



## Survival Top 40 — Case #15 — ESS = 277

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Relics Revealed & Revisited<sup>1</sup>

## Part I

In 1914, as Violet Parent was recovering from a severe illness, her deceased mother appeared to her and told her she would find a gold coin above one of the doorways in her apartment. Her husband, Gregory, later reported: "We both considered this merely a dream, for our apartment had just been thoroughly cleaned. Nevertheless, we looked, and sure enough, over a door leading to the porch we found a ten-dollar gold piece."

Now, the Parents were of very modest means. He was a grocery clerk and she a housewife. They lived in a "two-room apartment of threadbare aspect." Thus they were most impressed by such a find, and so, understandably, they paid close attention to Violet's ensuing visions.

Shortly, she began to fall into trances in which other spirits spoke to her. Some of these spirits claimed to be missionaries who had spent much of their earthly lives trying to convert the natives of Mexico, Southern California, and Arizona to Christianity. Other spirits said they had been Indians who were the subjects of these conversion attempts. Mrs. Parent, an illiterate woman who had grown up in St. Louis, had no idea what they were talking about. But, she understood quite well when the spirits directed her to other caches of money buried or hidden here and there around their hometown of Redlands, California. Within 6 years, the Parents had found sufficient funds to purchase their first house and automobile.

The locations of the loot were only revealed to give the Parents the means to pursue the agenda of the missionaries. They told Violet that the natives had buried numerous crosses and other religious artifacts throughout the Southwest. The padres had decided to try and prove

their continuing existence in the spirit world by directing people to the location of these crosses. This would be exactly what skeptics had been asking for since the first claim of Survival was made: the spirits would reveal information that no one living knew or could have known.

And reveal it they did, and not just once, or twice, or thrice, which ought to have been proof enough. Over a period of 10 years, the Parents were directed to more than 50 widely separated locations across a region 600-miles long by 300-miles wide. Once they arrived at the location specified they were directed to a particular hillside or streambed or other landmark and told what they should find buried there. Sometimes the search was fruitless; perhaps because someone had already discovered the treasures, perhaps due to heavy rains or earthquakes, or it could be that the Indians simply misremembered the location of a ceremony. But the quests were successful often enough to net more than 1,500 crosses and other sacred objects!

Yes, you read that right. Information that only people long dead could possibly know enabled living people to find real, solid, man-made items FIFTEEN HUNDRED times! All this in addition to hundreds of finds of gold, silver, and paper money crammed into tins and bottles, or wrapped in oilskins or decaying leather pouches that had been carefully buried by the denizens of the desert and never retrieved.

At first, the Parents did not own a car, so they had to rely on neighbors and friends to chauffeur their excursions. Typically, Violet would direct the group to the designated site (often hundreds of miles from their home) and then the others would dig in the ground, chop at cactus, or pry up boulders as necessary to reveal and retrieve the crosses. Violet, being somewhat delicate and very fearful of rattlesnakes, did little

digging herself. Numerous affidavits exist, signed by people who assisted on one or more of these expeditions, testifying that they found crosses precisely where the spirits predicted.

We know all of this because Gregory Parent kept detailed notes that ultimately filled 22 journals. He gave the dates and times of every excursion and he listed every item in every find. Most importantly for posterity, 5 years after his wife died, he wrote a letter to a man named Hamlin Garland.

Garland was a Pulitzer-prize winning author of over 50 books, mostly novels and biographies. Mr. Parent was likely attracted to him because his most recent book was an account of his personal experiences as an investigator for the American Society for Psychical Research. Garland was intrigued enough by what he read in the letter to visit Parent at his apartment and view his journals and several pictures of the crosses. Parent wanted Garland to write a book about the discovery of the crosses. Garland liked the idea, but being busy with other matters, he did not attempt to contact Parent again for almost 2 years, by which time Parent had died.

It took several months, but Garland managed to track down and obtain the entire collection of crosses along with Gregory Parent's journals and papers. The names of many people who had assisted the Parents in their searches were listed in the papers and Garland was able to locate fifteen of them — all of whom confirmed Parent's reports. As an example, in one interview a woman told Garland: "I myself picked up two containers for her — one from the sand on the seashore and one from the bed of a stream. To say that Violet had 'planted' these gold pieces and these wads of bills is absurd. She never had coins to plant, and furthermore, the rusted and rotted condition of these containers proved their long situation in the ground."

From these interviews and papers, Garland learned enough of the Parent's story to begin work on a book. From that book, appropriately

titled and published in 1939, the facts and quotes given here are derived.

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## Part II

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When Hamlin Garland received the letter from Gregory Parent, he had just published *Forty Years of Psychic Research*, a book he felt was the final summation of his work as an investigator of the paranormal. But the letter, and the journals, papers, and artifacts he subsequently discovered, brought an unexpected and astounding capstone to his avocation. Indeed, what Garland titled "The Mystery of the Buried Crosses" would prove to be one of the most convincing arguments for the survival of human consciousness after physical death.

Once he had read Parent's journals and gazed upon the 1,500 crosses with his own eyes, Garland knew that he had been handed a case of supreme importance. He also knew that the case needed to be verified by an independent researcher duplicating the feat of finding such items buried in the California desert. Despite being 76 years old, Garland realized that this task had fallen on his shoulders.

His first step was to find a medium who could contact the spirits of Gregory or Violet Parent or of the missionaries themselves. As he was considering who might be best suited for the job, Garland received a letter from a Dr. Nora Rager in Chicago who had read *Forty Years of Psychical Research* and wished to introduce him to a medium named Sophia Williams, who had recently moved to Los Angeles. Garland interviewed Williams and found her perfect for the job. She was friendly, could work anywhere (indoors or out), anytime (day or night), was anxious to help, and made no charge for her services. As Garland writes: "It was in this providential way that I found myself in possession of a most intelligent co-investigator.<sup>2</sup>

In her very first session, Williams immediately became a conduit for several of Garland's

deceased friends. One of whom, Henry Fuller, often acted as a control in the coming sessions. But it wasn't just the obvious acquaintances of Garland who spoke through Williams in that first session; spirits that he hardly remembered showed up, and at least one fellow that he didn't know at all. The latter identified himself as Harry Friedlander, a recently deceased friend of the stenographer whom Garland had hired to take notes of the session. Williams had never met the stenographer nor did she know he would attend the session. Friedlander accurately described his recent death in an airplane accident. Garland refers to this performance by Williams as "our first evidence of her power." There would be a lot more.

At their third sitting, on March 17, 1937, the spirit of Violet Parent spoke through the medium. She affirmed that there were more crosses to be found and she promised the aid of the padres in finding them. As the sessions continued, many of the missionaries did come through, plus several early explorers of the American Southwest.

Besides the veridical material received through Sophia Williams, there came some interesting, and reassuring, insights into the afterlife. One of the padres noted: "We have all changed our opinions about many things — not only about the Indians, but about religion. We learn

the truth on this side. ... We have found now that there is no difference in creed."

All that Garland and company managed to get from their first few expeditions were good lessons in how hot the desert could get, how steep the hills, how hard the ground, and how prickly the cactus that seemed to grow everywhere. Then on the 15<sup>th</sup> of May, 1937, while digging as instructed near the roots of an ancient oak tree some 75 miles northeast of Los Angeles, Garland's daughter, Constance, struck a cross.

Greatly inspired by this first find, Garland *et al* took every opportunity to make the lengthy excursions prescribed by the spirits. The story of the successes and failures of these trips is well told in Garland's book. Suffice it to say here that a total of 16 crosses were discovered in widely scattered and generally difficult-to-reach locations.

And so, the "research" of the Parents was duplicated and authenticated. People with no connection to the Parents, once again, have been able to find something that could not have been consistently found without information held only by the supposedly dead.

Discussion An analysis of this case, and more details, may be found on pages 98-114 of *The Survival Files*.

Illustrations The following pages contain photographs scanned from Garland's book. The quality is less than desirable. I have tried to improve them as much as possible without altering their content in any way. The cut lines are as written in the book unless otherwise noted.



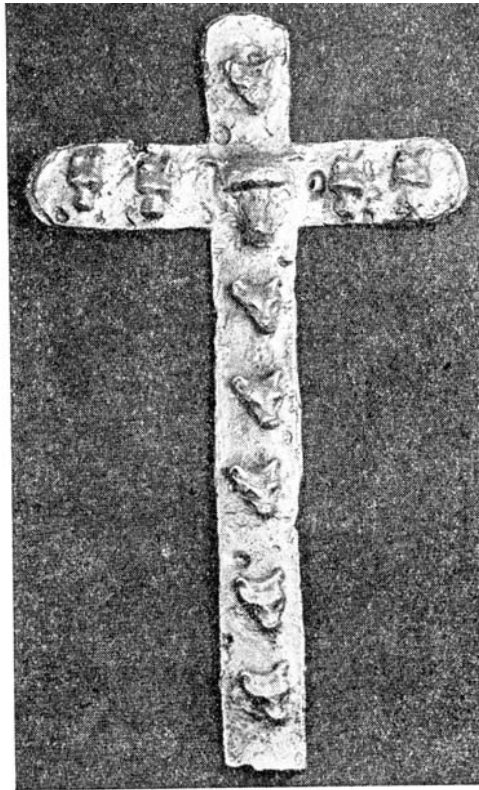
*Amulet with ape or monkey heads. Note varying character of the heads.*



[Not labeled in book. This cross appears to be adorned with the figure of a Central-American Indian wearing an ornate headdress.]



*This amulet, we are told, is very old and "came from the South."*



*The Monkey and Panther clans are symbolized on this amulet.*

END CASE 15

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<sup>1</sup> Originally published in *The Survival Files* and listed on the *Survival Top 40* as two separate cases, we decided to combine them because they are all part of the same story and are more convincing together.

<sup>2</sup> Garland, Hamlin, *The Mystery of the Buried Crosses*, E.P. Dutton & Co., 1939, p. 4.