say? No. I never got further than what would be first year in high school. I was graduated down in the country, where they have nine grades. But since then you have read a lot, naturally. Well, I like to read, and I used to work in a bookstore, but I reckon my taste isnt very high. You can look through the bookcase there in the hall if you like. Dr. Mnsterberg went immediately into the hallway. We will see what you read. It should be interesting, he said. He began taking books from the cases, stacking them on the floor. Some he flipped open, running through the pages quickly; these he dropped carelessly, so that some of them fell face open on the floor. There seems to be nothing worthwhile here, he said. The Harvester, The Common Law, The Rosary, Girl of the Limberlost, The Trail of the Lonesome Pine... Let me see what are these large volumes... Judge magazine and Red Book magazine. I have them bound each year, the young man explained. We like to keep them. The Circular Staircase, The Awakening of Helena Richie... who is this E. P. Roe? Ah, you have a complete set of his works! Those are my wives. I gave them to her years ago. E. P. Roe is her favorite novelist. Hmmm. Yes, I see now. Love stories... what trash! Here is The Doctor. No, it is a novel. The Jungle, Coniston, The Clansman, Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm, The Cardinals Snuffbox... some poetry here... hmmm... it is Ella Wheeler Wilcox. He straightened himself and turned back to the living room. Well, there is nothing here, he said. I shall have to look further. Perhaps you would like to see a reading? the young man said. The copies are kept at the office, downtown, but I have my wives readings here. We had a check reading for her the other day. The doctors all said she would die. She has tuberculosis. But she is getting better by following the readings. He was eager now; his face shone. Ill get it! He went into a room across the hall, returning almost immediately with two sheets of typewritten manuscript. Each sheet carried his picture at the top, with the legend, Edgar Cayce, Jr., Psychic Diagnostician. The printer made a mistake, he said, handing the sheets to the doctor and pointing to the legend. He got me mixed up with my Uncle Edgar and put me down as junior. Im not. Dr. Mnsterberg began to read the sheets. The young man stepped away politely and sat down by the tea table. I cannot learn much from this; I am not a medical doctor, Dr. Mnsterberg said. He looked quickly at the young man to see how this was taken. The young man offered another suggestion. There are some people you might go to see, who have had experience with the readings. They could tell you whether they work or not. You could see Mrs. Dietrich, and some of the others... Mrs. Dabney, Miss Perry... Mrs. Bowles, maybe. Good, the doctor said. You will write down their names and addresses? He continued to read. The young man went to a desk against the wall and wrote on a pad. Dr. Mnsterberg watched him, returning to his perusal of the manuscript sheets when the young man finished and looked up. Here are the names and addresses. Uncle Billy can take you to all of them. They are too far apart to walk. Are you planning to stay here tonight? Were going to have a reading in the morning. Perhaps youd like to watch it. I intend to stay, the doctor said, putting the manuscript sheets on the tea table. I will take a room at the hotel. Tonight I will visit these people and question them. The owner of the hotel, Mr. Noe, is one of my partners. Youll probably find Dr. Ketchum and my father there, too, later on. Good. I shall endeavor to see them. He tucked the sheet with the names and addresses into an inside pocket. Well, we meet again, tomorrow, eh? Yes, sir. Oh, there is one more thing. To what power or force do you and your associates attribute this phenomenon? We dont know, sir, except for what the readings have said themselves. You mean what you have said while asleep. Yes, sir. Its here, in this New York Times story. He picked up the clipping and read from it. This is what I said when they asked me to explain the thing: Edgar Cayces mind is amenable to suggestion, the same as all other subconscious minds, but in addition thereto it has the power to interpret to the objective mind of others what it acquired from the subconscious state of other individuals of the same kind. The subconscious mind forgets nothing. The conscious mind receives the impression from without and transfers all thought to the subconscious, where it remains even though the conscious be destroyed. He folded the clipping and returned it, with the others, to Dr. Mnsterberg. The doctor looked him squarely in the eye. The story of the subconscious mind can be told in three words, he said. There is none!... Well, I shall continue my investigations. He went out without shaking hands or saying good-bye. The young man watched through the living-room window until

the cab drove away. Then he went into the room across the hall, taking the manuscript sheets with him. On the far side of the room, on a massive oak bed, lay a frail, dark-haired girl, almost lost in the great expanse of sheets and counterpane. In the twilight only her outline was visible; she was a shadow on the bed. The young man lit one of the lamps on the dresser and brought it to the sick table. Her face leaped up at him like a flame. Her eyes were dark, but a fierce light shone from them. Her cheeks were bright red. Her oval face was like a miniature portrait come to life. Her face was worried, quick, yet the words came softly. Who was that man, Edgar? What did he want? You're not going off with him somewhere, are you? The young man leaned down and kissed her forehead. Just a professor from Harvard, he said. He came all the way down here to expose me. She seemed relieved. No wonder his voice sounded so officious. What did he say? Nothing much. He dumped all the books on the floor and called me a simpleton. The girl sighed. I declare I don't know where people learn such bad manners, she said. What time is it? Mother ought to be bringing Hugh Lynn down soon. They're coming now. I hear Hugh Lynn banging that gate again. It's five o'clock. He went to the front door and opened it. A little boy with fat cheeks grabbed him around the legs. Hey, Dad, the bears are after me again! he cried. The young man smiled at the lady who had come with the boy and waved a hand against the cold air that was blowing in on him. Go way, bears! he said. The little boy released his legs and walked into the hallway. Almost got me that time, he said. What about your grandmother? the young man said. Aren't you afraid the bears will get her? No, the boy said. They don't eat ladies. Only little boys. He struggled out of his coat and ran into the bedroom, shouting, Muddie, the bears didn't get me again! The lady who had come with him took off her black coat and black hat, revealing a black dress, high at the throat, and black hair brushed straight away from her forehead. How is Gertrude? she said to the young man. About the same, he answered. They went into the bedroom together. The girl turned her head and smiled at her mother. Hugh Lynn says Aunt Kate made him some ginger cookies, she said. Kate's a fool, her mother said. Hugh Lynn's like a ball of butter now and she keeps feeding him sweets. How do you feel? All right, I reckon. I'll get you freshened up for dinner. Edgar, who was that who just drove away from here? Anyone I know? No. Some professor from Harvard, down here to investigate me and show me up as a fake, same as they all try to do. He spilled our books all over the floor and called Edgar a simpleton, the girl said. Her voice was resentful. I noticed the mess as I came in. Well, you've got to expect that sort of thing from Yankees. They don't know any better, poor souls. I think they know what's right as well as anyone else, the girl said. They just think they're better than we are, that's all. Don't excite yourself, child, her mother said. That white trash isn't worth it. Edgar, why don't you get some decent school to investigate you, like Washington and Lee? Harvard is just a pesthole of Republicans. You know that. This man is a foreigner, the young man said. A German, I would say, from his accent. Oh, well, that explains everything. Here, take Hugh Lynn out of here while I fuss around with Gertrude some. The young man and the boy went into the living room. Was that a bad man who was here, Dad? he asked. The young man lifted him high in the air and set him down by the fireplace. No, he wasn't bad. Nobody is really bad. People just make mistakes. They don't understand about God. Do you understand about God, Dad? Nobody really does. But I try to remember that God is the only One who really knows anything, and that He told me what He wants me to do in the Bible. So I try to do that. The little boy nodded. Let's play bears, he said. You be the big bear who's chasing me. Uncle Billy huddled in his cab outside the large house on South Walnut Street. In the living room of the house his fare sat, overcoat removed, listening to a mild, lovely woman, whose face became radiant as she told her story. When our daughter, Aime, was two, Mrs. Dietrich began, she caught grippe. After apparently recovering, she became afflicted with convulsions. She would fall down suddenly and her body would stiffen until it was rigid. Her mind stopped developing. We had all sorts and kinds of doctors. They did her no good, and after two years of futile experimentation we took her to Evansville, Indiana, to see Dr. Linthicum and Dr. Walker. They said it was a type of nervousness, and they treated her for months, but she didn't improve. We brought her home. We had treatments here, but she got worse—twenty convulsions a day, sometimes. Her mind became a blank. We took her to Dr. Hoppe, in Cincinnati. He said she had a rare brain affliction that was invariably fatal. We brought her home to die. Then one of our local friends, Mr. Wilgus, told us about Edgar Cayce. Dr. Mnsterberg interrupted. This Mr. Wilgus... was he connected with the young man Cayce in any way? Oh, no, except that he had always been interested in him. Mr. Wilgus is one of our most influential citizens. He used to hunt a good deal down on the Cayce property, and when Edgar was a boy Mr. Wilgus used to hire him as guide. One day a piece of shot glanced from a bird which Mr. Wilgus had brought down and struck the boy in the cheek. Mr. Wilgus felt so conscience-stricken that he always kept an eye on Edgar and tried to help him out. At any rate, Mr. Wilgus had readings, and on the advice of one of them went to Cincinnati for a minor operation, which he said vastly improved his health. He urged us to give the young man a chance—you understand, of course, that he was not in the business of giving readings at the time. This was in the summer of 1902, nearly ten years ago. Edgar was then working in Bowling Green, in a bookstore. Dr. Mnsterberg nodded. I understand, he said. We will proceed. My husband asked him to come here, and he did. He wanted no other remuneration than the railroad ticket. He said the trip gave him a chance to see his girl. They were married the following year, I believe. He came with Mr. Al C. Layne, the local man who was at the time conducting the readings and giving some of the treatments. Dr. Mnsterberg interrupted again. He was a doctor, this Layne? He was studying osteopathy at the time. Later he was graduated in the profession. His wife had a millinery shop in Hopkinsville and Edgar Cayce's sister was employed there. Mr. Layne put Cayce into a trance, Dr. Mnsterberg

said. Did either of the men examine the child? No. They saw her, but I remember Edgar saying how he did not see how it could help her. I remember how young and boyish he looked. I thought to myself, How can this boy be of any help to us when the best doctors in the country have failed? You see, we knew his family and we knew Edgar. He had very little schooling. You were skeptical, then? Dr. Mnsterberg asked. I hoped for a miracle, as any mother would. The doctor nodded. He removed his coat and loosened his tie and shoelaces. Then he lay on that sofa there she pointed and the doctor looked and apparently went to sleep. After a few minutes Mr. Layne spoke to him, telling him to have before him the body of our child, who was in the house, and to examine her and tell what was wrong with her body. I could not believe my ears when the sleeping man began to talk and said, Yes, we have the body. His voice seemed different. It seemed well, authoritative. Dr. Mnsterberg nodded. Exactly, he said. He told us that on the day before she caught grippe she suffered an injury to her spine, and the grippe germs had settled in the spine, causing the attacks. He then told exactly where the lesion was and gave instructions for correcting it osteopathically. He could not possibly have known of the injury to her spine beforehand. I alone knew of it, and had not considered it serious or even an injury. But you are sure it happened? The day before Aime caught grippe she was getting out of the carriage with me. She slipped and struck the end of her spine on the carriage step. She jumped up as if unhurt, and I thought no more of it. The lesion was discovered where he described it? Yes. Mr. Layne gave Aime a treatment that night. Next day we took another reading. He said the adjustment had not been properly made. Very interesting, Dr. Mnsterberg said. He told the man, Layne, his own conductor, that he had not carried out instructions? Yes. Then he told what had been done that was wrong, and explained how to do it the right way. Layne tried again that morning. In the afternoon another reading was taken. Still the correction had not been made. Layne tried again. The next morning a reading was taken and the treatment was approved. Edgar returned to Bowling Green, and Mr. Layne, who lived in Hopkinsville, continued the treatments. He came every day for three weeks. At the end of the first week Aimes mind began to clear up. She suddenly called the name of a doll of which she had been fond before the attacks occurred. A few days later she called me by name; then she called her father. Her mind picked up just where it had left off three years before, when she was only two. She advanced rapidly then? Quite rapidly. Soon she had the mind of a normal five-year-old. After the three weeks of treatment we had a check reading. At that time he said the condition had been removed. There was never any more trouble. Aime today is a normal girl of fifteen. She'll be finished with her lessons in a few minutes and I will bring her in. Yes, yes. I would like to see her. I don't know what this strange ability is, Mrs. Dietrich went on. We have only our own experience and the experiences of our friends by which to judge. But so far as we know it always works. Edgar Cayce is certainly no charlatan. He's one of the pillars of the Christian Church, and so far as anyone knows he has never taken advantage of anyone. It's just the other way around. People are always taking advantage of his good nature and his generosity. Of course, the doctor said, of course. He answered automatically, as if he had not quite heard what she was saying but was aware that she had stopped. He was staring past her, dreamily, at the sofa on which, ten years before, the young man he had visited that afternoon had gone to sleep. The man with the mustache paused to measure the distance between himself and the cuspidor. Accurately he spat into it. His listeners, grouped around him in the foyer of the Latham Hotel, waited respectfully. Leslie Cayce went on with his story. Well, you can see for yourself that he was a normal boy, except in school. There, he was dull. No doubt about it. He dreamed too much; all his teachers told me that. When he was twelve years old he was still in the third reader. That was in the spring of 1889. My brother Lucian was teaching the school. One afternoon Lucian met me and told me he had asked Edgar to spell cabin and the boy couldn't do it. I hope I did right, Leslie, Lucian said. I made him stay after school and write the word five hundred times on the blackboard. Do as you like, Lucian, I said. You're the teacher. Well, I felt mighty badly, mighty badly. Maybe it's my own fault, I thought. Maybe I don't spend enough time with the boy. Maybe he just needs somebody to bring him out properly, you know? So that night I sat down with him and we took hold of the spelling lesson. Well, there didn't seem to be anything I could do to get the lesson into his head. I'd think he had it; then when I'd close the book and ask him to spell the words, he couldn't do it. First thing I knew it was nearly eleven o'clock. The boy was tired, I knew, so I told him he might better go to bed. Just let me rest for five minutes, he said to me, and I'll know the lesson. All right, I said, just to humor him, you know. Well, I went into the kitchen to get a glass of water. I puttered around with a few things, then went back to the living room. There he was, asleep in the chair, with the spelling book for a pillow. I laughed and gave him a shake. Wake up, Old Man, I said, time for bed. Well, he woke up right off, and said, Ask me the lesson. I know it now. I was sure he didn't, but to humor him I asked him a few words. Well, dogged if he couldn't spell them. I asked him some more and he knew them. Ask me anything in the book, he said. He seemed all excited. So I skipped through the book, and no matter what I asked, he knew it. Then he began telling me what other words were on the page with the words I asked him, and what the pictures were on the pages, and the numbers of the pages. He knew that book as if he had it in his hands looking at it. Dr. Mnsterberg leaned forward. What was his explanation? he asked. What did he say had caused this? All I could ever get out of him was that he suddenly felt that night that if he slept a little on the book he would know the lesson. And he did. After that he slept on all his lessons, and he knew them all perfectly. He began to hop grades like he was skipping rope. His memory of these lessons, did it persist? Dr. Mnsterberg asked. Never forgot any of them. Even to this day he remembers them. Very interesting. And you recall no peculiar circumstances or accidents at his birth, or in his youth, before this? Not a

thing, except milk on the breasts. Milk on the breasts? Cried for a month after he was born. Nobody knew what the trouble was. Then old Patsy Cayce black woman at my fathers house, used to be a slave she came over and asked my wife for a needle. Boil it up first, she said. Then she took it and pricked a little hole in the nipple of each breast, and dogged if milk didnt come from them. After that the baby never cried much at all. I have heard of that, Dr. Mnsterberg said, in my medical studies. Are you a medical doctor as well as a Ph.D.? Dr. Ketchum asked. He was a smiling, quick-moving, bright-eyed man, in his middle thirties. Oh, yes, Dr. Mnsterberg said, I have a medical degree. I studied both at Leipzig and Heidelberg. Then I may tell you of some of my cases? Dr. Ketchum said. I am most interested to know what school of medicine he endorses, Dr. Mnsterberg said. For the Dietrich child he prescribed osteopathy. He uses all schools, Dr. Ketchum said, and often for the same case. He sometimes gives osteopathy along with electrical treatments, massage, diet, and compounds to be taken internally. He sometimes calls for herbs that are hard to get or for a medicine we havent heard about. Sometimes its just come on the market, sometimes its been off the market for a while. Always he seems to know everything, Dr. Mnsterberg said. You would say that he was... quoting from a universal mind, perhaps? Dr. Ketchum nodded sagely. I have often thought so, he said. In one of the earliest readings I conducted a preparation was given called Oil of Smoke. I had never heard of it, nor had any of our local druggists. It was not listed in the pharmaceutical catalogues. We took another reading and asked where it could be found. The name of a drugstore in Louisville was given. I wired there, asking for the preparation. The manager wired back saying he did not have it and had never heard of it. This was given for what? Dr. Mnsterberg asked. For a boy with a very obstinate leg sore, Dr. Ketchum said. We took a third reading. This time a shelf in the back of the Louisville drugstore was named. There, behind another preparation which was named would be found a bottle of Oil of Smoke, so the reading said. I wired the information to the manager of the Louisville store. He wired me back, Found it. The bottle arrived in a few days. It was old. The label was faded. The company which put it up had gone out of business. But it was just what he said it was, Oil of Smoke. Very interesting, Dr. Mnsterberg said. Very interesting. Leslie Cayce cleared his throat and spat again into the cuspidor. I remember a case, he said, when the boy was in Bowling Green... The young man sat at the kitchen table of the Cayce home on West Seventh Street, looking miserable, staring into the cup of coffee set before him. His mother, a gray-haired woman with a tired, pretty face, sat opposite him, looking at his downcast head and bent shoulders. I dont know what happens to all the pairs of rubbers you get, she said. Youll be lucky if you dont catch cold, walking two miles to get here and two miles back again in a snowstorm with nothing on your feet but those light shoes. It wasnt snowing when I started, he said. You should wear rubbers anyhow. The ground is cold and damp even when there isnt snow. She smiled. Well, Im glad you came, anyhow. Its nice to see you. I know youre working too hard, staying at the studio all day and being up with Gertrude at night. You shouldnt bother even to talk with these people who come here to do their so-called investigations. If you ask me I think most of them are bigger fakes than the poor soul they try to bedevil. They go and get a little learning and then run around being superior to everybody else. He didnt bother me, mother, except to start me bothering myself again. I could see his viewpoint: standing there, asking me questions, and comparing the answers with what he knows to be true in science. I kept realizing more and more that the only answer that to me would answer the whole thing satisfactorily would just make him certain that Im crazy. His mother nodded. Everybody takes it for granted even the best Christians, the ministers and missionaries that the things that happened in the days of the Bible and the days of the saints cant happen now, she said. He shook his head gloomily, agreeing with her. Suppose I had said to him, Dr. Mnsterberg, when I was quite young I became attached to the Bible. I resolved to read it once for every year of my life. When I was twelve years old I finished it for the twelfth time... reckon I whizzed through it most of those times, reading the parts I liked best. I had built a little playhouse for myself in the woods on a creek that ran through the old Cayce place, by a bend at the willows. Every afternoon I went there to read my favorite book. One spring day when I was reading the story of Manoah for the thirteenth time, I looked up and saw a woman standing before me.