

A Chronology of the Life of Elmer Gates

1859

— Born May 5th on a farm near Dayton, OH. Although he will attend the public schools, his main education will come from parents, a governess, and tutors (who will instruct him in subjects of his choosing— particularly physics, chemistry, mathematics, and biology).

1872

— Begins a lifelong experimental study of conscious states, their functional activation, and their relation to the external world.

— Conducts a systematic study and tabulation of the reliability of judgments.

1873

— Discovers psychurgy, the art of mind-using, and teaches it to his teachers.

1874

— Conducts experiments in mind-using.

1875

— Attends the Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia, seeing Bell's telephone and a steamship with "a compass like a conscience".

1876

— Corresponds with Major John Wesley Powell (later Director of the US Geological Survey).

— Reads the biographies of past inventors, discoverers, and thinkers to learn their mental habits; interrogates and observes living creators. Ultimately studies over 1000 extraordinary minds.

— Begins to recollect and classify the complete content of his own memory, concluding that most of it is worthless.

1878

— Announces the discovery of a new domain of experimental psychology by the application of scientific experiment to introspection.

1883

— Gives an early account of the art of mind-using in a letter to Dr. William T. Harris (later US Commissioner of Education); declines

Harris's offer to publish it in the *Journal of Speculative Philosophy* (of which Harris is editor).

— Develops periscope, gyrostatic regulator, multiple methods of torpedo guidance, superheated compressed-air torpedo propulsion.

1886

— Discovers “A New Method of Introspective Seeking for an Understanding of My Mind's Own Tendencies and Judgments.”

— Begins a study of immanent cosmic mind via a series of introspections of Awareness and subconscious processes.

1890

— Lays plans for a major private laboratory.

— Tentatively describes the results of his mind-using experiments, which include many animal studies.

1891

— Decides that the current business venture with his inventions is entirely uncongenial to his tastes and motives.

1892

— Resolves to accept nothing less than opportunity to start *real* life work, the study of mind-using

— New form of motor, oil stove, sound stethoscope, clay furniture, improvements in aerial apparatus, improved boiler, double disk toy, magnetic framework for planetary rotation, psychological study of narcotics.

— Meets Theodore J. Mayer (a future investor in Gates's work), Capt. Milan C. Edson, and Phebe Edson (Milan's daughter and Elmer's future wife).

— Offered opportunity to make tests at Smithsonian Institution.

1893

— Several manuscripts on the mind-art are typed and privately circulated at Mayer's expense.

— Letter to Jane Lathrop Stanford (dated July 10) requesting return of his book *The Mind Art*.

1894

— First public lectures on psychurgy (the art of mind-using) and his confirming neuro-physiological experiments, given in Washington, D.C.: Philosophical Society (“Artificial Evolutionary Transformation of Lower Organisms”) and Anthropological & Geological Society (account of brain-building experiments on dogs).

- Results of Gates's animal experiments confirmed by Dr. Aurelio Lui of Stephano's Laboratory, Milan, Italy.
- Interviews and reports by Rene Bache and Kate Field published.
- Marries Phebe Edson.
- Moves to the Germantown area of Philadelphia and sets up laboratory.
- Birth of first child Elmer, Jr. (followed in turn by Phebe, Donald, and Roger).

1895

- Meets with Alexander Graham Bell in Washington, D.C., who advises him to continue with his inventions.
- Sterilized milk process, electric loom mechanisms.
- Accepts an invitation to establish a School of Psychology and Mind Art at the Philadelphia Museum's School of Industrial Art, where he moves laboratory..
- Lectures to the Education Club of Philadelphia on "Psychology and the Mind-Art."
- Publishes "The Science of Mentation" in the *Monist*.
- Publishes "Methods of Research in, and the Importance of, Cellular Psychology" in the December issue of the *American Therapist*.
- Lengthy correspondence and meetings with Phoebe Hearst (wife of businessman George Hearst and mother of publisher William Randolph Hearst), who offers him the use of \$25,000 if he will move his laboratory to Washington, D.C. (Later, this money is largely repaid.)

1896

- Four patents for electric loom.
- Builds a small laboratory in Chevy Chase, MD, a suburb of Washington, D.C.

1897

- Addresses the First Annual Session of National Congress of Mothers (later to become the Parent-Teachers Association or PTA) on "The Art of Child Rearing."
- Publishes "Experimental Researches into the Cause and Cure of Disease by New Methods and along New Lines" in the December issue of *Medical Times*.
- Borrows \$50,000 at 6% to expand laboratory, adding a machine shop and equipping a building for teaching. Puts up as collateral a 50% interest in the machine shop and some 30 listed inventions, which are to be surrendered if debt not repaid by December, 1899.

1898

— Publishes “Acclimatization of Plants” and “Chemical Selection in Plants” in *Popular Science*.

— Addresses the Thirty-seventh Annual Meeting of the National Educational Association on “Brain Building and Mind Building, with Special Reference to the Sense-Training of the Eye and Ear, and Teaching Mentally Defective Children.”

— Publishes “The Art of Brain Building” and “The Science & Art of Child-Rearing” in *Our Day*.

1899

— Two patents for purifying, cooling, and moisturizing air.

— Report of Gates’s electronic musical synthesizer appears in the press.

— Speaks to the teachers and students of the National Park Seminary and observes a demonstration of the Fletcher Method for teaching music to small children. Writes an enthusiastic letter of endorsement to Evelyn Ashton Fletcher.

— Decides to refuse most future invitations to lecture.

— Unable to repay the \$50,000 laboratory debt. Mayer assumes previous creditor’s interest in Gates’s laboratory and inventions and refinances his debt.

— Gates borrows from Mayer additional money for expansions, giving him a 1/3 interest in magnetic iron-making and agglomerating inventions.

1900

— Lectures on “Medical Research at the Elmer Gates Laboratory” at the General Meeting of the American Social Science Association, Department of Health.

— Lectures on “Amplifying & Parallelizing X-Rays” at the Roentgen Society of the United States.

— One patent for making radiographs.

— Eleven mining patents.

— Publishes “We Can Increase Our Mental Powers” and “Can Will Power Be Trained?” in *Success*.

— Laboratories costing \$2000 a month to run.

— \$161,000 debt repayment due to Mayer. Gates, unable to raise the money, is forced to increase Mayer’s interest in his inventions to 50%.

1902

— Publication of “Immortality from New Standpoints,” from which “Science, The First World Movement” was extracted and reprinted.

1903

- Five patents for the production of alloys.
- Thirteen mining patents.
- One patent for educational (“Box and Blocks”).
- One patent for fire extinguisher.
- Solar focus, incandescent gas mantle furnace, melts two small rubies to produce one larger ruby, microphotogoniometer to measure the relative distance of stars.
- Discovers the “telic” series of conscious states.
- Makes five attempts to mentate a successful business framework

1904

- Publication of *The Relations and Development of the Mind and Brain*.
- Sells investor a three month option to purchase his welding inventions.
- Rejects legal counsel to declare bankruptcy.
- Conducts experiments in spontaneous mentation.
- Health declines from financial worries and overwork.
- Chevy Chase property, residence, laboratories, equipment, and 152 listed inventions become property of Gates’s creditor, Theodore J. Mayer. Mayer rents the facilities back to Gates and gives him the option to reclaim his inventions upon repayment of \$100,000.

1905

- Gates owes \$400,000 in debt and accrued interest on his laboratory.

1906

- One mining patent.
- The press misreports Gates’s experiment on the transparency of the animal body to certain electrical frequencies, saying that he saw the departing soul of a dying rat. Despite denials and clarifications, the story persists.

1907

- One mining patent

1908

- Forced to vacate the Chevy Chase laboratory; contents sold at auction.

1909

- Moves to the District of Columbia
- Works as consulting inventor.
- Lays plans to finance a Preliminary Exhibit of the Main Results of Psychurgic Work

1910

- Settles in a comfortable rented house in the Mt. Pleasant section of Washington, D.C.

1911

- Applies psychurgy to the problems of livelihood and arrives at heurotechny, the technique of attaining the *new* in knowing, feeling, and doing

1912

- One patent for method of purifying liquids

1917

- Writes “A Treatise on Poetry”

1918

- Questioned by the Bureau of Investigation (precursor to the FBI) about his effort to secure private funding to demonstrate his War inventions: long distance, mammoth charge submarine torpedo; long range, aerial self-propelling projectile, guidable by wireless waves or by violet rays; unmanned boat, guidable from shore by a wire

1919

- Hit by automobile while crossing street. For two months his life is uncertain. In five months he is walking without crutches.

1923

- July 29th suffers a paralytic stroke; mental functions unaffected.
- Dies December 3rd, 12:45 a.m.
- Buried in Glenwood Cemetery, Washington, DC.

1925

- One posthumous patent for method and apparatus for complete combustion

1927

- One posthumous patent for electric iron

1928

— One posthumous patent for combustion under pressure